

University Committee Yearly Report for 2017-2018

Committee Name	Counseling Service Advisory Board
Contact Person's Name	<i>Lorraine Bush (Senior Administrative Coordinator), for Dr. Vera Romano (Director of Counselling Service)</i>
Contact Person's Email	Lorraine.bush@mcgill.ca
Student Representative(s)	Ebby Crowe
Meeting Dates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monday, September 18th (completed, and present) 2. Monday, November 20th (completed, and present) 3. Wednesday, February 7th (upcoming)

Overview of the Committee
<p>The Counselling Services Advisory Board is a working group made up of relevant student body representatives from Mental Health related groups on campus, under the direction of Dr. Romano and Dr. Norm O'Brien (Associate Director of Counselling Services). We meet approximately 3 times a year (this is set to increase to bi-monthly meetings), and discuss ways in which Counselling Services can better meet the needs of their users.</p>
Highlights or key business discussed this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monday, September 18th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updates re: <u>structural changes</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As of June, Mental Health Services has closed and partially merged with Counselling (non-psychiatry members only). ▪ Psychiatric Services has become a separate office ▪ Counselling has taken over spaces where ISS used to be ▪ Still have issues with the space. Some offices are not yet sound-proofed. ○ Updates re: Feedback from clinicians about the structural changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some found it an intense and rapid change to service delivery ▪ There was an absence of consultation in the design stage (specifically with the sound-proofing of offices) ▪ In general, staff agreed with changes and why they were made. Agreement with collaborative care model. ▪ Changes made working conditions better, overall, for clinicians. ▪ Some felt there was less autonomy in how they could practice. ○ Updates re: user feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strength: quality of care once becoming a user of Counselling Services ▪ Room for Improvement: students felt the elimination of walk-ins to be a major barrier to timely access. Some want more classical styles of therapy – psychotherapy. Students feel that policies and procedure could be made more transparent.

- Discussed the possibility of re-instituting “Walk-In” appointments through Counselling Services.
 - It was suggested that we alter the way walk-ins had been previously conducted, to better suit both the needs of students, and avoid ‘bottle-necking’. The suggestion made was that Counselling Services move towards a ‘triage’ style walk-in system, where students can be seen immediately, have their needs assessed, and then guided towards the right kind of service for their specific needs.
 - Possibility of having a limited number of ‘drop-in’ appointments made available through the website.
- Monday, November 20th
 - Major focus of the meeting was about how to deal with the exponential increase in demand. How do we (CS) provide timely and effective delivery to students in need?
 - Collaboration with Peer Support was suggested as a means of improving timely service. Dr. Romano and Dr. Norman O’Brien were receptive to taking our suggestions re: how they can increase the visibility of Peer Support Services within the Counselling Services Office.
 - We made real-time changes to the Counselling Services website, making the “Community Care” section more obvious on the landing page.
 - Discussed the need for a one-stop-shop resource map of services on campus, and in the community; This was very well received by both Dr. Romano and Dr. O’Brien.
 - Since our discussion, Dr. O’Brien has begun the creation of this resource map.
 - Discussed the need for a ‘unified front’ between all of the Mental Health and Wellness Services and Groups on campus.
 - PGSS, PSC, and MHC have all agreed to increase the visibility of online services (TAO and EmpowerMe) to the student body through tabling and info sessions.

Topics that might carry over to next term

- The major topic that will be carried over into next term is:
 - How Counselling Services can further strengthen their collaboration with Mental Health and Peer Support initiatives on campus. Steps have already been taken to keep the conversation going. Dr. Romano has set up bi-monthly check-ins with the Counselling Service Advisory Board members moving forward into the next term.