Mental Health Crisis on Campus

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“If your son or daughter is in college chances are almost one in two that he or she will become depressed to the point of being unable to function; one in two that he or she will have regular episodes of binge drinking; and one in 10 that he or she will seriously consider suicide” (Kadison & Digeronimo, 2004)
Prevalence of mental illness in Education

- 15% and 25% of our children and youth suffer at least one mental health problem or illness (Mental Health Commission of Canada)
- 20% of adolescents have a mental disorder in the U.S. (Anderson & Cardoza, 2016; Kataoka, Zhang & Wells, 2001)
- 38% Mental illnesses often develop during adolescence and young adulthood (Canada Public Health) 50% of lifetime disorders start by age 14 (Kessler et. al., 2005)
- Ryerson University 200% increase in demand from students in crisis situations (MacLean, 2012)
- "Students Are Exposing The University Of Guelph For Abandoning Students Dealing With Mental Health Issues" (Aonso, 2019)
- 2011 U of A 51% of students surveyed (N=1600) had felt hopeless or overwhelming anxiety in the past year
A variety of mental health challenges - acute and chronic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood disorders</th>
<th>Eating disorders</th>
<th>Other disorders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression – 11% of those 18+</td>
<td>Bulimia</td>
<td>Anxiety disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>bipolar</td>
<td>Anorexia</td>
<td>Personality disorders</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Schizophrenia</td>
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Mental illness is just the tip of the iceberg

• "Some students will experience mental health difficulties that are not necessarily symptoms of a mental illness. Mental health issues or problems are reactions to life circumstances or events that have an impact on an individual"

• Symptoms include: common struggles and difficulties by feeling stressed, upset, confused or overwhelmed

• Mental illness and mental health issues impact the ability to learn, maintain relationships and enjoy life.

(Education Alberta)
## Indicators of Distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Emotional</strong></th>
<th><strong>Behavioral</strong></th>
<th><strong>Social</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Absences and tardiness</td>
<td>- Outbursts and mood swings</td>
<td>- Aggressive, demanding, disruptive</td>
<td>- Open conflicts with instructors, students, staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Missed assignments, meetings</td>
<td>- High level of anxiety</td>
<td>- Deterioration in personal hygiene</td>
<td>- Isolation from other students</td>
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<td>- Disruptive behavior</td>
<td>- Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>- Weight gain/loss</td>
<td>- Problems with roommates, friends, family</td>
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<td>- Procrastination</td>
<td>- Hopelessness</td>
<td>- Imagining things</td>
<td>- Little or no contact with friends or family</td>
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<td>- Requests for special consideration</td>
<td>- Paranoia</td>
<td>- Agitation, restlessness, hyperactivity</td>
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<td>- Drop in quality of work</td>
<td>- References to suicide</td>
<td>- Excessive fatigue</td>
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<td>- Inappropriate, incoherent work</td>
<td>- Talk of harm to others</td>
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</table>

(Adapted from Counselling & Clinical Services, 2018)
Impacts on Learning
Is Education the problem or the solution?
The more educated a person is, the lower their incidence of mental health issues and higher use of support resources. (Alegria et al., 2000; Dohrenwend, 1990; Starkes et al., 2005; Steele, Glazier, & Lin, 2006; Steele, Dewa, Lin, & Lee, 2007; Valiadis et al., 2005; Wang, Berglund, & Kessler, 2000).

The challenges of education and young adulthood may contribute to the incidence of mental health issues and the limitation of education. (Kadison & Digeronimo, 2004; Lopes, 2007; Mallett, 2014)
A case for exploration
A BC institution

- 10,000 Student FTE, multi campus
- 1200 faculty
- **Vision** GOAL 1 & 2
  
  Facilities, resources and supports to promote wellbeing of students and employees
Assessing the situation

Learning struggles
Finances
Physical wellness
Career decision
Academic Challenges
Mental Health
(stress, anxiety, depression)

Learning center and accommodation services
Financial aid, student foodbank, coop employment
Recreation programs, fitness facilities/classes
Career Services, academic advising
Early alert
Counselling for faculty and students

Missing elements
Student awareness campaigns, culture that decreases stigma.
Faculty instructional strategies, recognition of students who are struggling.
Roadmap for success – education can help
Developing social support

- Reduce stigma
- Education on coping strategies
- Support groups
Innovative Education Strategies

Institutional strategy  Instructional design/delivery model  Resources for students  Resources for faculty
It's all in the balance

(Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools, 2017)
Educators have mental issues as well.

Educators are the front line in diagnosing and mitigating mental health issues, and LMS and other online systems provide a method for delivery of resources. (Di Placito-De Rango, 2017, 2018)

We need to manage the educator mental crisis. (Department for children, schools and families, 2008; Grant Rankin, 2016; Hougan, 2018; Shaw & Ward, 2014; Single, 2017; Teacher, 2017; Tsipursky, 2015; Worth & Van den Brande, 2019) to effectively service the student mental crisis. (“Education team to tackle increasing mental health problems,” 2019)

If administration takes care of the educators, then they will be in a position to help the student, just piling on another task is not going to be helpful. Educators already feel overwhelmed (Worth & Van den Brande, 2019).
Supporting Faculty

• EAP programs
• Recognizing personal challenges
• Work life balance

Help yourself before others!
Distributed Education to the rescue
How ODL can help

Benefits to student wellbeing

• Accessibility
• Flexibility
• Open pedagogy
• Self directedness
• UDL
• Community

What do you see as limitations of ODL in this context?

The only thing that we can think of is the lack of immediate personal connection.
Faculty tools to support students

• Mental Health First Aid for Educators
• Dealing with mental health: a guide for professors
• How academics can help ensure students’ wellbeing
• Reports of mental health issues rising among postsecondary students: study
• https://healthycampuses.ca/
Instructional Strategies

Choice and Voice
Students express their learning styles and preferences as learners in the lesson.

Choice for Demonstrating Learning
Students have multiple ways to demonstrate mastery of standards. They can leverage both technology tools and traditional tools.

Mastery Based Assessment
The students drive the curriculum rather than the curriculum driving the students. Assessments are guided by proficiency and competency.

Varied Strategies
Students are given more than one way or modality to learn the material or access content.

Flexible Pacing
Students move through the curriculum at a pace that fits their individual abilities and allows for mastery of learning rather than a time-bound learning schedule.

Co-planning Learning
Students, parents and community are involved in planning and setting goals, demonstration of learning, pace, and mastery level.

Just-in-time Direct Instruction
Direct instruction is available to students when it is needed regardless of the availability of an in-person teacher.
Institutional supports

- Campus initiatives
- Mental health services
- Accommodation

- Wellness programs
- Faculty course design assistance
Leadership Approach – key elements

- Inclusive or collaborative
- Culture shifting
- Non judgmental
- Self aware and emotionally intelligent
Supports for Relational Leadership

- Daily relational and responsive dialogue of leaders leads to morally responsible leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011)
- It is about noticing subtleties (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011)
- It is a means to collaborative relationships (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011)
- Emphasis on social construction (Uhl-Bien, 2006)
- Dynamic system of leadership, not role specific
- Cultural transformation needed requires relationships and open dialogue
- To fully understand others we need to look holistically at their needs
References


Education team to tackle increasing mental health problems. (2019). Retrieved February 27, 2019, from https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/news/218-new-academic-team-focuses-on-rising-mental-il-health/


