

Welcome!

Knowledge Mobilization Event

Centre for Community Partnerships & Learning, Mohawk College

SSHRC  CRSH



CRSNG
NSERC

Land Acknowledgement

I would like to begin by acknowledging that where I am located, Mohawk College, is situated on the traditional Territories of the Anishinaabeg and the Haudenosaunee, within the lands protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum agreement.

We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the traditional guardians of this land that we call Canada;

That this land is everywhere unceded and that the leadership of each of the partners on the call today acknowledges their relationship to the land upon which they live and work, and to prioritize initiatives that support reconciliation with local indigenous communities;

That the keepers of traditional Indigenous knowledge in every community are worthy of honour, consideration and respect;

That courageous Indigenous leaders, young and old, deserve the ongoing support of all Canadians to create equal opportunities for everyone of this land;

And that reconciliation will be successful when all Canadians have committed to learning about our shared past, listening to Indigenous truths, and pursuing a new and more inclusive, collaborative and respectful path towards a better future.

Introductions

Wellness Connect

Clara I. Tascón, Ph.D.
Social Innovation Research
& Policy Analyst
Community Partnerships
& Learning



Wellness Connect:

Improving At-Risk Student Capabilities
and Well-Being to Access and Persist
in Postsecondary Education
2020 – 2023

Clara I. Tascón, Ph.D.

Agenda

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ What is this research project about?
- ❖ Perspectives
- ❖ What we have done
- ❖ Where are we at the moment?
- ❖ What is next?



What is This Research Project About?

Wellness Connect as a participatory action research:
medium, not an end

For what purpose?



To build a sustainable **support system** for students in the **Access programs** at Mohawk College **in partnership** with health and wellness organizations in the community

Why?



To contribute to **students' capabilities development and well-being** towards **access to postsecondary education and employment pathways.**

What is This Research Project About?

**But,
why?**



Students in the Access programs experience individual challenges and barriers

- Situational
- Institutional
- Dispositional or Motivational

Therefore



There is an urgent need for awareness, accessibility, and availability of **wellness services**



Perspectives

- ❖ **Wellness:** “an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more healthy and successful existence”
- ❖ **Multiple Dimensions of Wellness** (overlap and interdependent)
- ❖ **Capabilities:** Persons’ abilities and freedoms to choose, to do, and to be in pursuing their well-being
- ❖ **Covid-19 Pandemic Impact:** Compounded challenges and barriers



Wellness Peer Mentoring



Sara
Ali



Kimberley
Sanzo



Liam
Flynn



Rashda
Syed

Development of the Wellness Connect

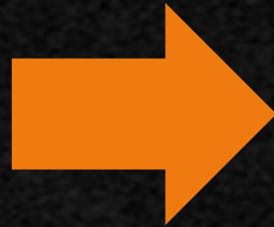


Wellness Support System



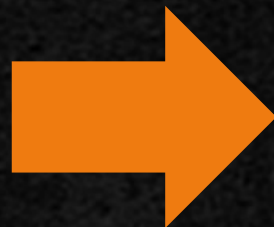
What we have done

- Asking to
- Listening to
(surveys & interviews)



- Students
- Faculty
- Staff members
- Partners (Health and wellness organizations)

- Communicating
- Working in collaboration with



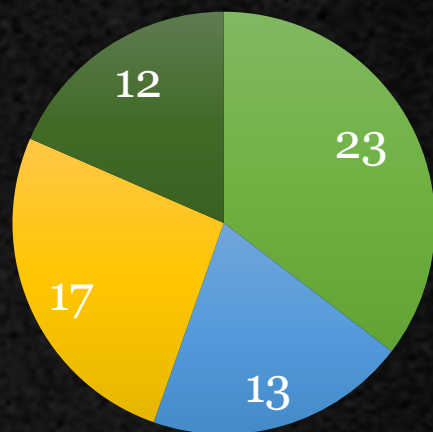
- Wellness Peer-mentors
- Partner representatives
- Staff members



