



reCAPS

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

Why Group Therapy?

Many students know that Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) offers one-on-one brief therapy. However, not all students realize that CAPS offers other services, too, including groups. Those who have never participated in group therapy may be unsure if they want to try it. Groups are definitely worth checking out because they offer some benefits that one-on-one therapy cannot provide.

What's different about group therapy compared with individual therapy? One difference is that in a group, members get support and feedback from other students who

can relate to their concerns. This can be validating for people who feel alone or believe that no one else has the same problems. It's also a good way to get multiple perspectives on an issue and ideas about how to address problems.

CAPS offers a few different kinds of groups. Some are "psychoeducational," meaning that members get information and learn skills related to their issue of concern. For example, this sort of group may focus on learning coping skills for anxiety or depression. Other groups are "process groups," meaning that the focus is on sharing thoughts and

feelings and getting feedback from other members and group leaders. Many process groups, such as CAPS' Understanding Myself and Others, explore relationship and communication issues. Support groups are similar to process groups, in that they allow for discussion and connection around a shared problem, such as substance abuse or the challenges of being a graduate student or a student of color.

Some groups are "drop in," meaning that members don't have to commit to coming every week. In such groups,

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All About CAPS

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers FREE, confidential mental health services to registered UCSC students all year 'round:

- Brief individual, couples' and group counseling
- Awesome workshops and trainings around campus
- Referrals to on- and off-campus resources
- Crisis services (in person Mon-Fri 8 am-5 pm; by phone 24/7 at 831-459-2628)

To make an appointment, call us at 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](#)!



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some members may come every week, and some may come and go. Other groups are “closed,” meaning that members commit to attending every week, usually for one quarter. Typically, no one new is allowed to join after the first few meetings; this can help the existing group members get to know each other over time and develop a sense of trust.

When is a group the best way to get help? Any issue or problem that can be addressed by the bene-

fits of group dynamics is usually a good fit for a group. Groups can be especially helpful for students who feel isolated or stigmatized, as they help them get support and see that they are not alone.

When is individual counseling the better approach? For students in crisis or with problems that require a more direct focus, individual therapy is often more helpful than a group alone. Sometimes, people engage in both individual and group therapy at the same time.

Although CAPS’ closed groups are filled for winter quarter, we offer several drop-in groups that students can check out any time. (See p. 3 for two new drop-in groups.) To ask about signing up for one of CAPS’ closed groups for spring quarter, the best time to call is between now and the week of March 30th. To learn more about CAPS groups, visit our group page at <http://caps.ucsc.edu/groups/index.html>. You can also call CAPS at 831-459-2628.

Need to Talk to a Counselor? Try Let’s Talk!

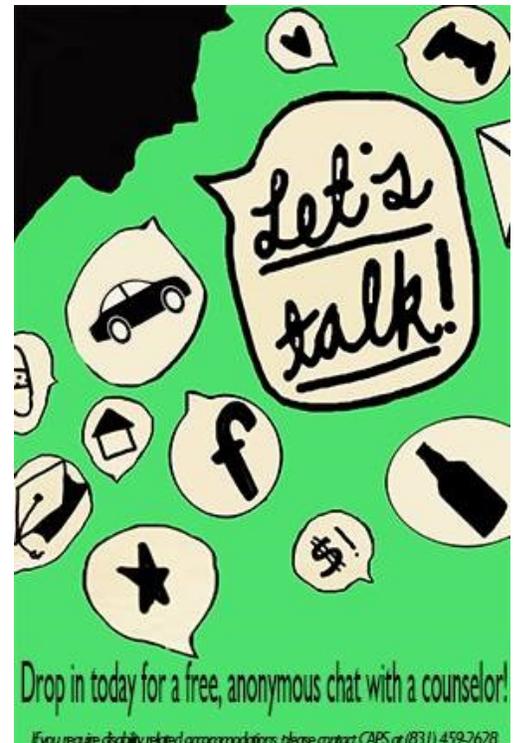
Let’s Talk is a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential one-time chat with a CAPS counselor. It’s free, and you don’t need an appointment—just walk in!

CAPS launched Let’s Talk in the fall of 2013 to provide another option for students looking for counseling services. CAPS recognized that sometimes students just want a short, one-time conversation with a counselor rather than more formal counseling services. That’s what Let’s Talk is all about.

In January 2015, Let’s Talk added a new location. In addition to Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at McHenry Library, Room 2285, and Thursdays from 2:30 to 4:30 pm at Baskin Engineering, Room

153B, you can now talk to a CAPS counselor at the Cantu Center on Mondays from 3 to 4:30 pm.

