

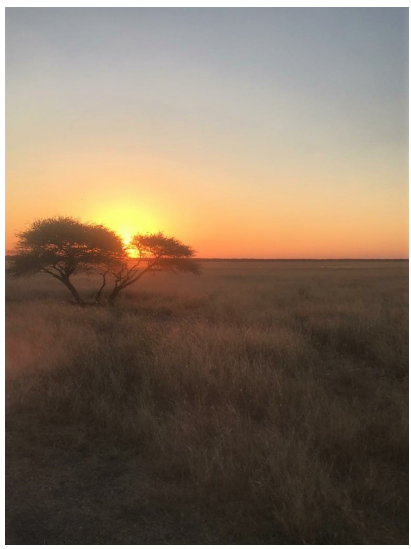
Anxiety and Stress Go Abroad

Best practices for working with students with anxiety on faculty-led international programs

Jessica Lindoerfer, Director of Experiential Education, Landmark College

Institutions can: collect mental health histories; provide training to leaders; assess resources at sites; ensure insurance includes mental health.

Leaders can: ensure program info is complete; identify/meet with vulnerable students; preview itinerary.



“Clear, concise information. Gather as much information about student as is available before trip.”

-Landmark Botswana program leader

Leaders can **review plans** and **set expectations**; provide written info for reference—e.g. **hang itineraries** on the wall; make sure programming includes **downtime** and time to meet with individual students, if necessary.

“Preview, preview, preview! before any move or change, discuss...what to expect with the group, and if needed (always needed) with individual students as well ”

-Landmark Caribbean Islands program leader



Prevention

Pre-program

During program

Anxiety may look like a **focus on details** or asking **repeated questions**.

Institutions can: provide information; support leaders; encourage students to discuss plans with a therapist.

Leaders can: meet with individuals to establish strategies/boundaries.



“Helping students to preview experiences and possible sources of anxiety. Normalizing that travel can be disorienting.”

-Landmark Ireland program leader

Anxiety may look like **isolation**, or **clinging to leaders** or friends. **Panic attacks** can include **physical symptoms**.

Leaders can **listen actively** to concerns; **review options**, including students’ coping mechanisms; **get outdoors** or otherwise change location; use deep **breathing or mindfulness** techniques.

“Walking with a student, or other activity requiring movement. Listen rather than give advice, validate anxiety.”

-Landmark Germany program leader



Response

Sources:
see
handout.

Learning to cope with anxiety can be an opportunity: just one of many possible areas of personal growth on an experiential program abroad.

