

What is Mental Health?

Mental health describes your emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, which affect how you think, feel, and act. **36% of international students have reported "poor mental health" in school**, caused by stress from culture shock, self expectations, loneliness, etc. One of the reasons for this statistic can be tied to the limited conversations on mental health in other countries. However, this discussion is necessary to understand **the importance of when, where, and how** to care for your well-being to make the most of your time in the U.S.

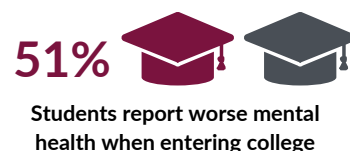


→ Understand the Symptoms and Stigma

- Symptoms of mental health issues take on the form of isolation, high anxiety, and depression.
- You may find **extreme differences** in either your eating or sleeping habits.
- Mood changes can become more **frequent**, including prolonged anger or euphoria.
- Your ability to detect changes in your feelings, thoughts, or personality may be reduced.
- Mental illness is complex and can come from **anywhere**.
- Those with mental health issues are **not** naturally violent or unpredictable.
- You can be a brilliant student and **still** have mental health issues.
- There is **no shame** in using counseling as a primary support system.

"I'm young. Why do I need to worry about mental health?"

The decline of mental health is a process that can easily be ignored, but begins at an early age.



→ Self Improve Your Well-Being

-  **Pursue Hobbies**
Provides positive release from daily stress
-  **Practice Meditation**
Develop awareness and peace of mind
-  **Eating Omega-3's**
Healthy fatty acids are linked to lower depression
-  **Volunteer Work**
Boost your social connections and inner satisfaction
-  **Increase Sunshine**
Elevated vitamin D can improve your mood
-  **Journal Your Experience**
Process your feelings and track your progress

Professional Support

As an international student, it is normal to feel some stress but knowing when to seek professional help is important. You should not be afraid to seek medical help if you see the following signs: suicidal thoughts, engaging in self harm, addictive behaviors, and extreme mood swings. Your student health center is an ideal resource to utilize. If you do not have a designated center at your school, your international student office can also guide you to a qualified specialist. You should also familiarize yourself with and visit either of the following health professionals for more thorough support:



Psychologists

Licensed counselor focusing on talk-therapy to help treat mental health symptoms and improve how you manage stress.



Psychiatrists

Medical doctors that can prescribe medication, diagnose illness and offer a range of therapies for complex and serious mental illness.

→ Free Resources

In recent years, the U.S. has introduced resources you can use if you are seeking free, accessible mental health support across all 50 states. **Immediate assistance is just a call or text away.** Below are few of the many support systems that are publicly available.



SAMHSA National Helpline

Agency that supports those with behavioral and mental disorders. Call at (800) 662-HELP for multilingual support.



NAFC - www.nafcclinics.org

Organization of free and charitable clinics offering support, public advocacy, medication access, and discounted supplies.



Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 anywhere in the US for assistance about any urgent mental crisis situations you may have.



7Cups - www.7cups.com

FAQ and public forum for mental health questions. Provides free 24/7 chat to speak with trained volunteer listeners.



988 Lifeline

Text or call 988 to be connected to crisis counselors for crisis support. All conversations are free and confidential.



iPrevail - www.iPrevail.com

Peer-to-peer support offered in solo and group settings for collaborative growth through coaching and assessments.

For more information visit www.isoa.org