

# When students have nowhere to turn

## Crisis Center offers an open ear, advice

A solitary figure ambles aimlessly across campus, impervious to the fog at 4 a.m. A nagging anxiety prevents the student from sleeping or even relaxing. Questions overwhelm the student's mind... confusion... doubts... perhaps despair.

Right now, the student's only friend may be at the other end of the Crisis Center's hotline — a phone number available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The student is probably in the third phase of a crisis situation, "a real intense anxiety," according to Candy Reynolds, the director of the campus Crisis Center.

Students face crisis situations every day and they usually can apply normal problem solving mechanics to alleviate a crisis, says Reynolds, who has been the director since January 1980. For example, a student might talk to a friend about a particular problem.

If normal problem solving mechanisms don't work, students must turn to other solutions they are familiar with, but don't use often, she says. Often those techniques include knowing that one's parents or family will offer help if friends can't.

Sitting in the sparsely furnished closet-like office she shares, Reynolds' energy sparkles from her eyes behind large round glasses and from her never-still hands that emphasize each point.

Students who call on the Crisis Center, which is staffed with 18 to 20 trained volunteers, have either exhausted these two avenues or, more likely, don't have them available, Reynolds says.

"Most people call us when they've tried everything they

possibly can," according to Reynolds, who earned a masters degree in counseling from the University in June 1982. She received a bachelor's degree in psychology and social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1979.

Situations that create crises vary from person to person and even according to each person's three "balancing factors", Reynolds says.

"Tripping on a sidewalk can be a real crisis for one person and for another person it might be losing a spouse," she says.

How a student handles a stressful situation depends on the presence of the three balancing factors; a social support network, adequate coping mechanisms and adequate perception, Reynolds says.

A social support network is friends, family, people to talk to, someone who can loan money or just "someone to hang out with you if you're going through a bad time," Reynolds says.

Adequate coping mechanisms are problem solving abilities. Students with some common sense and the knowledge to tell themselves they are going to get over their current crisis, can usually cope with the problem, according to Reynolds.

Adequate perception is being able to keep things in perspective and saying "this isn't the worst thing that's ever going to happen to me and I can deal with it," she says.

People coming to the University for the first time often lose some or all of these balancing factors, Reynolds says.

"People that move here from high school have lost a lot of their social support network.

"And their perception might be changed. They're getting new ideas from the University and all of a sudden what used to be a firm conviction might be gone," Reynolds says.

When students call the Crisis Center, they usually want to make a change and are probably at a turning point, she says.

"It's very interesting that in Greek and Chinese a crisis means both a danger and opportunity, and that's very true. When a person is in a crisis, they can either learn about themselves and gain new resources and skills and become better for that, or it can be a real danger and people can develop neurotic tendencies," Reynolds says.

