Building Connections in Student-Informed Mental Health

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Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research
SPOR
Putting Patients First

Fondation **Graham Boeckh** Foundation

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About the presenters

Sara Jalali:

- Co-Chair, ACCESS Youth Mental Health Council
- ACCESS Open Minds National Youth Council
- Third Year, BSc Honors Neuroscience

Feodor Poukhovski-Sheremetyev:

- Co-Chair, ACCESS Youth Mental Health Council
- ACCESS Open Minds National Youth Council
- Fourth Year, BA Psychology/Sociology
- Research focus on macrosocial determinants of mental health

Goals

▸ Provide an overview of ACCESS Open Minds' innovative approach to student-informed mental health services
  ▸ Connecting with individual students
  ▸ Facilitating interpersonal connections
  ▸ Engaging the student community
  ▸ Institution-wide collaboration
  ▸ Collaboration beyond the institution

▸ Show that you can and should have youth actively involved at every level

▸ Inspire you to consider implementing similar models at your institutions!

National Perspectives

ACCESS Open Minds from coast to coast to coast

ACCESS Open Minds is:

A national research and evaluation network transforming youth mental health care across Canada through:

Generating new knowledge & evidence

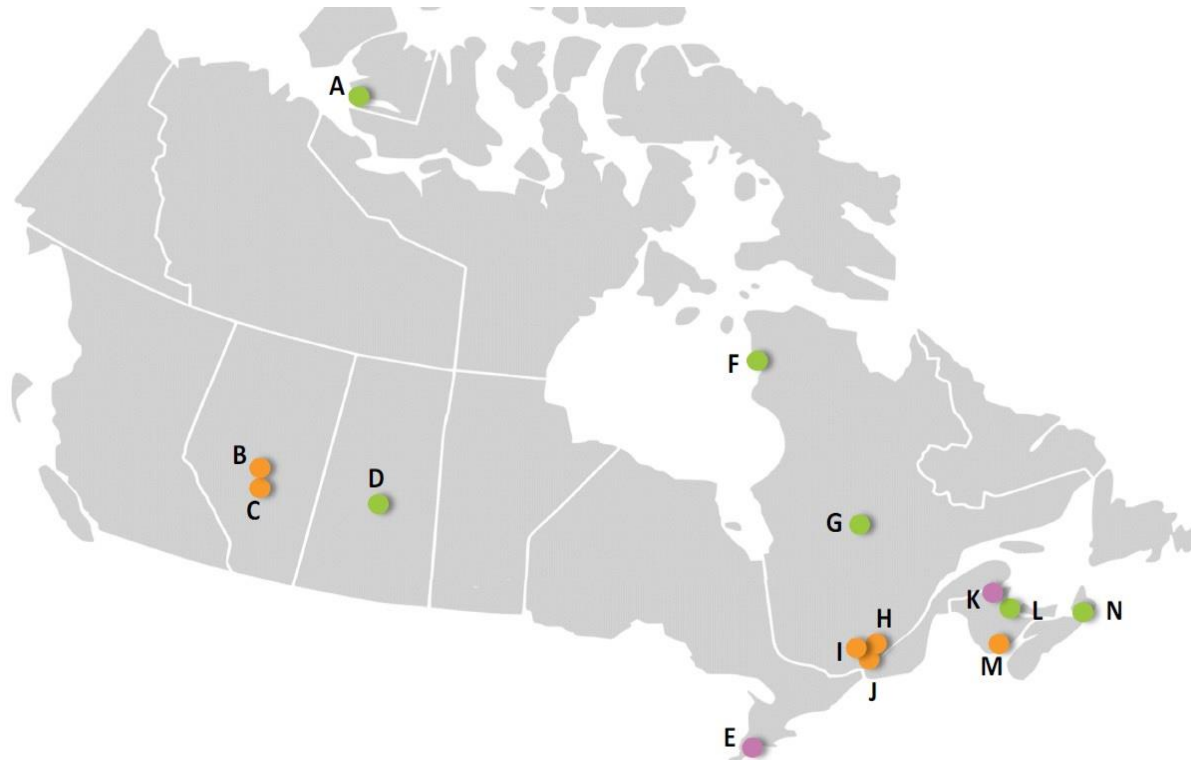Creating a pan - Canadian network

Providing high quality mental health care & services

Involving young people & their families/carers

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ACCESS Open Minds Service Sites:

