

CCPH 2019

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CHANGING TIDES:
SHIFTING CULTURES AND CREATING SAFE SPACES

Development and
Implementation of a
Comprehensive Peer Support
Program for Medical Students at
the University of Ottawa



Kelsey Mongrain & Dr Kay-Anne Haykal, MD Assistant Dean

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Potential for conflict(s) of interest:

Kelsey Mongrain & Dr Kay-Anne Haykal have not received payment or funding from any organization supporting this program. No products are being discussed in this program.

Objectives

1. Recognize the need for prevention, identification, and treatment of mental illness early in medical training;
2. Identify factors that contribute to poor help-seeking behaviors in medical students;
3. Describe the implementation of a peer support program in medical school including planning, recruitment, training, and evaluation.

Background

- Students enter medical school with relatively good mental health.
- Depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation are most prevalent during medical school and then decline with each career stage.
 - 27.2% screened positive for depression
 - 11.1% reported suicidal ideation
- The increased risk for suicide among physicians may begin during medical school.
- The training process may contribute to the deterioration of mental health in medical trainees.

Background

- Relative to the general population, medical students are less likely to receive appropriate treatment.
 - Only 15.7% of students who screened positive for depression sought treatment
- Students prefer to seek help from their family, friends and peers rather than approaching health professionals or faculty members for support.
- Physicians also prefer to receive support from their colleagues.

Survey

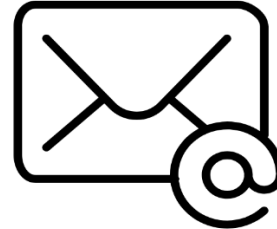
137 MD students year 1 to 3

29% response rate

participated in the

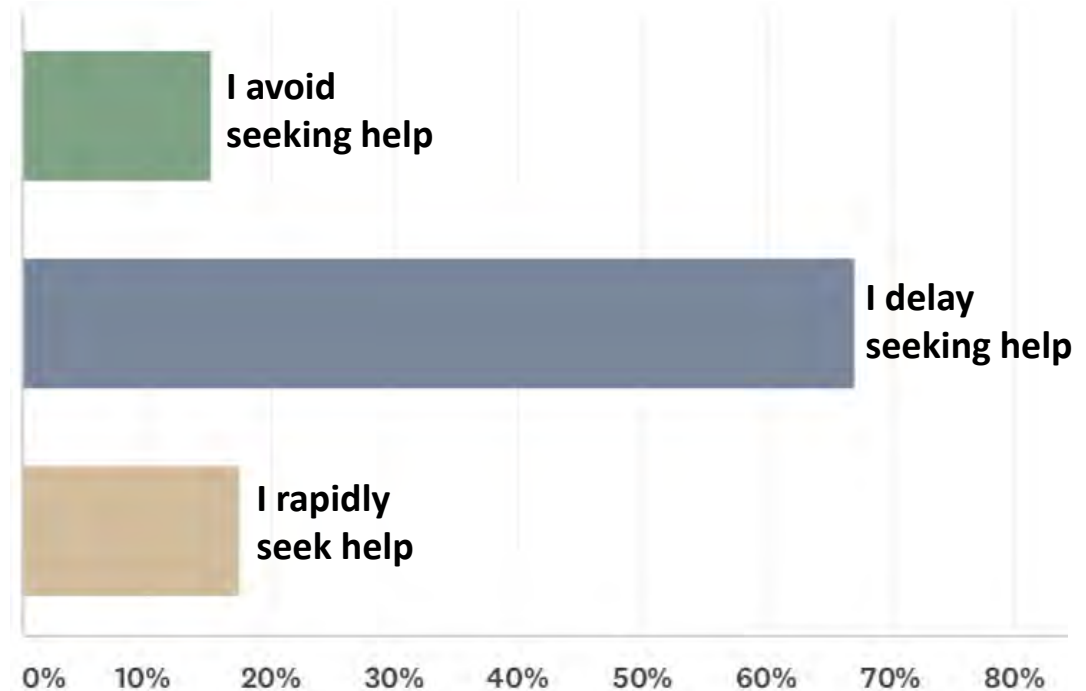
24-QUESTIONS SURVEY

sent via



Seeking Help

Which of the following best describes you when you're experiencing mental health distress?



Barriers

Which of the following is currently a barrier for you to seek help from the services provided by the faculty?

Choose all that apply.



