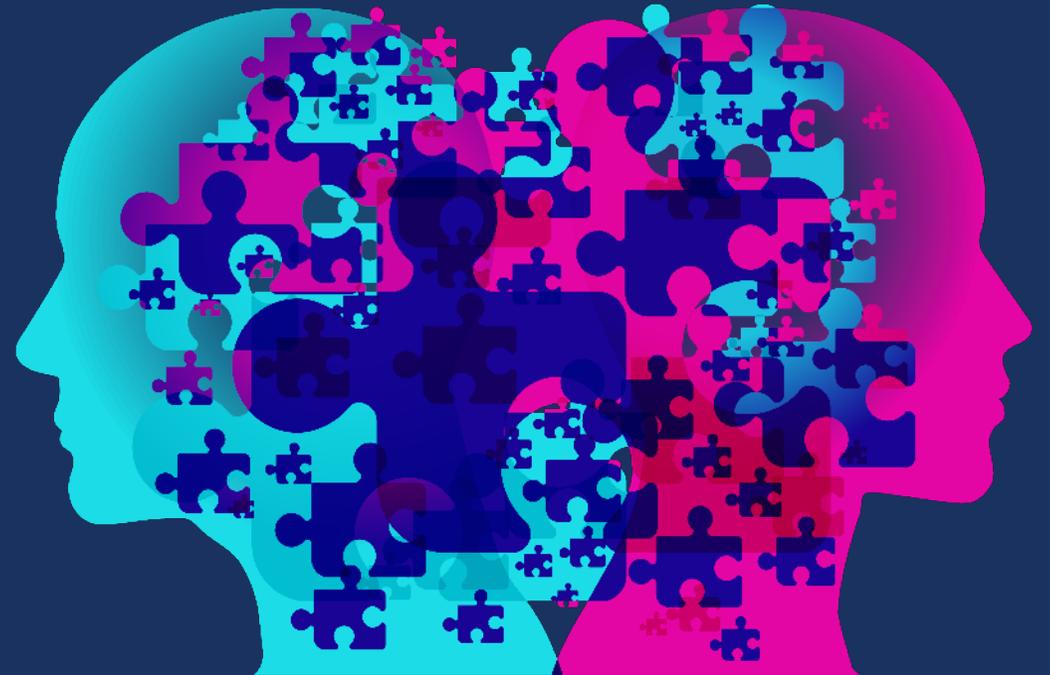

TRAINING YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INSURANCE | TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY | UNIV. OF THE INCARNATE WORD



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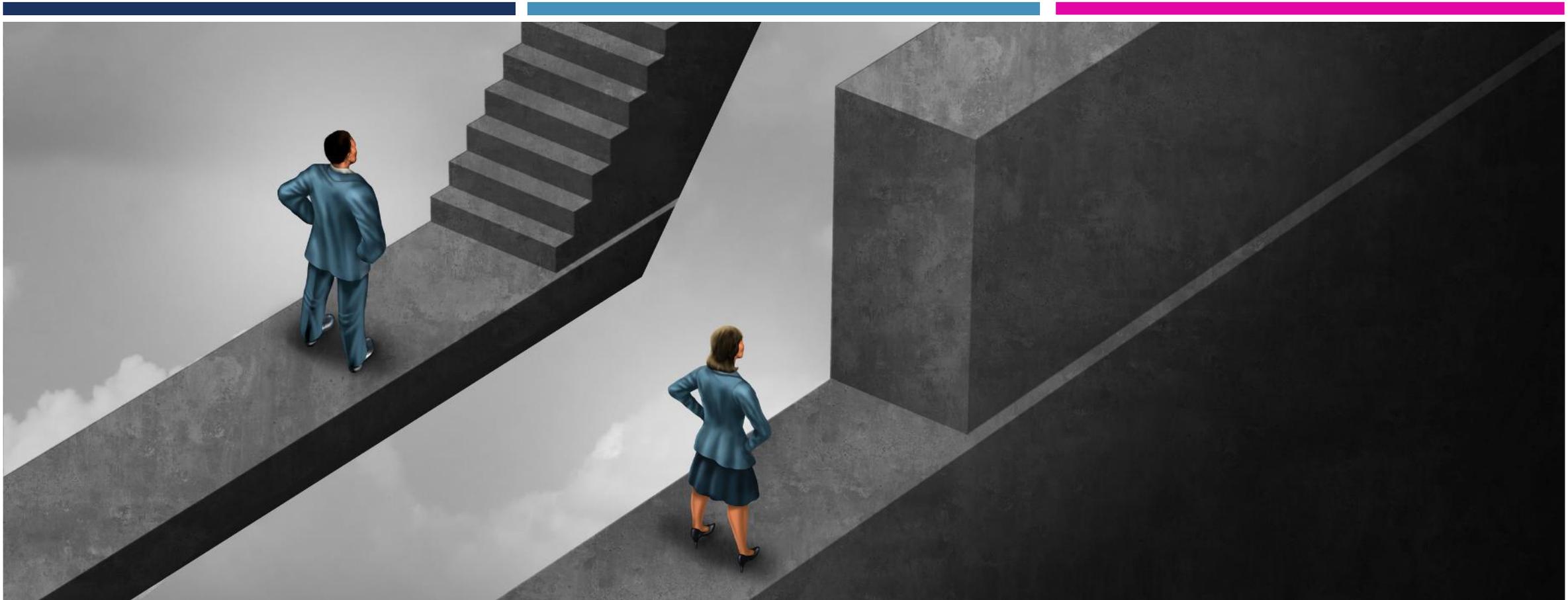
CULTURE SHOCK & STRESS VIDEO



