**Creation and Implementation of the Student Wellness Navigator Role at the University of Guelph: Development, Implementation, Evaluation and Considerations**

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**Development**

The Student Wellness Navigator (SWN or “Navigator”) role was developed in response to the Mental Health Initiative and the feedback from students about mental health supports on campus. The Student Wellness Navigator roles were developed in the spirit of providing students who are new to Mental Health Services a quicker touch point, ability to provide follow-up supports and obtain resources while awaiting access to the best services to meet their needs, whether those be on or off campus.

There were a few goals that the SWN roles were aiming to meet. These include:

* **Clear communication** to the student about the nature of the SWN role and their appointment
* **Empowering students** with greater knowledge about services and supports
* Providing students, the **right level of support**
* Ensuring an **overall satisfaction** with the support provided

The Student Wellness Navigator roles consist of 2 contract positions. The SWN roles began in August of 2019 with one position being 8 months and the other 10 months. As a part of the staff training the SWNs met with Managers in each of the Student Wellness Units and attended a portion of the Manager meetings for the first three months to update all Managers about the role out of the position and hear about the impact of the positions on each of the units. Additionally, the SWNs attended some of the residence training sessions that are offered for student residence staff.

To promote the position several measures were taken to share the SWN positions within the department, as well as across campus. The Navigator’s attended meeting with the following campus partners to discuss the role and how students can connect for support: Residence Life, Learning Commons, Diversity and Human Rights, First Response Team, the Stress Management Clinic, Student Experience, Multi-Faith Resources, Addiction Counsellor, Library Accessibility Services, Aboriginal Resource Centre and Program Counselling.

Department communications were updated to include and market the SWN positions across campus. This included changes to the “Student in Distress” folder to include the Navigator contact for students who faculty identify can wait at least 24 hours for support. As well website and social media posts to promote and include the SWN roles.

Further actions and considerations were taken before and during the beginning stages of the position. For further details please refer to the Program Logic Model found in Appendix A for a complete picture of activities.

**Implementation**

Students typically are booked to see a SWN through the Student Wellness Services front desk. Students who are new to Student Wellness Services and are requesting supports for their mental health are informed that the first step is to see a Navigator for a 30 min appointment. Some additional ways that students are booked with the Navigators is through referrals from campus partners, the Mental Health Care Coordinator (MHCC), students who reach out via email directly or students who email other SWS staff and those emails are forwarded to the SWN.

There are 4 same day appointments available and an additional 16 booked appointments each day, less any time taken away for meetings or other responsibilities of the SWNs. The target is for the Navigators to be booking to see students within 24-48 hrs. **To date (August 2019-March 11, 2020) the SWNs have served 1,131 unique students and had 1,185 student appointments.**

When the student arrives at the appointment, they complete a Mental Health Screener while they are awaiting the appointment. The Screener obtains information about services and supports accessed, as well as information about their difficulties, concerns and what they hope to address today.

The Navigator appointments consist of explaining to the student the purpose of the appointment. It is explained that the role of the Navigator is to do just that, support students in getting connected to services and supports. Further it is explained that the appointment can be used to discuss what brings them in, what they are hoping for support and hopefully together supports can get started and put in place.

The discussion is the appointment is guided by the student, to share as much or little as they feel comfortable with, in order to help determine supports. The Navigator also uses the Mental Health Screener to ensure any suicide or self-harm risk is screened with the student and to assess if urgent or priority services are needed. Should a student identify as high risk through screening the Navigator will consult with the Mental Health Care Coordinator, drop-in counsellor or a Manager for support. From the appointment students are supported in connecting with the appropriate Student Wellness Services supports, if applicable. Should it be appropriate students may also be referred or recommended to access supports elsewhere on campus or off campus, such as private counselling. In keeping with the goal of the SWN position, the Navigator will help to students to achieve a circle of supports that may consist of professional and informal services and supports. Informal supports include discussing with students what supports they have of family or friends. Students are encouraged to use those information supports not only for someone to lean on during difficult times but also for support with self-care, such as calling a friend to exercise with or go for a nutritious dinner. Additional supports of professions or other campus supports are discussed with students.

