

Connecting Across Cultures: Outreach, Allyship, and International Students

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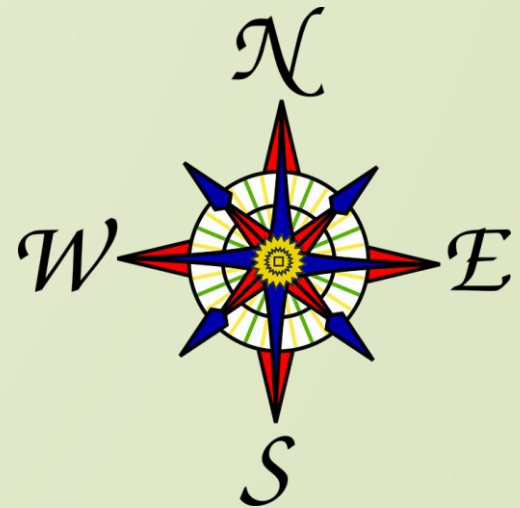
Lilian Odera, Ph.D.

Sudha M. Wadhwani, Psy.D.



Road Map

- Brief introductions
- Each presenter will present on:
 - **Minji**- challenges in international student outreach
 - **Shraddha** - self-care strategies to prevent burn-out
 - **Lilian**- engaging counseling center staff in conducting outreach with this population
 - **Sudha**- building allies through collaboration
- Discussion of creative strategies for outreach
- Audience Q & A time



Brief Intro Of The Presenters

Shraddha- University of Missouri Counseling Center

Minji- San Jose State University Counseling and
Psychological Services

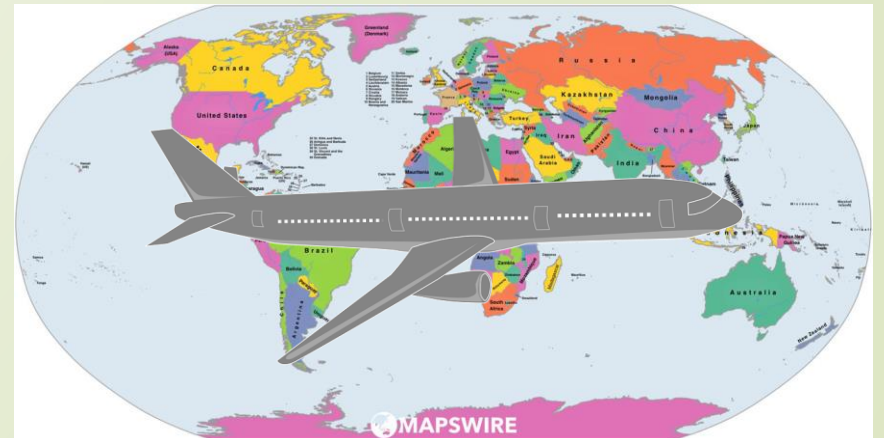
Lilian- Towson University Counseling Center

Sudha- Montclair State University Counseling and
Psychological Services



Challenges for International Students

- Homesickness
- Language difficulties
- Financial challenges
- Change in climate, dress, food, transportation, etc.
("culture shock")
- Cultural value differences
- Academic adjustment
- Job and career concerns



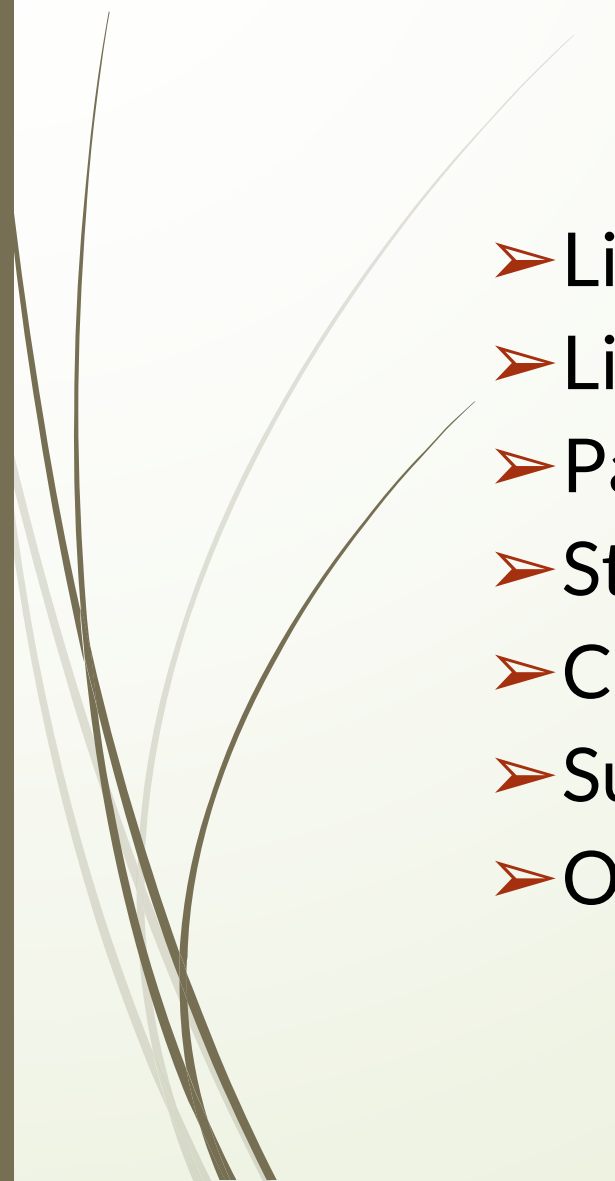
Challenges for International Students (Cont.)

