



"POTTY TALK"

Brought to you by the Wellness Center

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-UP!



Although college can be an exciting time, charged with new emotions, new experiences and new challenges, it can also be a confusing time, filled with anxiety, sadness, uncertainty, and difficulty coping. The transitions of leaving home, family and friends, combined with the challenges of the academic environment easily contribute to feeling lonely and overwhelmed. For some, these feelings diminish, but if symptoms persist and you just don't feel "like yourself" anymore, you could be experiencing depression or anxiety. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE** and help is available for you at SCU.

Worrying About Worrying

Anxiety is part of our natural defensive system – a close cousin to fear. The brain releases adrenaline: fight or flight. A manageable amount of anxiety can enhance our performance. The problem is when our anxiety becomes disproportionate to the situation or is so paralyzing that we are unable to perform. Another related problem is when anxiety becomes pervasive and free floating, no longer linked to specific demands, challenges or threats.

- Since anxiety can be normal, the goal should be to **lessen unhealthy anxiety**, but not eliminate it. First, try to discover where the anxiety is coming from.
- Sometimes exposure to situations that cause us anxiety help us overcome them (take a public speaking class to overcome giving speeches).
- Stress has a cumulative effect. If you know you are heading into a particularly stress-inducing time, try to **reduce stress in other areas**.
- Learn **relaxation techniques** that work for you (deep breathing, body scanning, etc).
- Worried about the severity of your anxiety? Take an **anxiety disorder screening** at www.scu.edu/wellness/screenings.cfm or make an appointment with a counselor at SCU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 408-554-4172
- Want more information on Anxiety Disorders? Visit www.mayoclinic.com/health/anxiety-disorder.

Adapted from: <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dn/Help/HelpResources/StressAndAnxiety/TamingTheButterflies/tabid/336/Default.aspx>

More than Cranky?

Sometimes, angry feelings can become overwhelming and can be difficult to handle. We all experience feelings of anger at some point or another, however, a frequent loss of control over anger issues could point to anger management issues.

Ask yourself the following questions to determine if you have difficulty managing your anger:

1. When you become angry, do you feel out of control?
2. When you become angry, have you said or done anything you regretted?
3. While angry, have you ever physically attacked someone (i.e., grabbed, shoved, slapped, or punched)?
4. Has an angry reaction to a situation cost you a relationship or a job?
5. Do feelings of anger often make it difficult to concentrate on work or school?
6. Do you drink alcohol or use other drugs to calm down and to reduce your angry feelings?
7. Have you been arrested or faced legal difficulties as a result of your anger?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you may have difficulty managing anger. If you answered yes to most or all of these questions, you may have a serious anger management problem. Free and confidential counseling is available at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) in the Cowell Health Center building. Call 408-554-4172 for an appointment.

Adapted from: http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/index.gw/Site_ID/5176/Page_ID/1428/ & http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/selfhelp/informaton/personalPower/dealing_with_anger.aspx

Potty Talk is brought to you by the Wellness Center. To learn more, contact:

- Alison Bateman, Ph.D., Health Educator
ABateman@scu.edu; 408-554-4409
- Sarah Maciel, Assistant Health Educator
SMaciel@scu.edu; 408-554-4409



Alcohol: Is it time to make a change?

College is a time of personal growth and challenges, in which you are faced with many important decisions as you become an adult. One of these challenges is determining the role alcohol plays in your life. Most students who choose to drink do so responsibly, but some have problems with their drinking. Ask yourself:

- Have you used alcohol dangerously (e.g., blacking out) more than once?
- Have you had legal problems associated with your drinking, like a DUI?
- Have friends or family expressed concern about your drinking?
- Are problems with friends and family worsened by your alcohol use?
- Do you drink alcohol every day?
- Do you have to drink more and more to achieve the same effect?
- Do you notice physical sensations when you don't drink (e.g., sweating, fast beating heart, shaking, etc.)?
- Have you stopped doing something you enjoy or that was important because of alcohol?
- Do you drink more or for longer than you originally intend?
- Have you tried to cut down your alcohol use, but weren't successful?



If you answered YES to any of these questions, you may want to consult with a professional.

The Wellness Center offers e-CHUG, a free, online alcohol assessment at www.scu.edu/wellness, and BASICS, a free, confidential, and non-judgmental one-on-one assessment of your alcohol use and considerations for making changes. Contact Dr. Alison Bateman at the Wellness Center for info (ABateman@scu.edu).

