

Risk Management Best Practices for Programs Abroad: A Case Study Discussion

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GAIE 2020

Who is in the Room?

Katherine:

- Study Abroad Coordinator at Columbus State
- Completed a Semester Abroad in Japan and 2 programs in England
- Loves Harry Potter & Lord of the Rings!
- Hobbies: Crochet, Reading, Hiking, Board Games, and Yoga



&

Sasha:

- Study Abroad Manager at Clayton State University
- Studied abroad for two summer semesters in Barcelona, Spain. Short term study abroad programs in India, England, Belgium & the Netherlands.
- Potterhead and Historical Fiction & Non-Fiction Nerd
- Hobbies: Reading, Writing, Board Games, Crochet, Traveling, the Theatre and Photography



How does “Duty of Care” affect International Education?

First, some history...

- Originally *in loco parentis*, “Bystander” Era in 1970s, and now higher education follows a more customer service-orientated or business approach to care of students
- Nova VS. Gross (2000) & California VS Rosen (2018), “special relationships” between higher education and students began to be defined
- “Duty of Care” means we must strive to protect students from foreseeable harm and act on knowledge in a timely manner to prevent situations from arising - otherwise it can be seen as negligent
- Courts have not fully defined “school-sponsored” activities so it **can include** education abroad programs
- Everyone should have basic crisis management training because sometimes trained clinicians might not be easily accessible

Mental Health

You are the faculty leader of a month-long program to Spain. It's late evening when you receive a call from a student that their roommate is having a breakdown because they left their medications (for anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder) in the US. The student in crisis never disclosed they were taking medications or seeing someone about their mental health. The program has two weeks left before returning home.

- What are some viable steps to take?
- What are some of the challenges?



Mental Health Resolution

- Physically check on the student in crisis
- Notify study abroad office and Dean of Students (begin documenting)
- Locate in-country counselors to assist or utilize campus counseling services
- Determine the generic names of the medications and request a prescription from US physician before contacting a foreign pharmacy (if legal in-country)
- If unable to acquire the medications, discuss with campus officials about sending the student home early
- If needing to leave early, check with insurance provider for best methods

Physical Health

You are a faculty leader of a short-term (two weeks) study abroad program visiting several different cities throughout India. In the middle of your program, half of your group has come down with Traveler's diarrhea. After speaking with your participants, you have determined that all of the participants came down with TD by drinking the water that was provided on the domestic flight (in India) to your current location. Most of your students will be ill for the next three to four days during your time in this city.

Traveler's diarrhea (TD) is a stomach and intestinal infection. TD is defined as the passage of unformed stool(s) while traveling. It may be accompanied by abdominal cramps, nausea, fever, and bloating. Bacteria often causes this illness. The risk of TD is greatest in the first two weeks of travel and among young adults. People affected are more often from the developed world.

- What do you do in this situation?
- Can anything be done to prevent this from happening in the first place?



Physical Health Resolution

- Refer to the Access Abroad resources provided by the partner company to CISI insurance. *Will explain this resource in the next slide.*
- Find in-country provider.
- Notify study abroad office in US.
- Consider packing: activated charcoal tablets, tums, electrolyte powder or tabs, ginger wrapped hard candy/ginger tablets, ginger tea, hand sanitizer, hand wipes, pepto bismol tablets.
- Use only bottled water to brush teeth and clean your toothbrush.
- Frequent hand washing.
- Consider if the fruit was washed in contaminated water.
- Consider if your drinking water was re-opened and filled (on a plane or restaurant) with regular tap water. Make sure to order and/or buy filtered bottled water. Check that your water bottle cap has not been tampered with.
- Consider the fresh foods you are eating - anything that cannot be peeled (fruits and vegetables) will need to be re-washed with bottled water.
- Eating cold foods such as ice cubes (in your drinks), milk, fresh juices, tap water, and so forth should be considered as potential contaminants (avoid cold foods or foods that have not been cooked).

