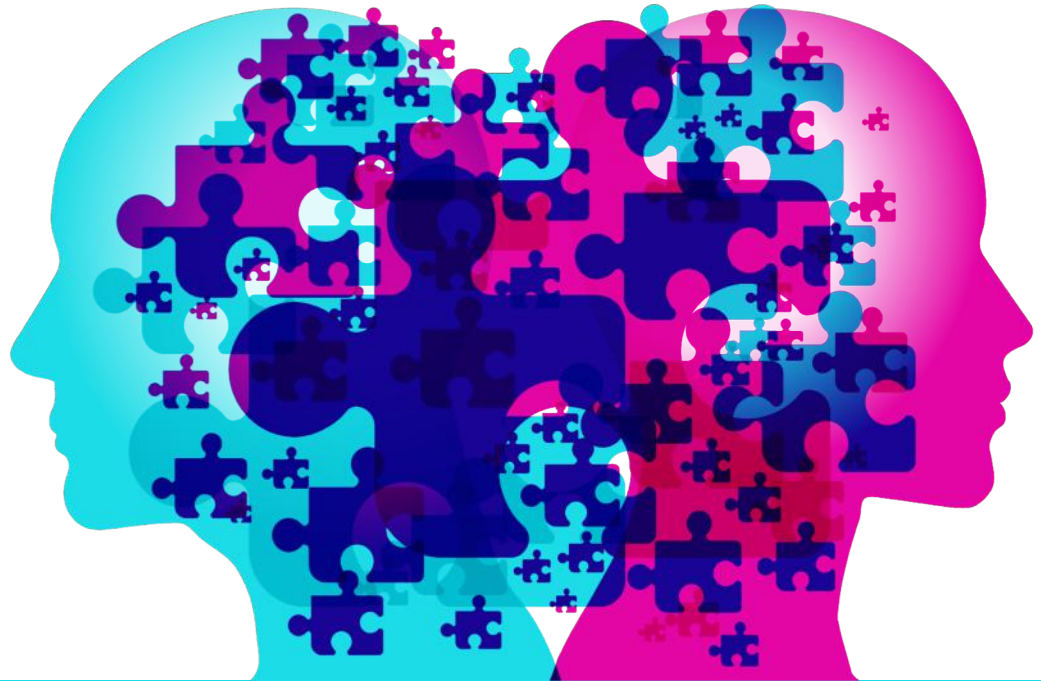# The Impact of Pervasive Technology
On the Emotional Wellness of International Students

