**Academic Accommodations Related to Mental Health Needs:**

Academic or other accommodations related to mental health conditions are sometimes necessary for students while they are in school. The Office of Accessible Education (https://oae.stanford.edu) can assist you with the process of obtaining needed accommodations.

Medical documentation of mental health diagnosis is usually needed when applying for accommodations. Your therapist, psychiatrist, or other medical professional can provide medical documentation of your diagnosis, and the impact of the diagnosis on your academics, to the Office of Accessible Education in a confidential manner.

This medical documentation is provided in the context of an ongoing treatment relationship, where both you and your provider have determined that accommodations are needed.

**Emotional Support Animals and CAPS:**

Many staff at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) are animal lovers, as well as professionals and advocates for student mental health. We occasionally receive requests from students for letters in support of obtaining Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) to help students manage and improve their mental health while living on campus.

While a service animal is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, an emotional support animal provides companionship and emotional support for a person diagnosed with a psychological disorder. ESAs are classified under the Federal Housing Act and do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The American Counseling Association’s (ACA) position statement on Human-Animal Interventions in Counseling recommends that professional mental health counselors do not engage in the practice of writing letters recommending ESAs as an intervention for their clients, unless the counselor has had specialized training and experience in working with human-animal interventions in counseling. The codes of ethics for licensed mental health treatment providers across all disciplines specify that providers must only work within their boundaries of
competence based on education, training, supervision, experience and credentials. At CAPS, while our clinicians are trained in the assessment of mental health diagnoses, the use of Human-Animal Interventions in counseling falls outside of our scope of practice.

The use of Emotional Support Animals as a treatment intervention has many potential risks to be considered: for clients, the public, and the animal. Due to these potential risks as well as ethical codes regarding scope of practice, clinical professionals at CAPS abstain from writing letters of support for Emotional Support Animals.