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Opening

Louis Chen:

Thank you, Duane. Hello everybody, good afternoon. And hope you're all keeping well in this difficult time. Thank you for taking the time today to chat with us about Here2Talk service. I'm glad to have you here and glad to be able to answer your question later. To begin, let me introduce myself. I'm Louis Chen, and I'm Acting Director in Human and Social Services Education unit here at the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. And with me today are also two colleagues, also from the same unit in the ministry, Nurie Aliperti and Cody Willett, from whom you will hear later in the presentation. And of course, my colleague from Morneau Shepell, Stephanie Walker, she will also walk us through the presentation today.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Louis Chen:

Before I hand it over to Stephanie, let me first by acknowledging the Lekwungen-speaking people's land on which we here, the crew of ministry, get to work and some of us get to play on this wonderful land. And let me also take this time as well to encourage everyone to take a moment to acknowledge the territory on which they're dialing in today. Next, I want to set some context, again, before I hand it over to Stephanie about Here2Talk, and hopefully that'll get us going and maybe try to anticipate some of your questions. Hopefully, my context setting may help us later as we get into the discussions.

Background

Louis Chen:

So this service, we started planning for this about a little over two years ago. And long story short, we went out and then we spoke to students about, what are some of the needs that they need, and it was clear from our consultation with students... it was identified that students would like to see a service that they can readily access 24/7 and also have a way of connecting with counselors in a very private, confidential medium. So through various consultations, not just only with students, but with also folks in the field, that's how sort of we planned for Here2Talk.

Louis Chen:

Through all that preparation, planning and consultation, the concept we landed with, which is what we're presenting today for this Here2Talk service, is that it's a... Here2Talk is a single session model counseling service that a student can access at any time through three different modalities. And I stress single session, because it's... What that really means is that students can, at any time, connect with the service, and they can connect as many times as they need to, but they won't necessarily get the same counselor every time. And so that's what we mean by a single session model.

Louis Chen:

And really, the purpose of the service through those consultations was that it needed to be something that is readily available and also more importantly, really help students and educate students to understand the importance of mental health. Whether they're struggling or not, it's important to keep healthy throughout the academic year. And so those are the premises on which we built this service.

And so that is what we will be focusing on today. And Stephanie now will give you some details, specific details, about this service and what it looks like. And I think that's all I have to say for now. And again, we'll come back later for questions. And so Stephanie, if you're ready, I can hand it over to you.

Here2Talk Introduction

Stephanie Walker:

Thank you. Thanks, Louis, really appreciate it. Hi everybody. I'm Stephanie Walker, I work with Morneau Shepell. I'm the Director of Student Support, so I oversee all of our work in the post-secondaries in Canada. We are absolutely thrilled to partner with the government of BC on Here2Talk, we think it's just an amazing program. And probably a little biased, but we do think it's an amazing initiative and really thankful to be a partner on this. So in terms of a bit of kind of logistics for today, what I thought we would do is kind of run through some of the information that I've put together. I know some of you did submit some questions in advance. Most of those, actually, are covered in the material I've prepared. For those that aren't, I've actually made a note that I can kind of follow up after the prepared materials to address some of those other ones, and then we will have the Q&A session at the end as well, so feel free to ask your questions.

Stephanie Walker:

So I also wanted to add in terms of the context that we're in right now with COVID-19, I think it's important to acknowledge that's kind of why we're here to highlight this service, and also recognize the fact that this service is being fully delivered in the same way now as it would be six months ago and six months from now. So it is fully business continuity, business as usual. We're absolutely able to support all the needs of students, even with everybody kind of in different situations because of COVID. So just wanted to highlight that as well.

Stephanie Walker:

So I'm recognizing that over the course of this kind of short presentation, I'll walk you through the Here2Talk what I call program basics, so what it is. A lot of the questions that we got were around, how does it work? How do I talk to a student about it? How do I talk to a fellow student about it? Just so that people understand what it is and how it gets used. So I think a lot of that will be addressed in here, and hopefully we're tackling all your questions, but happy to take the ones that we don't address at the end as well.

Stephanie Walker:

So if we can pop over to the next slide. Quick summary here. So essentially, as Louis mentioned, Here2Talk is a government of BC initiative, and it connects post-secondary students in BC with mental health support when they need it. And I think, again, to what Louis said, the when they need it part, or when you need it, depending if you are a student, is a really key piece of this, recognizing that the in-the-moment, or kind of on-demand piece [inaudible 00:06:22] important to students. So through Here2Talk, all students registered in a BC post-secondary institution will have access to free and confidential counseling and community referral services available 24/7 via the app, the telephone and the web as well. So that's a quick high-level summary, and we will kind of dive a little bit deeper into all of that information to make sure that we're answering the questions you have about the program as well.

