

Collaborative Campus Programming

Two of the biggest hurdles institutions face in connecting international students to mental health and counseling services are a lack of awareness about these services and the stigma attached to them. To combat both of these obstacles, consider developing collaborative programming with other campus partners. Programming should reach students where they are and use informal, non-threatening interactions to educate them about the realities of using these services.

Identify Opportunities on Campus for Collaborative Programming

Consider where existing campus programming may be leveraged to incorporate education and awareness building around counseling services and common adjustment issues. Options include informal sessions or meals at orientation, global coffee hours or other social events on campus, ISSO programming and events, academic workshops, and student organization events. Brainstorm some options on your campus below:

Prioritize Topics to Address with Students

Consider what topics you want to cover with international students, based on the trends you are seeing on your campus and your student demographics. Often, students may not realize that they could benefit from counseling for issues they consider part of the general adjustment process, such as academic stress, homesickness, cultural differences, language difficulties, social isolation, and time management. Also consider how to incorporate information about counseling services themselves—the cost, confidentiality, and potential benefits may be unknown to international students.

Collaborative Campus Programming (cont.)

Determine Who is Best Suited to Deliver These Messages

Choose who will represent your campus or office at on campus programming. The Forum recommends using a certified counselor so that they can not only speak knowledgeably about the services offered, but also identify students who may be in great need of help. Consider which of your staff or departments has the time and resources to participate in this programming and who will be best equipped to handle the conversations and any issues that may arise.
