

Anxiety Toolkit



*Illustrated Gif by [Jenny Chang](#)**

Welcome! If you've come here, perhaps you're navigating anxiety, or want to support a friend who is navigating anxiety. Don't know if you're experiencing anxiety? Maybe [this brief video will be helpful](#).

Studies by the National College Health Association indicate that anxiety has surpassed depression to become the dominant mental health issue on college campuses ¹. If you are experiencing anxiety, you are part of a larger community who shares similar feelings and barriers. By accessing this database, you are one step closer to a better college experience.

We want to let you know that talking with a counselor at CCA Counselling Services is a good step in reducing anxiety and research supported; however, when you can't be sitting in our office, **these are some great ways to take care of yourself outside of CCA Counselling Services while you wait for an appointment.**

This Anxiety Toolkit was developed with special attention to historically marginalized communities. There is an annotated bibliography at the end for additional information.

10 Research-Based Strategies to Navigate Anxiety

1.) CONNECT WITH A COUNSELOR



Illustrated Gif by [Chipper Designs](#)*

- Consider making an appointment at Counselling Services, which offers short-term therapy. If you feel like you can't make an appointment or make the call, get in touch with a friend, an advisor, or mentor who can make the appointment with you. Research has found that timely appointments, and "nipping it in the bud" are helpful ¹².
- On-campus counselling services are designed to be short-term. Off-campus long term psychological care, medication, and therapy are avenues where you can receive specialized, consistent, and effective support ¹².
- Establish your relationship with Counselling Services early in the year, and early in your time at CCA. Studies have shown that being involved in counseling at the start of your college career improves your ability to deal with anxiety ⁷.
- Through expressive art therapy, students have been shown to be less anxious, more confident, more positive and more active. Take a step away from your art practice and do something that has different intent ⁸.

CCA Resources:

- [Counseling Services](#)

General Resources:

- [Off-Campus Resources](#)
- [Find a Psychiatrist in San Francisco or Oakland \(Customizable\)](#)
- [Find a Therapist in San Francisco or Oakland \(Customizable\)](#)
- [Trans Health & General Information](#)

Comics:

- [A Very Brief Guide to Self Care](#)
- [Express Yourself](#)

Videos/Interactive:

- [Personality Quiz: Everything is Awful and I'm not Okay](#)

2.) CONNECT WITH FAMILY (CHOSEN OR BIOLOGICAL)



*Illustrated Gif by [Anna Salmi](#)**

- If you have a good relationship with your family, work with them to find small ways they can help support you (sending inspirational little notes, stories of good times, or fun and memorable photos.)^{3 4 10}.
- Research has found that external support is particularly helpful in building confidence, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and building relationships; family can be a resource and area where you can receive external support^{2 5 8 9}.

General Resources:

- [Maintain a Healthy Relationship with your Parents](#)
- [12 Ways Your Relationship With Your Parents Changes As You Grow Up](#)
- [Families of Choice are Remaking America](#)
- [Panel Discussion on Families of Choice - Queer Kinship and Relationship Conference - POLAND 2015](#)

Comics:

[Baopu #19](#)

Videos:

- [Skype - Stay Together Project](#)
- [Build yourself or join a rhetorical 'HOUSE'.](#)

3.) CONNECT WITH YOUR SPIRITUALITY



*Illustrated Gif by [Jun Cen](#)**

- Connecting with your spirituality can ground you into prioritizing what is important, and to re-establishing purpose ^{2 3}.
- When searching for community, finding a spiritual space that embraces all of your identities can be an empowering and instrumental factor in integrating into your new spiritual community ¹³.