Eligibility

Stephanie Walker:

So if we can pop over to the next slide. We wanted to talk a little bit about eligibility. So these are questions that we often get. So bear with me with this list, but all current students, including domestic, international, undergraduate, graduate masters, PhD, online learners, students of all ages and students currently studying abroad, from both public and private post-secondary institutions are eligible to access Here2Talk. So that's a bit of a mouthful but it's very all-encompassing. Those are the kinds of eligible criteria for students being able to access the program. So important to note, staff and faculty, alumni, recent graduates, spouses in dependence of those groups are not eligible for Here2Talk. It is a very student-specific service. And the other piece to highlight here is that it is specifically for students registered with an institution in BC, so those registered in institutions outside are not eligible for the program. So that gives you a bit of scope around usage.

Services

Stephanie Walker:

So if we pop over to the next slide. I wanted to put this into kind of three buckets, as to how students might access the Here2Talk program. So the first, and I would say the one that is used the most at this point, is the app, the mobile app. So eligible students can easily access the program by downloading the app. It is free, that's an important piece here, and it's available on the Apple Store or Google Play, and it can be downloaded directly from there. So there's no cost to download the app. Students can also access services by phone, so calling either that toll-free number that we show there, the 604 number, or the international number, which is essentially the 604 number dialed from outside of Canada, in which international calling charters potentially may apply.

Stephanie Walker:

So the third bucket that we see here is the web. So students can access www.Here2Talk to make sure they're [inaudible 00:08:57] as well. So quick summary. With all these eligible students in mind, and with these three buckets, Here2Talk proudly supports over 555,000 students across more than 400 BC campuses. So very widespread support. Slide five. Let's see where we are here. There we go. Scope of clinical services. So I think I wanted to make sure that we're addressing this question, because we do get it a lot. So Here2Talk operates within a short term single session model. What this means is that each time a call or chat is initiated, the first available provider will support the request.

Stephanie Walker:

And this is important to note, because we do recognize that students like to kind of develop a relationship with a counselor, and so that's a very familiar concept for, especially, on-campus counseling. But in order to be able to provide in-the-moment, kind of on-demand support, we do need to work under a first available provider. So there's no kind of guarantee it's possible, but there's no guarantee that a student will be chatting with the same counselor if they chat in today versus six weeks from now.

Stephanie Walker:

Students can access the program as many times as they need, so important to note that. Single session does not mean one time only. So they can access as many times as they need. However, important to note that anything ongoing, so appointment-based ongoing therapy, face-to-face counseling, all of those pieces are out of scope of this Here2Talk program. And because we aren't doing appointment-based, that kind of references back to the fact that the same provider can't be guaranteed each time a student reaches out to the program. Important to note here, too, that while the counselor providing the support can see whether the student has accessed previously in any related clinical notes, [inaudible 00:10:53] as a new interaction, as opposed to kind of a continuation of a previous engagement with a counselor. So that's the kind of context we're working in there.

Stephanie Walker:

If students are looking for in-person or reoccurring or ongoing therapy or counseling sessions, what we will do I help direct the student to an appropriate, either a campus-based or community-based resource via a referral, and we would work with the student to make sure those referrals are the most appropriate resource for the student through a fairly thorough discussion around parameters, location, if there's any costs for community-based referrals, et cetera. Important to note here that some campuses may have existing mental health services that offer in-person or recurring ongoing and counseling therapy. These would be accessed separately from Here2Talk, important to note, and we will be making referrals and we can make referrals back to campus resources in terms of helping the student find out what is available on their campus. But referring back to a specific campus resource is outside the scope of the program. So it's a more generalized referral to help the student find out what is available on campus and how they can access it from there.

Free, Voluntary and Confidential

Stephanie Walker:

So, moving on. Sorry, I'm just going to grab some water. I think this is maybe my most important slide that I do want to spend some time and highlight. So important to know the use of the program is free, voluntary, and confidential. So those are the three key pieces that I want to highlight here. Free is fairly self-evident, the student does not pay for the use of the program. But voluntary is one I wanted to dig a little bit deeper on. So recognizing that sometimes there are well-meaning individuals in a student's life who want to help that student seek support. The student can only seek support on a voluntary basis if they, themselves, are consenting to access. So essentially, what I'm saying is nobody can make a student use it, nobody can force that. We can assist, we can help, and I'll get into that a little bit later, but it is an entirely voluntary program, so the student's choice to access.

Stephanie Walker:

It is entirely confidential as well. So key piece to note here is that any personal information collected in association with the provision of these services will be treated in compliance with the privacy protection requirements of BC's Personal Information Protection Act, or PIPA. So that's something that's been a focus of our organization for a very long time, and we do comply completely with that. There are certain limited circumstances where we do have to disclose confidential or personal information where that may be required. And a couple of the types of situations, I wanted to give you a sense of those. So situations involving child protection concerns, medical emergencies, any kind of danger to public safety, threats of violence or harm to self or to others.

Stephanie Walker:

So that's important to know, that in those circumstances, we are obligated, for the safety of the student, to make sure that we are getting the resources correct. For example, in these cases, emergency services may need to be looped in to ensure the immediate safety of the student, but keeping in mind that the student will be kept informed of what's happening every step of the way. One other piece to highlight, the second scenario where disclosure of personal information may be required is where clinical records are subpoenaed by a court of law. So that's fairly self-evident, we do need to abide by that subpoena. In the case of a subpoena, we do need to provide the records.

