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## Counselling Issues with International Students

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### Abstract

As Canadian post-secondary institutions increase their marketing and recruitment efforts to attract international students, attention must also be paid to comprehensive support services. A supportive campus environment is essential for assisting international students to attain their academic and personal goals. Counsellors have an integral role in the delivery of direct counselling and campus outreach programming to international students. Issues faced by international students in the transition to living and learning in Canada are reviewed with specific suggestions for counsellors to address the adjustment concerns of international learners.

### Résumé

Au fur et à mesure que les établissements d'enseignement postsecondaire multiplient leurs efforts de promotion et de recrutement pour attirer les étudiants étrangers, il faut également consacrer des ressources à des services d'aide complets. Un milieu universitaire favorable est essentiel aux étudiants étrangers pour leur permettre d'atteindre leurs objectifs scolaires et leurs buts personnels. Les conseillers font partie intégrante des moyens mis en oeuvre pour offrir des services de counseling direct et des programmes d'extension aux étudiants étrangers. L'auteur examine les problèmes se présentant aux étudiants étrangers qui doivent s'adapter à la vie et à l'apprentissage au Canada, et elle offre des suggestions précises aux conseillers pour les aider à répondre aux besoins d'adaptation des apprenants internationaux.

Post-secondary educators are examining ways to meet the current realities of global education. As boundaries of trade expand to new and larger markets, Canadians will interact with foreign partners in both domestic and overseas settings. Educators across Canada are faced with the challenge of preparing domestic students for future work with people whose cultural background differs from their own (Herr, 1993; Zussman & Poapst, 1995). Along with global education initiatives, there is increasing interest in international student enrollment in Canadian colleges and universities (Knight, 1994). In a competitive international market, Canadian institutions are allocating resources to attract greater numbers of international students. The motivation to recruit international students is inextricably linked to shrinking government resources and the need to secure alternate sources of funding in post-secondary education (Arthur, 1995). Apart from financial resources, international students represent a relatively untapped source of expertise in educating Canadians regarding cultural and professional practices in other countries.

In conjunction with increased recruitment efforts, there needs to be corresponding attention to infrastructure, ethical practices, and profes-

sional standards to support the enrollment of international students (Francis, 1993; Knight, 1994; Tillman, 1990). A supportive campus environment is essential for assisting international students to attain their academic and personal goals of studying abroad (Hayes & Lin, 1994). As members of the student services division, counsellors are frequently called upon to directly assist international students, or to intervene on their behalf with other members of the campus community. Counsellors have a key role in helping international students to work through the loss of support systems that results from moving overseas and to build local networks that support academic achievement.

With increased attention to multicultural issues in counsellor training programs, there is, arguably, information on working with clients from other cultures (Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). However, general attention to multicultural issues falls short of equipping counsellors to effectively assist international students (Fouad, 1991). International students bring unique issues to counselling which require understanding of the ways in which culture impacts the experience of living and studying abroad. Without adequate preparation of counsellors, there is a greater risk of perpetuating problems of early termination, client dissatisfaction, and a sense of isolation experienced by international students (Anderson & Myer, 1985; Pedersen, 1991). Counsellors are challenged to consider how their values, counselling styles, and delivery methods accommodate the needs of international students.

The goals of this paper are to elaborate upon issues faced by international students in the transition to living and learning in Canada and to address the role of counsellors in providing support services for these students. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate discussion among counsellors who currently work with international learners and assist counsellor trainees whose future roles in post-secondary education require an understanding of the needs of international learners. The discussion will review the literature on issues relevant for understanding the experience of international students, and include author's suggestions for ways in which counsellors can address the adjustment concerns of international students.

#### COMMON EXPERIENCES IN THE TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Above all, international students are people in transition (Thomas & Althen, 1989). While international students, like domestic students, are adjusting to role demands in the transition to post-secondary education (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996), this adjustment is further complicated by cultural differences from previous educational settings and the demands to quickly master changes in other roles in the host culture. The common adjustment concerns of international students include educational

concerns, language difficulties, financial problems, social isolation, interpersonal difficulties, homesickness, worries about extended family, discrimination, and the adjustment to differences in social customs (Church, 1982; Crano & Crano, 1993; Parr, Bradley, & Bingi 1992; Wehrly, 1988). While these categories provide an overview of international student concerns, there will be variations in the nature of experiences which students find demanding (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996). It should not be assumed that international students will find cross-cultural educational experiences to be equally stressful (Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992). As a general consideration, the greater the difference between the student's home culture and the host culture, the greater are both the complexity of adjustment issues and the likelihood of cultural misunderstandings (Pedersen, 1991).

