

# Personal Counseling Services

Location: Personal Counseling Services at the Student Health and Counseling Center in Yuba Hall (behind Sage Hall)

Phone: (805) 437-2088

Fax: (805) 437-8829

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## Welcome to Personal Counseling Services



***Dr. Alan Pasternak***  
***Licensed Psychologist (PSY18876)***  
***Coordinator of Personal Counseling Services***



***Erika Vakilian, MFT***  
***Psychotherapist (MFC42419)***  
***Personal Counselor***

Personal Counseling Services (PCS) helps students meet the personal challenges associated with identifying and accomplishing academic, career and life goals. Our services include short-term counseling for individuals and couples, group counseling, referral services, psycho-educational workshops, and crisis intervention. Counseling is provided by mental health professionals and PCS welcomes students of all backgrounds, value systems, and lifestyles.

## When to Ask For Help

Sometimes personal problems require more assistance than can be found within your own circle of support. PCS offers counseling for students who are struggling with issues such as family, social and romantic relationships, life transitions, sexuality, grief, stress, sexual assault, anxiety, loss of motivation or depression. If you are dealing with any of these issues or need professional help in general, please come in or call for an intake appointment.

## Counseling Services

### *Individual and Couples Counseling*

PCS offers short term, one-on-one counseling for students whose issues require individual attention. Counseling is also provided for couples who are having relationship difficulties. Your counselor will assist you with identifying and understanding your issues and will strive to help you make positive changes.

### *Group Counseling*

Counseling and therapy groups provide a safe environment for you to learn more about yourself and your interactions with others. Each semester PCS will be offering a variety of groups. If you are interested in a group, come in or call to schedule a screening appointment. Most group meetings are held at the Counseling Center in Yuba Hall.

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## Important Numbers

Name of Office	Hours of Operation	Contact Phone Number
Personal Counseling Services (PCS)	Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Closed on Friday (except for crisis assistance)	805-437-2088
Office of the Dean of Students	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	805-437-8512 805-437-8511
Student Health and Counseling Center	Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	805-437-8828
University Police Department	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	805-437-8444 EMERGENCY: 911
Multicultural and Women's & Gender Student Center	Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	805-437-8407

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## **What to Do:**

### **Make an Appointment**

To make an appointment, you may call (805) 437-2088 or come to the Counseling Center located in Yuba Hall. The front office support person will offer you the first available appointment time and a session will be scheduled for you to speak with a counselor as soon as possible.

It is best to call the center as early as possible in the semester if you anticipate that you may want a series of counseling sessions.

### **First Appointment Intake**

To schedule an intake appointment, come to the Counseling Center located in Yuba Hall or call (805) 437-2088. Plan to arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment to complete necessary paperwork. During your first visit with us, an intake counselor will listen to your concerns, explore options with you, and help you identify an appropriate course of action to meet your needs.

### **Regular Appointments**

Counseling appointments begin on the hour and last 50 minutes. You can help us provide the best possible service by arriving on time for your appointments and by canceling or rescheduling appointments as early as possible when an appointment must be missed.

### **Crisis Appointments**

Crisis intervention is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. For urgent on-campus emergencies outside of office hours, please contact the University Police at (805) 437-8444.

### **Fees**

Basic PCS services are provided at no charge to registered undergraduate and graduate students. There is a limit to the number of individual counseling sessions for any student in any given year.

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## **Crisis Assistance**

Location: Counseling Center in Yuba Hall  
Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday  
Phone: (805) 437-2088

Most PCS services are offered on an appointment basis, but situations arise that require immediate or same day attention. You do not need an appointment if you have an urgent matter. Such circumstances may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Extreme anxiety or panic
- Extreme sadness
- Death of a friend or loved one
- Thoughts of self harm
- Thoughts of harming someone else
- Experiencing a traumatic event
- Having odd or intrusive thoughts

***If you have an urgent situation, call PCS at (805) 437-2088 or come to the Counseling Center. If you are on campus and need assistance after PCS office hours or on weekends, please call the University Police at (805) 437-8444. When not on campus, call 911 or have a family member or friend take you to a local emergency room or urgent care clinic.***

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## Confidentiality

As an essential aspect of our efforts to provide an environment where students are free to seek help, PCS maintains the strictest standards of privacy and confidentiality. In adherence to the laws of the [California Board of Psychology](#), counseling records are kept separate from all academic, administrative, disciplinary and medical records. No information about a student's contact with PCS is released without the knowledge and written consent of the student.

All information disclosed within sessions is confidential and may not be revealed to anyone outside PCS without the written permission of the client, except where reporting is required by law. Disclosure of information is required in circumstances where there is reasonable suspicion of abuse of children or dependent or elderly persons; where the client is likely to harm herself or himself unless protective measures are taken; or where the client presents a clear and serious danger of violence to another. In very rare instances, disclosure of relevant information may be required by court order during a legal proceeding in which the client becomes involved.

