

Subject: Psych and CD students: Helping and being helped

As most of you know, all Psychology and Child Development majors take PSY 323, The Helping Relationship, where students learn to apply a problem management model, in a respectful, supportive way, to a volunteer "Helpee's" personal concern or goal. We're proud to offer such "hands on" classes where students truly build skills with other students who generously volunteer, and benefit, as "Helpees." To be clear, you would volunteer to be the party being helped on a topic of your choosing. While this is NOT professional therapy or counseling, students who volunteer to be Helpees typically find the experience of this collaborative helping model to be useful in carving out time for reflection and change and often find the process to be helpful and growth oriented.

Our 323 students truly depend on you volunteering and following through for meetings as Helpees. If you're reading this, you have either already taken 323 and benefited from a volunteer or you will be taking 323 and, likewise, will depend and benefit from a student who volunteers. Signing up is a commitment, to self and another student. We want to ensure those who volunteer will follow through. We can't make this opportunity work without the mutual commitment, respect, and follow-through of both our volunteers and our students in these courses.

We are seeking volunteers for this term who would appreciate and benefit from committing to 3 or 4 - 50 minute meetings with a 323 student to discuss either a personal concern, or an area of personal goals or growth sought. This experience brings you an opportunity to tend to something important in your life, with a supportive "Helper," as well support the 323 undergraduate students in developing valuable skills in the Cal Poly "hands on" way.

Everyone has concerns and goals to address from the ones that quickly pass to major serious events. The kind of concerns/goals well suited to this project are in the middle range of intensity and reflect situations common to most students, for example, relationship/family issues, roommate issues, school, long and short-term personal goals, etc. Faculty of these courses will refer students with more difficult concerns to other resources.

This process benefits all parties. Volunteer Helpees (you) have a chance to see how this model might be useful, not only to your current concern or goal, but can apply what is helpful to you with future goals or concerns. Students who have not yet taken 323 can get an idea of what it is all about, first hand. Even students who have taken 323 can give back and benefit by volunteering.

We do audio record sessions so the student helper can receive feedback about how s/he can be the most effective helper. Your privacy and anonymity are taken very seriously. No name or any other identifying information is ever kept with assignments. The recordings are only for the purposes of helping the student Helper develop their skills by way of giving feedback. Most work is shared primarily with the instructor or a small group. Recordings are deleted and disposed of after assignments. Again, your privacy and anonymity are taken very seriously.

If you would like a place to tend to a personal concern or goal and help 323 students in this learning experience, as well as have someone interested in listening to and supporting you in working on your situation/concern or goal, please contact Dr. Aaron Estrada @ aaestrada@calpoly.edu. You'll be contacted by a student within the next couple of weeks to begin. Additionally, if you have any feedback or would like more information regarding this process, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Please include your name, a contact phone number, a good time to reach you, your email address, and the general nature of the goal or concern (family, partner, roommate, future direction, etc.) You must include a description of the topic you want to focus on to be considered for the experience.

Thank you so much for your willingness to consider participating in an experience which will support you with your goals or concerns, as well as benefit the growth of the students in these courses.

Sincerely,
Aaron Estrada, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology and Child Development