- Developing community
- The current socio-political climate
- Experiences of discrimination
- Immigration, visa concerns
- Parents/family expectations and conflicts
- Coping with disappointments
- Mental health concerns and stigma about mental health/counseling





Challenges with International Student Outreach

- 
- Limited awareness of international student challenges
 - Limited resources and funding
 - Participant recruitment
 - Stigma about mental health and counseling
 - Changes in collaboration with other depts
 - Sustainability of partnerships and programming
 - One or few counselors focused on this population



Self-Care Is Important!

- Why do we need to talk about self-care?
 - Limited staff and resources
 - Over-reliance on international centers?
 - Responding to the “rest of the world”
 - Individuals vs. Populations



So, How Can We Avoid Burnout?

- Important to know your boundaries
- Collaborate with faculty, staff, and students
- It's okay to say no
- Choosing when to respond
- Not being stuck in a box
- Creative ways of engaging students






“Team Work Is Dream Work”

Assumptions → Knowledge → Skills → Action

Multicultural Training

- Educate the staff about acculturation and impact on mental health
 - Continuous reflection of the impact of global issues on international students (MC Lab & Cultural Reflections)
 - Provide opportunities for CE seminars on international issues
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“Team Work Is Dream Work” (Cont.)

Cultural Competence Skills

- Populating staff clinical caseloads with international students
- Centerwide case presentations on issues of concern for international students
- Invite staff from ISSO to speak to the reality of international student issues



“Team Work Is Dream Work” (Cont.)

Hands-On Outreach

- Set up staff liaison rotations for cultural and international organizations
- Invite staff to co-facilitate support groups or activities for international students (e.g. MSA, DiversiTea, International Circle, Bagels with Bria)
- Set up a point system for participation in outreach with diverse populations



Building Allies through Collaborative Programming

- Developing a community of allies - particularly critical for international students
- Reaching international students from day one -
 - Welcoming new students and creating an atmosphere of caring and support
 - Shifting mental health stigma - we need our allies to help us with this!



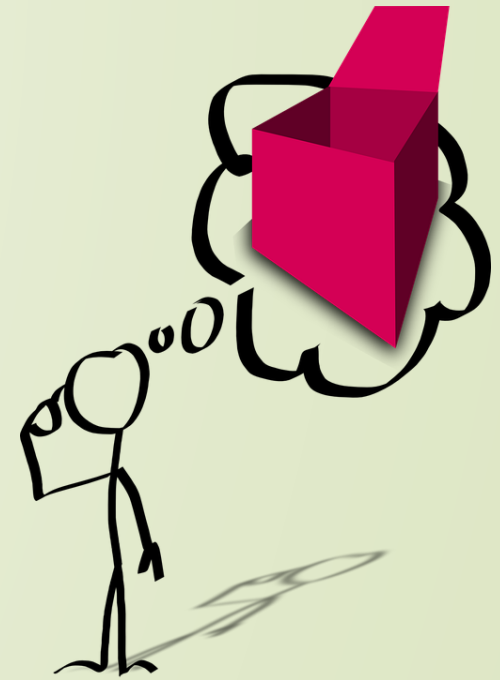


Building Allies through Collaborative Programming (Cont.)

- Reaching international students from within - relationship building in their world
- The concept of boundaries - culturally loaded
- Increasing access to care - reconceptualizing “therapy”
 - “*Let’s Talk*” - walk-in support and consultation hours
 - “*Connecting Across Cultures*” - collaborative drop-in group

Innovative Outreach Ideas

- Think outside the box...
- Hire international students as GAs or peer educators
- Invite international students to the counseling center space (Int'l Students Club E-Board)
- Include international student leaders in your planning and development of programs/events.



Innovative Outreach Ideas (Cont.)

- Social media
- Change the delivery package
- Outreach can be fun!
- Go into their space
- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate...
- Food and more food!



Q & A





Presenters' Contact Information



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Thank You!

