

Forum on Education Abroad – Boston conference (March 2018)

Session: *Practical Risk Management: Dealing with Emotional & Mental Health Abroad*

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www.isdsi.org/risk

EFA or Emotional First Aid

- **80-20 Rule** : Student does 80% of the talking, listener 20%
- **BIG CAT – a 5-step process of Active Listening**
 1. **B**uild rapport (with student) Key phrase: “Tell me more.”
 2. **I**dentify problems. Ask questions, rephrase, express empathy (not sympathy)
 3. **G**enerate alternatives
 4. **C**reate an **A**ction plan
 5. **T**ransition & follow-up (may include referral)

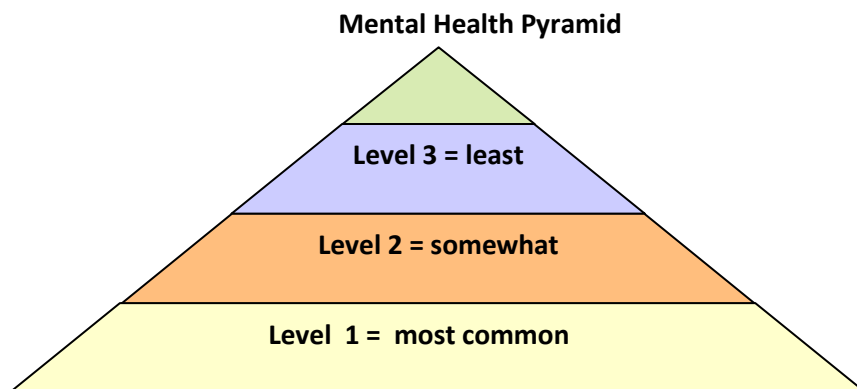
DON'T ... make judgments or jump to conclusions; ask students to defend what they are feeling; argue; lecture; give advice.

EFA Goals:

E = Equilibrium. Student begins to return to a more calm, relaxed state.

F = Functioning. Day-to-day behavior and habits begin to become more healthy.

A = Action. Student has a “game plan” to change behavior. Check-ins with staff, face-to-face.



Level 1 = low risk of physical harm; rapid onset

Ex: panic attack, homesickness, family or relationship issues, mood issues, grief reactions, bullying.

Actions recommended: Use EFA (80-20 rule, BIG CAT, action plan); Report to supervisors.

If unaddressed, can escalate to level 2.

Level 2 = moderate risk; chronic; negatively affects daily functioning

Ex: disordered eating, abuse or trauma history, substance abuse, self-injury, chronic depression/anxiety

Actions recommended: Use EFA (80-20 rule, BIG CAT, action plan); Report to supervisors ASAP.

Level 3 = high risk; rapid onset; seek professional help

Ex: sexual assault, suicidal attempt or thoughts, eating disorders, irrational behavior, physical violence

Actions: EFA; Report immediately to supervisors; Don't leave the student alone!

Summary by Monique Fecteau