

EAN Spring Meeting

Student Mental Health Concerns
and Learning Abroad

May 7, 2019

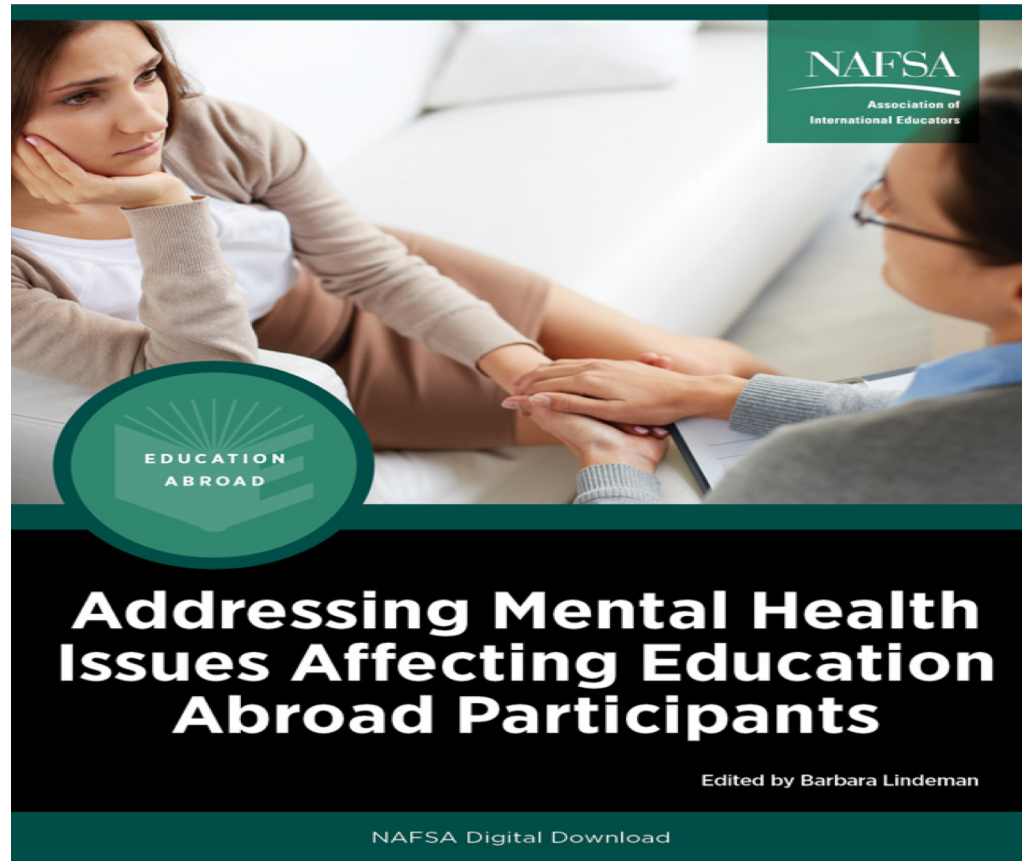
LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Addressing Mental Health Issues Affecting Education Abroad Participants

