

Achieving Well-being Together

Student Counselling, Health & Well-being
Annual Report 2022-2023

YORK 



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Introduction
- 09 Well-being
- 14 Health Services, Education & Promotion
- 24 Counselling
- 27 Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Students
- 29 On-campus & Off-campus Collaborations
- 36 Messages from Students



INTRODUCTION

Message from Executive Director

As we approach the culmination of another remarkable year, I am honored and delighted to present the Annual Report for 2022/2023. Throughout the past year, we faced challenges that tested our resolve. Yet, in the face of adversity, our team demonstrated remarkable strength, adaptability and an unwavering commitment in our service to students. This report serves as a testament to the collective efforts, dedication and resilience that define Student Counselling, Health & Well-being (SCHW).

Some of the key highlights of this year include the establishment of a core team and progress on the implementation of the Sanctuary Model, securing a vendor for the design of the Virtual Portal, the introduction of a new pilot project and partnership with Athletics & Recreation, a significant increase in presentations and workshops to students and campus partners as well as completing a draft of the Well-being Strategy. These initiatives not only showcased our ability to innovate but also underscored the meaningful difference we make in the lives of those we serve. The dedication of our staff, work/study students and nursing and counselling practicum students has been pivotal in turning challenges into opportunities for growth and positive change. As we celebrate our achievements, it is equally important to acknowledge the continued support of our internal and external partners. Their trust and collaboration have been instrumental in our success, and we look forward to deepening these relationships in the coming year.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each member of SCHW for your unwavering commitment, passion and hard work. Our achievements reflect your collective efforts, and I am truly privileged to lead such an exceptional team. Thank you for your continued dedication, and I look forward to another year of making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,



Lori Walls, PhD C. Psych
Executive Director, Student Counselling, Health & Well-being

Our Mission

Student Counselling, Health & Well-being (SCHW) is a student service department within the Division of Students at York University. SCHW strives to provide a range of health and well-being services that foster academic success, student development and an engaged community.

Our primary aim is to support students in realizing and developing their personal potential and manage the demands of university life.

Contact information

N110 Bennett Centre for Student Services

99 Ian Macdonald Boulevard Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

T: 416-736-5297

E: schw@yorku.ca

Introduction



Sanctuary

Alignment with the UAP:

- Living Well Together

Alignment with the DOS Strategic Plan:

- Invest in our People
- Reinforce our Foundation

The Sanctuary Model represents a trauma-informed practice that considers the impact of individual and organizational trauma and recommends strategies to inspire transformation within an organization.

A needs assessment of SCHW was conducted by the Sanctuary Institute in 2022 and laid the groundwork for implementing Sanctuary in 2023.

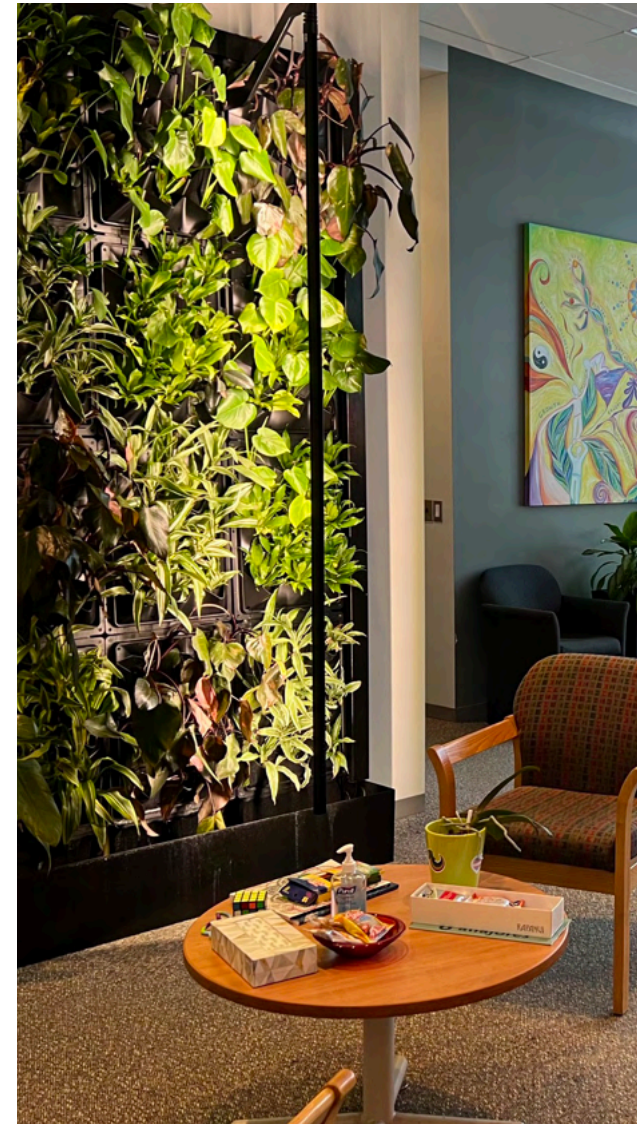


Sanctuary

The past year was focused on building a core team of staff who would become knowledgeable about the Sanctuary Model and introduce others to the vast undertaking of Sanctuary. Comprised of staff from diverse areas and roles in SCHW, the core team was formed in March and announced at a departmental event in April. Most of the core team's early tasks centered on training and learning the Sanctuary Model and engaging the larger SCHW community with implementation.

This multi-year implementation process, and eventual certification in Sanctuary, is one that requires adaptation, planning, practice and evaluation. The model is rooted in four pillars:

- 1** A theoretical basis in trauma theory that provides a lens for understanding behaviour.
- 2** A philosophy for creating safe environments through community adherence to Seven Commitments.
- 3** The trauma-responsive problem-solving framework represented by the acronym S.E.L.F., which stands for the four categories Safety, Emotions, Loss and Future.
- 4** A set of practical tools, known as the Sanctuary Toolkit



Team Building

As SCHW staff continued to work under the hybrid model, team building events provided a valuable opportunity for staff and students to reconnect and foster teamwork. The purpose of the team building events was to strengthen cohesion within the department. Below is a snapshot of the SCHW team building events:

Gratitude

February 2023

A time to practice gratitude and share uplifting stories with colleagues through engaging activities.

Sanctuary Kick Off & Team Building Activities

April 2023

This day was all about fun, competitive and challenging team exercises. SCHW also recognized the significant contributions made by our practicum students and work/study students during the past academic year. In addition, the Sanctuary Core Team was announced and introduced to the department.

Welcome New School Year

August 2023

Before the new academic year was about to unfold, the SCHW team welcomed new staff and students and bid farewell to a retiring colleague.

Year-End Wrap-Up

December 2023

A time to reflect, a time to celebrate. Staff and students came together to strengthen their bond through team games. We tested their knowledge and understanding about Sanctuary and York in trivia and reflected on the past year while setting resolutions for the new one.



Physical Space

Transforming the physical space by updating the layout, functionality and aesthetics all reaffirm SCHW's commitment to creating safe, welcoming and accessible spaces for students at the Keele and Glendon campuses. Whether students are looking for counselling services, a quiet space to work and decompress or a snack to boost their energy, we welcome them to enjoy the space.