Presenters

Vera Dimoplon

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs

Cambridge College

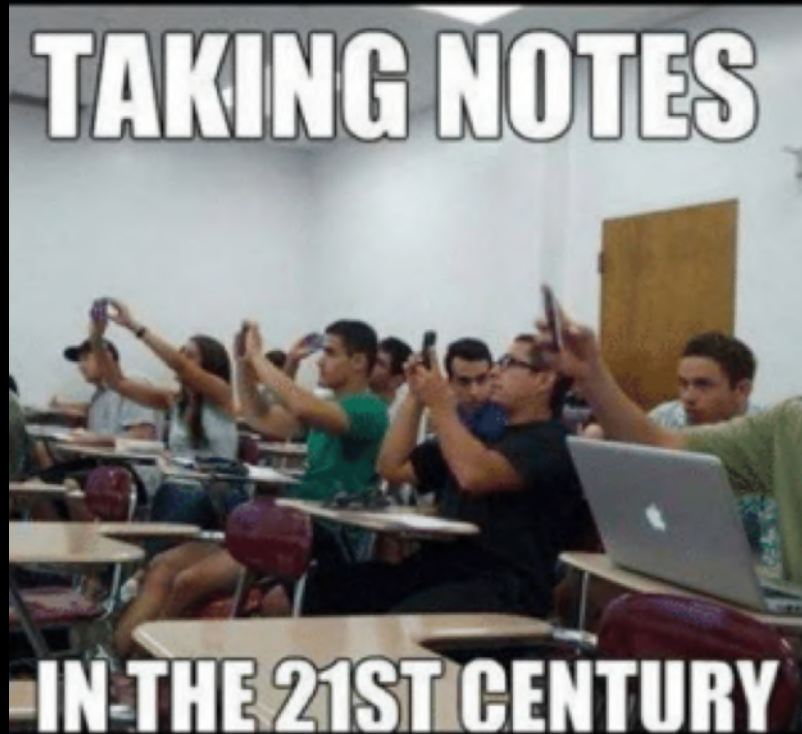Leah Hammond

Marketing Manager

Agenda

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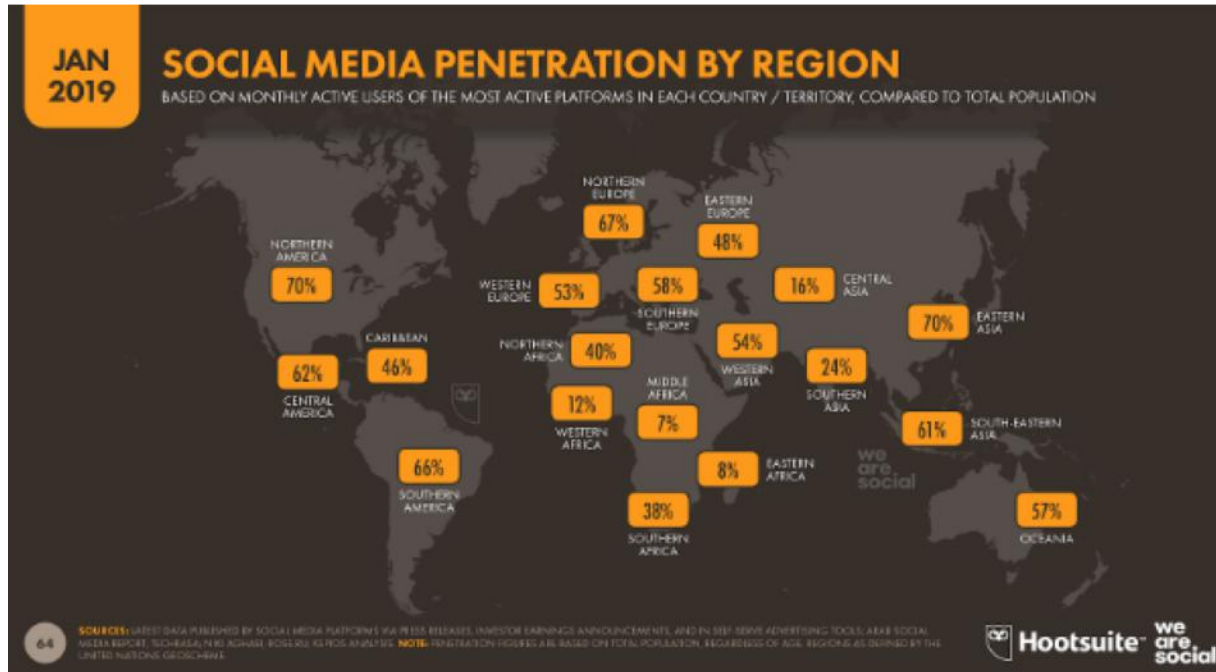- Programming That Works
- Resources
- Discussion & Questions

What's Going On?

Technology is on the Rise

Source:
https://www.wearesocial.com/
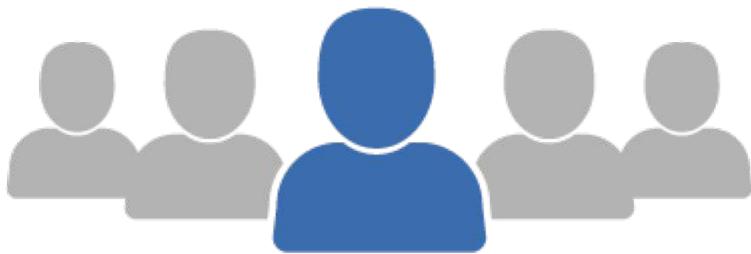
Stats on Mental Health & Technology

- Individuals who spend more time on social media and less time with others face-to-face report lower well-being and are more likely to be depressed - Lin et al., 2016; Shakya & Christakis, 2017

- College students with insomnia have significantly more mental health problems than college students without insomnia. - American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM)

- People that report using 7-11 social media platforms had more than three times the risk for depression/anxiety that their friends who used only two sites had, even after the study was adjusted for the amount of time spent by members of both groups - *Computers and Human Behavior Journal*

- 54% of college age students said that they use cell phones during class to text friends and browse social media - Student Pulse survey by Top Hat.

