

# Group Therapy

Hello! Due to COVID 19, CAPS is currently offering its services virtually through zoom. This includes our extensive group therapy program.

I know many of you may have questions about what it's like to do group online. We found through the end of spring and through the summer that group therapy online can still be as enriching, as powerful, as life-changing as when we offer these groups in person. So come with us now on a brief video tour to tell you a bit about what you can expect from group therapy online thru Zoom and the positive feedback that we've gotten from students who have already participated in our groups in this forum. Thank you.

We felt really well prepared when we switched over to Zoom.

The facilitator set very clear guidelines for how to achieve a good atmosphere over zoom. I felt like we had a good foundation of group rapport going into the switch which helped massively.

The group experienced a change of over zoom from in person - I felt like we were supported in the same ways.

I felt like everyone was more open and less reticent to share personal details over zoom, which was lovely to experience and helped therapy to be more productive.

It was honestly so great. It gives me a sense of belonging at UNC and leads me to reflect on my cultural identity with a clear mind and heart. It helps me know more of who I am and how I communicate with others with a more genuine self.

This was a great group and it came at a time when i really needed it.

This group helped me to become grounded and realize that PhD life is only one part of my life and i can do this. I really like talking and thinking about my values in this group, and understanding that I have so much to be grateful for outside of this program and within this program. It was also great to hear about everyone's successes throughout the semester and how things which were very important and difficult for us at one time somehow worked out.

Wow - group was great. It was so amazing to discuss the trauma that brought us all

together and our adjacent vulnerabilities. It was challenging at times and sometimes i didn't think i was ready for those conversations but i was and the group helped me through them. I designed many new metaphors that clicked with me and helped me reshape my experience. For example saying, "You don't have to walk over there if you aren't ready yet," is a big one that i hope will be carried to some of the next groups.

Overall even just having a safe place to reflect about my week was amazing and I really loved it.

I was less nervous to go to a zoom group than i would have been for an in-person group. I have considered going to in-person groups before but was always too anxious. I think I will feel much more comfortable going to in-person groups after this experience.

I enjoyed the group much more than I expected I would.

I think there is a bit of stigma surrounding going to group while you are in college, but that is just a term used for the activity, and the activity is useful for a wide range of people even if you are not dealing with extreme issues.

The best feature of this group was its ability to bring together such a diverse group of graduate students who could relate to each other. I felt supported by other group members and I looked forward to going every week.

I felt really comfortable expressing ideas for topics to discuss.

I felt like everyone respected my needs and everyone else's when they requested it. I also felt like everyone made a really honest effort to understand each other. It is a clear sign of how well the group jelled that we all felt comfortable sharing personal details like our family situations and knew others would be able to relate to it in some capacity.

Heel, yeah! Group is effective over Zoom!

Yes, as students shared in their remarks group over Zoom was a very positive experience. There were differences to being in person but group is still very helpful over Zoom.

Same as with in person group you get what you put into it. When students share that they've shared in group and we're active participants - even when feeling anxious - there was a sense of really getting a lot of that group, from having a safe therapeutic environment where they can try new things to learning new ways of managing emotions and connecting with others.

Group is not a class. It's not a passive experience. The more active someone is in engaging with the group, while in group, as well as using what is learned in group outside of group, the more they'll benefit from the group.

Students really get more from group when they challenge themselves to be vulnerable, which really allows other group participants to really support them. Several students have said that group on Zoom felt different from class in a really good way including that they felt less zoom fatigue while in group and that they didn't feel the pressure to perform like they do in class sometimes.

Since the start of the pandemic, most of us have felt some sense of social isolation. Now more than ever we realize how important it is for us to connect with other people.

Group therapy over Zoom is a great way to connect with a bunch of other people to feel less alone and less isolated.

You can expect confidentiality so like in person your confidentiality is the same when doing a group over Zoom which means that what you say to your therapist, what you say within the group, is kept within the group and doesn't leave outside of it. So confidentiality is the same as it would be if you're in person. Another thing you can expect from doing a zoom group at CAPS is that group norms will be covered at first and so one of the pieces of that is that you'll sign an agreement about doing group by telehealth over Zoom. And that will include different information about maintaining the confidentiality of the group and the group members and other sorts of things about what you're consenting to to participate in the group.

