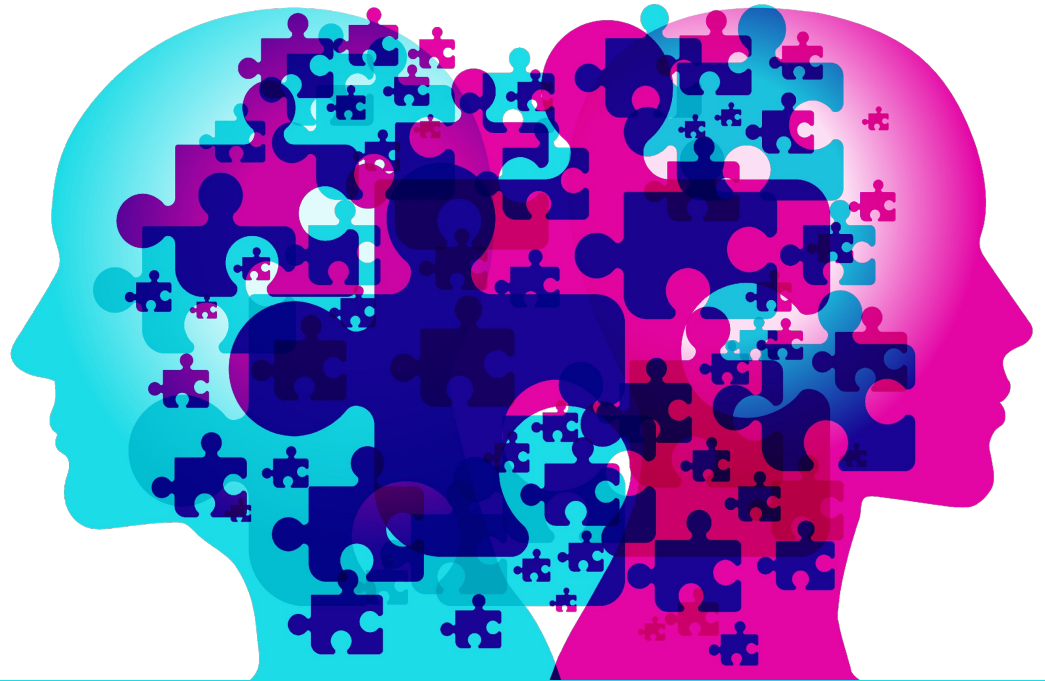


Training your International Students

Emotional Wellness and Mental Health Awareness



Presenters



Robyn Walter

International Student and Scholar Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University



ILLINOIS WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY



Meghan Klein

Marketing Director
International Student Insurance



Culture Shock & Stress Video



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



<https://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?

