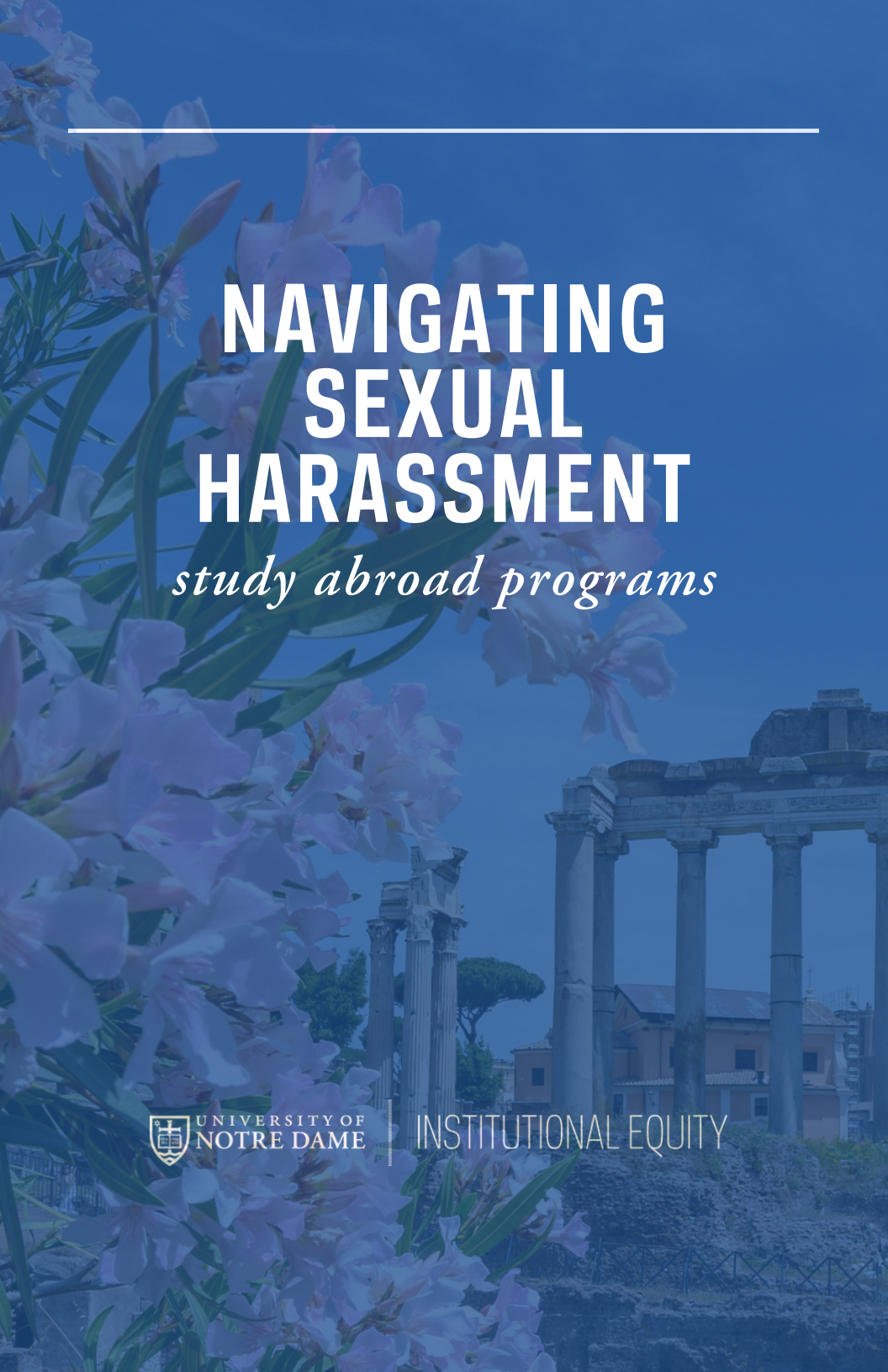


NAVIGATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

study abroad programs

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME | INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

Content Warning
This guide discusses sensitive topics, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, cultural challenges, interpersonal boundaries, and systemic barriers to reporting. These topics may bring up difficult emotions, particularly for those with personal experiences related to harassment or trauma. Please know that it's okay to pause, step away, or seek support as you engage with this material. Your well-being comes first, and you are encouraged to approach this guide at your own pace and in a way that feels safe for you.

