



COUNSELING + PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

What is counseling?

“Counseling” may not be familiar to many international students because it is not common practice in some other countries and cultures. Some international students may think that counseling is only for people who have serious psychological problems. Many students often say, “I’m not crazy, so I don’t need to speak with a psychologist.” International students often choose to talk to their friends and family members when they face concerns and problems. In fact, you do not have to have serious psychological problems to make an appointment with a counseling staff member at the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Counselors at CAPS are here at the university to help students reach their educational goals. We understand that problems in your personal life can impact your ability to learn, so we talk with students about a variety of issues. You do not have to have a mental illness to find talking with a counselor helpful.

What problems do international students often talk about with a counselor?

Living in a new culture presents many challenges. Often the differences are interesting and fun at first, but over time having to adjust to so many new things can be exhausting.

Some of the issues foreign students face and talk about in counseling include:

- missing home
- not wanting to go home
- difficulties reading, writing, or listening to lectures in a foreign language
- adjusting to major differences in the educational system
- wanting to choose a major that your family would approve of, or that would make getting a job in your country difficult
- problems getting help for physical illness due to difference in the medical system
- not being understood because of your accent
- not being understood when you express yourself in your usual way
- roommate conflicts
- difficulties making friends with Americans
- conflicts between values at home and in the US regarding dating
- problems interacting with professors, advisors, or employers
- concerns about family reactions to choices you make while in the US
- dealing with others’ misperceptions about your culture or country
- finding that some people are prejudiced against others from different cultures
- finding that things that were a problem at home are still a problem even though you are in a new environment

Dealing with these issues can lead to:

- feeling sad
- feeling worried
- feeling lonely
- feeling confused
- feeling frustrated or angry
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling helpless or stuck
- feeling a lack of confidence
- feeling fearful of the unknown and unfamiliar
- problems with sleeping
- problems concentrating
- academic performance problems
- physical illnesses



COUNSELING + PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
2222 Bancroft Way, 3rd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94720
uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling
uhs.berkeley.edu/international
(510) 642-9494

Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

 **UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SERVICES**
Tang Center

Can anyone find out that I have been in counseling or what I said to the counselor? What is confidentiality?

Everything you tell the counselor is strictly private and confidential. This means that by law the counselor cannot provide anyone with information about you, including that you are meeting with a counselor, without your written permission. That means that information will NOT go into your academic record and will NOT be given to your parents, your home government, or the US government. The only exceptions to this confidentiality law involve those few times when it is clear that a person's life is in danger, when a child or elderly person is in danger of being harmed by a caregiver, or when the information is required by a court of law (i.e., subpoenaed) within the United States.

Who are the professional counseling staff members?

Counseling professionals include licensed psychologists, and licensed social workers. Some of us speak other languages including Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, and Japanese.

Who is eligible for services?

Any international student enrolled at UC Berkeley including UC Extension students in international programs.

OK, I want to talk with a counselor/ What do I do now?

- Call CAPS at (510) 642-9494 or stop by the office at the Tang Center and tell the receptionist you wish to schedule an appointment. The CAPS office is on the third floor of the Tang Center at 2222 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.
- A CAPS counselor will talk to you briefly by phone or in person to evaluate your needs.
- If your needs are urgent, stop by CAPS office to see a counselor for a drop-in session (Monday-Friday 10am-5PM).

Questions

Visit our website at uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling

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