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

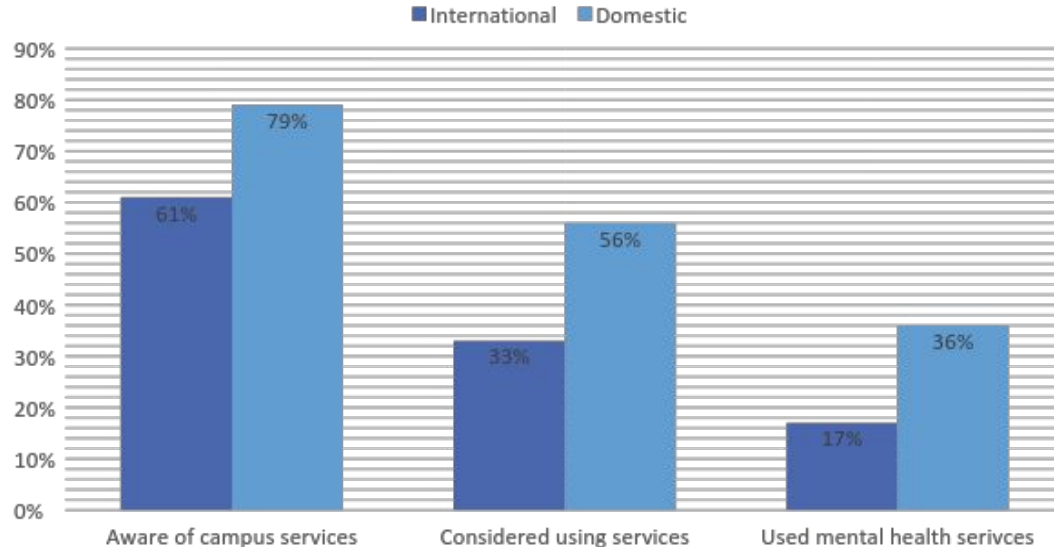


46% Diagnosed

Source: NIMH, 2013

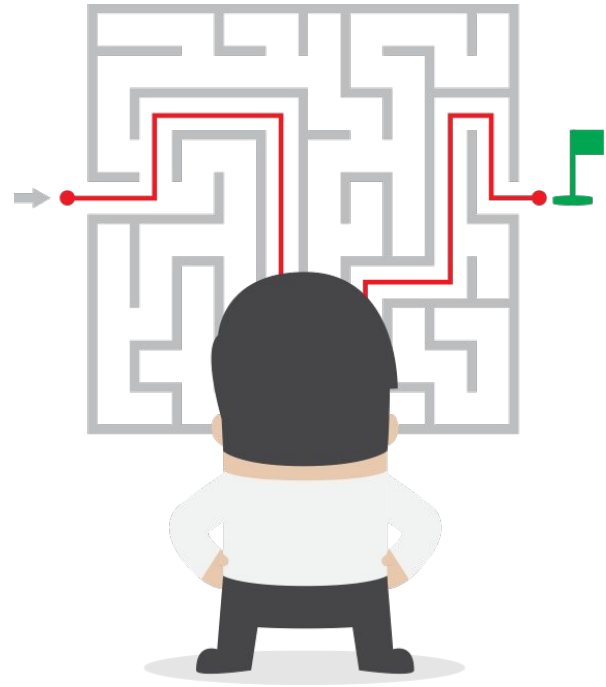
Mental Health Care – Underutilized

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

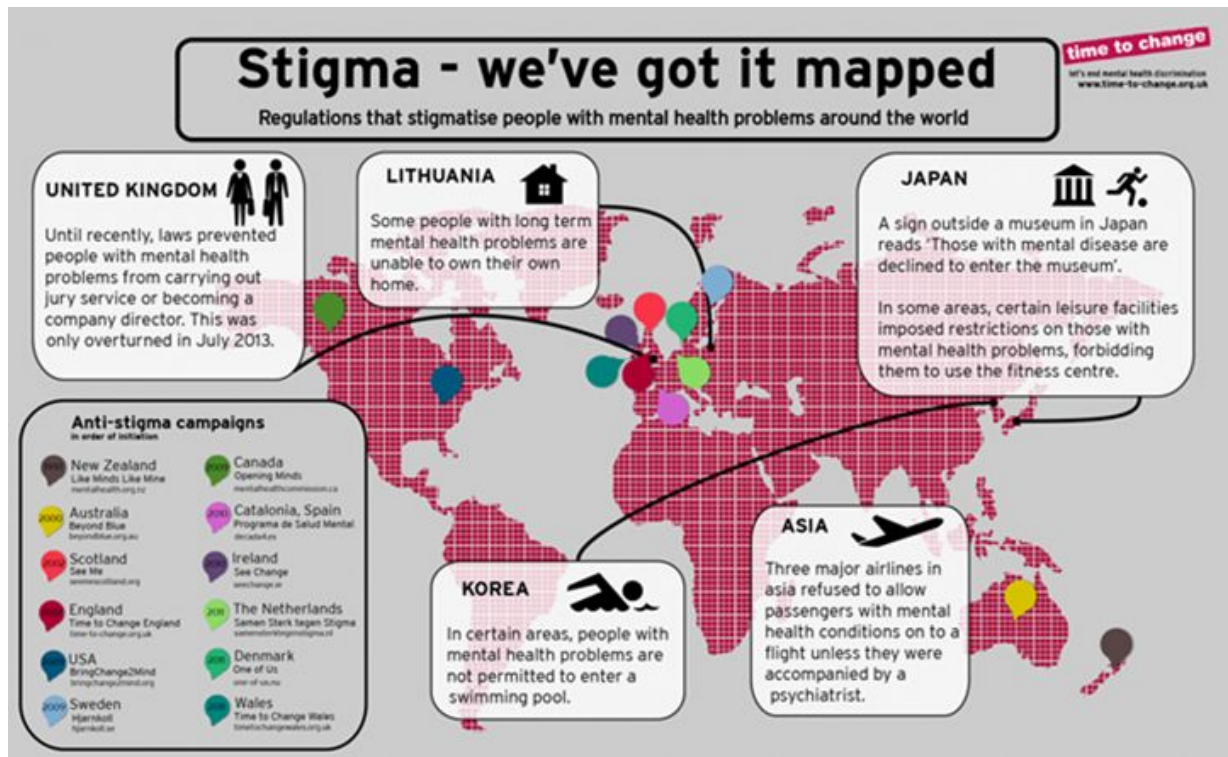