Not thinking one is stressed enough for help



Fearing impact on career progression



Being unable to identify personal distress

Preferred Support

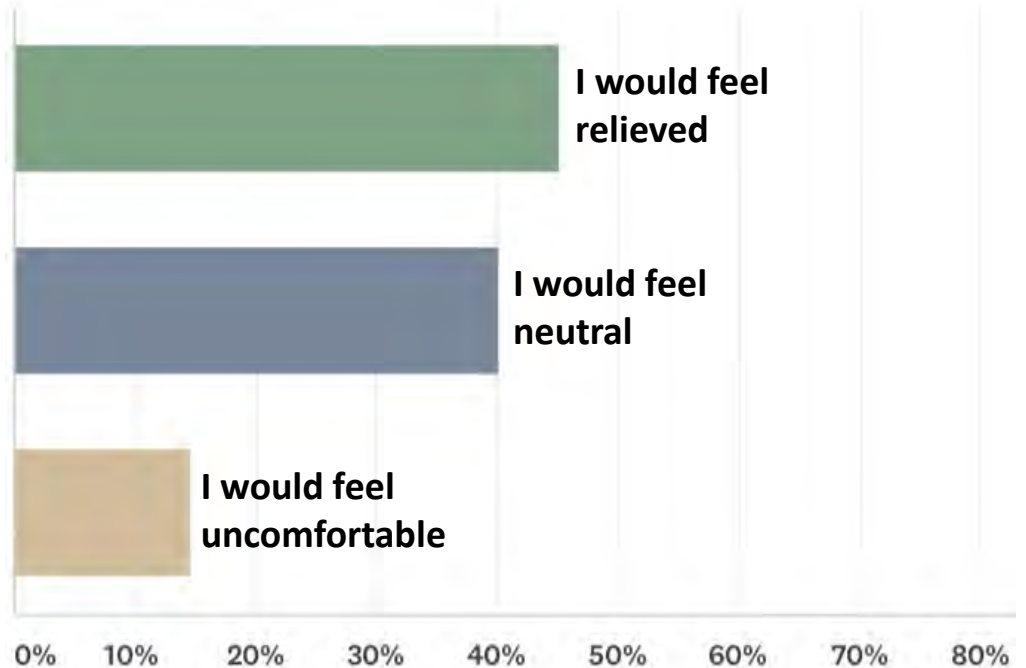
For each of the following categories, please choose the order of who you would go to for support?

Rank each support option from 1 to 4.

Ranking	Psychological	Academic	Relational	Physical
1	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
2	Family	Peer Supporter	Family	Family
3	Peer Supporter	Family Faculty	Peer Supporter	Peer Supporter
4	Faculty Services (ex: SAO)	Services (ex: SAO)	Faculty Services (ex: SAO)	Faculty Services (ex: SAO)

Openness

How would you feel if a Peer Supporter checked-in with you to see how you are doing based on changes in your behaviour?



Opportunity

MEDICAL
SCHOOL



RESIDENCY



STAFF

Evidence

- Currently, the majority of peer-led programs in medical school focus on academic support.
- Peer-led programs can improve help-seeking behaviours in university and high school students.
 - In the extreme situation of suicide, young adults prefer talking with a peer rather than a parent, staff member or a counsellor.
- Peer Support Program in veterinary school:
 - 74% agreed that it creates a supportive atmosphere

Goals

1. Improve help-seeking behaviours;
2. Reduce stigma;
3. Approach peers who are at risk of experiencing distress based on behavioural changes;
4. Provide non-judgemental, accessible and confidential peer support from students who have undergone training;
5. Facilitate students' pathway to proper resources and professional services.



Planning

- Working group of medical students from all years
- In direct collaboration with the *Student Affairs Office*
- Key resources:
 - U of O survey results
 - Key recommendations from Guidelines in High-Risk Organizations
 - Similar programs



Recruiting

Recruitment email



Application Forms



Panel Interviews



Candidate Selection



Training

September 2019

September 2020

Weekend Training:

1. Peer Support 101
2. Communication & Basic Counselling
3. Responsibilities, Limits & Resources
4. Crises & Suicide
5. Common Scenarios & Practice
6. Self-Care

Additional sessions:

- Debrief
- Address concerns
- Topic of choice

Refresher Training:

- For returning Peer Supporters
- Emphasize important concepts

Training



WORKSHOP 3: LIMITS, RESOURCES & RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Presentation

What are your responsibilities? What are the limits to your role?

3.2 Activity

What behavioural changes might you recognize in peers who may be struggling?

