Yes, they ARE anxious.

For the past six years USF Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Counseling Centers nationwide, have found that the number one presenting issue of students entering counseling is anxiety. There is a great deal of conjecture as to why this may be true and some less than flattering analyses e.g., A Nation of Wimps: The High Cost of Invasive Parenting, Hara Marano. Our clinical experience and recent research, however, suggests that there are a multitude of influences which have negatively impacted the resiliency and ability of today’s traditional aged college students to cope .

The cost of an undergraduate degree has increased by 1,120% over the past 30 years, and the average American student graduates with over $30,000 in debt. This sharp increase in tuition costs is coupled with shrinking government and school-based grants and scholarships and increased competition for financial aid. In the economic crash which occurred for many in their adolescence, students experienced drastic economic changes and job losses in their own families, as well as the increase in financial pressures and anxiety that accompany these changes.

Research indicates that students get fewer hours of sleep and put in more hours for non-school related work with each passing year, for the past 20 years. They face a more uncertain economy and unstable job market, and cannot be as confident as previous generations that their academic efforts will lead to a secure career. In a period of steep degree inflation, they must achieve more and more to stand out among their peers.

Additionally, today’s traditional-aged college students have grown up in what many researchers identify as a post 9/11 “culture of fear” – complete with school shooting drills and 24 hour news cycles.

Top it off with any number and combination of the personal issues we see our students dealing with – parental divorce, substance abuse, changes in romantic relationship issues, etc., and the high anxiety we see in this population starts to make sense.

If a student shares with you that they are experiencing anxiety, please refer them to campus support systems. If they have been psychiatrically diagnosed with an Anxiety Disorder, they can register with Student Disability Services and may be eligible for academic accommodations. Koret Recreation Center offers yoga, aikido and a variety of other exercise options. Below is a list of support options offered through CAPS.

1.  Annual tabling related to anxiety and management strategies

2.  Website:

Self-assessment on line at [www.usfca.edu/counseling](http://www.usfca.edu/counseling)

Relaxation Podcasts

3.  Brief, confidential individual therapy

4.  Group therapy addressing Social Anxiety, Test Anxiety, General Anxiety

5. Referrals for yoga, Aikido, Tai chi, meditation, community practitioners and specialty clinics

6. For students who may experience late night panic attacks or who just need to talk, we provide *CAPS After* *Hours* which can be accessed between 5 PM and 8:30 AM weekdays and 24 hours on weekends and holidays. Individuals wanting support can call 415-422-6352 and dial extension #2. Branch campus students, faculty, and staff are invited to use *CAPS ALL HOURS* 855-531-0761.