

Let's Talk: Info for Staff, Faculty, and Student Leaders

Let's Talk is a drop-in program offered by UCSC Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at various sites around campus several times a week, where students can stop by for a brief, confidential chat with a CAPS counselor to receive support, referrals, information, and advice. It's offered in fall, winter, and spring quarters when classes are in session. Visit the CAPS website (<http://caps.ucsc.edu>) for the latest schedule of Let's Talk locations, days, and times, which may change quarter to quarter.

Who Is Let's Talk Designed For?

- Students who have a question or concern that would benefit from a brief consultation
- Students who are hesitant or curious about counseling and want to learn more about it
- Students who are concerned about a friend and would like information or advice
- Students who are not interested in therapy but would like to get a counselor's perspective

How Is Let's Talk Different From Individual Counseling Through CAPS?

Although Let's Talk is similar to counseling in that it is a confidential, supportive, one-on-one conversation with a professional counselor, Let's Talk is not counseling. It is important that you understand the differences between the two in order to make referrals that are most helpful for the students with whom you work. The following table compares the two services.

Let's Talk	Counseling
Drop in, no appointment necessary	Scheduled appointments are required
10 to 15 minutes (or longer if other students are not waiting)	45- to 50-minute appointments
Usually a one-time meeting	Appointments may be weekly/bi-weekly for a period of several weeks/months
No records kept of student's visit	Counseling notes become part of student's protected record at Student Health Services
Focus on brief support, problem-solving, information, advice, referral	Diagnosis of mental health issues, insight-building, skill-building, problem-solving, support, referral to other resources
Not appropriate for students who are in immediate crisis	Counselors can manage crisis situations as they emerge in conjunction with CAPS crisis team

How Do Students Access Let's Talk?

All enrolled undergraduate and graduate UCSC students are eligible for Let's Talk, and there is no charge for meetings. Because it is a drop-in service, students may stop by any location during walk-in hours. It's offered in fall, winter, and spring quarters when classes are in session. Visit the CAPS website (<http://caps.ucsc.edu>) for the latest schedule of Let's Talk locations, days, and times, which may change quarter to quarter.

Meetings are first-come, first-served, so students may have a brief wait. Although Let's Talk does not keep records on students who attend, the Let's Talk counselor will ask students to fill out a brief demographic form before their meeting. This should take less than 5 minutes and is for tracking purposes so we can continually improve the Let's Talk program—we want to make sure that Let's Talk is reaching different groups within our diverse student body.

Who is NOT a Good Referral to Let's Talk?

In order for Let's Talk to be successful, we rely on staff and student leaders to refer students to us—and also to make judgment calls about when a student is not a good fit for the program. Here are some examples of students who would *not* be good referrals to Let's Talk:

- Any student who is actively in crisis, including
 - Students who are expressing suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans
 - Students who are exhibiting psychotic behaviors
 - Students who are extremely distressed and having difficulty managing their emotions (for example, crying uncontrollably)
 - Students who are currently intoxicated
 - Students with other safety concerns
- Students whose immediate needs are too severe/complex to address in a brief consultation

It may be tempting to bring a student in crisis to Let's Talk if it is at a more convenient location than the main CAPS office or if the student is reluctant or refusing to contact CAPS or access our crisis services. However, bringing a student to Let's Talk as a “last resort” to connect them with CAPS sets the student up to have their needs go unmet and could potentially cause additional safety concerns. It is also likely to cause a disruption in Let's Talk services for other students. **Counselors at Let's Talk locations are not set up to manage crisis situations**, as they will not have access to the rest of the CAPS crisis team or to other needed resources.

If you have a student in crisis who is refusing to access CAPS services, you may call CAPS during business hours to consult with a crisis counselor at (831) 459-2628. Student leaders and student employees should always consult with their direct supervisor and other crisis team members (e.g., college administrators, campus police) to develop an appropriate plan of action.