The international student population in the US has been steadily increasing over the past decades, and China is the number one contributor. Studies have shown that these students face unique challenges compared to their American counterparts. Although they experience relatively high rates of psychological distress, they seek professional help at lower rates, making supporting their mental health a priority for the overall support of the community.

The project aims to bridge this gap. A sticker is designed in both English and Chinese, incorporating a multi-colored rope (including Carolina blue) to represent the strength of combined cultures and values. Drawing on the idea of community and relationships as protective factors, the intended audience is encouraged to view connection and support with fellow international students and American students alike in a positive light.

After researching, several key challenges that Chinese international students face were identified, along with potential strategies that the community can adopt to better help them deal with mental health problems. Longer term, there is a hope to produce actual copies of these stickers through the UNC maker space and place them in high-traffic locations to spread a message of community support among Chinese international students.
**SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AMONG CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- Language Barriers
- Academic Stress and Career Problems
- Lack of Social Support
- Financial and Visa Status Concerns
- Acculturation Difficulties
- Stigma and Discrimination

International Chinese students face an array of unique challenges.

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**ADDRESSING THE DISPARITY**

How can universities, care providers, and other institutions support better mental health for these students?

**MULTICULTURAL TRAINING FOR PROVIDERS**

Teach all health professionals to pay attention and identify possible psychological triggers manifesting through physical symptoms. Train mental health providers to provide culturally competent healthcare that takes into account international students’ unique characteristics.

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**ACTIVE OUTREACH APPROACHES**

Actively reach out to international Chinese students through posters, campus newspapers, events, etc. to increase visibility about existing resources. Raise awareness and reduce cultural stigma toward mental health support.

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**TEACHING EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS**

Develop methods for teaching Chinese international students to build effective coping skills, including skills in problem-solving and seeking social support.

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**PROVIDE MENTOR AND/OR PEER SUPPORT**

Develop networks of senior students with similar backgrounds or local national students to provide guidance when navigating the experience. Provide students with faculty mentors to offer better support.

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These students have higher rates of psychological distress, but are less likely to seek professional help.

What can we do to help this part of our community?

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关注心理健康，我们一起。
Our Project

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After researching, we identified several key challenges that Chinese international students face and offered some potential strategies that we as a community can do to better help them deal with mental health problems. Longer term, we hope to produce actual copies of these stickers through the UNC maker space and place them in high-traffic locations to spread a message of community support among Chinese international students.

References