



CAL POLY

Study Abroad

Training Module

**Crisis Prevention, Preparedness,
and Response**

About this Training Module



Global Health & Safety Plan
Cal Poly International Center

A small version of the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo logo, with "CAL POLY" in green serif font and "SAN LUIS OBISPO" in green sans-serif font below it, separated by a thin horizontal line.

Training Module

**Crisis Prevention, Preparedness,
and Response**

These self-guided slides are designed to complement the **Global Health & Safety Plan**, which is a comprehensive resource for faculty and staff leading students abroad, produced by the International Center. Access these resources at abroad.calpoly.edu > Faculty/Staff Resources.

Both the **Global Health & Safety Plan** and this supplemental **Training Module on Crisis Prevention, Preparedness, and Response** are required reading for group leaders on all international programs.

Please review both resources prior to attending the mandatory **Group Leader Preparation Workshop**. Attendance to the Workshop is mandatory each year you lead students abroad. The workshop is offered at the International Center several times per quarter.

In this Training Module

- ✓ Roles of the International Center
- ✓ Roles of Core Key Responders
- ✓ Crisis Response Resources
- ✓ Prevention & Preparedness
- ✓ Crisis Response Considerations
- ✓ Post-crisis Debriefing



Roles of the International Center

The International Center provides resources, shares information on best practices, and collaborates with various campus entities.

The Cal Poly International Center (CPIC) provides support and services to the study abroad community (students, faculty, staff, and parents) in order to collectively prevent, be prepared for, and be able to effectively respond to crises that occur abroad. The CPIC works in partnership with:

- Cal Poly Police Department
- Risk Management
- Health and Wellness
- Counseling Services
- Dean of Students
- SAFER (Sexual Assault Resources)
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Legal Counsel
- University Communications (media relations)

The CPIC is a member of the Forum on Education Abroad and follows its Standards of Good Practice.



Learn more at forumea.org.

The International Center provides and facilitates health and safety through access to information, expertise, consultation, networking, and resources.

The CPIC also convenes the Global Health & Safety Committee, which is a team of experts on campus who can support you while you are abroad.

- The Cal Poly International Center has organized a campus-wide Global Health & Safety Committee (GHSC) to assist in all emergencies.
- The GHSC meets annually to discuss, revise, and initiate policies on how to respond in times of crisis.
- The GHSC also meets on an ad hoc basis to address specific situations as they arise.
- The GHSC responds to Incident Reports, assesses the ongoing safety of program locations for continued Cal Poly presence, communicates crisis assessments to group leaders and students, communicates appropriately with media outlets, and accounts for all students, staff, and faculty related to crises abroad or at home.

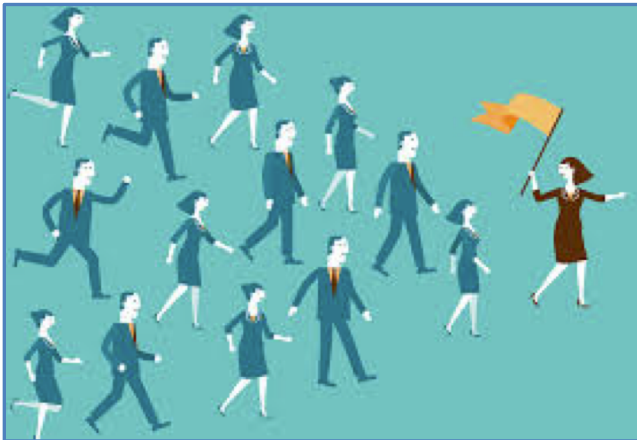
Roles of Core Key Responders

Group Leaders are Core Key Responders.

- **Group Leaders are usually the first responders to incidents and crises abroad.** In any type of minor incident or major crisis that occurs on a faculty- or staff-led international program or trip, be prepared to take an active part in the immediate response.
- On-site staff from service providers and/or host institutions may also be involved in the initial response to incidents and crises abroad.
- There are several core immediate and subsequent steps that will be involved in the response to all types and levels of crises.