Major Trends

- Communication
- Sleep
- Physical Activity
- Community
- Cyberbullying
- Self-Esteem
- Body Image
- Depression & Anxiety

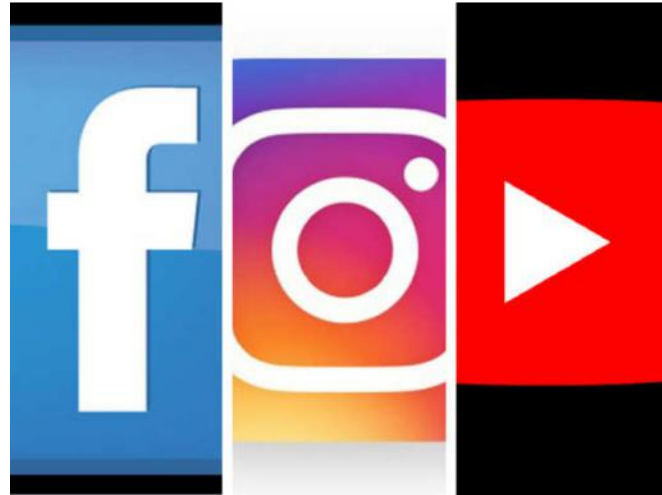**1 in 5**

College students have anxiety or depression

http://theconversation.com/1-in-5-college-students-have-anxiety-or-depression-heres-why-90440

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

Which social media platform was the most negative and positive for users?

A. Facebook
B. Instagram
C. Youtube

Instagram

Oh, so you're on Instagram?

Tell me about how much of a preffessional photographer you are.

Instagram has the most negative overall effect on young people's mental health.

- Body image and sleep, increases bullying and "FOMO", and leads to greater feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness
- Self-expression, self-identity, community building, and emotional support

Source: https://www.psychalive.org/worst-mental-health-instagram-facebook-youtube/

Facebook

Facebook was found to have similar negative effects to Instagram in the categories of bullying, "FOMO", body image, anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

- Major negativity on sleep
- Emotional support and community building

FACEBOOK IS LIKE THE FRIDGE.

IF YOU'RE BORED YOU KEEP OPENING & CLOSING IT EVERY FEW MINUTES TO SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING GOOD IN IT.

imgflip.com   memegenerator.net

Source: https://www.psychalive.org/worst-mental-health-instagram-facebook-youtube/

YouTube

YouTube was by far the most positive of the social media platforms.
- Major negativity on sleep
- Scored high on awareness, self-expression, and community building.

YouTube was also the only social network where anxiety, depression, and loneliness lessened with use.
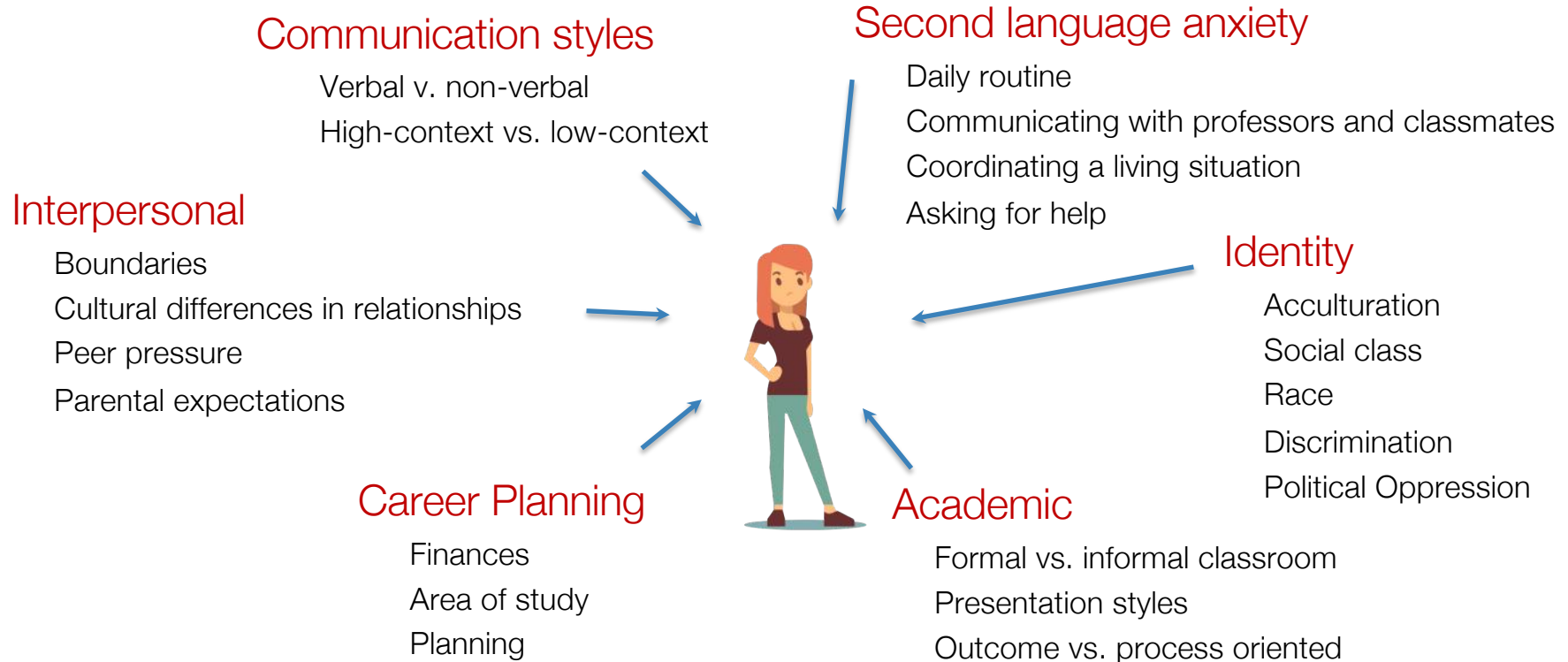
spider-bih   FOLLOW

