

Navigating Mental Health Issues Within The International Student Population

NAFSA: Association of International Educators
Region X Conference 2019
Monday, October 28th
1:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Presenters



Cory Owen, EdD
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Development*
The Juilliard School



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International Director
International Student Insurance



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*Coordinator of International
Education*
Alfred State College

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, Agenda
- Overview of Common Mental Health Concerns
- Special Considerations: Students from East Asia
- Role of International Program
- Insurance Discussion

Break: 15 Minutes

- Collaborations
- Programmatic Ideas
- Table Talks (Case Studies)
- Resources/Closing

Introductions

- Name
- Institution
- Years in the field
- What do you hope to get out of the workshop?

Poll

What words come to mind when you think about international students and mental health?



Poll

What's the biggest mental health trends or issues on your campus?

What's Going On?

40% of students so depressed they found it difficult to function

61% of students felt "overwhelming anxiety"

13.9% of entering freshman anticipate a "very good chance" of seeking counselling

38.5% felt things were hopeless



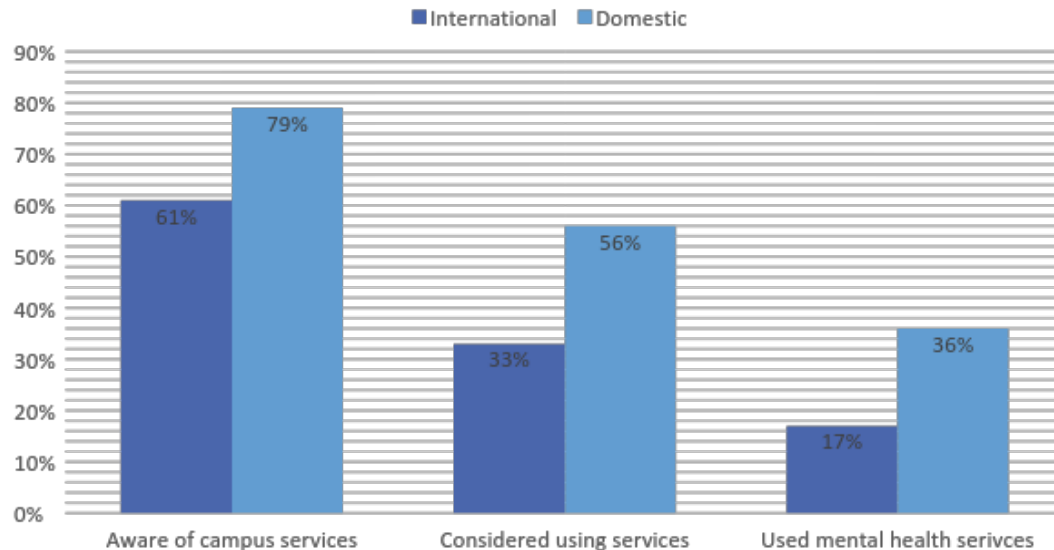
1 in 5 children, ages 13-18 will have a serious mental illness

Source: acha-ncha.org
[American College Health Association](http://acha-ncha.org)

Source: nami.org
[National Alliance on Mental Illness](http://nami.org)

Mental Health Care – Underutilized

Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling Services Among International Graduate Students, Journal of American College Health



Source: Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lusting, 2010

Most Common Mental Health Concerns

Depression:

- **Physical Well-being Symptoms:** Changes in sleep habits, whether sleeping more or — more frequently — difficulty sleeping. Appetite changes, including either a loss of appetite or overeating
- **Emotional Symptoms:** Sadness, feelings of being overwhelmed, feelings of hopelessness, and feelings of powerlessness
- **Thinking Symptoms:** Seeing a glass 'half-empty,' having trouble concentrating and paying attention, resulting in difficulty in reading and completing work tasks

Depression could lead to suicidal ideation which will be discussed later in the workshop.

Most Common Mental Health Concerns

Anxiety:

- Feelings of stress and apprehension
- Irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Fearfulness
- Sweating and dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Irregular heartbeat
- Muscle pain and tension
- Headaches
- Frequent upset stomach or diarrhea

Most Common Mental Health Concerns

Eating Disorders:

- Distorted or poor body image
- Excessive exercise
- Irregular heartbeats
- Dehydration
- Feeling like eating is out of control
- Fear of eating in public
- Constantly making excuses for eating habits

Most Common Mental Health Concerns

Addiction:

- Slurred speech, bloodshot eyes, or impaired coordination
- Fear, anxiety, or paranoia for no apparent reason
- Prone to suspicious behaviors, frequently get into fights or trouble with the law
- A sudden need for money or financial crisis
- Built tolerance for alcohol and drug use; user needs to use more of the substance to obtain the same effects
- Deterioration of physical appearance, such as weight loss or gain, and change in personal grooming habits
- A sudden change in friends, activities, or hobbies

“I thought about coming to counseling for a long time, but I cannot even express my simple thoughts in classes. How can i describe all these complicated feels in English? It is really nice to know that you work here, so that I can speak Mandarin. Such a relief!”