- **Analyzing**
 - Looking at detail
 - Questioning

Participation in the Research

Interviews



Total= 65
Individual
interviews
conducted

- Students Interviews
- Faculty Interviews
- Staff Interviews
- Partners Interviews

Surveys completed according to distribution

Students pre-surveys = 82% (Total distribution = 226)

Students post-surveys = 95% (Total Distribution = 82)

(Students who completed the pre-survey
were invited to complete the post-survey)

Partners pre-surveys = 100%

Partners post-surveys = 50%

(All partners were invited to the pre-and-post surveys)

Wellness Peer-mentors' Monthly Reports (2020 – 2023)

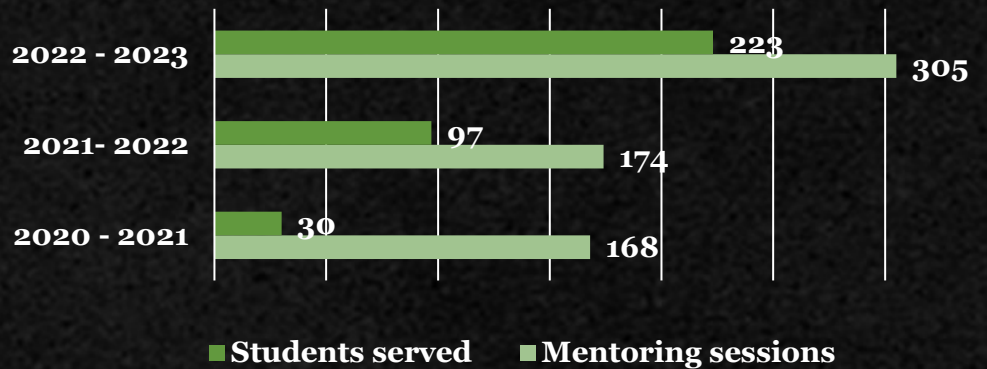


Wellness Peer Mentoring

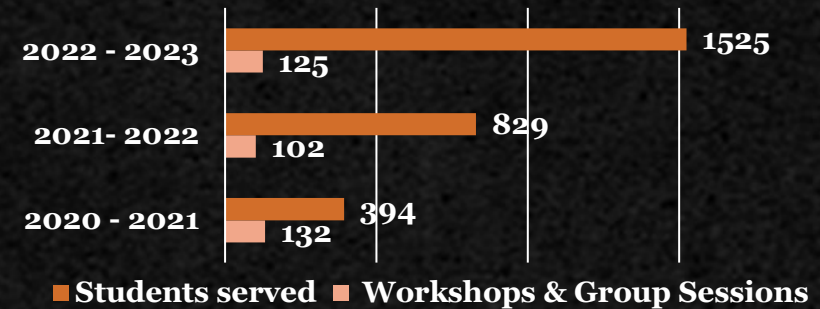
Students' support & relationships of trust

Wellness awareness & capabilities development

One-to-One Mentoring



Workshops & Group Sessions



“I definitely have seen students, the ones that I've sort of directly referred [to the wellness peer-mentor], they have developed strategies, connections to the community. You can see that they're better able to manage their needs, [and] they cope a little bit better” (*Faculty*)

“I attend[ed] any workshop they offer...I [went] because I need to learn more about to improve my life... [Also], I didn't feel alone, so I feel stronger...I was [on] my way to be depressed but then I started to ask and I asked for services and then the services were there for me... I started to [be] strong and to go on in my daily life” (*Student*)