www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/culture-shock-and-stress-video.php

AGENDA

- What's Going On With Our Students?
- Understanding the Challenges
- Overcoming the Challenges
- Programming That Works
- Resources
- Discussion & Questions



WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

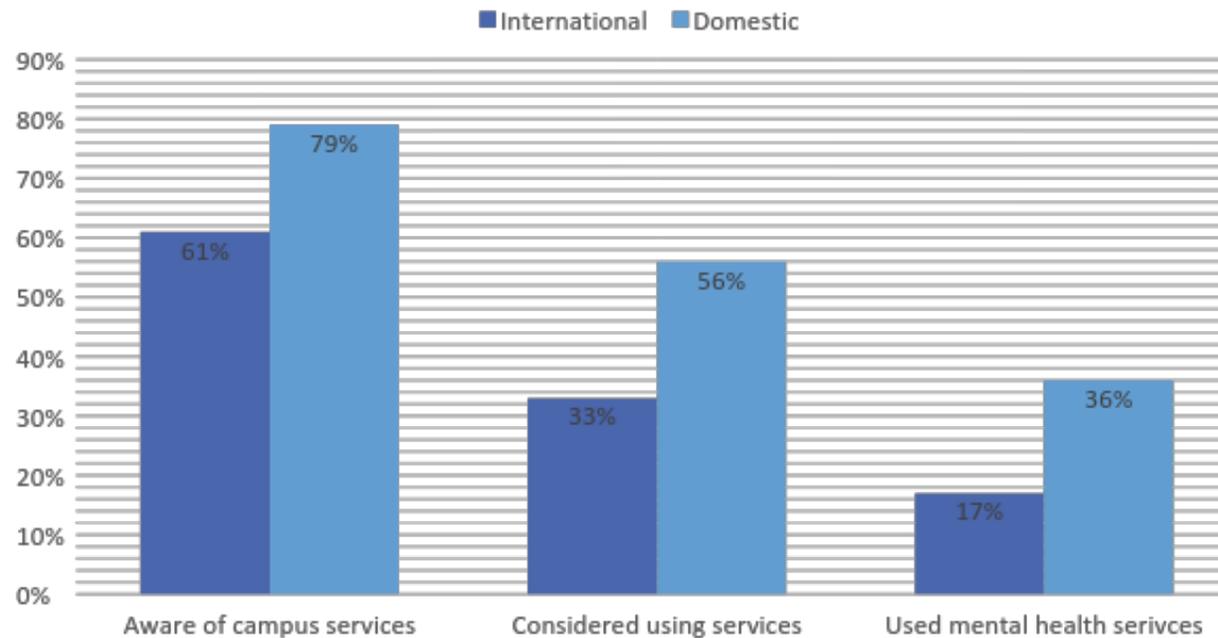


49% of adolescents ages 13-18 experience mental health disorders

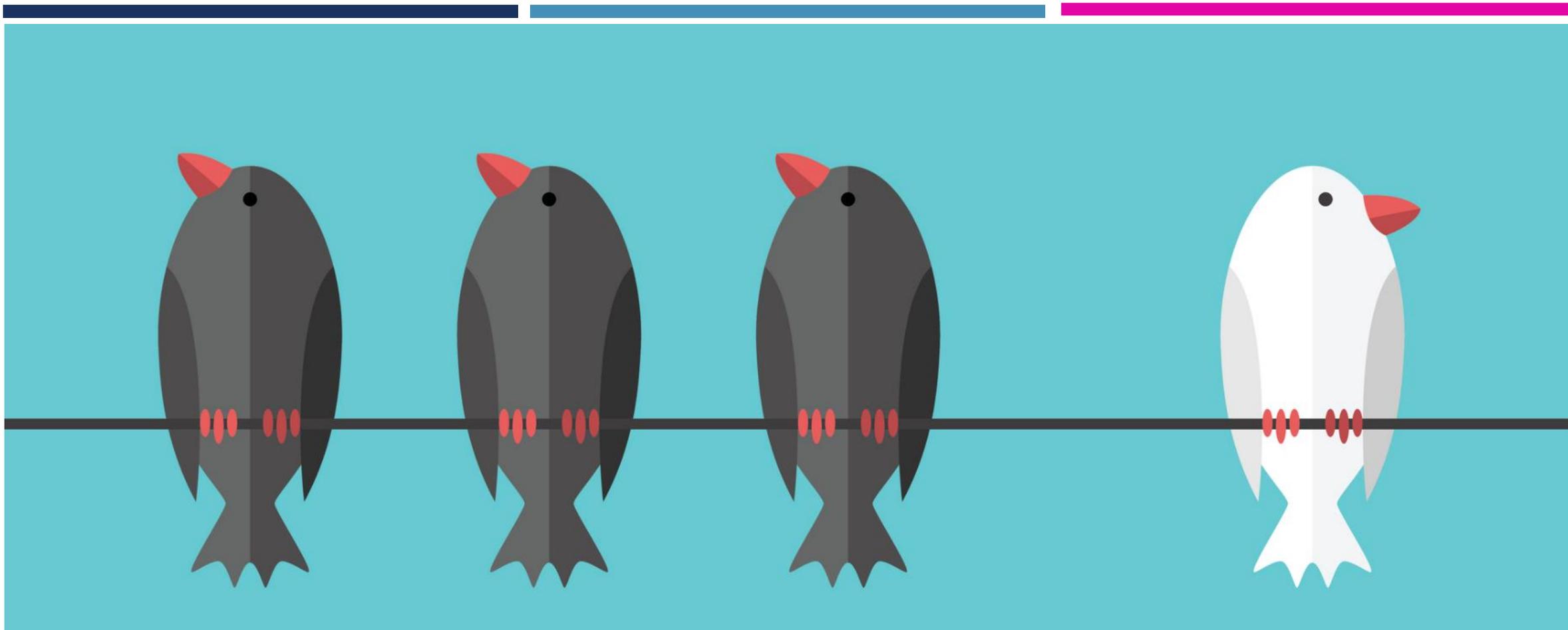
WHAT'S GOING ON? - MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNDERUTILIZED

Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling

Services Among International Graduate Students, Journal of American College Health



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



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

CULTURE IMPACTS - ALL ASPECTS OF ILLNESS



- Expression of symptoms outwardly and inwardly
- Coping
- Where to seek care
- Management of symptoms
- How they seek help

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES – COMMON ISSUES

Seeking Care

- Location of counseling center
- Cultural understanding

Second language anxiety

- Daily routine
- Communicating with professors and classmates
- Coordinating a living situation
- Asking for help



Interpersonal

- Cultural Boundaries
- Differences in relationships
- Peer pressure
- Parental expectations

Identity

- Acculturation
- Social class
- Race
- Discrimination
- Political Oppression

Career planning

- Finances
- Area of study
- Planning

Academic

- Teaching styles in other countries
- Presentation styles
- Academic pressure

“
“
**ONLY SOMEONE
FROM MY HOME
COUNTRY WILL
UNDERSTAND MY
PROBLEM.**
”
”

