

# Advancing a Mentally Healthy Campus



VARI HALL

November 2014

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# Advancing a Mentally Healthy Campus



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# Mental Health & Wellness Steering Group

The Mental Health & Wellness Steering Group constitutes from the following members:

- **Lesley Beagrie (Co-Chair)**, Master Stong College, Advisor to Dean, Faculty of Health
- **Suzanne Killick (Co-Chair)**, Project Director, Creating a Better Workplace
- **Leah State (Co-Chair)**, Coordinator, Health Education & Promotion, SCLD

- **Susan Murtha**, Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning, Faculty of Health
- **Polly MacFarlane**, Director, Personal Counselling and Learning Skills Services, CDS
- **Noel Badiou**, Director, Centre for Human Rights
- **Robert Castle**, Senior Executive Officer, Vice-President Finance & Administration
- **Susan Goodfellow**, Org. Development Consultant, TAD
- **Lara Ubaldi**, Project Lead, YU Start
- **Abe Salam**, Project Lead, Creating a Better Workplace & Change Management
- **Louise Hartley**, Director, York University Psychology Clinic
- **Karen Traboulay**, Internal Communications Advisor
- **Indie Kaur**, President, Active Minds at York
- **Frank Clarke**, Director, Communications & Planning, Faculty of Health
- **Wendy Zhao**, Chair, YUGSA
- **Maria Liegghio**, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Faculty of LA&PS
- **Hamoudi Hneinou**, President YFS
- **Mora Campbell**, Faculty Member FES, Equity Committee YUFA

