

International Student Support

Meeting Student Where They Are: Breaking Down Barriers



Speaker Panel



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Agenda

- Who are we?
- Mental health overview
- What is keep.meSAFE/My SSP?
- FIC context-why we chose keep.meSAFE/My SSP
- SFU context-why we chose keep.meSAFE/My SSP
- Challenges of My SSP
- Benefits of My SSP



What do we mean by meeting students where they are at?



Physical location (24/7 access)



Psychological location: stage of learning, development and understanding about self, others and the world; stages of change.



Cultural aspect: contextualize or situate people within their cultural, familial and generational influences



Psychiatric diagnosis: meeting them where they are at in their health, recovery, stage of change, etc.



Fixing (advice-giving, “shoulds”, silver lining) vs guiding (empathy and support in navigating experience and learn new skills)

It Takes a Village

Problematic view: “Educational institutions are not hospitals”

Research: Baik, Larcombe & Brooker (2019). *How universities can enhance student mental wellbeing: the student perspective.*

Shared responsibility for students’ physical, social, emotional and academic safety

Questions to ask ourselves: What is my understanding of mental health? what are my biases or blind spots? Do I have some fears? How can I better educate myself?



Presenting Concerns

Especially for international students = transitional issues: Adjustment to young adulthood coupled with adjustment to a new country/culture and to new education systems/North American or global curriculum.

✓ **TRAUMA**

✓ Depression

✓ Anxiety

✓ Suicidal Ideation/Intent

✓ Psychiatric diagnoses:
Borderline Personality
Disorder, Bipolar Disorder,
Obsessive Compulsive
Disorder