Stress and Culture Shock Video



**Stress & Culture Shock
as an International Student**



<https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/culture-shock-and-stress-video.php>

Poll

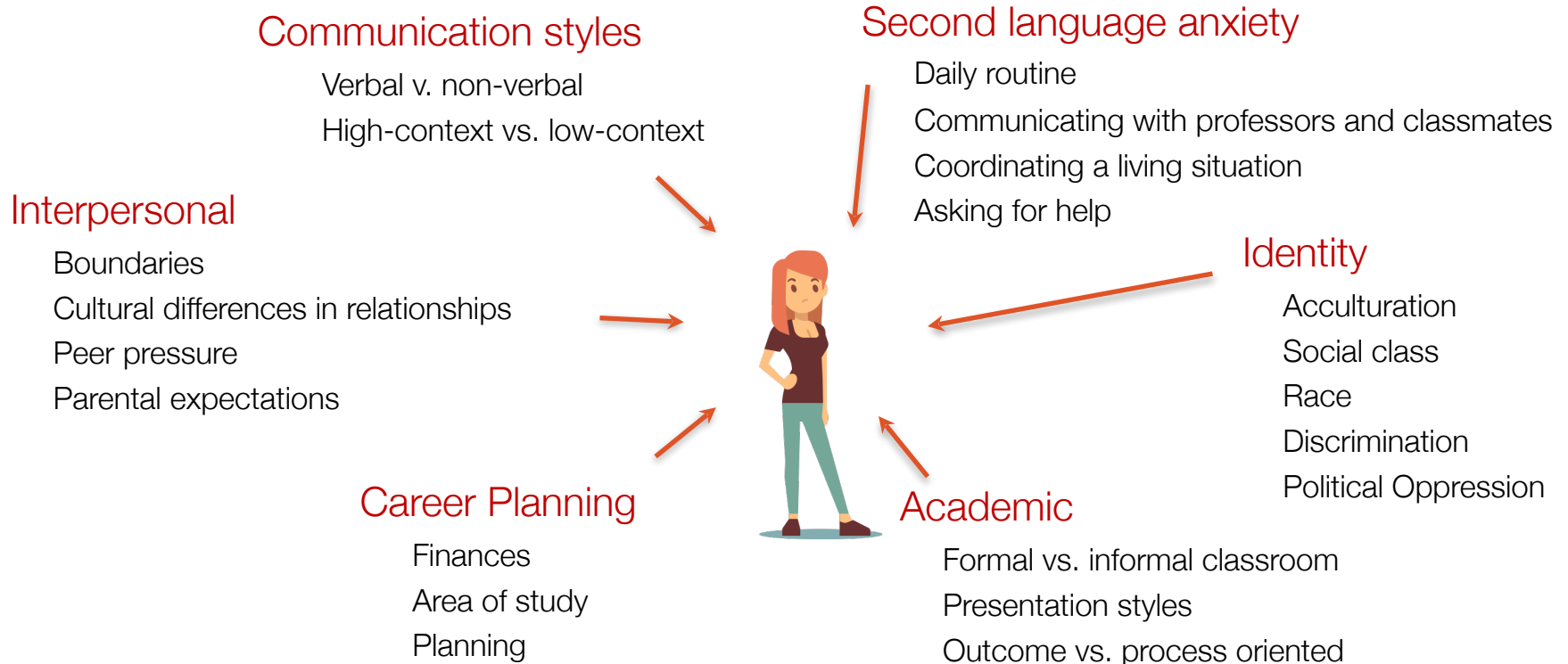
What languages do your counselors speak?