Keele:

The following examples illustrate some of the ways in which SCHW enhanced the space at the Keele campus:



This year highlighted the pervasive issue of food insecurity among the York student community and the need to actively work to address it. In March 2023, SCHW installed a refrigerator in the waiting area of the office offering free snacks and drinks to students who may be facing food challenges.



In August 2023, SCHW welcomed the addition of another hallway mural designed by Toronto artist Patrick Lightheart.



In November 2023, New Earth Solutions installed a biofilter living wall in the waiting area. The addition of plants improves air quality and enhances the space with natural beauty.

Transforming Spaces

Glendon:

In August 2023, SCHW's counselling centre relocated from the Glendon Manor to the Student Success Centre, York Hall (YH) B108 at Glendon. The Student Success Centre acts as a central intake point for student services such as SCHW, Student Accessibility Services, International Student Support and Student Life.



Virtual Portal Project:

SCHW recognizes that the online environment has become an integral platform for students navigating web-based resources.

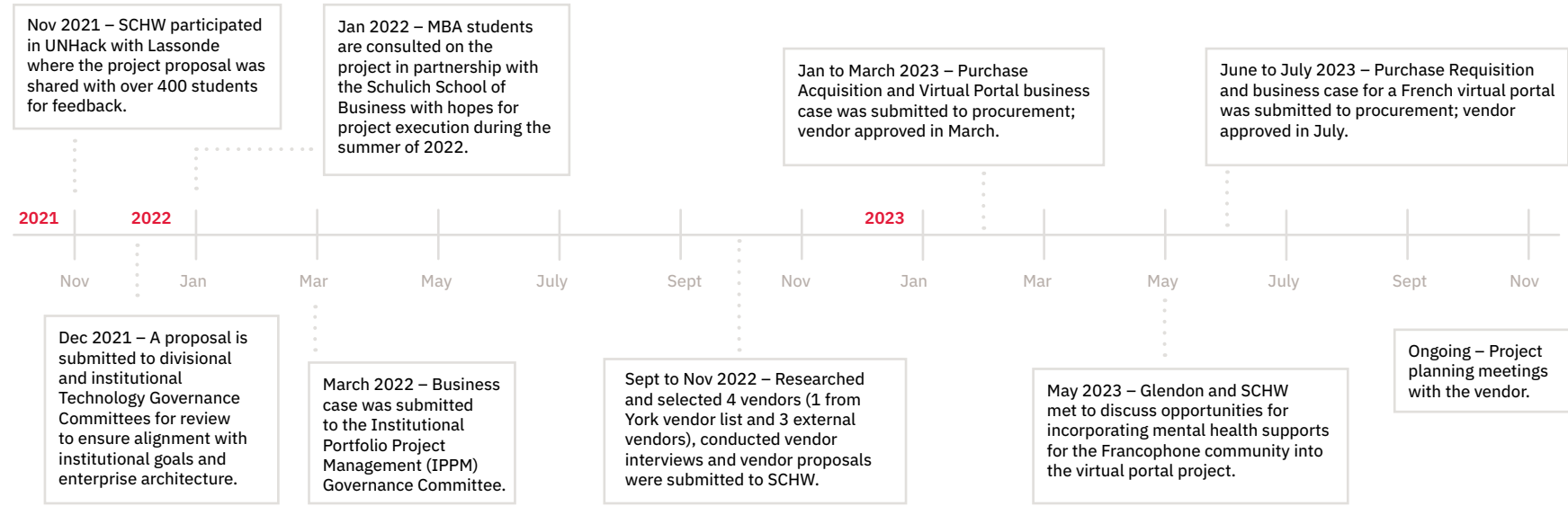
The virtual portal project aims to create a bilingual, immersive and engaging virtual platform offering access to mental health and well-being information, resources and services. Students will have access to a wealth of resources in English and French.

Alignment with the UAP:

- Service Excellence
- Living Well Together
- 21st Learning

Alignment with the DOS Strategic Plan:

- Impact the Student Journey
- Create our Future



Alignment with the UAP:

- Living Well Together

Alignment with the DOS Strategic Plan:

- Invest in our People
- Reinforce our Foundation
- Impact the Student Journey
- Create our Future



WELL-BEING



The Well-being Strategy promotes a holistic approach to health and well-being across York University. Creating environments where members can thrive is key to the overall success of the York community. Through education, training and support programs, the Well-being Strategy strives to promote a more holistic and integrated approach to campus health that supports academic excellence, and staff satisfaction and productivity.

The initial engagement sessions were held from **November 2022 to January 2023** to provide opportunities for students, staff, faculty and instructors to share their feedback and vision for well-being on campus. With the responses collected, the Well-being Strategy team drafted a Well-being Strategy.

The Well-being Strategy draft was finalized in **fall 2023** and the Well-being Strategy team came back to the community for final engagement sessions to confirm the direction. These sessions provided the opportunity for students, staff, faculty and instructors to share their feedback on the current draft that is anticipated to launch in **2024**. Ensuring the voices of the York community are represented in this important Strategy brings York closer to becoming a signatory on the Okanagan Charter.

Student and staff, faculty, and instructor engagement sessions were held throughout **October 2023 to November 2023**.

33 engagement sessions were held in 2023.

Well-being Weeks

Well-being

York launched a new Well-being Weeks Campaign. Well-being Week occurs once per semester, during which we invite members of the York community to join us throughout the week for events and activities that run virtually and in-person. These include on-campus support service recommendations, skill-building seminars, self-help resources, creative self-care activities, giveaways and more. These events aim to increase discussions and create more visibility on well-being on York's campuses. Events offered across campus and virtually are available to students, staff and faculty.

This year's Well-being Weeks featured an exciting line-up of events presented by on- campus and off- campus partners.

- ✦ **Winter Well-being Week (January 16 to February 1 2023) = 28 Events**
- ✦ **Fall Well-being Week (October 2 to 6, 2023) = 17 Events**

Virtual highlights:

- Well-being and YU Podcast: Mindful Moments
- Navigating Mental Wellness: Plan for Success with keep.meSAFE
- Art of Managing Conflict presented by Health, Safety and Employee Well-being
- Self-care through Art presented by the Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (The Centre)
- Coping with Stress as a Graduate Student presented by Graduate Student Wellness Services

In-person highlights:

- Dog Therapy presented by the Faculty of Health, Calumet and Stong Colleges
- Nutrition 101 for International Students presented by York International and Athletics & Recreation
- Glendon Mental Health Services and Supports Tabling
- Make your own Care Package presented by Student Community and Leadership Development

EAB Belongingness Workshop

A total of 40 attendees including various student services leaders, faculty members and communications teams' members attended a workshop in June in partnership with EAB as part of their Mental Health Consortium. The virtual session, "Addressing Student Loneliness," educated campus stakeholders on how they could use current findings to enhance connection on York's campuses.

SAVY Integration

The Well-being Team successfully completed the integration of SAVY on the Well-being website's student-facing resources page, connecting students to important resources. Over the past year, our team collaborated with the SAVY team to compile and review the well-being content currently accessible through SAVY, including some of the workflows used to share these resources with students in response to queries. As a result, the list of available resources in SAVY has significantly expanded.

