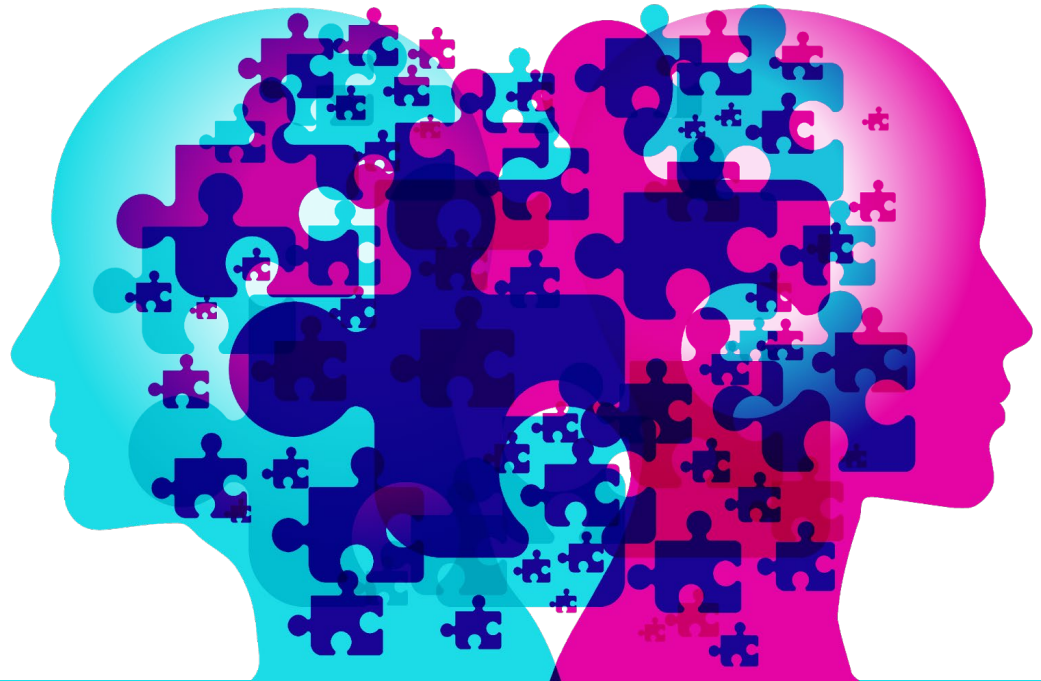


# Training Your International Students

## Emotional Wellness and Mental Health Awareness



# Presenters

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**Sally McLeod**

Marketing Manager,  
Licensed Insurance  
Agent

International Student  
Insurance



**Janice Tse**

Programs Coordinator,  
Services for International  
Students and Scholars

Global Affairs  
UC Davis

# Stress & Culture Shock Video

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Stress & Culture Shock  
as an International Student



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

# Agenda

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



# What's Going On?

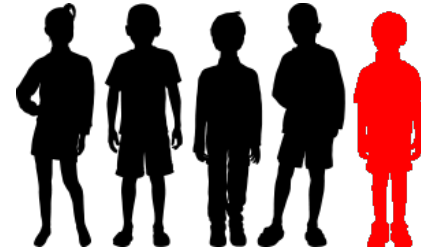
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40% of students so depressed  
they found it difficult to function

