International Students at Columbia University: Making the most of the transition to CU

A presentation to Columbia University undergraduate international students by Counseling and Psychological Services
Welcome

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CU ranks 5th in international enrollments among all US colleges and universities

Fall 2012: 7032 international students enrolled at CU. Of the 7032,

- 943 at the undergraduate level
- 5670 at the graduate and professional schools

CU enrolls students from all over the world. 139 Countries were represented. In 2012 the top 5 countries of origin were:
  - China
  - Korea
  - India
  - Canada
  - France
• **Adjustment** entails the changes made in one’s self in order to adapt to a shift in the environment

• Adjustment usually
  1) occurs in the context of external or internal **pressures** and
  2) leads to specific **changes**
• New living situation
• Cultural differences and/or language issues
• Academic demands
• Living independently
• Making decisions away from family support and the culture of origin
• Financial pressures
• Homesickness
• Other pressures from home country

PRESSURES associated with being new to Columbia
CHANGES that can result from the aforementioned pressures

- Feeling lonely/alone
- Changing emotions related to being in a new place
- Feeling uncertain and/or less competent at things you know you do well
- Feeling misunderstood in the U.S.
- Feeling misunderstood by those back home who are not familiar with pressures here
- Feeling differently from others upon return home
TIPS for making the best of your transition to CU

- Get involved
- Take time to allow yourself to adjust
- Take time to establish new friendships
- Stay connected to family and friends overseas
- Use campus resources
- Monitor your emotions and know when to get support
- Maintain healthy habits and coping strategies
- Use Columbia Health, in particular, Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) if necessary
Columbia Health Program

- Alice! Health Promotion
- Disability Services
- Sexual Violence Response
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)
- Medical Services
• 40 clinicians

• Strict standards of confidentiality

• Array of different services

• Pay particular attention to understanding the unique situations of the students they serve
Counseling services offered at CPS

- **Individual Therapy**
  - psychological and psychiatric assessment and interventions

- **Couples Therapy**

- **Group Therapy**
  - for group support with a variety of concerns

- **Workshops**
  - 1-4 session workshops on a variety of subjects
If you or a friend are...

- feeling very stressed
- feeling down much of the time/ low self-esteem
- crying often
- thinking negatively
- sleeping too much or not enough
- Not eating well
- tired all the time
- wanting to give up

...find support at CPS to help prevent sadness from developing into depression

Prevent common emotional reactions from becoming severe and problematic
If you or a friend are...

- experiencing a lot of stress
- constantly thinking about worries/ concerns
- finding it hard to control all the worries
- having difficulty sleeping

...find support at CPS to help prevent stress from developing into chronic anxiety

Prevent common emotional reactions from becoming severe and problematic
You can find support at CPS if you or a friend are...

- Wanting to cultivate a more healthy lifestyle
- Isolating from friends, family, or other supports
- Engaging in excessive procrastination
- Overeating or neglecting adequate nutrition
- Using alcohol, drugs, or prescription medications to cope
- Engaging in self-harm behaviors, feeling like giving up, or having thoughts about hurting yourself or someone else
- CPS sees over 4,000 different students each year. During their 4 year stay, 50% undergraduates come to CPS.

- Students can choose who they want to see at CPS and can switch counselors.

- Students can drop in to satellite offices in one of the six residence halls (East Campus, Hartley, Carman, 600 W. 113th St, Broadway dorm office and the IRC.) Please check our website for specific hours.

- Couples counseling is provided if both partners are students.

- CPS cannot disclose to anyone (not deans, not Residence Life staff, not family) that a student has been seen at CPS without the student’s written consent. The only times CPS can legally break confidentiality are in cases where the person is a threat to self or other.

- All students in CC and SEAS pay a Health Services Fee which entitles them to free access to Columbia Health.

- If a student is worried about a friend or a resident, he/she can call CPS for advice at (212) 854-2878.
Contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)

- http://health.columbia.edu/services/cps
- Or call (212) 854-2878
- Or visit 8th Floor of Lerner Hall
Questions?