- Indigenous Community
- Urban Community
- Semi-Urban/Rural Community

A:	**Ulukhaktok, NT**
B:	Edmonton, AB
C:	University of Alberta, AB
D:	Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK
E:	Chatham-Kent, ON
F:	Puvirnituq, QC
G:	Cree Nation of Mistissini, QC
H:	Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle, QC
I:	Parc-Extension, QC
J:	RIPAJ-Montréal, QC
K:	Province of New Brunswick (P.E.E.R Saint John, Péninsule Acadienne, Elsipogtog First Nation)
L:	Eskasoni First Nation, NS

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Service Planning: Transformation Based on 5 Core Elements
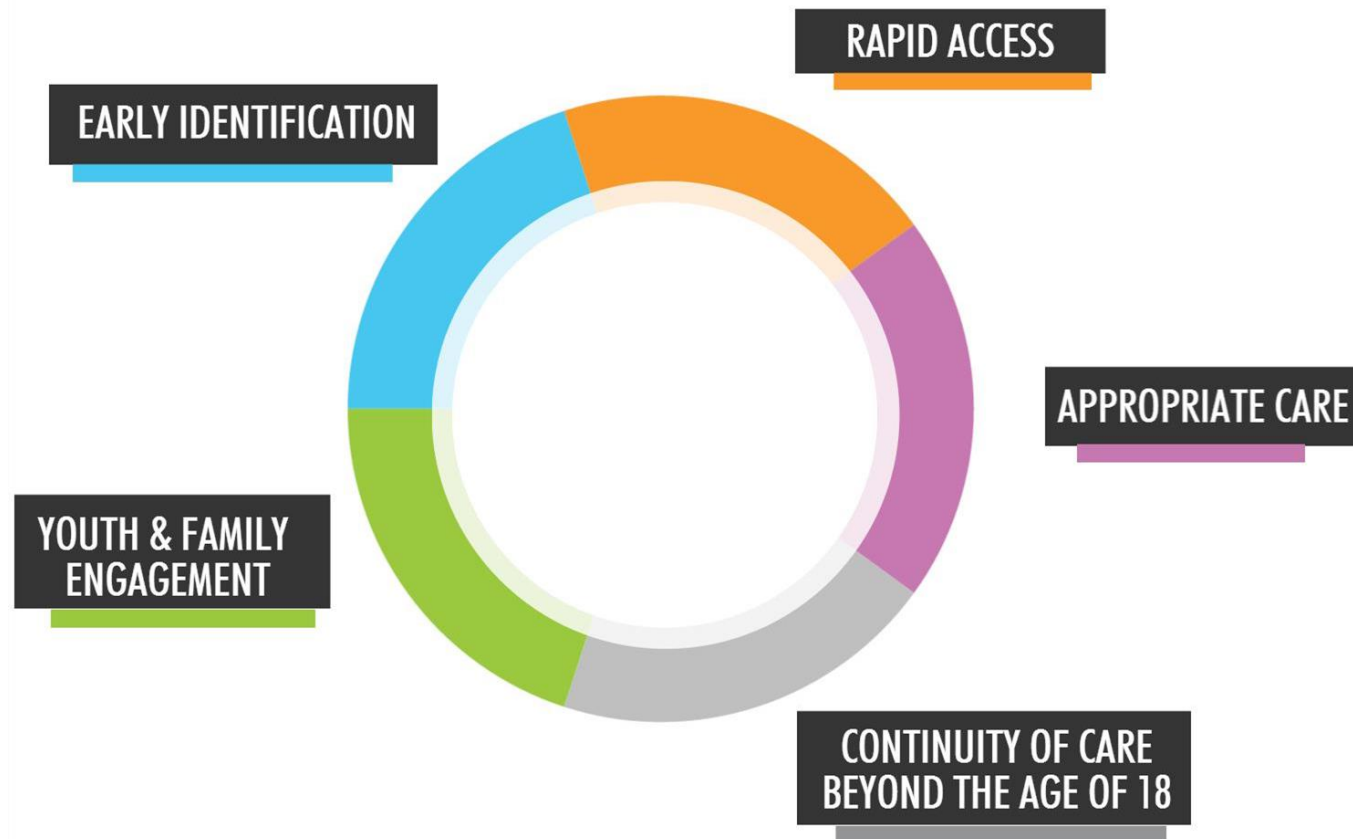
Project Components