Stephanie Walker:

Also, important to note here that all clinical files and related data are stored in Canada. And for those who are looking for more information on this type of area, students and any other key stakeholders can see the full privacy agreement, and it's outlined in the more tab of the app and also on the website. So those two locations carry the entirety of the privacy agreement and all the language that we have put in place to make sure students are informed of the privacy protections that are in place here.

Morneau Shepell

Stephanie Walker:

A quick note here about Morneau Shepell. Here2Talk is powered by Morneau Shepell, and we are one of the largest counseling providers in the world. We've delivered mental health solutions since 1974, and are currently supporting over 20,000 organizations, including public, para-public and private sector organizations. So if you kind of add all those together, we do cover over 37 million individuals globally. We also are an advisor and partner to more than 200 post-secondary institutions individually, both directly and through partnerships, across North America. So what this means, and kind of the reason that I'm including this information here, is that our team are very well-versed in supporting the needs and the preferences of students. It's something that we do all day, every day.

Stephanie Walker:

All Morneau Shepell counselors supporting Here2Talk are required to meet the same qualification criteria, regardless of whether they're providing telephonic support that I mentioned or chat-based support. So that's a key piece to know as well. And for further information on that, there is a frequently asked questions document on the website that details that a little bit further. But the minimum master's level education and some of the other qualifications that'll go through in a couple of slides later are required, no matter the modality of support.

Here2Talk Process

Stephanie Walker:

So, from here, a lot of the questions or some of the questions that we got, the kind of pre-questions for this session were around just understanding exactly the process a student goes through in order to get support through Here2Talk. So we thought we'd lay it out, just so that everybody has a really good sense of what happens and when and how it happens. So essentially, just to click away, as the slide says, confidential, real time clinical support via phone and chat. So, important to know that 24/7 piece as well. So it's anytime, day or night, and that's something that we have focused on for a long time,

recognizing that it is more difficult to seek support after hours. A lot of the supports that are available, both on campus and the community, tend to be during daytime hours. So recognizing that there was kind of a need to support the 24 /7 model as well.

Stephanie Walker:

Just to reiterate here, and this slide does identify it as well. So Here2Talk operates within a short term single session model, so that the first available provider will be supporting the request from the student. And to highlight as well that ongoing therapy, face-to-face support is out of scope for this program. So single session, both call and chat, is what we would see here. So, this naturally leads to the next question, which is on the next slide, around who exactly is providing the clinical support? We've got one here in the middle. Sorry.

Stephanie Walker:

So wanted to highlight as well, the actual call process here. If a student decides to call in for a real time telephonic support, I'll show you what the process looks like on the next slide, but additional languages can be requested, upon availability, beyond the English and French, and if they are available, we will do our best to connect the student. After listening to an initial quick auto attendant message and selection option, callers are connected to a live representative to complete an intake assessment. So here we have the reminder of the toll-free numbers that are provided in the call set up.

Stephanie Walker:

So we can pop to the next slide here. So here's where I wanted to talk about the call flow. So what actually happens when a student calls in? So I mentioned the first short auto attendance message and making a couple of selections. Those selections are related to their language preference, so English or French, and their immediate need. So students are identifying if their situation is an emergency versus a general support request. So that's the first kind of question that we go through. From there, students are connected with a live representative, and they complete what we call the intake assessment.

Stephanie Walker:

So a little bit of a closer look of this call flow process. So what we refer to as the opening there is confirming eligibility, so essentially creating or locating a client record. So if a student has accessed before, there will be an existing record, or if the student has not accessed before, confirming eligibility and creating that record. So what we are asking that student to confirm is their first and last name, the name of the institution, the student's status, being domestic or international, phone number, and date of birth. So that's what we're using to create the client record. There is also the option of adding a unique security question, such as mother's maiden name, some of those ones that we're fairly familiar with, to add an extra layer of security, and that's at the student's option as well.

Stephanie Walker:

I do want to highlight as well if a noneligible caller does connect with our service. So at this first point, we're confirming eligibility. If, for example, a staff member calls in, or a student registered with an institution in Alberta calls in, what happens is the intake providers will help educate them on the scope of the program and redirect them back to their campus, if it's a student, for information on other available resources. That said, I do want to highlight, if the caller is in distress, or if it's an urgent situation, we will support the person to ensure their safety and then find them more ongoing support

that is available, whether in the community or on campus, depending on their situation. So that's important to note as well.

Risk Assessment

Stephanie Walker:

In terms of the second step here, the safety assessment or risk assessment, students are asked to confirm whether they have a reason to believe there is risk of harm or violence to themselves or to anyone else at this time. If a risk is flagged here or at any subsequent point in the rest of the call, what happens here is that there are a couple of different situations. So essentially, that existing provider will stay on the line with the student and basically talk through with the student what they're doing, and we'll have a colleague, so a fellow counselor, actually loop in with 911 or local authorities to ensure immediate safety.