Every student is provided information about urgent 24/7 support lines, including: drop in counselling and 24/7 supports of HERE 24/7, Good2Talk and the Crisis Text Line. When applicable self-directed supports are encouraged while awaiting supports. This may include information about Anxiety Canada or BigWhiteWall or apps that might be helpful. Sometimes specific tasks are discussed, such as keeping a worry journal or completing the Feeling Better Now assessment, which might provide further information for when they see a physician or counsellor.

Typically, students present at Student Wellness Services because they are looking for a certain service. Through statistic tracking the SWN identified that 827 or approximately **73% of student’s were seeking the support of counselling services**. While some students were seeking multiple supports, after the fall semester tracking changed to just target the primary support the student is seeking. See Appendix B for a full list of the statistics obtained to date.

**Evaluation**

82% of students were directly referred to services within Student Wellness Services. These referrals included # students to each service:

* 170 Counselling Single Session
* 504 Counselling Intake
* 84 Counselling Drop in
* 205 No appointment booked
* 8 Dietician
* 8 MHCC
* 58 Health Services Appointment
* 10 Health Services Drop In
* 38 SAS
* 76 Counselling Groups

It is important to note that allowing the SWN to refer directly to counselling groups, created another avenue for students to gain access to groups without having to be receiving care through the supports of other Student Wellness departments.

In the appointment the Navigator works with student to identify other supports that they might benefit from considering access to create a greater circle of supports. These recommendations included, # student for each recommendation:

* 96 SAS
* 149 Counselling
* 470 Counselling Drop in
* 62 Counselling Group
* 40 Online Counselling
* 321 Private Counselling
* 40 Health Services
* 7 Dietician
* 177 Academic (i.e. Program Counselling, Professors, Learning Commons, Start on Track, Bounce Back etc.)
* 27 Career Services
* 52 Residence Staff
* 182 SSN

As mentioned earlier, to empower students to start with self-directed supports and care the websites of Anxiety Canada and Big White Wall are some additional recommendations that might be made, when applicable. 110 students were provided the information about the Big White wall supports and resources Discussions may include encouraging students to work on their self-care and finding a balance to improve their mental health, including eating well, sleeping well and exercise. For students who identify wanting some support in implementing or identifying these wellness goals 44 students were provided information about the UShine program, designed to provide peer-to-peer support.

To encourage students to stay connected and have a meaningful take away from the Navigator appointment 440 students were sent a follow up email with information or links to supports and services discussed. This may include information about private counselling options, which was suggested to 321 students who were seen by the Navigators. Each student was encouraged to reconnect if they are needing any further support and 54 students did just that, attending multiple appointments with a Navigator.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the new position an exit survey was created to ensure the position was meeting the goals of the position. 249 students completed the exit survey. Due to the consistency of results and minimal variability from the respondents the survey was discontinued. Overall responses concluded that:

* 86% indicated it was clear about the purpose of the meeting
* 97% indicated they were more knowledgeable about services and support options after meeting with the Student Wellness Navigator (SWN)
* 97% indicated receiving the right level of support from the SWN appointment
* 97% indicated they were satisfied with the supports received from the SWN
* 99% would recommend the SWN to a friend

For a full breakdown of the results and a complete list of student comments, please refer to Appendix C.

**Lessons Learned & Future Considerations**

The initial process for booking students with a Navigator was that the front desk was recommending the Navigators for students who presented and were unsure about what supports they were looking for to support their mental health. This process changed part way through the fall 2019 semester for the Navigator to instead be a first step for all students new to services for their mental health. As well the Navigator became a recommendation for those who are already connected to a service when the service provider is not able provide a detailed account of services and help the student to clearly identify their needs. This is an important change to note, as until the process changed the SWNs were not being accessed to their full capacity.

