

# Current Trends

## Health History, Medical Forms, and Disability Disclosure

Are you trending up or down with these changes that long-established education abroad programs are spearheading and other types of international exchanges could tap into?

### Swapping Hard Copy for the Cloud

Online applications are making it easier for today's digital natives to check a box or type a longer explanation about pre-existing health conditions in a format that seems more private.

### Do You Really Need to Know?

More programs are asking fewer questions and encouraging self-assessment to avoid screening out or discouraging diverse participants. Limit who has the "need to know" status about the individual's specific health history. If you're not that person, and someone discloses a disability to you, then say "Thank you for trusting me with this important information, and I know who to put you in touch with to take the next step."

### Leave it to a Professional

Physicians, disability service providers, and counselors are increasingly being trained to understand the demands of international travel and charged with determining the health clearance for individuals, not international exchange staff. Ask doctors or psychologists to review exchange participant self-assessment forms and refer to their own records for completeness and accuracy.

### When, Who, What, Where, How?

When an individual discloses a disability, is it clear who it will be shared with, what the purpose of disclosure is, where to go to arrange accommodations, and how the information will affect his or her participation?

## The Leader Becomes the Learner

Exchange leaders and faculty on overseas programs are being trained on how to simply and neutrally respond to a participant's disclosure of a disability. Train advisors and staff on disability disclosure protocols and increase education on non-apparent disabilities to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and other disabilities. Ask "What support do you need abroad that you use now?" or "We can talk about what barriers you're experiencing and some options for resolving those barriers."

## No Secrets and Lots of Repetition

Be more transparent and persistent in informing exchange participants where and how they can get information when they need it. Share regularly about medications, English-speaking doctors or psychologists abroad, peer support, and other resources. Consider making counselors available at no cost upfront to participants.

## Knowing What To Do

If you are the person responsible for making arrangements, how do you know where to begin? The following online forms and guidelines are examples of how to learn from the individual what is needed, and then how to interpret his or her responses and possible follow-up questions to start planning.



### Download and adapt for your use disability assessment forms and guidelines

[www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/assessmentforms](http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/assessmentforms)

### Train faculty and other exchange leaders on disability arrangements

[www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/facultyled](http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/facultyled)

### Include peer support as an innovation for services abroad

[www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/peersupport](http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/peersupport)