International students, like all college student populations, are at risk for suicide. Along with the stresses many college students face, international students often experience additional pressures such as:

- adjusting to a new culture,
- using a foreign language,
- learning new social interactions,
- feeling misunderstood,
- having limited local support.

International students often report depression as one of their primary concerns. Many cultures communicate that counseling is for people who are “weak”.

International students may be reluctant to seek help, which increases their risk for suicide.
KNOW THE SUICIDE RISKS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:
Suicide Risk Increases when International students experience:
• Prejudice, inter-cultural conflict
• A new educational system, language barriers
• A recent loss (e.g., death or break-up)

Suicide Risk Increases when students have:
• Homesickness and culture shock
• Fears about seeking help for depression or suicidal thoughts
• Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
• Conflict with others or feel misunderstood
• Behaviors that are impulsive or aggressive

Suicide Risk Increases when there is a:
• History of family depression and/or suicide
• History of abuse
• History of previous suicide attempts
• Mental health problem that is untreated e.g., depression, bipolar disorder, or anxiety

Suicide Risk Increases when the International student has access to:
• Firearms or other lethal methods

KNOW THE SUICIDE RISK WARNING SIGNS
An individual may be suicidal if he or she:
• Reports feeling very depressed
• Experiences anxiety and/or stress
• Has increased conflicts with friends, roommates, peers, faculty
• Talks about wanting to commit suicide
• Is focused on death and dying
• Writes about death and/or suicide
• Starts giving away possessions
• Withdraws from family, friends, and activities once enjoyed
• Says things like, “I don’t deserve to be here,” “I wish I were dead,” “I am going to kill myself,” or “I want to die.”
• Increases their use of alcohol and/or other drugs
• Engages in reckless behaviors
• Secures a firearm or other lethal methods

TAKE SUICIDE RISK SERIOUSLY, CONVEY HOPE
Hopefulness is the best defense against suicide. It is always better to overreact than under react.
• Stay calm, listen and accept their feelings.
• Try not to judge or argue.
• Don’t act shocked by their plans.
• Be direct. Do not be afraid.
• Be persistent but gentle as you get them to answer your question.

DON’T IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS.
Reach Out: Always Ask.
• Ask them if they are thinking about suicide.
• If you can’t ask, get someone who will ask.

GET HELP, TOGETHER:
Know the resources at OSU and in your community:
• Offer to go with the person for help at:
  OSU CCS (student counseling center): 614-292-5766
  Hospital Emergency Room: 614-293-8333
  Help them call the Suicide Hotline:
  Columbus Area: 1-614-221-5445
  National/Veteran: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  Emergency Services: 911

NEVER LEAVE THE PERSON ALONE, IF POSSIBLE.
Find someone else who can help;
• Family or friends
• Religious leader
• The Counseling Center
• Resident Advisors
• Campus Security

Help them find a reason to live one more day.
There is hope.
There is treatment that helps.

KNOWING ABOUT DEPRESSION HELPS
What is Depression?
• It is a medical problem.
• It can affect anyone at any time.
• You don’t “get over it” or “snap out of it”.
• Like any illness, a person with depression needs professional help.
• It can be successfully treated with appropriate treatment.
• Stress, life events or a combination are triggers.

How does Depression feel? People with depression report that they feel:
• Sadness that lasts longer than a few days or weeks.
• Little or no enjoyment in life;
• Tired much of the time;
• Difficulty concentrating;
• Worthlessness or guilty;
• Hopelessness and despair.

What does Depression look like? Learn to recognize the signs.
• Depressed mood
• Irritability
• Diminished interest in activities
• Difficult falling asleep or sleeping all the time

Common concerns among International college students who experience depression
Understanding what to look for is helpful:
• Academic problems: Missing classes, not completing assignments, inattentiveness, and/or failing exams and courses.
• Relationship problems: Conflicts with roommates, family, friends, and/or partners, feelings of social isolation, feeling misunderstood
• Engaging in risky behaviors: Violence, unprotected sexual practices, alcohol and other drug abuse, and/or driving under the influence.
• Spiritual disconnection: Loss of faith, alienation from religion due to suicidal thoughts.