“
“
**counseling
is for
“crazy”
people**
”
”

“
“
**I can handle
my own
mental health
problems. If I
can't, that
means I'm
weak.**
”
”

COMMON MYTHS

“
“
**Everyone will know
I saw a counselor**
”
”

“
“
**I COULD
LOSE MY
VISA STATUS**
”
”



OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENTS

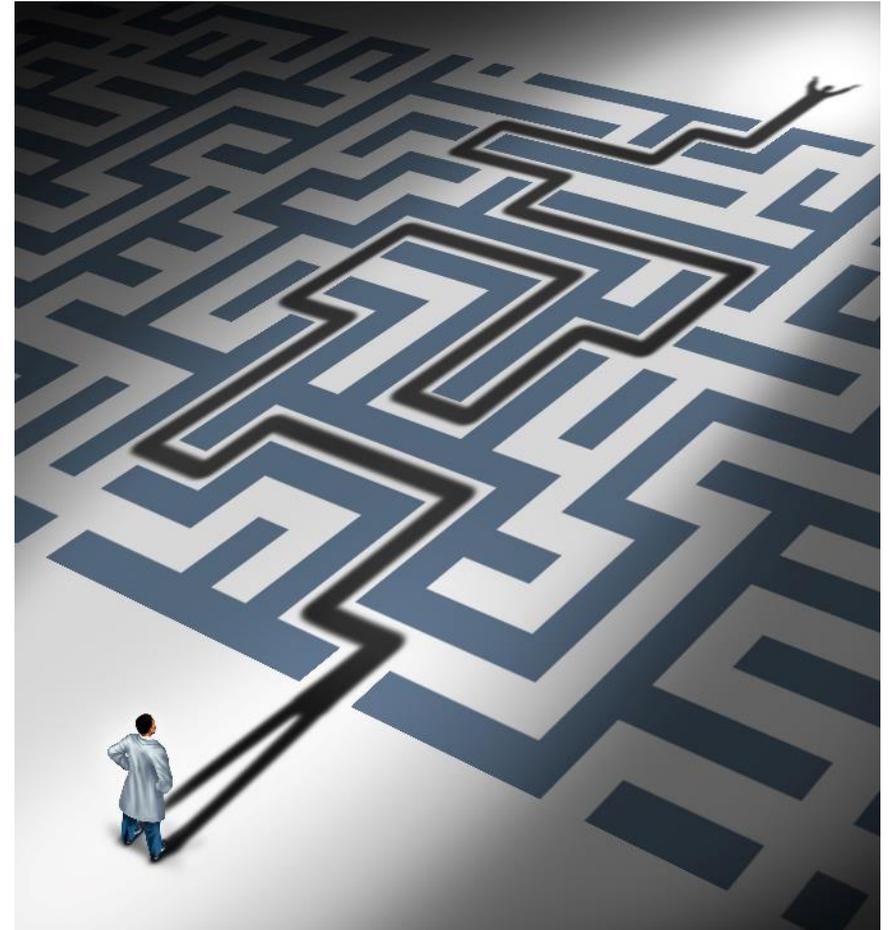


1. Help Create A Community
 - Connecting students prior to their arrival in the US
 - Awareness of clubs, teams and organizations on campus
 - Scheduling events regularly, especially during holidays
2. Regular Check-Ins
 - Being able to identify students who are struggling
 - Noticeable changes in dress, appearance, demeanor
 - Being available to talk, and to speak with others in the community
3. Internal Training
 - Identify and respond to students in distress
 - When to connect students to resources (we are not counselors!)
 - How to listen actively, empathetically, and without judgement

CULTURE OF CARE: SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Advisors can support students with counseling skills, including:

- Demonstrating empathy
- Reflecting and paraphrasing
- Asking open-ended questions & building rapport
- Keep confidentiality (a professional code of public silence) - FERPA
- Learn how to pronounce names correctly
- Have a support team available in times of crisis
- Support the community, not just the affected student/family



CULTURE OF CARE: PLAN AHEAD

In difficult conversations:

