

Advancing a Mentally Healthy Campus

Annual Report: 2016 – 2017

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Submitted to Executive Sponsors: Trudy Pound-Curtis, VP Finance and Administration (interim); Lisa Phillips VP Academic & Provost; Lucy Fromowitz, VP Students

York University's Mental Health strategy aims to promote a healthy, inclusive and supportive environment that fosters positive mental health and wellbeing among members of the York community. The initiative was developed on the premise that wellness is a necessary pre-condition to learning and working, and that physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, mental, cultural and environmental health and learning are interdependent. Guided by a framework focused on leadership, planning and promotion, service delivery, and campus engagement, York University's Mental Health strategy strives to promote a more holistic, and integrated approach to campus health that supports academic excellence, employee satisfaction and productivity, as well as the overall success of all York community members.

Mental Health Strategy Launch

After extensive consultations, the formal launch of the strategy took place on October 18, 2016. The launch was an opportunity to thank community members for their contribution to the strategic plan and to distribute bilingual copies of the document. It was also an opportunity to hear from senior leaders, including Rhonda Lenton, VP Academic and Provost, David Coward, AVP & CHRO, Human Resources, Michael Charles, Executive Director, Centre for Human Rights and Jennine Rawana, Master Calumet College, who expressed the importance of the strategy for York University. A number of campus resources were invited to set up tables with information, and St John Ambulance brought therapy dogs. The guest speaker Eric Windeler representing jack.org spoke to the work of his organization and two peer leaders spoke about their own personal experiences. An estimated 250 people attended the launch and branded materials are now well distributed throughout campus.

With the strategy formally endorsed, the co-chairs reconstituted the Steering Committee mandate and membership (see attached terms of reference). With oversight of the strategy, the Steering Committee identified and supported an operational plan for 2016 – 17 (see

attached). The following provides some highlights and accomplishments of the 2016-17 operational plan.

Highlights & Accomplishments 2016-17

Strategic Priority: Leadership

- Meetings took place with leaders (Deans, Administrative Directors and Senate) to gain support for integrating mental health as part of their strategic plans.
- The implementation of a pan university wide mental health strategy articulated as key objective within the UAP.
- Working group established to create a plan for Psychological Standard to be implemented.
- Staff, faculty, and student roundtables were hosted and recommendations for action tabled at Steering.
- Working group established to examine the intersectionality of mental health and wellness and physical health; being chaired by the Executive Director Athletics and Recreation.

Plans for 2017 -18

- Begin development of a policy framework to ensure all academic and non-academic policies are congruent with the university's commitment to making mental health a priority.
- Continued support for actions initiated in 2016-17.

Strategic Priority: Planning & Promotion

- Communications strategy developed and endorsed
- Training sub-group established to identify all campus training/education resources for community members; information now posted on mental health web-site.
- Partnership discussion with Morneau Sheppel and HLLN, Faculty of Health to sponsor training program for leaders in managing mental health in the workplace.
- Provided ongoing training opportunities focused on mental health awareness, resources and support, and suicide awareness and intervention. (1300+ individuals trained in

mental health awareness, resources and support; 340 individuals trained in suicide awareness; 105 individuals trained in suicide intervention).

- Collaborated with KINE faculty member to pilot embedded suicide awareness training within course curriculum.
- Piloted exam prep program during Fall and Winter exams, which provided students the opportunity to explore learning skills and health and wellness strategies to help manage their stress.

Plans for 2017-18

- Training sub-group to identify gaps and make recommendations to Steering.
- In partnership with Employee Wellbeing Office, HR, establish a working group on Wellness for faculty members and staff.
- Expand pan university exam prep day to include Faculty involvement.
- Increase opportunities to deliver suicide awareness training within relevant faculties i.e. social work, nursing, and psychology.

Strategic Priority: Campus Engagement

- Teaching Commons offered workshops on Universal Design.
- Developed a data base of mental health research across campus.
- Participated in the National College Health Assessment and socialized the data across campus.
- Launched bilingual Strategic Plan for Advancing a Mentally Healthy Campus with defined brand.
- Advocated for the consideration of wellbeing within physical spaces as part of IIRP working group focused on campus space.

Plans for 2017-1

- Develop a plan with VP Research & Innovation to coordinate research projects and applications on mental health and well-being.
- Continue to support the work of Teaching Commons and Employee Well-being in promoting wellbeing for faculty members and staff.

- Embed language highlighting the importance of well-being to student success into syllabi template used by faculty.
- Develop workshop for faculty focused on supporting wellbeing within classroom settings.
- Develop a mental health awareness opportunity grant open to student groups running events with regards to mental health.
- Develop recommendations for built environment that would positively impact mental wellness

Strategic Priority: Service Delivery

- Revised Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities policy was reviewed and approved at Senate.
- Purchased WellTrack for the campus community and developed an implementation plan with launch scheduled for Fall 2017.
- Delivered training at Peer Leader Training and Orientation Leader Training with regards to how peer leaders can offer support and resources to other students.

Plans for 2017 -18

- Sponsor a working group to develop a campus plan to address the implementation of a multi- disciplinary team to manage faculty and staff crisis.
- Support the AVP Academic in discussions regarding the Academic Accommodations Policy.
- Collaborate with campus units engaged in early alert system development to pilot an early alert program.
- Explore potential partnership between Personal Counselling and relevant academic programs to investigate the feasibility of establishing a program that supports undergraduate students feeling overwhelmed by academic demands.
- Review existing organizational structure of disability services and draft recommendations to enhance collaboration across disability service units.