CCA Resources:

- Multi-Faith Meditation Room

General Resources:

- [Multi-Denominational Spirituality Centers Off-Campus](#)
- [Start HERE to find a Spiritual Center that is LGBT Friendly!](#)
- [Torah/Bible/Koran or Faith Book Study Groups in SF](#)

4.) GROW, BUILD, AND LEAN ON FRIENDSHIPS



*Illustrated Gif by [Marcus Gestre](#)**

- Establish the importance and meaning of your relationships. Are you there for each other when you're sad? Are you friends who go out and dance with each other? It's okay and actually healthy to set boundaries with friends! Know when to reach out to each other and how your relationship plays out⁴
- **THIS IS THE MOST RESEARCHED-BACKED PIECE OF THIS GUIDE:** Connect yourself with support groups and study groups on campus. These are known to help students avoid academic anxiety. They can also reduce anxiety by decreasing alienation and stress. Support groups are also known to reduce stress that may result from being someone who holds a marginalized identity on campus^{4 6 7 8 9 11 13}.
- Imposter syndrome is not uncommon; comparing yourself to others can be misleading and not reflective of the nuances of strengths and skills that you have. **You ARE enough**¹¹.

CCA Resources:

- [Find people that share identities or interests with you and join that club! No clubs fit you? Make your own!](#)
- [International Students - Connect with ISAP!](#)
- [Make an Appointment with a LRC Coach](#)

General Resources:

- [San Francisco/Oakland Support Groups](#)
- [More SF Support Groups](#)
- [For Women and Trans Folks: Support Groups at Lyon Martin](#)

Videos:

- [The Purpose of Friendship](#)
- [How to Start a Study Group](#)
- [How to Study](#)

Comics:

- [Other-Care - Baopu #21](#)

5.) FACULTY & ADVISORS ARE THERE FOR YOU, MORE THAN YOU KNOW!



Illustrated Gif by [Google Doodles*](#)

- Academic Advisors and LRC coaches are great sources of knowledge regarding resources on campus! If you're ever confused or too shy to ask questions, your LRC coach can assist ² !
- Professors want to help you be successful. Communicate with them if you are falling behind. Sometimes, if you're honest about a sudden barrier, they may be accommodating. If you're having trouble in navigating accommodations, Access/Disability Services may be helpful ²⁵⁸⁹ .

CCA Resources:

- [Make an Appointment with a LRC Coach](#)
- [Get in touch with Access/Disability Services!](#)
- Submit a [CCA Cares Form](#)
- [From the University of San Francisco: 10 Tips on Talking to Your Professor](#)

6.) GIVE LANGUAGE TO WHAT YOU'RE FEELING



Illustrated Gif by [Marie Spénale](#)*

Identify your emotions.

What is upsetting you? What are the things that make you sad? What are your major stressors? **Identify and name catalysts that cause distress.** Research has suggested stressors may include the perceived scrutiny of professors and classmates, stereotyping/discrimination, negative life events, negative thoughts, perfectionism⁶⁷.

Walk yourself through a simple exercise of Interpersonal Therapy. Ask yourself:

- Am I dwelling on a recent conflict?
- Have I had recent life changes that affect how I feel about myself and others?
- Am I experiencing grief?
- Am I having difficulty in starting or keeping relationships going?

If you feel this is true for you, individual counseling may be the most appropriate option¹². If you're having a hard time naming what you're feeling, there are counselors and therapists on campus and all around who are ready and waiting to help you through that process!

CCA Resources:

- [Counseling Services](#)

General Resources:

- [Mood and Feelings Questionnaire \(MFQ\)](#) Scores range from 0 to 66. Higher scores on the MFQ suggest more severe symptoms. Scoring a 27 or higher indicates pervasive symptoms that require attention.
- [Off-Campus Resources](#)
- [Find a Psychiatrist in San Francisco & Oakland \(Customizable\)](#)
- [Find a Therapist in San Francisco & Oakland \(Customizable\)](#)
- [Trans Health & General Information](#)

Videos:

- [Naming Anxiety](#)
- [How to sit down and think](#)
- [Why Mindfulness is a Superpower](#)
- [How Mindfulness Empowers Us](#)

7.) GIVE LANGUAGE TO WHAT YOU WANT TO FEEL



Illustrated Gif by [Chris Phillips](#)*

After identifying your feelings, determine how you would *like* to feel.

- Self-affirming statements regarding what you like about yourself & your life can be helpful ^{6,12}.
- Gain a sense of awareness of what you can and can't control; know that for things you cannot control, you have a limited scope of influence and prioritize your energy from there ⁶.

