

Conversation with mental health professional at Yale University
S. Demers, December 2012

Scale of the Problems:

On average, over ten percent of graduate students seek help from mental health and counseling centers at universities in the US. These visits are a result of a wide variety of issues from romantic relationship concerns to advisor/advisee relationships and depression. There is also a wide range in severity of the concerns. Not sufficient statistics to see different levels with students based abroad.

Suggestions:

- Be aware of connections to local groups in Geneva for students going abroad. A particular challenge is non-US students not having access to local national groups. For example, a Korean student might be linked in with other Korean students at his or her own institution, but that link might not exist to Korean students in Geneva.
- Discussion groups/transition groups are extremely helpful in the first 4 – 5 weeks. It can take 6-9 months to really settle in.
- A meeting that is in person, as opposed to virtual, can be important. Many international students maintain such strong links with their virtual communities at home that they do not socialize in their new environments. This is made worse by students' financial situation.
- Local connections need to be available for times of distress. Therapy over the phone is NOT preferred.