



1.866.925.5454

Post-Secondary Student Helpline

good2talk.ca  
info@good2talk.ca

## Q&A with Good2Talk - CICMH Webinar May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**1. Do you have interest from other provinces yet? Is the program able to be expanded with appropriate funding to other provinces?**

As Good2Talk is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, it is only available to students in Ontario.

**2. What is the average length of a phone call for counselling?**

The average length of a counselling call is 20 minutes. There is no limit on the amount of time a student can spend with a Good2Talk counsellor, and many of our calls last upwards of an hour.

**3. What range of issues do counsellors typically deal with?**

Currently, the top three issues we're seeing on Good2Talk counselling calls relate to anxiety, depression, and partner relationships, specifically break-ups. These account for over half of the counselling calls received. On the Information & Referral (I&R) side of Good2Talk, non-diagnosed mental health issues, anxiety disorders, and mood disorders account for the majority of the calls. That said, we know postsecondary students are facing a wide range of stresses and concerns, whether they be related to academics, employment, finances, relationships, sleep difficulties, concerns with substance use and abuse, mental illness or a disability. Good2Talk therefore is equipped to provide students with in-the-moment support for most challenges they may face.

**4. How can you ensure that Good2Talk is not driving up demand for already taxed services on campus through your referrals?**

By providing information on how Good2Talk's counselling service can best be used by postsecondary students and staff across the province, Good2Talk aims to reduce the occurrence of so-called "reverse referrals" that might drive students back to their campus counselling service. Therefore, it is important that college and university counselling services clearly explain to students what Good2Talk can provide in between appointments or while on a waiting list: brief, solution-focused, single session counselling and referrals. Students who have been referred to Good2Talk by their campus counselling service are encouraged to communicate that information to the Good2Talk counsellor or Information and Referral Specialist so that they may have a better understanding of the student's pathway to accessing support. In addition, by conducting a thorough assessment of the needs of our callers, Good2Talk can help make appropriate referrals for those students whose issue may be best addressed by services other than counselling.

**5. Are students' issues recorded under their name? Or will a student have to repeat their situation to a counsellor every time they call?**

Good2Talk is a 100% confidential and anonymous service, and thus we do not keep case notes on our callers, nor do we record any identifying information in the context of our counselling service. (The sole exception to this would be in the case a student presents a risk of harm to



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themselves or others, whereby Good2Talk will then have a duty to warn and engage appropriate authorities to ensure the student's safety). A student who calls the helpline back after an initial call would not be required to repeat their story or situation in order to receive support. In using a brief, solution-focused therapeutic model, counsellors work with the issues, concerns or needs the student brings to them in that moment. This involves using a strengths-based counselling model, whereby counsellors work with the caller to discuss personal readiness, resilience and available personal and professional resources for addressing their concerns. Rather than exploring the student's history, the counsellor will focus on the student's present and future circumstances in order to help them arrive at possible solutions and next steps.

**6. What is Good2Talk's relationship with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health?**

The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health is one of four partners behind Good2Talk. They provided all of Good2Talk's counsellors with in-depth training on issues specific to postsecondary life, psychological and social development of students aged 17 to 25, and the common mental illness and mental health considerations relevant to transition-aged youth. The Centre is also responsible for Good2Talk service evaluation, scheduled to take place in fall 2014.

**7. Do you have posters that you could send out that we can post around our student affairs office to promote the helpline to students?**

Yes, Good2Talk promotional materials, including posters, wallet cards and information cards are available in French and English for campuses to disseminate. These can be obtained by submitting your request to [info@good2talk.ca](mailto:info@good2talk.ca) (please remember to include a full mailing address in your email), or by downloading them for free from the Good2Talk website at [www.good2talk.ca](http://www.good2talk.ca) or [www.allojecute.ca](http://www.allojecute.ca).

**8. Is there a single database, i.e., have ConnexOntario, Kids Help Phone and Ontario 211 combined its resource databases?**

ConnexOntario, Kids Help Phone and Ontario 211 each maintain their own distinct database of on and off-campus supports relevant to postsecondary students. While the Good2Talk partnership enables students calling the line to choose the service that best meets their needs (by pressing "1" for connections to local resources for a mental health or addictions issues, or by pressing "2" to speak to a professional counsellor), we are also able to transfer students from one service to the other according to their particular need for ongoing support on-campus or in the community.

**9. Does good2talk have a smartphone app?**

Good2Talk does not have an app at this time.



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**10. How do you believe this service complements locally-based 24/7 distress or crisis lines?**

While Good2Talk can and does support callers in crisis (as our first two simulated calls in the webinar showed), the scope of our helpline is a bit broader than some of the excellent distress and/or crisis lines students have available to them locally. Think of Good2Talk as kind of a "one-stop-shop", where through one number, students can access counselling delivered by paid, professional counsellors, and Information and Referral Specialists. Another feature that makes Good2Talk distinct is that our funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has enabled us to gather and maintain detailed information about the services and supports available to students on each college and university campus in the province, whether that be mental health services, LGBTQ support services or academic writing resources. So, it's part of our mandate to work with postsecondary institutions to ensure that Good2Talk operates and is promoted in a way that complements existing services on campus. The training of our counsellors has focused heavily on the transition issues and developmental factors that can influence postsecondary students' mental health and well-being, so that we can really tailor our counselling to support student callers. While there are variations in the services offered by Good2Talk and local distress and/or crisis lines, there is never any wrong number to call, and anyone who calls any helpline is taking an important step to getting help.

