



# reCAPS

**Counseling & Psychological Services**  
**University of California, Santa Cruz**

## Making the Most of Winter Quarter

Students often tell us that winter quarter can be difficult, since it's in the middle of the school year and brings shorter days and rainier, colder weather. That doesn't mean that you have to throw up your hands and brace yourself for a bad few months. There are ways to make the quarter go well, or at least to cope better with any challenges it brings.

First, take the opportunity to assess your academic needs. Are things

going OK, or will you need additional help to do well in your classes? Start looking for tutoring, MSI, or a study group before finals approach. Go to office hours or schedule some time with advisors and professors. Don't wait until things are going downhill to seek extra help and resources!

It's also helpful to check in with yourself around self-care. Are you getting enough sleep (research shows that 7

or 8 hours is ideal for many) and eating a healthy diet? Are you getting regular physical activity? How does fun and social time fit in to your schedule? Taking care of yourself is important. If you don't, you're more susceptible to illness and mental health problems (as well as academic issues).

Something we all need in the winter is to get some sun. Even when it's a cloudy day, being outside for a while helps to improve mood and regulate sleep cycles. Daylight is important for wellness all year 'round, but it's especially important during the shorter and darker days of winter.

If you realize you need to make some changes, consider coming up with a specific plan to meet your goal. Just saying "I want to eat better" or "I will study more" is vague, making it hard to know whether you are reaching your goals.

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## All About CAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) offers confidential mental health services to registered UCSC students all year:

- Helpful workshops, trainings, and self-help tools
- A variety of therapy and support groups
- Let's Talk drop-in consultations
- Brief individual, couples, and family counseling
- Medication services
- Referrals to on- and off-campus resources
- Crisis services in person Mon–Fri 8 am–5 pm and by phone 24/7 at (831) 459-2628

To make an appointment, call (831) 459-2628 or stop by (Student Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor) weekdays between 8 am and 5 pm. To learn more, visit our [website](#), check out the [CAPS blog](#), and like us on [Facebook](#)!

## HOW TO KEEP WARM THIS WINTER:



**CARRY KITTENS IN YOUR POCKETS**

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Think about what goals would be both realistic and helpful for you. For instance, if you aren't exercising, think about how many times a week makes sense—maybe start with a plan to take a brisk walk twice a week for half an hour, then bump it up to three times a week after you reach the first goal. Starting small and building from there can be a good way to make progress toward bigger changes over time.

Using an app to meet a goal, keep track of your moods and stress levels, and integrate new self-care tools can make it easier to solidify new habits. One good program is [WellTrack](#), which has a website and app. UCSC affiliates can register for WellTrack for free using their campus email address. Another great no-cost tool is the Headspace app, which provides short meditations. (Users can upgrade to a paid version for more features.) Another good app is MindShift, also free, which helps users relax

and learn more helpful ways of thinking to reduce anxiety.

Students can take the opportunity to contact CAPS in winter quarter (or any time of the year) to find out about workshop series, brief individual counseling, referrals for longer-term counseling off campus, and other services. Stop by CAPS or call us at (831) 459-2628 during business hours to schedule an appointment, and check out our [website](#) for more information.

## What's the Story With CBD?



*Cannabis sativa*, adumbratio scientifica, circa 1900. Published and copyrighted by Gera-Untermhaus, FE Köhler in 1887 (1883–1914).

The alternative medicine CBD, or cannabidiol, has been getting more press lately. CBD is one of the active ingredients of cannabis (marijuana), but unlike cannabis derivatives that contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), CBD does not cause the user to feel high. CBD, often in the form of an oil that can be taken orally or used topically, has been gaining attention as a potential remedy for various problems. But is it safe and legal, and does it work?

While CBD is legal in California, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) continues to classify CBD (and all components of cannabis) as a Schedule I drug. Thus, the use and possession of CBD is not allowed on UCSC's campus (which must follow federal laws).

What does existing research show about CBD's uses and effects? It has been shown to help with seizures in some patients with childhood epilepsy disorders. It is commonly used to address anxiety and does seem to reduce anxiety symptoms. It is also used by those who experience insomnia, and studies suggest that it may help with both falling asleep and staying asleep. The findings of research in animals suggest that CBD may have future applications for treating depression. However, more research—particularly studies on human participants—is necessary before CBD could

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## Dear CAPS,

*I've been feeling unmotivated in school. I don't want to fail out. Help!*

—Stuck Student

Lack of motivation is common and can be caused by different factors. One is academic issues. When you're stressed by difficult classes or the fast pace of the quarter system, you may lose steam. If this is true for you, seek help—before things get out of hand and you can't recover.

