#YIFeel

Mental Health Awareness for International Students

www.yorkinternational.ca/internationalstudents
WHAT DOES MENTAL HEALTH MEAN TO YOU?
STRESSORS

- Homesickness
- Balancing academic and social spheres
- Family expectations
- Set time spans to complete academic endeavors
- Anxiety regarding fitting in
- Money
THE PURPOSE OF #YIFEEL CAMPAIGN

This campaign, through its various components such as video, online blogs and visuals and a photo series aims to initiate a dialogue about mental health among international students at York University.

It gives students a space to tell their stories, brings to the front what mental health entails for them, while also understanding the cultural differences and therefore the needs of international students when it comes to their mental health.
#YIFeel aims to address four key challenges that international students face: language barriers, issues with adapting to a new environment, dealing with expectations from one’s native country, and coping with family crises abroad

Diana Ning

Former Associate Director, International Student and Scholar Services
Why are we presenting today?

- To initiate and continue dialogue.
- To assist Campus Partners in identifying the specific needs of international students.
- To create awareness about the existing gaps in accessing mental health services.
WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF #YIFEEL?

- Website
- Blogs
- Excalibur Article
- Art Exhibition
- Survey
- Posters
- Videos

Creating a space

Initiating a dialogue

- Art Exhibition
- Website
  - Blog posts
  - Survey
- Posters
- Videos
  - Excalibur Article
What words cannot say: an art exhibition

What words cannot say gives space to everyone to express their experiences, thoughts and feelings about mental health and well-being through any form of art.
SURVEY RESULTS

Struggled with mental and emotional challenges while at YorkU

- Yes: 90%
- No: 10%

Form of Struggle

- Stress: 22%
- Depression: 19%
- Loneliness: 16%
- Feeling sad or down: 19%
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits: 17%
- Other e.g. anxiety: 7%

**40 Respondents**
REASONS FOR NOT USING SERVICES

The current system is more for short term counseling, I'd prefer a system where we could get access to longer term help.

Time management, fear, uncertainty, family members insisting it isn't worth it. I don't have the knowledge about it.

Personally I don't think it lacks variety in services - what it lacks is GOOD service and people who actually care.

In my first year, I was not aware of the mental health services on campus. When I got to know, I always felt they won't be able to understand since it was very personal, I think talking to my friends was the best to get out of this anxiety.

Not helpful, too embarrassed, too personal to discuss with anyone.
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT YOU WISH TO HAVE IMPLEMENTED AT YORK?

Counsellors need to be empathetic to the students. Saying "what you are experiencing is normal" is not enough.

Longer term counseling. Or at least, have it reset each year.

More accessible services, more counsellors, more awareness and information as to what's available.

Group CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) would be immensely helpful and is cost-effective, since many students can receive help at the same time, and the approach works for both depression and anxiety.

More community involved and friendly towards students and especially be able to understand international students' struggle as new students in the new environment.
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“AM I THE ONLY ONE FEELING THIS WAY?”

WE CARE. WE SUPPORT.

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GLOBAL LIAISONS ON MENTAL HEALTH
TOMMY’S STORY
LET’S THINK

How can we lead change?

- On an institutional level
- On a departmental level
- On an individual level