

Supporting International Students

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SPEAKERS

Garrett, Helen



Helen 00:19

Good morning, everyone. My name is Helen Pethrick, and I am the student research and knowledge exchange assistant at healthy campus Alberta. You can feel welcome to introduce yourself in the chat. We're so grateful that you could join us today, let's just review a few housekeeping items before we get started, microphones are enabled for presenters only if your audio is connected successfully, the speaker icon in the top toolbar should be green. If you are having any technical difficulties, please feel free to send us a message in the chat or start a private message with the host. If you have logged in with a browser and are having audio challenges, you might want to switch to the app, or to the classic view. You can do this by clicking the three dots at the top right of your screen. We are going to have live transcription available for this webinar, you can access this by clicking at the link at the box above the chat box, we are experiencing some technical difficulties right now, and we are working to resolve this, we'll have it up as soon as we can. comments and questions are welcome throughout the presentation, and you can use the chat box to communicate these, we will have a q&a session at the end of today's webinar. And at that time, we will ensure that any questions posed throughout the presentation are addressed.



Helen 01:44

Today's webinar will be recorded and the chat box will not be included in the recording

this recording will be sent to you by email, as well as posted on our healthy campus alberta.ca website, on the webinar page, so that you can listen again or share with others. And now I would like to introduce our presenter for today's webinar. Garrett Beatty. He is the Intercultural Programs Advisor in the International Student Services Office at the University of Calgary. Garrett has been working in international education. Since 2017 Garrett's work involves providing education and support on cross cultural learning and intercultural communication styles. He is an alumnus of the University of Calgary, completing his master's degree in English. In 2015, we are so excited to have Garrett here today, we will be discussing the unique needs of international students and some strategies for institutions to ensure there are meaningful appropriate and culturally responsive supports in place. We know that this topic of supporting international students is very important for our community and we're very excited to, to start the conversation. Thanks so much everyone for introducing yourselves in the chats. Welcome to today's webinar, and I will pass it over to Garrett

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Garrett 03:06

Awesome oh thank you so much Helen. Good morning everyone. Can you hear me all right, my sound is working. Okay. Perfect. Thank you. It's great to see so many folks here I'm also really happy to see a lot of students, and a few familiar faces as well so hello to everyone. My name is Garret and thank you, Helen, for that great introduction. That was a photo of me when the clothing that I wear to work was not sweat pants. So, it's a memory of what days long ago now feels like.

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Garrett 03:35

So today I'm going to be talking about internationalization in the time of COVID-19, and I have a lot to get through so I think I'm gonna dive in right away. So before I get started, I do want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories of the people of the treaty seven region in southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations, the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakota including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to Metis Nation of Alberta, Region III. The University of Calgary, where I'm from, and work from, is situated on land that is adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River and the traditional Blackfoot name for this place is "Moh'kins'tis", which we now call the City of Calgary.

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Garrett 04:28

So, really quickly our agenda today, I'm going to go through some international students

statistics and I'll try to go through that relatively quickly but I think it's just really interesting and helpful to contextualize the conversation and take a look at what International Education looks like across Canada, and here in Alberta. I'm going to talk a bit about some of the unique challenges that international students face while living and learning, and studying and in Canada. And I'm also going to talk about how some of those challenges have evolved or changed with the impacts of COVID-19. And more broadly, how COVID-19 has impacted International Education at the institutional level. And finally, I'm going to spend the bulk of today talking about some recommendations for how you can build more holistic and culturally responsive approaches to supporting international students. All right.

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Garrett 05:21

Let's take a look at international students in Canada as of 2019 and this is according to CBIE, which is the Canadian Board of International Education. We had a total of 614,480 international students studying across Canada by the end of 2019, and just under 500,000 of those were studying at the post secondary level so likely at many of the institutions that are represented here today. So this is a massive number, but let's break it down a little bit more. So, what this number represents is 185% increase in international student population in Canada, from 2010 to 2019, or, sorry from 2010 to 2019 and CBIE also conducts surveys with all the international students who are studying here every year. And based on some of their survey responses. 96% of international students who currently study in Canada recommended it as a study destination. So it was a preferred destination, on the world stage.

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Garrett 06:24

And this is particularly interesting of the respondents to the survey in 2019, 60% of them indicated that after they graduated their plan was to apply for permanent residence in Canada. So what that tells us is that 60% of the international students want to go permanent residence right in Canada, which means that this is a really major pathway for permanent residence, and for internationalization in Canada, and for immigration so this is really really important and I think reflects a lot of attitudes of international students who want to stay and remain in Canada. I'll talk a little bit more about what that means later on. Now we unfortunately don't have as data, 2019, but just to give you a sense this is my region in the world, where our international students come from. So, and this is all of Canada in 2017. We saw that about 40% of international students studying somewhere in Canada came from East Asia. That was the highest number and the next highest was South Asia with 27%. Now these numbers have continued to grow. And they change and fluctuate based on a lot of different conditions including the political climate relationships

between Canada and other countries, and and certainly the COVID-19 situation has impacted, where we're seeing folks coming to study from.

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Garrett 07:45

Take a little bit of a closer look as well. International students in Canada, the top countries have citizenship. And this is once again across Canada so in 2017, China was the number one source for international students, with India coming in second. Now what's really interesting is when you actually look at more general demographics, on this, so for example at the University of Calgary, when we look at our numbers our top two populations mirrored this for a long time. So China was our number one source for international students and India was our number two. But South Korea was not in fact their number three. We usually tend to see either the United States or Iran in number three in the University of Calgary, so some of these numbers may change depending on the region in Canada, as well as the universities that are there, what types of programs are offered and how appealing those are to folks from those countries. So I think that's really really interesting how some of those regions do impact the area of the world that the students do come from.

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Garrett 08:42

We also see fluctuations based on if there are existing agreements between the institutions here in Canada and institutions in those countries of origin, because that will certainly impact the number. So for a long time, University of Calgary had a lot of relationships with with Brazilian institutions and a couple of years ago some of those relationships expired and then they were renewed. And so for about a year we saw Brazil drop off our top five and then they came back the year after which was really great. So there's lots of things that contribute to these fluctuations.