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## Online Resource Links

### National Associations

- [American Counseling Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [Asian American Psychological Association](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

## **Consumer Information**

- [California Board of Psychology](#)

## **Stress and Wellness**

- [Mindfulness Meditation Tapes](#)
- [Stress and Wellness Resources](#)

## **Support Groups and Referrals**

- [American Association of Suicidology](#)
- [ANAD National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders](#)
- [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#)
- [Gender Education](#)
- [Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse](#)
- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill](#)
- [Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays](#)
- [Transgender Association](#)

## **CI Resources**

- [Associated Students Inc.](#)
- [Disability Resource Programs](#)
- [Multicultural Programs](#)
- [Student Leadership Programs](#)
- [University Policy on Drug-Free Campus and Workplace](#)

## **Substance Abuse and Addiction**

- [Marijuana Anonymous](#)
- [Save Our Selves](#)
- [Ventura County Alcohol and Drug Programs](#)

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## **Information for Parents:**

The college years can present unique challenges for students and their parents. Below you will find information about:

- [Understanding the Transition to College](#)
- [Services Provided by Personal Counseling Services \(PCS\)](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services as a Resource for Parents](#)
- [Confidentiality and Parents](#)

## **Understanding the Transition to College:**

For your daughter or son, college will likely be a period of intellectual stimulation and growth, career exploration and development, increased autonomy, self-exploration and discovery, and social involvement. During this period, your children may forge new identities or seek to clarify their values and beliefs. This may require an examination of self, friends, and family. It may also be a time for exploration and experimentation, and a period in which your children may question or challenge the values you hold dear. The changes your children may experience can occur quickly, as they begin to develop new peer relationships, gain competence in new areas, and learn to manage independence. It is important to recognize that every child will experience his or her own unique challenges and adjustments, just as every parent will have different expectations for and reactions to their child's college experience.

Often overlooked is the fact that the college experience is a significant transition for the parents of college students, too. As parents, you may experience feelings of happiness, excitement, and pride when your children leave for college. At the same time, you may feel a sense of sadness and pain and have many understandable fears and concerns about your children's future and well-being. You may worry about your children's safety and ability to care effectively for themselves. You may fear "losing" your children as they begin to function more independently and form deep attachments with peers. You may be concerned about how your children will deal with alcohol, drugs, and sexual relationships. You may also wonder how your children's performance in college will reflect on you as the parent.

### ***Here are some ways you might support your children:***

Although your children want and need to become more autonomous during this period, it is important for them to know you are still available. Maintaining a supportive relationship with them can be critical, particularly during their first year of college. If you and your children were not particularly close prior to their leaving home, it is still important for you to convey your support. You may be surprised to find that some space and distance from your children can help improve your relationships with them.

It is important to maintain regular contact with your children, but also to allow space for your children to approach you and set the agenda for some of your conversations. Let your children know that you respect and support their right to make independent decisions and that you will serve as an advocate and an advisor when asked. Finally, recognize that is normal for your children to seek your help one day and reject it the next. Such behavior can be confusing and exhausting for parents, so make sure to take care of yourself by talking about your feelings with your own support system.

Be realistic and specific with your children about financial issues, including what you will and will not pay for, as well as your expectations for how they will spend money.

It is also important to be realistic about your children's academic performance, recognizing that not every straight-A student in high school will be a straight-A student in college. Help your children set reasonable academic goals and encourage them to seek academic assistance when needed.

The fact that your children have left home does not necessarily prevent family problems from arising or continuing. Refrain from burdening your children with problems from home they have no control over and can do nothing about. Sharing these problems with your children may cause them to worry excessively and even feel guilty that they are away from home and unable to help.

Find out contact information for people involved in the various aspects of your children's college experience. If you have questions, or if a particular problem arises, contact the appropriate person, but make sure to involve your children in a collaborative effort to address the problem.

***Here are some ways you might support yourself:***

- Recognize that it is normal to have mixed feelings when your children leave home. Feelings of pain and loss often accompany separation from loved ones. It is also normal to feel a sense of relief when your children leave for college, and to look forward to some time alone, with your significant other or with your younger children.
- Do your best to develop and maintain your own social support.
- Do your best to maintain your own sense of well-being. This may involve eating and sleeping well, exercising, and setting new and creative goals for yourself. Perhaps this is a good time to do some of things you put off while your children were growing up. Taking on a project or hobby can be an excellent way to channel your energy and feelings.

