



Drug and Alcohol Use

and its Impact on International Student Emotional Wellness

Presenters



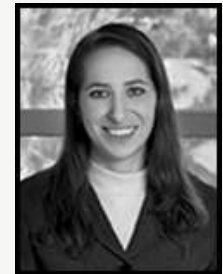
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Agenda



- Current Climate
- Support
- Immigration Implications
- Effective Programming
- External Partner Support
- 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.

Coping with COVID-19



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](#))



everything
is
connected

The Connection with Mental Health



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

Identifying Signs

Behavioral

Establish a baseline to identify the signs.



- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
- Frequently getting into trouble
- Using substances in physically hazardous situations (ex: driving)
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness
- Lacking motivation
- Appearing fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason

Identifying Signs

Physical



Establish a baseline to identify the signs.

- Bloodshot eyes and abnormally sized pupils
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Deterioration of physical appearance
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination

Identifying Signs

Social



Establish a baseline to identify the signs.

- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies
- Legal problems related to substance use
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems
- Using substances even though it causes problems in relationships

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.

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



Resources on Campus: Reactive & Proactive



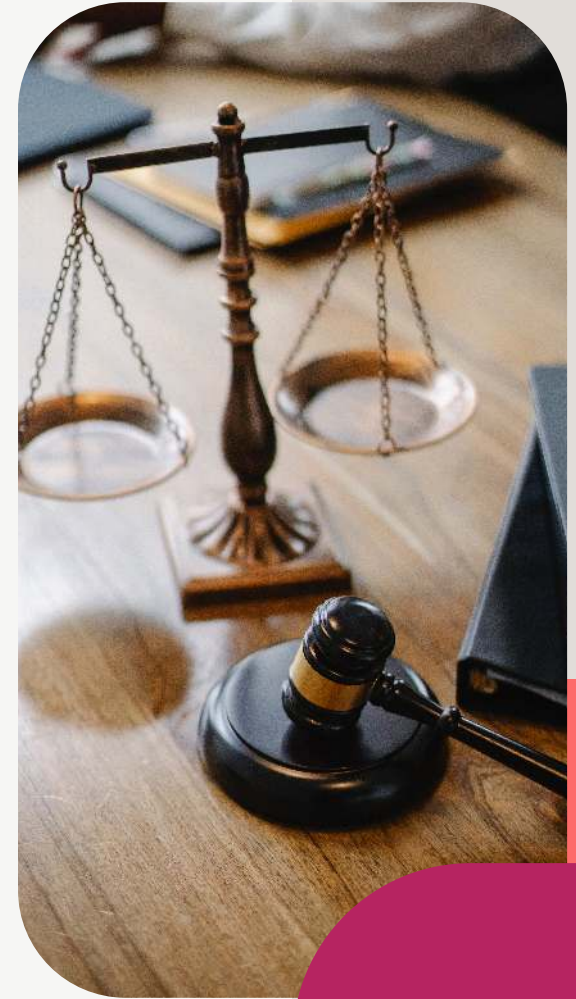
- Depression Screening at Student Health Center
- Establishing a knowledge-sharing community (know your partners)
- Inform and promote information on student activities, engagement opportunities and fitness centers
- Know the services offered around campus, and form connections
 - Support groups/medical practitioners who speak other languages
 - Ombudsperson office
 - Chapel and community religious/spiritual support centers
 - Others?

Resources on Campus: Connecting with Counseling



- Develop a connection with the center
 - Know basic information and share it with students.
 - Hours, processes, insurance/payment, scheduling appointments
- Familiarize yourself with their experience working with culturally diverse individuals
 - List specific contacts to refer students to if applicable
 - Based on language and cultural experience
- Establish programing
 - Early in the year and throughout
- Highlight Counseling Center events through newsletters, social media, etc.

**What are the
legal
ramifications?**



Legal Consequences



- Fines
- Arrest or jail time
- Criminal record
- Employment issues

Federal Consequences



- Visa renewal denial
- Port of entry problems
- SEVIS record termination
 - Institutional dismissal
 - Federal agency
- Visa cancellation
- 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 (SACM)

Effective Programming



Institutional Partnerships

- Counseling Center
- Public Safety
- Welcome Event



- Email reminders
- Student Life
- MultiCultural Center

Informational Programming

- Orientation
- Welcome Event
- NAFSA Booklet



- Email blasts
- Information Videos
- Social Media



Working with External Partners



Community Partners

- Counseling Centers
- Outpatient treatment options
- Support Groups
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Narcotics Anonymous
 - Al-Anon
- Religious centers/churches

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



Training Program

Emotional & Mental Health Training Program


 **INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
INSURANCE**


Administrators ▾ Students Parents/Guardians Resource Center ▾

Emotional & Mental Health Training Program

 **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.

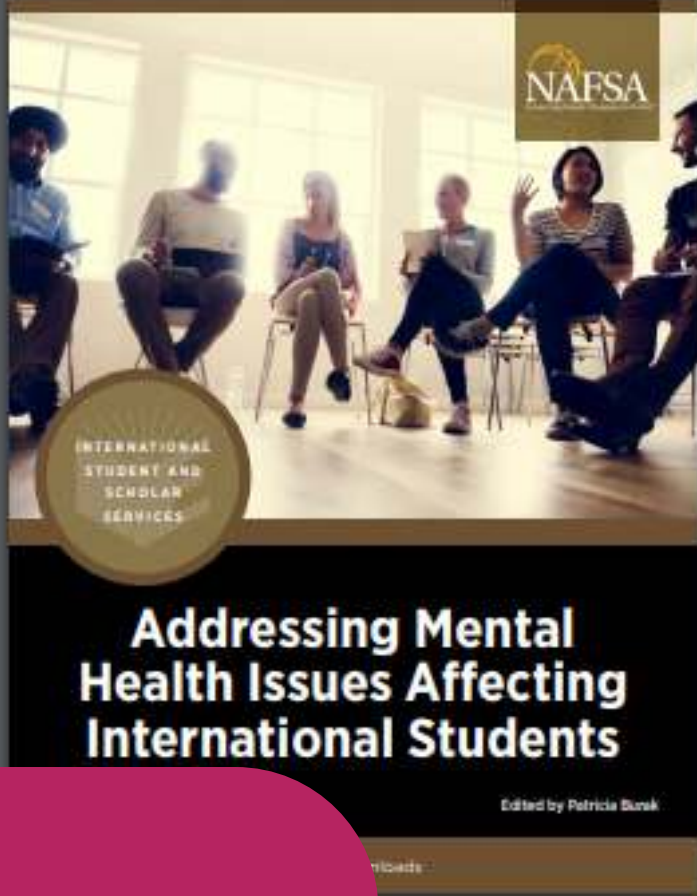
 **Student Handout**
A downloadable student guide take-away, or we can supply hard copies, to distribute to students.

 **Interactive Activities**

 **Proctor Guide**

In partnership with

- MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness
- International Student Insurance



Resources

- Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness (MGH CCCSEW)
- Tufts University Counseling and Mental Health Service - Information for international students regarding counseling
- Emotional Wellness During the COVID-19 Outbreak for International Students

Services & Hotlines

Hotlines

- National Suicide Prevention
 - 1-800-273-TALK
 - www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- 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?





Thank You