- Learn to be assertive. Knowing how and when to stand up for yourself and advocate for your wants and needs is important ¹⁴ .

General Resources:

- [Life Goal Questionnaire](#)
- [Where You Are vs. Where You Want To Be: 8 Steps From Fear to Greatness](#)

Videos:

- [Jessica's Daily Affirmations - Little Girl Stands on Bathroom Counter and lists things she loves.](#)
- [How to sit down and think](#)
- [Why Mindfulness is a Superpower](#)
- [How Mindfulness Empowers Us](#)

8.) DIVERSIFY YOUR LIFE.



*Illustrated Gif by [Tara Jacoby](#)**

- Perhaps you feel like you're not grasping class material as well as other students. Maybe you don't know much about 'The Bay Area'. Perhaps you're an international student who isn't confident using English just yet. Take a moment to identify someone who you feel has a greater grasp of what you're trying to achieve, and ask if you can spend some time with them as they do the activity you're nervous about. The more you demystify the activity you feel bad about, the more confidence you can have in approaching it. If

what you're nervous about in the first place is approaching people - look to mentors, old friends, and classmates you worked with and ask for help⁵.

- This is something that people hate to hear, so I want you to get emotionally ready to hear it...

...exercise can help reduce anxiety.

You don't have to turn into a gym rat or make an immediate change to your lifestyle. Doing something as simple as taking a walk outside and taking some deep breaths of air, stretching after taking a nap, riding a bike, or taking a class at a local gym. Remember - exercise means **move your body!** ².

- If you're someone who spends the majority of the time on the internet, find ways to limit your time on the internet. Studies have found that students who limited their use to 1 to 2 hours a day surfing The Internet had lower depression and anxiety scores compared to those who used the internet more frequently ².
- A great coping strategy for anxiety is giving yourself other activities to fill your time. Cooking/baking, creating art, or reading can be helpful deterrents to anxiety ²⁸.

CCA Resources:

- [Find people that share identities or interests with you and join that club! No clubs fit you? Make your own!](#)
- [International Students - Connect with ISAP!](#)

General Resources:

- [50 Ways to take a break](#)
- [Website restriction tool.](#)
- [MMORPG Time Management - Forum Discussion](#)
- [Computer Software Program Blocker/Time Restriction](#)
- [TRY AND SELL ME ON COOKIN:I hate cookin/aint got time/aint got money.](#)
- [Free Yoga](#)
- [Free Runners Groups](#)
- [Free Park Meditation](#)

9.) YOUR BODY IS TALKING TO YOU, LISTEN TO IT!



*Illustrated Gif by Freepik**

- If you're feeling crappy (fatigue, restlessness, or sweating, irritability, racing or unwanted thoughts, feeling of impending doom, insomnia, nausea, poor concentration, sensation of an abnormal heartbeat, or trembling) some of your symptoms may be the result of anxiety. You may want to make an appointment with a physician and consider visiting a therapist as well. Holistic health serves the whole person! ²

General Resources:

- [What is there in terms of healthcare outside of campus partnerships?](#)
- [Trans Health & General Information](#)
- [HEALTHY, QUICK, AND CHEAP COOKIN](#)
- [Free Yoga](#)
- [Free Runners Groups](#)
- [Free Park Meditation](#)

Videos:

- [Emotion, Stress and Health: Crash Course Psychology](#)
- [Reducing Stress by Taking Care of Your Body Early in the Morning](#)

10.) IT SUCKS, BUT TIME HELPS.



*Illustrated Gif by [Eden Weingart](#)**

When you are in a new environment there is an adjustment curve. Over time, as you adjust, anxiety reduces. If you're new to CCA, the Bay Area, a living situation, or friend group - time is a great healer ¹⁰ .

Videos/Interactive Websites:

- [Time Heals all wounds, or does it?](#)
- [10 Tips for Adjusting to new Surroundings](#)
- [Here's How to make waiting a little less excruciating](#)
- [ENYA - Only Time](#)
- [Related Phone Apps](#)

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