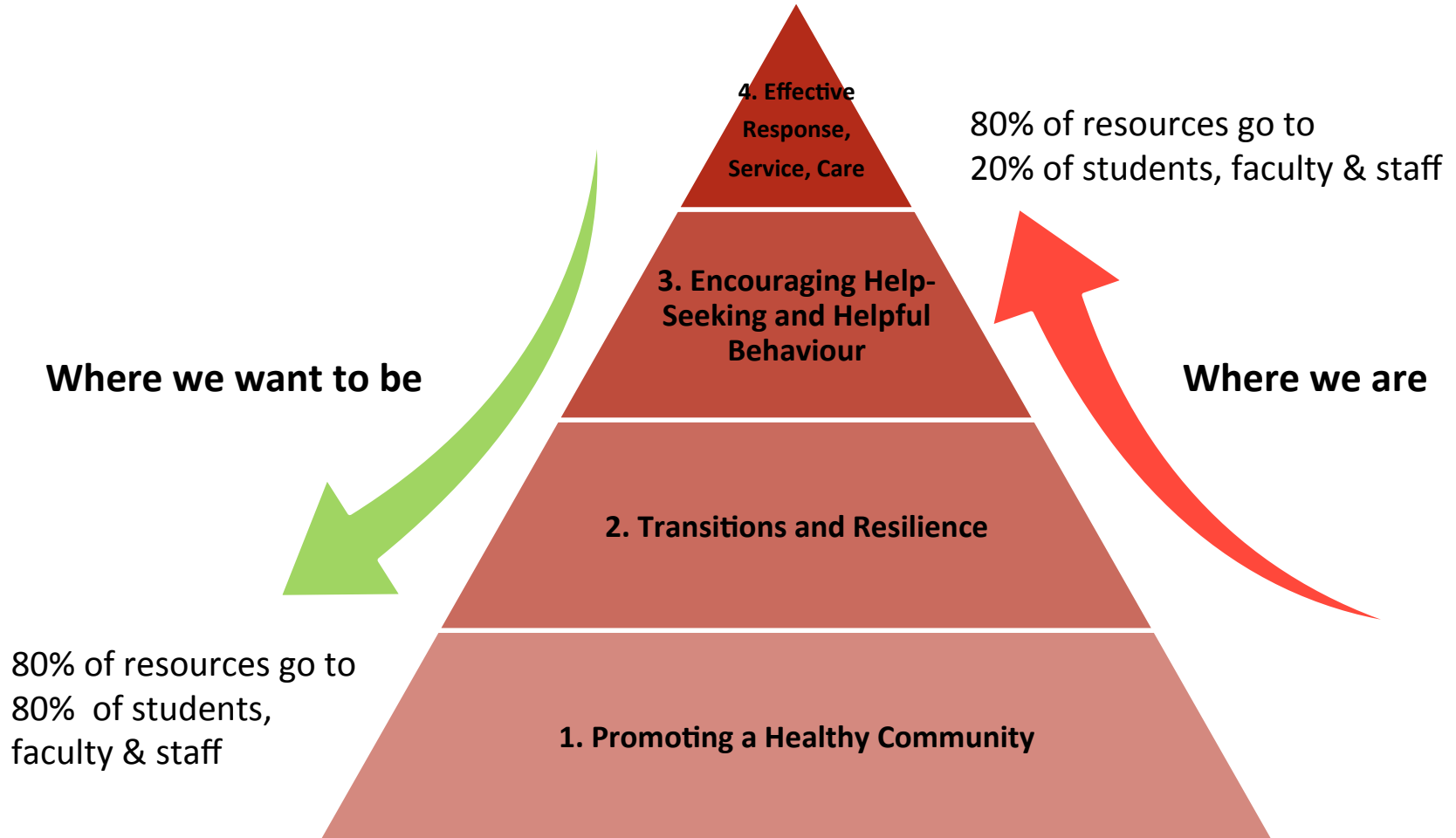
# Background Context

Why mental health is important:

1. Wellness is a pre-condition for learning and working. As such, York has an **institutional responsibility** to promote a mentally healthy campus community
2. Physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, mental, cultural and environmental health and learning are **interdependent**
3. We must move beyond an individual physical illness approach to a **holistic and integrated** campus health approach
4. The **three most common factors** identified by students as affecting their academic performance were stress (37.7%), sleep difficulties (26.3%), and anxiety (25.8%). 9% (York) seriously considered suicide\*
5. The **cost implication** of disability on York University is \$3.2 million in annual LTD premiums, \$11.3 million in LTD reserves and \$1.3 million in WSIB premiums

\* Source: NCHA-II Exec Summary Web Spring 2009 York University, page 13-14.

# Background Context



Source: Queen's University. (2012). *Towards a Mental Health Strategy for Queen's*.  
Pyramidal Approach to Mental Health.



# Discovery Phase: Core Themes

The core themes expressed by participants to advance mental health were:

1. Creating a stronger sense of community belonging
2. Enhancing access, awareness, promotion and coordination of existing mental health services and wellness strategies
3. Personalized supports that include professional development, program advisory and counselling services; and improved access to experts in mental health
4. An integrated strategy that includes risk identification, timely response and follow-up by mental health professionals

# Discovery Phase: Challenges

Top 5 mental health stressors that cross-cut all groups were:

- Loneliness, isolation and feelings of not belonging
- Workload and academic career demands
- Lack of mental health awareness and support services
- Major concerns around physical and emotional well-being
- Lack of acknowledgement of mental health issues

*"As a university, do not know why we are here - what business are we in?"*

*"Mental health is not something that you see, its something that you feel. A mentally healthy campus feels like home"*

*"I often think nobody cares about me. Everyone wants me to care about things, or something, but nobody cares about me"*

*"When I went to my colleagues to try to explain my condition, they looked at me funny and they are afraid - they do not know"*

*"I eat at my desk because there really isn't anywhere else to go"*

# Strategic Priorities 2013 - 2018

1. Ensure leaders demonstrate institutional commitment through raising awareness and promoting a mentally healthy campus
2. Support and continually assess our systems to ensure they foster academic success and better workplace within a diversified community
3. Establish institutional policies and procedures that respond to existing and emerging community needs
4. Communicate and enhance institutional capacity to support mentally healthy campus
5. Reinforce existing and develop new strategic partnerships to collaborate on a coordinated response to a mentally healthy campus



# Accomplishments 2013 - 14

1. Met with senior administration and union executives to build buy in for the development and implementation of a mental health strategy.
2. Highlighted President's message on mental health through digital and print media
3. Hosted multiple opportunities to create pan university wide awareness at the Let's Talk Mental Health Day and throughout the month of February
4. Reached out to multiple on and off campus resources to learn more about their services
5. Documented all services and posted on the mental health website, and a brochure
6. Created an inventory and database of resources for analysis and continuous assessment
7. Invited resources to participate in Let's Talk Information Fair and Information Fair as part of York Region School Board event
8. Highlighted resources on YouTube posted on the website