▸ Service Planning

　▸ Strengths-based planning process, tools, and ongoing support that builds on a community's existing resources to transform youth mental health services

▸ Service Delivery

　▸ Staffing model, service delivery framework, and training to provide youth with an initial assessment within 72 hours of seeking help, and needed, referral to external services within 30 days.

▸ Service & Program Evaluation

　▸ Assessment toolkit that provides real-time, relevant information at multiple levels: for clinicians and other professionals providing front-line services to youth, for administrators to inform service planning a delivery, and for policy makers to inform ongoing investment.

▸ Research & Advancing Knowledge

　▸ Data collected through the ACCESS OM project will create a national data set of common indicators that will help fill current gaps in knowledge about what works in youth mental health care in Canada.

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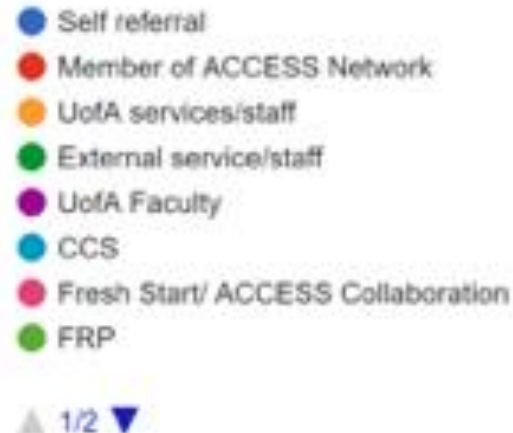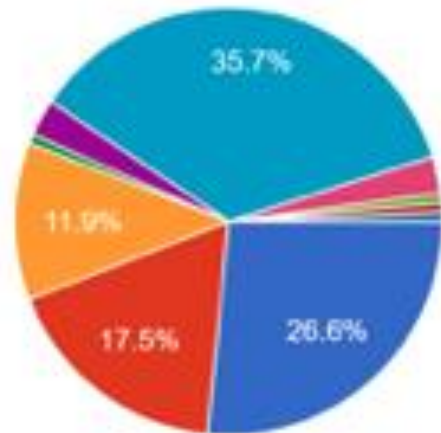# Connecting with Individual Students

Towards a holistic clinical approach

Community Brokers Model

▸ First and foremost a clinical program, with research and evaluation embedded into services

▸ Social workers and research assistant

▸ Rapid first assessments and long-term follow-ups

▸ Holistic Approach:
  ▸ Take into account additional factors such as academics and financial difficulties
  ▸ Work with ACCESS OM Network for warm referrals (both to and from their care)

Referrals to Community Brokers (October to December 2018)

Referred by

143 responses

- Self referral
- Member of ACCESS Network
- UofA services/staff
- External service/staff
- UofA Faculty
- CCS
- Fresh Start/ ACCESS Collaboration
- FRP