✓ Autism Spectrum

✓ ADHD

✓ Family Conflict and/or Violence

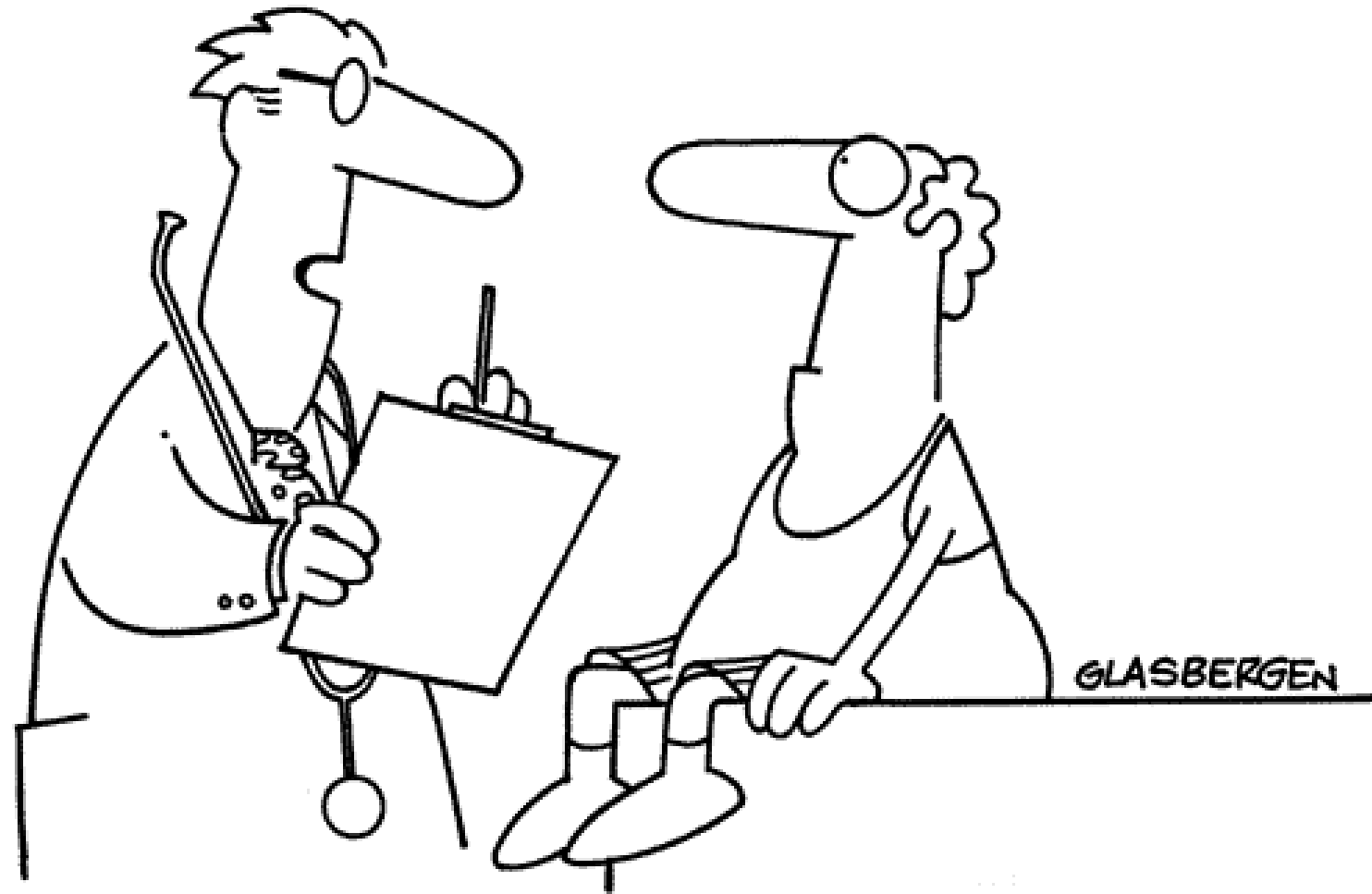
✓ Sexual Violence

✓ Racism/discrimination

✓ Bullying

✓ Romantic Relationships

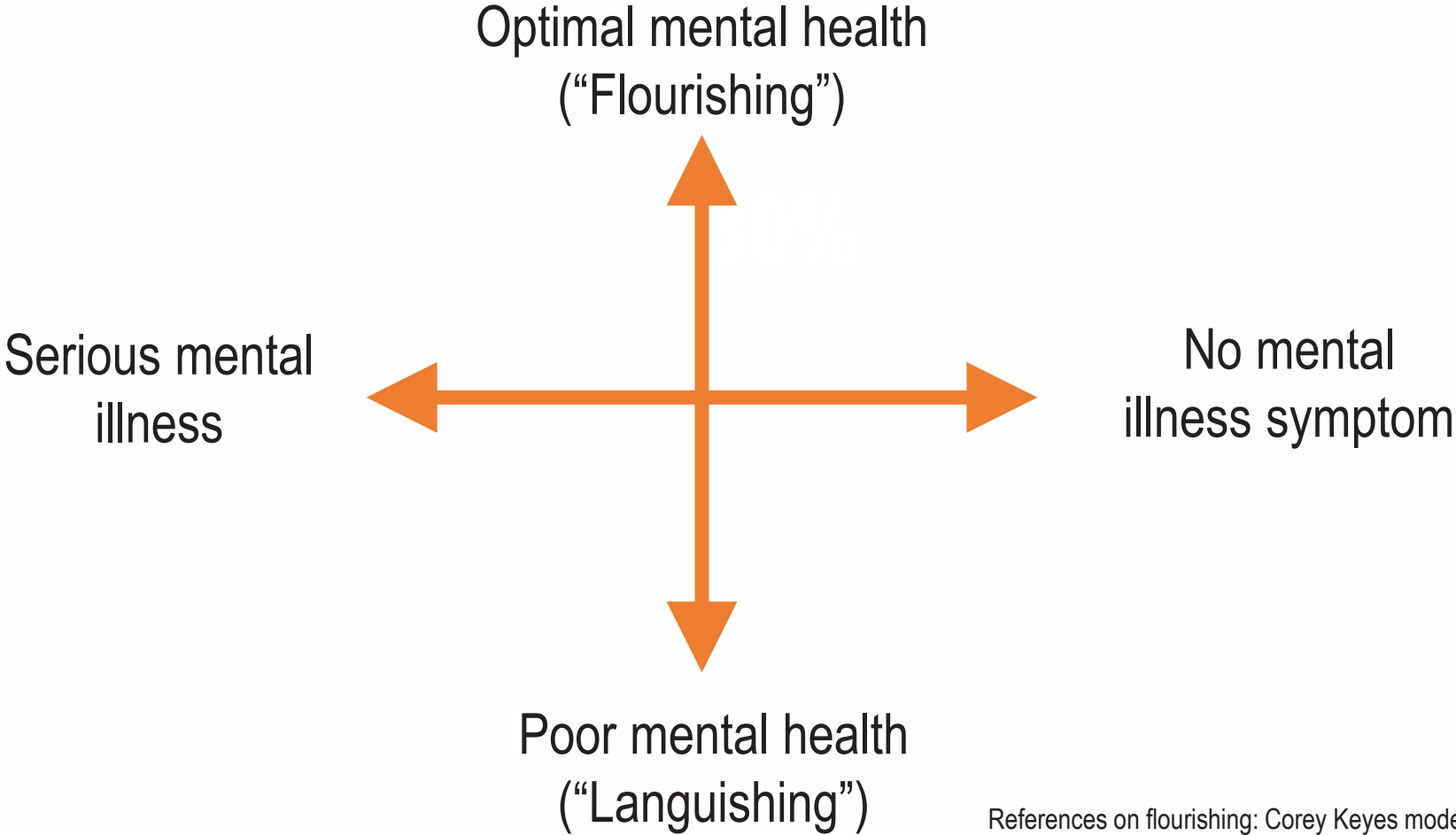
✓ Major Academic Stress



“We can’t find anything wrong with you, so we’re going to treat you for Symptom Deficit Disorder.”