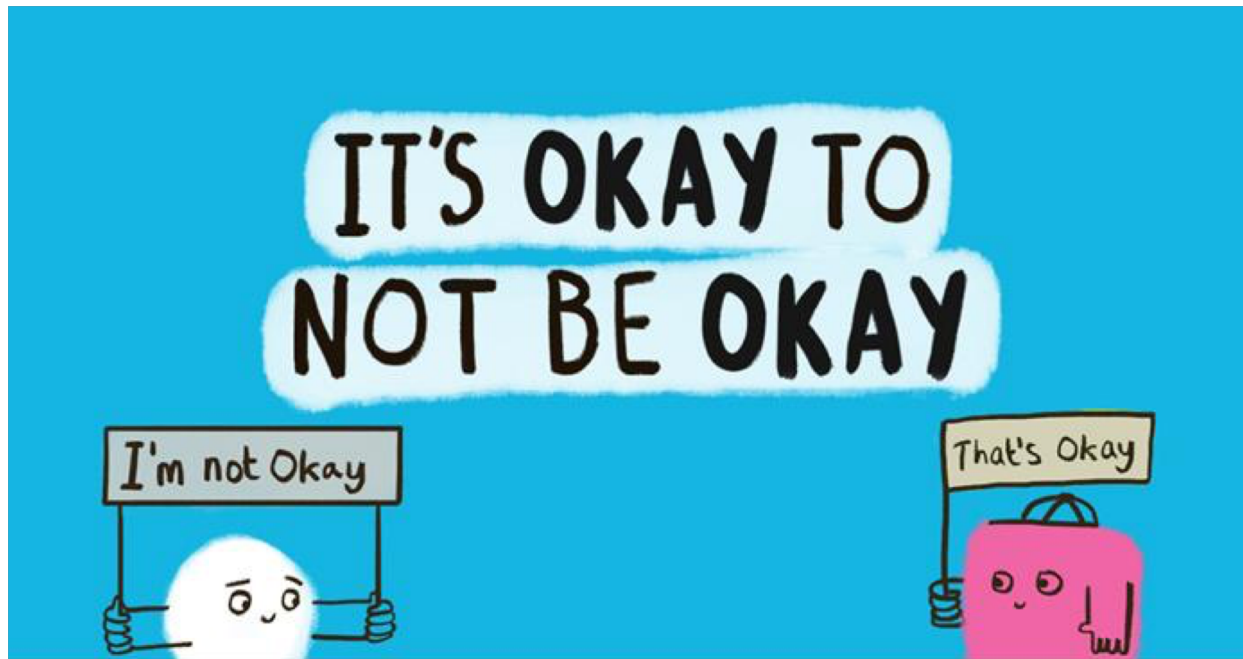


Meeting Goals

- How can we work together to support students with emotional and psychological challenges who are considering a learning abroad experience?
- What resources or processes are already in place?
- What type of support is available onsite?
- What trends are we seeing?

Student-Made Video: Thinking Ahead About Mental Health Abroad

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5jQt0iN_pQ



Fall 2016 EAN Meeting

Effective Advising to Address Learning Abroad Fears & Concerns

“Is it safe to go abroad?” “Should I still avoid all of Africa because of Ebola?” “Is there any place in Europe not experiencing regular terrorist attacks?” “Should I be afraid of the Zika virus?”

These are some of the many questions we might face daily from students and families as they explore going abroad. Are you finding that students are choosing not to participate on a learning abroad experience because of their fear? During this interactive session, we hope to arrive at a better understanding of resources available and how to expand your comfort level in discussing these broader issues with students.

How do the Learning Abroad Center and GPS Alliance support and prepare students, families, and our on-site partners when health, safety, and security situations arise? What is the University’s health and safety philosophy on how to mitigate risks to our students and our on-site partners?

Presenters

- Kevin Dostal Dauer, Director of International Health, Safety, and Compliance, GPS Alliance
- Zach Mohs, Associate Director, Learning Abroad Center
- Scott Daby, Assistant Director, Advising and Enrollment

Grounding Assumptions / Setting the Stage

Defining mental health:

- Some definitions emphasize positive psychological well-being
- Some focus on the absence of mental health problems
- WHO - "Mental health can be conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."
- Continuum from having good mental health to a mental disorder.

Grounding Assumptions / Setting the Stage

Includes but not limited to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Eating disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Paranoia
- Substance use disorders

Culture Shock ≠ Mental Health disorder

Overview Data

A national survey of U.S. citizens found that 18.5% of adults (18 and older) experienced a mental illness in any one year.¹

Of the students with documented disabilities who choose to study abroad, 28% disclose having a psychological disability, compared with 6% who disclose having a physical disability.²

The [2018 College Student Health Survey of University of Minnesota Twin Cities](#) (UMTC) students found a 29 percent increase in mental health conditions among students since 2015.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

² Institute of International Education, 2015.

Overview Data

2018-2019 University of Minnesota Education Abroad data:

Situations flagged as Mental Health

- Various program models
- Worldwide destinations
- English-based as well as other language-based programs

Concurrent incident flags:

- Illness
- Refund Appeal
- Academic Issue
- Pre-departure Medical Advising/Support
- Student Behavior Issue
- Host Family Issue
- Drug Law Violations
- Parental involvement
- Early return

Audience Participation

What are you seeing in your advising appointments?