1/2

35.7%
11.9%
17.5%
26.6%

Source: Community Brokers' October-December 2018 Report

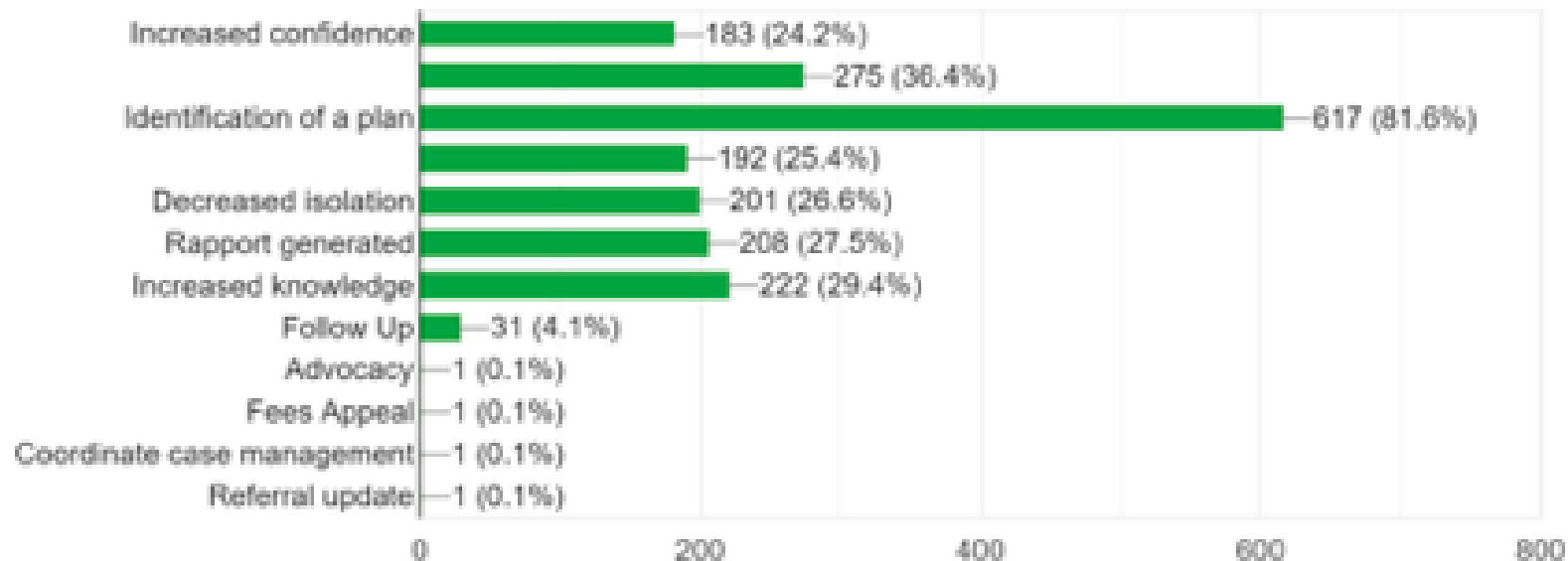ACCESS OPEN MINDS ESPRITS OUVERTS

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Community Brokers (cont.)

- Rapidly growing usage

  - January to September 2018: 140 first assessments

  - October to December 2018: 123 first assessments

  - 2018: 1,746 student contacts with social workers

- Research successes

  - January 2018: 13 research participants

  - December 2018: 105 research participants

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Most importantly, students are being supported

Impact of contact (check ALL that apply)

756 responses

Category	Count (Percentage)
Increased confidence	183 (24.2%)
	275 (36.4%)
Identification of a plan	617 (81.6%)
	192 (25.4%)
Decreased isolation	201 (26.6%)
Rapport generated	208 (27.5%)
Increased knowledge	222 (29.4%)
Follow Up	31 (4.1%)
Advocacy	1 (0.1%)
Fees Appeal	1 (0.1%)
Coordinate case management	1 (0.1%)
Referral update	1 (0.1%)

Source: Community Brokers' October-December 2018 Report

Most importantly, students are being supported

"Thank you so much for helping me get through all of this. You have no idea how great it was to know that I could talk to you about anything. I really cannot thank you enough."

"The Community Brokerage offered me a stable central place to put everything troubling my life on to the table and identify the branchwork of needed supports available, financially, emotionally/psychologically, spiritually, nutritionally, academically, and so forth."

"I want you to know that I really appreciated the times that you reached out to me – you didn't have to do that, and yet you did, and that is amazing."