Acknowledge your leadership role in crisis management.



“The optimum leadership style will be determined by the personal characteristics of the team leader and what the crisis dictates.

Successful crisis team leaders have been those who have been open, supportive, flexible and still decisive and directive when the moment warrants.

The ability to manage varying levels of conflict – among staff and students, with the media, and demands from U.S. college or university/study abroad program – will be essential.”

– Peace Corps

In any crisis, first take Core Immediate Steps.

- **Group Leaders(s) and on-site staff should serve as a first responders to the crisis and begin to manage it.** Use professional judgment to appropriately and effectively respond to the crisis. Assess the steps that must be taken immediately, and take intentional action accordingly. Consult as necessary.
- **If needed, contact the 24-hour University Police line in order to reach the Cal Poly Chief of Police who can contact the International Center Director around the clock.** In an emergency, the Group Leader has full authority to use his/her best judgment in handling severe crises, before reporting those actions to the International Center Director.
- **Take purposeful action with awareness, so as to avoid the escalation of the crisis.** Verify information about the crisis with the student(s), and communicate detailed information to the other key responders as it becomes available and as appropriate. Communicate the situation to the International Center Director by submitting an online Incident Report Form. If needed, coordinate with the International Center to arrange for notification of the student's emergency contact person.

Then, take Core Subsequent Steps.



- **Account for all students, staff, and faculty.** Arrange for the care of the rest of the student group, so as to minimize the interruptions to the program. Assess the extent or severity of the crisis. Document the occurrence, and keep a log of all communications regarding the incident.
- **Provide updates as needed via email or the Incident Report Form.** Maintain communication with the International Center, whose staff will mobilize the Global Health & Safety Committee members and relevant auxiliary members to provide further instructions and to support you in managing the crisis as needed.
- **Coordinate with the other key responders to assist the student(s), and continue timely and appropriate communication with the other key responders.** Ensure that food, water, and transportation are on hand, and secure a safe location if needed. Prioritize students' physical health, mental health, and general wellbeing.

Follow specific response protocols, based on the *type* of crisis you are dealing with.

- Based on the specific type of crisis that occurred, further immediate and subsequent steps will be involved.
- See the Global Health & Safety Plan for additional response protocols for the following types of crises:
 - **Health Emergencies** (serious accident or illness, psychiatric emergencies, serious behavioral problems)
 - **Legal or Criminal Emergencies** (crime against a student, sexual assault, crimes committed by a student)
 - **Missing Student**
 - **Student Death**
 - **Political Emergencies, Terrorist Attacks, and Natural Disasters**
 - **Crises at home in the U.S.**



Crisis Response Resources

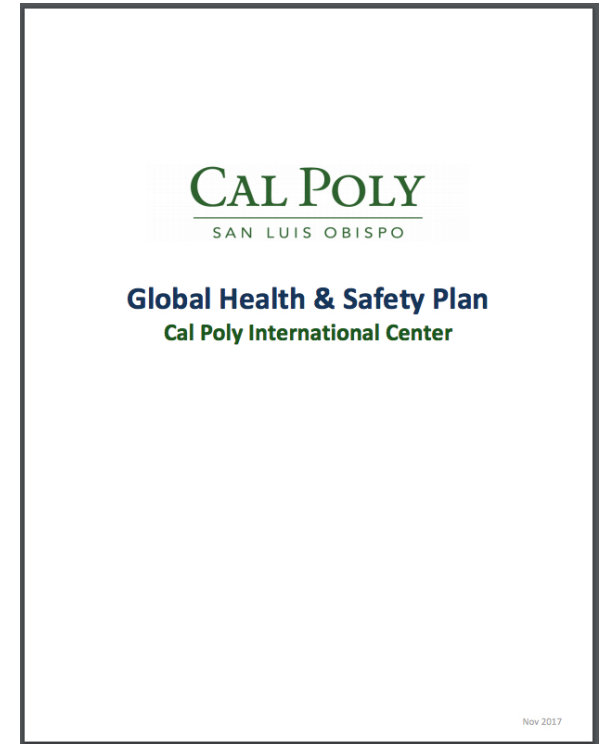
Know your Crisis Response Resources.