Talk to professors or TAs and seek tutoring or Modified Supplemental Instruction (MSI) (contact [Learning Support Services](#)). Also, you could set up a study group or meet with your advisor to get advice about your academic plan.

Not having study habits that work well for you can also drain motivation. Breaking work into smaller chunks (e.g., starting a paper by doing an outline, doing a few math problems at a time instead of all of

them) can help you get started and avoid burnout. If you're studying for hours with no breaks, it's easy to lose momentum. Taking regular, short pauses to stretch, walk, and eat is important.



Another reason for low motivation may be poor self-care. Are you pulling all-nighters, skipping meals, or eating junk? Are you letting exercise slide? Not getting enough sleep, nutrition, and activity leads to low energy and thus, low motivation. Similarly, relying on alcohol, caffeine, pot, or other substances can erode self-care. Pot in particular has been shown to make people feel

less motivated. This can make it hard to meet your goals and stay on top of things.

Self-care also involves learning to cope with stress. Check out some self-help tips on [CAPS' website](#). You may also benefit from signing up for CAPS' [Anxiety Toolbox](#) workshop series or talking to a doctor or counselor about stress.

Sometimes depression is a cause of low motivation. If you are feeling sad all day most days for more than a couple of weeks, have low energy, don't feel interested in things you used to like, and have changes in sleep and appetite, you may be clinically depressed. Talk to a professional to find out and get treatment. *It's especially important to seek help if you are thinking about killing yourself.* CAPS is one resource if you are feeling low or having difficulty managing stress. Call or stop by CAPS during business hours to inquire about making an appointment.

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become an accepted treatment for depression. CBD also seems to help with some forms of chronic pain. However, claims that CBD cures cancer have not been backed up by the research.

Side effects of CBD may include nausea, fatigue, and irritability. It can have negative interactions with some drugs, such as the blood thinner coumadin.

A significant safety concern with CBD is that it is primarily marketed and sold as a supplement, not a medication; thus, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate its safety and purity. This means that consumers cannot know for sure that the product they buy has active ingredients at the dose listed on the label. In addition, CBD products may contain other (unknown) elements. What's more,

there is no definitive research that determines the effective therapeutic dose of CBD for any particular medical condition.

What does all of this mean for you? The bottom line is that you could get in trouble using CBD on campus. If you are considering trying CBD to treat an ailment, it's a good idea to get all the information you can and weigh the pros and cons.



## Upcoming Events

**LET'S TALK:** Let's Talk is a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential, one-time chat with a professional CAPS counselor. It's free, and you don't need an appointment—just walk in! Let's Talk is held four times a week from 1 to 3 pm at different locations throughout the quarter, except holidays and finals week. All registered undergraduate and graduate UCSC students are welcome at all locations of Let's Talk. Read more on our [website](#). Note that Let's Talk is not set up for mental health crises—for crisis situations, visit CAPS during business hours or call (831) 459-2628 any time to talk to a crisis counselor.

**TRANS, NON-BINARY, GENDERQUEER, & GENDER QUESTIONING STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP:** CAPS is offering this weekly drop-in group that provides a welcoming environment and support to discuss topics of interest brought up by group members. Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 pm at the CAPS Central Office Group Room. Call group facilitator, Lain Lease, L.M.F.T., at (831) 459-1476 for more info.

**ANXIETY TOOLBOX:** This three-part workshop series gives you information and coping tools for managing anxiety and stress. Meets three times for an hour each session. Read more about the series and see the schedule of workshops still remaining this quarter on the CAPS [website](#), or call us to get more info at (831) 459-2628.

**CAPS INFORMATIONAL GROUP FOR MIXED-STATUS & UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS:** This drop-in informational group provides an overview of available CAPS services and the off-campus referral process and clarifies myths about access to services. Remaining meetings for winter quarter occur on two days: Friday, 2/15 from 12:30 to 2:00 pm and Thursday, 3/7 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm, at the EOP Office, ARCenter, Room 121. Call group facilitator, Erica Lopez, L.M.F.T., at (831) 459-2572 for more info.

**PARENT-STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP:** A supportive environment for those struggling with the unique challenges of parenting while being a student. Children up to age 1 year welcome with parent. Remaining meetings for winter quarter occur on two Mondays, 2/11 and 3/11, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Family Student Housing #712, Family Center. Call group facilitator, Susan Gulbe Walsh, Ph.D., at (831) 459-2377 for more info.

**PSYCHIATRY 101 WORKSHOPS:** CAPS is offering one-time workshops several times throughout the quarter to provide information about medications for mental health issues and resources for psychiatry on and off campus. Sign-up and referral by a therapist or medical doctor is required to participate. Read about the workshops on our [website](#), or call CAPS at (831) 459-2628 for more info.