Emotional Wellness Video



<https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php>

Common Adjustment Issues

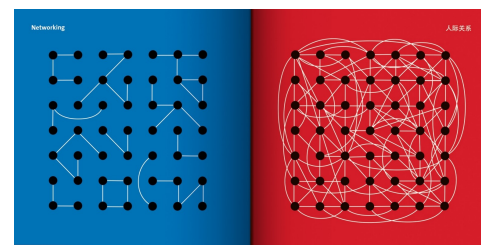
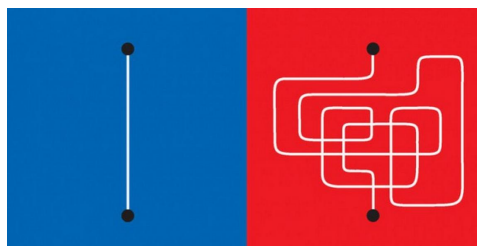
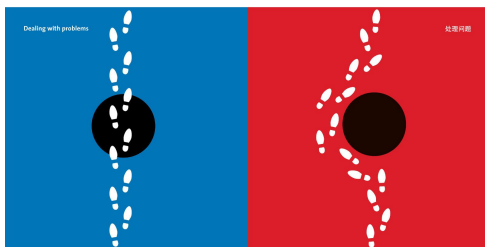
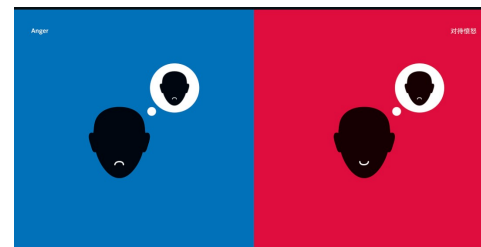
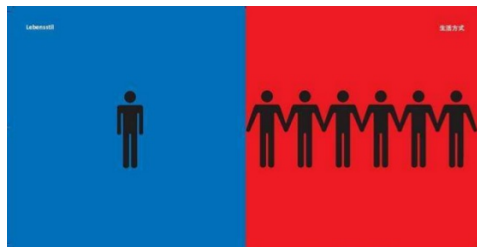
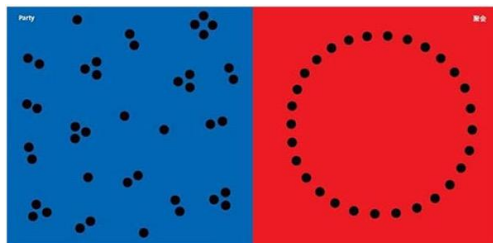


Navigating Family Expectations

- Help students understand and manage self and family expectations
- Provide orientation materials for families back at home
 - Cultural adjustment, providing emotional support, differences in US pedagogical styles, etc.
- Encourage students to talk about the good and the bad
- Train faculty and staff to help bridge cultural divides
- Consider the type of language that is culturally appropriate
 - “Stress” may be less stigmatizing than “depression” or “anxiety”

“I thought I am strong enough to handle this by myself. I did not want to admit that I am so weak now.”

Special Considerations: Students from East Asia



“You know, in my country, all records, even like what I did in kindergarten, will be kept throughout my life, and will follow me to any new school or later to the company I work for. I don’t know how these counseling records will impact me here or even later.”

Cyan's Activity

Role of the ISSS Advisor

- Serve on the Crisis Management Team
- Provide cross-cultural training to faculty, staff (including counseling), and student staff (i.e. RAs)
- Understand the student health insurance plan--especially the repatriation and evacuation policy
- Create partnerships across campus and determine roles (i.e. crisis communication team)
- Make sure you understand FERPA!
- Learn about the HIPAA release process
- Know on and off campuses resources
- Create an environment of support
- Set the tone for your relationship with students

Poll

Does your counseling services come to international student orientation?

FERPA Release

Syracuse University

Permission to Release Education Record Information as Required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

I, _____, give permission for Syracuse University (David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics) to release academic and graduate assistantship performance evaluation information to Patricia A. Burak.

Purpose for release: Review of dismissal from Doctoral Program.

Information to be released: Grades, faculty evaluations, Oral exam evaluations.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Poll

How many free counseling sessions can your students receive per year on your campus?

Connecting Int'l Students to Counseling

- Address myths about counseling
- Provide pictures of the counselors and list any languages that they speak
- Do a campus tour and show the students the physical space of counseling
- Highlight the types of services, how many sessions are free, etc.
- Offer to help them schedule an appointment or walk with them to the office
- Follow up

Suicide

Key facts

- Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide every year. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds
- 78% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally

Fact sheet- from the World Health Organization (WHO)

Updated August 2017

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Sometimes there are no signs!
- Statements such as “Soon it won’t matter anymore”
- Settling of accounts
- Behavioral change such as reckless acts, high-risk activity, increased drug or alcohol use
- Withdrawal from friends and family

1 in 5 College students had suicidal thoughts over the past year

<https://sites.psu.edu/ccmh/files/2019/01/2018-Annual-Report-1.30.19-ziytkb.pdf>

Responding to Suicidal Ideation

- “Are you thinking about killing or hurting yourself? Tell me about it.”
- “How will you do it? Do you have a plan?”
- “How often do you have these thoughts of dying? How long do these suicidal thoughts stay with you?”
- “Have you ever felt this way or attempted suicide before? What happened then?”
- “Is there anything or anyone to stop you from hurting yourself?”
- “What has kept you from hurting yourself so far?”
- “What is in the future for you?”
- “Have you talked about this with anyone else?”