Stephanie Walker:

So the other piece I wanted to highlight here is that in some cases, on-campus security might be the best support in that moment, and as such, we will be able to loop in campus security as needed, if the student is on campus, when we do get that risk call. I know that the team, advanced education, has been providing contact information for some of those institutions with 24/7 campus security that we can use as a referral if we do get a situation where a student is on campus. So that risk assessment is conducted every time a call is initiated, and that's important to know, it's a key piece to everything that we do. So for this reason, it's important that students can provide true and accurate information when asked. Because for example, a phone number, if it gets disconnected, we need to have an accurate phone number to reach back out to them. So, we ask that students not do kind of aliases or fake names when they are setting up their file.

Needs Assessment

Stephanie Walker:

So as we do that safety assessment, assuming that we have a no-risk student, the provider will then conduct a quick needs assessment with the student, which involves uncovering the primary presenting issue and the reason for the call. And this information-gathering portion of the intake process discussion typically only takes a few minutes in total before the student proceeds on and connects with a provider to talk through their concern. So once connected with a counselor, what happens is a consult will be provided that helps address the identified presenting issue. So in some cases, a referral to more specialized or more appropriate, either campus or community-based resources, is required. And if this is the case, the student will be provided with information relevant to their situation, to their preferences, to their geographical location within BC, and a number of other factors. So, I will tell you a little bit more about the community referrals piece on the next slide.

Student Satisfaction

Stephanie Walker:

So once the clinical consult or community referral has been addressed... Sorry, if we just go back one slide. I did say next slide, I know, but it was... So once we have addressed either the clinical consult or

community referral, what we look to do is assess the student's satisfaction with the service before we end the call. And I always want to highlight when I speak to groups that this part is so important. And it's one of those things that oftentimes, people have kind have gone through the whole process and they're just... two or three more questions is a bit too much for them. So we really try and encourage students to give us this feedback if they have time and they're open to it and they're able to do it. So it's some quick questions around client satisfaction, but what it does help us do is improve our service on an ongoing basis. So, we really make sure that we're asking those questions before the call ends there.

Clinical Support

Stephanie Walker:

Yeah, so we can move on from that side now. Thank you. I should stop. I think we might've skipped a quick slide on the clinical support, so I'm just going to maybe share the information directly here. So when talking about who is delivering the clinical support, I think the questions that we often get are, who is providing this? So Morneau Shepell maintains a robust clinical network, with 24/7 coverage capability. And all of the counselors that are supporting this program are required to meet the same qualification criteria, as I said, so no matter in which way they're providing the support. And that criteria includes a couple of factors, a number of factors, actually.

Stephanie Walker:

So one is a minimum master's level education, and that's typically in social work, counseling psychology, education, or health, those are the most prevalent. The second piece is membership in good standing with a professional accredited association, according to their field of practice. So for example, Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association would be an example of that. They also require ongoing proof of active liability insurance, and we provide intensive training and monitoring prior to supporting any students, and successful completion of an intensive screening process, with reference and background checks.

Stephanie Walker:

Now, there's a couple of pieces I wanted to highlight here that I think are important to talk about a little bit. Training and monitoring prior to supporting any students is key. So when a student does access the program, we do not record any calls ever, but the student will hear, the call may be monitored for training purposes, which is a very typical situation, so that we are able to train, in an intensive way, the clinical staff that we do have. So in addition to that screening process, references and background checks, professional development includes what we call our learning link as well, so lots of modules available that our team, both at the intake level and at the counselor level go through.

Stephanie Walker:

So just to give you a sense of those training modules, they'd be such as working with the LGBTQ+ community, cultural competence, cross-cultural support, indigenous cultural safety, understanding transgenderism, and they're being added all the time. So that's by no means an exhaustive list that I'm giving there, but I just wanted to give you a sense of some of the ongoing training and professional development that our clinical team would have. Okay. So, sorry. I think I just skipped that. So, I just wanted to get back and make sure you understood the clinical qualifications of our team.

Community Referral

Stephanie Walker:

So, when it comes to community referrals, community referrals require a fairly robust consultation, and so as such, they're done over the phone, but not via chat. So a student chatting in where a community referral is necessary or required would usually be triaged to a call, if that's the most appropriate support. The other piece I wanted to highlight here as a bit of a difference is the community referrals group is a bit of a different group, and are not referring to campus support. That will be done in the initial stage by our clinical team.

Stephanie Walker:

So if it's identified that the student would be best supported by a community referral, this is a dedicated team, and they support requests for community referrals over the phone. They typically work in business hours, Monday to Friday. So basically, we can provide a call back to students with a specific referral if they are calling kind of in the middle of the night or on weekends as well. And important to note here, this team maintains a bank of information based on common questions and requests, and they're constantly updating our resources, so that they stay kind of valid and the most appropriate at the given time. It's pulled from reputable, vetted sources within the health and wellness industry, and we've also had some contributions from various BC gov programs that we can be referring to as well.

Stephanie Walker:

Important to note here too, that the consultation is fairly robust to help identify student location, student needs, student preferences, all of those types of things, to make sure the referrals that we're providing are the most relevant. The teleconsultation, like I say, is important. And then what happens from there is the team will compile a customized, comprehensive list of resources that are relevant to their situation as a result of the kind of consultation, and then provide that via email, usually within two... definitely within two business days, usually within a day.

