

Counselling Services for International Graduate Students on UK campuses

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Abstract

Transitioning into a foreign educational and sociocultural system can present numerous challenges for international students attending universities in the UK. Consequently, international students have commonly reported concerns that include, but are not limited to, social isolation, language proficiency, and cultural adaptation (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2016; Shadowen et al., 2019). However, due to limited awareness of issues faced by international students, university administrators, university counsellors and educators may unintentionally exacerbate these challenges and therefore fail to give international students appropriate support (Prieto-Welch, 2016). Given the large number of international students in the UK which has now exceeded 1,1 million (HESA, 2022), it is important that educational institutions ensure there are sufficient spaces on campus to support the mental and emotional well-being of this student population. All graduate students are often inundated with strict deadlines, have heavy workloads, often have to manage graduate assistant or other work responsibilities, and may also have family responsibilities. However, international students additionally face a variety of different stressors in their new educational environment and are therefore more likely to be negatively affected by acculturative stress (Hansaab, 2006; Hyun et al., 2007; Mori, 2000; Poyrazli, 2015). Furthermore, they may be faced with linguistic, academic and other challenges related to sociocultural adaptation. Therefore, the objectives for this presentation are twofold: 1. to highlight the emotional stress international graduate students undergo during their transition phase in the UK as new international students and, 2. To create awareness about the importance of counselling services on UK campuses.

Keywords: International Graduate Students, Students, Minorities in Higher Education, Emotional Wellbeing, Intervention Services, Higher Education