- **24-hour crisis line: University Police 805-756-2281**
 - Cal Poly Police will then contact the Director of the International Center who will then mobilize the most appropriate Cal Poly officials to address your concerns.
- [U.S. Department of State](#)
 - Travel information
 - Warnings and alerts
 - Embassies & consulates
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)
 - Medical emergencies (e.g., outbreak)



Read the Global Health & Safety Plan and take it with you abroad.

- Defines crises and discusses crisis management
- Outlines the responsibilities of key parties
- Explores elements of emergency protocols
- Informs prevention of a chain reaction of crises
- Provides specific procedures to follow
- Outlines crisis scenarios and responses
- Outlines a communication network



All Group Leaders are required to read and retain a copy of the Global Health & Safety Plan.

Preview the Incident Report Form.

abroad.calpoly.edu > Faculty Opportunities > **Faculty/Staff Resources**



Additional Resources: Crisis Response

**INCIDENT
REPORT FORM**

Crisis
Response Plan

Training Module:
Crisis Preparedness
and Response

Crisis Response Team
Contact List

Assisting Emotionally
Distressed Students

CSU Red Folder

Cal Poly
Counseling Services

Cal Poly
Student Rights
and Responsibilities

NAFSA
Risk Assessment and
Crisis Management

Prevention & Preparedness

Take action now for crisis prevention and preparedness with your students.



Six steps to take for crisis readiness

1. Identify potential crises and assess potential risks.
2. Analyze your program's state of readiness.
3. Identify resources and practice risk mitigation.
4. Set clear expectations with your student group.
5. Stage crisis readiness simulations.
6. Test the communication plan.



Do your part to decrease liability.



**respect
yourself
protect
yourself**

- Respond to any incident or crisis in the way that would be expected of any reasonable professional with responsibility for student welfare.
- Take the same kind of actions in each instance of the same kind of crisis (consistency is very important).
- Employ a 'harm reduction' approach. Always take the option least likely to lead to harm, and encourage students to make decisions for themselves in the same way. (Example: Though students may want to enjoy a few drinks with friends on a free weekend evening, encourage them to have one designated sober person to ensure that everyone makes it home safely.)

Be proactive and communicate with your students.

- Many crises affecting U.S. students overseas arise from negative behavior, poor decision-making, misconduct, carelessness, or lack of preparation.
- Other problems occur when students are victimized by social, political, or natural circumstances beyond their control.
- Your goal is to take a proactive approach to crisis management.
- Pre-planning and professional perspective are emphasized as the best prevention.

- **Goals in crisis management:**

- Prevent foreseeable harm.
- Prepare for conceivable crises by communicating information, tools, and resources.
- Respond to needs of students, faculty, staff and parents in any crisis situation.

**PREPARE FOR
SUCCESS**

Harness the orientation phase to make sure your students are informed.

During your Orientations, discuss how students should respond to potential crises that could occur in your area:

- Group Leaders must collect in-country contact information (e.g., cell phone numbers) for all participants prior to arrival or on the first day of the program.
- Create a system of rapid communication through a 'phone tree' and a 'buddy system' so that the Group Leader gets rapid group updates during a crisis.
- Designate a primary and secondary meeting place to be used in the event of a major natural or political disaster.
- Agree on when, where, and how to meet (inform all participants).
- Designate an alternate staff leader or student leader(s) in case the Group Leader is incapacitated or unavailable.



Set the tone with your students. Speak openly about risks and expectations.