- Consider student's reaction when responding
- Consider how you will handle discomfort delivering/receiving information
- Don't avoid subject because it's uncomfortable (ex: suicide)
- Avoid minimizing their feelings/situation (Be positive)
- Know when to refer
- Connect with on and off campus resources

Planning Ahead:

Have a plan, know who to call and connect with resources

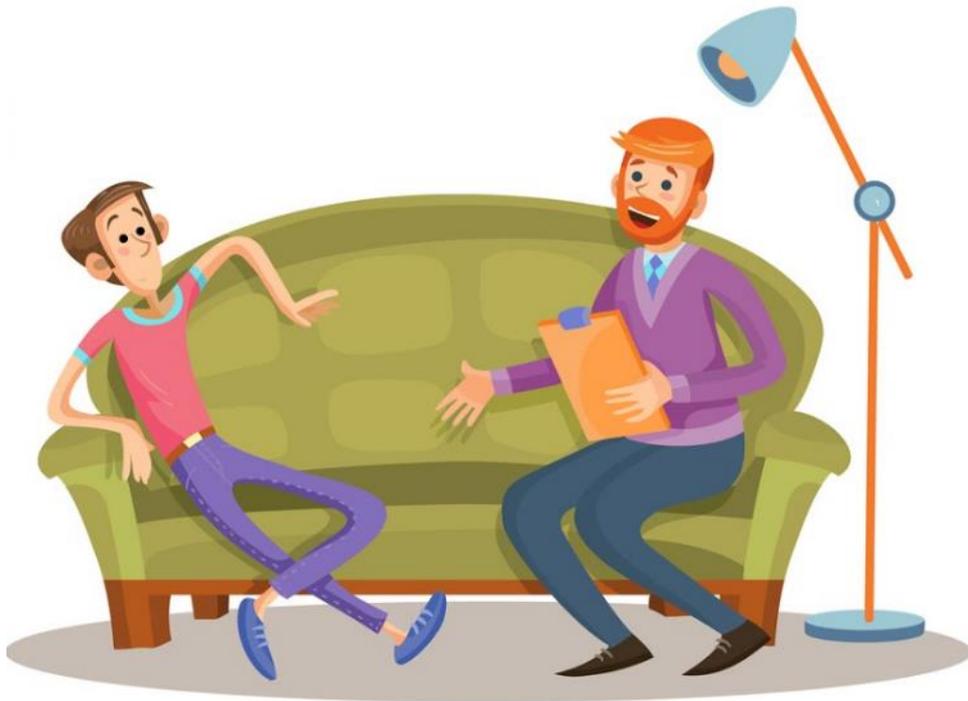


HOW TO REDUCE STIGMA

- Dispel the myths: What is mental health and counseling
- Know the facts about cultural differences around counseling
- Invite on-campus counselors/psychologists to orientation and meet & greets
- 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
- Demystify seeking treatment (i.e., types of providers, where to go, what to expect)



BUILDING BRIDGES



Mental Health outside of the Mental Health sphere

- Depression Screening at Student Health Center
- Establishing a knowledge-sharing community (know your partners)
- Highlight Counseling Center events through newsletters, social media, etc.
- Know the services offered around campus, and form connections
 - Support groups/medical practitioners who speak other languages
 - Ombudsperson Office
 - Dean of Students
 - Child and Family Studies on campus
 - Chapel and community religious/spiritual support centers



PROGRAMMING THAT WORKS



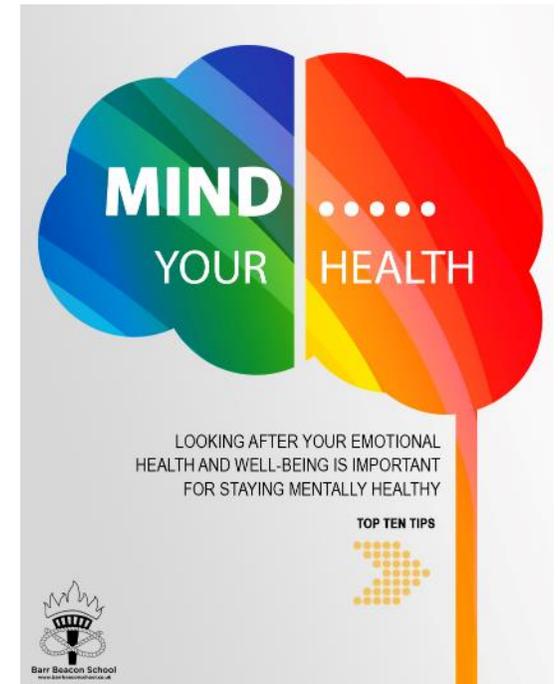
“...the quality of the **social support** system can have both a direct and a buffering effect when international students undergo **psychological stress.**”