Is it the "Blues" or Depression?

Life is full of good times and bad, happiness and sorrow. But if you've been feeling "down" for more than a few weeks or are having difficulty functioning in daily life, you may be experiencing more than just the "blues." You may be suffering from a common, yet serious, medical illness called clinical depression.

The good news is clinical depression is highly treatable. Most people with depression, however, do not seek the professional help they need -- often because they don't know the symptoms, think depression will go away on its own, or are embarrassed to talk about how they're feeling.

Clinical Depression is a medical condition. It is NOT a matter of willpower! It is NOT a character flaw or a sign of personal weakness. You CAN'T make yourself well by trying to "snap out of it."

Signs to watch for:

- Prolonged sadness or unexplained crying spells
- Significant changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Irritability, anger, worry, agitation, anxiety
- Pessimism, indifference
- Loss of energy, persistent lethargy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness
- Inability to concentrate, indecisiveness
- Inability to take pleasure in former interests, social withdrawal
- Unexplained aches or pains
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide



If you're interested in getting a mental "check-up": *Take an online assessment at <http://www.scu.edu/tcc/screenings.cfm> OR *Make an appointment with a counselor at SCU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 408-554-4172

What Can I Expect from Counseling?

People seek counseling for a lot of reasons. Common concerns for students include anxiety/stress, low self-confidence, relationship difficulties, self-defeating behaviors, academic problems, sexual identity concerns, and decision-making dilemmas.

Counseling can help you:

- Identify negative or illogical thinking patterns that develop into feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Explore learned thoughts and behaviors that create or maintain problems.
- Regain sense of control and pleasure in life. Develop a more positive outlook.
- Discover personal strengths and learn how to use them to grow in other areas.

What can you expect from your counselor?

- Acceptance and embracement of race, ethnicity, cultural background, ability, gender, religious affiliation and sexual orientation.
- Upholding of the highest ethical and legal standards of confidentiality.
- Interest in listening to your concerns without judgment.

Free and confidential counseling is available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) in the Cowell Health Center building. Call 408-554-4172 to make an appointment.

Source: <http://www.caps.ku.edu/selfhelp/counselinghelps2.shtml>

SPECTRUM

NEW Date/Time! Wednesdays, 5-6 pm in the Cowell Health Center Conference Rm. (weekly starting Jan. 13)
Dealing with constant stress caused by heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (or the expectation of it) can lead to anxiety, depression and substance abuse.

Join us for a regular and confidential discussion and supportive evaluation of the common struggles and unique opportunities for growth that many SCU students with sexual or gender identity differences share.

For more information, contact Don Capone at DCapone@scu.edu or Kim Taveras at KTaveras@scu.edu.

Beating Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem impacts every area of your life. While one can't change the past, one can become more aware of one's self-critical thoughts that help to keep low self-esteem going.

Dysfunctional Thought Patterns that Contribute to Low Self-Esteem:

- **Jumping to negative conclusions:** Jumping to a conclusion that reflects badly on you instead of considering all of the evidence. For example, a friend is not very talkative and you jump to the conclusion that you must be a boring person, when in fact you really have no idea what might be behind his/her behavior.
- **Setting unachievable goals:** Setting higher, more rigid standards for yourself than you expect others to meet. If a friend came to you with a similar problem, would you be as hard on him or her?
- **Black and white thinking:** Oversimplifying things to be good or bad. If you do poorly on an assignment, you might think to yourself, "I'm going to fail this class."
- **Losing perspective:** Judging yourself on only one aspect of who you are. Difficulties often lead you to such global judgments as "I'm useless" or "Nothing will ever work out for me."
- **Discounting or disqualifying the positive:** Rejecting positive experiences by claiming they don't count for one reason or another. Someone may tell you that you look great today, but you tell yourself it doesn't count because they were just trying to be nice.

How to take care of yourself:

- Reward yourself.
- Challenge thought patterns that contribute to low self-esteem.
- Stop comparing yourself to others.
- Laugh more.
- Do something for someone else.
- Take notice of the good things about yourself.
- Allow yourself to make mistakes.

Adapted from: http://www.counseling.qut.edu.au/selfhelp/students/self_esteem.jsp