QPR Model

Question

Persuade

Refer

After a death

- Don't forget about additional reporting requirements for J-1 exchange visitors
- Have a communication plan
- Determine liaison roles:
 - with the consulate
 - with funeral directors
 - with religious leaders
 - with insurance companies

Things to Consider

- Health insurance, especially repatriation and evacuation policy
- Who will take the lead on communication with:
 - Family
 - Consulate
 - Community
 - Media
- Family visitation
 - Where will they stay?
 - Do they need a translator?
- Immigration status consequences
- Religious practices
- Support for the community
- SEVIS record updates
 - If on a J-1 visa, the DOS needs to be informed

Health Insurance

- Know what your plan covers
 - Read through the certificate
 - Review the exclusions
- Evaluate the benefits
 - Capped benefits
 - Maximum number of visits
 - Waiting periods
 - Pre-existing condition limitation
- Where you can seek coverage
 - On-campus counseling
 - Out of pocket in-network v. out-of-network
- Other important benefits
 - Medical evacuation
 - Repatriation
 - Emergency reunion
 - Counseling line

HIPAA Release Form

“The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 was put in place to help ensure the privacy and ease of access of your medical records. A HIPAA authorization form is a document in that allows an appointed person or party to share specific health information with another person or group.”

- [RocketLawyer.com](https://www.RocketLawyer.com)

BREAK

Collaborating with Counseling

- Know the director and counseling staff; do joint meetings at least once a year
- Know how intake is done at the Counseling Center
- Walk students to the Counseling Center when the need is apparent
- Read published material about counseling and international students
- Have the phone numbers, especially the crisis 24/7 phone number, on speed dial

Collaborating with Others

- Crisis Management Team
- Residence Life
- Student Affairs
- Academic Affairs
- Title IX
- Greek Life
- Health Services
- Disability Support Services
- Multicultural/Diversity Office
- LGBTQIA+ Office
- Chaplains
- Campus Police

Programming Ideas


- Buddy/Peer mentor programs
- Workshops (e.g., “Decoding U.S. Culture”, “Lost in Translation”, “Culture Shock”)
- “Let’s Talk” Drop-in Hours
- University 101-type courses
- Social organizations/student clubs
- Summer/Holiday programs
- Friendship family programs
- Discussion/Support Groups



Event Examples

FOUNDATIONS

Coping with Post-Election Stress while at Home



Facilitated by:
Chino Okonkwo, LCSW

Tuesday, December 20
Student Multipurpose Room (105)
6:30 - 7:30 pm

Pizza will be provided!

This program is a Diversity and Civic Engagement program or a Health and Wellness program

Juilliard

xxxxxx

STRESS RELIEF COLORING

De-stress with some relaxing coloring and snacks!


Tuesday, October 3rd
6-7pm in the
Morse Student Lounge

This event is taking place in recognition of National Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 1st-7th)

Juilliard
diversity
advocates

xxxxxx

#DearNextPresident



Join the video series/hashtag campaign & have your voice heard.
Create a message for the next POTUS & let him/her know your pressing concerns & issues

Wednesday,
Oct. 28th 1-2 pm
Morse Student Lounge


Juilliard
diversity
advocates

Juilliard
diversity
advocates

Office of International Advancement

FOUNDATIONS

IN DIFFERENT ALCOHOL CULTURES



MONDAY OCTOBER 17TH
12.15-1.15 PM, SMR

These programs are Diversity & Civic Engagement Foundation Programs

Juilliard

TO STAY OR NOT TO STAY

- Name: Harold Zhou
- Hometown: Beijing, China
- Date of Birth: 3/2/1998
- Major: Bachelors of Music- Piano
- Year: 1st year
- Disability Registration: Not yet registered
- Languages: Mandarin (fluent), English (minimal conversation)
- Room: 2001E (Double)
- Roommate: David Smith (BFA-Dance 2020, White, from Wichita, KS)
- Family: Only child of two prominent musicians from Korea

October 12

- A professor notices that Harold, a 1st year Chinese student, seems to be lacking friends and has a hard time communicating in English. The teacher feels that the student's awkwardness may be contributing to social adjustment as even the Chinese students generally do not talk to him. Teacher reaches out to the Assistant Dean of International Advisement to ask for advice.