Well-being



Conference Presentations

Well-being

Canadian Council of Deans of Science – Annual Meeting May 2023

The Assistant Director of Well-being, along with the other Well-being Strategy Co-Chairs, presented on Designing Faculty-Level Community Supports for Employee and Student Well-being.

Well-being and YU Podcast

The [Well-being and YU Podcast](#) was launched in January 2023. This podcast, created by students, is for the York community and beyond. The mission is to cultivate connections with the audience through a podcast that engages in open discussion on health and well-being topics. Well-being and YU is a testament to SCHW's continued commitment to promoting a supportive environment, fostering holistic discussions on well-being and driving the Well-being Strategy forward.

338 individual downloads.



Alignment with the UAP:

- From Access to Success
- Knowledge for the Future
- Working in Partnership
- Living Well Together

Alignment with the DOS Strategic Plan:

- Invest in our People
- Reinforce our Foundation
- Impact the Student Journey
- Create our Future



**HEALTH SERVICES,
EDUCATION & PROMOTION**

Health Services is comprised of two integral parts: Student Health, and Health Education & Promotion. Health Services plays an important role in supporting students by teaching them how to develop proactive approaches to maintaining positive health and well-being.

The Student Health approach aims to improve the health of York students by reducing health inequalities and inequities, and developing sustainable integrated strategies. Our Public Health Nurses are committed to providing health resources and education programs as well as advocating for the needs of York students.

Health Education & Promotion focuses on providing health and well-being support through education, empowerment and access, enabling students to make well-informed and sustainable decisions for their health. Our Health Promotion Educator and Peer Health Educators engage with the York community and offer a range of services including training programs, workshops, engagement activities and outreach opportunities.



Health Services, Education & Promotion Workshops and Engagement Activities

Health Services, Education & Promotion

Mental Health

Navigation Series

Nutrition

Substance Use

Sleep & Physical Health

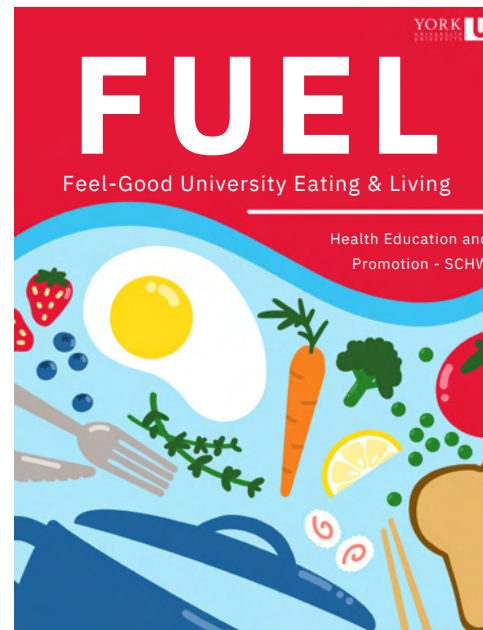
Sexual Health

Collaborative Events

Self-Care and Self-Compassion

Fuel Cookbook

One of our Peer Health Educators, with the support of the Assistant Director of Health Services, Education & Promotion and other Peer Health Educators, wrote this cookbook exclusively for York University students. FUEL - Feel-Good University Eating and Living highlights the themes of accessibility, affordability, approachability, health and well-being and balance to align with the priorities of university students.

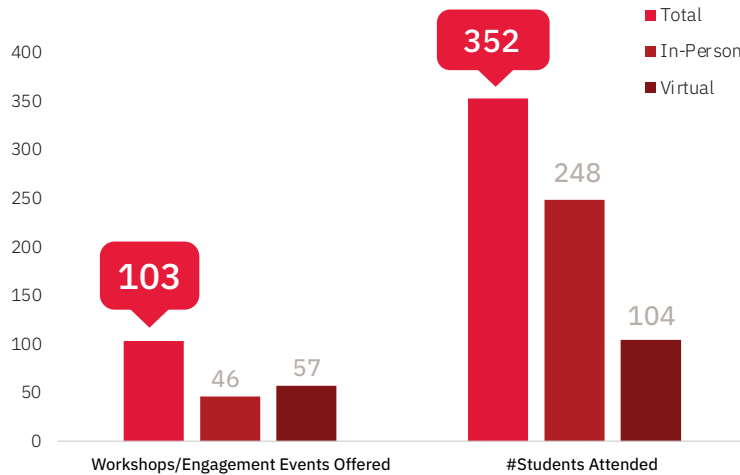


[YFile]

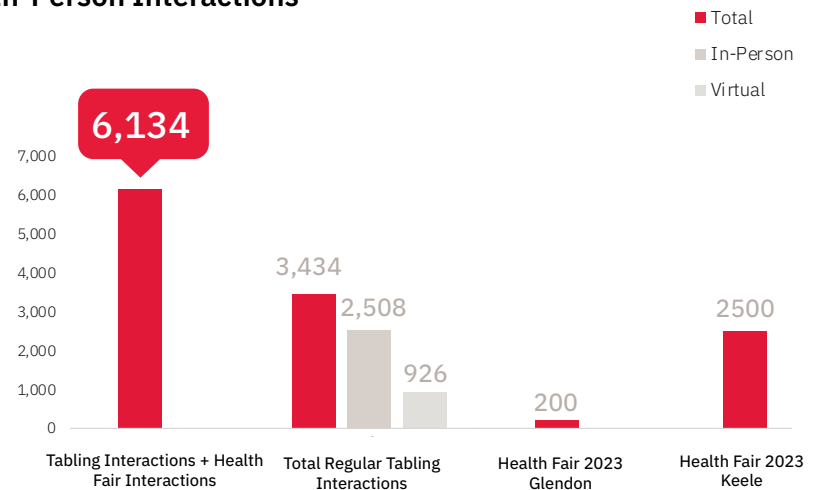
[Student-led cookbook provides York community with accessible recipe options](#)