You are not alone, and support is available. Visit **equity.nd.edu** to find resources and assistance.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Each year, University of Notre Dame students embark on study abroad programs that offer enriching academic and personal experiences in diverse global settings. These opportunities provide valuable learning and cultural engagement, but also come with unique challenges, including the heightened risk of sexual harassment.

This guide is designed to empower students studying abroad by raising awareness of these risks and equipping them with strategies to foster accountability, set personal boundaries, and advocate for themselves and others. By understanding the complexities of different social environments, students can contribute to a culture of safety and respect while navigating their experience abroad.

Please direct all questions about the content of this guide to the Office of Institutional Equity at **equity@nd.edu** or **(574) 631-0444**.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Compared to their on-campus peers, students studying abroad face increased risk of sexual harm. Several risk factors contribute to this trend, including:



Unfamiliarity with Reporting Systems. Uncertainty and lack of knowledge about how and where reports should be filed results in fewer students utilizing reporting mechanisms available to them. This gap in awareness can increase victimization by leaving individuals without clear pathways to seek help, access support, or hold perpetrators accountable.



Social Isolation. Being away from familiar support networks, such as family, friends, and home institutions, can lead to feelings of loneliness and uncertainty, which may hinder individuals' ability to access resources or report incidents when they occur. Isolation can increase victimization by making individuals more vulnerable to coercion, manipulation, or harm without the immediate support of trusted connections.



Engagement in New or Exploratory Behaviors. While studying abroad, students may be more inclined to experiment with substances, engage in unfamiliar sexual experiences, or explore new cultural environments. Students often increase alcohol use in countries where drinking laws are more lenient or where alcohol plays a significant cultural role. Among other risk factors, increased alcohol consumption is frequently cited as a contributing factor to sexual victimization.



New or Heightened Power Dynamics. As students form new relationships with peers, faculty, and program and housing staff, power dynamics can emerge based on authority, cultural norms, or dependency for support. These imbalances can discourage students from setting boundaries or reporting misconduct.



Language Barriers. Barriers to communication increase the risk of sexual violence and harassment by limiting a person's ability to set boundaries, understand consent, and seek help, increasing vulnerability to coercion and exploitation. Perpetrators may take advantage of these barriers and survivors often face challenges in reporting, accessing legal or medical services, and receiving support due to difficulties with interpretation, cultural stigmas, or a lack of resources in their primary language.



Lack of Cultural Competency. New or different cultural norms and societal hierarchies are critical factors that can increase the risk of victimization. In many countries, deeply entrenched gender roles and patriarchal values can normalize harassment and minimize the perceived severity of sexual violence. The impacts can be further exacerbated on those with intersectional identities (e.g., LGBTQIA2S+ students of color).

PROACTIVE PREVENTION MEASURES

The following strategies are designed to enhance protective factors and apply harm reduction principles, but it's essential to remember that a survivor's actions or inactions never determine responsibility for harm —it always lies solely with the perpetrator.

ENHANCE PROTECTIVE FACTORS.

1. **Understand Local Laws and Resources.** Familiarize yourself with the legal protections, support networks, and reporting mechanisms of the host country and any countries you may visit while abroad before you arrive.
2. **Establish Clear Personal Boundaries.** Clearly communicate your boundaries with confidence and reinforce them in a way that prioritizes your comfort and well-being.
3. **Build Social Connections.** Establish a network of peers or trusted community members to strengthen your ability to navigate challenging situations.
4. **Be Mindful in Environments with Alcohol.** Stay aware of your surroundings when alcohol or other substances are present, as it can sometimes be used to exploit vulnerabilities. Note that exploitation is never the fault of the person being harmed.
5. **Research Cultural Competency and Interpersonal Skills.** Understand cultural differences and the intersections of gender, race, and socioeconomic factors to safely navigate environments and identify when cultural misunderstandings are being exploited.
6. **Prioritize Emotional and Mental Health Support.** Utilize available resources and self-care strategies to address cultural adjustments, academic pressures, and the emotional impact of being in a new environment.

APPLY HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES.

