

2017 Swiped Out Session Summary

In our first round of research, we sought to get a sense of how prevalent dating app use is among students studying abroad, as well as how involved institutions and providers are in addressing this topic in orientation and materials. We also gained initial insight into how and why students use dating apps while abroad, recognizing there is room to delve deeper into uses and motivations for use.

In our session, we presented our findings and facilitated some robust discussion on safety and ethical concerns, as well as some potential practices for institutions and providers to acknowledge dating app use and incorporate it into how they support students.

Survey Takeaways:

- There is widespread student use of dating apps, but it appears staff are unaware of the extent of use
- Students use dating apps abroad for a wide variety of reasons
- Students report positive effects of dating app use on immersion, adjustment, and cultural competence development
- There is a large gap between student demand for info on dating safety, social media safety, & dating apps in orientation and what is actually being provided
- A majority of both institutions and site staff feel providers/site staff/host institutions should be providing info about dating safety, social media safety, & dating apps, while about ¼ of each feel it is the students' own responsibility
- Some institutional and site staff seemed uncomfortable with topic due to lack of understanding the technology

Limitations of Research:

- Survey respondents in all three surveys self-selected to respond
- There was significant qualitative (short-answer responses) in the Institution and CIEE Site Staff surveys; for this session, we primarily focused on analyzing the quantitative responses
- Provider (overseas site staff) responses are only from one provider, CIEE

Initial Ideas for Best Practices:

- Conduct your own research on your students' use of dating apps Partner with Student Services/Sexual Assault Advocacy Office to develop meeting locals/dating tips for orientation
- Cal Poly's International Center partners with SAFER office to provide "Passport to Dating" workshop
- Utilize local college students when covering dating safety, social media safety, and dating apps in on-site orientation