Health Services, Education & Promotion Analytics – January to December 2023

Workshop/Engagement Events



In-Person Interactions



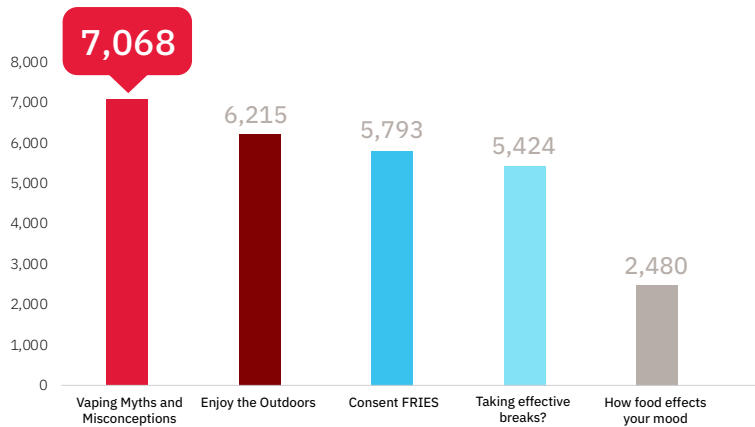
Top 5 Events/Workshops

- Painting
- Yoga
- Knitting
- Dance Fitness
- Taking Effective Breaks

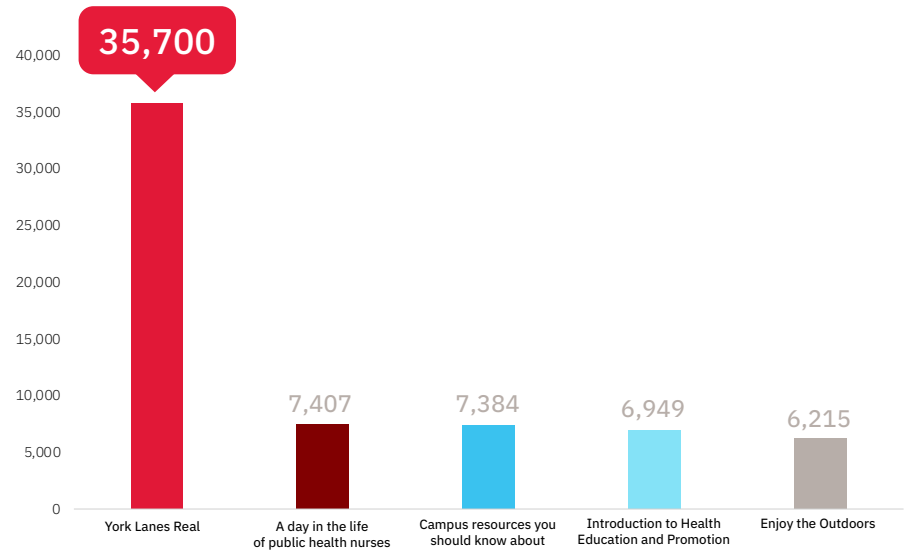


Social Media Engagement

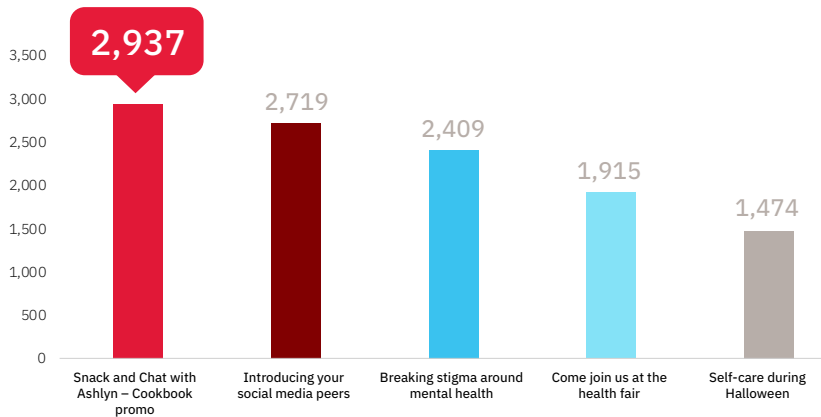
Top 5 Posts by Reach



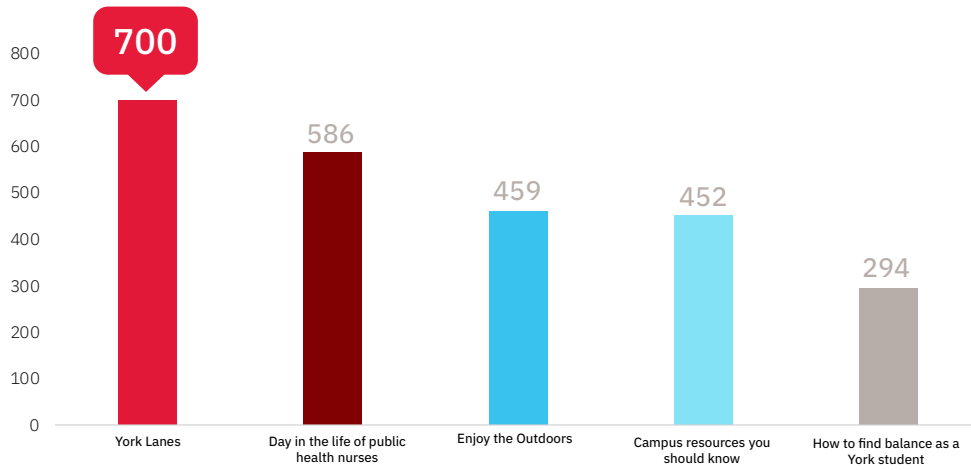
Top 5 Reels by Reach



Top 5 Stories by Reach

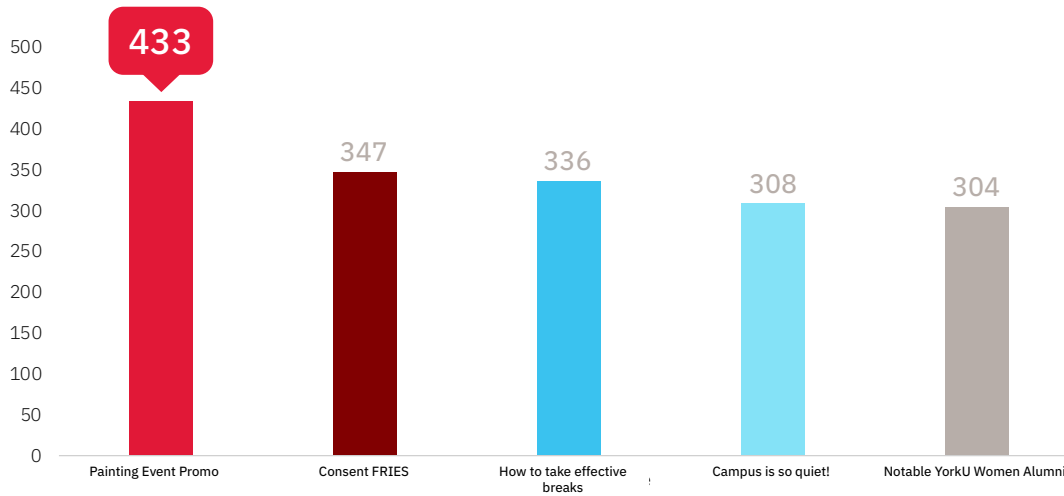


Top 5 Reels by Likes



Health Services, Education & Promotion

Top 5 Posts by Likes



Health Fair

Our Health Services, Education and Promotion team hosted a Health Fair for the York community in the Fall of 2023. The team partnered with 22 internal and external stakeholders in designing a health fair that met the social determinants of health in our community. The goal was to provide York with a variety of health education information and resources, promote health and well-being and provide screening services for the community. We also aimed to offer networking opportunities for students to interact with health organizations and agencies in the community.

Students who visited the Health Fair had the opportunity to win raffle prizes which were generously donated by our community partners.

