



reCAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz

CAPS Groups and Workshops in Winter 2017

CAPS is always working to improve and add to the services we offer UCSC students. For winter quarter, CAPS is continuing to provide a wide array of weekly therapy and support groups, drop-in groups, drop-in workshops as

part of our Wellness Wednesdays series, drop-in Peer Educator-led workshops, and the Embrace Your Life three-part mindfulness-based series.

New additions to our group and workshop

offerings will include a return of the Slug Social Club, a weekly support and social group for students with Aspergers or on the Autism Spectrum and students who have challenges around forming and maintaining
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2016-2017 Peer Educators

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 and couples counseling
- 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](#)!

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relationships for other reasons. The Slug Social Club was offered in prior academic years but had been on hiatus this fall. The group will be held on Wednesdays from 3:15 to 4:30 pm, and sign-up is required, so interested students should call Brent Alsaker, L.C.S.W., at (831) 459-2828 to find out more.

Our Peer Educators, who offer Stress Less workshops every quarter, are hard at work planning workshops on additional topics that

will be launched in winter quarter. Some of these will be drop-in workshops at CAPS. Peer Educators are also available to come to your dorm, student org, or program to deliver a Stress Less workshop. To learn more about Peer-led workshops or request a workshop, visit our [website](#), which includes an online [workshop request form](#).

CAPS is also considering offering two sections of some of our higher-demand groups next quarter to

allow more students to participate. Information about our groups and workshops, as well as other outreach events, can be found on the CAPS [Groups and Workshops](#) web page and [web calendar](#). Schedules for winter will be updated by early January. We also frequently post about these services on our [Facebook page](#), so “like” us there to get all the latest updates and announcements.

Dear CAPS,

What are the most common reasons students come to CAPS?

—*Curious About CAPS*

Students come to CAPS for a lot of different reasons. However, we do see common patterns every year (and counseling centers across the country do, too). The top four problems for which undergraduate and graduate students seek help from mental health professionals are anxiety issues (including general anxiety, social anxiety, phobias, and OCD); depression; academic concerns; and problems with relationships and/or social interactions.

In addition to these top issues, CAPS sees many students with trouble managing stress, problems related to identity, concerns around discrimination, drug and alcohol problems, trouble adjusting to college, and problems related to learning disabilities and ADHD. We also see students who have

been abused or sexually assaulted and those with bipolar disorder, psychotic symptoms (e.g., seeing or hearing things others can't see or hear, having ideas and beliefs that don't fit with the reality others perceive), suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, grief and loss issues, and concerns around self-harm.

No matter the reason students come to us, we try to work with them to create a plan for getting help. Sometimes the plan involves at-

tending a therapy or support group or workshop through CAPS. Other times, it may include brief individual therapy with a CAPS counselor or open-ended therapy off campus. We also help students connect with medication services, academic services, and other resources and provide suggestions for self-help.

Read about the wide variety of services we offer on our [website](#) or learn more by calling us during business hours at (831) 459-2628.



Dealing With Holiday Stressors

Some students look forward to the holidays, but for others, holidays can be stressful. Still others may have a mix of good and bad. Family conflict, isolation from family and friends, and temptations around substance abuse or addiction are a few reasons people may struggle this time of year.

In dealing with any stressful holiday situation, it's important to exercise good self-care: Try to get enough rest, eat well, and get some exercise. Here are some additional tips for making your holidays happier and healthier.

Dealing With Family Problems

If you are a part of a dysfunctional family, holiday visits can be stressful. They can also be tough if your family does not accept your sexual orientation or gender identity. One way to deal with problematic family situations is to avoid visits. If that isn't an option, consider ways to get extra emotional support during time with relatives. Schedule a call or Skype session with a friend or "family of choice" member and connect with supportive people through social media. Consider bringing a friend home with you to provide a "buffer" and put family on their best behavior.

Try to plan some time alone or out of the house to get a break from challenging people and stressful situations. Make a date to see friends, go for a walk, see a movie by yourself, or say you need time to study in your room or at a library.

