

York University: Advancing A Mentally Healthy Campus

Lesley Beagrie, Suzanne Killick, Leah State

Our students



“Our main purpose as a university is to make sure that we create the best learning environment for our students.”

– President Shoukri

(AIF Teaching & Learning Celebration: President Shoukri Greeting)

Why does mental health matter?

- Wellness is pre-condition for learning and working. As such, York has an institutional responsibility to promote a healthy campus community.
- Physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, mental, cultural and environmental health and learning are interdependent.
- We must move beyond an individual physical illness approach to a holistic, integrated campus health approach.

What is mental health?

“Mental health comes from a community, not just from a counselor’s office.” - UBC Vancouver, Thrive Program



Context: Canada

- Our student population falls into the highest risk age group for mental illnesses and substance dependencies (Statistics Canada; Canada Campus Survey).
- Students are more likely to suffer from psychological distress/report mental illness symptoms than the general youth demographic (Canada Campus Survey) and contributing factors associated with onset of mental health problems are customary in a college or university setting (Andrews and Wilding, 2004).
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds, accounting for 24% of all deaths in this age group. (Statistics Canada).

Context: Ontario

Prevalence data from six Ontario post-secondary institutions (ACHA-NCHA II student survey, 2009):

- Approximately 4% of students have a psychiatric condition.
- Approximately 15% of students have ever been treated by a professional for one or more mental health problems.
- Canada-wide prevalence survey conducted by CAMH states that about one-third (29.2%) of undergraduates reported four or more symptoms indicative of elevated distress as measured by the 12-item General Health Questionnaire mental health screen.
- The most common symptoms of distress were: feeling constantly under strain (47%); losing sleep over worry (32%); and, feeling unhappy or depressed (31%) (Adlaf et al, 2005).

Context: Employees



- Mental health-related conditions represent 35 million workdays lost every year in Canada, and a financial cost of more than \$51 billion a year to the Canadian economy.
- The cost impact of disability on York University is \$3.2 million in annual LTD premiums, \$11.3 million in LTD reserves and \$1.3 million in WSIB premiums.

