



Study Abroad Pre-Departure Mental Health Check-in

Studying abroad is something all students should have the opportunity to experience. Your mental illness should not be a barrier to this exciting, meaningful experience. However, it is important to remember that you can experience the same symptoms of mental illness abroad as you do at home.

Check in with yourself

What needs do you have right now? Have you been struggling with anything that needs to be addressed?

Is right now a safe time to be thinking about your mental health struggles? Do you have someone to turn to if you become overwhelmed?



Identify and Practice Healthy and Effective Coping Mechanisms

It will be much easier to apply coping mechanisms if you practice them before you absolutely need them. What is "healthy" and "effective" is different for everyone, depending on your current needs and history. What works for your friend may not work for you! Further, it's important to remember that what works at home may not work abroad. So, it's important to have several options to turn to when you recognize a need to care for your mental health. Some examples may include:

- Finding a quiet space to read, draw, or journal! Simply write down how you are feeling, trying to do so without judgement.
- Reach out to a trusted friend or family member to talk about how you've been feeling
- Get outside! Go for a walk, bike ride, hike, or run alone or with others.
- Look for clubs at your host university you may be interested in joining. Maybe a club you enjoy at Wesleyan also exists there! This can help with feeling isolated in a new place.
- Cooking or baking. This could be a way to connect to the culture of your host country by trying a new recipe, or a way to find some comforts of home by sharing a recipe which you already know.

Who can you turn to for help?

Make a list of people you know and trust will be able to help you if you are in need of support.



Recognize your symptoms

Think about what signs have been indicative of your struggles with mental illness before. This way, if these feelings arise when you are abroad, you are able to recognize them for what they are and practice effective coping strategies.

These symptoms may include:

- Feelings of anxiety or sadness: irritability, fear, disrupted sleep patterns
- Feeling lonely or isolated: homesickness, withdrawal, compulsive eating or irregular hunger cues
- Feeling uncomfortable or helpless: excessive need for cleanliness, a sense of total disconnect from new country and culture, restlessness

Do you need to make a more specific plan?

If you have struggled with a mental illness or your mental health at all in the past, it's a great idea to speak to a therapist through CAPS or an outside practitioner to develop a specific treatment plan to suit your needs.

Brought to you by the Wesleyan Office of Study Abroad, CAPS, and Davison Health Center

Contact us at studyabroad@wesleyan.edu with any questions

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