As well initially drop-in appointments were being offered with the Navigator all day, which each Navigator rotating to offer morning or afternoon drop-in appointments. After feedback from staff and the Navigators the number of drop-in appointments was reduced and changed to be considered “same day” bookings. These changes were made as the booked appointments were preferred over an immediate appointment, which was evaluated through watching number of booked vs. drop-in appointments, as well as feedback from the front desk. The Navigator’s also identified that the drop-in appointments were more often high risk or student’s in distress which were better served through drop in counselling, drop-in health services or though the Mental Health Care Coordinator.

During peak times the Navigators are primarily spending their time providing direct access to students. However, future consideration and development is needed for additional roles and responsibilities that can be completed in the down times when students are not seeking new services in as great of numbers.

To date some additional responsibilities have included:

* Participation in Wellness Services committees, including: Health & Safety and Wellness at Work
* Participation in Wellness Services or campus events, including: Shine Mental Health Events, Admissions Events (Fall and Spring Preview Events), LGBTQ2A+ Event Presentation
* Delivery of the Counselling Anxiety Group in the Winter semester (MSW qualified Navigator)

Future considerations for the SWN include:

* Participation in orientation activities
* Further participation within the academic community to promote wellness; Collaborate with Wellness Education to see about sharing some of the delivery of information across campus related to mental health supports
* Further counselling/ SWS group participation or delivery