Whereas the tendency has been to emphasize group differences between domestic and international students, one should not lose sight of the tremendous within-group differences in the experiences of international students. Pedersen (1991) discusses the dangers of stereotyping international students and further isolating them on campus. Student services personnel need to appreciate both the common experiences of students as they make the adjustment to post-secondary education, and the unique experiences of international students as temporary sojourners in the host country.

### *Motives for Studying Abroad*

Thomas and Althen (1989) outline the relationships between circumstances that lead students to study in Canada and both the academic preparedness and motivation of these students. They suggest that while some international students may be selected to study abroad due to their superior academic qualifications, others make that choice not because of their academic achievement, but because of their family influences in the local government or sponsoring agencies. Other reasons for studying abroad may include political or local conditions. It is not uncommon for families to send one or more children abroad due to pending or actual war conditions or perceived negative practices of local governments. Traditional notions about international students "representing the cream of the crop" in terms of academic abilities may hold true in some cases, whereas other students will be less motivated and unprepared for the rigors of studying in a foreign environment. Unrealistic academic expectations combined with difficulties coping with academic loads and differences in instructional practices can be the basis of severe stressors for international students. Additionally, Thomas and Althen (1989) note that developments in their home countries can lead to the student being preoccupied and can interfere with effective studying.

However, in cases of political unrest or instability in their home country, international students may face concerns about the well-being of their families, the potential impact of elections, or major political decisions which alter living conditions.

Wan, Chapman, and Biggs (1992) emphasize that the stress experienced by international students pivots around academic concerns. Counsellors need to attend to international students' perceptions of expectations held by others regarding their performance in Canada. These expectations may not be in line with the students level of academic preparation or capacity to adjust to foreign teaching methodology (Huxur, Mansfield, Nnazor, Schuetze, & Segawa, 1996). What is at stake for the international student is more than the pressure for academic success. The threat of failure, whether real or perceived, and returning home to face embarrassment of self, family, or sponsors, coupled with the financial resources allocated for international students can be immense pressures.

### *Financial support*

The increasing financial restraints faced by post-secondary institutions has impacted foreign student recruitment and admission practices. According to Lambert (1992), fewer institutions are willing to subsidize foreign students, particularly undergraduates. Recruitment efforts are directed towards those students who can finance the full costs of their foreign education out of personal resources. The differential costs of daily living standards and tuition fees are approximately four times more expensive than fees for domestic students exemplify the level of financial commitment needed by international students.

International students typically receive financial support from their local government, their family, or a foreign sponsor. While many international students finance their overseas education through the resources of their family, it should not be assumed that students come from wealthy families. Pedersen (1991) notes that immediate and extended families may endure considerable financial hardship to send one of their children abroad. In such cases, resources are extremely limited and students may experience additional pressures with respect to their sense of family obligations for success. Further, students who struggle to meet the high costs of living in Canada for basic items such as food and clothing, may be reluctant to request assistance that would further burden family finances.

With immigration policies restricting employment for international students to campus settings, students must be prepared to live within their means. Concerns regarding finances, immigration status, and other basic requirements for living in a foreign country can be troublesome worries that can detract international students from their academic focus

and impact their emotional sense of stability. Programming regarding the cost differentials between home and local communities, responsible consumerism, and general budgeting skills are important topics for student orientation.

### *Communication Problems*

Language proficiency has been linked to both the academic and social adjustment of international students (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Pedersen, 1991). The student's ability to communicate in the host culture can impact student's confidence in approaching host nationals, and the quality of interactions with others (Huxur et al., 1996).

Hayes and Lin (1994) discuss implications for the counselling process when international students have to articulate their concerns in a second language. The limited vocabulary of clients can correspond to an inhibited level of understanding of issues attained by counsellors. A limited vocabulary from which to describe concerns and symptoms, combined with the anxiety of seeking counselling assistance, may explain the embarrassment and sense of inadequacy expressed by international students who seek counselling assistance. According to Hayes and Lin (1994), it is both the counsellor's desire to work with international students and the quality of their contributions to conversations that are salient factors for the counselling relationship. As a result, counsellors need to be aware of the complications of second language issues in counselling and assist international students to feel at ease about seeking help. Essential communication skills include allowing for sufficient silences, offering words to assist explanations, and including perception checks by both international students and counsellors.

