



Drugs and Alcohol:

The Impact on International Student Emotional Wellness

NAFSA Region IV Conference, October 2022

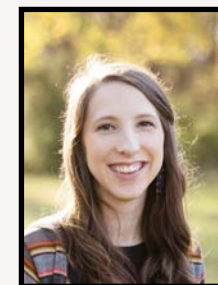
Presenters



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Leslie Reynolds
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Audience

What types of institutions are represented? Four year public, four year private, two year/community college, HBCU, ESL programs, others?

What size campus populations? Over 30,000, between 10,000 and 30,000, 5000-10,000, under 5000

What size office/team? Over 5, 2-5, single person

Have you seen an increase in mental health and substance abuse issues among international students since COVID? Yes or no

Are you satisfied with the programs and resources available to you and your students for these issues? Yes or no

Why are you here today?

Agenda



- Current Climate
- Immigration & Visa Regulations
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- Approaches to Support
- Resources & Brainstorming
- Discussion and Q&A



Current Climate

34% of college respondents struggled with anxiety disorder and 41% with depression according to the 2021 [Healthy Minds Study](#)



Mental Health Crisis

73% of students reported moderate or serious psychological distress according to the [Fall 2021 American College Health Association National College Health Assessment](#) survey.



Impact of COVID

- The efforts made to help minimize the spread of COVID left many students with uncertainty and concern about their health, mental health, and academic futures.
- Post-secondary students were disproportionately affected by the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A survey of more than 16,800 students in 21 countries found that more than half of undergraduates said their mental health had suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Chegg, 2021](#))



International Students Hit Even Harder

“International students across the globe have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic due to additional sources of uncertainty,” – Cory Owen, EdD, associate dean of students at Yale-NUS College and the author of *Advising International Students with Disabilities*.

“You have the response of any young person living through the pandemic—and doing it in another country far away from their support networks.” — Emma Swift, EdM, associate director of the Office of International Education at the University of Vermont and the author of *U.S. Classroom Culture*.

“Isolation, especially for first-year graduate and professional students living off campus, who are far away from families and yet to form their own community locally.” – Ling Jin, MA, student development coordinator at Duke University’s International House.

Drug & Alcohol Trends Among College Students



Drug and alcohol use on the rise across the United States

- 53% of full-time college students ages 18-22 drank alcohol in the last month and about 33% engaged in binge drinking in that same period [NIAAA](#).
- Alcohol consumption increases by 39% between February 2020 to November 2020 across the United States
- NIDA study that analyzes substance use indicates marijuana usage is up amongst college students
- Trends are showing that students are drinking more frequently but in lower quantities per occasion ([Dumas et al., 2020](#); [Graupensperger, Fleming, et al., 2020](#))

Abuse, Dependence and Addiction



- Alcohol Abuse: “A pattern of drinking that results in harm to one’s health interpersonal relationships, or ability to work.” – Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Drug Abuse: Any illicit use. Street drug use in general and prescription medications without a prescription.
- Dependence: When a user develops a physical tolerance to a substance over time and experiences withdrawal symptoms. Typically dependence is resolved when slowly tapering off the use.
- Addiction: When extensive use has caused the user’s brain chemistry to change. Uncontrollable cravings to use drugs (even when harm to self or others is/has been done). Treatment is necessary.



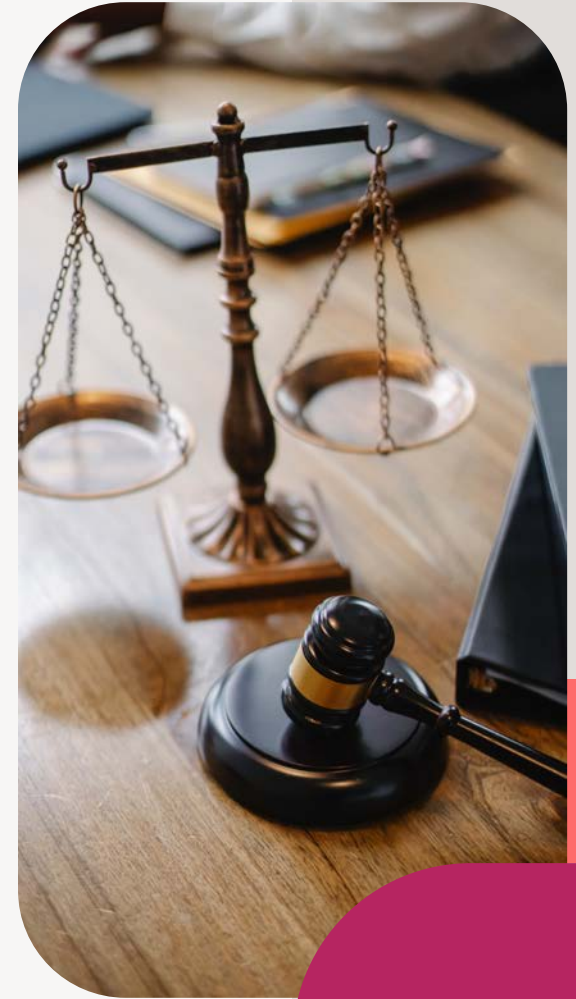
Mental Health and Substance Abuse

International Student Stressors

- Academic challenges
- Anxiety and depression
- Financial stress
- Homesickness
- Immigration regulation
- Internet challenges
- Isolation
- Time Differences
- Unstable living conditions

