Embedding a Clinical Therapist as Staff into a Faculty of Nursing to Promote the Mental Health of Nursing Students

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Presentation Objectives

Following this presentation, you will be able to:

• 1. Describe the benefits of embedding a clinical therapist into a nursing program designed to improve program and individual outcomes.

• 2. Identify strategies to engage the clinical therapist as an advisor in student academic issues.

• 3. Explore opportunities for promoting mental health within a faculty/school of nursing.
Faculty of Nursing, University of Windsor

BScN 4 year and 4 year collaborative – 400 students admitted per year on 4 sites

MN/NP (36) & MN & MScN with thesis – 140 total

PhD – 6. (first cohort Sept 2017)
Are universities doing enough to support mental health? Students report feeling overwhelmed while their schools struggle to address the demand for help.

Ontario campus counsellors say they're drowning in mental health needs. Survey of 25,000 students found rise in rates of anxiety, depression and suicide attempts.

By Amanda Pfeffer. CBC News

Posted: Sep 26, 2016
Number of university dropouts due to mental health problems trebles

Data shows record 1,180 students who experienced mental ill health left courses early in 2014-15, up 210% from 2009-10

Charities, counsellors and health experts have urged universities to provide support for students who report mental health issues.

The Guardian, May 2017
A POST SECONDARY ISSUE

• Universities are struggling with a mental health crisis (Soet & Sevig, 2006, Ahern & Tuckette, 2010).

• A 2011 study of 1,600 students at the University of Alberta, Canada reported that 51% of students surveyed felt hopeless, more than 50% felt overwhelming anxiety, and 7% admitted they had seriously considered suicide.

• Canadian universities are developing systematic programs to address the crisis.
SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

• MacLeod and Brownlie (2014) reported that up to 40% of young adults experiencing mental health difficulties go undiagnosed.

• The most common mental health issues reported in university students include:
  • Anxiety    Depression    Panic attacks
  • Phobias      Eating disorders   Self harm
  • Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and psychotic disorders (Horgan, Sweeney, Behan & McCarthy, 2016).
• Untreated mental illnesses can lead to poor academic performance, increased incidence of substance abuse and dysfunctional social and familial relationships (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; MacLeod & Brownlie, 2014; Wyatt & Oswald, 2012).

• On campus counselling services available on Canadian university campuses. A study done in Alberta reported 96% had on-campus services (Heck, et al., 2014).
• Technology-based interventions
Nursing Students

Compared to the majority of university students, nursing students have a higher risk of mental health difficulties including:

- Excessive stress, anxiety and depression that can lead to poor health outcomes (Bartlett, Taylor and Dirk Nelson, 2016; Chernomas & Shapiro, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2015).

- One major cause of stress for nursing students according to Chernomas & Shapiro (2013) is the clinical learning experience due to the fear of making a mistake, lack of experience, and witnessing traumatic experiences.
The University of Windsor – FoN Experience

• Increased student attrition related to mental health issues
• Loss of clinical hours / Failures on exams
• Several completed and attempted suicides, hospitalizations and incarcerations
• Burden for faculty of academic advising and supporting student mental health
• Faculty / student boundaries crossed
• Faculty overwhelmed – impact on culture
Creating A Safe Accessible Place

- Private entrance/away from faculty offices and classrooms
- Student support includes clinical placement coordinator offices and student academic success coordinator office.
- Self-booked appointments
# Part-Time Clinical Therapist Activity

## 2011-2016

| Nursing Students Seeking Counselling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 55 | 65 | 58 | 80 | 76 | 48 |
Mini mental health fair to help students de-stress

Jack.org, a UWindsor group focusing on mental health, will educate students on suicide awareness. The fair will also have a light for the treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder, a type of depression occurring during fall and winter seasons.
Strategies to Engage the Clinical Therapist

• Special Projects
• Student Advising Team
• Early Intervention and Prevention
• A Resource for Faculty
Advisor for Student Academic Issues

Sits in on every meeting with a student at risk

A strategy used by our school to engage counsellor
Conclusion

Every day we learn something new

Every day can bring a struggle to light and requires a team to tackle

A compassionate and caring culture in our faculty is having tremendous positive outcomes for both student and faculty health without confusing boundaries.

THANK YOU