Is there a stigma out there for the students you work with?

Are they sharing mental health concerns/study abroad with you in advising?

Advising on Mental Health Concerns Prior to Selecting a Program

Topics to discuss

What would you like to talk to a staff member about?
(select all that apply)

Program type

- Study abroad
- Internship
- Language study
- English language options
- Service learning
- Volunteer
- Work
- Teach English
- Travel

Academic questions

- Academics/courses
- Application requirements
- GPA
- Language prerequisites
- Class standing
- Career implications

Financial questions

- Financial aid
- Scholarships
- Work while studying abroad

Logistical questions

- Application process
- Housing/meals abroad
- Passports/visas
- Student athlete status

Culture/Identity questions

- Multicultural considerations
- LGBTQIA considerations abroad
- Cultural norms in country
- Religion

Health/Accommodation questions

- Health care abroad
- Medications abroad
- Mental health abroad
- Disability considerations
- Dietary needs/restrictions

Family/Relationship questions

The screenshot shows a student profile page for TC LAC. The page has several tabs: Overview, Characteristics, Academics, Contacts, Notes (13), Courses, Programs, Pre-Enrollment, Education Abroad, and Itineraries. The main content is divided into several sections:

- Prospect:** Institution: UMNTC, EA Center: TC LAC (YLAA), Status: Active, Effective Date: Feb 05, 2016, Contact Status: Contact.
- Profile:** Last updated: Jun 27, 2018 by UMWSUSER.
- Application:** University Study in Ireland, Fall 2017 [Fall Semester]. Application: 01666820, Institution: UMNTC, EA Center: TC LAC (YLAA), Credit Type: Resident Credit, Program: University Study in Ireland (003209) (Study), Track: U of Limerick (009002), Location: Limerick, Ireland - Europe, Dates: Aug 28, 2017 - Dec 15, 2017, Status: Confirmed on Mar 13, 2017.
- Progress Points:** A table with columns for Event, Date, Staff, and Entered by. The first entry is "First Step Online" on "Feb 05, 2016" by "Kelsey Berg".
- Interests:** Countries of Interest: Greece, Requirements to Fulfill: Elective, General/Liberal Education.

On the left side of the profile, there are buttons for "Appointment", "Log contact", and "Compose Email".



Program Specific Advising

During application process:

- Program Specific Advising with program contact
 - discuss why it's important to disclose
 - student could disclose via email or in person

After confirmed on program:

- Health Information Form
- Program contact follows up individually with each student
 - ask for more information based on disclosure
 - provide resources
 - offer to set up therapy abroad, contact insurance, etc.
- Summary of disclosure shared with onsite so accommodations can be made
 - early disclosure is key
 - local context plays a role
 - examples: English-speaking therapist, extra testing time



Pre-Departure Orientation

- Another touch point for program teams and students
- Mental health and physical health are equally important
- Remind students to notify contact of changes in health before going abroad
- General adjustment, highs and lows
 - encouraged to reach out to onsite staff
 - past participants comment on their adjustment
 - coping strategies
 - make communication plan with family, friends, health care provider
- CISI Insurance
 - Mental health counseling covered

It's often difficult to know:

IS IT CULTURE SHOCK? OR DEPRESSION?



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Cross Cultural Focus

What are we seeing onsite?

Triggered by culture shock, students with mental health issues are often most affected.

Very common that conditions that are under control when students are here pop up again when studying abroad.





Training/Resources for LAC Program Staff Onsite

- Resident Staff Workshop in Minneapolis
 - Mental Health First Aid
- Atlas Online Resources
 - Intro to Mental Health
 - Link to Mental Health Online Self Assessment
 - What to do if you suspect a problem
 - Emergency mental health care abroad
 - Cultural differences with mental health treatment
 - General mental health articles



CISI Insurance

- Inpatient or outpatient care including mental health
- Prescription drug coverage
- Medical evac including mental health (if necessary)

- Assistance in finding providers abroad
- Direct-billing vs. participant reimbursement

- Student pre-disclosure leads to advance conversation and CISI assistance with care plan abroad

Thank you!



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