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Garrett 09:17

So let's take a little bit of a closer look at the province. Each of the provinces so the number in the percentage of international students in Canada by province and or territory. So I'll just talk about Alberta really quickly so about 5% of the overall international students that are studying in Canada are studying in Alberta. Once again this is in 2017, we've definitely seen those numbers increase quite significantly unfortunately don't have more recent data than this but CDIE does publish reports on these things and I'm hoping that they'll have some new data within the next year or so by the end of 2020.

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Garrett 09:53

And then let's just take a look at some of the major metropolitan spaces in Canada. So Toronto, of course, has the largest international student population. And then we see Vancouver has the second largest, Montreal has the third, and then they sort of go down from there. But what's really significant is these are the numbers and increases between 2016 and 2017. And so they're actually quite significant increases in fact I have the percentages here in Toronto alone that was a 26% increase. Just between 2016 and 17 in Edmonton we saw 14% increase, and in Calgary a 10% increase, and those numbers have only continued to go up so those trends have been absolutely on an upward trajectory ever since 2010. So if I was to present more recent information here, we would see similar trends as well so I just wanted to give you an idea of what growth has looked like from an international education perspective in Canada.

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Garrett 10:51

We'll talk a little bit about the unique challenges that international students may face while they're studying here in Canada. So one of the first challenges and one of the first barriers that all international students encounter is navigating Canadian immigration. If you've never had to navigate Canadian immigration you may not be aware of how challenging it can be. And so there's a lot of pieces here. As soon as a student is accepted into a post secondary institution, they need to apply for a study permit, which is their legal ability to study in Canada. And so there's a lot of really key application deadlines, as well as requirements they need to demonstrate that they have in order to apply for these documents, and it is ultimately the student's responsibility to do this, but for many of these students who may be as young as 16, 17, or 18 years old. Certainly navigating the complexities of an immigration system can be really really challenging. And there's likely not something that they've done before. There's other pieces like making sure that they have their passports or potentially even having to renew that passport to make sure that it is valid. And then any other require travel documents. As I said before it's ultimately this student's responsibility to maintain their legal status in Canada. And this can be challenging.

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Garrett 12:13

So one of the requirements of maintaining legal status for example is that they must maintain full time study in their programs. Now, this may be okay for students who are studying at the graduate level, many of whom are enrolled full time anyway. But for students at the undergraduate level, at the University of Calgary, for example, in order to be classified as a full time student you need to be enrolled in three courses per semester. This certainly presents some challenges if the student is dealing with any sort of personal

challenges or potentially issues that may require that they need to consider dialing back their involvement or dialing back their courseload. And so, maintaining legal status can be really really challenging because if they drop below that three course limit then they're no longer full time students, and that has implications for their immigration status.

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Garrett 13:04

Certainly dealing with situations back home. That comes up a lot for our students and sometimes that means that they have to step away from university for a little bit to return home to deal with those situations. And then also, because it is ultimately their responsibility to maintain their legal status, they need to make sure that they're on top of the expiration of their documents. So, study permits are only usually only granted for a four year period generally. And so if a student requires more time to complete their degree, they need to make sure that they're on top of study permit renewal, and now they, they're not studying here with any expired documents. So certainly navigating immigration is a really really challenging piece. At the University of Calgary, we do have dedicated advisors who are Immigration Consultants. What's really really key here with immigration advising is that it is actually legal advice that has been provided to students and therefore, the person providing that advice does need to be regulated. So, we do have immigration advisors and that does help a lot. but it is a challenging thing to navigate. For many of the students and it's certainly one of the first barriers that they encounter.

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Garrett 14:15

So, some of the other barriers and I'll talk through some of these rather quickly, is certainly one of the first experiences is culture shock and so what I always say with the students when we, when we do our international orientation in September and then again in January, is that with culture shock it's really interesting how it works because there's usually a sense of excitement at the beginning of elation of everything is new and different and I'm just really happy to be here and that's usually what we see, at orientation sessions right there in September, is that everything is new and fresh and, and, so exciting. And, culture shock often doesn't set in until there's something that may happen that really makes that student realized while things are really really different here, or I'm really not accustomed to this in Calgary. Usually what I say is one of the first times that some of our students will experience culture shock is the first day that it gets to minus 30, because we have a lot of international students who come from tropical and subtropical countries.

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Garrett 15:18

So it can be that that sudden change in weather can be that first moment of culture shock, but it can be many other things that could be navigating relationships with new roommates if they're living in residence or off campus with other roommates. It could be even the time and frequency of testing and assessments and courses. It could be the instruction method. It could even just be the food. There's lots of different things that may cause a student to experience culture shock, and so on so this can be something that can be really challenging to deal with managing finances, is probably one of the most common issues that we see in our office for international students. Now one of the challenges with managing finances is that when an international student applies for their study permit. One of the requirements from the Canadian government or from her immigration body is that the international student has to demonstrate that they have access to a certain amount of money that will cover all their costs outside of things like tuition and books. Now, this number is \$10,000. So \$10,000 they have to have \$10,000, to be able to cover things like rent, food expenses if they aren't on a meal plan or living in rez. And then all of their other living expenses that they may have clothing, certainly buying winter clothing is key. And all of those other pieces, entertainment.

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Garrett 16:43

So when you think about a \$10,000 in one year, that's not a lot of money and we do often see a lot of international students who are not prepared or are unexpectedly dealing with, you know, different, different costs of living here in Canada. And so this can be really really overwhelming. And so we've had students who have shown up in, you know, as early as October and November, saying that they run out, run out of money. And so this can be really, really challenging. We also know that a lot of international students are young. And so this may be their first time managing their own finances, and that can be a lot to handle. So, managing finances is one of the, one of the top concerns that we see with international students. We also know that there's not as many funding avenues, or scholarship opportunities for international students, as there are for Canadian and domestic students. So this is certainly a challenge that institutions do need to start addressing with things like scholarships that are specifically dedicated to international students

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Garrett 17:46

Academic differences are really key as well. We have different styles of pedagogy here in Canada. And so this is an adjustment for many students. Many of the students may be used to either more assessment or less assessment, different styles of assessment. They may be used to classroom environments where the, the knowledge sharing is more didactic, it's that their role is more passive to sit to absorb information. And here we have

a lot of faculty and a lot of courses that involve discussion and will ask for student's perspectives and opinions and so some students come from pedagogical backgrounds where, where that is not the case and so learning how to engage in a Canadian classroom takes work, even how you relate to others, how you relate to the, the instructor in the course. It may be new in how you relate to other colleagues in the course, which is something that these students have to navigate and learn. And they even have to learn the hard way by making mistakes, and that can be really scary sometimes.

