Dreaming big: Collaborating to support student wellness and improve retention

Jennifer Thiessen, Laurie Morrison
Brock University
We will:

1. Recognize the importance of wellness and well-being for student success

1. Identify potential partnerships for developing wellness initiatives at their own institutions

1. Recall strategies to institute a wellness project/collection, from initial inception to execution.

Who are we?

The Wellness Team

Jennifer Thiessen (lead)
Martin Chandler
Evelyn Smith
Brooke Jones
Laurie Morrison
About Brock
Mental health services on campuses were once seen as “a fringe benefit”. ... Now it’s part of everything we do.”

Debbie Bruckner,
Senior Director of Student Wellness
University of Calgary

Context: Our Student’s Wellbeing

15-24 year olds:
- Mostly likely group to suffer from mental illness, substance dependency & suicide\(^1\)
- Suicide is second leading cause of death (24%)
- Higher risk for mood disorders (depression & anxiety)

Ontario Results from Canadian Campus Survey 2004,:
- 47% reported stress,
- 32% reported worry and sleep loss,
- 31% reported being unhappy or depressed,
- 29% reported elevated levels of psychological distress\(^3\)

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- 89.5% experienced overwhelm from their workload
- 64% reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety
- 44.4% reported at some point felt “too depressed to function”

The local context

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Library Strategic Plan

Student Success: The Library expands its impact on student success by providing the competencies, tools and resources that learners need to excel in a changing environment.

Brock University Student Mental Health and Addictions Plan (2017-2020)

Retention grants

Brock reinforced as No. 1 for mental health services in Maclean’s ranking

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2019 | by Kevin Cavanagh

https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2019/10/brock-reinforced-as-no-1-for-mental-health-services-in-macleans-ranking/
Student Wellness Project aims to:

- Support academic success for first year students.
  a. promote wellness, targeting high-stress times such as exams.
- Provide awareness of wellness initiatives and programming on campus.
- Increase opportunities to de-stress.
  a. events and programming during high-stress times can encourage healthy breaks, social interaction and support.
Outcomes of the project

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Wellness book collection

Game collection

Events and activities promoting wellness

Getting feedback

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Peer Health Educators

Survey to students attending Health Fair

Reached out to residences

Other libraries

Need a Little Pampering?

We haven't planned any spa treatments (yet), but the Library would love to hear from you about how we can support your wellness & ease your stress.

New board games & craft kits are on their way. Meditation sessions too.

Have other suggestions? Email esmith@brocku.ca
Wellness books
How did we do it?

Developed collection guidelines:

- Body-positive, focus on student wellness, evidence-based, avoid pop psychology

Topics: exercise, economical cooking, nutrition, sleep, reducing stress

Feedback from: Peer Health Educators, Health Promotion Educator, Financial Services, other libraries

How did we do it?

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Whiteboard poll

Focus group with Peer Health Educators

Other libraries
The details...

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Stored behind services desk

Full count of pieces twice a year

Circulate for 3 days

bit.ly/brocklibrarystressbusters

Games & Stressbusters for Loan

Need a Break? Take one at the Library or take one home! Choose from a variety of games and creative activities the Library has on offer. Put some play in your day! Visit the Ask Us desk in the James A. Gibson Library, or the Map, Data & GIS Library in MC C-306 to borrow.

We love getting suggestions for new games and activities! Share your favorites via email to libhelp@brocku.ca

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Loan Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boggle</td>
<td>Ask Us Desk - James A. Gibson Library</td>
<td>3 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catan</td>
<td>Ask Us Desk - James A. Gibson Library</td>
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Other wellness

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Goals: long-term impact, can be re-used and/or inexpensive to purchase again

Button-maker and supplies, pencil crayons (for de-stress events and to lend-out), craft supplies, puzzles.

Light therapy lamps
‘Busy boxes’ for children available at Brock Library

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019 | by Maryanne Firth

When your mom is taking a French class, you get to hang out with me and use the @brock_library busy box!

Are you a @BrockUniversity student AND a parent? Come this September, you'll be able to borrow a "Busy Box" from the Brock University Library. On those days when your little ones tag along with you, you can borrow a box and keep them occupied. Stay tuned for details.
Popular items

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Games:
- Monopoly
- Clue
- Jenga
- Pencil crayons

Books:
- The gifts of imperfection (Brené Brown)
- Don't sweat the small stuff-- and it's all small stuff
- Make your bed: little things that can change your life ... and maybe the world

Events

Opportunities to:

- De-stress
- Take a break
- Eat
- Socialize
Exam de-stress
Exam coffee breaks

Coffee, treats

Colouring pages, play doh, button-making, crafting
Puppies!
Zine- and button-making workshop

Take a study break! Pop into ST231 in the library to do a bit of cutting & pasting! Free button and zine-making courtesy of @miwsfpa. #BrockU

https://twitter.com/brockhumanities/status/1072897253457752064
Supporting mental health

Provided space, marketing and promotion:

- Partnership with CMHA Niagara and Brock
- Peer to peer drop-in counseling
- Open Door
- Meditation sessions
https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2019/02/new-partnership-brings-additional-mental-health-resources-to-brock
Collaboration and partnerships

Expertise in student health and well-being
Knowledgeable about student needs
Connections with students
Program ideas/needs
Closing thoughts

Collaborations and partnerships key to success

Learn from experts in wellness; don’t duplicate

Supporting student success through wellness central to our role
Questions?

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