

Tyler Phill, under the supervision of Melani Fernando and Judith Jayasuriya with the partnership of MyStudentWellbeing has written this case solely for the 2023 24-Hour Case Crack Competition. The author has no intention to comment on or evaluate the handling of managerial decisions within MyStudentWellbeing. Photocopying transmitting, distributing or reproduction this case in any form or by any means is strictly prohibited.

MyStudentWellbeing: Charting the Development of Mental Health Services for University Students

Introduction

In a local coffee shop in Winnipeg, the Founder and CEO of MyStudentWellbeing, Tyler Phill sits contemplating strategies to enhance the wellbeing of post-secondary students in Canada amidst increasing mental health concerns. He's spent the past few years launching My Student Wellbeing and although he's been excited by how it's catching on, he knows there is a lot more awareness to build so students know where they can get help quickly.

How My Student Wellbeing Works

My Student Wellbeing is a federally incorporated business which operates an online platform designed to simplify the process for college and university students in Canada to book mental health counselling sessions with private therapists. Through mystudentwellbeing.ca, students can register, select a therapist, and schedule appointments. The platform offers a free 10-minute consultation with therapists to ensure compatibility. It features 13 mental health therapists providing approximately 130 available hours weekly and there are a number of therapists signed on ready to go live if demand increases.

My Student Wellbeing prides itself on not having waitlists, enabling students to start counselling within the week or even often within 24 hours. The therapist network also offers a diverse range of therapists, reflecting the diverse student population.

Predominantly offering online counselling, My Student Wellbeing also facilitates in-person sessions if therapists have their office space, though only one therapist currently offers in-person sessions and there

are no plans to focus on in person offerings due to the high costs associated with operating a physical location.

Therapists, which are signed on as Independent Contractors, are carefully selected by Tyler, who holds a Honours Bachelor of Social Work, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Tyler leverages his social work background to onboard ethical, experienced therapists who are passionate about supporting post secondary students.

As independent contractors, therapists maintain confidentiality and flexibility in their roles, setting their rates and hours. My Student Wellbeing charges therapists a 25% service fee on their hourly session rate for promotion, insurance, and billing handling, and providing a secure session platform. MyStudentWellbeing has seen strong therapist retention and has even had signed on therapists recommending their colleagues to apply to sign on with My Student Wellbeing.

History of My Student Wellbeing

Tyler first had the idea of My Student Wellbeing during his first year of his Asper MBA in 2017 as he had people close to him struggling with their mental health and had difficulties accessing services. The people he knew would attempt to access free services on campus, but they had to wait weeks to get a counselling appointment or if they missed a counselling appointment, they had to wait a week for their next session.

It was difficult for Tyler to see people close to him struggling and unable to get help when they needed. At the time, Tyler was paying for his student insurance and realized that there was coverage for mental health counselling. He started asking people around him if they knew they had the counselling coverage and few were aware, and for those who were aware, they didn't know how to use their insurance or they were afraid that their claims would get denied if they used it.

Tyler used the concept of My Student Wellbeing during any group project possible during his MBA to see if it was a viable business. As a former social worker, he had limited business knowledge and starting an organization seemed like a big challenge, but he was motivated to think through the idea as much as he could. Through his courses in the program, he started to build the confidence to keep progressing My Student Wellbeing.

When the COVID pandemic started, Tyler spent his time learning web development, researching laws related to mental health services, learning about mental health counselling group practices, and speaking with mental health counselling group consultants. He got to the point where he had put in so much thought into the concept, looked at it from every angle, that he felt confident he was going to give it a try.

My Student Wellbeing was federally incorporated in February 2021 and soft launched in May 2022 to test the systems to ensure everything works well. It did, and it was time for liftoff.

My Student Wellbeing employs a University of Manitoba student who is able to improve the website and assist with technical tasks. If needed, My Student Wellbeing will utilize freelancers to assist with other tasks as needed, but will prioritize hiring students, as they want to help students get work experience and develop their skills.

Growth of My Student Wellbeing

In summer 2022, the University of Manitoba Student Union President reached out to My Student Wellbeing to learn more about the service, as they were committed to increasing access to mental health services for their student population. In November 2022, Tyler was full steam the business, working full time to promote the service and let students know how easily they can get help. Since Summer 2022, Tyler has been making connections around the University of Manitoba campus and other campuses in the province to find those who are passionate about mental health services and helping the student population.

Since the launch, My Student Wellbeing has seen hundreds of students booking sessions, many booking weekly sessions. It has continuously been growing, as students start to share their experiences using My Student Wellbeing with their peers, causing organic growth, and the direct promotional efforts of My Student Wellbeing.