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Garrett 18:51

Suddenly family issues as a thing we see that with a student being separated from their families. But that doesn't stop things from happening back home. Students, oftentimes have to step away from university or have to make difficult decisions to leave and go deal with family issues or, or have family issues that are happening while they're studying, and it's the additional challenge of not being able to be physically there for their family, whatever it is that that issue is, and can be really emotionally taxing for a lot of international students getting around so navigating in new and unfamiliar city can be a lot.

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Garrett 19:31

What I've heard from many or many of our international students is that they like Calgary but we could probably have a better transit system. Certainly when you're coming from other countries in the world that have much better public transit systems, even just navigating public transit can be a lot. Housing is another big thing so we usually recommend international students when they're studying to, you know, especially in their first year to live on rez, because that's part of a, I think a really great first year experience for students on campus. This may not always be viable because oftentimes residence is quite a bit more expensive. And so if a student is then looking for housing in the community, then they have to navigate potentially a housing market, something they maybe have never done before, potentially having roommates something they also maybe never done before having only one family. And then even just navigating those relationships can be really really challenging and dealing with issues around your house, which maybe is something that they've never had experience doing. So that can be a really big challenge.

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Garrett 20:37

We also know that many international students indicate that they feel socially isolated, even students that are living in residence where you would think that there would be lots

of opportunities and outlets for them to relate to one another and to build their social network. There's still a lot of feelings of isolation. And so what's really key here is that institutions do have programming that is specific for international students to allow them to build their relationships on campus, meet other students. And what's really really important here and also really challenging, and I can speak from experience is that international students want to make more friends with Canadian students they want to build more social connections with Canadian students, and it can be really challenging to create programming where you can have both Canadian and international students attend because a lot of times what I've heard from Canadian students is they see the word International, and that's an immediate opt out - that's oh that's not for me. And so, they tend to self select out of those kinds of programs, so it can be really challenging and it takes a lot of intentional work to demonstrate that if you're running social programming that it's open to all students, Canadian and international students. So trying to create those opportunities is challenging.

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Garrett 21:50

And then I already mentioned before, climate so in Canada we can get quite cold here. And, and that can be a huge shock for a lot of international students who, as I said, we're coming from, many are coming from tropical and subtropical climates. So, even just navigating that, making sure that they have the appropriate clothing to stay warm during the winter is really really key here and making sure that they, they have that information is really important.

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Garrett 22:22

So what are some of the impacts of COVID-19 on international education? So I'm gonna talk first about some of the institutional impacts and then I'm going to talk about the individual impacts on the students.

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Garrett 22:35

So first of all, many of you likely are at institutions where there was a suspension of international travel and research, likely back in March. There was likely a cancellation if you have a study abroad exchange program, there was likely a cancellation of those programs for this academic year. We also saw a higher number of international students who are having to defer their program start. And this was largely due to a couple factors. So the first one was that there was a travel ban. and the travel ban was up until actually October 20. And so there were very few ways for international students especially new international students to be able to enter Canada during that travel ban time period.

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Garrett 23:20

In fact, one of the exemption pathways that did exist during the time period was an international student had a study permit that they had received before March, 18. So what that meant was, if there were students in their second or third or upper years, who already had a study permit from their first year, they would likely have been exempted and would have been able to come back into Canada during that time. What that meant though, is that new students who are starting this fall, likely wouldn't have met that exemption because we would never recommend students apply for their study permit as early as March 18, so that's why we saw a lot of deferrals. There were a lot of new incoming students who didn't apply and hadn't applied for their study permit to meet that March 18 deadline. And that actually makes a lot of sense because the Canadian government, if they even had applied that early likely would have refused them. Usually they prefer that students are doing it around, 90 days before they're, they're meant to be here so we would never recommend students apply as early as March anyway.

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Garrett 24:24

And then the last thing was the international visa offices all over the world were closed in a lot of places. So, providing things like biometrics was just not an option because those offices were closed. Now, another big impacts, of course and likely all of us have had to deal with this, is moving course content to an online delivery model that has had a lot of challenges and we've certainly done a lot of learning. But let's talk a little bit more institutional. Perfect.

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Garrett 24:54

Okay, so some of some of the I guess the positive things that that came out of this. So, with institutions they had to pivot in a lot of ways because there was a cancellation of of exchange programs. And so how were they able to then develop or emphasize maybe currently existing programs that really promoted internationalization. Oh. And so looking at some of the programming and how could you still do this intercultural learning and capacity building from the comfort of your own house. So have you ever seen Calgary, we had a couple programs that launched over the last few months. So one of them was the Global Community Challenge YYC, where we've worked with students, both from the University of Calgary and from institutions across the world, and partner them up with local Calgary, nonprofit organizations as well as settlement agencies, and those nonprofits and settlement agencies have identified a problem or challenge so they have, and students have been working together to come up with solutions. I've had the opportunity to be a mentor for some students and I've got to work with students from all over the world on this and it's been a really rewarding opportunity.

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Garrett 26:05

And the other one is the Hugo Ucalgary Global Online Study Abroad Program so this is an opportunity to take courses and programs at institutions from elsewhere in the world, while earning course credit here at the University of Calgary. So while not leaving Calgary obviously being able to take online programs at universities all over the world is certainly an opportunity to engage in some of this intercultural learning. There's also opportunities to identify what are some of the other collaborative opportunities that institutions may have. So, for example, you may engage in COIL which is a collaborative online international learning course. And so for example I'm working with the University of Calgary Faculty of Science, and the University in Ecuador, on a program where we are talking about epidemiology and we're embedding a lot of intercultural learning and programming within this course because it's going to be students from Ecuador and students from Calgary. We're going to be working together and helping them build intercultural communication skills is really key for the success of a program, I guess.