Source: Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lusting, 2010

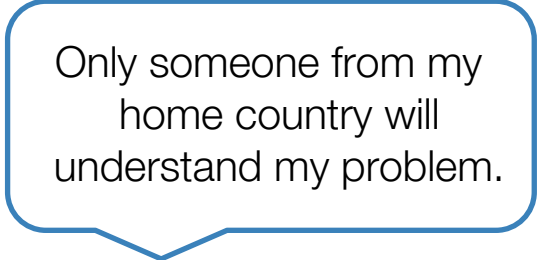
Understanding the Challenges



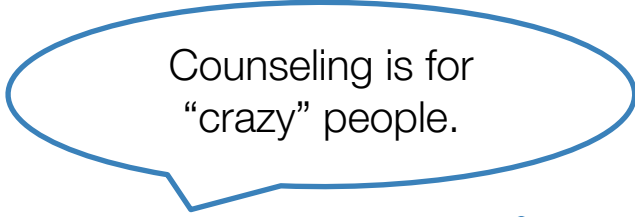
Stigma Around The World



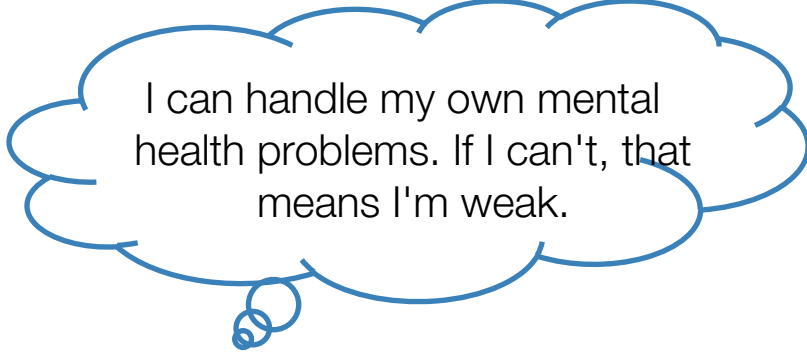
Common Myths




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.