### *Culture shock*

A hallmark feature of the international student's experience is the adjustment process associated with moving between cultures. The transition between home and host countries has generally been described as the process of culture shock (Oberg, 1960; Winkelman, 1994). Early studies described culture shock as a U-curve shape of adjustment over time (Lysgaard, 1955). Within this context, three phases of acculturation are typically described as; contact with the host culture, conflict with the host culture, and adaptation. Stages progress from initial excitement and optimism about encountering a new culture, a shift toward the bottom of the U-curve to reflect difficulties with cultural differences and resulting negative affect, and the later stage of recovery as strategies for managing in the host culture are mastered. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) further suggested that culture shock could best be understood in terms of a W-curve model. Beyond the components outlined in the U-curve,

and W-curve adds a stage to account for a similar readjustment process that occurs when sojourners return to their home countries.

Recent studies suggest that models of culture shock continue to have heuristic utility for framing the changes and reactions experienced by international students over time (Crano & Crano, 1993; Parr et al., 1992). International students are immediately immersed into a new culture which requires learning and adjustment to new role demands. The need for rapid understanding and demonstration of appropriate role behaviour in the host culture may be the source of considerable stress, resulting in identity diffusion and role conflict, both of which has been associated with severe culture shock (Pedersen, 1991).

Models of culture shock need to incorporate the different levels of adjustment with which international students enter the host culture and account for the differential experiences that unfold over time (Huxur et al., 1996). International students "begin" the cultural transition through the application process to overseas institutions, acquiring authorization from immigration to study overseas, gathering financial and other resources, making travel arrangements, and leaving family and friends. Before arriving in the host country, international students have invested considerable effort into their overseas experience.

A second criticism of the models of culture shock has to do with their failure to identify the specific experiences of students. For example, Furham and Bochner (1986) suggest that an over focus on intrapersonal variables may obscure the interpersonal dynamics that are essential for an understanding of cross-cultural adjustment. Whereas models of culture shock may be used to assess international students' general sense of well-being in a foreign culture, it is of greater counselling utility to assess the specific concerns identified by students that are stressful (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996). International students may benefit from skill training in stress management to develop specific coping strategies that are appropriate for addressing perceived demands in cross-cultural environments (Walton, 1990).

According to Fouad (1991), models of cross-cultural adjustment also need to take into consideration the experience of returning to the home culture. It is proposed that international students may enter another period of cultural transition as they face discrepancy between their personal learning and the degree of change in their relationships and other living conditions in their home countries. It is important that international student are briefed about the re-entry process and consider matters of adjustment before leaving. This type of "cultural inoculation" can serve as a natural extension of earlier programming in the area of culture shock and can assist with the closure experience of students as they prepare to leave Canada (Arthur, 1997; Stanojevic, 1989; Westwood, Lawrence, & Paul, 1986).

International students may lack the terminology for naming the syndrome of culture shock but nonetheless present a myriad of related psychological and physiological symptoms. Culture shock may manifest in psychological symptoms such as depression, social withdrawal, academic problems, loneliness, hostility towards host culture members, or physiological reactions such as insomnia or vague physical symptoms (Thomas & Althen, 1989; Winkelman, 1994). The focus on physiological as opposed to psychological symptoms may be culturally bound and more acceptable for students to divulge (Allen & Cole, 1987; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992, Zhang, 1995). Counsellors need to be aware of the symptoms commonly associated with the experience of culture shock, particularly the somatization pattern among international students. A close working relationship with campus health services is essential to assist students to access appropriate treatment for their concerns.

*Dissonance About the Cross-Cultural Experience.* As a result of contact with the host culture, international students are faced with contrasts regarding their own culture. This can be the source of considerable dissonance. Similar to models of cultural identity development, (e.g., Helms, 1995) many individuals living overseas may vacillate between acceptance and rejection of features of their home culture. Triandis (1991) has noted that on some items that are highly visible such as clothing, students may “overshoot” and become more like the host culture. On other variables that are less clearly linked to behaviour, there can be a type of “ethnic affirmation” regarding the correctness of one’s cultural viewpoint. Counsellors need to be aware of the conflicts that occur as international students face values issues that may be either normal developmental issues, i.e., living away from parental control, or those accentuated by exposure to new and often competing values in the new culture. A framework for assessing the degree of acculturation in multicultural counselling (e.g., Grieger & Ponterotto, 1995) can be useful for exploring values and decision-making with international students.