Appendix A- SWN Program Logic Model

SWN Program Logic Model

Overall Goal: Demonstrate the value of the SWN position to the support it provides to students and the MH response on campus, through evaluation over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| INPUTS  *Resources dedicated to or consumed by the program* | ACTIVITIES  *What you do to fulfill your goals and objectives*  \*Activities that are included as Outputs | OUTPUTS  *The direct products of the activities you do* | OUTCOMES  *Changes, benefits, or impacts as a result of an activity* | | |
| Short-term | Intermediate | Long-term |
| Funding/ Budget  - 2 SW Navigators  - Space and Office Furniture/ Equipment  Resources  - Job Descriptions/ Fact Sheets  - Salary Banding  - Advertising/ Posting Position  - Job Evaluation Committee  - Hiring Manager  - Interview Time  - Office Space for SWNs  - Clinicial Materials/Tools  - Promotional/ marketing materials  - Business Cards  Supports  - Management  - Information Technology  - Administration  - Evaluation consultant – Sandra Yuen | Develop SWN Position  - Identifying need for position through MH strategies (i.e., review student feedback for identified wants/needs on the UoG campus)  - Secure funding for position and resources needed  - Allocate space and identify resources needed for SWN positions  - Management Meeting/retreat to clarify objectives for the position  - Work with HR, Administration & job evaluation committee to develop job fact sheets, salary banding and advertising the posting  - Meetings to discuss the service impact of position  - Information gathering sessions with campus stakeholders for staff training purposes and education on the SWN position  - recruitment and selection of candidates  - Development of clinical materials/tools (i.e., SWN Surveys, MH Screener, CIS template for electronic notes and data collection)  Hiring & Onboarding  - Change student in distress folder to reflect new position  - Order business cards for new staff members  - Update services within Student Wellness Services to include SWN positions  - Update the Student Wellness Services website to include SWN  - Staff training (see outputs)\*  - Update MH Screener to be used for all services, including SWN services  Evaluation  - Meetings (5, 1-hr meetings) with Sandra Yuen providing evaluation support  - Meetings with SWN and Manager to evaluate position\*  - Create SWN surveys  - Impliment SWN surveys to gather qualitative and quantitative data  - Attend Manager meetings to discuss activity of SWN  - Attend Front Desk meeting weekly to assess flow of service  - Discussed midpoint evaluation of position consistency across other post-secondary institutions and identify output and collaboration  - Discussion of work flow of service between two SWNs  - Follow-up and check-in (through email) with students regarding “No-Show” appointments. Re-book and/or provide resources to these students if required  - Create and implement survey for SWS clinicians to complete on evaluation of the SWN position | Onboarding Protocol  - From feedback with campus stakeholders developed onboard process; i.e. for training and implimentation  - SWN trainings by campus stakeholders (i.e., Residence, SAS Manager, Counselling Manager, MHCC, Health Services nursing staff and Medical Lead, DHR, CRT, Library Services, Program Counsellors, ARC, Multi-Faith Resource Team)  - SWN attended meetings with campus stakeholders to educate and inform about the position (i.e., with  SAS, Stress Mangement Clinic, Program Counsellors, Residence Life, Learning Commons, Experiential Learning)  SWN Productivity  - # of navigator sessions: Fall 2019: 607  - # of admin hours (for notes, contacting campus resourcse, attending meetings, etc.): 1.5-2 hours/day  - # of clinical hours: 5-5.5 hours/day  - # of no-shows (F19: 44)  - # Referral Sources to SWN ( F19: 4 Program Counselling, 20 Other/Unsure, 19 Health Services, 8 MHCC, 462 Front Desk, 10 Academic, 14 Residence)  - # Referrals from SWN Appointments (F19: 287 Counselling Intakes, 66 Counselling Drop ins, 123 No appointment booked, 2 Dietician, 3 MHCC, 35 Health Services, appointment , 7 Health Services Drop In, 66 SAS, 33 Counselling Groups.  - # Additional Support Recommendations/ Secondary Refferals from SWN (F19: 57 Counselling, 220 Counselling Drop in, 18 Counselling Group, 21 Online Counselling, 162 Private Counselling, 21 Health Services, 4 Dietician,69 Academic (i.e. Program Counselling, Professors, Learning Commons, Start on Track, Bounce Back etc.), 13 Career Services, 31 Residence Staff, 102 SSN)  - # students receiving a follow up email immediately after appointment (F19: 252 Students)  - Student Satisfaction Survey (frequencies)  - SWS Clinicians Survey Results (frequencies) | Improved Referral Process  -The overall purpose of the SWN position is to provide short-term service to students  -Quicker access to mental health supports by seeing a Navigator within 48-72 hrs  -Provide more access points to counselling groups through SWN referrals   * Creates direct referal and eliminates barrier to access group counselling   -Increased knowledge of evaluation benchmarks to continuously monitor and improve service  Development of Evaluation Benchmarks  -Exit Survey Results (F19: 168 exit survey’s completed)   * The purpose of the meeting was clear (F19: 87%) * SWN increased students’ knowledge about services and support options (F19: 98%) * The right level of support from the SWN appointment was received (F19: 98%) * Students are satisfied with the supports received from the SWN (F19: 97%) * Students would recommend the SWN to a friend (F19: 99%)   -Email support and resources provided to students, as needed (F19: 42% of students received a personal email following their appointment)  -Identifying reasons for SWN appointment (i.e., Academic, Counselling, SAS, Health Services, Mental Health General, Urgent care) (F19: 86 Academic, 421 Counselling, 22 SAS, 31 Health Services, 121 Mental Health General, 14 Urgent, 14 Unknown, 7 Other) | Improved Access to MH Supports for Students  -Students have a SWN as a touch point for support while awaiting other services and supports  -Access to services within Student Wellness Services, other places on campus or off campus supports; i.e. private counselling suppports  -Utilize services to support their mental health needs  Improved Student Clinical Outcomes  -Clinical Measures  -Positive feedback from Clinicians  Improvement/ Refinement of Evaluation Benchmarks  - Ongoing evaluation | Improved Student Mental Health & Academics  - Improved mental health and academics for student by increasing their knowledge of services and supports available  Improved Student Experience with Mental Health Services  - Better expectation of services and capacity of those services to improve the students experience once they connect to SAS, HS or counselling  - SWN is able to better match students needs to services  - Adaquete response to the mental health initiative and responding to the goal of easier access to and knowledge of services  - Empower students with greater options for community supports when they identify a need for quicker or more frequent access to services than what can be provided within CS or HS |