Wellbeing: No Health Without Mental Health





Top Reasons Students Are Reaching Out For Support



Depression



Stress



Anxiety



Cultural/Adaptation
Issues



Matching culture and language is successful



Increased program utilization



Favorable treatment outcomes



Lower treatment dropout

*Meyer O., et al. (2011). Understanding the Psychological Processes of the Racial Match Effect in Asian Americans.



Technology Trend

Students are spending more time connected to their devices

9 hrs

Estimated time per day young adults spend connected to media ²

80%

Of young adults report texting as #1 form of communication ¹

62%

Of smartphone users report using device to look up information on health condition ¹

*1) PewResearchCenter- Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015

2) ComScore- ComScore Media Metrix Multi-Platform, US, Dec 2014*

Remote based counselling delivers effective support to those in need



Telephone Counselling

Is equally effective as face-to-face counselling



Chat Counselling

Highly effective in treatment for symptoms of Anxiety and Depression



Increased Help Seeking

Increased willingness to reach out and work towards a solution

*1) Ebert DD, et al. (2015) Internet and Computer-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety and Depression in Youth
2) JAMA and Archives Journals. (2012, June 5). Effectiveness of telephone-administered vs. Face-to-face CBT for depression compared.
3) Suler, J. (2004). The psychology of text relationships.

FIC Context



- Started using keep.meSAFE/MyISSP in summer 2015
- No onsite counselling support existed
- Winter 2015 hired case manager for onsite support
- Wellness Office with case manager & 2 counsellors



Why did FIC choose to use keep.meSAFE?

Challenges for campus counselling resources:

- Not available 24/7
- May be general practitioners and not specialists
- Waitlists to see support people
- May be barriers to support (mostly international students)
- Brief counselling model
- Services can tend to get overwhelmed
- Need additional services that can be available in various forms such as apps, online chat, telephone and in-person



SFU Context

SFU is a comprehensive research university in BC with 3 campuses in the Vancouver Lower Mainland. We have a head count of about 35,000 students, are considered primarily a commuter school. We have a Residence and Housing of about 1,600.

- In Fall 2018 we had 6,500 international students
- 20.4% of our Undergrad students are international
- 30% of Grad students are international
- We have students from 110 Countries
- Additional ~3000 (FIC: pre-SFU) students supported by many services and faculties



SFU Context

Specific Mental Health Supports offered through Health and Counselling Services:

- 4.8 doctors
- 2 mental health nurses
- 6 counsellors
- 2 psychologists
- 0.6 psychiatry
- Practicum students, doctoral internals
- My SSP (24/7)

Healthy Campus Community Initiative (3 Health Promotion Staff)



Stigma is Elevated Among International Students

SUPPORTS

Unique, integrated, accessible and inclusive supports targeted to needs

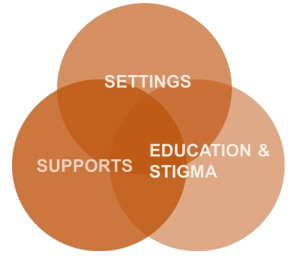
SETTINGS

Policies, processes, learning environments, and physical spaces that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

EDUCATION & STIGMA

Coordinated and integrated mental health education

Mental Health Framework - Supports



SFU

- Various department Advisors
- Centre for Accessible Learning
- Security First responders
- Residence and Housing
- Interfaith
- Student Success
- Health and Counselling
 - Health Promotion
 - Counseling
 - Medical

SUPPORTS

Unique, integrated,
accessible and inclusive
supports targeted to
needs

My SSP

24/7 access to:

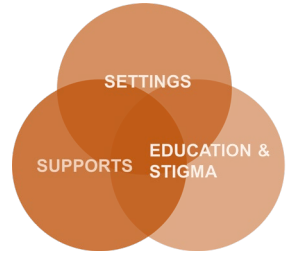
- Chat
- Phone support
- Scheduled appointments
- Assisted referrals
- Outreach
- Monitored referrals

Incident response:

- Defusing
- Critical Incident Debriefs

Assist with after-hour, off-campus needs

Mental Health Framework - Education & Stigma



SFU

- Existing in-person group training on:
 - Supporting Students in Distress (including hand out)
 - Supporting Suicidal Students
 - Ad hoc offerings
- Mental Health Anti-Stigma initiative: Hi-Five run by students, overseen by a clinician centered on openness, non-judgmental interactions, kindness.
- Events, celebrations

