Mental Health and Well-Being
Fulbright Pre-Departure Orientation

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Culture Shock

- Not a mental illness
- Normal/Expected
- Last two weeks or more
- Functioning is not disrupted
- Include: Helplessness, feeling out of control, vulnerable, fear, anxiety, confusion, sadness and sleep or appetite is impacted.
## Signs of Psychological Distress: What to look for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood changes</th>
<th>Behavioral changes</th>
<th>Evidence or Risk of harm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Marked nervousness, agitation or irritability  
• Apparent depression or lack of energy  
• Social withdrawal | • Missing work  
• Procrastinating on deadlines  
• Increased substance use  
• Inappropriately aggressive or abrasive behavior  
• Increase in risky behaviors | • Comments (Written or verbal) that suggest thoughts about harming oneself or any threats to another person  
• Bizarre alarming statements, or evidence of engaging in dangerous behavior |

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### Levels of Crises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>Urgent</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
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| • Cultural adaptation  
  • Psychological/Emotional concerns that do not impair functioning  
  • There are coping skills that have helped to manage the situation | • Signs of psychological distress impair functioning  
  • The concerns feel different  
  • Suicidal thoughts, without plan or intent  
  • Talking about the problem without seeking professional help | • Imminent danger to self or others.  
  • Behavior that increases risk of harm.  
  • Grave disability that impacts one’s ability to care for self at a basic level.  
  • Acute withdrawal symptoms due to alcohol or drug use.  
  • Medical Emergency. |

Seek out support of Fulbright staff and peers  
Seek counseling  
Connect immediately to a medical/psychiatric facility
Suicide: What to look for?

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- Someone looking for ways to kill themselves, such as seeking access to pills, weapons or other means
- Someone talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
What can you do to help?

- Do not DIAGNOSE
- Identify the right time and place
- Do NOT promise confidentiality/secrets
- Focus on the behaviors, not the person
- Provide honest feedback and link consequences to behaviors
- Avoid judgment
- Listen
- Suggest helpful resources
- Reconnect and follow up
Sexual Assault

“Sexual assault takes many forms including attacks such as rape or attempted rape, as well as any unwanted sexual contact or threats. Usually a sexual assault occurs when someone touches any part of another person's body in a sexual way, even through clothes, without that person's consent. Some types of sexual acts which fall under the category of sexual assault include forced sexual intercourse (rape), sodomy (oral or anal sexual acts), child molestation, incest, fondling and attempted rape.”

-- National Center for Victims of Crime
Myths about sexual violence

If the woman had a drink, it was not sexual assault

The “perpetrator” is usually a stranger

Women are responsible for the assault or rape if they were acted a certain way

If the woman did not scream or fight back, she wanted it

If she didn’t say no, she wanted it

If the woman didn’t say something immediately, it did not happen

Prostitutes cannot be raped

It's not rape if the couple is dating or is married
### Impact of Sexual Assault - Emotional/Psychological

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guilt</th>
<th>Numbness</th>
<th>Appetite Disturbance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shock/Disbelief</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>Sleep Disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rage</td>
<td>Anxiety/Fear</td>
<td>Nightmares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Flashbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Mood changes</td>
<td>Sexual concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Impact of Sexual Assault - Physical

- Injury
- Pregnancy
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Physical safety concerns
What can you do to help?

- Remind them it is not their fault
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Give them choices/control over decisions
- Ascertain physical safety
- Discuss choices for a physical exam
- Discuss choices for a report
- Provide support
- Connect them to resources (short term/long term)
What can you do to help?

Refrain from normalizing the harassment and minimizing the experience

Check for safety concerns and identify safe routes

Give the victim a choice

Affirm that it is not a compliment and it is harassment
Language: What is effective?

- You will be fine, don’t worry!
- I am concerned about you.
- Have you talked to anyone about these concerns before?
- I am happy to support you and walk you through some options.
- You have a lot going for you, don’t forget that!
It is hard for me to know exactly what you are going through, but I know it is distressing for you.

Let’s find a time to meet up and talk more about this.

You seem upset and worried, would you like to talk about it?

My brother went through the same thing, I know how you feel!

If these concerns have been present for a long time, what would you think about consulting with a physician or another professional?
Mindful Adaptation and Self-Care
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Be mindful of how you engage the new system/culture
  - Assess your expectations and do a reality check
  - Observe, understand, then react, spend some quiet time observing people around, notice patterns (don’t operate from the autopilot)
  - View people in their multiple identities. The more we know about someone as a human being, the less we stereotype (funnel vision)
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Be mindful of how you engage the new system/culture
  - Understand the structure/value system of the host culture
  - Ask questions, ask people what they mean by their language or behaviors
  - Focus on cultural similarities, ideas which you share
  - Interact with members of the host culture
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Practice mindful living
  - Daily rituals to pause (even for ten minutes)
    - Breathing, visualization, mindfulness exercises
    - Transition Windows
  - App: Tactical Breather
  - Mindfulness practice: Youtube (Elisha Goldstein – 10 minute body scan practice)
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Practice mindful living
  - Sleep hygiene-
    - S - Substance
    - L - Laptop
  - E – Exercise
  - E – Entertainment
  - P - Pamper
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Be mindful of own and other’s boundaries
  - Assess your own boundaries – sexual, romantic and other
  - Recognize cultural differences in boundaries
  - When confused – talk with your support network, point of contact in the program and get a realistic perspective
Be mindful of existing vulnerabilities

- If on medication, be mindful of continuing treatment and talk with your provider before departure.
- If currently in treatment, be proactive about connecting with resources before departure.
- Be mindful of how transitions can impact existing psychological vulnerabilities
- If in distress that feels unmanageable, reach your point of contact in the program to connect with a local mental health professional
Tools for mindful adaptation

- Be mindful of your normal reaction to ‘stress’
  - How does stress impact your appetite, sleep, physical activity and play?
  - Create a schedule and structure to maintain normalcy for diet, exercise, sleep and play
  - What is your unique set of successful coping strategies?
RAIN

R - Recognize what is happening
A - Allow life to be just as it is
I - Investigate with kindness
N - Notice the shift in your sense of own being or identity

Source: www.tarabrach.com
Daily Rituals of Pause

- Identify your transition Windows
- Be realistic about what you can and cannot do given the time, energy, resources you have
- Daily rituals of pause
- Slow down
Transition Windows

- Ten minute meditation
- Take a coffee or tea break
- Listen to music
- Shower
- Grocery or window shopping
Mindful Adaptation

Prepare

Rituals of Pause

Keep your lens of crossing cultures ON

Slow Down

Journal

Speak up/Share
“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

– Victor Frankl
A MOMENT OF MINDFUL PAUSE