Based on Tyler's time spent on campus and browsing r/UManitoba on Reddit, it's clear there are still many students at campuses around Manitoba, including the University of Manitoba, who do not know about My Student Wellbeing and who may be struggling because they don't know where to get help.

Current Marketing

As a startup in Manitoba, My Student Wellbeing has taken low-cost marketing strategies to spread the word, however, as the organization has grown My Student Wellbeing has increased investment into marketing. They have approximately \$5000 sitting in a marketing fund and will continue to contribute 30% of revenue each month into the marketing fund, however, My Student Wellbeing would consider taking out a business loan if it meant more students would learn about their service and thus know where they could get help if they need or know where to send a friend in need.

To date, My Student Wellbeing has utilized social media marketing (Meta and Reddit ads; Appendix 1), a bus bench around the University of Manitoba, posters around the University of Manitoba campus, and tabling on the University of Manitoba campus in different buildings.

To bring people to the table when My Student Wellbeing is on campus, they came up with the 60 Second Word Search Challenge, which is where if a student can complete one of the word searches in under 60 seconds, they win a \$5 Starbucks or Tim Horton's Gift Card (and it's free to try). The word search challenge has been well received by students, causing students to look out for the My Student Wellbeing table to come try the challenge each day it's going on, causing students to return to engage with My Student Wellbeing time and time again.

My Student Wellbeing has received incredible support from University of Manitoba community members such as the University of Manitoba Student Union (UMSU), the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship, various student associations in different faculties, and students who spread the word about the organization organically. The Manitoban Newspaper and UMToday both wrote articles on Tyler and My Student Wellbeing.

Promotional efforts have been primarily focused on the University of Manitoba; however, My Student Wellbeing would like to also build awareness to students attending University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, St. Boniface University, and Assiniboine Community College.

A Student's Mental Health

University and college years are a transformative time filled with challenges and growth. Students may need to navigate their academics, romantic relationships, self-identity, making friends, deciding on a future career, family pressures, losing loved ones, moving away from home for the first time, financial stress, or any of the other many parts of life we may experience. Survey data has shown that a majority of students have experienced mental health struggles at some point in their life and that the overall trend for student mental health is worsening year after year (Appendix 2).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing mental health issues among students even further due to increased isolation, disruption of normal life, and uncertainty about the future (Appendix 2). The shift to online learning also posed new challenges in terms of maintaining a work-life balance and reduced social interaction.

Many universities and colleges struggle to meet the growing demand for mental health services. While some have expanded their counselling centers and online resources, students often face long wait times and limited access to one-to-one counselling services (Appendix 3).

Current Issues

My Student Wellbeing has processes in place to allow students to start mental health counselling quickly and they've been fortunate to have a lot of interest from mental health therapists who want to sign on, making therapist availability not an area of concern for My Student Wellbeing.

The main focus of My Student Wellbeing is building awareness of the service across universities and colleges in Manitoba. Eventually My Student Wellbeing wants to expand services to other universities and colleges across Canada, but the immediate focus is building awareness in Manitoba. There are students likely sitting in their rooms right now, struggling, because they don't know where to go for help. My Student Wellbeing wants every student to know they can reach out for help and start getting help quickly, because when we want to talk, we want to talk.

My Student Wellbeing also has plans to expand their service offering to be more holistic of student health, as they have been considering offering services and information related to financial literacy, physical wellness, socialization, and more, but that expansion of service and information hasn't been the primary focus of My Student Wellbeing, rather, the focus has been, and remains, on building awareness about how students can access mental health counselling quickly and in many cases, at no out of pocket cost to them.

Conclusion

Tyler sits in Daily Grind Coffee Shop in Winnipeg, working remotely and thinking of how to build awareness of My Student Wellbeing so students who need help can start getting help. Although My Student Wellbeing has gained some traction and awareness around the University of Manitoba, Tyler suspects there is still a majority of students around campus who are unaware of My Student Wellbeing. With a short-term mission to offer mental health support to as many university and college students as possible in Manitoba and a long-term mission to offer support to students across Canada, Tyler needs to figure out how to best build awareness to students.

Appendix 1: Past Social Media Posts/Ads

Know a University of Manitoba student?

Share this with them so they know where they can get help quickly if they are ever having a tough time, or they know where to send a friend or a classmate who is having a tough time.

Most students have insurance (many don't realize they do) that covers the cost of mental health counselling

U of Manitoba students' insurance will cover 100% of the cost of sessions with any of our mental health therapists, for on average 10 sessions

We offer online counselling and don't have waitlists. Students can have an appointment this week (or even tomorrow!)