**Appendix B-SWN Stats**

**August 2019- March 11, 2020 (to be updated at the end of the semester)**

**Unique Number of Students seen:**

* Total Unique Students: 1,131; Total Student Appointments: 1,185
* Sarah: 608; Bethany 523; Total Student Appointments: Sarah: 637; Bethany 548
* 94 no shows; 49 cancelled appointments

**Referral Source:**

* 8 Program Counselling
* 2 FRT
* 46 Other/Unsure
* 34 Health Services
* 11 MHCC
* 918 Front Desk
* 15 Academic
* 18 Residence

**Reason for Appointment: (multiple reasons may apply to the same student)** *\*Note: revised in the winter semester to be the primary reason and only one choice per student\**

* 102 Academic
* 827 Counselling
* 36 SAS
* 37 Health Services
* 168 Mental Health General
* 21 Urgent
* 23 Unknown
* 19 Other

**Referral Path: (multiple appointments may have been booked for one student)** *\*Note: winter semester tracked single session separately from counselling intake\**

* 170 Counselling Single Session
* 504 Counselling Intake
* 84 Counselling Drop in
* 205 No appointment booked
* 8 Dietician
* 8 MHCC
* 58 Health Services Appointment
* 10 Health Services Drop In
* 38 SAS
* 76 Counselling Groups

**Additional Services/ Supports Recommended: (information provided, discussed and suggested)**

* 96 SAS
* 149 Counselling
* 470 Counselling Drop in
* 62 Counselling Group
* 40 Online Counselling
* 321 Private Counselling
* 40 Health Services
* 7 Dietician
* 177 Academic (i.e. Program Counselling, Professors, Learning Commons, Start on Track, Bounce Back etc.)
* 27 Career Services
* 52 Residence Staff
* 182 SSN

**Additional Services/ Supports Recommended**

* 110 BigWhiteWall
* 44 UShine
* 34 Other

**SWN completed a follow up email after appointment:**

* 440 students received a follow up email immediately after appointment

**Appendix C- Student Wellness Navigator Survey Responses**

* September 20th- February 3rd; **249 respondents**

**Quick Glance at number:**

* 86% indicated it was clear about the purpose of the meeting
* 97% indicated they were more knowledgeable about services and support options after meeting with the Student Wellness Navigator (SWN)
* 97% indicated receiving the right level of support from the SWN appointment
* 97% indicated they were satisfied with the supports received from the SWN
* 99% would recommend the SWN to a friend

**Comment to highlight:**

“ Really helpful and very glad that I popped in. Been feeling very stressed and now I feel more in control of my options 😊”

“Amazing services! Really makes things feel possible instead of impossible”

“I think this is a great way to get students started in the wellness centre and provide information about services that are available.”

**Here are the broken-down responses, per question:**

Was the purpose of the meeting made clear before you were booked with the Student Wellness Navigator?

**213** Yes                         **36**  No

As a result of meeting with the Student Wellness Navigator, please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements (please circle the number corresponding to your response): **Scale is 1-5; strongly disagree to strongly agree**

1. I am more knowledgeable about services and support options after meeting with the Student Wellness Navigator.

Strongly Disagree         Moderately Disagree     Neither Agree or Disagree     Moderately Agree       Strongly Agree

**0                                           1                                          3                                           57                             188**

1. I received the right level of support from the Student Wellness Navigator appointment (i.e., completing forms, information of services and booking appointments, etc.).

              Strongly Disagree         Moderately Disagree     Neither Agree or Disagree     Moderately Agree       Strongly Agree

**0                                               2                                          5                                        43                             199**

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the supports I received from the Student Wellness Navigator.

              Strongly Disagree         Moderately Disagree     Neither Agree or Disagree     Moderately Agree       Strongly Agree

           0                                           **3**                                          **4                                          47                           194**

1. Would you recommend the Student Wellness Navigator service to a friend?

**247**Yes**2**  No

**All additional comments: \*those in blue are comments that highlight a concern\***

“I think this role is important for providing students with a more immediate contact about their concerns even if counselling services is booked up for weeks. Reaching out to book an appointment with a counsellor can be difficult if you are struggling, so it can be discouraging if you reach out and don’t see anyone for several weeks, having this intermediate step with a navigator is good for alleviating that.”