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Garrett 27:14

So just taking a chance to identify where other opportunities where we can expand, where we can build relationships, outside of our borders and bring our students together to engage in really meaningful intercultural learning and work. And then, I think just really turning a critical eye on how we engage in international learning and capacity building so doing that from the comfort of our own home, it's still possible it's still something that we can do, it's things that we can do in our own backyard or things that we can do in our own community. But just thinking about how we do that. And then finally I think institutions have had some more intentionally address the inequities that were already inherent and already present in online learning, even prior to the covid 19 pandemic. We have many programs at the University of Calgary, where we would have distance students, students that may be studying from Edmonton may be studying from rural communities, may be studying from indigenous communities across the province, who are already accessing those courses in an online platform. And there are a lot of inequities in this and so now that the institution is almost fully online it's forced us to really look at those inequities and come up with better solutions and try to address some of those challenges and some of the gaps that are inherent to that platform.

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Garrett 28:36

And we'll talk a little bit more about that because I want to talk about some of the individual impacts. So I'll pick up on that remote and online learning piece just knowing

that with our international students, in particular, this has been really really challenging so we have a large portion of international students who are not in Canada and have been studying this fall semester from their home countries. And that's been really challenging because of things like different time zones, and that not all courses are being offered asynchronously. Meaning that not all courses are being recorded and then the students are able to access it at a time that works for them. So we've had many international students who indicated that they have to get up at 2,3,4, or 5am their time in order to attend their lectures or to write an exam. And this certainly is really really challenging and one of the inequities that is inherently present in this online learning model. So that's been something that we've been trying to navigate and the decision about whether or not to offer a course synchronously or asynchronously is really based on instructors comfort and, sort of, their own personal division so some courses are offered synchronously and asynchronously and others are not and that's just a challenge that we've been having to navigate and help students navigate as well.

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Garrett 29:52

The reality is there were travel restrictions. So, even those students who were starting in the fall, if they knew okay well I'm going to have to be up at 5am to attend this lecture, it would be way better if I could just come to Canada. That was just unfortunately not an option for many of those students. The travel restrictions have changed a little bit, there was a change as of October 20 that did allow some more flexibility for international students who are studying here, to be able to come. But there's still certain things that they need to do in order to demonstrate that their travel is required. And so there are still some challenges for navigating that.

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Garrett 30:30

We also know that social isolation was a problem even prior to that, and and now, certainly with students that may be accessing the institution from overseas. They're likely feeling very socially isolated, and it's much more challenging to build relationships with classmates when you're in a different time zone. And then we also know that home environments, may be really challenging to control and what are the pressures that are present in the home environment that maybe that student wouldn't have as a distraction if they were here studying in Canada. So certainly navigating these challenges has been has been really really difficult, and it certainly is a case-by-case sort of situation, access to resources and technology, this one has become a really, really big one. So, with online learning.

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Garrett 31:21

Of course, there's a dependency on access to technology and things that in Canada many of us take for granted, like electricity. We have many students who live in areas of the world, where they experienced brownouts and blackouts may not always have consistent or reliable access to electricity, may not have consistent and reliable access to WiFi and internet may have certain internet sites blocked. So for example YouTube -YouTube is blocked in China. So if an instructor is using a YouTube video as part of their instruction model that may be blocked for some students to be able to even watch, so certainly accessing these resources and technology is really challenging.

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Garrett 32:06

We also know that there are many students that may be in a housing situation where there may only be one computer, or limited access to computers so it can really, it can be really challenging to navigate this piece. And then we also know that for the students that were able to get into Canada, that there are self isolation protocols and so what supports are in place. If that student is able to come back into Canada to ensure that they're feeling supported during the 14 day self isolation. The University of Calgary, for example, if the student has an agreement with resident services, then they would be able to self isolate in our Residence Services Building before moving into their permanent space and in Rez services. But what about the students who chose not to live in rez, what were they meant to do? And so we had to identify resources and supports in the city to ensure that they were able to self isolate safely and so whether that was in a hotel or an Airbnb or whatever that was, we had to make sure that the students had access to that information so that they could make the right choice for them.

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Garrett 33:14

All right. That was a lot so I'm going to spend the rest of this on recommendations for building more holistic culturally responsive supports for international students and I know that I went through all of that really really quickly and I do see that there's a few questions about that. So I'm happy to talk a little bit more about some of those pieces in the q&a.

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Garrett 33:34

But what I want to first start with is what does it mean to be culturally responsive. So, culturally responsive is a term that I've seen a lot in research and it's really tends to focus around how to build culturally responsive learning environments so it's really focused around pedagogy, but I do actually think that a lot of the skills that are talked about in culturally responsive approaches that are very transferable to things like counseling

supports, one-on-one advising and program development and coordination. So here's the definition. So, being culturally responsive it describes an approach that recognizes that everyone learns and makes decisions and responds differently, and that these differences may be connected to background language, family structure, and social or cultural identity.

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Garrett 34:22

That sounds pretty fair, but what I think is really key here is in fact that practitioners who are culturally responsive do way more than simply acknowledge the cultural uniqueness of the individual. What practitioners of culturally responsive approaches do is that they are intentionally nurturing that cultural uniqueness and difference in order to create and facilitate effective conditions for learning and growth. And so that's adapted from that source down there on the slide. So this is really really key. And this is actually going beyond just simply recognizing that difference's presence and learning how to navigate and utilize these cultural differences as scaffolding to supporting students and their individual and unique needs. So if this sounds really really big and difficult, it absolutely is, it's very very challenging. So what I always say when people are wanting to engage in this kind of work, is that the first thing to do is start with yourself, and I'm going to talk a lot about that actually, and starting with self location is really really key.