Health Fair Partners

Internal (YorkU) Partners

ACMAPS
Athletics & Recreation
Community Safety
Food Services & Dietician
Glendon Athletic Club
HSEWB
Learning Skills
SCLD
Sustainability
The Centre
York International
YUCDC

External Partners

Breaking Free
Canadian Blood Services
Toronto Community Crisis
(Canadian Mental Health Association)
Keep.meSAFE
Planned Parenthood Toronto
RBC On Campus
Regenesis
Sexfluent (CANFAR)
Toronto Fire (Public Education Officers and Fire Trucks)
Virtual Health Clinic

Health Services, Education & Promotion



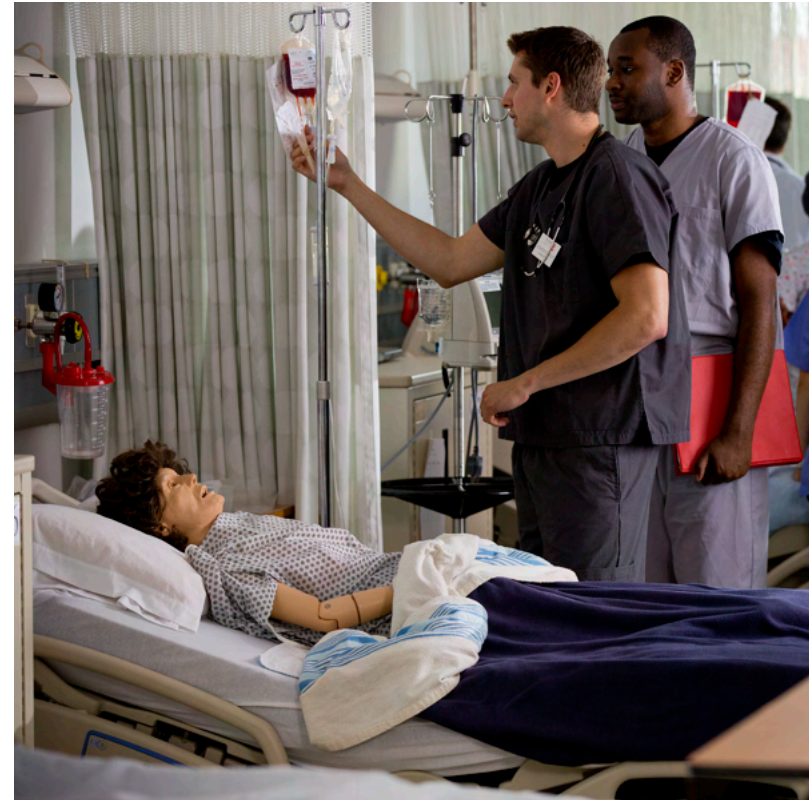
Nursing Students & Student Health Blog Posts

Health Services, Education & Promotion

The Assistant Director of Health Services, Education & Promotion and the Public Health Nurses provided preceptorship to five undergraduate nursing students and one graduate nurse practitioner student from the York University School of Nursing. By gaining firsthand experience in public health nursing, the nursing students learned how to take a community-focused approach to improving health outcomes. Students were able to apply their knowledge to real life situations and consolidate their clinical abilities by learning about cold chain management, vaccine program development and the social determinants of health.

Students also practiced their community health assessment and education skills by writing [blog posts](#) for YUBlog on health topics geared towards the student population. These include:

- [How to stay healthy during flu season](#)
- [Navigating exam anxiety and stress: getting support on- and off-campus](#)
- [Still struggling with acne? It's okay, you're not the only one](#)
- [Your guide to breast cancer awareness: Important tips and what to look out for](#)



Community Health Plan

Health Services, Education & Promotion

In December 2022, a transitional four-phase community health model was approved by the President and Vice-Presidents Committee (PVP). This marked a shift from York University's previous acute COVID-19 approach, transitioning towards a broader public health strategy, the York Community Health Plan (YCHP). The YCHP takes a proactive stance in responding to communicable disease(s) and emphasizes developing and providing supports, resources, services and policies for public health matters. This includes addressing any emergent high-risk public health concerns, not limited to COVID-19 alone.

Throughout the past year, the co-chairs SCHW and Health, Safety and Employee Well-being (HSEWB) have worked together and spearheaded efforts to:

- Launch a mobile vaccination program operated by York University in partnership with Toronto Public Health
 - The inaugural mobile vaccine clinic was held at the Keele Campus on December 19, 2023.
- Provide harm reduction education and programming
 - Public Health Nurses and Peer Health Educators distributed free harm reduction kits and harm reduction education.

Vaccine Clinic at Central Square- East Bear Pit

1970 Campus Walk, North York, ON M3J 2S5

**Tuesday December 19th,
2023 | 11AM - 2 PM**

**Get your Influenza (Flu)
and COVID-19 vaccines**



YORK
UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY

Community Health Plan

- Provide COVID-19 and general communicable disease community health programming and management where required
 - Public Health Nurses and Peer Health Educators distributed free masks and COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits to the YorkU community.
- Develop a Human Health Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Continually liaise with Toronto Public Health
- Collaborate on community health-related communications
- Develop relevant and responsive website updates

Phase	Timeline	Representative
Phase 1: Hold Steady	Completed March 2023	COVID Steering Committee (CSC)
Phase 2: Wind Down and Handover	Completed April 2023	CSC, HSEWB and SCHW
Phase 3: Reallocation	April - August 2023	HSEWB and SCHW
Phase 4: Forward Planning to New Normal	PVP August 23, 2023	HSWEB and SCHW



Alignment with the UAP:

- From Access to Success
- Working in Partnership
- Living Well Together

Alignment with the DOS Strategic Plan:

- Invest in our People
- Reinforce our Foundation
- Impact the Student Journey
- Create our Future



COUNSELLING

SCHW Counselling offers support to York U students seeking mental health services. Individual counselling is available in two formats, in-person and virtual. The single session walk-in counselling service is intended to provide students timely access to professional clinicians. When students are in short-term counselling, they will work with a counsellor under a short-term therapy model. In addition to individual counselling, SCHW offers support groups and workshops throughout the year.

Individual Counselling

Data collected from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

1916 total number of clients

6761 total number of sessions (virtual sessions: 3892, in-person sessions 2869)

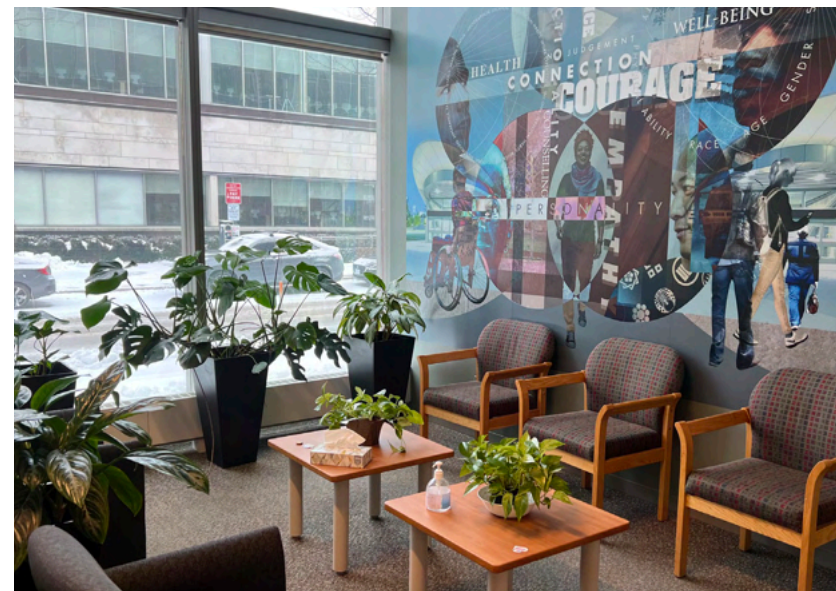
Top Presenting issues:

- 1) Anxiety
- 2) Interpersonal/Relationships
- 3) Academic
- 4) Stress
- 5) Depression

Support Groups

Racialized Students Support Group

The Racialized Students Support Group aims to create a safe and healing space for students who identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (BIPOC) to process and heal from racial trauma. Facilitated by racialized counsellors at SCHW, the group is held once a month.