Read more about Let’s Talk on the CAPS website at <http://caps.ucsc.edu/pdf/lets-talk-FAQs.pdf>.



Dear CAPS,

I'm in love, and it's all I can think about. Is this normal?

—Lovestruck

When you are in a relationship, it is common to think about your partner a lot of the time. Whether that is “normal” or not depends on how it’s impacting other parts of your life and how healthy the relationship is.

In the early stages of a relationship, it can be hard to think about or focus on anything except your partner. This is the infatuation stage. One reason it’s hard to stop thinking about love during this phase is that the brain releases a certain kind of endorphin that makes you feel happy, excited, and positive—that “in love” feeling. Your partner’s negative traits don’t seem so bad, and the positive ones seem amazing. This phase helps partners create a bond that can lay the foundation for a long-lasting relationship. While it’s very hard to focus on other

things, it is possible with effort.

For many couples, infatuation gradually evolves into something less intense but potentially great: A feeling of connection, trust, and contentment that can come from getting to know a partner over time and demonstrating caring for each other. Once the infatuation phase ends, it should be easier to focus both on your partner and other important things in your life. It should also be possible to balance your partner’s needs with your own.

One sign of an unhealthy connection is when you think so much about your partner that you can’t get important things done, let responsibilities slide, or cut yourself off from close friends and family. Another sign that a relationship may not be healthy is intense jealousy and suspicion about what your partner is doing. Occasional feelings of jealousy are very common, but when jealousy leads to unhappiness for one or both partners or to one partner trying to control the other, that’s a red flag.

Finally, feeling completely empty when your partner is not around can be a sign of an unhealthy relationship. For some people, romantic connections are a way to try and get needs met that were not met in childhood, such as the need to be validated or nurtured. When a desire to be loved turns into an obsession that nothing can satisfy, it may be a good time to seek advice from a trusted family member, mentor, religious leader, or mental health professional. You may also want to read a book about “love addiction,” such as *Is It Love or Is It Addiction?* by Brenda Schaeffer to learn more about signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to overcome unhealthy patterns.



Upcoming Events

WOMEN OF COLOR SUPPORT GROUP: New for winter 2015 quarter. Open to all female-identified students of diverse cultural backgrounds looking for a safe space to cultivate support, discuss challenges, and honor our journeys. Every Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:30 pm at the CAPS central office in the Student Health Center complex. Free, and no appointment needed—just drop in.

UNPACKING MASCULINITY IN MEN OF COLOR: A four-week series of group meetings for male-identified students of color who want to explore what it means to “be a man.” Free, and no sign-up required—just come by. Bay Tree Building, 3rd Floor, Rm 353, 3:30–4:45 on four Thursdays: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12. For more info, contact CAPS postdoctoral resident Quade Yoo Song French at 831-459-2269.

Wellness Tip: Getting Better Sleep

One of the most common wellness issues we hear about at CAPS is not getting enough sleep. Sometimes students stay up too late because they aren't managing their time well. Other times, they have trouble falling asleep for various reasons (often stress or anxiety), leading to missed hours of shut-eye. Here are a few tips for falling asleep and getting the rest you need to be healthy and productive.

1. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Even weekends! It really seems to help a lot of people get into a good sleep routine.
2. Reserve your bed for just sleep (and sex). Don't use your bed a place to study. If your body associates the bed with sleep, it'll be easier to doze off at night.
3. Avoid strenuous exercise, caffeine, and big meals a few hours before bed.
4. If racing thoughts are keeping you up, try journaling or making a list of things you need to do tomorrow as a way of getting your thoughts "out" so you can let them go. You can also try breathing or relaxation exercises.
5. If you are having trouble falling asleep at night, try cutting daytime naps out completely, but if you can't, then at least limit them to 20-40 minutes.
6. Keep your room dark, quiet, and a little cool if possible. Sure, you can't always control light, noise, and temperature if you live in a dorm or have housemates, but you may be able to adapt with earplugs, a white noise machine or fan, an eye mask, or other fixes if your sleep environment is not ideal.
7. Try natural sleep aids like chamomile tea, melatonin, and valerian root before reaching for sleeping pills. Sleeping pills may have unwanted side effects, and if you use them too much, you can become dependent.
8. For more tips on sleep, including relaxation exercises, visit the CAPS self-help website at <http://caps.ucsc.edu/resources/self-help.html>. You can also download a free app for sleep called CBT-I Coach with sleep strategies, relaxation exercises, a sleep log, and more.



Contact CAPS:

Student Health Center
East Wing, 2nd Floor
Phone: 831-459-2628
(24/7 crisis help)
<http://caps.ucsc.edu>