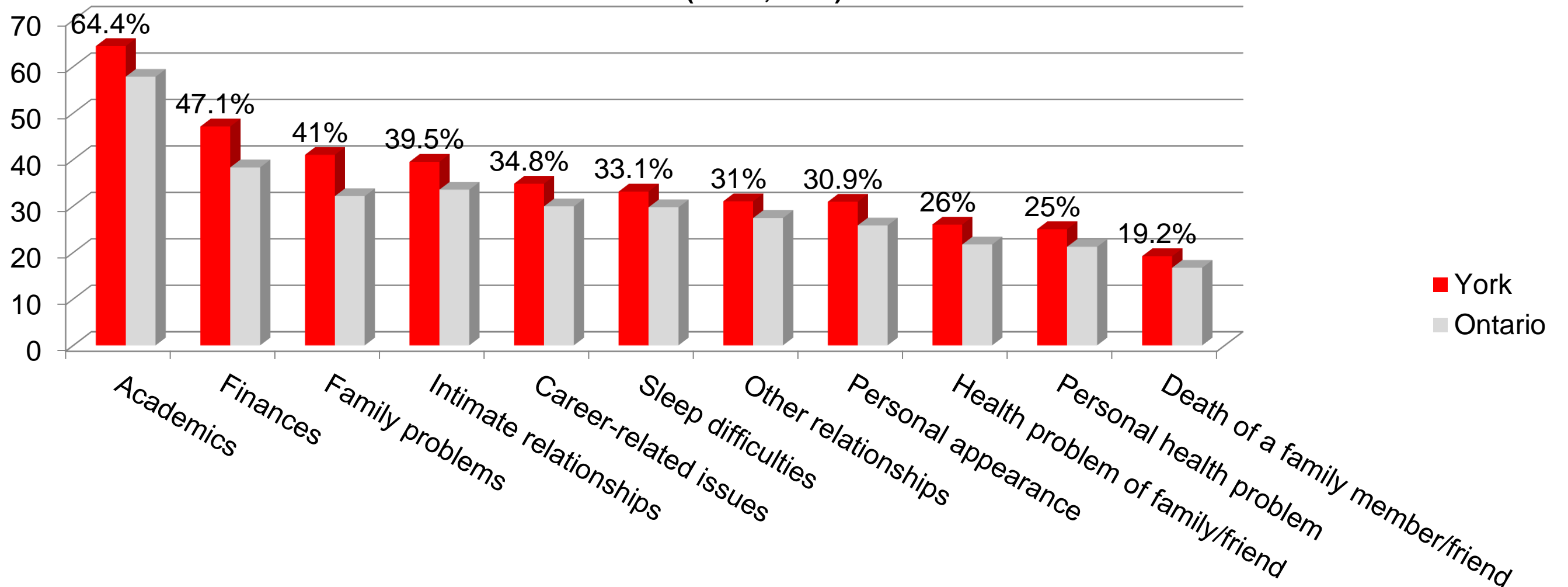
Context: York Employees



- The cost impact of disability on York University is \$3.2 million in annual LTD premiums, \$11.3 million in LTD reserves and \$1.3 million in WSIB premiums.
- In 2011, approximately 35% of York University's long-term disability cases were due to a mental health condition (up from 22% in 2010 and 19% in 2008), surpassing Sun Life Financial's incidence rate.
- 36.5% of employees who completed the depression screening tool while accessing EAP counselling services were identified as having signs of moderate to severe level depression.

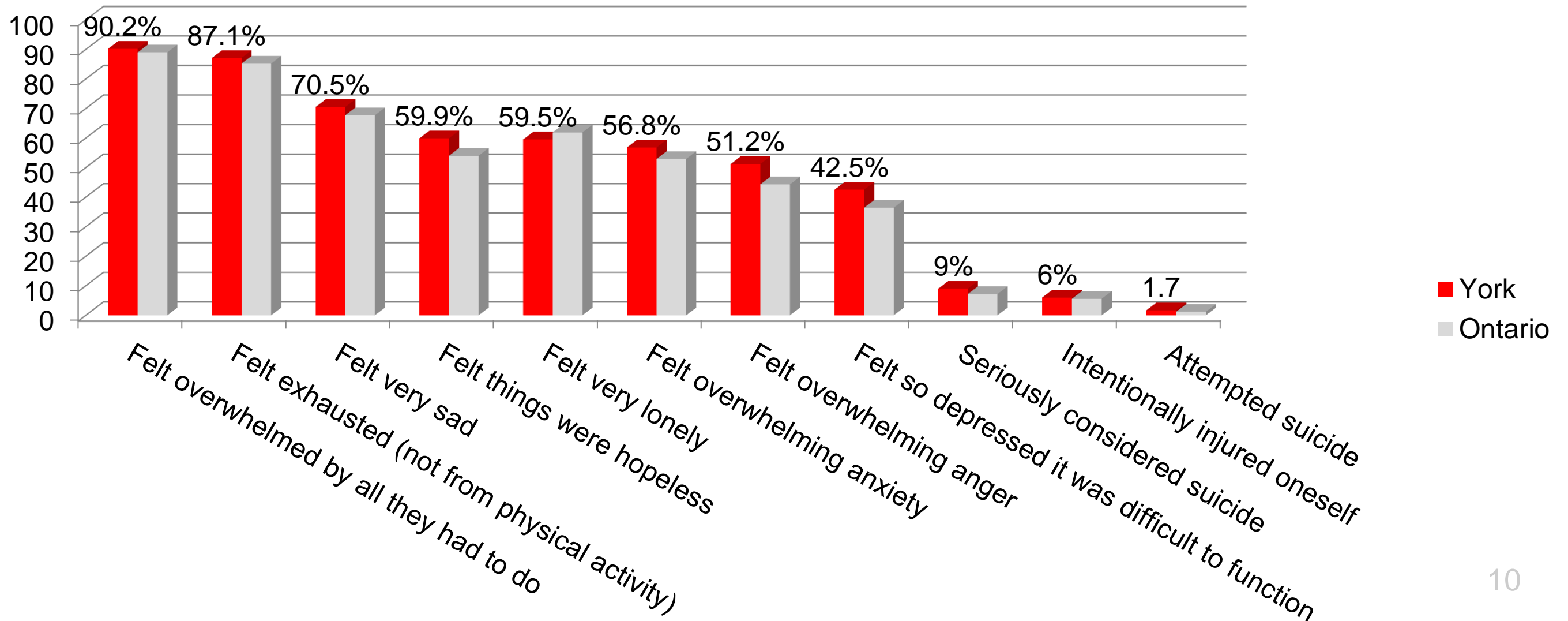
Context: York Students

Within the last 12 months, this has been traumatic or very difficult to handle
(ACHA, 2009)



