

Interprofessional Collaboration in Post-Secondary Student Wellness Services: A Multiphase Proposal

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The mental health and wellbeing of post-secondary students are increasing concerns for students themselves, administrators, health professionals, and governments. Many post-secondary institutions offer health related services such as primary care clinics, counselling departments, and accessibility services, however there is a paucity of research regarding how interprofessional health service providers collaborate in campus health settings. Interprofessional collaboration is necessary for meaningful integration of health-related services. The purpose of this two-phase research process is to understand how interprofessional collaboration occurs within student wellness services in post-secondary settings. The first phase will involve a scoping review to examine what is known about interprofessional collaboration in on-campus student wellness services. This scoping review will include research studies with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs, as well as literature reviews, editorials, position papers, and policy reviews. The scoping review will inform the second research phase.

I propose that a qualitative, multi-site case study will aid in developing practice-based knowledge of interprofessional collaboration. Post-secondary institutions in Ontario with multiple on-campus wellness services and team members from two or more health related disciplines will be invited to participate. A biopsychosocial lens will be used to underpin this study. This lens supports the inclusion of health, counselling, and accessibility in the definition of student wellness services. Data will be collected using document analysis, interviews, and direct observations with particular attention to communication, team dynamics, and interpersonal relationships. Analysis will be further refined through case descriptions and cross-case examination.

An understanding of interprofessional collaboration will inform post secondary departmental planning in guiding healthcare delivery, reducing service duplication, and informing intentional use of resources. The findings from this research will provide insight for integrating care and support knowledge translation between and within student wellness services in order to best support students seeking care.

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