And then also the group facilitators will cover things about the group norms when the group starts to meet and this can include things about communication, use of the chat function within zoom, and other functions within zoom and whether that's helpful to the group process or not, and many other things and so there will be real clarity about what's expected from you in terms of doing and being part of the group.

And then the last thing that you can expect is the great experience of connection. That's one of the really powerful things about being part of a group and so finding a sense of connection, support, and meaning-making within the group experience is a very powerful part of being in a CAPS Zoom group and particularly in this time of COVID and a lot of social isolation and disconnection, that's the reason to participate in group and what you can really get from group is that sense of connection, power, unity.

It's awesome.

Group helps.

We're here for you.

You won't regret it.

Take advantage of this opportunity.

Come and see us, virtually.

Try it out.

You're not alone.

Group can help.

So thank you for joining us for this short video about doing group online and we look forward to seeing you in a CAPS group soon.

CAPS offers a number of groups to address student concerns in a variety of areas. A brief screening is usually required to join a group. All groups are confidential and free for eligible CAPS users.



Group therapy helps people who would like to

receive support, increase self-awareness, and learn new ways to cope with personal or interpersonal challenges. Most students, though somewhat apprehensive at first, report that the group experience exceeded their expectations. Groups typically involve a combination of members sharing thoughts and feelings, giving and receiving support and feedback, and trying out new behaviors in a safe environment.

CAPS [offers a variety of support groups](#) <sup>[1]</sup> focused on communication and relating to others, and workshop-style groups which teach specific skills. During COVID-19, group therapy will be offered by HIPPA-compliant Zoom. A link will be provided prior to the group meeting time.

## Student Feedback about Groups at CAPS

?Hope is what I walk out with every time I leave this group. I don?t know how to thank you for that.?

"I look forward to being a member of another group ASAP. I really like this feature of CAPS."

"I liked how diverse our group was. It was nice to have a group with many minorities in the Carolina Community. I also very much enjoyed our leaders, who were very open minded and supportive, and always willing to mold group to make sure that we got our needs fulfilled. "

"This was the first exposure I had to these topics (Meditation & Mindfulness), and I can surely say that it changed my life! While I ebb and flow with consistency in my practice, learning about mindfulness from you and the 8 Minute Meditation book completely shifted my perspective on the world around us. It is a gift that keeps on giving."

"I can look back over the last semester knowing that I have made intentional progress in working towards my goals which feels fantastic. I am thankful that I joined this group as it has been one of the most helpful support services I have engaged with at UNC. Being in group helped me stay focused on my behavior patterns and helped me learn how to ask for feedback from others. The group provided me with extra support and gave me a safe space to explore different ways of interacting and connecting with people."

?The safeness of being open and vulnerable was incredible. I don?t think I would be in school without group, it has seriously changed my life.?

?Having an open space to talk about LGBTQIA/gender issues was invaluable and I don?t have any other place to talk about that or how it impacts my daily life. The space helped me feel valid and express myself.?

?Group helped me realize that getting help doesn?t mean you?re weak. You are still improving yourself, but with guidance?

?The leaders were very open and comforting. They assured us that there are always options and to keep trying.?

?This has been one of the most rewarding experiences that I?ve had at UNC and at CAPS."

?This group really helped me better understand and communicate my feelings and emotions.?

?Made me feel like I belonged and am welcomed to something amazing. I grew along with others!?

?(The group) was designed to make us really examine shame, but also gave me the tools to deal with it and process without being overwhelmed.?

?I was nervous about group at first, but it ended up being a space where I made tremendous growth.?

?This group helped me a feel a sense of community and was a great reminder that I am never alone in my battles.?

"Another feature of group that took a few weeks for me to adjust to was the lack of structure. I was unsure how I was going to come to this meeting weekly and not know what was going to happen. As the group went on, the challenge of claiming time showed its true value to me as I saw myself and others decide on what we wanted to share with the group. Even though it was out of my comfort zone, I feel like the challenge to share about my life with others helped me work towards my goals more than a weekly power-point with discussion topics would have. "

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**Source URL:** <https://caps.unc.edu/services/group-therapy>

**Links**

[1] <https://caps.unc.edu/services/group-therapy/therapy-groups-offered>