Stephanie Walker:

So to help you understand kind of this community referrals approach, I wanted to share some of the types of community resources that we do share with students periodically. So groups like mental health organizations and community programs, it could be maybe subsidized or affordable housing information or groups, shelters, food banks, basic needs, groups supporting those leaving family violence, job banks, bereavement groups, support groups, and legal clinics are kind of the top few that that we typically support through the community referral group.

Stephanie Walker:

And just wanted to highlight there as well, that these aren't referring back to existing specific campus resources, but will be specific community-based resources. The counselors doing our clinical work can refer the student back to campus as necessary. So one piece that's important to highlight here as well is that our team doesn't provide medical resources or referrals to kind of physicians, doctors, specialists, those types of things. If a student needs that kind of information, we are providing the link to the College of Physicians for BC. And I do want to highlight that all of the agencies and programs that we are recommending are non-profits, government services or charities, and we don't provide recommendations to kind of private, full-fee businesses, including ourselves.

Stephanie Walker:

So given the fact that these referrals are non-urgent, if an urgent request comes in, a community referral is typically not the best approach. We don't do kind of a warm transfer. So if we're referring a student, let's say to a support group for bereavement that's available in the community, what we are doing is providing the relevant contact information and all of the description about the group, where to find it, how to kind of register, if that's appropriate, and that's provided via email within two business days. Usually, depending on the complexity of their crust, it can be much quicker, so within the same day, as I mentioned.

Stephanie Walker:

Important to note here too, and I have mentioned this a couple of times, but I do want to highlight the different channels here, is that the existing mental health services that offer in-person, recurring, ongoing therapy counseling on campus are accessed separately from Here2Talk. So if student A is seeking support through Here2Talk and needs that referral back to campus, we can help them find that information to find out how to get back, but it's not a direct, warm referral to that on-campus counseling support.

Chat Flow

Stephanie Walker:

Alrighty. Next slide would be great. So, we talked about call flow, and now I want to talk about chat flow. So chat is essentially text-based support that's available via the app and the web. Every time a student initiates a chat session through the app or the website, there is a chat description and privacy agreement, as you can see in the graphic there, as well as some personal details in their profile, which asks for the following information. So it would be first and last name, institution name, student status, as domestic or international, phone number, and date of birth. Students will also be prompted to confirm whether they have a reason to believe there's risk of harm, of violence to themselves or anyone else at this time. So similar to the call flow, but it's kind of done within the app.

Stephanie Walker:

If the answer is, yes, that there is risk, to that question upfront, or if a student uses, in the chat, some language that would raise a similar flag, essentially what we have to do is transfer them to a call. So to better have that consultation, find out what their needs are, check out the urgency, et cetera. So once we've triaged that student to a call, then the provider stays on the line with the student, again, explains what they're doing, same process again, where a colleague calls 911 to loop in local authorities as necessary. And the caveat applies again, that in some cases, depending on the institution, the campus security team is maybe the ones that are looped in, as opposed to local authorities.

Stephanie Walker:

And I do know we kind of... we keep talking about these risk situations. They are not very prevalent, they don't happen that often, but when they do happen, it's important that we get it right, and we know exactly how we're supporting that student. So it's key to highlight that we do have the protocols in place. So that's case if there is a risk flag. If no risk is flagged and the student has answered the profile questions, they pop into the chat queue, ready to connect to the next available representative for support. And a couple of features here, a popup screen will remind the students not to navigate away

from the chat page, just in case a disconnect happens. And we don't want the conversation to be interrupted with the clinician.

Stephanie Walker:

So if the chat is interrupted by chance due to maybe an internet situation, the same provider waits to see whether the student reconnects, before they move on to supporting somebody else. So it's not like you've lost your place in line, so to speak. And then just to confirm as well, once a student ends the chat session, their text history will disappear from their phone for confidentiality and security reasons. So in that image that you see there, that does not remain on the student's phone, it disappears as soon as the chat ends.

High Risk Situations

Stephanie Walker:

So we can move on to the next slide. So, I did mention that high risk situations are not that common, but we do need to be aware and on top of them when they do happen. So essentially, what we do want to highlight to students is if it is an emergency, 911 is the first port of call. Obviously, we will never turn somebody away who is in distress, and we will also triage to 911 or local emergency services, but we want to make sure that if there is risk to life, imminent risk, that 911 is the first port of call.

Stephanie Walker:

A couple of caveats to note here too, and I think they're noted in the bullet points too. If the student is on-campus versus off-campus, there is a difference in the way that we will loop in on the ground support. So if a student is on campus, then we will work with campus security teams to make sure that we are navigating campus appropriately... sorry, that the emergency service are navigating campus appropriately, or whether security can take care of it on their own. If a student is off-campus in the community or the campus security team is unavailable to support, we triage, or we connect with 911 for immediate action on that side and just treat it in the same way.

