



## Mindful(I): Mental Health @ FIE Dublin

Participation in a study abroad programme is generally a brand new and exciting experience that requires you to prepare for the unknown. When it comes to your mental health, it may be something that you have dealt with in the past, something that you are still in treatment for or something that you have never faced before. In keeping with FIE's mission to promote inclusivity, this document provides information if you find yourself in any of these categories.

### **Some Differences in Psychological Treatment: USA vs. Ireland**

#### **Psychotherapists / Psychologists / Psychiatrists**

There are several significant differences between psychological support provided in the USA and Ireland. In America '**psychotherapists**' are sometimes called '**psychologists**'. The term 'psychologist' in Ireland is usually refers to educational or clinical psychologists. Schools in Ireland often also employ '**counsellors**' who offer emotional support and behaviour modification.

In America, '**psychiatrists**' often provide counselling and psychotherapy. In Ireland, psychiatrists are medically trained, and work primarily with conditions that may require medication or hospitalisation. Their training in counselling or psychotherapy is generally limited.

#### **Prescriptions**

There are some differences also in the way that **prescriptions are written** in Ireland and the US. Prescriptions in Ireland can only be written by a 'General Practitioner' (GP) or a psychiatrist, and not by a psychotherapist or counsellor. Psychiatrists in Ireland are also much more expensive than in America.

Both GPs and Psychiatrists in Ireland may be reluctant to prescribe new medications, or renew existing prescriptions to study abroad students who are unknown to them, medically, and who are only here for a relatively short time. It is therefore extremely important, if you need medication(s) to manage a mental health condition, to secure sufficient quantities of medication(s) prior to your arrival in Ireland.

- **Medication.** We recommend that you come to Dublin with at least **3 months' supply** of all prescribed medications. If any of your medications cannot be supplied ahead of time, please consider the following.
  - Speak to your doctor– ask if they have recommendations for suppliers in Dublin and how to go about getting a prescription filled. Ask them if they are willing to ship the medication to you in Dublin through the relevant legal channels.
  - Check if your medication is readily available in Dublin – some medications may be under a different name. Speak to your doctor and get documentation about your prescription including the condition

for which you are taking it, dosage, any special instructions etc. Bring this to Dublin so that you can show a Doctor all the details of your treatment regime.

- Another option is for your family to get the prescription and ship the medication to you in Dublin. You must check with the Health Products Regulatory Authority (**HPRA**) (who regulate all medicines and medical devices in Ireland) if your medication is legal to import. If so, then use a reputable shipping company who can help with documentation and have appropriate tracking facilities to prevent any issues at customs.

### Additional Pre-Departure Preparations

FIE would like to ensure that your study abroad experience is as positive as possible. If you have any mental health concerns, **you** will understand best what barriers you might struggle with in daily life.

- **Communication.** Sharing your mental health concerns with your Study Abroad Advisor or any of the FIE Dublin team makes it easier for us to be able to help. **Help us to help you by letting us know what you need!**
- **Your Mental Health Practitioner.** If you are currently seeing a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist, speak with your mental health practitioner about your plans to study abroad, and discuss any concerns you may have, including a review of any medication(s) you are taking. Your practitioner might be able to provide continued on-line services remotely, or recommendations for treatment in Dublin, including referrals to practitioners.
- **Insurance.** FIE's Endsleigh insurance policy is mainly used for emergency medical matters. It will therefore not cover you for private treatment in Dublin and it **does not cover pre-existing conditions. It is therefore vitally important that you speak with your home travel insurer to check that they will cover you whilst abroad.** If they will not cover you, we advise that you seek a travel insurance policy that will cover pre-existing mental health conditions including the provision of a therapist, prescriptions etc.

If your insurer will cover you whilst in Dublin, please check if they have a preferred medical partner in Dublin with whom they have a pre-approved relationship.

- **Research, Research, Research!** You should look into what [mental health facilities](#) are like in Ireland. Check out Mobility International's page on [Mental Health Considerations](#), which will hopefully give you some idea of what to prepare for and how to manage your own mental health whilst abroad.

### FIE Dublin Mental Health Resources

Check out the [FIE Dublin Counselling and Mental Health webpage](#) for a list of resources available while studying in Dublin.