



Report of the Mental Health Committee to Legislative Council

December 3rd, 2015

This year there are two mental health working groups that together compose the SSMU Mental Health Committee. The mental health advocacy committee focuses on mental health issues at the policy level and work towards administrative changes. The mental health outreach committee is responsible for increasing awareness in the student population and connecting them to campus resources.

Currently the advocacy committee is planning a Mental Health Open Forum and drafting a blurb on mental health to be included in course syllabus:

- I. The mental health forum will take place on Jan 29, 2016. It will be a space for students, faculty, and administration to discuss mental health issues on campus and propose practical solutions. The committee has been brainstorming on the group discussion topics, forum structure, possible panelists, etc. We will be sending out invitations to faculty members this month and calling out for student participants in early January. We will also be reaching out to various members of the administration to partner with us in the promotion and organization of this event.
- II. We are aiming include a blurb on mental health on the course syllabus just like for academic integrity. The blurb will aim to help students become more aware of the importance of mental health as well as providing a list of resources. The blurb has already been written, and it will be reviewed by professionals and peers from Mental Health Services, Counselling Services, and Healthy McGill. At beginning of January, we will contact professors of large classes such as introductory science classes and ask them to include the blurb on syllabi. The long term goal is to pass through the Senate and make the blurb mandatory to be included on the syllabus of every course, which we will be working on next semester.

The outreach committee also has several projects planned for this academic year. In addition to reaching out to students through social media and tabling, we will be building a resource map and implementing the Friendship Bench:

- I. The resource map will aim to help students navigating through all the different services that support student mental health on campus. Currently there are many great resources on campus, however often students don't know about their existence or students are not sure about the differences among them and which one best suits their needs. This map will include all resources related to mental health and will highlight the type of services they offer. In January we will start compiling the resources and brainstorming ways to make the map clear and easy to understand for students.
- II. The Friendship Bench is a yellow bench installed on university campuses as a reminder to all students to speak up about mental health. The project is started by an external organization that we would be working with. Its slogan is



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Association Étudiante de l'Université McGill

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#yellowisforhello, which seeks to provide a reminder that something as simple as a hello can change someone's day. The bench will also feature a URL where students can quickly access mental health services. Thus the bench is a place for students to meet new friends while also acts as a physical presence for mental health awareness. Next semester we will contact Student Services, student-run groups, and faculty associations for support and collaboration. We will also plan fundraisers to raise money as part of the project for the installation of the bench and donation to campus student services group focused on mental health awareness, education, and support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chloe Rourke on behalf of Anya McMurrer and Jiayi Wang