

What You Should Know About Making a Referral to CAPS

Faculty and staff are not expected to diagnose mental health issues or provide psychological counseling. That is the role of CAPS staff. CAPS professional staff members are trained to assess and intervene with emotional problems and psychological disorders. In some instances, you may wish to refer distressed and distressing students to CAPS.

When you have decided that professional help is indicated ...

Inform the student in a concerned, straightforward manner. Because many students initially resist the idea of psychological services, it is useful to be caring but firm in saying you think that CAPS services could be useful, to be clear and concrete about the reasons you're concerned, and to be familiar with CAPS' procedures and services (and those of other help-giving departments on campus). Except in emergencies, it is important to allow the student to accept or refuse help from CAPS. Note that CAPS cannot guarantee the type of service (e.g., group, workshop, referral, individual counseling, crisis services) any particular student will receive or the number of sessions provided if individual counseling is what we recommend. CAPS operates using a brief therapy model and in most cases cannot provide long-term therapy. We offer many services, and brief individual counseling (up to a handful of sessions) at CAPS is not our recommendation in every case. *Note that CAPS does not provide drop-in counseling but does provide a drop-in consultation service, Let's Talk, for students seeking advice, support, or information (see below for more information).*

Suggest the student call CAPS to make an appointment

Students can either call or walk in to CAPS during business hours to schedule a first appointment, typically within 7 business days. Provide them the CAPS phone number, (831) 459-2628, and let them know that when they call, they will be scheduled for a 30- to 40-minute first appointment with a CAPS counselor. During this appointment, the counselor will learn about their concerns and help them connect with resources and services. Remind the student that CAPS services are confidential, and most services are free. If they want more information before calling, they can visit our website: <https://caps.ucsc.edu/>. As noted above, they can also visit our Let's Talk drop-in consultation service to get brief information, advice, or feedback from a professional counselor. Let's Talk is held several times a week at various locations around campus. Read more about Let's Talk on our website: <https://caps.ucsc.edu/resources/lets-talk/index.html>. Let's Talk is not set up to handle crises: Students in crisis should call or stop by CAPS during business hours or call our main number any time to talk to counselor by phone.

Sometimes it is useful and necessary to assist the student more directly ...

... in making an appointment. In these instances, you can offer the student use of your phone or call CAPS yourself while the student is in your office. Occasionally, you may decide to walk the student over to the CAPS office. This can be especially helpful to students who are unsure about the location and/or are intimidated about meeting with a CAPS staff member for the first time. If you feel the student is in an emergency situation, it is best to walk with the student to the CAPS office. The CAPS office is located in the Student Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor. Please note: If you are concerned about a student but unsure about the appropriateness of a CAPS referral, feel free to call us during business hours at (831) 459-2628 for a consultation with a professional staff member.