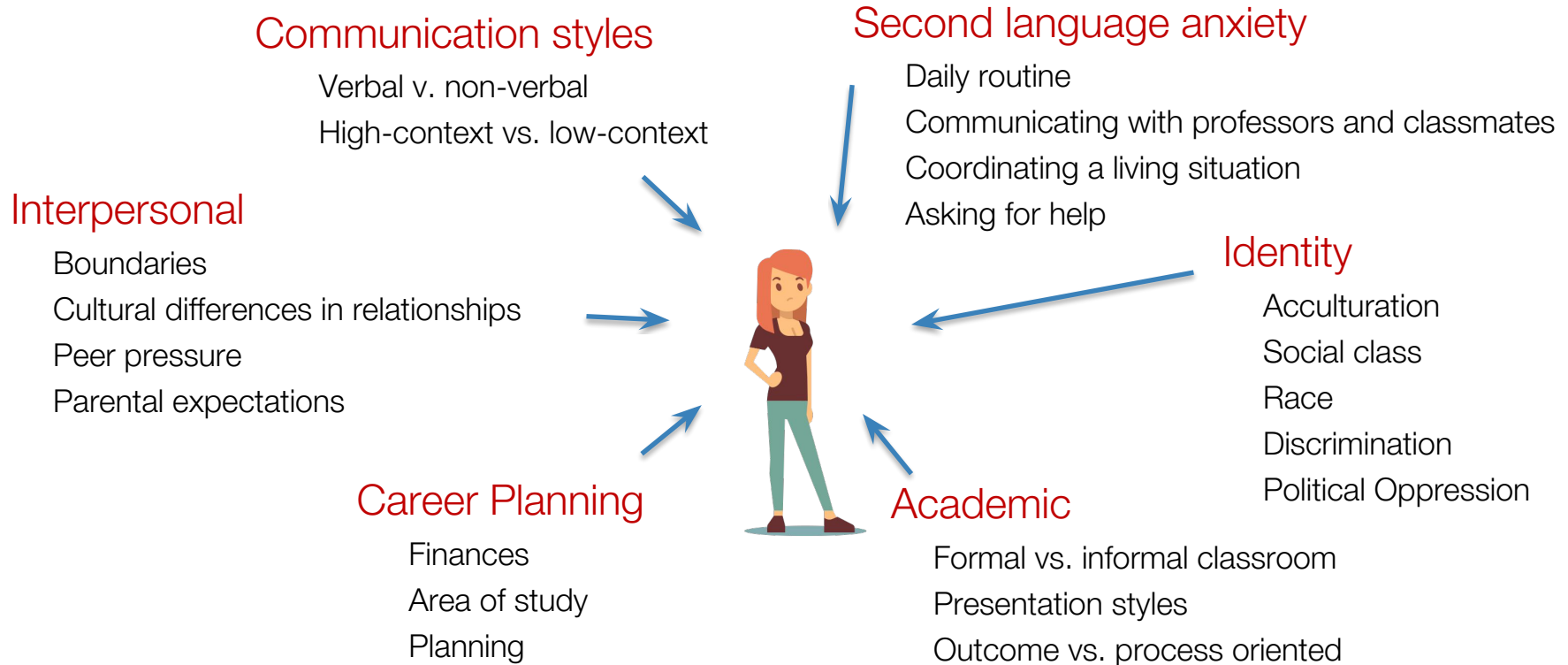


I could lose my visa status.



"Everyone will know I saw a counselor."

Common Issues – What's going on



Barriers To Treatment

- Unaware of services
- Lack of mental health awareness
- 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.

Overcoming the Challenges



Supporting Your Students

1. Help Create Community

- A. Connecting students prior to their arrival in the US
- B. Awareness of clubs, teams and organizations on campus
- C. Scheduling events regularly, and especially during holidays

2. Regular Check-Ins/Collaboration

- A. Being able to identify students who are struggling
- B. Noticeable changes in dress, appearance, demeanor
- C. Being available to talk, and to speak with fac/staff in the university community
- D. Develop relationships with critical partners (advising, counseling, career services, res. life)

3. Professional Development

- A. Anticipate challenging conversations and plan ahead
- B. Strengthen reflective listening skills
- C. Increase knowledge of student issues~conferences; workshops; reading; consultation
- D. Support colleagues conversations with students (join student mtg w/ advisor, faculty, coach)
- E. Solicit student feedback, from programs, orientation, etc.

Culture of Care: Supporting Students

Advisors can support students with strong listening skills:

- ROEQS
Reflection, Open-ended ?'s; Empathy, Questions, Summary
- Keep a professional code of public silence
- Use preferred name, pronounce names correctly
- At times of crisis, be part of the support team
- 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 because it's uncomfortable (ex: suicide)
- Be positive, without minimizing student's concerns/experiences
- 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
- Ask counselors/psychologists how they communicate across cultures
- Give testimonials even anonymously, and perhaps in their native language
- Normalize students' concerns and stress
- Creative ways of introducing counseling; explore faith-based relationships
- Demystify seeking treatment (i.e., types of providers, where to go, what to expect)

Mental Health in Orientation

- Discuss transition challenges and cultural adjustment; ask peer mentors to describe their difficult experiences
- Invite counseling center/mental health professionals to introduce mental health service/host a luncheon
- Educate students about campus/community resources
- Parent and partner programs
- Train your peer leaders and mentors to be knowledgeable enough about these issues to help guide students
- Collaborate with residence halls on outreach programming

Building the Trust – Creating the Connection

“The first day of a student’s orientation is too late to be discussing student mental health for the first time.” Lee Burdette Williams, “It’s Never Too Soon To Talk About Mental Health,” The Chronicle of Higher Education, 10/14/2016, p. A56.

Make counseling/wellness initiatives & info. available 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”)

“There is no health without mental health.” David Satcher

“People who need help sometimes look alot like people who don’t need help.”