PRE-DEPARTURE PROGRAMMING

“The first day of a student’s orientation is too late to be discussing student mental health for the first time.”¹ - “It’s Never Too Soon To Talk About Mental Health”²

Prior to student’s arrival, think of ways to prepare students or address the topic in pre-departure materials:

- Introduction materials about the Counseling/Wellness initiatives available on campus with pictures and phone numbers/emails
- Testimonials from current students about homesickness, culture shock, stress, anxiety, and depression (perhaps in video format)
- Quotes about acceptance of mental health and counseling (like “Common Myths”)
- Create Buddy programs
- Collaborate in residence halls on outreach programming

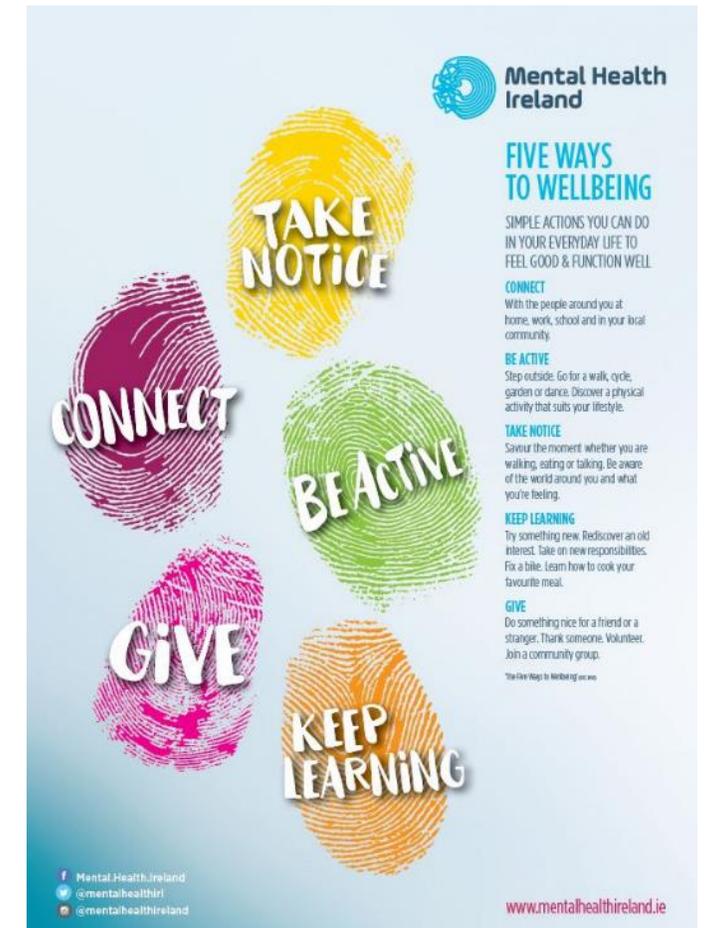


¹ Lee Burdette Williams. ² The Chronicle of Higher Education, 10/14/2016, p.A56.

MENTAL HEALTH IN ORIENTATION

These are a few things you can keep in mind for your international student orientation:

- Educate students on challenges and cultural adjustment issues that may arise
- Invite Counseling Center or other mental health professionals to introduce mental health service/host a luncheon
- Educate students about campus/community resources
- Train your peer leaders and mentors to be knowledgeable enough about these issues to help guide students
- Collaborate in residence halls on outreach programming



PROGRAMS THAT WORK



- Texas A&M University
 - QPR Training
 - Resources for Undocumented Students
 - Tell Somebody



- University of the Incarnate Word
 - International Student Wellness Meetings
 - Resources for Undocumented Students
 - International Ambassador Program