2SLGBTQIA+ Support Group

Please refer to page 27 for more information.

Counselling Practicum Program

SCHW has a long-standing practicum program that provides teaching and supervision to a diverse group of aspiring clinical practitioners. SCHW provides supervision and practical experience to several practicum students from multiple disciplines (i.e., social work, psychotherapy, psychology) and allows for theoretical learning to be applied in a real life setting. The practicum program begins in September and ends in April of each year. Practicum students are an integral part of the SCHW service provision as they help to provide York students with a wide range of services including walk-in sessions, short-term ongoing therapy and groups. SCHW values and appreciates the work of the practicum students and looks forward to the practicum program each year.

Varsity Athletes Mental Health Support

SCHW partnered with York University's Athletics and Recreation department to support the mental health of student athletes by providing counselling services dedicated to varsity athletes at Tait McKenzie Centre. This pilot program is a testament to the meticulous planning and dedication of the Athletics team, SCHW team and the practicum students.



Counselling



SUPPORTING 2SLGBTQIA+ STUDENTS

SCHW is actively involved in a variety of support groups and events for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community at York University. 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying SCHW counsellors and all staff strive to create a supportive and responsive environment for the 2SLGBTQIA+ student community.

2023 Support Groups

2SLGBTQIA+ Support Group

This biweekly group provides a safe and supportive space for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and SCHW counsellors who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to connect virtually and share stories and resources.

Queer Women's Support Group

This biweekly support group is for women who identify as Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, Non-Binary or Questioning (2SLBTQ). This group is facilitated by Queer Women counsellors.

Gay Men's Support Group

This weekly group provides a safe space where students can find support in the gay and/or queer men community.

2023 Workshops/Partnerships

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Students

Creating your Gender Journey: Using Art & Story to Unpack Trans Experiences – February & March 2023

Facilitated by Jay Jonah, a trans-masculine social worker who specializes in supporting trans and non-binary folx, this workshop explored gender through interactive art and writing-based activities.

York University Pride 2023 Opening Ceremony – June 2023

Organized by the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion (CHREI) in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Events and Student Community & Leadership Development, SCHW participated in the event by tabling a booth and sharing promotional materials and resources.

SexGen Trans Day of Remembrance – November 2023

November marked Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR). SexGen's TDOR Rest, Regenerate, Resist event offered a space for the Trans community to mourn, engage with community and remember those who were lost to anti-Trans violence. The event featured a variety of stations including button making, art, bracelet making, Lego building and bean bag chairs. A SCHW counsellor was available on site to provide support to members of the community.

Trans Connection: Coming Together in Uncertain Times – November 2023

In partnership with The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, this art and discussion-based workshop offered a space for trans, non-binary and gender-questioning students to connect through different topics. Discussion topics included community building, self-care, social and medical transition, advocacy and safety in the current political climate.



ON-CAMPUS & OFF-CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

Introduction to Services

SCHW staff offer virtual and in-person presentations throughout the year to faculty, staff and student groups. This presentation provides an overview of the services and resources available at SCHW. Requests can be made by completing the “[Collaboration with SCHW](#)” form found on the SCHW website.

Events

SCHW staff support campus partners and participate in a variety of campus-wide events throughout the year. Examples include:

- Open Doors York
- Campus Services Fair
- Orientation Week
- Pride Opening Ceremony



Workshops

SCHW is dedicated to addressing mental health by offering a diverse range of workshops. Mental health and well-being workshops are tailored to the needs of the campus community and facilitated by SCHW management, counsellors and the Health Services, Education & Promotion team. Examples include:

- Res Life Training
- Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students (ACMAPS)
- Dean's Circle
- Learning Skills
- Student Community & Leadership Development (SC&LD)
Peer Leader Training
- Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)
- Workshops for various student groups
- New staff orientation

On-campus & Off-campus Collaborations



SCHW and York International offer students free, 24/7 access to counselling and mental health supports through [keep.meSAFE](#), a mental wellness student support program. Students can access real-time and appointment-based support via chat and telephone in multiple languages. The program is available online through the keep.meSAFE website and the TELUS Health Student Support app.

Data pulled from the keep.meSAFE Annual Report, January - December 2023.¹

Presenting Issues

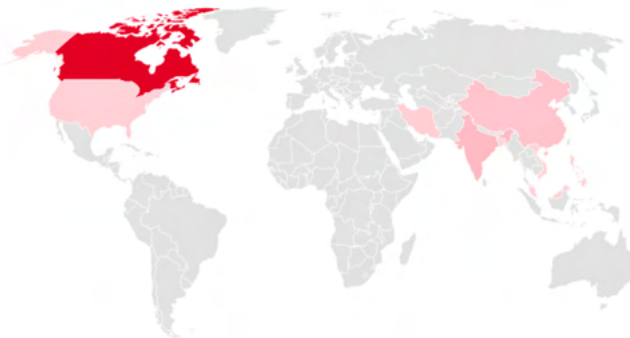
Students can seek support for any school, life, family or work challenges. This section summarizes the top primary presenting issues for which students are seeking support.

26%	Stress – Personal
21%	Anxiety
13%	Depression
7%	Mental Health Condition
4%	Suicidal Riks
3%	Post Trauma
3%	Relationship Breakdown
3%	Relationship/general
3%	Academic Issue

Home Countries

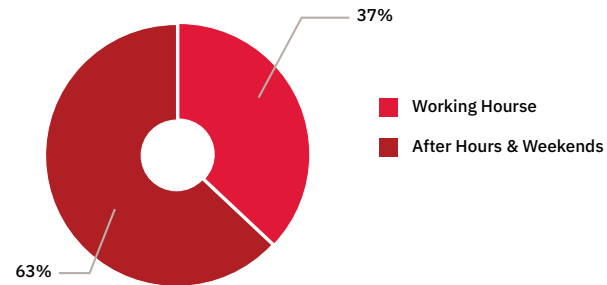
Students from 24 countries were provided clinical support. This section summarizes the top reported home countries by students.

1	Canada	60%
2	China	12%
3	India	7%
4	Iran	4%
5	United State of America	2%
6	South Korea	1%
7	Pakistan	1%
8	United Arab Emirates	1%
9	Nigeria	1%
10	Trinidad and Tabago	1%



Time of Day Access

This section summarizes support during or after working hours (9am to 5pm weekdays) across each year of the program.



1. keep.meSAFE (2023). *keep.meSAFE Annual Report January - December 2023*, York University. keep.meSAFE by guard.me. pp 4-5.

Student Initiative Fund

The Mental Health and Wellness Student Initiative Fund was established to support student groups on campus with developing and executing innovative student-led initiatives that promote mental health and well-being.