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Garrett 35:29

So I think it's really important and not all of us do this to start by reflecting on your own cultural identity, what I tend to find when I work with Canadian students is that we as Canadians often have a really hard time articulating what it is about are like what is the Canadian identity what is Canadian culture, what is that. And so, I often say to people think about your own cultural beliefs and so I have some maybe some guiding questions for you to think about. But do you know what your beliefs, values, ideas, assumptions and biases are and are you able to articulate them to others? How would you define something like the family, or your community? What does community look like for you? What does responsibility mean and what is your faith? What is your belief system? What does respect look like for you? This one's a really interesting one because I think many of us who engage in, in workshops or to teach courses, often times when we're talking about, you know, sort of like the etiquette or the conduct that we expect students to engage in in any given situation, one of the, one of the guidelines I always see is that we're going to talk respectfully to each other that we're going to engage in respectful dialogue. And what I often see folks doing is that they leave that sort of on a, they leave up on a pedestal, as if respect is meant to speak for itself. And the reality is that it doesn't; respect is cultural we experience respect differently, and we give respect differently. And so what's

really really key, what I do with my students whenever I'm doing courses, I don't leave respect on the pedestal, I actually asked them, "What does respect look like to you and how do you demonstrate respect?" And the function of that is not to necessarily come to a shared understanding of what respect means, but it's actually more to record, to help the students recognize that respect is experienced differently.

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Garrett 37:21

And I think that's really really key here. And then what's really important is what ways do you hold power? Where might you benefit from privilege, and where have you experienced oppression? These are really really important questions to ask yourself as you're self locating in this conversation. And once you've spent some time reflecting on your cultural identity I think you're then able to start better thinking about your own intercultural capacity.

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Garrett 37:50

So there's one distinction that I do want to make here. A lot of folks will talk about intercultural capacity or intercultural competency likely. Many of you have heard the term intercultural competency. What I really want to emphasize here is those are not the same thing. So I'm going to provide a definition of intercultural competency. And this is by Darla Deardorff, who's a theorist in this area, and she says that intercultural competency is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. So what's really interesting is that when we talk about intercultural competency, we tend to think of it more as a compositional model, so it tends to emphasize the components of intercultural competence like knowledge, skills and attitudes, but it doesn't actually really look at the process of developing each of these components.

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Garrett 38:50

On the other hand of this we also see models that tend to be much more sort of co-orientational. And these often focus on capacity to build relationships and behaviors that enable compliance and cooperation across lines of difference. So, what I think is really key here is that intercultural capacity is a merging of both of these definitions, intercultural capacity essentially combines both of these definitions. And it really conveys a focus not only on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge, but also relates them together with process, and with growth. So, it's really really key here that it is cultural competency is a component of that capacity. But that there is a little bit more to it than that and so I'm going to continue to refer to it as intercultural capacity as we go through the rest of the

presentation.

G

Garrett 39:44

So, at the University of Calgary we actually recently launched an intercultural capacity framework, a foundation for advancing intercultural capacity, and they identified three core capacity areas. So understanding Global Connections and cultural differences, communicating across cultures, engaging respectfully, learning cultures and valuing diversity and all of these merge, overlap and intertwine. I would really strongly recommend that you can actually access this document on the University of Calgary website. It's a really, really great document. It's not meant to be a strategy. It's meant to be a scaffolding that you can apply to your programs and services and supports to help build this more sort of culturally, this cultural capacity, within the work that you do. I'm not going to spend too much more time on that because I have a lot more than I want to get to here.

G

Garrett 40:36

But other ways that you can sort of help assess your own intercultural capacity is by taking this assessment, so it's called the Intercultural Development Inventory, or the IDI and this is an assessment. And essentially what it does is it will place you on this continuum of cultural capacity, and I'll very quickly talk through each of these so on the bottom left, we see denial. And so denial is an orientation that tends to recognize things that are more observable cultural differences so maybe you recognize the you know there's different foods between cultures, maybe the clothing is different. But you tend not to notice cultural differences that are deeper than that. And so many folks that are in the denial space may actually avoid or withdraw from having conversations or even wanting to engage in these differences. Polarization is next, and polarization is really interesting because there's two ways that polarization can actually function. So polarization is ultimately an orientation that views cultural difference in terms of us, and us and them. And so, on one side you have the defense, which is essentially viewing that your own culture, that the us and them is that the US is better and the them is not, and the reversal is the opposite so the US is worse and the them is better. So it's a really really interesting place to fall in. It can be really challenging to navigate. But oftentimes these folks may be overly critical of either their own cultural values and beliefs. And so that is present in their minimization, this is the one where a lot of folks tend to fall is an orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and appreciation appreciation of cultural differences. And so what you'll often find with folks into the. this is where you tend to see those discussions of oh I don't see color. It's sort of trying to identify where the similarities and not really wanting to acknowledge differences

or trying to de emphasize those differences.

G

Garrett 42:44

Next we have acceptance. This is an orientation that recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and commonality in their own culture, in your own culture, but also in other cultures. And what's really key around acceptance though is that there is a recognition that there's cultural differences, but maybe not necessarily the knowledge on how to actually bridge those cultural differences or how to navigate those complexities. And so that brings us last to adaptation, which is an orientation that really can ultimately shift cultural perspective, and can maybe even change behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways. So that's, that's acceptance, plus the ability to sort of know how to act on those pieces. And that's really really key here. Now the interesting thing about if you take the IDI, visit the idea I will actually place you in two spots on this continuum. So it will place you where you perceive that you fall, as well as where you actually fall, and oftentimes what the research shows is that most people, overestimate their own inter cultural capacity and so tend to actually rate themselves much higher than what they actually are and where they actually fall on this. And so yeah, on the, on the left we see folks that tend to be a little bit more monocultural and have a monocultural mindset. Whereas, we're moving and ideally hoping people will move more towards intercultural mindsets, the ability to recognize and adapt and move between cultural identities and belief systems. So, how does your cultural awareness and humility may help students? Oh, wonderful. Thank you, Helen yeah there's more information on the IDI just in the chat there.