PROGRAMMING THAT HELPS

- Workshops (e.g., “Decoding U.S. Culture”, “Lost in Translation”, “Culture Shock”)
- “Let’s Talk” Drop-in Hours
- University 101-type courses/Freshman Orientation courses
- Social organizations/student clubs
- Summer/Holiday programs
- Friendship family programs
- Discussion/Support Groups
- Creative initiatives (e.g., “Welcome to My World Photo Exhibition”)



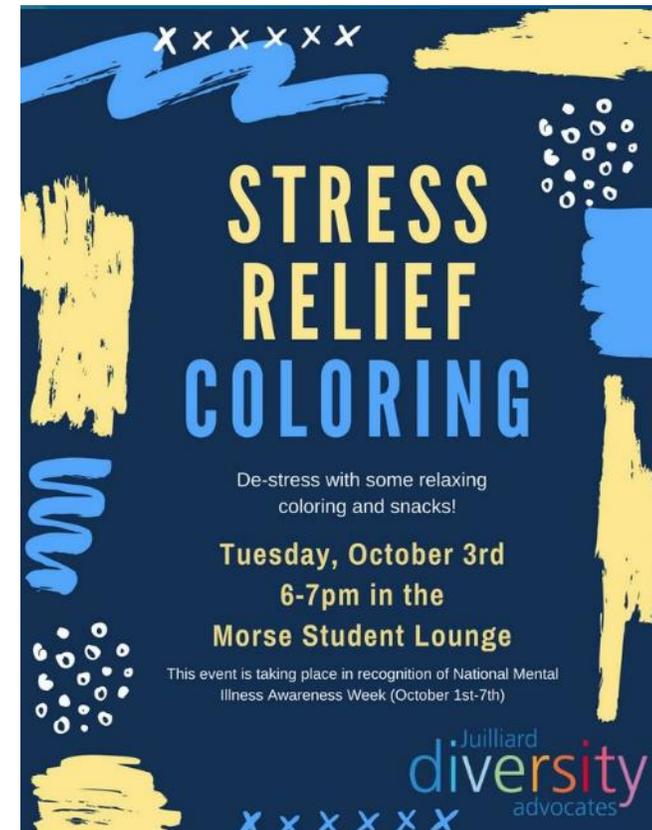
BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

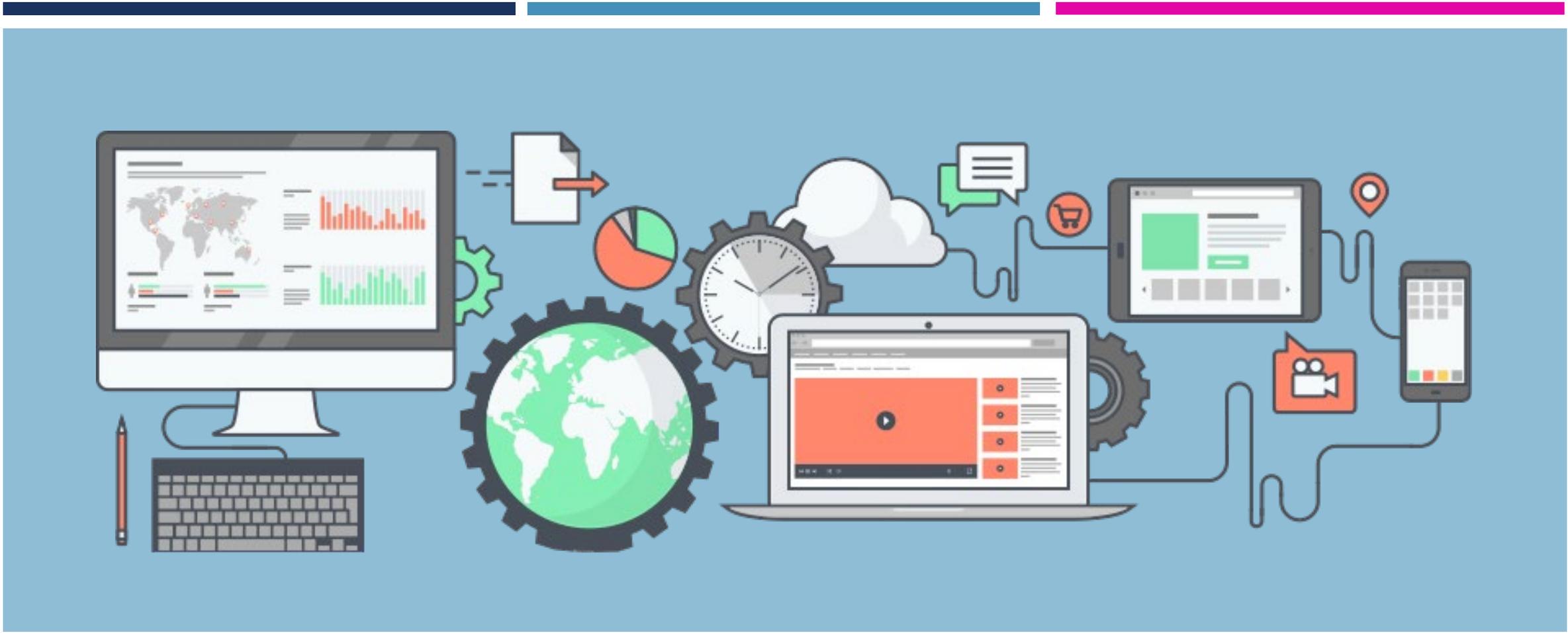
Can you think of **creative ways** to help students **get the help they need** to manage their stress?