After months of planning during the pandemic, two student groups were finally able to bring their visions to life.


Women's Mental Health Talks Magazine – February 2023

Women's Mental Health Talks designed a student-led, mental wellness magazine for peers. The magazine featured student articles related to female empowerment, leadership and well-being.

100 copies were printed and distributed to students.

On-campus & Off-campus Collaborations

Women & Financial Literacy: Why it Matters



Merwa Gheddai

Today, money and power have become synonymous. Money gives you a voice, opportunity, health and overall a better quality of life. Now more than ever, people have greater access to financial resources, products and opportunities. With greater financial knowledge, men and women are better equipped to take control of their lives and plan for their future. Yet, women are at a serious disadvantage.

Historically, women have had many social, legal and cultural obstacles when it came to finances. Overtime and with a lot of effort, women made many strides in financial matters, however, what came out of the historical hurdles (that continue to exist today), is the attitude women hold and the approach they take towards money. Julie Lee Knowlatch, a financial advisor, said it best when explaining the key difference in how women and men approach money:

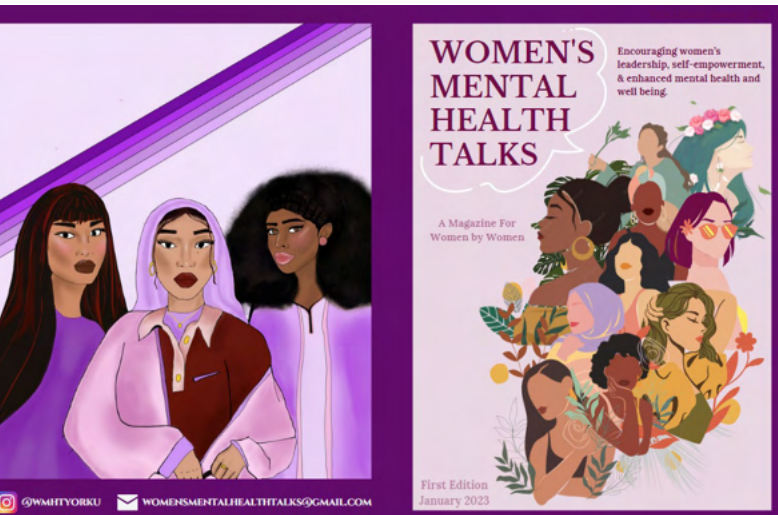
"When people talk about money, they will sometimes use a water analogy. I've noticed that professional men tend to talk about money as a river: Money comes in, money goes out, the level of the river goes up, and the level of the river goes down. There's a sense of gravitation and movement. For women, that water and money analogy tends to be of a pond. Money is static, and there's a set amount of it. It moves in any one direction, it's typically down."

More than ever, women comprise about half of the labor force. Women make up more than half of all college graduates. Women are increasingly the household breadwinners. Women are living longer than men; it has never been more important for women to become financially literate in areas such as investment, negotiation and management in order to make impactful decisions for the present and future. Luckily for us, we live in the age of information and have access to so many resources. Find reputable sources and grow your understanding of finances. Take a course or watch a video meant to know the many incredible women around you. Most of all, do not be afraid to take smart risk and invest in your future.

Why the disparity? From childhood, girls are fed a different narrative about money - directly or indirectly - that is steeped in fear and guilt. Maybe you saw your mom worry every time she spent money or were conditioned to believe that financial matters were meant for

the opposite gender to manage. Regardless, that narrative goes on to shape your life, dramatically and lays a foundation in your understanding of money and financial practices, which of course creates a ripple effect through other choices you make for your life.

Women are not the only victims of financial literacy. In fact, "financial literacy is especially low among certain demographic groups, such as women, minorities, and lower-income or less-educated people." However, what is uniquely a concern for women is that higher education does not necessarily mean higher financial literacy. When it comes to financial knowledge, less than one-third of educated young women could demonstrate understanding of interest rates, inflation, and risk diversification, and more so, half older women couldn't pass a retirement financial literacy quiz. These statistics become even more disturbing when you look at women with little or no education, women of color and women of multiple intersections.



WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH TALKS

Encouraging women's leadership, self-empowerment, & enhanced mental health and well-being.


A Magazine For Women by Women

First Edition
January 2023

IG: @WMTYORKU | EMAIL: WOMENSMENTALHEALTHTALKS@GMAIL.COM

Coping Strategies for Anxiety and Depression

Maricelle Duplak



Coping skills are often deeply personal and will not be effective for every person in the same way. If something doesn't work for you, it just means looking for a strategy that does. Thanks to research, we have evidence of various coping mechanisms and their effectiveness for different struggles we may be going through. This article offers a brief overview of various coping mechanisms with a broad application for anxiety, depression, and similar mental health conditions. The strategies in this article should be viewed as starting points and potential strategies that you can implement rather than hard truths to be followed.

- Physical Activity**

Exercise is a common recommendation for someone newly diagnosed with a depressive disorder. However, finding the motivation to engage in a yoga class or go out for a jog while depressed can be extremely difficult. Studies show that the type or duration of physical activity does not make a difference in the effect on patients' mental health, what mattered was that the activity was done consistently [6]. So, if someone wants to see improvements in their mental health by developing an exercise regimen, they should be encouraged to choose an activity that will be easy and enjoyable enough to do on a regular basis [6]. This is very encouraging for anyone who struggles with finding energy and motivation, as choosing a small activity like stretching before bed can still provide benefits to their mood and well-being.

One particular form of exercise can provide additional benefits to mental health; dance. A study found that tango dance reduced stress levels and feelings of depression to a similar extent as mindfulness meditation [8]. It could also benefit people with attention-deficit disorders or anyone who struggles with the quiet contemplation that mindfulness requires. While further study is required to assess the full benefits of dance as well as the effectiveness of styles other than tango, these preliminary results offer a novel way to combine the benefits of meditation with the benefits of exercise.
- Gardening**

It's no surprise that nature can have positive effects on our mental health. Engaging in gardening activities has proven to have a measurable reduction in stress levels and symptoms of anxiety and depression [9]. The reason for this positive impact is likely to be a combination of factors including the physical activity involved, the contact with nature, and the sense of community fostered by group gardening [9]. While more research needs to be done to determine exactly how gardening benefits our mental health, the research does support gardening as a positive coping skill and anyone can try incorporating it into their life, whether by starting a small garden on your balcony, or even getting a plant or two for your home to care for.

Kits of Happiness – March 2023

The Happiness Plan YU at York University created “Kits of Happiness” to promote self-care and organized a series of activities to raise mental health awareness during the exam period. The stress kits included items such as facemasks, pens, journals and tea bags. Activities included painting, movie night, self-care workshop and social night.

Student Placements

Through placement opportunities, students engage in experiential learning and apply theoretical knowledge in professional settings.

From January to March, SCHW welcomed three placement students from the Health and Society Program in the Department of Social Science. The students focused on community-based research and applied theoretical knowledge in a professional setting.

In the Fall semester, SCHW welcomed five nursing students and one nurse practitioner student who worked closely with the department’s two public health nurses and nurse practitioner to develop student-focused and student-led health programming.