Stephanie Walker:

So essentially, once this happens, it's important to know that we don't end that call until a student's immediate safety has been established. So for example, we know that the local authorities have arrived, campus security has arrived, we won't end that call until we know that student is safe. The other piece too, is that we do need the student's consent if we are to loop in any other parties on campus or otherwise. So those are the quick high-risk reviews.

Here2Talk App

Stephanie Walker:

We can go ahead to the next slide. So we mentioned the app, I did want to kind of highlight again, the App Store and Google Play is where you can get it. It is free, English and French, and it is available from both app stores as well. And we can move on to the next one. So just wanted to give you a sense to kind of navigation, how this works when a student downloads the app. So after downloading it from the App Store or Google Play, we have a number of splash pages that help orient students to key program features. So basic information. In this way, we also get students to set up their profile, so it's the same

pieces that I mentioned earlier: full name, preferred language, English, or French, and select the BC school that they're currently registered with, and domestic versus international student as well. And again, we are having students complete this basic set up and confirm they reviewed the privacy agreement and mark that they agree with the details outlined there.

Stephanie Walker:

We can move on to the next slide from there. So, as I mentioned, this is what the profile looks like as the student sets it up, and the search functionality for the school that the student is associated with. The additional information that is collected prior to initiating a chat session is beyond the generic profile that the student sets up initially, and that would include phone number, date of birth and disclosure of risk as well.

Stephanie Walker:

And we can move on to the next one from there. So some of the benefits that we do have with the app is the ability to send out some healthy reminders. So essentially, this is also covered on one of the initial splash pages, but students will be asked whether they want to accept push notifications to their device, totally the student's choice. But these push notifications serve as good reminders to maintain good physical and mental health. They've also allowed us, for example, during COVID, to have some very specific reminders go out as well. For example, it might be something like, the 24 hour news cycle keeps you connected, but can also lead to stress and anxiety. Remember to unplug and decompress. So very short, kind of bite-sized pieces around mental health and physical health and wellness.

Stephanie Walker:

Frequency of these tends to be around one a week, and the topics vary in relation to the season, academic cycle, public awareness events, World Mental Health Day is a great example. So just general kind of awareness topics as well. So we do outline the feature upfront to students, so we're not kind of doing it underhandedly, letting students either opt in or opt out, and can be turned on or off at any time. So the student can accept now and turn it off at another point, or can defer till later. Just to highlight as well, that the student can change their preference, visit the more tab and make your selection under the profile settings, but also going to the allow notifications piece in notifications, under general settings, to be able to control it as well. So multiple ways of controlling it. We do see, actually, very interestingly, usually a pretty good increase in utilization as students are reminded of the support that's available to them through these push notifications. So I do think it does help people keep abreast of what's available to them.

Stephanie Walker:

And we can move on to the next topic there. So also, included in the app, and I think these are good ones for folks to kind of keep in touch with various wellness topics, but once the students on the homepage of the app, you can explore articles and resources that have been organized under five different categories. So those categories are popular, student life, health, living away, and relationships. And from there, we do populate the popular tab with the specific articles that are kind of... students are reading the most and seem to be the most popular. So that's kind of a logical approach there. But a broad range of topics do fall under these wellness resources, so things like adapting to change, maintaining positive relationships, balancing academic and personal responsibilities and managing anxiety, sadness, stress, et cetera. So these change fairly frequently, are updated on a regular basis to make sure that we're providing kind of in-the-moment and relevant content, wellness content as well.

Stephanie Walker:

And then if we pop over to the next. Actually, that's our duplicate one, so I'll just move on to the next one. We did review that one. Perfect. So a quick review, that if students are looking for more information, there is a whole information tab on the app. So only is it information about the program itself, but if they click on the more tab, there's a frequently asked questions on the website as well, links to other helpful resources and ways to provide feedback on their experience. This is also where students can change their preferences, as we said, about language or push notifications or any other preferences with respect to the Here2Talk app.

Student Feedback

Stephanie Walker:

We can move to the next slide there as well. Wonderful. So this is the one that I really, really like to focus on, because I think it's so important. Student feedback is absolutely vital to making sure that we understand how students are experiencing the work that we're doing and how we can make it better on an ongoing basis. So student feedback is vital to kind of meet the changing needs and evolving needs of students and to continually improve the work that we're doing every day. So if you are a student yourself or work with students, we'd love you to share feedback through this channel.

Stephanie Walker:

So essentially the, tell us about your experience link, as you can see highlighted in the picture there, is how you connect into it. And it looks similar to the webpage version that we show there as well, which is the share your experience page. And here, we can have students submit both positive testimonials, if applicable, or complaints or concerns about the service they've received, if that's applicable. So both ways. I do want to highlight that this is not a clinically monitored section of the work that we're doing, this is a separate portal for feedback specifically. We do monitor it, but it is not a clinically monitored part of our service.