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

Think about ways to approach the topic indirectly:

- Making friends in the US
- Managing stress
- Time management
- Eating healthy
- Staying fit on campus





RESOURCES & HOTLINES

PRE-DEPARTURE, ORIENTATION, ONLINE

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS TRAINING



**Powerpoint
Presentation**



Video Content



Student Handout



Interactive Activities



Proctor Guide

In partnership with:



The MGH Center for
Cross-Cultural Student
Emotional Wellness

 **International**
Student Insurance

VIDEOS



www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/culture-shock-and-stress-video.php



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

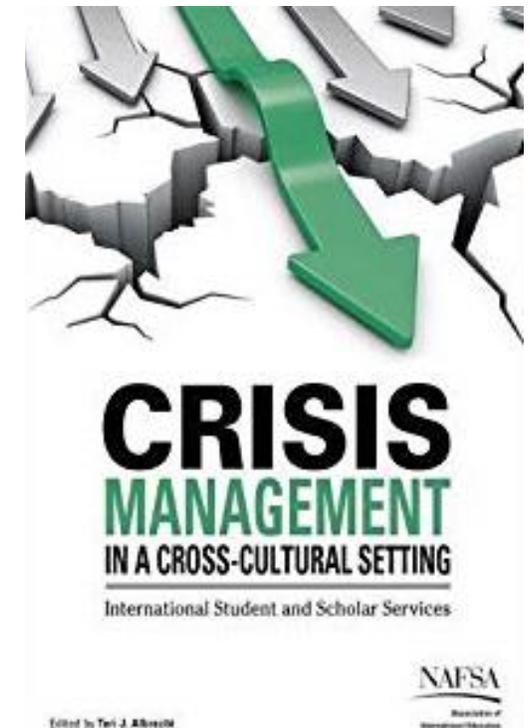
RESOURCES – FOR PROFESSIONALS

- **NAFSA Resources**

- Best Practices in Addressing Mental Health Issues Affecting Education Abroad Participants shop.nafsa.org/detail.aspx?id=102E
- Crisis Management in a Cross Cultural Setting: ISSS shop.nafsa.org/detail.aspx?id=992
- NAFSA Book/E-book: Mental Health Issues and International Students - AVAILABLE DECEMBER 2018

- **Other Resources**

- Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness (MGHCCCSEW) www.mghstudentwellness.org/consortium-landing



SERVICES & HOTLINES – FOR STUDENTS



Online and phone counseling services

- Hotlines and services
 - National Suicide Prevention - 1-800-273-TALK
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - The National Domestic Violence Hotline - 1-800-799-SAFE
www.thehotline.org
 - It Gets Better Project (LGBTQ) 1-866-4-U-TREVOR
www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/get-help
 - Trans Lifeline (transgender specific) 877-565-8860
www.translifeline.org
 - Crisis Text Line - Text 741-741
www.crisistextline.org



“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?



THANK YOU

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ONLINE SESSION
EVALUATION

Training Your International Students on
Emotional Wellness and Mental Health Awareness