October 14

- Assistant Dean meets with Harold to discuss cultural adjustment and academics. She recommends that he consider counseling and explains that it is confidential. He does not seem interested. They chat about the difficulties of making friends but he says that he has plenty of friends. Harold indicates that he doesn't talk to his roommate. The Assistant Dean notes that Harold seems to not pick up on social cues, and has difficulty communicating. She explains academic resources, including tutoring, but he brushes off the recommendations.

November 31

- Director of Residence Life is informed by the managers in dining services that Harold has run out of meal points for the semester since he has been buying too much food for himself and others. The Director meets with Harold to discuss the issues. Harold indicates that he has been buying food for other people because he wants them to be his friend. The Director notices the awkward nature of Harold's communication and interaction and contacts Director of Disability Services to see if Harold is registered with her office. The Director of Disability Services indicates that Harold is not, but has received concerns from Harold's teachers about his behavior and that he is being regarded as being on the spectrum.

December 14

- Director of Residence Life is notified at 2:40am by student staff that Harold has come back to the residence hall intoxicated. The Director evaluates Harold and determines while he does not need to be transported to the hospital that evening. Later that week, the Director holds a conduct hearing with Harold to discuss the issue. Harold discloses that he drinks on a regular basis and probably has 4 or 5 drinks a day. The Director finds Harold responsible for policy violation, places him on disciplinary warning, reminds Harold of the policy, and refers Harold to counseling out of concern for his drinking.

January 8

- Harold stops by the office to talk about his first sexual experience with another man. He is very excited and goes into a lot of details. He shares with one that he took a picture of his partner while he was sleeping, and that his partner is still unaware that he has taken pictures. The Assistant Dean explains the implications of taking pictures of his partner without his knowledge. The partner was very unhappy about the pictures and Harold explained that the pictures were deleted. The Assistant Dean discusses Title IX with Harold and the partner (separately).

FROM A COUNSELOR'S POINT OF VIEW

- Name: Jieming Lu
- Hometown: Beijing, China
- Date of Birth: 4/15/1993
- Major: Information Studies
- Year: 2nd year Graduate Student
- Languages: Mandarin (fluent), English (minimal conversation)
- Family: Only child. Father is a trainer for CEO's in China and mother works at a university as a teacher. Reports he is "close to them".

January 30, 2012: (20 Minute Contact- No prior Counseling Center contact)

- Referred to Counseling Center from the ISSS Office
- Reason for referral: “feeling socially isolated in the US and missing his homeland of China”; “difficulty acculturating & not being able to discern when Americans want to develop a friendship or remain acquaintances”; “being able to trust Americans”; “persistent feeling of having disappointed his academic advisor due to receiving a B+ in her class”; developing a sense of meaninglessness in regard to his academic work” and “ongoing medical concerns”.

Therapist assessment:

- Past transient suicidal ideation but denied having a plan or intent to act on his thoughts. Stated suicide is “cowardly and stupid”.
- No evidence of thought disorder/hallucinations/mania
- No self-harming behaviors or substance use
- Difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite
- Mood is assessed as “depressed” with “congruent affect”
- Medical condition: reported that as a child diagnosed with a tumor in his finger which was treated but has started to “swell and become painful”. Desired to return to China to have it treated
- Wants to return to China, therapist agreed to support a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) and advised JL of the process.

Discussion: Given the information....what are your thoughts regarding the student?

February 1, 2012: Jieming walked into the Counseling Center for 2nd crisis appointment and asked to see the same therapist he saw on January 30. Therapist contacted Student Assistance & Slutzger Center after obtaining ROI- Discussion determined that student decided to take a reduced course load & stay in the USA. No further appointments or follow-up by CC.

December 3, 2015: (Therapist 2)-Walk-in crisis appointment:

- Reason: “I think I am depressed again”. “Happened 3 years ago”. “Ended up taking a MLOA, went back to China to regain myself & came back last year”. Having trouble “focusing and feeling more and more pressure and stress”. “I don’t know how to deal with it”. “I have not attended classes this week and have missed a total of 2-3 weeks of classes”.
- Therapist assessment: “depressed, no current suicidal ideation, plan or intent”. Scheduled for a return walk-in the next day as no intake slots available & winter break approaching

December 4, 2015: (Therapist 3) -Walk-in crisis appointment:

- Reason: Same as above
- Therapist assessment: Same as above. Therapist determined that JL was staying in the USA for winter break & scheduled an intake for 1/22/16 & completed a referral for a medication evaluation & a walk-in crisis appointment follow-up for 12/11/17

December 17, 2015: (Therapist 3) - Walk-in follow-up appointment:

- JL advised same therapist as above that he had a medical consult and was started on Prozac on 12/8. Therapist notes improved mood and encourages JL to follow through with intake on 1/22/16.