Stephanie Walker:

So if the feedback is a service complaint, students are asked whether they consent to a follow up call from our quality assurance team, which I think is really important. And the more students are comfortable allowing us to reach out, the better it will be to help resolve the issue. Whether it be a concern, or a thought, or a question, or you didn't like how something happened, it's important to us that we get that feedback to make sure that we can either make it right or change it going forward. We will also give students a sense of how we reached back out from the quality assurance team, so it's not just kind of a call out of nowhere. We'll establish a good time to call and a good number to call, and whether it's okay to leave a message if we do call.

Stephanie Walker:

So I think it's always so important that we value the feedback and encourage students to tell us what they think of the program; good, bad, or in the middle. We can also get a sense... If you want to kind of do a quicker version of this, you can rate the Here2Talk app directly in the app store as a way to give a quick indication of satisfaction with it. I would say that that is slightly less preferable, just because we can't then ask for your permission to reach out, to connect with any concerns or questions that you [inaudible 00:44:21] have.

Stephanie Walker:

Next slide. Thank you. And the other piece too here to highlight is the fact that the website actually mirrors the app. So all the content, all the functionality, the chat functionality, the frequently asked questions about the program, and the fact that you can download the app directly from the website as well. So Here2Talk.ca is the web address there. And then if you just flip to the next slide. It does also go through the types of issues that a student might want to reach out for support for, and also the privacy pieces, which are so important for us to confirm as well.

Here2Talk Conclusion

Stephanie Walker:

And then we can move on to the next slide. So, that concludes the kind of brief overview that I wanted to share. I do want to direct everybody to the website, the frequently asked questions section of the website if there's anything you feel like you want some more information on. And there is this email address too, that a student can send any general inquiries, and we'll be in touch. So that's a quick summary there. So-

Duane Seibel:

Thank you.

Stephanie Walker:

Thank you.

Q&A

Duane Seibel:

So thanks, Stephanie. We'll now head into the Q and A. I'll ask that Nurie and Cody activate their cameras, as they may assist with the questions. I've been monitoring the chat, as questions have come up, and I will invite individuals to ask their questions in the order that they came in, and if they prefer, I can read them for them. So Lana, you had some questions. Would you like to ask? You can unmute and ask now. Okay. Lana's question, what do students do if there are ethical issues with the treatment being provided? Are students informed about the confidential regulatory bodies overseeing the clinicians or staff, and the process for making a formal complaint outside of the app or service?

Stephanie Walker:

That is a good question. There is, in the kind of terms and conditions piece... Both on the website and in the terms and conditions for the app, that information is in there as well. But the other piece too, and I recognize this is kind of an interesting approach, but we also will be able to provide that information too, if a student does go through our feedback channel, to let them know how that works as well.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Lana had another question, will you be referring students to other paid Morneau Shepell services, or are here to help [inaudible 00:47:07] refer students to the paid private practice services if available?

Stephanie Walker:

That's a great question, and absolutely not. We don't do any self-referrals. Students may have various other supports available through their campuses, and we will be able to help students find what is available to them based on their specific campus. So those campuses may be providing services that are... whether they're Morneau Shepell or any other provider, but any of our clinicians in particular, absolutely cannot refer to themselves in any private practice capacity.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. There was a question from Shantelle. Shantelle, would you like to unmute your mic and ask your question?

Shantelle:

If could read it, that would be great, because my internet failed and then I lost the question that I had typed.

Duane Seibel:

Okay.

Shantelle:

If you still have it, that would be great.

Duane Seibel:

So Shantelle's question is, during consultation, many students express a need for counselors who are intersectional, decolonized, culturally responsive in training and practice. How has this been accounted for in the service, especially given the need for decolonized mental health supports in this moment? They have always been needed, but are very important right now.

Stephanie Walker:

Absolutely. And Nurie, feel free to jump in here at any point if I'm kind of talking too much. But we recognize the need to support students of all backgrounds, and it's important that our clinicians are both generalists, because they are responding to each student in the moment, but also have a good consideration for a variety of kind of culturally responsive pieces. I did mention some of the training modules that our clinicians do go through, and cultural responsiveness, cultural awareness are some of them. It is a fine balance, and I do recognize that, that our clinicians need to be generalists in that whoever is chatting in, they need to be able to support that student in that moment in a very kind of personal way, but also recognizing that we need to be training, and we are training our clinicians to be responsive to whatever kind of lens needs to be present in the engagement.

Duane Seibel:

Nurie, do you have anything to add?

Nurie Aliperti :

Hi. No. Actually, Stephanie, that's great. I don't have anything else to add around that.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Logan, you had a question. Would you like to ask it?

Logan:

Sure, I can ask the question. So I work for the New York Institute of Technology, which is an American institution that has a campus in Vancouver, we've been here for a long time. I just want to like triple-confirm that our students would be eligible. We would fall under like the private institution kind of area, but obviously, on some level, we are American. I'm assuming, obviously, only our students studying in Vancouver would be able to access this service, but I just want to double check.

Stephanie Walker:

Nurie, I don't know if you want to respond to that one or?

Nurie Aliperti :

Sure, I can. Thanks, Logan, for that question. So students' eligibility are based on their registration with a BC institution, like an institution that operates in BC, and that would include the private training institutions. So students with your institution are definitely eligible. So I hope that answers-

Logan:

Okay.

