



PRESS RELEASE

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Getting Educated on Safety for College Students Studying: Terrorism Expert Offers 5 Tips for Families

(New York, NY) – Many parents of college students are finding themselves torn between allowing their children to experience a semester abroad to study in another country and the reality of today’s dangerous world and terrorism.

Steven Crimando, managing director at XBRM (Extreme Behavioral Risk Management) in New York, is one of several leading behavioral experts in the US in the field of terrorism and public safety. He says, “It’s basic human instinct to ‘circle the wagons’ and keep our loved ones near during threatening or stressful times. Having a loved one far away, especially a child, can fuel anxieties and fears. While instability and violence associated with terrorism or military conflicts can seem well beyond our control, there are several steps students and their families can take to bring a greater degree of predictability and peace of mind to a semester abroad.”

Crimando offers 5 tips that make studying overseas safer and more secure:

1. Study before you go abroad. Students and their families can reduce the “fear of the unknown” by learning as much possible about the customs, geography and history of the region they will be living in before they depart. Read the online version of the local newspapers from that area consistently for a few weeks. You can learn a lot about problems with crime, political conflicts and health risks from local papers. Many are available in English, but most will not cover local risks and resources that can be critical for a visiting student.
2. Access important government information. The U.S. State Department hosts a helpful online "Students Abroad" website (<http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>). Take time to review key information about local embassies, travel documents and how to handle emergencies while abroad.
3. Stay up-to-date. For information to be useful, it has to be timely and accurate. Travel guides and other printed resources can quickly become outdated in our rapidly changing world. Keep abreast with travel advisories in real-time. The U.S. State Department provides continually updated "current travel alerts and warnings" as well as Country Specific Information. Creating your travel plan based on yesterday's news is risky.

4. Use technology. There is a significant generational divide around text messaging, which can be an obstacle to creating a back-up plan for communications. A redundant form of communication is critical during emergencies both in the US and overseas. Text messaging is a low-tech, low-cost solution to having a quick connection when voice communications are not possible. Fine motor skills deteriorate when people are under stress. Parents should learn how to text message in everyday situations that are not stressful so if a difficult situation arises, they are proficient and familiar. Texting can be your default method of communication in times of emergency.
5. File a Flight Plan. Leaving home for an academic adventure abroad can be stressful for student and parents alike. Just like a pilot files a flight plan, communicating important travel information, such as an overnight trip away from campus or a day trip, is critical. Sharing information about where and when students will be away from their home-away-from-home can be helpful in emergency situations.

Most students traveling abroad will not encounter major emergencies or crisis situations. Physical and mental preparation by both the traveling student and their family can reduce stress and bring a greater sense of control during unpredictable times.

Crimando and XBRM specialize in human behavior related to emergency and disaster preparedness and response. The firm trains employees and their employers in the growing field of crisis management human factors. This includes responding to economic and financial turmoil, disasters, workplace violence, terrorism, and other crisis situations. XBRM is a division of AllSector Technology Group, Inc. For more information, visit www.xbrm.com.