Unsure if you have insurance? Message us on Instagram or through the website and we'll help you figure out if you do (most students have coverage)



ME WORRIED ABOUT MY FRIEND WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH



VS



ME AFTER LEARNING I CAN REFER MY FRIEND, WHO IS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT IN WINNIPEG, TO MY STUDENT WELLBEING WHERE THEY HAVE THERAPISTS AVAILABLE THIS WEEK

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MANITOBA (WITHOUT A WAITLIST)

Mental health counselling appointments available as early as tomorrow

- Read about our therapists and see their availability without making an account!
- Free 10 min consult call with any therapist
- Most students have insurance coverage (which may cover 100% of the cost). Contact us and we'll help you understand your coverage.

We aim to make it as easy as possible for students to book a online counselling appointment.



mystudentwellbeing.ca





Smiling on the outside doesn't mean smiling on the inside.

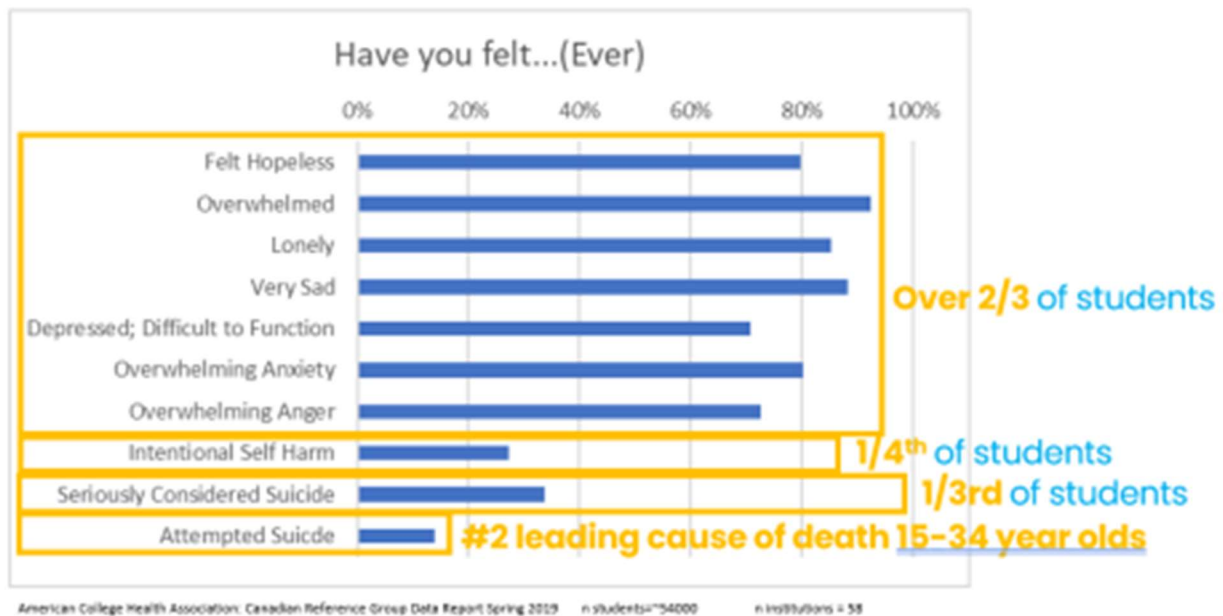
Sometimes we put on a front to hide what we're really dealing with.

Let's talk about what's going on inside.



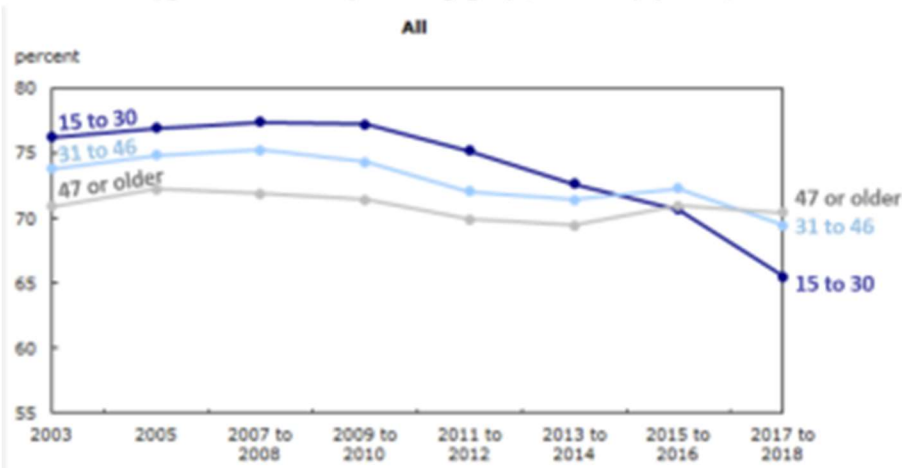
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Appendix 2: Studies, Reports, and Research Around Student Mental Health in Canada



Garriguet, Didier. Feb 1, 2021. Portrait of Youth in Canada: Data Report. Statistics Canada.