Discussion: What are your thoughts now????

January 22, 2016: (Therapist 4) - Full Intake session

- Prescribed Prozac 20 mg for depression
- Self-reports: “Fear of acceptance” in US culture; “fear of the future”; feels “abandoned”; “terrific panic and tenseness around others and fear that people don’t like him”. “I think I am gay and I am currently living in a Christian household”; “above average student and likes writing code”; does not feel that “Chinese students are honest”. States that American students have “taught him to be honest” however he likes the “humbleness of the Chinese”. “shy around other”, “don’t enjoy being around people”, “concerned that others don’t like me”, “i feel uncomfortable around people I don’t know”, “unable to concentrate” and “it’s hard to stay motivated for classes”.
- CCAPS score: Depression=73, Gen. Anxiety=54, Social Anxiety=99, Academic Distress=77, Eating concerns=39, Hostility=19, Alcohol use=46, overall distress=71. Audit score=1
- Reports lack of friends in primary school and not liked by his teachers. Knew he was gay at age 14 but could not tell anyone in China as this would embarrass his family. Unable to relate to his peers & preferred talking to older adults.
- First time Release of Information is requested/signed for the Slutsker International Student Center. since 2012.

Therapist recommendations:

- LGBTQ Resource Center - Student refused- Does not feel it represents him
- Graduate Group Therapy - To help with social skills and understanding of others- Student agreed
- Individual therapy - To help work through sexual identity- However, CC rules, if student in group, one of the group therapists will follow (Therapist 5 & Therapist 6, group facilitators)

Discussion: Therapist’s recommendations & finale outcome. What are your thoughts now? Would you do anything different?

CYBERBULLYING

- Name: Susie Kim
- Hometown: Incheon, South Korea
- Date of Birth: 5/1/1998
- Major: Bachelors of Music- Piano
- Year: 2nd year
- Disability Registration: Not yet registered
- Languages: Korean (fluent), English (minimal conversation)
- Room: Off-campus
- Family: Only child of two prominent musicians, both teaching at the school

- Name: Eun Jin Lee
- Hometown: Seoul, South Korea
- Date of Birth: 2/15/1998
- Major: Bachelors of Music- Piano
- Year: 2nd year
- Disability Registration: Not yet registered
- Languages: Korean (fluent), English (minimal conversation)
- Room: 1901E (Double)
- Family: Only child of a businessman and stay at home mom

January 4, 2016

- Assistant Dean of International Advisement is called into a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs, Human Resources, and Provost. It is revealed that a J-1 professor has fled the US after allegation of sexual misconduct with a student. His J-2 spouse is also working at the school on her EAD card and his J-2 child (Susie) is a student. After much discussion, the spouse and child decide to go home to Korea (child takes a leave of absence). A

September 10, 2017

- Susie comes back to campus from her leave of absence and she meets with the Assistant Dean. They discuss the option of Counseling but she says she's fine and is excited to be back.

October 2, 2017

- Assistant Dean hears rumours that Eun Jin is struggling in classes, distant, and doesn't seem to have a lot of friends suddenly. They meet to talk and the Assistant Dean learns that this is the student who had the interactions with the faculty member the previous year and had reported it to the school. She is being cyber bullied through Kakao and Snapchat from Susie (the daughter). She claims that Susie has turned the entire Korean student population against her. They discuss counseling and she agrees to meet with one of the Korean counselors.

October 3, 2017

- Assistant Dean works with Student Affairs who opens a conduct case and meets with Susie--Assistant Dean recuses herself from the case. Through the investigation, witnesses deny that Susie has been cyberbullying Eun Jin. Eun Jin provides screenshots of discussions in Kakao which then need to be translated. The investigation finds Susie responsible for bullying.

October 5, 2017

- Assistant Dean meets with Susie to talk about the cyberbullying incident and the incident with her father. They discuss the importance of saving face in Korean culture and eventually agrees to meet with a Korean counselor to discuss her frustrations and anger.

October 10, 2017

- Eun Jin meets with Assistant Dean to explain that while the bullying has stopped, she just doesn't have any friends and is thinking about transferring to another school.

