

Providing Continuity of Care for University Students with Mental Health Concerns



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Lessons Learned

Collaborations between community-based hospitals and post-secondary education institutions will improve the navigation of mental health supports, promoting continuity of care.

Description

A mother had a son, an undergraduate student, lost to suicide in 2016. An investigation later revealed the son had reached out for mental health support, but felt a lack of compassion when navigating the hospital system.

Inspired by this patient story, leaders at Humber River Hospital (HRH) collaborated with the mother to develop strategies to support university students requiring mental health services.

In collaboration with York University (YU), HRH launched a program focused on increasing accessibility, facilitating the navigation of the mental health supports available, and maintaining continuity of care.

Actions Taken

At HRH:

- Healthcare providers identify YU students in Emergency Department.
- Inform patients of the option to share personal information with YU, which would require a signed "Consent to Share Information" form.
- Contact and send information to YU.

At YU:

- Transition the Student Services registration process to a "drop-in" model.
- Increase presence of mental health professionals on-site once a week at YU.
- Support students' return to campus from HRH.

Summary of Results

The program was launched in January 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Competing priorities, virtual delivery of university programs, and reduced hospital resources impacted how YU students were affected by COVID-19, as there was a pause in YU services. Despite the pause in YU services, both institutions have renewed this partnership, and recognize the invaluable connection it provides for seamless information transfer for university students under duress.

Figure 1.

Dissemination of Education Handouts at HRH Emergency Department to identify York University Students and obtain consent to provide health information to York University. This collaboration enhances further support at York University once students have been discharged from HRH.

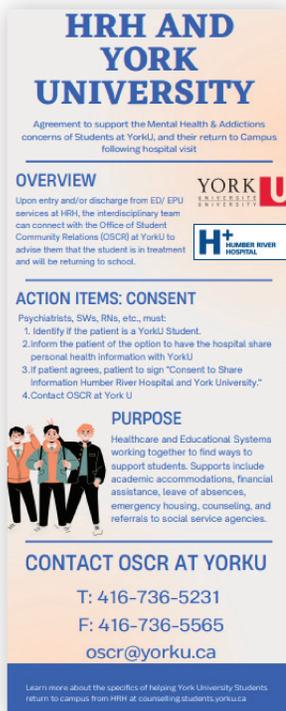


Figure 2. Handouts disseminated to York University Students to assist with navigation of services upon return to campus from HRH.