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

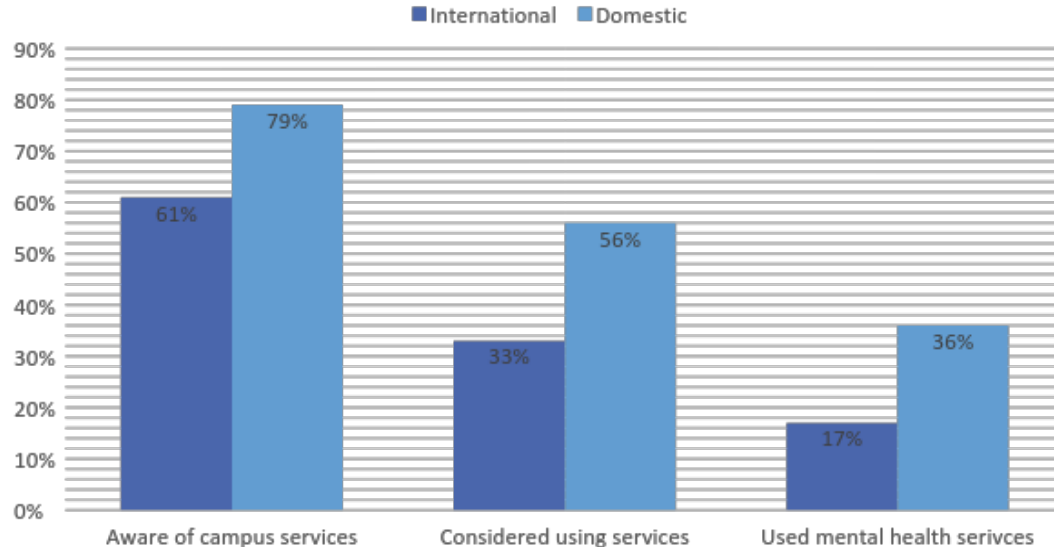


1 in 5 children, ages 13-18 will  
have a serious mental illness

# Mental Health Care – Underutilized

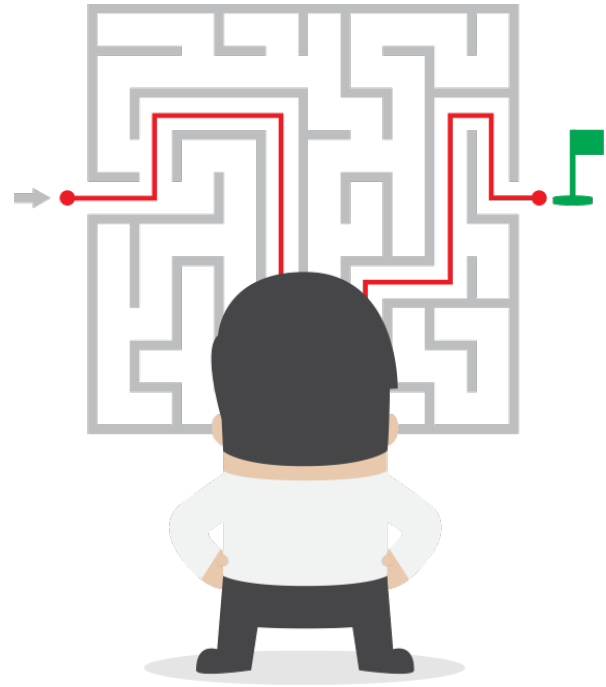
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Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling  
Services Among International Graduate Students, Journal of American College Health