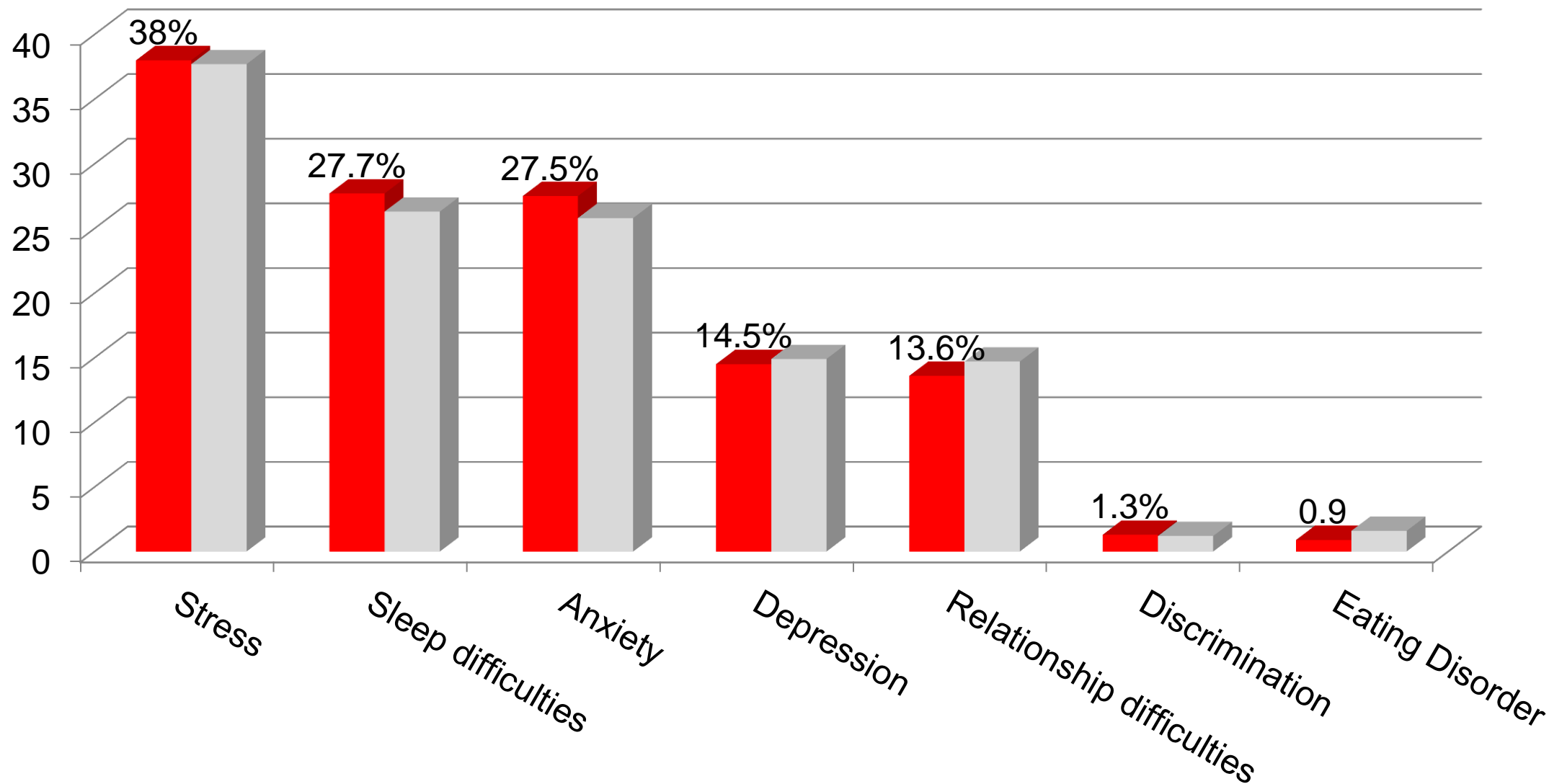
Context: York Students

Students reported experiencing the following any time in the past 12 months
(ACHA, 2009)



Context: York Students

Factors influencing students' academic performance (ACHA, 2009)



(defined as:
lower grade on an exam/ project
lower grade in course
incomplete or dropping course
significant disruption in thesis,
dissertation, research, or
practicum work.)