The discussion of the acculturation process requires acknowledgment of the individual nature of cultural transitions. It should not be assumed that all international students will attempt to assimilate to the host culture. Further, the process of acculturation is not linear. International students may vacillate between various ways of managing their ethnicity during contact with the host culture (Helms, 1995). For some students, cross-cultural dissonance results in a firm grasp on home values and rejection of the host culture. Where this occurs early in the overseas experience and is maintained, the risk is that students remain closed to experiencing specific aspects of the host culture that they may enjoy. The prognosis for a prolonged negative overseas experience and/or prematurely returning home may lead to serious consequences (Harrison,

Chadwick & Scales, 1996). For other international students, dissonance regarding home versus host culture leads to debate regarding the merits and possibilities of immigrating to Canada, a consideration that may be problematic for legal, family, and re-entry matters. Althen (1991) has noted that the conflict about where to live after graduation may come to a head towards the end of an academic program, however, the issue can be of concern to students throughout their program and impact the types of decisions made regarding both academic and lifestyle choices.

### *Social Support While Living and Learning in Canada*

According to Ishiyama (1995), cultural dislocation can result in under-validation of the self, cultural conflicts, and loss of cultural attachment. International students lose their familiar roles, traditional sources of self-validation and means through which social support is communicated. If sources of support are inadequate, international students may experience debilitating stress associated with the adjustment to life in a foreign country (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Wan et al., 1992).

Bontrager, Birch & Kracht (1990) note that the focus on academic achievement may, ironically, prevent students from participating in programming that is intended to support their achievement. As students attempt to manage the confusion associated with new academic and community environments, they may be reticent about taking time to participate in campus programs. The press for academic success can be mistaken as indifference by others and consequently add to the isolation from available campus support. Wan et al. (1992) emphasize that campus support personnel must be persistent in reaching out to international students to take advantage of programs which foster support and ease academic adjustment.

In the author's experience, international students demonstrate social anxiety in response to both concerns about language competency and concerns about socially appropriate behaviour in new cultural contexts. International students may be criticized when they are observed forming groups with others from similar cultural backgrounds or from nations with geographical proximity. It may appear to others that students are rejecting opportunities for cross-cultural learning and affiliation. However, the experience of many international students is that developing friendships with local students is a difficult and often disappointing experience. International students may be confused by the levels of friendship found in Canadian culture and by the fact that relationships appear to be dominated by a concern with time and activity (Arthur, 1997). The lack of understanding by Canadian students of international student needs can lead to less than desirable interactions by both parties. Hayes and Lin (1994) add that host students generally have a monocultural



background and lack both the sensitivity and experience with diverse racial and ethnic groups necessary to bridge international friendships.

Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings require additional time, commitment, and personal confidence by both parties to overcome differences and search for common understandings and mutual interests. Rather than viewing social involvement as solely the responsibility of the international student, it appears that Canadian students need awareness and skills to enhance their experience with building cross-cultural friendships. Whereas international students may desire more contact with Canadian students, their experiences tend to lack the intimate qualities of friendships that lead to a sense of belonging. Coupled with the demands of academic systems and studying in a second language, it is little wonder that international students seek reprieve in the familiarity of others who share language and other cultural similarities.

#### USE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Research regarding the use of counselling services by international students shows conflicting results. Some researchers have suggested that international students underutilize counselling services and that there is typically a low level of satisfaction with those services (Pedersen, 1991). Other researchers have suggested that international students prefer formal systems for assistance with educational and vocational issues (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986). However, the evidence that international students are more likely than domestic students to drop out after a single counselling session (Anderson & Myer, 1985) may be explained by help-seeking factors such as misunderstandings regarding the process of cultural adjustment (Wan et al., 1992), invasion of privacy perceived to be attached to the counselling relationship (Dadfar & Friedlander, 1982), or lack of awareness regarding campus resources (Hayes & Lin, 1994).