YouTube being down is wack. What am I supposed to do now? *Go outside????*

Common Adjustment Issues

Communication styles
- Verbal v. non-verbal
- High-context vs. low-context

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

Interpersonal
- Boundaries
- Cultural differences in relationships
- Peer pressure
- Parental expectations

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

Career Planning
- Finances
- Area of study
- Planning

Academic
- Formal vs. informal classroom
- Presentation styles
- Outcome vs. process oriented

Overcoming the Challenges

On a Positive Note...

Use Technology to your Advantage!

Positive effects of technology on international students:
- Mental Health Support
- Resources
- Network and Connections
- Travel

Mental Health

- Depression
- Isolation
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Rejection
- Culture shock

- Role of the family
- Social support
- Feeling of continuity
- Feeling of connectedness
- Emotional support
- Presence

Resources

Prior to arrival:
- Place to live
- How to rent books
- School organizations
- Community resources (library, gym, cultural center, interest groups, etc.)

Upon/After the arrival:
- Locating information about International Student orientation
- Getting information about necessary steps and processes for the new international students
- Connecting to student organizations on campus/off campus
- Locating internship opportunities

Network and Connections

Making connections:
- Networking using technology (minimizes financial burden, helps overcome social anxiety, creates opportunities across international community, network without traveling)
- Time-efficient

Keeping connections:
- Example
- After graduation/after leaving the US
- Connecting professional network across international community
- Alumni connections (provide expertise to the next generation of students)

Travel

- Making travel arrangements
- Meeting people prior to arrival
- Creating a community prior to arrival
- Travel alerts(State Department alert example)
- Stay connected with a DSO/PDSO in case there is an emergency

Limitations and Implications

Access to technology across international community
- Accessible technology
- Time zones
- Country regime and use of technology
- Political situation and use of technology

Supporting Your Students

Help Create A Community
- Connecting students prior to their arrival in the U.S. and encourage face to face meetings and event wherever possible
- Let students know about clubs, teams and organizations on campus
- Connect students with interest groups
- Alumni network-create connections from day 1

Regular Check-Ins
- Being able to identify students who are struggling
- Noticeable changes in dress, appearance, demeanor
- Being available to talk

Internal Training
- Identify and respond to students in distress
- When and how to connect students to resources (we are not counselors!)
- How to listen actively, empathetically, and without judgment

Culture of Care: Supporting Students

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

Holidays

Time when international students feel most vulnerable:
- Isolation
- Rejection
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Homesick

Include your international students into your holiday planning:
- School events
- Host families
- Seek local families (students, staff, general community) who would invite international students to join them for holidays

Help international students connect to the holiday community events:
- Share the dates of the events
- Help make reservations
- Organize group trips to attend holiday events together with international students
- Ask students to "report" about their holiday travel after the fact (give ideas to other students, promote your interest in your student's social life engagement)

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

- 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

Common Fears

- Fear of being rejected by the family
- Fear of losing a sponsor
- Fear of being accused of "cheating" if using accommodations while being a student
- Fear of being rejected by their international community at school
- Fear of losing their reputation
- Fear of being perceived as being "weak"
- Fear of being labeled
- Fear of losing respect of their professors/ administration

Other Factors:
- Not having a formal diagnosis
- Not being aware of a diagnosis at all
- Having difficulty with seeking mental help
- Having difficulty with accepting a diagnosis
- Living with a diagnosis

Building Bridges

Mental Health outside of the Mental Health sphere:

- Depression screening event on campus/Depression screenings on website

- Encourage participation at "lunch and learns" focused on stress management, time management, sleep, etc.