“Super quick appointment- helpful to at least have resources offered while waiting for an in-depth appointment”

“Very kind, provided many options”

“This was a very helpful session. It is important to assess specific needs. I also thought it was helpful to get multiple options. Great experience overall! 😊”

“Thank you for pointing me in the right direction!”

**“Short wait times, more staff, more on duty counselors needed”**

**“My only comment is I was hoping to assess counselling services on campus and there was no availability. Other than that my student wellness Navigator was very nice and helpful.”**

“Wellness Navigator was very nice, and the appointment was a very pleasant experience overall.”

“Perfect! Nothing else needed!”

“Very informative, a bit overwhelming.”

“Very helpful! Comfortable environment. Felt fully supported.”

**“I would have liked more time to talk.”**

“Thank you for helping!”

“Excellent service for student not knowing where to start when seeking help. I gained a lot of information.”

“Very helpful. Didn’t push when I didn’t know what to say/do. Give me tons of options but not in an overwhelming way.”

**“I do wish that it was more clear that I had to check in at front desk on the first floor (maybe that can be mentioned on the phone call).”**

**“Asking what steps the student wants to take, or if they have anything in mind before referring.”**

**“Having counsellors available immediately is ideal for those who only wish to confide once, 3-4 weeks is a long wait.”**

“The navigator (I think Bethany?) was very friendly and helpful!”

“Really nice and understanding navigator! ❤”

“Keep doing what you’re doing! 😊”

“It was helpful in knowing my options!”

**“Seems as though no progress has been made.”**

“They were able to meet with me the same day, which was helpful. Has lots of suggestions and were able to find me a last minute appt to talk to someone.”

“The Navigator I spoke with was very kind and understanding and gave me multiple options of where to go from here.”

“😊”

**“It would be nice to be able to book appointments online or through email.”**

“The Navigator was incredibly warm and welcoming. Definitely a great resource to have as a starting point!”

“Service was helpful for those who do not know which resources to use, but relatively unhelpful for those who do.”

“When I was told I’d see a “navigator” I wasn’t thrilled about being bounced around from person to person. I thought I’d have to keep repeating my issues to a bunch of different strangers, but it was a relief not to do that. I was made aware of services I didn’t know of before. “

The Wellness Navigator was very welcoming, and made sure that all of my concerns were addressed and needs were met.

**It’s a good idea in general, but it was very unnecessary in my situation and ultimately made me lose time for booking a counsellor.**

It’s not intimidating which felt easy.

Very good to ease worries of students who don’t know what to expect.

Bethany was very supportive, and calm, which made my anxiety significantly decrease. Her office is cozy, and I believe that calming atmosphere was a main reason as to why I felt so comfortable to share my feelings.

Very good to ease worries of students who don’t know what to expect.

Sarah was very friendly and made the process feel less intimidating than expected.

I have accessed Wellness Services in the past, and thought I was coming in to see a counsellor. Wish I had been told about drop-in counselling at the front desk. Sarah was awesome, thanks for referring me to such great services!! 😊

Sarah was so great- very open and kind.

Very supportive and understanding and reassuring.

You were great!

She was lovely. No complaints at all <3

Bethany was amazing and made me feel super comfortable sharing my experience, she gave me all options for my growth and usage and was very open to my preferences.

Sarah was great!

Great job! Sarah was awesome.

Bethany was super personable and made me feel that I was in a safe space.

Really friendly and easy to explain issues!! 😊

She was really nice.

It’s good how it is!

Sarah was great and very helpful in navigating a screening for ADHD/learning disabilities, since the service was removed.

I felt like my first time going to counselling services would be scary but I felt at ease and cared for the entire time.