Researchers, who maintain that international students use counselling services with a similar rate to other students, have investigated the importance of counselling style (Ebbin & Blankinship, 1986). While it has been suggested that international students, and particularly Asian students, prefer direct counselling to indirect methods (Leong & Sadlacek, 1986; May & Jepsen, 1988), methodological issues are contentious in relation to reported results. For example, conclusions based on single session observations and the use of analogue stimulus for ratings of counsellor styles may obscure changes in the counselling process, including counselling style preferences, that may shift as sessions unfold (Yau, Sue, & Hayden, 1992). Further, research has typically emphasized cross-cultural differences using North American students as the comparison group and treating international students as a homogeneous group. In light of these concerns, it appears appropriate for counsellors to consider that the

intercultural needs and preferences of international students may shift as counselling unfolds.

### *International Student Views of the Counsellor*

International students' views of the counsellor may impact whether they access services as well as their satisfaction with those services (May & Jepsen, 1988). According to May and Jepsen (1988), views of counsellors by these students range from an informal view of helping but a strong emphasis on the relationship component, i.e., counsellor as friend, to less emphasis on the relationship component and a strong emphasis on direct and concrete advice, i.e., counsellor as expert.

From the author's experience working with international students, it is important for staff in post-secondary institutions to understand the value of support and interaction emphasized by many international students. At the same time, counsellors need to be cognizant of the boundaries of their relationships with international students who may desire more frequent contact and in settings other than the office. Whereas informal contact may be essential to gain the trust and confidence of students, it may also be problematic in that the context of the professional relationship is not clearly defined by the host culture. Some international students may find it a contradiction that highly personal matters are discussed with a counsellor in one setting but the relationship is restricted in others.

May and Jepsen (1988) elaborate that international students whose expectations are aligned with formal relationships may see the counsellor in an expert, advice giving, and/or authoritarian role. It is easy to see where counsellors whose style is less direct may be perceived as less helpful by international students whose expectations are that counsellors will give concrete recommendations to help them.

In summary, counsellors need to be cognizant that expectations of the counsellor role may be culturally bounded by both the view of personal disclosure in supportive relationships, and international students' view of authority in relationships. Counsellors who work with international students need to be flexible in considering various expectations by international students of the counselling relationship. International students are unlikely to share the same understanding with the counsellor regarding the counsellor's role, the nature of the counselling relationship, and the client's responsibilities in the change process. Students from different cultural groups may present similar symptoms. However, as noted by Zhang (1995), the identification and interpretation of the problem may vary across cultures. It is critical that counsellors explore international clients' expectations of counselling in order to negotiate a common framework for responding appropriately to client needs.

CHALLENGING THE WAYS COUNSELLING SERVICES  
ARE DELIVERED TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Fouad (1991) reminds practitioners that one-on-one counselling with a stranger is not a universal practice. Counsellors may need to explore both the values of the individual regarding problem definition as well as the systems and cultural practices used in the home culture to address problems. Counsellors must be willing to be innovative and to move beyond the boundaries of traditional counselling protocol since these may be viewed as either intimidating or offensive by international clients. More flexible counselling approaches are needed to complement and enhance the meaningfulness of the counsellor-international student relationship (Siegel, 1991; Thomas & Althen, 1989).

For example, the author quickly learned that international students may not seek assistance through existing systems such as scheduling appointments or meeting in an office. While some international students will prefer privacy, others find this context overly formal. It is not uncommon for international students to approach counsellors in more informal settings such as hallways, on campus, or public areas. In turn, the delivery mechanisms of the formal interview may be replaced by discourse through discussion, informal groups, and short encounters in ongoing campus interactions. Whereas traditional models of counselling may be challenged by this nonstandardized approach, it is imperative for counsellors to consider the needs and practices of the clientele that they serve. As Pedersen (1991) has suggested, "It is important for counselors working with international students to broaden their understanding of counseling beyond narrowly defined methods and contexts" (p.29). In order to be effective in meeting the needs of international students, counselors will undoubtedly be challenged to diversify the approaches and settings in which counselling has traditionally been offered.

Early intervention with international students is highly desirable to prevent the potentially devastating consequences of having to return home before completing an academic program. As discussed by Steglitz (1988), orientation programs for international students are a cost effective way to educate international students about commonly experienced adjustment concerns and available campus resources. Orientation regarding the general themes of culture shock can be very useful to assist students with the initial transition period to living and learning in Canada. Understanding the process of cultural adjustment can help to alleviate uncertainty and boost student's sense of control about reacting in an unfamiliar environment (Walton, 1990). As cultural transitions are a process that occur over time, orientation needs to be ongoing to deal with issues as they emerge (Steglitz, 1988).