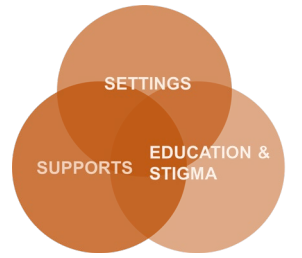
EDUCATION & STIGMA

Coordinated and integrated
mental health education

My SSP

- Incorporating into existing training and handouts/marketing
- Specific training on how to talk to people experience mental health issues, signs, symptoms.
- Using the service to have more conversations about MH with staff and faculty (creating comfort, lowering stigma)
- Lower barriers to access, normalizing asking for support
- Provide tools for Peer Support

Mental Health Framework - Settings



SFU

A Healthy Campus Community is one where the people, processes, and spaces contribute to well-being and success for all. It's in the words spoken, decisions made, actions taken, and culture and systems created.

6 areas for action:

1. Learning and working environments
2. Policies and procedures
3. Services and supports
4. Personal development & growth
5. Social connection and community engagement
6. Physical space

SETTINGS

Policies, processes, learning environments, and physical spaces that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

MySSP

Providing staff and faculty with the tools so they feel supported when having difficult conversations with students.

Creating safety for staff and faculty to show empathy and reach out, where they may not have before.

Creating a community where people feel connecting, asking questions and caring is important.

Stakeholder Buy-in

Student Support Program Committee

- Student Services/Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/SFSS/GSS
- SFSS contributed \$\$
- HCS Counsellors buy-in

Changed Name and Created our own Promotional Materials

- My SSP
- Materials for students as well as staff/faculty
- VIDEO



Proactive Project Manager



Conversations



Outreach



Departmental Education

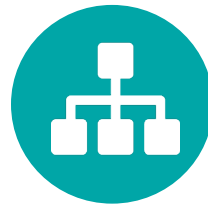
So far...

- Soft launch in August 2018
- Responsive to world incidents (Saudi Arabia)
- Incidents on Campus
- Used by Domestic and International students
- Decreased liability (being able to say that we can offer support 24/7)
- MySSP was not anticipating the uptake seen at SFU
- Student Survey
- Staff and Faculty feedback



Referrals & High Risk Protocols

Collaboration with Campus Police and Health & Wellness



Monitored Referrals

Collaboration with Health, Wellness and Accessibility Services



Referrals to On-Campus Resources

Collaboration with Health & Wellness
International Student Center
Academic Advising



In-Depth Reporting

Robust student usage data and outcome metrics reported on a monthly and semesterly basis



Community Outreach

Connecting students with additional services in their community that meet their specific needs



Staff Consultative Support

Providing direct consultative support for staff and faculty on student-related issues

Ongoing Communication and Building Program Awareness on Campus



Orientations

Tailored to different audiences:

- Students
- Staff & Faculty
- Clinical Team
- Student Services, etc.



Promotional Materials

Provide promotional material such as swag, staff & faculty reference guides, digital communications, etc.



Campus Ambassador Program

Provide student leaders an opportunity to engage with their peers and promote **keep.meSAFE** and mental wellness on campus



Education Opportunities

Tailored to different audiences:

- Mental Wellness Seminars
- safeTALK
- Mental Health First Aid

Real Students: Real Support



Female student

- Year of study: 1
- Age: 22
- Home county: India
- Support provided in Punjabi



Presenting

with multiple concerns:
Relationships, Stress,
Depression,
Communication/Conflict
Resolution, Academic
Issues



7 contacts Sept-Dec via
immediate chat and tele-
counselling, as well as
in-person counselling



Decrease in severity
of concern about
presenting issues and
their impact on her ability
to do schoolwork (study,
attend class, etc.)



Challenges with keep.meSAFE

- Counsellors are not always culturally aware or helpful with practical support
- Miscommunication with international students
- Inconsistency with procedures
- Brief counselling
- Other languages (i.e.; Mandarin) sometimes hard to access
- App will drop



Benefits of keep.meSAFE outweigh the challenges!

- Openness to feedback from institutions
- Develop strategies and provide campaigns
- Excellent communication and follow up
- Commitment to fixing issues
- Promotion of their services to students
- Guard.me ambassadors
- Collaboration on projects that enhance mental health awareness and de-stigmatization
- Cultural competency training for counsellors in their networks
- Helps to destigmatize the learning community

Note: Cool project with FIC : ART EXHIBITION

The logo for keep.meSAFE features a white icon of three overlapping hexagons on the left, followed by the text "keep.meSAFE" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The background is a teal wall with light rays emanating from the top left.

keep.meSAFE



Questions?