Managing Holiday Loneliness

For students who can't travel home, the holidays can be lonely. Seeing



other people celebrating can make it seem like you are the only one who feels alone.

There are several things to keep in mind when trying to manage loneliness. One is that it's OK to feel lonely or sad—acknowledge your feelings. But, it's also important to recognize that your perceptions about "everyone else" having a great holiday are probably not accurate. You are certainly not the only one feeling down.

Try to plan something fun for yourself to do—go on that hike you've been putting off because you were too busy or take the time for that book or new video game you were saving for after finals. Make plans with others who are staying local for the holidays. It's also a great time to look into volunteering. Research shows that doing for others not only helps them, it can help you to feel good, too.

Preventing Relapse

The holidays can bring temptations and triggers for people in recovery from or struggling with substance use problems. Holiday parties where alcohol is served can make it tempting to slide into a lapse in sobriety or overdo it. And, if you are feeling lonely and isolated, it may be

tempting to try to cope by drinking or using other drugs.

It's important to be realistic about what tempts or triggers you: Plan ahead to avoid tempting situations or minimize the risks of participating in them. For example, if going to a big New Year's Eve party is going to make it likely you will drink when you are trying to remain sober or get drunk when you wish to moderate your drinking, consider making an alternative plan—go to

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Upcoming Events

See our [website calendar](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more upcoming events.

LET'S TALK: Let's Talk is a drop-in service where you can have a brief, confidential chat with a professional counselor. You don't need an appointment—just drop in! Let's Talk resumes at the beginning of winter quarter and is held four afternoons a week from 1 to 3 pm at the following locations: Mondays, Bay Tree Building, 3rd floor (Ethnic Resource Centers); Tuesdays, The Cove (mobile building near Cowell Provost House); Wednesdays, Cantu Queer Center; and Thursdays, Graduate Commons in Quarry Plaza. All registered undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to all locations of Let's Talk. Read more on our [website](#).

CAPS GROUPS: We offer a number of weekly therapy and support groups, many of which will be taking new members for winter quarter. We also offer some drop-in groups that do not require sign-up. Visit our [website](#) and [web calendar](#) or call CAPS at (831) 459-2628 to

learn about the groups we offer and who to contact to sign up for a particular group. Schedule to be updated by early January.

EMBRACE YOUR LIFE: This three-part workshop series helps you get more in touch with yourself, recognize your patterns, and build coping skills. Based in mindfulness, this series meets once a week for three weeks. Several different sections of EYL are offered on different days and times throughout the quarter. Sign-up is required. Visit our [website](#) and [web calendar](#) or call CAPS at (831) 459-2628 to learn more. Schedule to be updated by early January.

WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS: Every Wednesday at CAPS from 3:30 to 4:30 pm, we offer a different wellness workshop. You can just drop in—no sign-up is required. These workshops resume in winter quarter. Check out our [website](#) and [web calendar](#) for the topics covered in winter. Schedule to be updated by early January.

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dinner or a movie instead. Throw a sober party with other friends who won't be indulging. You could also decide to stay at the party a short time to make it less likely things will get out of hand, or take a friend with you who can help you stick to your plan to avoid or minimize drinking. If others offering you drinks or pressuring you to drink too much is a problem, practice saying "no thanks," or keep a nonalcoholic drink in your hand to discourage people from giving you drinks.

If you are in recovery, research meetings that are available over the

holidays—especially if you are traveling and won't be able to go to your usual meetings. Sometimes there are special and/or extended meetings during the holiday season to provide additional support. If you have a sponsor, find out when they are available, and stay in touch if needed. If you don't have a sponsor, figure out which friends, mentors, or family members would be helpful to contact if you need a pep talk or advice to avoid substance use issues over the holidays.

Final Thoughts

If the holidays are challenging for you, remember that there are ways to boost your coping. Figure out what works for you. Try to let go of any "shoulds" you are holding about holiday expectations. Although it may not be easy, you can look at this holiday season as a chance to recognize things to celebrate in your life and find new ways to celebrate.

CAPS wishes you a happy and healthy winter break!