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

# Understanding the Challenges



# Culture Impacts All Aspects of Illness

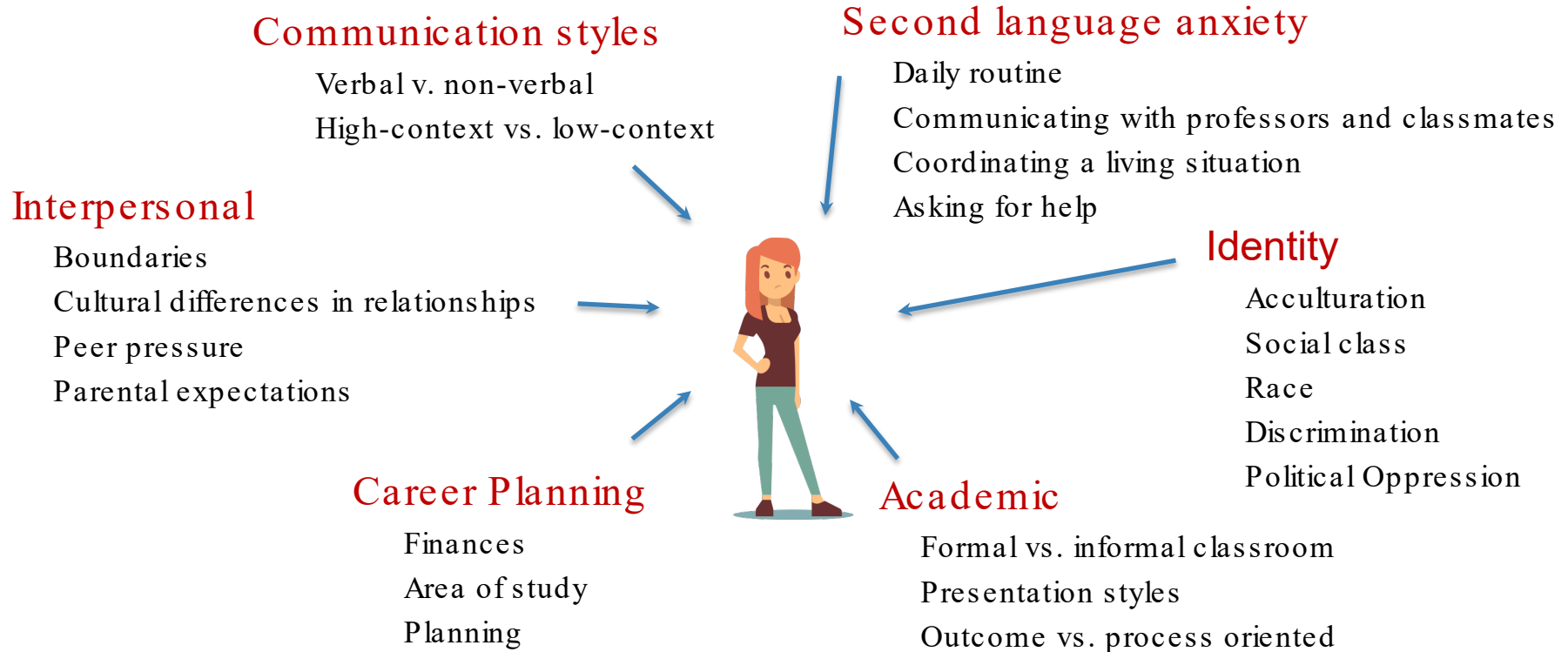
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- Expression of symptoms outwardly and inwardly
- Coping
- Where to seek care
- Management of symptoms
- How they seek help



# Common Adjustment Issues

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# Barriers To Treatment

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- Lack of mental health literacy
- Unaware of services
- Language barriers
- Role of psychiatry in other cultures
- Stigma (Family & friends)
- Location of counseling center
- US therapists lacking cultural understanding
- Lack of support



Yeung A, Kung W. *Psychiatric News*. 2004; 21(1): 34-36.

Kim BSK, Omizo MM. *Couns. Psychol.* 2003; 31:343-46.

# Common Myths

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Only someone from my home country will understand my problem.

Counseling is for “crazy” people.

I could lose my visa status.

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

"Everyone will know I saw a counselor."

# Embracing Mental Health



# Supporting Your Students

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## 1. Help Create A Community

1. Connecting students prior to their arrival in the U.S.
2. Awareness of clubs, teams and organizations on campus
3. Scheduling events regularly, and especially during holidays/holiday breaks

## 2. Regular Check-Ins

1. Being able to identify students who are struggling
2. Noticeable changes in dress, appearance, demeanor
3. Being available to talk

## 3. Internal Training

1. Identify and respond to students in distress
2. When and how to connect students to resources (we are not counselors!)
3. How to listen actively, empathetically, and without judgment

# Culture of Care: Supporting Students

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Advisors can support students by:

- Being available/open door policy
- Learn how to pronounce names correctly
- At times of crisis, be part of the support team
- Support the community, not just the affected student/family
- Knowing resources on/off campus and provide a “warm hand-off”
- Do not avoid difficult conversations

# How to Reduce Stigma

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- 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
- Normalize students' concerns and stress
- Demystify seeking treatment (i.e., types of providers, where to go, what to expect)
- Acknowledge that helping looks different across cultures

# Building Bridges

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## Mental Health outside of the Mental Health sphere:

- Encourage participation at “lunch and learns” focused on stress management, time management, sleep, etc.
- Highlight Counseling Center events through newsletters, social media, etc.
- Know the services offered around campus and in your community, and form connections
  - Support groups/medical practitioners who speak other languages
  - Student Health Center
  - Counseling Center
  - Chapel and community religious/spiritual support centers

# Case Studies

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## Case #1: A Warm Hand-Off

- Importance of knowing campus partners
- Acknowledging “elephant in room”

## Case #2: Transitioning Home

- Not just about homesickness/adjusting to U.S.
- Integrating back to home country



# Resources & Hotlines

Pre-departure, Orientation, Online

# Emotional Wellness Training

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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

# Mental Health Awareness Video

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[www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php)

# Resources

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## NAFSA Resources

Best Practices in Addressing Mental Health Issues Affecting Education Abroad Participants

<https://shop.nafsa.org/detail.aspx?id=102E>

Crisis Management in a Cross Cultural Setting: ISSS

[http://www.nafsa.org/wcm/Cust/Custom\\_Cart/Product\\_Detail.aspx?prodid=450](http://www.nafsa.org/wcm/Cust/Custom_Cart/Product_Detail.aspx?prodid=450)

Available December 2019, NAFSA Book/E-book: Mental Health Issues and International Students

## Other Resources

Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness (MGH

CCCSEW) <https://www.mghstudentwellness.org/consortium>

# Services & Hotlines

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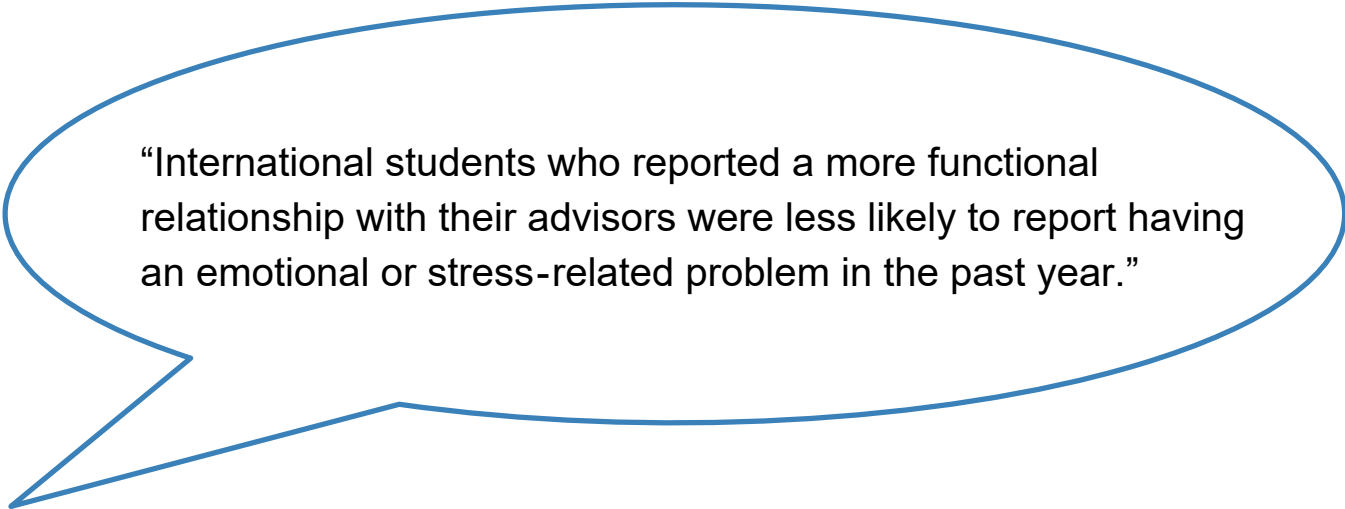
## Hotlines

- National Suicide Prevention  
1-800-273-TALK  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://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](http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/get_help)

## Services

- Crisis Text Line  
<http://www.crisistextline.org/>  
Text 741-741
- Online and phone counseling services





“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?