**11. Are we able to use this PowerPoint for our students on TVs posted around the school?**

The Good2Talk webinar is a great educational resource for staff and student leaders on campus, and could be useful to include in trainings or meetings, for example. If you're looking for promotional materials or graphics for TVs on campus, however, please contact [info@good2talk.ca](mailto:info@good2talk.ca) or [media@good2talk.ca](mailto:media@good2talk.ca) and we can provide the appropriate resource.

**12. Will there be support resources (e.g. mental health/treatment info) added to the website?**

The Good2Talk team is working on developing a small resource section for the website, which we hope to make live in time for the fall semester.

**13. Do you have counselors who can speak other languages?**

While many of Good2Talk's counsellors do speak other languages, at this time, we are resourced to provide counselling in English and French only. Students whose first language is not English or French who may be looking for support in another language are encouraged to press "1" for Good2Talk's I&R service, which is accessible in up to 150 languages through the translation services of ConnexOntario and Ontario 211.

**14. How is your service different than a phone in help or crisis line? From the examples provided, your service seems to be quite similar to available services. Is this a duplicate of service? If not, how are you different? Please see Question 10.**

**15. Have you considered adding an Aboriginal support, talk4healing is a help line for Aboriginal woman in Northern Ontario?**



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Thank you for mentioning this great resource; Talk4Healing is definitely something we will consider adding to our database of supports. Between Good2Talk's partners, we maintain many records for both on and off-campus services and supports relevant to the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Metis students, and Talk4Healing is a good example of another helpline to which we could refer northern Aboriginal female callers interested in receiving culturally-specific and traditional healing.

**16. Are the people providing support to the callers Good2Talk employees or are they from Connex or Kids Help Phone?**

Good2Talk counsellors and I&R Specialists are employees of Kids Help Phone and ConnexOntario or Ontario 211 respectively.

**17. How do we sign up to receive resources?**

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**18. Can students request specific counsellors? I.e: perhaps someone they have spoken to before? Or a female counsellor? Or a First Nations counsellor?**

Our goal as a counselling service is for students to develop a relationship with the Good2Talk service, rather than with individual counsellors. While students are welcome to ask to speak with a male or female counsellor, we can't guarantee being able to accommodate the request as it all depends on who is available at the time of the call.

**19. Am I right in asking if good2talk is very much similar to distress centre calls? Please see question 10.**

**20. What would you do if a student tells a counsellor that they had just taken pills to kill themselves? Is there a way to track?**

All Good2Talk counsellors and Information and Referral Specialists are trained in general risk assessment and response as well as in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). If a student calls with a suicide in progress, Good2Talk has a duty obtain identifying information such as name, location, dorm room, and dispatch emergency services while keeping the student on the line. As in any instance where a caller is presenting an imminent risk of harm to themselves or others, the Good2Talk staff member will work with the caller to establish a safety plan and deescalate the situation. While we recognize the importance of having informed and responsive on-campus services to support students' mental health and well-being, we know one of the main reasons students reach out to Good2Talk is because we offer a service that is completely confidential and anonymous. We have a duty to inform appropriate authorities of any call where



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a student is at risk of harming themselves or others and who provides identifying information, however, Good2Talk does not have caller ID nor do we track any personal information obtained during a crisis call.

**21. With increased gender diversity, how well trained are counsellors to properly handle calls from a gender variant person?**

We think it is important for anyone contacting our service to feel confident that every aspect of their identity will be respected. In order to be sensitive to gender variant callers, our counsellors have received training regarding best practices for counselling LGBTQ-identified youth. Many of our counsellors identify themselves as gender variant and provide internal consultation and training for other counsellors. Additionally, counsellors are encouraged to discuss opportunities and challenges concerning their counselling work with their supervisors to ensure continuing self-awareness and growth. Counsellors also have available to them well researched and evidence-based counselling documents and tip sheets in a knowledge management system. They can access this while they are speaking with a caller to help them with background information that can remind them of context issues and concerns they need to be aware of.

**22. What recommendations can the panel offer for the collaboration of mental health & gender identity support services given the high co-morbidity of these conditions?**

This is a large question, and really beyond the ability to answer in the context of this webinar Q&A. While this does not actually address the question of collaboration, I want to point out that Good2Talk makes it easier for gender-variant students to access suitable resources. The Good2Talk service can provide gender variant individuals access to professional, in the moment counselling support and also the opportunity to explore a large range of mental health resources via the Information and Referral option. They can then select the resources they think are most suitable.

**23. Any best practices and recommendations you can offer for students leaving high school transitioning to postsecondary? What can high schools do to help with this transition?**

There's quite a learning piece here for high school students. This is more than changing to a new type of school, it's a lifestyle change that can be exciting and fresh, but can also very stressful and isolating. This is especially true if the student is moving to a new location. There can be all kinds of great advice and guidance included around this topic. From the Good2Talk perspective we recommend the new postsecondary student knows that if they do start to feel stressed or distressed about school performance, relationships or any other reason, they have some place to reach out to for immediate, in the moment support. Prior to going to college or university prospective students have access to very similar support by calling Kids Help Phone, or can obtain mental health resource information by contacting ConnexOntario directly. 35% of all Kids Help Phone callers are 17 and older and might be transitioning out of high school. Counsellors are experienced in supporting young people preparing to leave for college or university.