

## **Subtheme 5: Collaborating with Health Services**

*How can we partner with health services to best meet the mental health needs of post-secondary students, staff, and faculty?*

The breakout sessions around “Collaborating with Health Services” were facilitated by Marie Wanty and Jackie Koughan. Marie is the Manager of Mental Health and Counselling at Medicine Hat College (MHC), who shared her experience in implementing the Stepped Care Model of mental health and counselling support on campus in response to increasing needs and limited resources. Jackie is the Nursing Supervisor at MacEwan University Health Center, who explored the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of a unique partnership between two mental health delivery centers on campus.

### **Celebrating and Learning from Successes**

- MHC shifted from a traditional approach to the Stepped Care Model after seeing an increase in the diversity and severity of student issues, and demand for services. Following these changes, which required changes to student expectations and provider mindsets, they observed better caseload management and increased community referrals, evaluation measures, and student satisfaction and involvement
- Regular walk-in appointments were well-received by students, particularly during exams
- Focus on building trust and relationships, and taking a solutions-focused approach
- Mental Health Services at MacEwan are provided through a unique partnership between two centers, allowing for streamlined, comprehensive, and rapid care
- “Rainbow Clinic” that provides queer-friendly services, with all staff required to complete inclusivity training
- Sharing health records among providers helps establish collaborative care

### **Acknowledging Challenges**

- Providing a wide range of interventions across the different steps with limited resources
- Community referrals experience challenges with wait times, handover, and accessibility
- Changing perspectives and addressing counsellor and student buy-in on campus
- Need to reconceptualize the model’s steps in an online environment, as a result of the COVID pandemic
- Often requires changes to traditional paradigms of mental health care
- Blending models (at MacEwan) presents new challenges in collaboration, bureaucracy, and managing competing priorities and procedures between stakeholders
- Working with people from different backgrounds is challenging, but rewarding

### **Emerging Opportunities and Next Steps**

- Building collaborations with AHS and community provides to streamline the intake process and increase community referrals for mental health supports
- MHC working to develop e-mental health resources for students over the summer
- Looking into encrypted texting and apps for communication and information sharing

### **Resources**

- [CelestHealth](#) and the Behavioural Health Measure Assessment