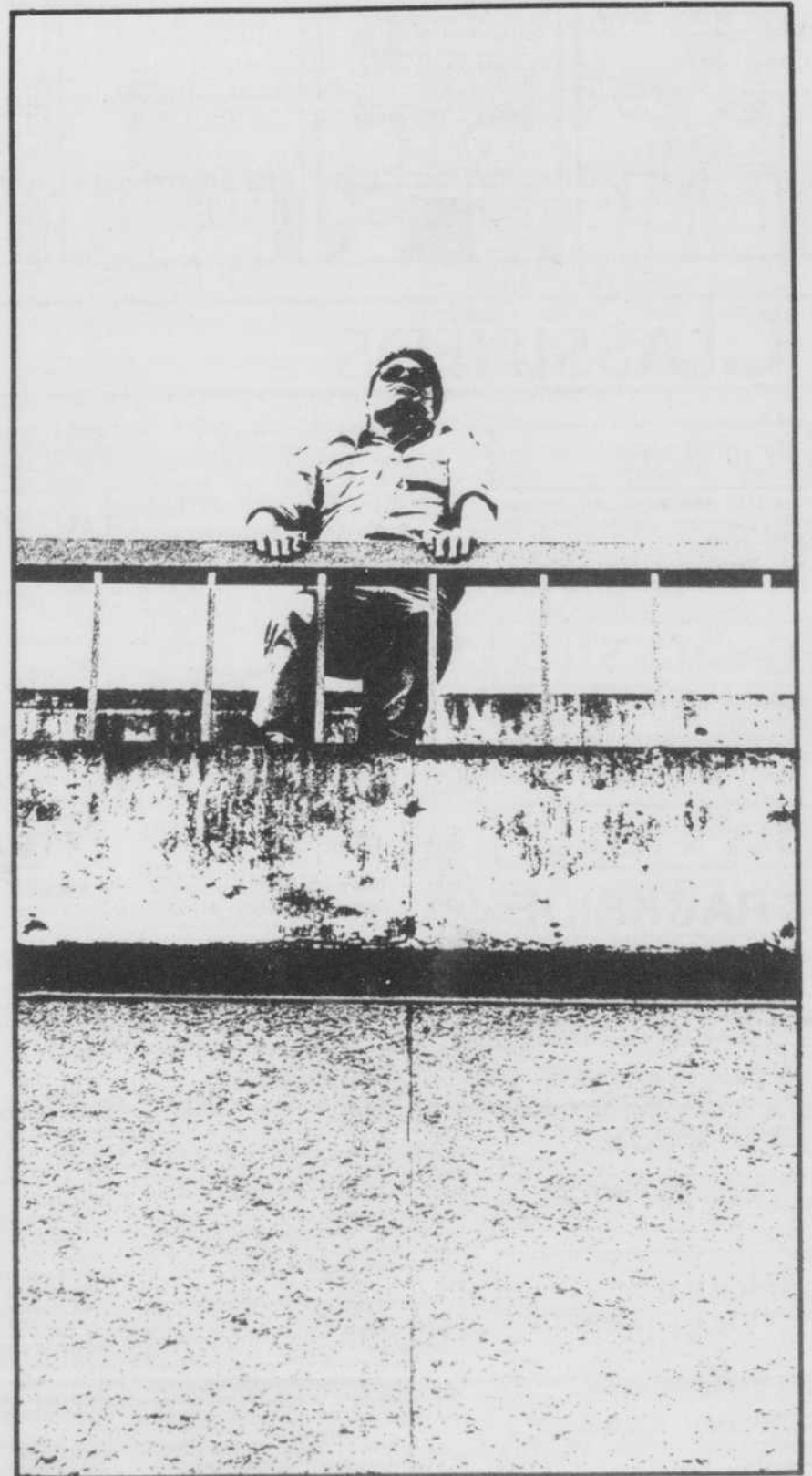
Constantly dealing with people who are at crossroads sounds in itself a stressful and nerve-wracking job. Not so, Reynolds says.

"When a person is at a crisis, they are really eager to make change because if they are feeling so anxious and they are feeling such distress, they want to move off that point," Reynolds says.

She leans forward, smiling broadly. One hand fidgets with her necklace, the other circles the air above her head, as if encompassing the whole building.

"It's a real nice place to be as a counselor," she says of the Crisis Center, as she sits back with her arms folded, takes a deep breath and punctuates the statement with an emphatic nod of her head.

**Story by Jim Moore  
Photo by Mark Pynes**



The Crisis Center offers distraught and lonely students a "friend" to whom they can pour out their problems and gain sound advice.

## El Salvador

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participation for any kind of opposition movement has been tantamount to suicide in El Salvador. The strategy of the current election proposal is to encourage divisions within the Democratic Revolutionary Front, buy time for the government's counter-insurgency, and pose the United States as

a catalyst for democratic change.

For those concerned and confused about the recent escalation of American involvement in Central America, "Face of Revolution" is an engrossing study of El Salvador that puts the everyday news into a wider

historical context. It also attempts — and succeeds — to provide a psychological portrait of the Salvadorean people. Towards that understanding, it is interspersed with Salvadorean poetry, verse predictably replete with death imagery that is alternately satirical or fatalistic.

How authoritative and complete is "The Face of Revolution"? Written in 1982, it predicted Pres. Ronald Reagan would send American warships to blockade gun running from Cuba to Nicaragua. The journal, "National Catholic Reporter," writes that of books on El Salvador, it is

"by far the best to date."

Of course, for those who are hungry for more, we probably won't have to wait long for a deluge of books on Central America. If the Vietnam experience provides any scholarly blueprint, there will be more.

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