Building Bridges

Mental Health outside of the Mental Health sphere

- Depression Screening at Student Health Center
- Use social media to promote health messages, memes, links, etc.
- 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
 - Chapel and community religious/spiritual support centers

Programming Ideas



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

Meirong Liu, “Addressing the Mental Health Problems of Chinese International College Students in the United States,” Advances in Social Work Vpl. 10 No. 1 (Spring 2009), p. 74.

Programming that helps

- 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
- Creative initiatives (e.g., “Welcome to My World Photo Exhibition”)

Marketing Your Program

Consider creative ways to approach the topic indirectly:

- Making Friends in the US
- Managing Stress
- Juggling Family at Home with Life in the US
- Improve your Grades
- Time Management
- Eating Healthy
- Strong Brains Need Strong Bodies ~ intro to fitness equipment

IWU Efforts

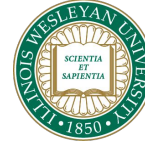


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Build Community:

1. Titan Talks~summer before arrival
2. Breakfasts/Lunches with departments btw arrival and Pre-Orientation
3. International Friendship Family Program; Kickoff during Family Weekend
4. Promote Christmas International
5. Fac/staff potluck onset of winter break
6. At least one organized off-campus activity winter & spring breaks

IWU Efforts



ILLINOIS WESLEYAN
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Regular Check-Ins

1. Pre-O 2.0 weekly meetings fall semester w/ first year students
 - **Counseling staff~safe partying; mental health
 - **Relationships, Dating & US Culture (Sexual assault prev) 3 part program
2. Semester registration: students must come to the office
3. Semester all class meetings

Other

1. Increase validation of and appreciation for international students presence on campus. #YouAreWelcomeHere; International Alumni Network; International Education Week;



Resources & Hotlines

Pre-departure, Orientation, Online

Emotional Wellness Resources



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



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

Resources



For Professionals --

- NAFSA Book/E-book: Mental Health Issues and International Students
- 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
https://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/

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

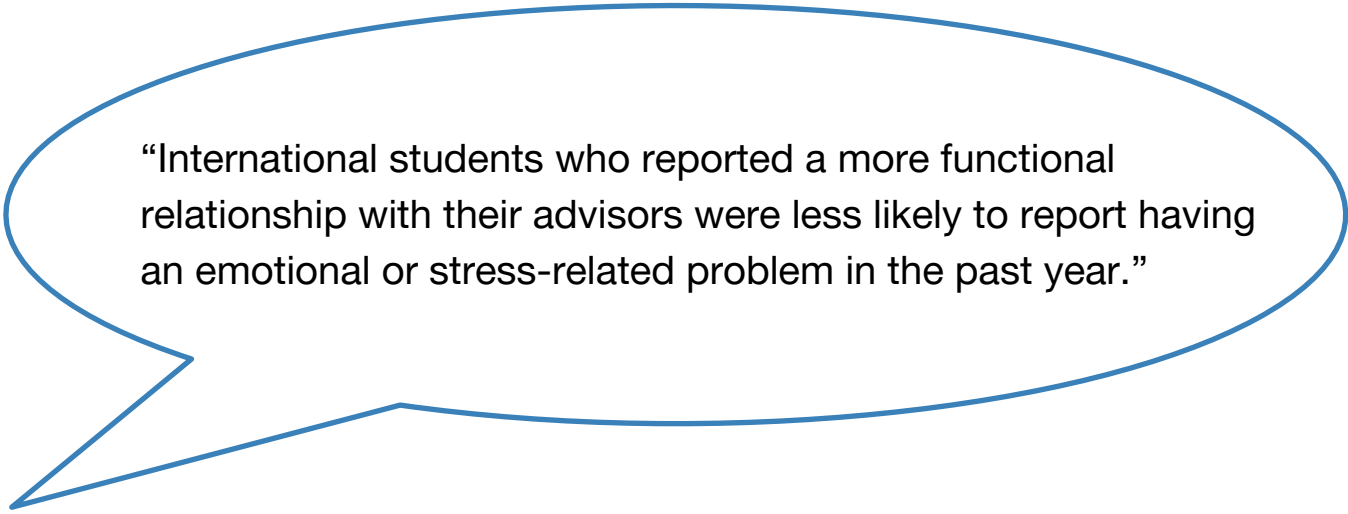
For Students --

Services

- Crisis Text Line <http://www.crisistextline.org/>
Text: 741-741
- Headspace <https://headspace.org.au/>

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



“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?