

What's Happening with Student Mental Health at Seneca

Published 9/8/2017 by [Ashley Ribbel](#)

by David Johnston, Counselling and Accessibility Services

in the **Fall 2017 issue**

There are many individuals, groups, and programs at Seneca working hard to respond to the mental health needs of our students. Counselling and Accessibility Services does not work in isolation, and partners with many others who have an interest in the field. The mental health of postsecondary students has received considerable attention recently. Those of us that have been working in this area for any length of time will not be surprised to hear that the mental health of postsecondary students is a concern that needs to be addressed. In Counselling and Accessibility Services, we are responding in several ways.

We start first with our **skilled and experienced counsellors** who are available to assist faculty, staff, and students with questions related to mental health. Many staff focus their annual professional learning on enhancing their skill in the identification and support of mental health issues. We currently have staff on Professional Development leaves who are researching a number of mental health issues and programs.

Over the past couple of years, our counsellors have had specific, practical training from experts in the fields of Self Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In May, we hired a counsellor dedicated to supporting the delivery of increased training, development of resources and identification of mental health supports.

A welcome addition to our team in July was Debbie Ernest, who comes to Seneca as Senior Manager for Counselling after working for 19 years at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

During this academic year, we are making plans to provide a variety of **trainings and workshops** related to Mental Health. We have staff trained to deliver Mental Health First Aid (a two-day program that trains participants in how to respond to a mental health crisis), and are looking to have two additional staff trained so that more trainings can be provided.

One of our staff is now trained to deliver safeTALK, a half-day suicide awareness program that will be offered through the LED website. We are also in the process of developing half-day training for staff and faculty on Mental Health awareness.

Finally, there will be an increase in **general awareness and anti-stigma activities** to enhance the mental wellbeing of all students by providing information, tips, suggestions, strategies, and resources through a variety of media platforms.

We look forward to seeing you in some of the training sessions or workshops as we work together in responding to the mental health needs of our students.

View the [Fall 2017 issue of the Academic Newsletter](#).

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tags : counselling-and-accessibility-services, fall-2017