# Accomplishments 2013 - 14

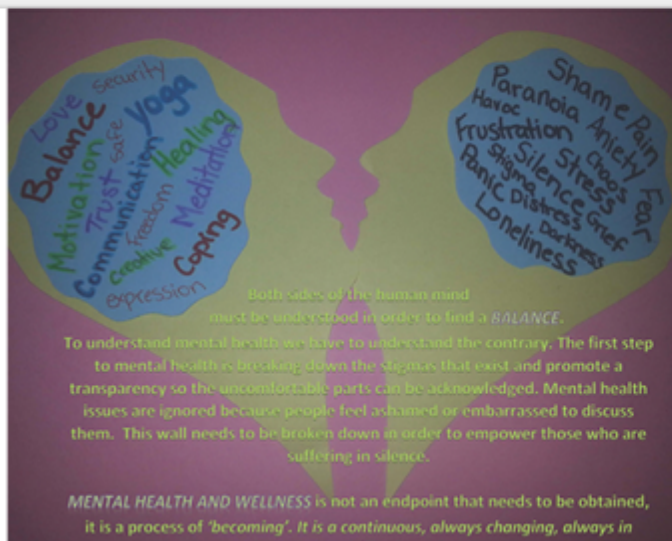
1. Draft framework has been developed by a sub-group of Steering that illustrates current policies and provides an easy reference guide
2. Communications sub-group provided focused and effective multi-media communication actions in support of events and initiatives through 2013 – 14
3. Developed increased awareness of York's commitment to a mentally healthy campus
4. Launched York's Mental Health & Wellness website to provide information and support with a list of resources on and off campus ([yorku.ca/mentalhealth](http://yorku.ca/mentalhealth))
5. Held Mental Health Conferences for Peer Leaders and the York Community with a focus on building capacity, raising awareness, sharing needs, and strengths

# Accomplishments 2013 - 14

1. Trained selected staff to deliver Safetalk and ASIST. Trained over 600+ community members in Safetalk. Over 175 faculty/staff completed MentalHealth EDU
2. Held a month long event to extend focus on mental health awareness beyond the York U Let's Talk Day event.
3. Outreach to on and off campus resources set the foundation for partnership
4. Continued relationship with the Mental Health Collaborative in York Region
5. Collaborative event with York Region School Board – Maple High School
6. Invited Good2Talk Coordinator to present at Let's Talk Day

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York University's Mental Health and Wellness committee aims to promote a healthy, inclusive and supportive environment that fosters mental health and wellbeing among members of the York community. The initiative was developed on the premise that wellness is a necessary pre-condition to learning and working, and that physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, mental, and cultural and environmental health and learning are interdependent. Through a variety of education, training and awareness events, York University's Mental Health and Wellness committee strives to promote a more holistic, and integrated approach to campus health that supports academic excellence, employee satisfaction and productivity, as well as the overall success of all York community members.

# Mental Health and Wellness at York

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## Need Help Right Now?

► **In case of crisis or emergency:**

▼ **Need to talk to someone?**

Open 24 hours a day seven days a week if you need to talk to someone.

- **Good 2 Talk (for post-secondary students)**  
1-866-925-5454
- **Toronto Distress Centres**  
416-408-4357 or 408-HELP  
\*hold times may be greater than 15 minutes
- **Saint Elizabeth Community Crisis Response Program**  
416-498-0043

### **Multilingual Distress Lines**

If you need to talk to someone in a language other than English. Open Monday to Friday, 10 am – 10 pm.  
Offered through Spectra Community Support Services (<http://www.spectrasupport.org/call-now.html>)

- Mandarin & Cantonese: 416-920-0497
- Hindi, Urdu & Punjabi: 905-459-7777 ext. 2
- Spanish: 905-459-7777 ext. 3
- Portuguese: 905-459-7777 ext. 4