■ York
■ Ontario

Counseling & Disability Services

Counselor to student ratios

York (Keele) **1:4358**

Waterloo **1:1870**

Ryerson **1:3000**

UofT (St. George) **1:2621**

Intake wait times for personal counselling at CDS varied from **5-16** business days during Fall of 2011 to **8-13** business days in Winter of 2012.

At the beginning of the Fall semester, **19** students were waitlisted for counseling appointments (3 week wait period) By November the number rose to **67** students (4 weeks), to **111** students in December (4+ weeks). Winter semester experienced peak times in February, with **189** students waitlisted.





Benefits: Human and Financial



Academic success

Retention

Cost savings

Reputation as a caring
community

What do we need?

- President's vision and statement of support to advance the strategy.
- Creation of a Mental Health Action Group to identify York's needs and to develop a custom-fit Mental Health Strategy.
- Administrative aid in building a Mental Health Strategy for York.
- An invitation to present the strategy to the UEC in March 2013

References

- Adlaf, E. M., Demers, A., and Gliksman, L. (Eds.) (2005). *Canadian Campus Survey 2004*. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~facilities/documents/CanadianCampusSurvey2004Report.pdf>
- American College Health Association (ACHA). (2009). *Institutional Data Report, York University. American College Health Association National College Health Assessment II*.
- American College Health Association (ACHA). (2009). *York University Executive Summary. American College Health Association National College Health Assessment II*.
- American College Health Association (ACHA). (2009). *Ontario Reference Group Executive Summary. American College Health Association National College Health Assessment II*.
- American College Health Association (ACHA). (2009). *Reference Group Data Report, Ontario College/Universities. American College Health Association National College Health Assessment II*.
- Andrews, B., & Wilding, J. M. (2004). The Relation of Depression and Anxiety to Life-Stress and Achievement in Students. *British Journal of Psychology*, 95, 509-521.
- CAMH: Mental Health and Addiction Statistics. *CAMH*. http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about_camh/newsroom/for_reporters/Pages/addictionmentalhealthstatistics.aspx.
- Conference Board of Canada. (2011). *Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces: Perspectives of Canadian Workers and Front-Line Managers*. http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/11-06-20/Mental_Health_Stigma_Still_Pervades_Canadian_Workplaces.aspx.
- Gail MacKean (June 2011). *Mental Health and Well-Being in Postsecondary Education Settings: A Literature and Environmental Scan to Support Planning and Action in Canada*. <http://www.tgao.ca/assets/pdfs/CACUSS.MHCC-Student-Mental-Health-Jun19.2.pdf>.

- Health Canada (2009). *Environmental Scan on Workplace Health in Canada*. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/env_scan-balayage_eco/index-eng.php#e.
- MacFarlane, P. (2012). *2011-2012 Academic Year Wait List Information re: Personal Counselling Services*. Counselling & Disability Services, York University.
- MacFarlane, P. (2012). *Ratios Ontario Counselling Centres 2012*. Counselling & Disability Services, York University.
- Manulife Financial. (2008). *Workplace Solutions for Mental Health*.
https://repsourcepublic.manulife.com/wps/wcm/connect/ae4c248046a10180bd3cbf1152a44cd6/gb_dis_workplacesolutions.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ae4c248046a10180bd3cbf1152a44cd6.
- http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/whitepaper/docs/White_Paper_Companion_April_15.pdf.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2009). *Stress at Work, Mental Injury and the Law in Canada: A Discussion Paper for the Mental Health Commission of Canada*.
http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Key_Documents/en/2009/Stress%20at%20Work%20MHCC%20V%203%20Feb%202009.pdf.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada (2010). *Tracking the Perfect Legal Storm*.
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/workplace/Perfect%20Legal%20Storm%20FINAL%20EN%20wc.pdf>.
- Mental Health Education Program for College. *MentalHealthEdu - A Community Approach to Assisting Students in Distress*.
<http://www.outsidetheclassroom.com/solutions/higher-education/mentalhealthedu.aspx>
- Monahan, P. (April 2010). *Building a More Engaged University: Strategic Directions for York University, 2010-2020, White Paper Companion 2010*. York University.