Excellent or very good mental health by sex and age groups, household population, 2003 to 2019



Youth are struggling & 84% of youth reported pandemic has added new or exasperated mental health challenges (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations)

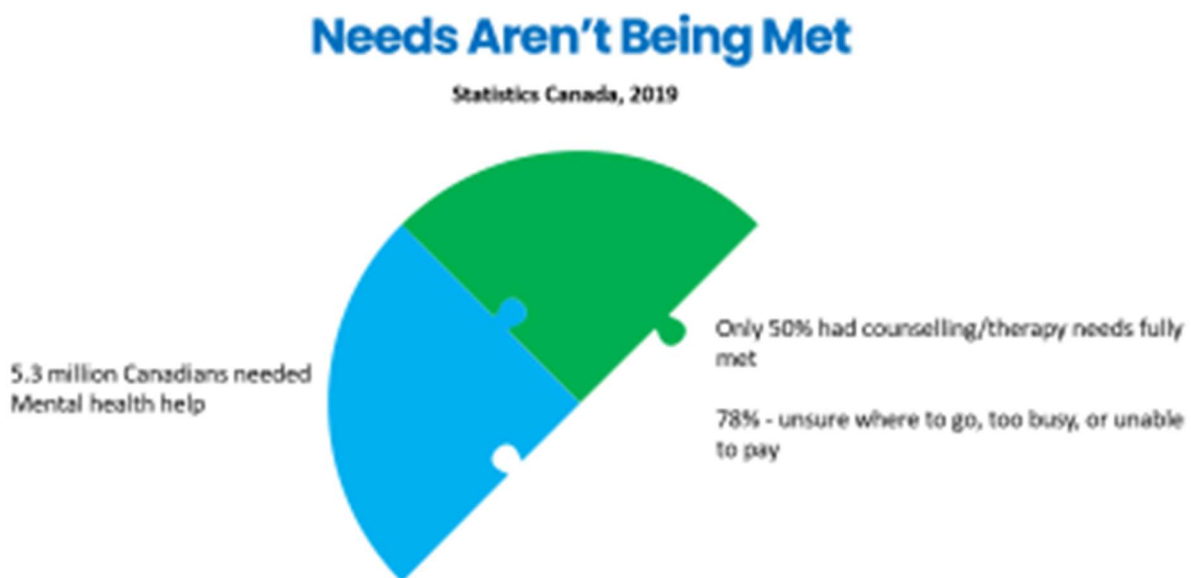
“The phrase ‘mental health problems and illnesses’ represents the range of behaviours, thoughts and emotions that can result in some level of distress or impairment in areas such as school, work, social and family interactions and the ability to live independently. There are many different kinds of mental health problems and illnesses. They range from anxiety and depressive disorders through to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and are often associated with a formal medical diagnosis. The type, intensity,

recurrence, and duration of symptoms of mental health problems and illnesses can vary widely from person to person, as well as by type of problem or illness.”

- Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019

“If we just reduced the number of people experiencing a new mental illness in a given year by 10% – something that is very feasible in many illnesses among young people, after 10 years we could be saving the economy at least \$4 billion a year.”

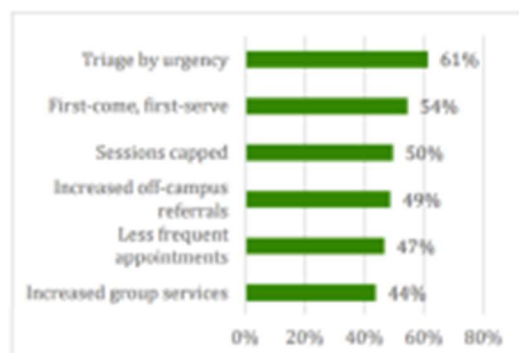
- Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019



Canadian Association of University Teachers; 2021 Counselling Survey Report

N = 103 counselors; 9 provinces

Campus Counselling Centre
Demand Management Strategies



Ease of Off Campus Referrals



Awareness of Mental Health Support/Services on
Campus (NCHA):