Wellness Connect with Partner Organizations

Wellness Connect

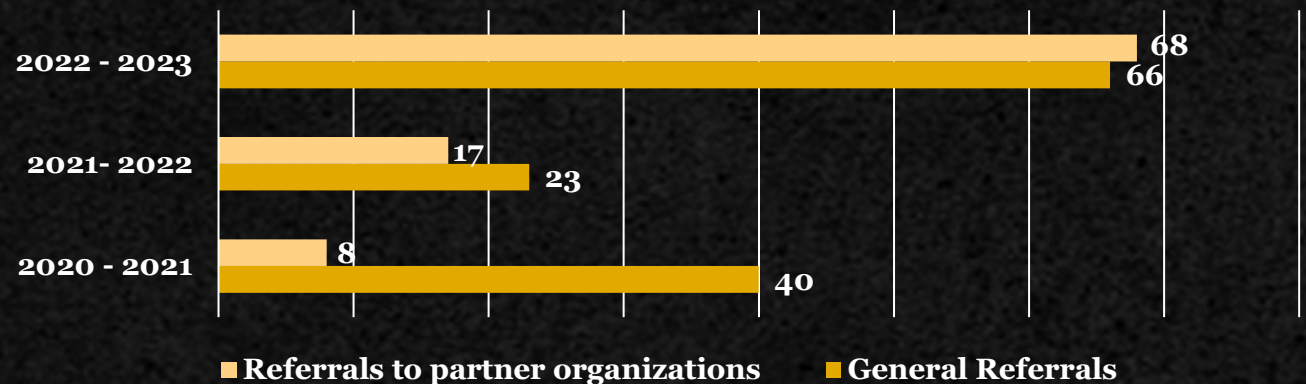


Access to specialized services

Wellness Peer-mentors'
warm referrals

“I grew to trust [this person], and that let me actually use the wellness connection. Because if I didn't trust her, I was not touching [other] services” (Student)

Student Referrals



Partner organizations' contact person

“If you really struggle and you have a lot of life issues, you struggle to complete your work on time, and you show up late to work, [it is not that] you're just depressed...in reality, it's not simple. There's a lot more that goes into it.” (Student)



Students' Compounded Challenges and Barriers Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

- ❖ Physical and mental health impact (i.e., stress, fear, anxiety, depression, anger, grief)
- ❖ Social impact (i.e., isolation)
- ❖ Economic impact (i.e., unemployment)
- ❖ Mental health impact associated with economic impact

“It did have an impact on my wellness, it had an impact on mental health issues. I specifically had to work a lot harder than I was probably capable of” (*Student*)

Partner Organizations' Compounded Challenges and Barriers Due to the COVID-19

“One of the areas that we have always struggled with, but we've seen struggle increase during the pandemic, is our own capacity as a sector to be able to appropriately support individuals coming in for [counselling]” (*Partner*)



Advances and Potential Developments

Students' Wellness Awareness, Capabilities, and Well-being

- Students' capabilities development enhances personal growth, including mindfulness, self-confidence, self-determination, stress and anger management, safe talk, advocacy, coping mechanisms, and understanding of the multiple dimensions of wellness

Essential role of the Wellness Peer-Mentor (one to four WPMs)

- Students' experience of a **trustworthy relationship** with the **wellness peer-mentor** helps to facilitate **access to community partners' services**

Access Programs at Mohawk College in collaboration with **Partner Organizations** in the Community

- Education and health and wellness organizations' **willingness to adjust procedures and continue working on a collaborative research partnership** has contributed to the process of **building a support system** for students in the access programs



What is next?

- ❖ Wellness Peer mentoring continues
- ❖ A Final Report Available at Reports and Research on Mohawk College Website
- ❖ Potential Developments in Collaboration Our Partner organizations
 - Access programs tailored programming in collaboration with the partner organizations

Sarah Bradshaw

Training Specialist, Community Partnerships & Learning



Question & Answer



Wellness Support System



Thank you!

Clara I. Tascón, Ph.D.

Social Innovation Research and Policy Analyst
Community Partnerships & Learning
Mohawk College

clara.tascon@mohawkcollege.ca



Discussion

We want to hear from you!
Please join us to share your ideas
Grab a post-it note and join the conversation



Wellness Connect

Debrief

Key takeaways

Great conversation

Exciting ideas



Wellness Connect



Thank you for attending!

Knowledge Mobilization Event

Centre for Community Partnerships & Learning, Mohawk College

SSHRC  CRSH



CRSNG
NSERC