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- Substance abuse can occur more frequently with certain mental health problems:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Schizophrenia
 - Personality Disorders
 - In some cases:
 - Form of self-medicating
 - Mental and substance abuse disorders share some underlying causes

Immigration & Cultural Concerns



Immigration Concerns



- State Law vs. Federal Law
 - Unlike peers, international students must follow federal law
 - E.G., Marijuana remains illegal under federal law
- Variation in Penalties/Charges under State Law
 - Violations of drug/alcohol laws categorized differently by state for DUI, Underage drinking, providing alcohol to a minor
 - Do you know the felony or misdemeanor classifications for underage drinking or providing alcohol to a minor in your state?

Federal Consequences



- Visa renewal denial
- Port of entry problems
- SEVIS record termination
 - Institutional dismissal
 - Federal agency
- Visa cancelation
- ICE and deportation

Institutional Responsibilities



- Age restrictions
- Federal and state laws/consequences
- Institutional responsibilities
 - SEVIS/DOS reporting
 - Consistent guidelines/policies
 - SEVIS termination
- Loss of scholarships

Overcoming the Stigma

- Dispel the myths
- Know the facts about cultural differences around counseling
- Invite on-campus counselors/psychologists to orientation and meet & greet opportunities
- Educate counselors/psychologists on how to communicate across cultures
- Give testimonials even anonymously, and perhaps in their native language
- Normalize students' concerns and stress
- Creative ways of introducing counseling



Approaches to Support





For all students:

- Student Intervention Team
- Partners in Prevention (statewide consortium)
- Panthers for Prevention
- Panther Clinic
- Third-party Counselors on campus
- Higher Education Council of Community Partnership of the Ozarks



For International Students:

- Additional services via insurance provider:
- International Student Support Program (LifeWorks)
- Togetherall
- Teladoc



OPPORTUNITY IN ACTION

Information for International Students

- Orientation
 - Drinking/Drug Laws, Information on Resources
 - Information About Insurance Coverage
- Campus Resources
 - International Center Staff
 - Office of Student Experience & Engagement
 - Connects students, faculty, staff to campus and community resources
 - Coordinates Services in Warrensburg and Greater KC
 - University Health Center: Started Services on Lee's Summit Campus
 - University Food Pantry
 - University Clothes Closet





OPPORTUNITY IN ACTION

Partnership with Compass Health in Warrensburg

- On-campus liaison/Off-campus offices (privacy)

Coordinate with Other Local Services

- West Central Community Action Agency
- Department of Mental Health

Story: Apartment Fire in OP



Insurance Considerations

- Health insurance should cover mental health
 - Verify coverage (i.e., internal limits, day maximum, etc.)
 - Includes coverage for substance abuse
 - Injuries/illnesses as a result of intoxication/drug abuse
 - Suicide/attempted suicide
 - Provider network
- Telecounseling
 - Increasing in popularity
 - Ask if telecounseling is part of your telemedicine program
 - A range of programs available through insurance plans or independently
 - Some have additional resources/screening surveys





Resources

Free Resources

Emotional & Mental Health Training Program Drug & Alcohol Awareness Video

Emotional & Mental Health Training Program

Emotional and mental health has become a hot topic across schools throughout the US as many international students struggle with culture shock, stress, anxiety, depression, etc. Because of the stigma surrounding mental health, international students seek help at much lower rates compared to domestic students but have additional struggles as they adjust to their new environment.

International Student Insurance has worked with the Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness at Massachusetts General Hospital to develop a comprehensive training to help students overcome these barriers. The training is designed specifically for international students, and is one hour long (although it can be adjusted to meet any time frame).

This complete training was developed so that any staff member can give the training, as it includes the following:



Powerpoint Presentation

Professionally designed presentation to walk your students through the training.



Video Content

Two videos on mental health awareness and student perceptions on culture shock and stress from around the world.



Student Handout

A downloadable student guide take-away, or we can supply hard copies, to distribute to students.



Interactive Activities

Activities that encourage dialogue on many of the larger issues such as myths surround seeking help.



Proctor Guide

Complete guide to walk you or your staff through the training, including a full script and talking points.



Scan the QR code, email lreynolds@internationalstudentinsurance.com, or give me your business card after the session for access to the training!



Services & Hotlines

Hotlines

- National Suicide Prevention
 - 988 (new 3-digit number)
 - www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Essential Community Services - 211
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 1-800-799-SAFE
 - <http://www.thehotline.org>
- It Gets Better Project (LGBTQ)
 - 1-866-4-U-TREVOR
 - www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/get-help

Services

- Crisis Text Line
 - <http://www.crisistextline.org/>
 - Text 741-741



Discussion

Q&A

What are you seeing on your campus?

What programming do you have around this topic?

Have things changed during the pandemic?





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Thank You!

Leave your business card for a copy of the slides, additional copies of the handouts, and/or access to the free mental health training mentioned.