G

Garrett 44:24

So in one-on-one advising or counseling sessions I will say that you'd be better able to provide culturally appropriate guidance and support. If you have a better sense of your own cultural identity and how that shows up in the work that you do. And I would say that here's a few things that I thought about you maybe have a better understanding of knowing notions of collectivistic and individualistic cultures and things like in group and out group dynamics and how those actually may relate to the way in which you can advise and provide support systems to students and how those cultural identities and belief systems may inform the way in which they seek help for me familiar familial and or community responsibilities versus individual choice. I think I've heard. I've heard a story from an international students who said to me that she went to seek some counseling and some supports and one of the things that she identified in the session was that she wasn't particularly happy in her program of study. And what she told me was that the counselor said well why don't you just, why don't you switch programs when he was going to

something that you want to do. And, the students said to me, she's like, I don't think they understood that I had a familial obligation. I had a responsibility to my to my family. And so that was why I'm in this program it's not an option for me to change my program. And so I think recognizing the familial relationship and community responsibilities, but also recognizing that in Canada we tend to think that, you know, we certainly value individual choice but that is not something that all cultures value in the same way.

G

Garrett 46:03

And certainly there are different cultural perceptions of mental health and we have many students that come from cultural backgrounds that maybe don't even have the language to be able to talk about mental health. There are certainly different expectations around gender roles and gender norms, I'm also noticing I'm running out of time so I'm gonna go through this quickly. And then even conceptualizations around gender identity and gender expression, and then sexuality and sexual orientation, very much cultural. We know as well that there are certainly impacts for many students on their faith or religious identity, spirituality, on the their decision making, and what kinds of choices they can make. And then another key thing is that you better be able to understand power differentials between people. So I already mentioned before, but filial responsibility is really really key, but also how students may relate with, and their perceptions of people who hold power or are authority figures, as well as how students perceive people with less or with no power. So that's really really key here as well.

G

Garrett 47:06

And then this one I find really interesting. Students comfort with uncertainty and ambiguity, and students, you know, preparedness to deal with the unknown of the future - this is cultural, and so I always find it really interesting the students that, that, like to have tons and tons of plans and try to control the unknown of the future as much as possible to mitigate the unknown to mitigate risk. Were there many many students that approach it from you know what what comes what you know. And so that's that's really really interesting to see how that impacts students, and the decisions that they make.

G

Garrett 47:45

Alright, I'm not going to go through these. So what can you do to engage in intercultural learning opportunities, there's lots of different things. And these are some questions. This is actually on the IDI, when you do an IDI, you'll receive an assessment, and it gives you a bunch of questions that you can ask for how you can engage in intercultural learning. The only one I want to really mention and it's something that I've done for myself is the inter

cultural journal. I do really like to keep an intercultural journal and so the suggestion is could you keep an intercultural journal in which you reflect on cultural differences and commonalities you observe in your daily interactions with people from other cultural groups. I do this a lot with students. It's so so helpful, because I absolutely make mistakes during this, and it's really important that I learned from those mistakes and do better in every future interaction so I really recommend keeping a journal.

G

Garrett 48:37

I also use this when I'm, you know, watching television shows or movies or reading books from different areas of the world. I'll reflect like why did they do that, or how is this different for me? And that's been really helpful for me personally to sort of be able to reflect on on my own cultural values and identity but also start to understand why other cultures do the thing that they do the way that they do it, working with students. So, what I would recommend if you're doing programs with students, is if intercultural learning is a function of your program, please articulate that in the learning outcome or your program outcome. If you don't have that already in there, then I would really recommend thinking about a learning outcome that actually specifically states that as a function of the program. I also recommend taking time in your workshop or session to help students self locate and to reflect on their own cultural identity. And there's a few things that you can do I'm actually going to go through each of these and slide really quickly.

G

Garrett 49:33

So I always start with culture and I tend to use the iceberg as a model, and I this is actually the exact slide that I use, I'll get them to tell me the visible aspects. I'll get them to tell me the non physical aspects, we'll have a conversation about this and it's really good to start with those basics, because a lot of students. I actually ask them 10 knots even though they've never heard of the iceberg model. There's other models that you can use, as well, there's the cultural onion, there's the cultural glasses. But I do really like the iceberg the best. Another activity that you can do to help students self locate is a social identity wheel, there's lots of different types of this, and you can just google this online, these are a couple of examples that I found. I like the one on the right a little bit more because it recognizes some of the different dimensions, all the way from the organizational so the overarching to the individual right in the center there. You can, there's lots of activities that you can do around this, where students may be able to fill in the social identity wheel and reflect on different components of their identity and which ones are more important to them which ones are maybe less important to them, which ones are really central to their understanding of themselves.

G

Garrett 50:39

And then a journaling activity so this is once again another activity that I do is when I'm talking about cultural identity with students, like I said, a lot of students, or a lot of folks actually in general, don't reflect on this. So, I will embed in my workshops or in my courses, an opportunity for them to do this kind of journaling exercise to actually start to think about it, and it's not meant for them to share necessarily, but it's just there to get them to start to get in that headspace so I find those kinds of activities really helpful. And also really mindful of time so I'm going to try to go through these quickly because I see a lot of questions. I really, really like to center student voice so I involve international students in all of my programming. And so I recommend if you are able to provide volunteer opportunities, or if you have opportunities for part time employment, to really think about international students and and make sure that their voices are represented, especially if you have large teams or if you're recruiting really sort of large and comprehensive teams, really recommend that you are recognizing the international voices really key here. Another thing we know is that international students want Canadian work experience, as I said earlier 60% of them want to remain in Canada, and so they want to learn more about what the Canadian workplace and Canadian workplace culture. So building professional development pieces into these roles is really very key. So I recommend running workshops and how students can talk about their volunteer experience or their part time work experience on a resume or on a cover letter. And then also talk to them about Canadian workplace culture and norms, that's really helpful for them to learn more about. If your office or unit has an opportunity for multiple jobs, be intentional and create that multicultural team, and then with them engage in intercultural learning and team building activities and workshops. This is what I do with all of my volunteers.

G

Garrett 52:26

I would also consider conducting assessments with them if you, if you can so intercultural conflict styles is another assessment. That's really measuring students on their cross cultural communication styles in a conflict situation or the IDI which I mentioned before. Okay, I did it. Final thoughts: so really I think what's key when you're doing this learning for yourself is honesty and transparency so be honest with yourself and others as you're doing this work is not easy and you'll make mistakes. I also totally thought I could do this in the time I had but I clearly going over.

