**Knowing when you need help:**
The following signs may be more than just “stress” and may be an indication that you need to seek counseling:
- Prolonged/intense sad mood
- Pronounced changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Excessive anxiety that interferes with your ability to function
- Self-destructive or violent thoughts and behaviors
- Alcohol or drug use

**On Campus Resources:**
In addition to the Counseling Center the following resources are available to all students and may be helpful in alleviating some of the challenges faced by international students:
- Office of International Education (404) 894-7475
- Office of the Dean of Students (404) 894-6367
- Student Health Services (404) 894-1420
- Career Services (404) 894-2550
- Center for Academic Success (404) 894-1945
- Women’s Resource Center (404) 385-0230
- Office of Disability Services (404) 894-2563

**IF IN CRISIS:**
Call 911 or GA Tech PD: (404) 894-2500 or the GA Crisis & Access Line: 1-800-715-4225

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The Georgia Tech Counseling Center is a unit of the Division of Student Affairs. The Center is dedicated to enhancing the academic experience and success of all students by providing a variety of counseling and psychological services to individuals and the campus community. We provide short-term counseling services to address a wide range of personal and career concerns. Our services are available at no charge to currently enrolled students.

For more information, contact us at:

**Georgia Tech Counseling Center**
353 Ferst Drive, Suite 238
Student Services-Flag Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30332
404-894-2575
Website: [www.counseling.gatech.edu](http://www.counseling.gatech.edu)

Follow us on:
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- Facebook at Georgia-Tech-Counseling-Center
- YouTube: GTCounseling

**Office Hours**
Monday - Friday
8 am - 5 pm

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Studying internationally is…
- Exciting and fun
- Often a little scary
- Often stressful

It is a process that involves:
- Learning to adjust
- Coping with change

Things are different:
It is not uncommon to feel that things are very different than what you are used to. Often students note differences in the following areas:

- Manners
- Customs/Traditions
- Language
- Family organization
- Personal space
- Food
- Beliefs/Religion
- Laws/Government
- Values
- Social norms
- Gestures

Experiencing these differences can be challenging. It can make students feel out of place or uncomfortable.

Culture Shock:
Culture shock can be a reaction to the afore-mentioned challenges and changes. It is defined as “a psychological disorientation that is experienced when attempting to operate in a radically different cultural environment” and it can manifest in the following ways:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Frustration
- Feelings of isolation/loneliness

Homesickness:
It is also not uncommon for students to experience feelings of longing for their home country and family. These feelings can lead to:
- Low energy or motivation
- Trouble sleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Pervasive unhappiness
- Inability to concentrate

Homesickness is typically triggered by:
- Holidays
- Own or loved ones’ birthdays
- Anniversaries or special occasions
- Family illness or death
- And even changes in the weather! (Particularly winter)

Adjusting to a New Culture:
In order to overcome culture shock, homesickness, and the negative emotions that can be associated with studying internationally, it is important for students to adjust to their new surrounding culture and make a “home away from home”. At first:
- Students’ expectations of their new surroundings may be too high.
- Students might find themselves constantly comparing this new culture to their home culture.
- Students might focus mainly on what is missing or lacking in their new surrounding culture.

Eventually, students often experience feelings of acceptance and are able to find ways to balance their own/home cultural norms with those of the new culture. They also often come to appreciate the cultural differences.

Adjusting requires support...
Students might require help from others in their journey towards making a “home away from home”. They may need:
- Academic or language tutors
- Guidance from local students or school staff
- Encouragement from friends and family

Or sometimes, if stress is leading to more severe symptoms or the student is having trouble meeting their daily responsibilities and going about their daily routine, students might best benefit from individual or group counseling.

Visiting home might become challenging...
Sometimes, after students have adjusted and become accustomed to their new surrounding culture, it can become hard to visit their home country. Students might experience:
- Conflicts with their home culture or family
- Critical views of their home country
- Discomfort with home country’s norms

Over time, students often learn to re-adapt and re-integrate to their home culture. This process may also require learning to balance and switch between the two countries/cultures.

Being an international student poses unique challenges...
Sometimes international students have to deal with crises or conflicts arising in their home country while they are away or in their new surrounding culture when they still feel like “outsiders”. It can also be challenging for international students to experience being stereotyped by local students in their host country.

Healthy Coping Techniques:
- Exercising
- Meditation/Prayer
- Doing fun and relaxing activities
- Finding someone to regularly talk to
- Writing friends and family emails and letters
- Making new friends locally
- Reaching out to faculty/staff at GA Tech