



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

USG Health & Safety Workshop Series

Workshop III: Dealing With a Crisis Abroad
12/7/2023

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Recap of Previous Sessions
- III. Death of an FIU Student Abroad
- IV. Death of a KSU Student Abroad
- V. Q+A



Presenters

Leah Hicks, University of Georgia,
Assistant Director for Global Risk, Health
and Safety

Dr. Laura Boudon, Director of Study
Abroad Programs, Georgia State

Erin Rasche, Georgia Tech,
International Risk, Safety and Security
Director





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Moment of Silence

Workshop I: Building Your Resources

- Campus Study Abroad Committees:
 - Risk Management
 - Study Abroad Program Proposal
- Crisis Management Team
- Emergency Notification Plan
- Emergency Action Plan
 - Types of crises that may occur



Workshop II: Preparing for Travel

- Pre-Departure Orientations for Students
 - Templates and ideas for interactive sessions
 - Data-driven preparations: focus on realities of study abroad
- Faculty Orientation
 - Emergency resources and expectations
 - Workshops and tabletop exercises
 - Duty of Care (foreseeable harm and prudent response)





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Death of an FIU Student Abroad
and Lessons Learned
Laura Boudon, GSU

Chronology

- Diana's Story
- Initial
 - Phone Calls to Office of Study Abroad
 - Inform FIU senior leadership and Travel Committee
 - Liaise with student's family
 - Pull out Emergency Plan
- First 24 Hours
 - Worked with CISI on next steps and benefits
 - Spoke with US Consulate in Greece
 - Communicated with Exchange Partner in Spain



Lessons Learned

Be prepared for news of an emergency to come in unexpected ways.

- You may have an Emergency Phone Number or tell students to call your Police Department.
- Are your Student Assistants and front desk staff trained to respond to emergency calls?
- Please share concrete instructions about how to respond to such a call or email with every member of your team.



Lessons Learned

Be empathetic to the family and honor their wishes wherever possible.

- Have one main person serving as Liaison to the family.
- This is an extremely difficult time for them and they will need to make some hard decisions.
- What are small things you can do to support them?
- Really listen to their needs, concerns and wishes.



Lessons Learned

Consider diverse staff reactions and provide support for staff to process the events.

- Check in with individual team members regarding their well-being.
- Some team members will want to talk about what happened and others won't.
- Offer a team session with Employee Assistance Counselor as well as individual, private sessions.



Lessons Learned

Seek university acknowledgement of the tragedy.

- What is your university's formal protocol following a student death? Does your President send a letter of condolences?
- Can you post about the death on your study abroad social media?
- This acknowledgement really helps with healing for the community, including friends, staff and faculty who knew the student.





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Death of a KSU Student Abroad and Lessons Learned

Erin Rasche, Georgia Tech

Chronology

- Steven's Story
- Initial
 - ~3PM ET 10/29/22 – First reports hit media
 - Initiate check-ins
 - Notification received
 - Role assignment
- Ongoing
 - Supporting other students
 - Working with campus leadership
 - Working with Dean of Students/Family
 - Working with TPP, CISI



Lessons Learned

Emergencies **will** happen at the **worst** times.

- Account for absences, new people, etc.
- Everyone who **may** be called upon in an emergency has access to/knows the **very basic initial steps** to take (e.g. who on campus needs to know; death notification protocol*).
- May have to move quickly to react to publicity*



Lessons Learned

Role clarification

- Who notifies and/or liaises with individual's(s') emergency contacts?
 - Does this differ for initial outreach vs. ongoing support (for logistics)?
- Who prepares statements for or responds to media requests?
 - Make sure they have the information they need in a timely manner to respond
- Who works with insurance and/or on the ground partners?



Lessons Learned

This is the value of partnerships and program providers. Lean into them when able.

- Can assist in obtaining translations of death certificates, etc.
- Making space for and accommodating family wishes surrounding final preparations and repatriation
- Supporting family should they wish/need to travel
- Retrieving and sending belongings
- Potentially work with insurance



Lessons Learned

Make concerted effort for tributes / processing

- Crisis management: Easy to focus solely on the management piece
- Intentional, organized efforts
- Make space for and check in with impacted individuals
- Candlelight vigils or other memorial events?
- Posthumous degree?
- Honor legacy by incorporating lessons learned



Lessons Learned

Give yourself permission & make time for self-care

- May be dealing with multiple time zones
- Incident management can take time until full resolution attained
- High pressure & stress + lack of sleep = burnout
- Divide & conquer



Overview

- Prepare and practice plans
- Expect the unexpected – have backups and redundancies in place
- Lean on partners and contacts
- Empathy and care for all involved
- USG Resource: **Dealing with a Death Abroad: Policies and Best Practices**





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Questions

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