October 11, 2017

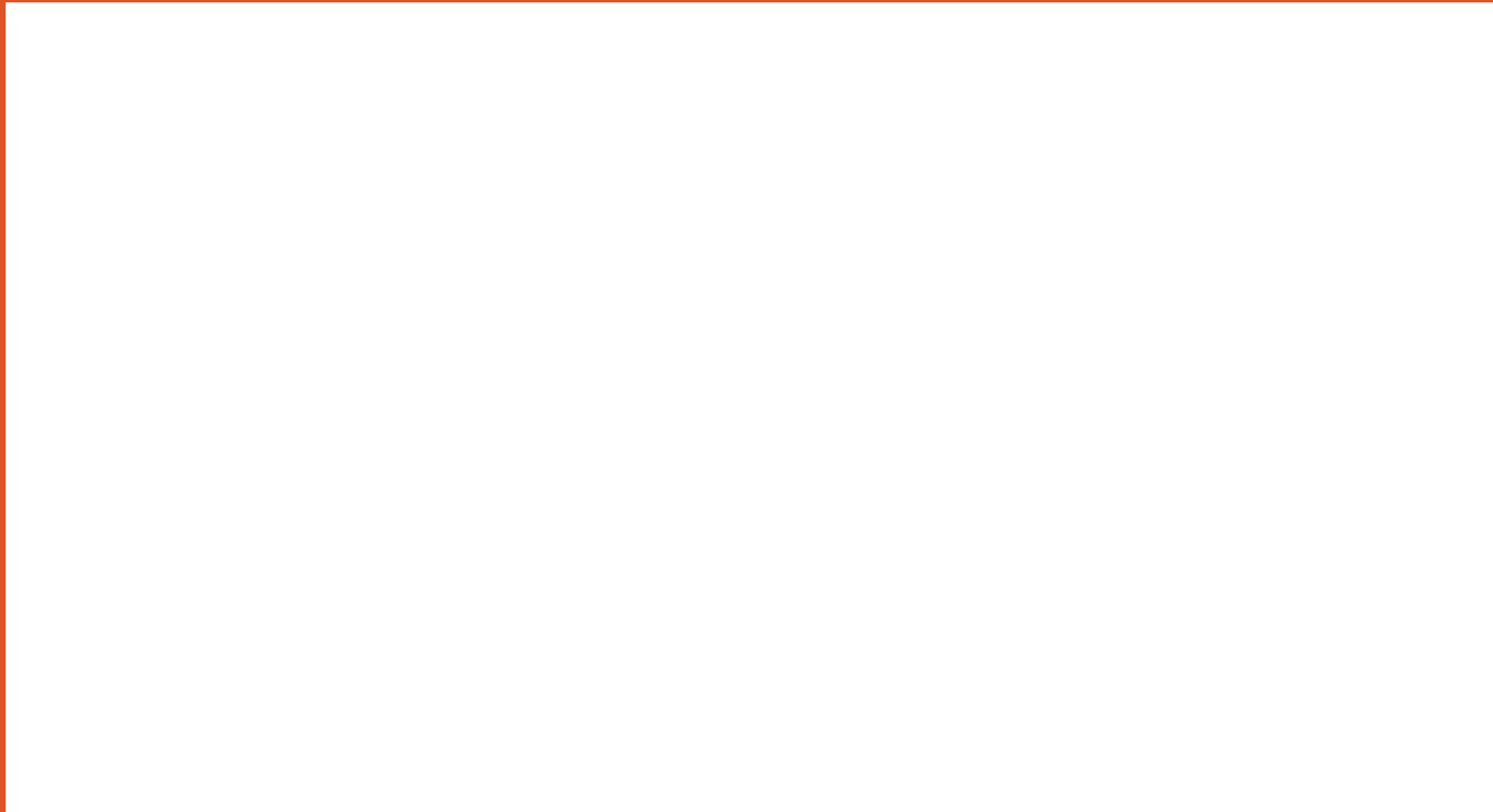
- Assistant Dean meets with Scholastic Standing Committee to discuss Eun Jin's exploration of transferring. Also meets with the Assessment and Care Team (ACT) to discuss the isolation felt by Eun Jin.

October 12, 2017

- Eun Jin decides to stay in the end since she will likely meet these students at summer festivals and auditions for the rest of her life and has decided to try to make headway here.

SUICIDE CASE STUDY?