- Highlight Counseling Center events through newsletters, social media, flyers 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

Mental Health in Orientation

- Inform students of challenges and cultural adjustment
- Invite Counseling Center or other mental health professionals to introduce mental health support services/host a luncheon and/or include mental health services in campus tours
- 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
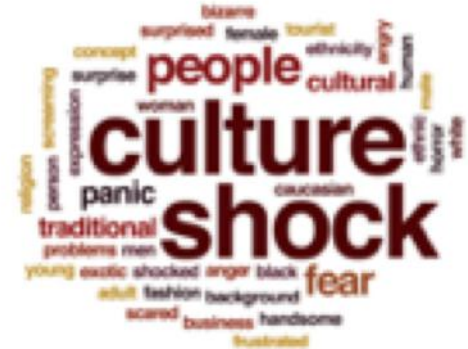
Marketing Your Program

How many of your international students want to go to a special event where they are going to talk about mental health?

Instead, think about ways to approach the topic indirectly:
- Making friends in the US
- Managing stress
- Time management
- Eating healthy
- Staying fit on campus

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 initiates (e.g., "Welcome to My World Photo Exhibition")
- Yoga sessions
- Coffee Hour
- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Resources & Hotlines

Pre-departure, Orientation, Online

Emotional Wellness Training

Powerpoint Presentation

Video Content

Student Handout

Interactive Activities

Proctor Guide

Download online at
International Student Insurance

In partnership with:

The MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness

International Student Insurance

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?

Mental Health Awareness for Internationa...

THERAPIST   PSYCHOLOGIST   PSYCHIATRIST

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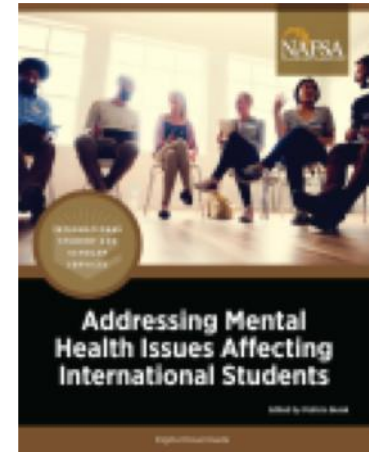
https://shop.nafsa.org/detail.aspx?id=202E

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
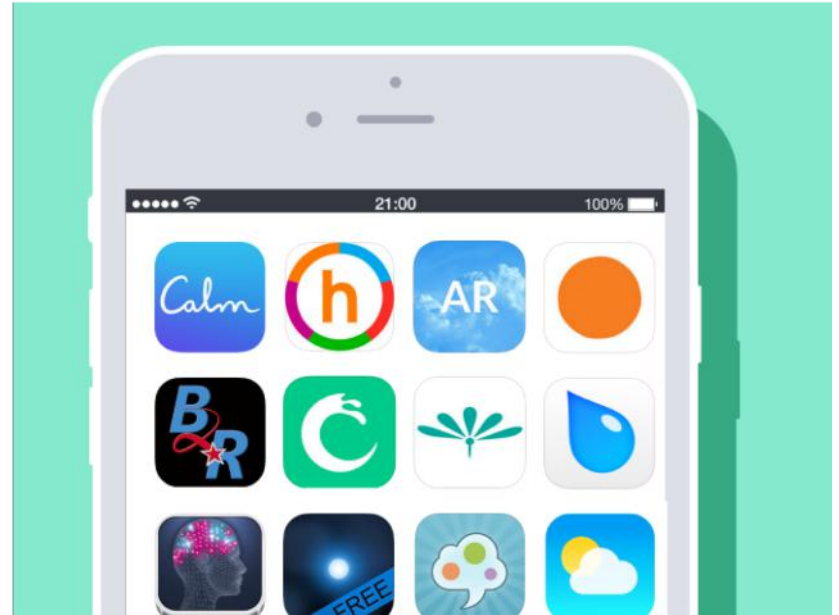 http://www.crisistextline.org/
  Text 741-741

Anxiety Apps

- Headspace
- Happyify
- Calm
- Acupressure
- Talk Space
- Sleep Time
- Relax & Rest Guided Meditations
- Stop, Breathe, and Think
- Colorify

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