THE AFTERMATH:
How to Provide Effective Support to Students Following a Crisis Abroad
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?
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- Duty of Care
- Restoring Balance
- Program Continuity
- Reputation
- Liability
SHARED CHALLENGES

- Trust
- Detection
- Reporting
- Overseas Care
- Insurance
- Privacy
- Stigma
- Wide-range of crisis
- International Context
SPECTRUM OF CRISSES

- Suicide
- Mass Casualty
- Accidental Death
- Sexual Assault
- Personal/Property Crime
- Arrested
- Witness
- Harassment
- Culture Shock
- Homesick
INTERNATIONAL IMPACTS

- Education Abroad vs. Home Campus
- Losing Wallet in Boston vs. Barcelona
EXAMPLE
SCENARIOS

• Sexual Assault Case – Central Europe
EXPLORING THE IMPACTS

Cognitive

- Disorganized
- Slowed Thinking
- Difficulty Concentrating
EXPLORING THE IMPACTS

Emotional

- Numbness
- Feeling of unreality
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Agitation
EXPLORING THE IMPACTS

Physical

- Physical numbness
- Hypo/hyper activity
- Shortness of breath
EXPLORING THE IMPACTS

Coping Mechanisms

- Denial
- Forgetting
- Avoidance
- Questioning
RESTORE BALANCE & PROGRAM CONTINUITY

INSTITUTION LEVEL

- Designate lead
- Identify immediate steps
- Account for all students/faculty
- Identify all affected
- Communicate with all stakeholders
- Designate a trained spokesperson
- Utilize experts
- Identify supportive services
- Debrief
- Complete post-crisis review
INDIVIDUAL NEEDS SUPPORTED BY THE INSTITUTION

- Food, sleep, exercise
- Check-ins
- Time to connect with support systems
- Routine
- Activities
RESPONSE STRATEGIES:

• How do I detect if someone is having a mental health issue and how do I approach that individual?

• Are there any actions that can make it worse?

• How do I know our support strategy is working?
RESPONSE STRATEGIES
INSTITUTION’S PERSPECTIVE

• Use a variety of check-in tools
• Document, document, document (and document some more!)
• Better to care TOO much
PREVENTION STRATEGIES:

• Are there any prevention strategies organizations can employ to mitigate the impacts of mental health issues before a crisis?

• What kind of efforts should organizations be making to build mental preparedness and resilience prior and on the day-to-day?
PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Mentally prepare students
- Pre-departure orientation involving scenarios
Who are the stakeholders, what are their needs post-crisis, and how to manage those reactions?

- Affected students
- Faculty and staff
- Parents
- Hidden victims
- Survivor guilt
A large group of students with a couple of faculty leaders are on a three month study abroad program in London.

Some of the group has decided to embark on a weekend excursion to the Tower of London.

Multiple IED detonations occur around key London tube stations including Tower Hill as students and faculty disembark.

In addition to others around the city, four students have been injured. One is in critical condition, two have been released with minor injuries and one awaits surgery.

The UK authorities are conducting ongoing raids in/around London. The terror alert was raised to critical and most tube operations have been suspended.

Parents of students in the hospital are flying to London. Some students are expressing concern for safety and want to leave.
The program consists of four students (three female, one male) on a spring break relief effort in Haiti.

One evening while out drinking, two of the female students leave early to head home.

A few hours later, as the others walk home, the male is knocked unconscious and the female is sexually assaulted by two unknown local nationals.

The crime was not reported to the local police, but upon hearing of the story, the two female students reported it to the University and wish to leave Haiti.

The student does not want to report the assault but the two female students have been posting information on social media to warn others and it is being followed on campus.

Many comments are implying it is their own fault for being out late and inebriated.

CASE TWO:
CASE THREE:

- Two students attend an overseas campus in Brazil operated by your University and live in approved off-campus housing.
- One evening, a few individuals force entry into the apartment and rob the students at gunpoint.
- The robbers take many of the items from the apartment including their personal computers, phones, passports, and wallets.
- The students are unfazed as they understood the risks of the environment and were not harmed in the exchange. Four weeks later the two students return home.
- One week after moving back into US campus housing one student reports they have been unable to sleep in their apartment and keep thinking someone is in the room.
QUESTIONS?