Ontario College Health Association (OCHA). (December 2009). *Towards a Comprehensive Mental Health Strategy: The Crucial Role of Colleges and Universities as Partners*.

https://www.cacuss.ca/content/documents/fileItemController/OCHA%20Mental_Health_Report%20Dec%2020091.pdf.

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006) *The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada*. www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/human-humain06/pdf/human_face_e.pdf.

Sadhwani, L. (2012). *Summary of Petitions and the Persistence of Mental Health Issues*. York University.

Shepell.fgi. (2012). *EAP Fourth Quarter Report: York University, 1 April 2011- 31 March 2012*.

Shoukri, M. (May 31, 2012) *AIF Teaching & Learning Celebration: President Shoukri Greeting*. Youtube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOVWp-bC5eo>.

Statistics Canada. (2003). *Canadian Counselling Centre Survey 2004/2005*.

https://www.cacuss.ca/content/documents/Link/CUCCA_ACCUC/cucca/Resources/SurveyResultsJune06.pdf.

Statistics Canada. (2009). *Leading Causes of Death in Canada*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/84-215-x/2012001/table-tableau/tbl003-eng.htm>.

Statistics Canada. (2011). *What's Stressing the Stressed? Main Sources of Stress among Workers*.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2011002/article/11562-eng.htm#a2>.

Sun Life Financial. (2011) *The Burnout Factor: Understanding the Far Reaching Impact of Chronic Stress on the Health of Employees and Organizations*.

<http://www.sunlife.ca/static/canada/Sponsor/About%20Group%20Benefits/Group%20benefits%20products%20and%20services/Sun%20Life%20Wellness%20Institute/BurnoutIndex.en.pdf>.

- Taillefer, D. (2010). *York University: Disability Management Update Report*.
- World Health Organization (WHO). *Mental Health: A State of Wellbeing*.
http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/index.html
- World Health Organization (WHO). *Mental Health: Depression*.
http://www.who.int/mental_health/management/depression/definition/en/.
- York Federation of Students. *YFS Health Plan Benefits*. <http://yfs.ca/section/205>.
- York University. (2012) *York at a Glance 2012*. http://www.yorku.ca/web/about_yorku/documents/YorkataGlance2012.pdf.
- York University. (2011) *York University's Priorities, IRP Framework 2011-2014*.
http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/IRP/docs/York_University_Priorities-2011.pdf.
- York University, Department of Human Resources. (December 2011). *Mental Health Strategy Business Case Draft*.

Additional reading

AUCC Working Group on Campus Mental Health. (June 2012). Mental Health: A Guide and Checklist for Presidents. <http://staging.aucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/mental-health-checklist-guide-for-presidents-june-2012.pdf>

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). (2004). Leadership for a Healthy Campus: An Ecological Approach for Student Success. <http://www.naspa.org/membership/mem/pubs/ebooks/HealthyCampus.pdf>.

Queen's University. (2012). *Towards a Mental Health Strategy for Queen's: A Discussion Paper*. <http://www.queensu.ca/cmh/index/1cmhdiscussionpaperJune2012.pdf>.

University Manager. (2012). *State of Mind: Addressing Mental Health Issues on University Campuses*. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tmh5urevkkt4a17/State%20of%20Mind%20-%20University%20Managers.pdf>.

Acknowledgements

Compiled by:

Julia Pyryeskina, RAY student

With support from:

Lesley Beagrie - Associate Dean, Professional & Global Programs

Suzanne Killick - Director, Learning and Organizational Development

Leah State - Coordinator, Health Education & Promotion

Contributors:

Carolyn Cannon - Special Assistant/Critical Incident Support, Vice-Provost Students

Debbie Hansen – Director, Office of Student Conflict Resolution

Louise Hartley - Director, York University Psychology Clinic

Vanessa Hunt – York Federation of Students President

Polly MacFarlane - Director, Personal & Crisis Counselling & Learning Skills

Yvonne Simpson - Manager, Employee Well-Being Office, Human Resources

Ann Tsirgielis - Advisor, Faculty of Environmental Studies

Janet Vukovic - Senior Development Officer, Faculty of Health, Division of Advancement

Enid Weiner - Manager, Mental Health Disability Services

Marc Wilchesky - Executive Director, Counselling & Disability Services