■ Key messages for students:

- While abroad, students are ambassadors of Cal Poly, the U.S., and themselves.
- Students are adults and are responsible for their own actions.
- It is important to exercise awareness and sound judgment, and to have your wits about you.
- It is crucial to be aware of the consequences of your choices and behaviors.



Make sure that all students, the other Group Leaders, and the on-site staff are able to contact you via phone, email, and social media apps.

Distribute Contact Information Cards to students prior to departure.

- Group Leaders should provide contact information to each individual participating in the program.
- Ideally, the information should be printed on a card (business card size) and kept with the participants at all times.
- Important information for students to know:
 - Name, address and phone number of housing accommodations
 - Group Leader(s) name, email, and cell phone
 - Secondary contact name, email, and cell phone (e.g., point person at the Service Provider or host institution)
 - Local emergency number (host country's equivalent to 911)
 - Contact information for the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. Consulate
 - Cal Poly 24-Hour contact number (Police Dispatch) & Cal Poly International Center email



EMERGENCY NUMBERS	
DOCTOR	_____
HOSPITAL	_____
AMBULANCE	_____
FIRE	_____
POLICE	_____

Establish communication immediately upon arrival.

- **Group Leaders must activate their cell phones**
 - Provide the International Center with your cell phone number *(preferably prior to arrival, if possible)*.
- Inform the International Center that everyone has arrived safely. Let the International Center know if a student does not show up or was delayed.
- Refrain from turning off your cell phone for long periods of time.
- Check your email regularly.
- If there is more than one Group Leader, set up an on-call schedule (weekly) and make sure that students know who is on call.
- Cover communication protocols, emergency plan, phone tree, and buddy system with students. Make sure that all students have phone and email access.



Crisis Response Considerations

Be able to recognize a minor incident.

- Minor incidents include illnesses like diarrhea and heatstroke, crimes like petty theft and pickpocketing, inter-personal student conflicts, a missed train or flight, and events such as single-day protests.
- Language and communication barriers, and a lack of familiarity with the local surroundings, can make minor incidents seem larger.
- Most incidents abroad will be minor. However, minor incidents can rise to the level of a crisis for an individual or group if they are not managed well or if the situation changes (e.g., illness becomes more severe, a mugging/crime results in an injury or psychological trauma, etc.)
- For any minor incident, the Group Leader:
 - should provide the student(s) involved with support
 - must complete an [Incident Report Form](#)
 - but does **not** need to enact a full-scale response at Cal Poly

MINOR INCIDENT

Be able to recognize a crisis.



- A crisis is any significant event with potentially severe consequences that requires immediate action or response. Crises include but are not limited to serious injuries or medical issues, physical assault, sexual assault, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, arrests or criminal charges, a missing student, an issue that disrupts the program for 1 or more days, and the death of a student.
- Common aspects of a crisis:
 - They can cause significant emotional stress for all involved, and that stress can result in predictable cognitive, physical and behavioral reactions.
 - They can result in a disruption or early termination of a program, whether for one participant or all.
 - **They can be managed, and how well they are managed determines the extent of their effects, in many cases.**

Prepare to manage medical emergencies.

- **Any hospitalization or clinic stay, no matter how brief, constitutes a medical emergency and must be reported.**



- Severe food poisoning
- Rape or sexual assault
- Severe allergic reaction to food, insect bites, alcohol, etc.
- Mental health issue or psychiatric break
- Pedestrian or vehicular accident
- Prolonged illness
- Appendicitis, kidney stones, collapsing/fainting
- Any incident involving injuries (Fights/assaults, sports or leisure accidents, slip-and-falls, etc.)

Assist students during medical emergencies.

