

Mental Health Abroad

Traveling or studying overseas is not a cure for mental health conditions. Sometimes going abroad may in fact amplify a condition such as depression or anxiety. Culture shock, language barriers, and homesickness can deepen isolation or depression.

Before traveling abroad:

- Create a workable plan for managing your mental health while abroad. The availability and quality of mental health services differ widely from country to country. In many countries, students will find it difficult — and sometimes impossible — to find treatment for mental health conditions. With your health services provider and your program contacts, put together a workable mental health plan before you go overseas.
- If you have a medical or psychological condition that may require treatment while you are abroad, discuss this ahead of time with your doctor. Study abroad is a great opportunity to try new things but this is not the time to experiment with not taking your medicine or mixing alcohol with medicine.
- Research the social culture of your destination to learn about how mental illnesses are viewed. Attitudes toward mental health can greatly vary between countries.
- Talk to your program contacts about access to mental health services while overseas. This information can help you decide what program would be best for you.
- If currently receiving mental health services — including prescription medication — find out if those services and/or medication are available at your destination. Also, check out the medications abroad section above.
- Consider the support system you'll have in place while abroad. If possible, know ahead of time who you can consult with about your mental health.

Mental Health Resources

If you find yourself facing overwhelming challenges or trying to isolate yourself from others while abroad, please contact us! It is very common to experience greater stress while adapting to life abroad, but you are not alone. University Counseling Services is available for consultation regarding your mental health needs: <https://ucs.okstate.edu/>

These links may also be helpful in researching options that best meet your personal circumstances:

- [Mental Health Wellness Abroad PDF](#)
- [International Medical Corps - Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings](#)