



Forum on Education
Abroad, March 25, 2010

Michele Scheib

Jim Baker

Laurie Duston



Assessing our Resources: People with Disabilities in Education Abroad Programs

Overview of the Issues



**MICHELE SCHEIB
PROJECT SPECIALIST
MOBILITY INTERNATIONAL USA
NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON
DISABILITY AND EXCHANGE (NCDE)
MSCHEIB@MIUSA.ORG**

Agenda



1. Best Practices on Students with Specific Disabilities
2. Roundtable Discussions
3. Large Group Sharing
4. External Resources



U.S. Disability Context



11% Post Secondary Students with Disabilities on U.S. Campuses vs. 3% in Education Abroad

	CAMPUS	EDUCATION ABROAD
• Learning Disability/ADD	28%	vs. 47%
• Mental Disability	24%	vs. 29%
• Physical Disability	15%	vs. 8%
• Sensory Disability	9%	vs. 5%
• Other Disability	24%	vs. 11%

Of several hundred college students with disabilities surveyed who have studied or plan to study abroad, **a fifth use disability supports often or very often.**

1. Citation National Survey on Student Engagement (2006), Open Doors (2009) and
2. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2008)

Attitudinal Barriers

Students

- Students may have their own internal fears of going abroad.
- How do we encourage them and provide “challenge by choice”?

U.S. /Overseas Staff

- We need to challenge the problem mindset of “it’s just not possible.”
- What makes for a positive mindset to ask “how can we”?

Resource Barriers



Getting Information:

- Example – finding ASL interpreters overseas or if remote services would work for a Deaf student abroad
- How can we best gather and share accessibility information?

Addressing Policy/Funds:

- When should we use advocacy, creativity, or universal design?
- Example – negotiating with different parties on sharing interpreter costs

Case Studies of Students with Disabilities Going Abroad



JIM BAKER
DISABILITY COORDINATOR
DUKE UNIVERSITY
JBAKER@DUKE.EDU

Caleb – Duke in Brazil, Mobility Impaired Student uses Wheelchair or Arm Crutches

Areas of Concern:

- Access to classroom buildings,
- Accessible living quarters,
- Transportation to University,
- Access to emergency medical care,
- Insurance coverage,
- Field trips/social activities
- Personal safety/Fatigue,
- Extra funding for special needs

Troubleshooting with:

- Study Abroad office,
- Local contacts in Brazil,
- Mobility International USA,
- Professors in program, Parents,
- Insurance companies,
- Wheelchair Providers, and
- Student in advance of trip.

Alex – Duke in Rome, Visually Impaired Student uses Cane for Mobility

Areas of Concern:

- Access to classroom buildings,
- Public transportation,
- Program concerns and fears for blind students from Rome program coordinators,
- Medical coverage,
- Third party student,
- Classroom access to materials
- Personal safety,
- Visiting ancient sites in Rome and on fields trips to other areas in Italy,
- Need for an personal assistant

Troubleshooting with:

- Study Abroad office,
- Students home University,
- Local contacts in Rome,
- Student's medical provider and medical consultant,
- Local assistive technology providers,
- Home state mobility instructors
- Other universities disabilities offices that send students abroad,
- University legal office,
- Student's parents

Amaris – Duke in Madrid, Mobility Impaired student uses Leg Braces to Walk

Areas of Concern:

- Access to family hosts living quarters,
- Transportation to and from family host living quarters,
- Public transportation,
- Field trips,
- Scooter rentals,
- Extra funding for special transportation,
- Insurance issues,
- Personal safety.

Troubleshooting with:

- Study Abroad Office,
- Mobility International USA,
- Local resources in Madrid for disabled travelers,
- Parents
- Student,
- Other students who went on trip before.

Kelly – Duke in Venice, Chronic Health Student, Severe Fatigue/Limited Mobility

Areas of Concern:

- Ability to travel with groups on field trips,
- Special transportation,
- Medical issues,
- Walking around university setting,
- Carrying books /travel items
- Rest periods,
- Access to her medical equipment to workout.

Troubleshooting with:

- Study Abroad Office,
- Medical provider,
- Mobility International USA,
- Local resources,
- Student,
- Parents.