G

Garrett 53:01

So what should you do if you do make a mistake? I recommend you own it and take responsibility for your mistake, and offer an apology. This is an opportunity for you to model cultural humility and demonstrate a willingness to take feedback with a

commitment to learn and grow from it. And that's really really key here. I also want to let you know to be prepared that sometimes you may receive criticism in a way that you don't like you might get called out. It might be uncomfortable for you. And that can be really difficult because they think a lot of us, nobody wants to be called out in this situation, and you may get that fight or flight reaction. I really recommend once again taking ownership of it, taking responsibility offering an apology. I think that's really really key, because sometimes the criticism doesn't come in the way that we wanted, but the message is really really important to listen to what's also important with different cultural approaches, is that you may also make a mistake and maybe nobody will tell you at all that you made a mistake, and that can be really challenging. So how can you address that. Well what's really key I think is ongoing reflection. Can you still hear me?

H

Helen 54:10

Yes we can.

G

Garrett 54:12

Okay, sorry, I just heard a weird sound. Yeah, so ongoing reflection is really valuable and talking about your experiences best friends and colleagues can be really helpful in identifying opportunities for you to continue your own growth in this area. So, I'm so sorry I went through that so quickly clearly this is like a two hour workshop. But I know that there's questions so Helen do we want to move over to questions right now.

H

Helen 54:36

For Garrett So, first of all, I just want to say you're getting so much positive feedback and questions lots of great conversation going on in the chat. I was wondering if you might be able to stay until 1205, so we can get a chance to go through some of those questions. Would that be okay with you?

G

Garrett 54:55

Yeah, absolutely. I'm willing to stay so fair folks, I'd like to stay a little bit longer I'm happy to stay for longer absolutely

H

Helen 55:02

Fantastic. So for those of you who are able to stay a little bit longer, you're welcome to, if you do need to go at 12, that's completely fine we will have a recording available

afterwards. And we're always available if you'd like to continue this conversation. And I'll just post that information in the chat right now. So Garrett, the first question that we had come in, was about some of the challenges that international students might experience especially knowing that that full time course full requirement. When a challenge arises when a student might have to, you know, drop some courses. What are some ways to that that we can really work through that with students, especially if there's a concern around well being.

G

Garrett 55:46

Yeah, That's a really good question. So, I think what's really really key is the first step, if anything is going to impact, potentially their legal status is to make sure that you address that first because we want to make sure that there aren't any long term impacts for that student changing their course load. Or at the very least, that we're advising the student that these are the possible implications for that. So, for example, one of the implications for dropping down to part time study, could be that it impacts the student's ability to apply for what's called a postgraduate work permit. This is a, this is a program that the Canadian government has implemented for international students to allow them to remain in Canada, after they've graduated from post secondary and work in Canada for up to, there's a few different key things that it's dependent on, but usually it's around two to three years after they graduated and for those students that want to go the permanent residence route. This is really really key. So it's really important I think to ensure that the student is informed on their decision and knows that there could be implications and impacts to that. In terms of I think supporting them, I always recommend that we we want the student to feel that they are making the best choice for them. So I think if we're providing them all of the information. Ultimately we can't be making that decision for them, they have to feel empowered to make that decision for themselves. So I would always loop in your immigration advisors, just to make sure that that student has all of the really key information so that they can make as in you know as informed decision as possible.

H

Helen 57:24

Thanks so much for the question. Okay. Yes, I think so that was a great answer. And just knowing that some folks might have to leave, we are interested in knowing is maybe, whether you'd be interested in a follow up opportunity. Just knowing that we've had so much interest in this topic so I'll just leave this poll open for a while we're finishing up our q&a here, if you could just fill this out before you leave, we'd really appreciate that. Garrett, we also had a question about providing culturally sensitive support, without falling into stereotyping, Andrea is asking that some staff might have the assumption that

certain cultures it's taboo to discuss mental health, they're more hesitant to discuss it openly with students from international students. Do you have any advice for navigating conversations where there might be different cultural assumptions about mental health?

G

Garrett 58:19

Yeah, that's such a great question and that is absolutely one of the challenges that is that is a key to this area so what I would recommend in those kinds of situations, is it's not necessarily about coming to sort of like a unified understanding of all of those pieces in these conversations. I think it's totally what I what I tend to do is I'll talk about it within the context of my own experiences because I'm comfortable talking about that, but also I'll talk about it more broadly in Canada. And I think what's really helpful in these conversations is that it is also an opportunity to open the conversation up to other students that may be in the room, and allow them to share and identify, maybe their own experiences, their own perceptions. So it's not always that it's the function of it needs to be that we need to come to one shared unified definition of this thing because I think we all know that these things are murky enough even just in the Canadian context, let alone in an international context. I think the goal is just to say how do we all relate to these topics, what our own experiences and and being able to share your own experiences I think can be one of those ways that that really helps students to understand their own their own perspective on it as well so I guess that would be I think that would be my answer for that.

H

Helen 59:36

And what about students who might perceive that there's a barrier to accessing supports that are primarily in English language, are there any ways that you would suggest navigating providing support to students who might want it in their own language or maybe you're just having difficulty with the English language support.

G

Garrett 59:57

Yeah, that's a great question that is a challenge. One of the things that's really key, I do want to mention, there is a perception that I think some folks have that maybe international students do not have strong English language skills and I would say that this isn't, this isn't, it's more complicated than that. So, when international students are admitted into a university program, they do actually have to demonstrate through a formal assessment process that they have the English language skills to be able to engage in in English language courses, so all international students do actually come with a certain degree of English language proficiency.

G

Garrett 1:00:35

What we do tend to find with students though is that it's oftentimes, students are then it's that they're less comfortable in situations where, like, it's less formal so like social situations they may be less comfortable with English in a colloquial sort of context. Some of them may also be in situations where they they did their English language assessment several years ago and maybe haven't utilized it in the last couple of years so, but what I would say is that our international students do actually have fairly strong in English language skills. That said, I think you're totally right there is many instances I think where students want supports in a way that is that is maybe easiest for them and meaningful to them so things that we've done, you know like Health Link for example. If a student wanted to talk to a health practitioner Health Link is available in multiple languages so we've certainly referred students to, to Health Link. Now this is a tough question to answer because I don't, I'm not an expert on all the different additional language supports but I would say Health Link is a good tool.