Group Leaders must do the following:

- Assist the student in locating appropriate medical care.
- Contact the ACE USA Travel Assistance Program.
- Notify Cal Poly of your location and status. Use the 24-7 Police line if after hours.
- Work with the International Center to maintain communications with ACE USA Travel Assistance Program and the local treatment facility. The International Center will facilitate communications with Cal Poly officials and the student's emergency contact.
- Protect students' rights to medical privacy. Share only necessary details with only those professionals who have a need to know.
- Submit an **Incident Report Form** as soon as possible afterwards.



Get informed about Sexual Assault.

- Sexual Assault is defined as any non-consensual sexual act. This may include unwanted oral intercourse, penetration of the anus or vagina with a foreign object, or unwanted touching on an intimate area of a person's body. Sexual assault can also include unwanted kissing or bodily contact that is sexual in nature.
- The new surroundings and language can make study abroad students particularly susceptible to assault.
- Explore the 'Get Educated' section of the Cal Poly Safer website: safer.calpoly.edu/get-educated



Support survivors of sexual assault.

- Survivors of sexual assault are not at fault, and should be directed to resources where they can find help (e.g., Cal Poly Safer, Cal Poly Health & Counseling Services, the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673, etc.).
- As supporters of survivors of sexual assault, Group Leaders have an important role. When students are sexually assaulted, their power has been taken away from them. Allow your students to regain control by letting them make their own decisions moving forward.
- Note that the survivor may want to talk to you, but may not; take care to respect the survivor's privacy and be sure to act respectfully and not to pry. Let the student know that you are required to report the event to the campus because you are a mandatory reporter. Let the student know that Cal Poly Safer is a confidential resource and can be contacted by phone at 1-805-756-2282 or email at safer@calpoly.edu.
- Be aware that it is normal for survivors to have a range of reactions, including depression, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, social withdrawal, impaired memory, even an increase in risk-taking behavior such as over-intoxication with drugs or alcohol.



Prepare to encounter students with psychological or psychiatric emergencies.



- Mental health concerns create some of the greatest challenges for Group Leaders and on-site staff who are responsible for study abroad students.
- Some students participating in study abroad may have mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders, sleep disorders, and substance abuse disorders. Some of these students may be taking prescription medications in order to manage their mental health disorders. Students may have limited access to their regular support networks and/or mental health counselors.
- Be on the lookout for warning symptoms: depressed or anxious mood; diminished or withdrawn interest in activities; significant weight loss or weight gain; restlessness, mania, hyperactivity; substance abuse; inability to concentrate or complete assignments; comments about hopelessness or suicide; volatile or erratic behavior and mood swings.
- If you have concerns about particular students, start by talking to them and really listening to what they are saying. Cal Poly Counseling Services is available for a consultation with any Group Leaders who have concerns about a student.

Prepare to manage other Crisis Scenarios.

- Student is the victim of a crime
- Student commits a crime
- There is violence between students in the group
- A student goes missing
- A student is injured or dies from a vehicle accident
- A student commits suicide
- There are local protests/civil unrest
- There is an armed conflict or military coup
- There is a natural disaster
- There is a crisis in the U.S. (e.g., terrorism, natural disaster, family member's illness or death)

WHAT	WOULD
YOU	DO?

Consider your plan. Know your resources.
REMEMBER: Prepare, prepare, prepare.

Post-crisis Debriefing

After the Crisis: Debrief.

- Timely support to students and staff in the immediate aftermath of a crisis is critical.
- Debriefing with your group should consist of three basic components:
 - Exploring and expressing feelings with instruction, support, and reassurance by a facilitator and/or other survivors;
 - Assessing the intensity of the stress response; and
 - Mobilizing resources and returning to normal roles, with a plan for further assistance if needed.
- Upon Return: Crisis management is a valuable learning experience. Meet with the International Center staff and submit the detailed log of crisis events and actions taken. Services can be improved by analyzing past problems and our overall ability to mitigate risk and respond to crises.

Reflect. Learn. Improve. Share.

Thank you for completing this Training Module.

QUESTIONS?

Cal Poly International Center and Risk Management

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