**Services Provided by Personal Counseling Services (PCS)**

PCS provides free, confidential services for CSUCI students, including individual and group counseling; walk-in consultations, emergency psychological services; and psycho-educational outreach programming.

Students seek counseling for a variety of reasons including relationship concerns, difficulties with roommates, loneliness, isolation, emotional difficulties including depression and anxiety, eating problems, and identity issues. Normally these problems are relatively temporary and students recover fairly quickly; however, if the intensity or persistence of any of the problems makes it hard for your student to function effectively, or if your student is experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings, it is advisable to encourage your student to come to PCS right away. It usually works best to allow your son or daughter to take the initiative in accessing our services. If you are the one who calls and makes an appointment, your son or daughter may be less likely to follow through.

## **Counseling and Psychological Services as a Resource for Parents**

PCS provides consultations to parents concerned about their students. Such consultations can focus on a range of issues, including how to assist a student experiencing a difficult situation, how to refer a student to PCS, or how to locate appropriate mental health treatment for students. To secure a consultation, call PCS at (805) 437-2088 and ask to speak with a counselor.

## **Confidentiality and Parents**

Confidentiality is an essential part of any counseling relationship. PCS staff adhere to the ethical standards of their respective professions and to state and federal laws relating to confidentiality. These standards and laws prevent us from speaking with concerned parents about their student's contact with PCS unless we have the student's written permission. Thus, unless your student gives us written permission, we cannot acknowledge whether your student has been seen or is making progress in counseling. The only exceptions occur when a student is under 18 years of age, we are concerned that a student is clearly and imminently a risk to self or others, we learn of ongoing child abuse, or we are ordered to release confidential information by a court of law.

Many students prefer to keep their counseling completely private, and such privacy is typically vital for successful counseling. Assuming your student is, however, willing to have one of the counselors discuss her or his participation in counseling with you, one good way to arrange for this is by asking your student to have the counselor call you during a counseling session. The counselor will then have your student complete and sign the necessary form, and may call you using a speaker telephone, so that all concerned can participate in the conversation. Note that, in general, counseling is best served if everything parents have to share with their student's counselor is also shared with their student.

Even if your student doesn't give her or his counselor permission to provide information to you, you may choose to contact a counselor to share your concerns. Such contact may make sense, for example, if you are concerned that your student is in serious danger. Note, however, that the counselor will not be able to even acknowledge knowing your student, and that the counselor will want to discuss any information you provide with your student.

## **Other Helpful Resources**

### **Books**

- *Don't Tell Me What To Do: Just Send Money*, by Helen Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller (2000)
- *When Your Kid Goes To College: A Parent's Survival Guide*, by Carol Barkin (1999)
- *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years*, by Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger (1997)

### **Web Sites**

- College Parents of America: <http://www.collegeparents.org/>



- National Resource Center for First-Year Experience and Students in Transition: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/index.html>
- The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention: <http://www.edc.org/hec/>
- Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays: <http://www.pflag.org/>

*Note: Much of the above material was adapted from the Hobart and William Smith Colleges.*

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## **Information for Faculty and Staff**

### **Consult with us:**

If you are unsure of how to handle a specific student, call Dr. Alan Pasternak at 437-2088. A brief consultation may help you sort out the relevant issues, explore alternative approaches, and identify other resources.

### **Making a referral to PCS:**

PCS offers individual treatment for CSUCI students. Early intervention is preferable to crisis intervention. Encourage students to seek help confronting, coping with and resolving personal problems before they develop into major obstacles to their success.

If you feel that professional counseling might be beneficial, refer the student to Personal Counseling Services. Be direct in letting the student know that you believe a therapist would be of help in this situation. Inform the student that the services are strictly confidential and free of charge. Don't force the issue if the student takes a defensive posture--simply restate your concerns and recommendations. An independent decision by the student to seek help is best.

If you would like Dr. Pasternak to call the student, first let the student know what your specific concerns are and request the student's permission to have Dr. Pasternak call him/her. Then call our office at 437-2088 and ask to speak to Dr. Pasternak. Let him know your concerns and give him the student's name and phone number.

If the student's situation is life-threatening (to self or others), it is critical that the student or faculty member inform Personal Counseling Services and/or Dr. Pasternak. We are available on a "same-day" basis to see a student if the situation is life-threatening. If the situation seems urgent, you might offer to accompany the student to the Counseling Center.

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## **Contact Us:**

**Personal Counseling Services**

Location: Personal Counseling Services at the Student Health and Counseling Center in Yuba Hall (behind Sage Hall)

Phone: (805) 437-2088

E-mail: [pcs@csuci.edu](mailto:pcs@csuci.edu)

After hours: call the University Police at (805) 437-8444

Emergencies: Dial 911