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Collaboration between students and brokers

▸ Student voice is integral

  ▸ Early Youth Council role in shaping Brokers' roles

  ▸ Community Brokers present at nearly every Youth Council meeting

  ▸ Advocate on behalf of YC when necessary

  ▸ YC worked with Community Brokers to hire Research Assistant

Facilitating Interpersonal Connections

ACCESS OM Youth Council: Active Engagement and Third Spaces

Role of ACCESS Youth Council

- **communicate and promote** the purpose of the ACCESS OM project

- be a **consulting body** for mental health initiatives by:

  - representing the student perspective in the ACCESS OM project

  - taking National's work and adapting it to the UofA setting

  - providing guidance to the UofA ACCESS OM Steering Committee

- represent the interests of the UofA ACCESS OM Project at National ACCESS OM meetings

- develop and carry out projects to support ACCESS OM principles and youth health at the UofA

Formation of a Third-Space

- ▸ Having a space promotes youth engagement

- ▸ Location and atmosphere enhances sense of safety and community

- ▸ Space serves a multitude of purposes

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Youth Council projects and responsibilities

▸ Projects undertaken by the youth council:

    ▸ Encouraging first-year involvement in ACCESS OM research

    ▸ Promotion of WellTrack, 211 and other University Resources

    ▸ Syllabus project

    ▸ Speaker series

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Students engaging the student community

▶ Methods of promoting events:

  ▶ tabling at the first-year residence

  ▶ tabling at club fair

  ▶ social media (facebook and instagram)

  ▶ print-handouts

  ▶ presentation in classes

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Institution-Wide Collaboration

Integrating youth in the work

The ACCESS Network

- Large group of stakeholder organizations on campus
  - Led by Community Brokers
  - Health, academic, non-academic services
  - Regular meetings
  - Diverse referrals to ACCESS clinical services
- Goals
  - Intentionality
  - Rapid Access
  - Community of Practice
  - Identify Gaps
- Future
  - Centralized intake

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Members of ACCESS Network

- **ACCESS Youth Council**
- Counselling and Clinical Services
- Community Social Work Team
- The Landing (LGBTQ+)
- Peer Support Centre
- Graduate Students' Association
- Community Brokers
- Aboriginal Student Services Centre
- International Students' Centre
- Campus Food Bank
- Registrar's Office
- Sexual Assault Centre
- Student Success Centre

- University Health Centre
- Lister Hall (Residence)
- Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services
- Helping Individuals at Risk Program
- Faculty of Engineering Students' Association

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An Institutionalized Youth Voice

▸ Reaching out to youth is a good start

  ▸ But it is not enough

▸ Must avoid tokenism and strive for authentic engagement

▸ Students must be integrated permanently in mental healthcare models

  ▸ Advisory roles

  ▸ Active participation in initiatives and projects

▸ In our experience, apathy has not been an issue

ACCESS OM Beyond the Institution

How youth voices can be heard far and wide

ACCESS OM is a national project

▸ Network of more than 200 experts from 14 communities across Canada (youth, family, clinicians, researchers, policy makers)

▸ Tight communication between ACCESS OM UofA and Central

  ▸ Sites are driven by common goals but develop culture-specific frameworks for implementation

▸ National Youth Council

  ▸ Helps inform direction of network

  ▸ Provides vital site information on a regular basis

  ▸ members are included in all governance bodies from working groups to the executive committee (ex: part of hiring committee for all AOM staff including central office)

  ▸ Represents ACCESS OM at national and international conferences

ACCESS OM in Alberta

▸ First 211 integration on an Alberta campus

    ▸ Collaboration with UofA, Canadian Mental Health Association, Government of Alberta, and 211

    ▸ 24/7 information and referral line now also indexes student services

    ▸ Soon: chat and text components

    ▸ Prospective rollout to post-secondary institutions throughout Alberta

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Conclusion

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▸ Students and their allies can build connections at all levels; locally,

provincially, and even nationally

▸ This means it is possible for allies to form and maintain connections if they

are willing to work towards it

▸ But this cannot be done unless engagement is authentic and ongoing

  ▸ Institutionalize the relationship through roles and physical spaces!

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Thank You!

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