

# STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AT BROCK UNIVERSITY

At Brock University, we have implemented many different services and programs to meet the increasing mental health needs of our constantly changing student population. We put the student experience first and pay strong attention to student mental health. It shows as Brock was once again ranked first by Macleans<sup>1</sup> among Canada's comprehensive universities for mental health supports that help students cope with stress.

However, research shows there continues to be a strong need for increased supports for our students. More than 55% percent of students who are experiencing mental health problems are not seeking mental health supports.

Additionally, students with mental health problems are two times more likely than their peers to leave their post-secondary institution. Increasing the availability of services and preventative programs can work to reduce this risk and provide students in need with the tools to better manage and cope with their mental health challenges and ensure students graduate. Mental health is also correlated with higher satisfaction in college and higher reported likelihood of donating as a future graduate.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.macleans.ca/education/canadas-top-school-by-student-satisfaction-2020>

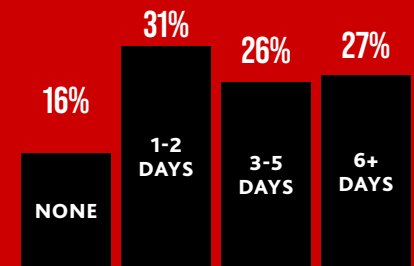
<sup>2</sup> Health Minds Survey, University of Michigan School of Public Health, 2019



# 49.9%

**OF STUDENTS AT BROCK ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF AT LEAST ONE SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM**

**NUMBER OF SELF-REPORTED MISSED CLASSES IN PREVIOUS FOUR WEEKS DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**



## RESPONDING TO COVID-19

With the arrival of COVID-19, in-person services were suspended and Brock's Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre (SWAC) responded by launching phone and video appointments, online resources, online replicated drop-in services and online peer support.

The demand for wellness and mental health supports has increased significantly at Brock and other post-secondary campuses across the globe as a result of COVID-19. Given the continued and rapid growth in demand and the disparity of resources available to meet these demands, SWAC has implemented several initiatives that strengthen effectiveness and efficiency of mental health service delivery including online drop-in sessions and increased training for practitioners.



## SYSTEMS APPROACH AND WIDENING DEMAND

Brock's systems approach recognizes the complexity of mental health issues and respects that SWAC is merely one element of a possible array of services, programs and supports focused on mental health. While these actions have made Brock a leader in campus mental health, the unrelenting demand still presents a significant risk to our community. The risk will only grow as the gap continues to widen between the demand for resources and the available funding to provide these essential resources.

We expect a surge in mental health supports for students as they continue to navigate the pandemic learning landscape. The learning cycle is off-kilter with the transition to online learning and students are feeling more isolated. In addition, they may be experiencing the barriers of technology and working through challenging living situations. The opportunity for naturally occurring engagement for support does not exist in the virtual experience leaving students increasingly vulnerable to not receiving support.



## EMERGING NEEDS

Continued and increased programming that offers drop-in sessions with high-impact interactions and the ability to respond to surging needs.

After seeing a successful but oversubscribed program offered in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association at on-campus drop-in sessions, there is a need to increase single session drop in counselling opportunities for students.

### Access to 24/7 clinically-staffed support.

Many services and supports available to students are not staffed by clinicians. As students are at increased risk of reaching a tipping point in the current circumstances and the need for assistance may come at all hours of the day, it is vital to put a service in place for students to access support at anytime and have access to trained staff to ensure their well being.

### Support for racialized populations through staffing and programming.

The goal is to ensure the staff population can adequately and respectfully assist students in racialized populations especially in the support of international students. There is a need to hire additional staff to ensure alignment and resources are available.



# 151

**TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS**

**WHO ACCESSED SINGLE-SESSION WALK-IN COUNSELLING SERVICE FROM OCT. TO DEC. 2019**

# 27%

**WERE IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF STUDY**



**BARRIERS TO RECEIVING SERVICE**



**FINANCIAL REASONS AND TIME**



Barriers relating to time seem to be very prevalent. Looking into more virtual counselling/therapy options may help to increase accessibility, especially in a post-COVID environment.

Financial barriers could be addressed by implementing more free programs and on-campus supports as well as increasing awareness of such supports.



*In the past when I needed them they were very helpful and supportive. Helped to take some of the worry away."*



## SUPPORTING SOLUTIONS

We continue to collaborate with campus and community partners to ensure the well-being of our students on campus and in the Niagara region. Support for student mental health can increase the active engagement of students, reduce the stigma of accessing mental health assistance and increase training for practitioners.

Your help is needed to support the emerging needs for our students and to ensure our students receive the services required to maintain their studies and their mental health. As the stigma of accessing support decreases, we need to meet increasing demands and ensure as a community we invest in the capacity to build the system of support that is lacking essential funds.



# 5.25

**DAYS**

**AVERAGE WAIT TIME FOR CAMPUS SERVICE**