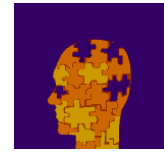




POTTY TALK

Brought to you by the Wellness Center
Mental Health Check-Up!



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).
- Want **more information** on Anxiety Disorders? Visit www.mayoclinic.com/health/anxiety-disorder.
- 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**

Adapted from:

<http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/SelfhelpResources/StressandAnxiety/TamingTheButterflies/tabid/336/Default.aspx>



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 "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."
- **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



Stress Busters

- **Exercise.** Physical activity helps your body and mind. Go to the gym, go for a walk, do yoga – do something you enjoy!
- **Eat a balanced diet.** Don't skip meals. Try to eat from all of the food groups and minimize caffeine, which can trigger anxiety and panic attacks.
- **Get involved.** Being active in your community creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.
- **Take a time-out.** Take a deep break and count to 10. Stepping back from a problem can help clear your head.
- **Talk to someone.** Don't bottle up your emotions. Reach out to someone you trust and feel comfortable with when you are feeling overwhelmed.
- **Find out what your triggers are.** Take notes or write in a journal when you are feeling anxious or stressed and try to find patterns.

Adapted from: <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/anxiety.html>



Mixing Alcohol and Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant which can mask sensory clues used to indicate your intoxication level.

This means that you may continue to drink more alcohol when you would normally stop. Many popular mixed caffeine and alcohol drinks like FOUR-LOKOs have much higher levels of alcohol content than expected at 11-12% while beer is 4-5%. When you choose to drink make the informed choice.

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm233987.htm>

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>



Dealing with Anger

Recognize angry feelings: Ask yourself, where is this anger coming from? What are the triggers involved?

Relaxation: Deep breathing and relaxing imagery defuses anger.

Changing the way you think. When we are angry, we tend to think in highly exaggerated, colorful terms. Try replacing these thoughts with more rational ones.

Better Communication: Don't jump to conclusions! Don't just say the first thing that comes to mind. Slow down, think carefully, and listen carefully to the other person.

Use humor: Imagining silly scenes or people can defuse anger.

Change your environment: Your external surroundings or situations could be frustrating you. Identify the instances that continually anger you, and take small steps to change the situation or your reaction.

Think about your reactions after the conflict or situation has occurred – Ask yourself what worked and what could be done differently in the future..

Accept your natural, healthy feelings of anger. Accept how you have handled anger in the past and learn how to handle it in the future.

Adapted from: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/counseling/resources-tools/anger-management.html>

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

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