Access Abroad - Accessing Medical Locations Abroad

Access Abroad

Access Abroad, partners with CISI Insurance to locate the medical locations that will accept CISI insurance abroad. ***We recommends obtaining this information before departure to know which locations will accept CISI insurance and charge little to no costs for insurance recipients while abroad.***

U.S. Phone: 1-855-327-1411

International Phone: 312-935-1703

*The process can take several days/weeks for the company to gather the required information. We suggest that you request this information **no later than 14 days before departure.***

Access Partners will need the information listed on the **Invoice-Details Insurance Sheet**, this document is provided after the insurance is purchased. We recommend providing faculty with this information at least three weeks before departure or this can be a Program Director requirement. Access Abroad will also require the name of the program, **EXAMPLE: Clayton State (university name) Biology in Bahamas 2020 (name of program) Study Abroad Program.** *This is the name that is listed on the insurance invoice documents.*

Program Directors

We recommend that Program Directors provide this information to the third party providers, i.e. tour guides, bus drivers, on the ground contacts, etc. This will allow your third party providers to note the locations in advance in case of a medical emergency.

Situational Threat

- You and another faculty member are leading a program to Mexico. While looking for a place to eat, students witness an armed robbery from across a plaza.
- What are some viable steps to take in this situation?



Situational Threat Resolution

- Host University sent security officers to escort everyone to campus
- The program director and university spoke with students about the importance of being aware of surroundings
- Offered counseling services for students to discuss what they saw transpire
- Asked if anyone felt uncomfortable enough to leave the program early

Random Incidents on Programs Abroad :)

You're assisting with a six-week summer program to Italy where students live with homestay families. Two weeks into the program, a student requests to move to alternative housing for the remainder of the stay. The student requires certain medications to be refrigerated and is also a vegan. The student is upset that their meds are stored on the same shelf as meat and that meat is present in the homestay at all.

- What can you do, if anything to accommodate the student and this situation?



Random Incident Resolution

- Check with the provider in-country to see if there is alternative housing
- If another homestay is not an option, can a hotel be arranged (if so, who pays?)
- Is it reasonable to expect a host family to eliminate meat from their home to accommodate the student's request?

Best Practices for Program Leaders

- Ensure program directors know what they need to discuss with students at throughout the process
- Complete USG Recommended **Annual Program Review** Form
- Encourage using vetted providers in-country
- Being willing to work with Accommodation & Access to see what is reasonable without changing the structure of the coursework
- Bring First-Aid kit but encourage students to **bring their own meds!**
- Consider taking a **Psychological First Aid** course
- Utilizing the Access Abroad agency before a programs departure to locate medical providers (that accept CISI) in-country



Best Practices for International Education Professionals

- Require a pre-departure orientation for students and faculty (give country-specific travel advisories)
- Students complete mandatory assessments
- **Physical Health Clearance Form**
- Create emergency contact cards for participants
- Enroll everyone in **STEP** with the U.S. Dept. of State or use the **AlertTraveler** program with Terra Dotta
- Require site visits for program directors prior to implementing program
- Use vetted providers in-country (possibly require faculty to use a provider)
- **Screen all students** prior to departure with relevant departments and make individualized plans if necessary
- Learn how to file a claim with the CISI Insurance, review what is covered in the USG plan, & download **CISI Traveler App**
- Consider offering a cell-phone allowance for directors in the program budget and possibly SIM cards for all participants
- Work with all relevant departments when updating Emergency Protocol Procedures
- Create an “Incident” form (more serious documentation) and an “Issue” form for more minor cases
- Always follow-up on those involved in the incident at least once after everything is resolved



Contact Us!

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Additional Resources

[Psychological First Aid Training with Johns Hopkins - Free Coursera Course](#)

[Traveler First Aid Kit Suggestions](#)

[Annual Program Review/Evaluation for Program Directors](#)

[Health Clearance Form Example](#)