The ways in which counselling goals are met may alter the international student's interest in participating. For example, international

students who are reluctant to seek counselling for a mental health issue due to the perceived loss of "face" or social stigma, may be more responsive to an educational format. If the topic can be approached as part of learning enhancement and support of academic activities, the student may view participation as highly desirable.

Hayes and Lin (1994) underscore the need for counsellors to reduce the barriers to services for international students. Lack of familiarity with both campus systems and cultural views of help seeking, may mean delayed attempts to seek counselling assistance. Counsellors need to recognize the additional steps taken by international students to come for help and acknowledge their efforts to access campus resources. One consideration is increasing the accessibility to services so that international students can be assisted with immediate action strategies to deal with perceived stressors. Brief but frequent contacts may be better aligned with student's needs for cultural assistance than is the traditional structure of hour long appointments.

Hayes and Lin further elaborate that the tendency of international students to develop support systems with conationals means that discussion of concerns and problem solving are likely to occur with peers as opposed to disclosing personal matters to perceived "outsiders." International students may be reluctant to seek assistance with identified helpers such as counsellors because of lack of familiarity or previous difficulties with members of the host culture. One implication for counselling staff is the necessity of building a positive profile with the international student community. Informal contact serves to build the kind of rapport that increases the chances of international students contacting professionals for services. Conversely, assurance and encouragement from other international students about accessing counselling services can be the best source of referral for students in need of assistance.

The cultural connection and network with other international students can be incorporated as an advantage for services to international students. For example, counsellors who are willing to respond to an international student's requests to include a third person or representative from the student's peer group may open the door for later individual work through diminishing the threat of directly approaching the counsellor. While including others can provide support for the international student, this has to be individually determined in light of confidentiality concerns and the student's need for privacy in seeking counselling.

The counsellor's connection and reputation amongst international students groups are essential for peer referral and for an endorsement of the services. Parr et al. (1992) suggest that more confident international students have the potential to become effective peer helpers and role models for helping others to meet their needs. Students who are more

experienced can be valuable resources in terms of new student orientation and assistance with ongoing preventive programming throughout the academic year. Through establishing a positive profile in the international student community, counsellors can ensure that student needs are directing the delivery of appropriate services.

Siegel (1991) has emphasized the need for counsellors to have a campus network of resource people who have demonstrated cross-cultural sensitivity and interest in international students. Several researchers (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992) have suggested that academic faculty represent a key source of formal support when international students face an educational or personal problem. By assisting international students to link with campus resources, both formal and informal support networks can be bridged.

Several authors (e.g., Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Siegel, 1991) have noted that campus programs have neglected the family members who accompany international students to Canada. Issues of status, role change, language proficiency, legal ability to work, and social isolation may be paramount for family members. The well-being of the international student's immediate support system should not be ignored in terms of the potential effects of family members' acculturation experiences on academic and personal success. Counselling efforts may well need to extend to a systems approach to assist international students and their families.

#### CONCLUSION

Counsellors need to consider how cultural values and assumptions impact counselling practices with international students. Without an awareness of the influence of one's own culture on counselling practice, there are dangers of stereotyping and cultural misunderstandings which may exacerbate client difficulties (Pedersen, 1991). International students are not a homogeneous group. Failure to recognize both the inter- and intra-cultural variability in working with clients from around the world perpetuates the marginalization of this group of students. Counsellors need to consider both the general needs and unique circumstances of international clients. By acknowledging that the group "international students" encompasses cultures from around the world, counsellors can respect the diversity of their clients who choose to study in Canada.

International students offer an immense resource of information regarding cultural and academic practices around the world. However, international students are often neglected as a valuable resource for educating other students on campus (Pedersen, 1991). Institutions must be prepared to build a climate that fosters meaningful academic and support programs. As a result, international students will maximize their

experience of living and learning in Canada. Simultaneously, Canadians can benefit from opportunities to collaborate and learn about the perspectives of people from other countries. Counsellors and other staff in post-secondary institutions play an integral role in promoting campus support for the exchange of learning between all students.

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