

First Time FAQs

If you have never talked with a mental health professional, you may have some questions about the process.

Students will typically initiate services on their own but it is not unusual for a concerned friend, faculty/staff, or family member to encourage the student to contact CAPS and even accompany them to the first appointment if this would enable the student to come to CAPS. Talking to a CAPS therapist is a mature step to take for a student's overall health, wellbeing, and success at UNC.

FAQ:

[Why contact CAPS?](#)

Your problems need not be of monumental proportions to warrant support or intervention. Yet, many students feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness. This perception changes as they realize that confronting a problem is a positive sign of health and maturity. Having problems, feeling anxious or depressed, and needing help at various points in life are universal experiences. Being able to acknowledge those feelings is an important step in taking care of yourself in a healthy and appropriate manner.

The CAPS counseling staff is available to help students gain perspective on any personal problems. It can be helpful to talk with skilled therapists about concerns with relationships, stress, anxiety, or depression. Services include, but are not limited to, crisis intervention, short-term individual counseling, stress management, group therapy and workshops, referrals and medication. [Couples counseling](#) ^[1] is available for students when both partners are enrolled students.

[How do I get to be seen at CAPS?](#)

You can access our service by calling 919-966-3658 and requesting an [initial assessment](#) ^[2]. Initial assessments are no longer scheduled appointments, although

follow up services, as needed, will continue to be scheduled at specific times by HIPPA-compliant Zoom. Students who would like to use CAPS after not having an appointment for several months will most likely need to present for an initial assessment as indicated above. Our initial assessment system will respond to crisis oriented situations as well as more routine concerns.

What can be discussed at CAPS?

Any problem that is causing you concern is appropriate. While you may think it is not serious enough to seek help, the determining factor can be the extent to which it seems to interfere with your activities, thoughts or feelings.

How can CAPS help you?

We listen objectively without being judgmental. Having the chance to talk with a concerned therapist can go a long way towards resolving problems. We can offer you the opportunity to better understand your feelings and why they are problematic now. You may discover new ways of expressing your feelings and may choose to try out new behaviors. You can then apply these skills to increase your sense of self-control, direction and well-being in your everyday life.

What will happen when you come to CAPS?

- As a first step you will be sent a link to complete an intake form that will provide us some general and background information about the reasons you have decided to initiate services with CAPS.
- You will talk with a mental health professional then who will explore with you the reasons you have come to CAPS, the ways you feel distressed, and options for addressing your concerns. This initial assessment is designed to assess concerns, provide immediate support, and plan for continuing interventions and resources to help the student.
- Further interventions might include:
 1. A course of brief therapy at CAPS for problems that are well defined and can be reasonably resolved in a short period of time;
 2. Follow up appointment to help stabilize a currently stressful situation and to continue assessment of helpful interventions;
 3. Participation in a [group](#) [3] at CAPS;
 4. Referral to community therapy when concerns require a more sustained attention to resolve adequately.

5. If a [medication evaluation](#) [4] would be helpful and the student is interested in this, referral to a CAPS psychiatrist can be made.

Video Embed:

Video Transcription:

Hi, my name is Jeanette. I'm a first year PhD student at the School of Journalism and Mass Comm, and I've used CAPS several times over the course of my first year here at UNC and the experience has been really good. CAPS is a totally stress-free experience, at least that's how I've experienced it. The only stress involved in the process of talking to somebody is what you bring with you and I always come away feeling much better - relieved and focused on moving forward and achieving success - however i define that - they don't define that for you. All you do is talk. They're not there to push medication on you or any other kind of activity or action that you don't like. And they don't judge you. They are really - they are working with every individual that they see and tailoring their recommendations to meet your personal needs, not some cookie cutter or a book.

Source URL: <https://caps.unc.edu/services/initial-assessments/first-time-faqs>

Links

- [1] <https://caps.unc.edu/services/couples-therapy>
- [2] <https://caps.unc.edu/services/initial-assessments>
- [3] <https://caps.unc.edu/services/group-therapy>
- [4] <https://caps.unc.edu/services/medication-management>