G

Garrett 1:01:39

One of the other things we know is that some of the students come from cultures where they don't even have the language to be able to talk about these experiences like there was somebody I sort of glanced in the q&a that maybe made a, an observation that a lot of times international students will maybe talk about their experiences, but often will describe sort of like physiological symptoms. And, and we do tend to see that so sometimes it's said the student is maybe not even like, you know, equipped with the language to be able to talk about their experiences of mental health. And so I think, trying to identify what are some of the barriers so I know confidentiality is a really big barrier for a lot of students, because there is a fear that if, oh if I go to a mental health practitioner, is that information going to be shared with the Canadian government? Is that going to impact my legal status in Canada and my ability to stay here and remain here? So I think what's really key is just to emphasize things like that like that you are a confidential support, that it can be accessed privately, that there may be multiple pathways to accessing it, and especially now in a COVID-19 environment. Maybe the appeal of a remote online session is, you know, something they might want even more. So I think yeah it's a challenging thing to navigate I don't think I have a great answer for that. But um, but yeah, if it maybe start there. Yes,

H

Helen 1:02:58

Thanks so much, maybe for our last question here, we have some folks in the chat pod, asking about bridging that gap you talked a lot about, some ways that we can work towards developing our own intercultural competence so that we can be providing better

support to students. And we also had a question about how to, like, measure our efforts towards intercultural competence - are there some resources that you would recommend that we could access or things that folks listening could, you know maybe try to implement in their offices and then their practices?

G

Garrett 1:03:39

Mm hmm. Yeah, so honestly I think that the best thing that you can do to measure your own progress is ongoing reflection. And so this is something that I do with a lot of the programs that I run, but certainly with my own work in my own intercultural capacity building is I do actually keep those journals of my own reflection, my own understandings and I reflect on things like my, my individual one on one interactions with students, where I either did a good job, or I did not do a great job. And I reflect on that, or you know when I am teaching, you know what went really well, where the areas that I need to continue to work on and grow. And what I do is like that's kind of your own roadmap for your own progress and doing this learning, because if you're constantly reflecting on the interactions that you have, and the things that you're doing, I think you'll actually start to recognize as you do it more and more and more, the progress that you're making. You'll also probably better be able to identify areas in which you know this is one thing I am really struggling with I just can't seem to get this. And that's where you might start to then do more targeted work in that area.

G

Garrett 1:04:51

So I really honestly I cannot undervalue the importance of ongoing self reflection in this work. And also just a willingness to make that mistake I think that we, you know, we are in sort of an academic environment where, for some reason, like the perception is I think for a lot of folks that that mistake equals bad. But I think that when you're doing this kind of work mistake equals opportunity to grow and learn. As long as you're reflecting on it and sort of using it meaningfully in terms of resources. That's a little bit more challenging because, really, when you're doing your intercultural learning and work, it's so individual, and it's really predicated on you know what you think are some of the opportunities that you want to engage in and how best you want to do it for yourself.

G

Garrett 1:05:42

So I know, like for example for me I really like to learn more about like social environments and other cultures. So, a couple years ago I, or no I guess it would be last year, I had, I was a mentor for an international student from Japan. And so, I didn't know very much about Japanese culture, and I wanted to learn more about it so I actually asked him in my first

meeting with him, you know, if I wanted to learn more about your culture, what can I do what what would you recommend that I do? And so he was like well you could watch this show, or you could read this book, and you could do this and that. And one of the things I ended up doing was I watched this show on Netflix called Terrace house. And I don't know if anyone's watched it, it is, it's essentially like a reality TV show, which features a group of Japanese, sort of like people that are aged like probably like 20s to 30s, living in a house together. And I learned so much about just day to day interactions and. Oh and I see oh and McHale SFO good to see McHale Terrace House is great, but I also ongoingly reflected as I was watching the show to say like, okay, so why do I think that they did this or what was the purpose of this? And so, I wasn't just watching it passively, I was actively engaged in what was going on, I was reflecting, I was thinking critically about. That's really interesting. If this is true, then, then I think that's maybe why this person did this and so I think that's really key is that if you're kind of building your own roadmap, you're kind of identifying what areas you want to work on and finding things that are most meaningful to you. So one of the things with the IDI for example is that if you were to take the IDI, there is a requirement that you would actually have a meeting with a qualified administrator to go over your results and part of your results is coming in from an action plan. So that's one of those platforms where you can work with somebody. I would also really recommend if you have folks that are struggling in this area to utilize their knowledge and skills if they're able to, and to sort of work with them and maybe set goals, set goals for yourself and have them accountable and hold them accountable with somebody else in your life. These are some of the strategies I think you could employ as you're doing this work.

H

Helen 1:07:57

Thank you so much for sharing your expertise your experience, and some ways that we can engage in that learning and reflection process. We really appreciate that you were able to be with us today. And I'll just read a few other things to wrap up, we would like to hear from you if you enjoyed today's webinar. And you can see a link that will post in the chat to our post survey that we would really appreciate if you could fill that out. And our upcoming healthy campus Alberta events.

H

Helen 1:08:30

We do have a webinar coming up, that is the redeveloped toolkit launch for the tools for holistic mental health approaches toolkit, that's on December 2, and then we are going to be offering an opportunity to attend a webinar hosted by our partners at the Center for Innovation in campus mental health called mental health in the learning environment toolkit, which is about engaging faculty members in student mental health, then we will

also be having a community discussion amongst healthy campus Alberta. Afterwards, so we're hoping that you would enjoy engaging in either one of those learning opportunities. So I will just post the link to the chat about the website where you can sign up for that, join the community hub to continue the conversation. Remember that if you signed up for this webinar as a guest you can convert your account to a profile on the community hub at over to [healthy campus alberta.ca](https://healthy-campus-alberta.ca) to check it out if you haven't already. As always, the Healthy Campus Alberta team is available for you and your team, please feel welcome to reach out to us. If there is something else that you would like we were really encouraged to hear that almost 90% of you would be interested in. Follow up opportunity based on this supporting international students topic, and we are very thrilled that you're all excited to be learning about this topic, and Garrett has posted his contact information in the chat, and we're going to close it off today. Thank you everyone so much for coming.