1. **Know Emergency Phrases.** Learn key local phrases (e.g., "I need help," or "Call the police").
2. **Utilize Program Contacts.** Keep key resources and primary support contacts for your study abroad program easily accessible.
3. **Establish a Check-In System.** Check-in regularly with friends or family. Let someone know your plans, location, and estimated return time. Consider using technology to share your location.
4. **Use a Buddy System.** Whenever possible, travel or attend events in pairs or groups to provide mutual support and ensure someone is available to help.
5. **Trust Your Instincts.** Your intuition is usually informed by cues about your environment.

UNDERSTAND HOW TO REPORT AND ACCESS RESOURCES.

HOW TO REPORT.

If you are subjected to, witness, or learn about sexual misconduct, you should report it immediately. Reports can be made to local law enforcement and/or the University. To directly notify the University, file a report at **speakup.nd.edu**.

You are also strongly encouraged to inform one of your program contacts who will work with the University to ensure you have the support and resources you need.

What happens after a report is made?
A staff member from the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will reach out with information about support and available resources.

Depending on the circumstances, additional reporting mechanisms may be available at your host institution or community. OIE staff can assist in understanding these options.

Questions?
Contact OIE at **(574) 631-0444** or by email at **equity@nd.edu**.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

If you are ever unsure about who to talk to or how to navigate a challenging situation while abroad, please contact **Crisis24 Horizon**. This confidential service is available 24/7 and designed to support Notre Dame students navigating emergencies, safety concerns, or personal matters while abroad—no issue is too big or too small.

Crisis24 Horizon connects you to experienced professionals who can help guide you through your options, offer immediate support, and ensure you are connected to the right resources, whether it is medical help, mental health support, or navigating interpersonal or safety-related challenges.

Reach Crisis24 Horizon through the Crisis24 Horizon app or by calling **+1 (443) 569-8607**.

LOCAL	
Medical and Emergency Services	Determine the location of local medical staff and how to seek services if needed. Ideally, find a hospital with a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). Also, be sure to know how to contact the police and crisis responders.
Specialized Support	Support organizations such as rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and family justice centers provide specialized assistance for those experiencing sexual violence, domestic abuse, or interpersonal harm. Locate these organizations at **RAINN.org** (domestic) and **NOMORE.org** (international).
MEDICAL	
TimelyCare Telehealth timelycare.com/notredame Confidential*	Available to students travelling within the United States or to US territories, services include access to 24/7 access to mental health counselors, non-emergency medical providers, and nutritional specialists.
University Health Services (574) 631-7497 Confidential* On Campus	UHS is available to students upon their return to campus between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can provide medical care including wound care, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and referral and transportation to a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.

COUNSELING	
TimelyCare Telehealth timelycare.com/notredame Confidential*	Available to students travelling within the United States or to US territories, services include 24/7 access to mental health counselors, non-emergency medical providers, and nutritional specialists.
GeoBlu geobluestudents.com Confidential*	Available 24/7 to undergraduates who are abroad, offering six free counseling sessions per issue per year.
AETNA aetnastudenthealth.com Confidential*	Available to graduate students 24/7, offering free virtual therapy through Talkspace or the Student Assistance Program, based on the students' plan.
RAINN.org (800) 656-4673 Confidential*	The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) is an anti-sexual violence organization that partners with local rape crisis centers across the United States. Access 24/7 support by calling the hotline or using the online chat function.
Care and Wellness Consultants studenthealth.nd.edu/supportandcare Non-Confidential**	Care and Wellness Consultants (CWCs) are available to assist students in identifying strategies and resources to address academic, social, physical, mental, financial, or spiritual concerns.
PASTORAL	
Campus Ministry ministry@nd.edu (574) 631-7800 Confidential* Staff who are not vowed religious are considered non-confidential** resources.	Staff in Campus Ministry are available to support students on campus and abroad. Schedule a time to meet with a staff member at **campusministry.nd.edu**. Vowed religious staff (priests, deacons, and religious sisters and brothers) are confidential resources and will honor confidentiality unless there is an imminent danger to the student or to others. A disclosure during the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) will not be revealed by the priest for any reason, as it is a sacred obligation protected by law.

*Will honor confidentiality unless there is an imminent danger to the student or to others.

**Non-confidential resources are required to file a report with the University.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

VISIT OIE'S WEBSITE AT EQUITY.ND.EDU

FOLLOW OIE'S PREVENTION TEAM ON INSTAGRAM @ND_POET

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