Meditations

Supporting the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students (ACMAPS), York International and the Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, meditation sessions facilitated by an experienced SCHW Registered Psychotherapist aim to help participants de-stress and focus on positivity through different meditation styles.





Survivors of Sexual Violence Support Groups

Together with The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, SCHW co-facilitated support groups for survivors of sexual violence. Students expressed themselves and processed trauma in a supportive and safe environment.

Student Accessibility Services

SCHW has a longstanding partnership with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to provide psychological assessments to students seeking diagnostic clarification in the areas of anxiety, depression and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders (ADHD). The goal of this partnership is to reduce barriers to student success, such as long wait times and high costs for assessment that students routinely encounter in the community. Students referred for service through this partnership are assessed by an SCHW Psychologist/ Psychological Associate, who will discuss the results and recommendations of the assessment report. SCHW psychologists and SAS work closely together to guide the implementation of eligible academic accommodations and support for the students.

58 students have been served through this partnership to date.

Ontario Shores

The partnership between SCHW and Ontario Shores provides access to Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) Program for York students. Individuals aged 18+ with depression and anxiety-related conditions can access cognitive behaviour therapy-based services within a stepped care model through the OSP program. For more information about the program, please visit [Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program | Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences](#).

Campus Committees

SCHW staff participate in various committees and are actively engaged in important conversations across the organization. These committees serve as forums where employees collaborate to share diverse perspectives, propose solutions and implement change. SCHW staff sit on committees such as:

- **SexGen York Committee:** A university-wide committee responsible for advising and advocacy around issues and concerns of sexual and gender diversity
- **York Student Food Insecurity Roundtable:** A roundtable, which consists of students, student groups, staff and faculty, focused on providing resources and information related to food supports on York's campuses
- **CARE Team:** A multidisciplinary team responsible for providing proactive interventions and comprehensive resource plans for students across a spectrum of support services
- **Sexual Violence Response Team:** A multidisciplinary team dedicated to supporting individuals who have experienced sexual violence and creating safe environments for survivors
- **CCWS Technical Advisory Committee:** Committee that supports the development of UBC's Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey
- **Food Security Campus Network:** National table working to address food insecurity in post secondary institutions.
- **Graduate Supervision Support Hub Steering Committee:** Committee led by the Faculty of Graduate Studies working to support academic supervision settings on York's campuses.

On-campus & Off-campus Collaborations





MESSAGES FROM STUDENTS

Artwork and messages from students
that have visited our office.



Hello everyone,
if you're reading this, it probably means
you're a student who is feeling hopeless or
very stressed out or even suicidal. Just know
that there are people out there for you.
People care about you and we love you.
If you ever need anything, do not feel
afraid or nervous to reach out to me
or anyone at this office. I came
to this office in pain and left happy or
better each time. I am a student here
& would love to help.

You're beautiful, one of a kind and
very loved. Keep smiling :)



Every time you fall you
get back up stronger than
before :)

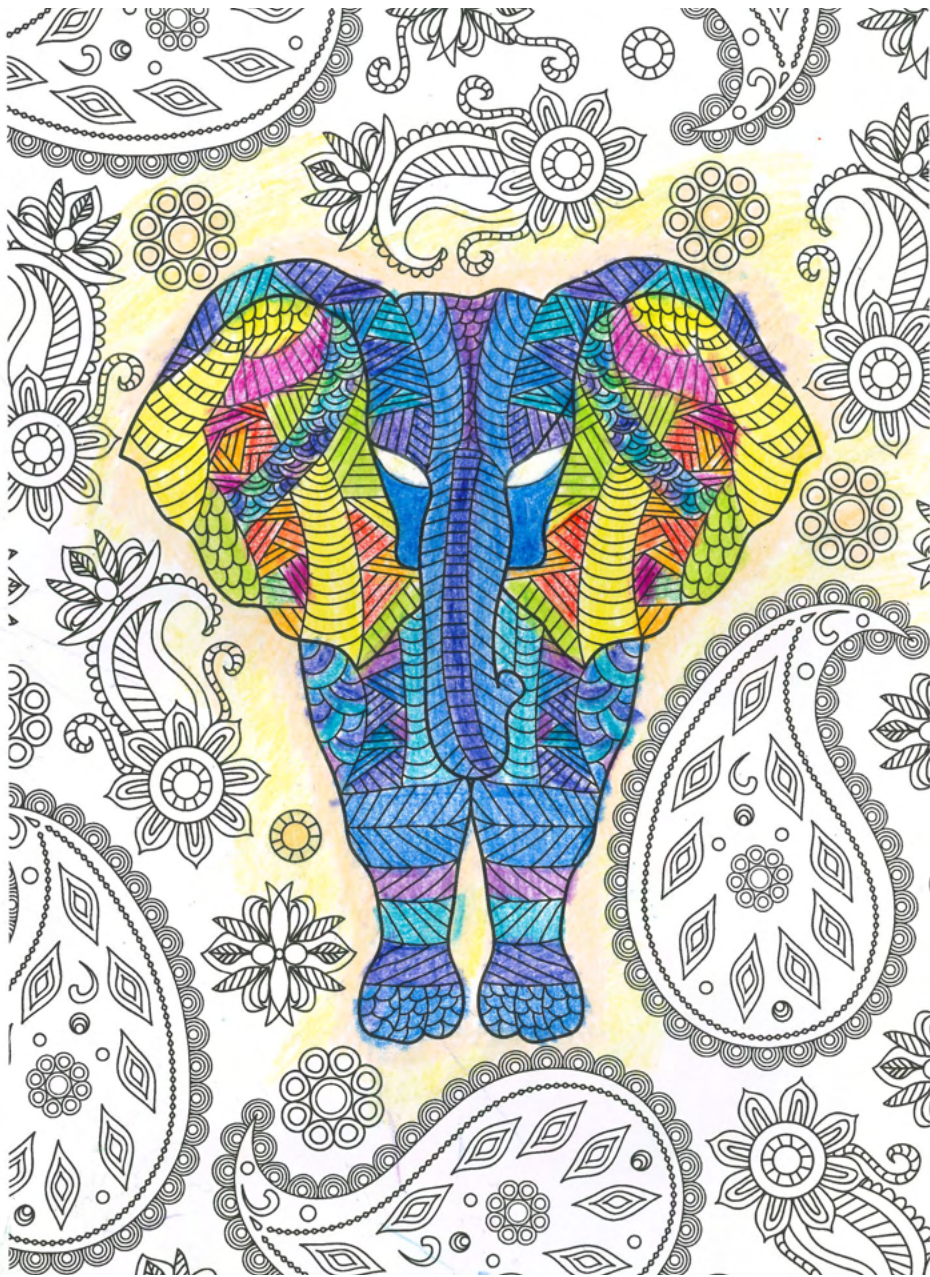
Everything
Happens for
Reasons ♡

You are
worthy &
Loved

You're
RESILIENT

Keep being
you ♡





All you have to do is
Try

those who
accept, acknowledge
and welcome
their insecurities
are no longer
insecure

♥ I am not very
in a good place
myself, but we'll
figure it out :)
Don't worry
♥

You are
worth every
second of the day
DON'T GIVE UP!!!





YORK 