- Data about the case





Resources & Hotlines

Pre-departure, Orientation, Online

Emotional Wellness Training



Powerpoint
Presentation



Video Content



Student Handout



Interactive Activities



Proctor Guide

Download online at [https://
www.internationalstudentinsurance.co
m/school-resources/mental-health-
awareness-training/](https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/school-resources/mental-health-awareness-training/)

In partnership with:



The MGH Center for
Cross-Cultural Student
Emotional Wellness












Student Info Page



Emotional & Mental Health Awareness
— for —
International Students

Emotional wellness is the ability to **be aware of our feelings** and accept them. It means having an **optimistic approach**, and is a key part of long-term success and happiness.

Emotional wellness means you:

-  Are aware of your thoughts and feelings
-  Have a positive attitude
-  Express emotions in a healthy way
-  Seek help when you need it
-  Set priorities
-  Accept mistakes and learn from them
-  Maintain good boundaries with others
-  Overcome setbacks and learn from failures
-  Feel at peace most of the time

What is mental health?



[◀ Watch this video for an overview of mental health ▶](#)

www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health.php

Resources

NAFSA Resources

Addressing Mental Health Issues Affecting International Students

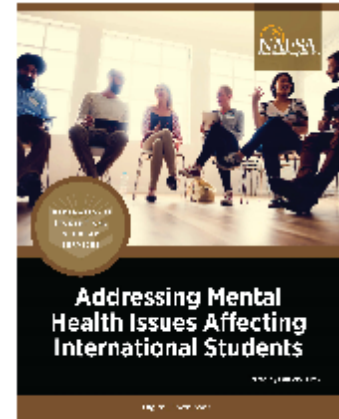
<https://shop.nafsa.org/detail.aspx?id=202E>

Crisis Management in a Cross Cultural Setting: ISSS

http://www.nafsa.org/wcm/Cust/Custom_Cart/Product_Detail.aspx?prodid=450

Other Resources

Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness (MGH CCCSEW) <https://www.mghstudentwellness.org/consortium>



Services & Hotlines

Hotlines

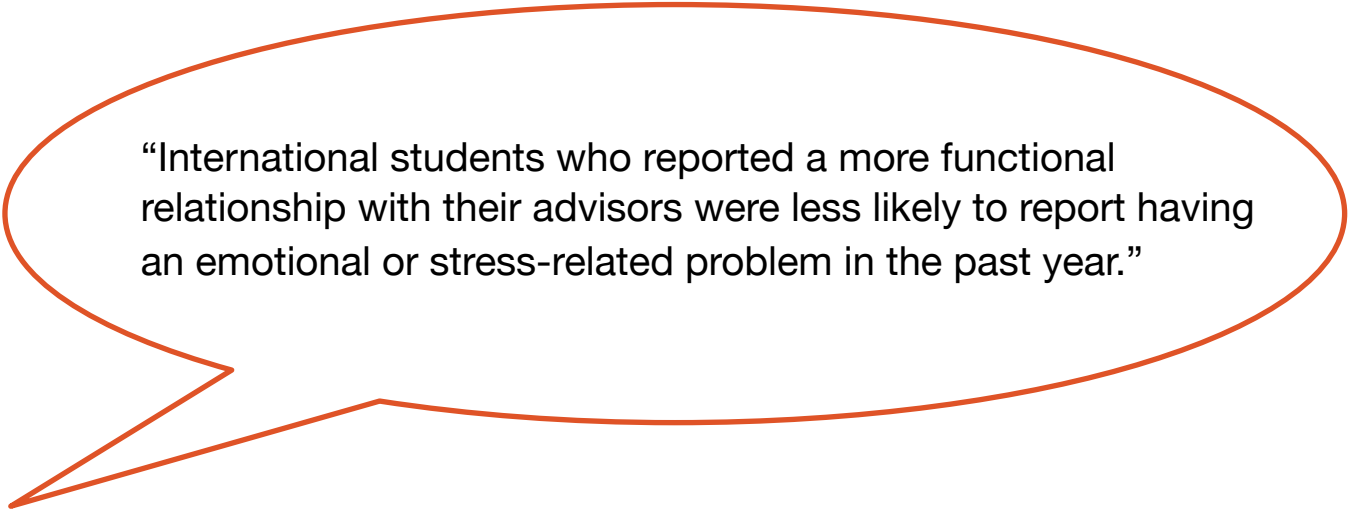
- National Suicide Prevention
1-800-273-TALK
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE
<http://www.thehotline.org/>
- It Gets Better Project (LGBTQ)
1-866-4-U-TREVOR
www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/get-help

Services

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







“International students who reported a more functional relationship with their advisors were less likely to report having an emotional or stress-related problem in the past year.”

Questions?