3.3 Resources

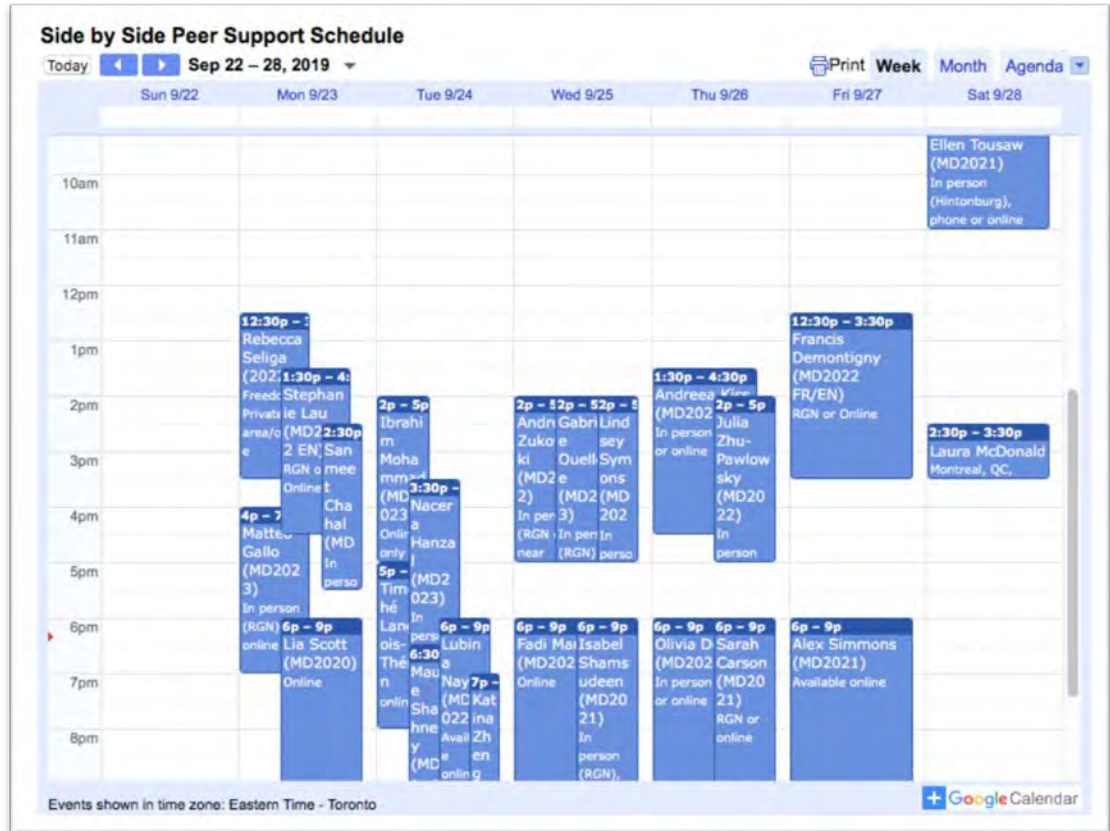
What resources are available to students?

3.4 Integrative Activity

Where should I refer this student?

Tasks

- Available 3 hours weekly
 - On Google Calendar
 - Only during specific blocks for 3rd year students
- Informal and proactive
 - Peer Supporters check in on students
- Knowledge of resources



Wellness

- Schedule restrictions
 - Maximum of 3 hours weekly
 - Cannot exceed 10pm
- Mandatory monthly forms
 - Screened by counsellors
- Access to Student Affairs Office
- Group debriefing sessions
 - Facilitated by counsellors

Monthly Form for Peer Supporters
Formulaire mensuel des pairs aidants

* 1. Name of Peer Supporter / Nom du Pair Aidant

* 2. I am taking good care of myself (e.g. sleep, eating, exercise, social life).
Je prends bien soin de moi (i.e. dormir, manger, activité physique, mener une vie sociale).

Yes / Oui

Sometimes / Parfois

No / Non

If "no" or "sometimes", please elaborate:
Si "non" ou "parfois", veuillez préciser:

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality Agreement
 - For all medical students
 - Signed at beginning of year
- Peer Supporter Contract
 - Exceptions to confidentiality
- Anonymous Database
 - Log each interaction

Peer Support Interaction Database
Interactions de Soutien par les Pairs

* 1. Name of **Peer Supporter** / Nom du **Pair Aidant**

* 2. Class of Peer / Année du Pair

MD2023

MD2022

MD2021

MD2020

* 3. Stream of Peer / Volet du Pair

English Stream

Volet Francophone

Conclusion

- *Side by Side* adopts an integrative, proactive and preventative approach to mental health.
- Careful evaluation of the *Side by Side* pilot program will ensure that students' needs are met.



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