Mental Health Case Studies



**LAURIE DUSTON
MANAGER, INEXT
COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE (CIEE)
LDUSTON@CIEE.ORG**

Case Study



- A student in Turkey arrived on site **without having disclosed** that she had previously attempted suicide, was taking considerable medications, and claiming her father had passed away 6 months prior to her arriving on program (which was not the case).
- On site she began blacking out, cutting herself, telling fellow students that she was going to harm herself, and presented an eating disorder.
- Her family and psychologist at home did not want her to return to the US for treatment and help as they felt that it would be more harmful for her to be at home and preferred that she remain on site in Ankara for the duration of the program.

Best Practices from CIEE



- Including mental health coverage in our iNext insurance plan that is provided to all those on a CIEE program.
- Resident staff charged with finding multiple resources for students needing counseling services
- Counseling from students' home institution in USA
- Psychologist available as consultant for CIEE resident staff to assist with mental health issues
- CIEE willing and able to front funding for counseling for students who are in crisis – funds used are entered as site debt. Student files claim for reimbursement and pays back CIEE after the fact.
- Behavioral Contracts between student and CIEE

Barriers



- Students may be unwilling to pay up front to see a mental health professional overseas and submit a claim for reimbursement
- Students may not be comfortable speaking with a counselor in their host country who may not understand the student's cultural background / linguistic barriers
- Students who elect phone counseling with counselors from their home institution may feel that the counselor does not understand the culture within which they are living and experiencing degrees of culture shock, etc.
- In some areas there may be limited access to counselors
- Students do not always disclose pre-existing conditions
- Students manage their own medication overseas

Questions



- How can we **be better prepared** to assist students arriving on site who are struggling with mental health issues?
- How can **insurance resources** be utilized for students struggling with mental health issues while abroad?
- What are the limitations of international travel insurance?
- What resources, in addition to insurance, can be utilized to help accommodate students struggling with mental health issues?
- How can we make the various resources available to students actually work for students while overseas?

Roundtable Groups



**#1 LAURIE DUSTON – MENTAL
HEALTH TOPICS**

**#2 JIM BAKER – MOBILITY
DISABILITIES & CHRONIC HEALTH**

**#3 MICHELE SCHEIB – SENSORY
DISABILITIES**

#4+ VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS

Roundtable Questions

1. Who has worked with study abroad **students with disabilities**?
2. What were the **disability specific issues** to think about in preparation stages?
3. Did you encounter any **barriers**? How did you **resolve** them?
4. What **resources** did you use to get needed information or services? **Who was involved**?
5. How can we be better prepared to assist students who arrive **on site** needing some type of assistance and **who have not disclosed** any pre-existing condition?
6. What did everyone involved **learn** from the experience? What are ways you are **building on** this experience?

Large Group Sharing

- #1 – Mental Health
- #2 – Mobility Disabilities
- #3 – Chronic Health
- #4 – Deaf/ Hard of Hearing
- #5 – Blind/ Low Vision
- #6 – Other Disabilities
- #7 – General Discussions

- What ONE solution or suggestion was most useful or surprising to learn?
- What ONE question or barrier still lingers and is in need of more answers or ideas?

External Resources



- 1. DISABILITY, HEALTH AND COUNSELING OFFICES ON CAMPUS**
- 2. INSURANCE COMPANIES**
- 3. THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS**
- 4. NATIONAL DISABILITY CLEARINGHOUSES AND ORGANIZATIONS**
- 5. ALUMNI WITH DISABILITIES**
- 6. THE STUDENTS' PARENTS**



National Clearinghouse on
Disability and Exchange

Mobility International
USA / U.S. Department of
State

541-343-1284 tel/tty

clearinghouse@miusa.org

www.miusa.org/ncde

Website Resources

- NAFSA's e-publications on Mental Health & on Disability - www.nafsa.org/mentalhealth
- Access Abroad's accommodation & site assessment - www.umabroad.umn.edu/access
- University of Pittsburgh's Making it Happen video - www.abroad.pitt.edu/makingithappen/film.html
- CIEE's Knowledge Series Brochure on Disability - www.ciee.org/program_resources/knowledge
- NCDE tipsheets on electrical conversions, service dogs, personal assistants, Deaf students, air travel, foreign languages, mobility disabilities, mental health, health insurance, web accessibility, disclosure - www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets
- NCDE tools for exchange professionals – www.miusa.org/ncde/tools
- NCDE e-publications on disability & int'l exchange - www.miusa.org/publications