Nurie Aliperti :

... your question.

Logan:

Definitely. Thanks.

Nurie Aliperti :

And just to [crosstalk 00:50:53] add to that... Sorry. I did want to add that the fact that they're... And I don't know the sort of nature of how your students study programs with your institution, whether they're all physically located in British Columbia or in Vancouver, but I just wanted to highlight the fact that we do have many international students that may be physically located or physically residing, especially right now, during this pandemic, in a country or a location outside of BC, outside Canada. It's their registration with a BC institution that deems them eligible, not necessarily that they're physically living in BC. So just to clarify that as well.

Logan:

Cool. Thanks for adding that.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Dana, you had a question. Would you like to ask it?

Dana:

Yeah. Thank you. I just had a question about the consultations around community resources happening over the phone. Some students who may be struggling with other stuff, like financial difficulties, we've noticed that a lot of them will use texting apps, or obviously, they could communicate them through the Here2Talk app, since it's free. So some of those students can't access phone calls, so how would the community referrals take place in those situations?

Stephanie Walker:

That's a great question, and thank you for bringing that up. So I think most students, we are able to do that fairly robust telephonic consultation and provide support via email following that. That said, if we suggest to the student a telephonic consultation and they're not able to do that, we can kind of maintain that chat-based connection with them to make sure they're getting the support and the kind of referrals that they need. It may be just kind of a workaround on our part to make sure that we are able to reach out to them and make sure that we get that information to them, but kind of the motto or the approach is that we won't let that stop us from making sure that that student gets a community-based resource.

Dana:

Okay, cool. Thanks.

Stephanie Walker:

No problem.

Duane Seibel:

And a question from Erin. Erin, would you like to ask your question?

Erin:

Sure. Thank you. So my question is just to really have a good understanding of if it was determined mutually that the student was wanting to have more ongoing support-

Stephanie Walker:

Sure.

Erin:

... in person or with a practitioner. I understand that there's... If I'm getting it right, there's kind of two levels. One, there might be a chat with the clinician, saying, here's some... connect more generally with these types of services, get a specific referral list. So what would they actually get from that email referral list?

Stephanie Walker:

That's a great question, and I think I can clarify for it a little bit. So in the consult that the student is having, so they call in, they do their initial intake with the initial agent, they talk to one of our clinicians that are having a consult, and it sounds like ongoing clinical therapy support would be the best approach for that student. The first part of call would be to help a student identify whether they do have counseling services available to them on campus, because not all institutions do have that available to

them. So if that student does, then helping them find out how do you get an appointment there? Is there a website? Is there a phone number? How do you kind of do it? So actually walking through that process with the student to refer them back to campus in a general way.

Stephanie Walker:

If the student, for some reason, maybe isn't in the geographical vicinity of campus, so can't go and see somebody on campus, we may be looking to make a community referral. And in those cases, that's where the consultation comes in about, is there a benefits plan, for example, that may help cover some of this? Or is there a geographical location you're looking to be in? We're looking for free resources, all those types of things, to make sure that we're referring the student in the right way. So the back-to-campus is one avenue, and then I would say the kind of community-based referrals would be the next port of call if that back-to-campus option is not the most feasible for the student. Does that help clarify?

Erin:

Yeah, I think so. So I understand if they're getting an email, then it would include just community-based, specific names or services. And I know it's been noted that it's out of the scope of service to provide specific information about campus, other than an awareness that there could be services available, but I don't really understand how it's... It sounds like there's a robust amount of information about food banks, financial services, things like that, how campus services wouldn't be included in that as also members of the community.

Stephanie Walker:

Sure. Fair point. And I think too, the way we've done it is kind of first port of call being that campus approach, so helping a student to get connected in with campus would be the best option. But if a student either declines that option, or it's not available to them or there's other kinds of circumstances around it, then we would kind of move to the community-based resources approach. So kind of first port of call would be campus resources if possible. Point well taken though. I'll actually make that suggestion to the community team to make sure they're even including it within that email as a reminder, these are the options available to you via campus that we've kind of come up with.

Erin:

Thank you.

Stephanie Walker:

Yeah, thanks for the comment. Appreciate it.

Duane Seibel:

We have more questions coming in, and the webinar was advertised to go til 4:00. We will go longer, and if you need to leave, you can visit BCcampus afterwards and catch the rest of the recording later. The next question I have is, how does your service address jurisdictional issues related to providing ethically sound clinical services to students who are out of province or out of country?

Stephanie Walker:

Yeah, it's a great question, and one we do get often. So I'll tackle the kind of out of country one first, is kind of the one to tackle first. So a student can call or chat in for support when they are, let's say, on a

study abroad engagement in, I don't know, Germany, just picking an option. That support, that initial intake will be provided from Canada, and would include a discussion of the student's concern and then a collaboration to identify options for that student to seek support in their current location. So essentially, helping to navigate how that clinical support can be made available to the student.

Stephanie Walker:

Important to note here, if that student is at risk, then we are still looking to make sure that we connect that student with safety. So local authorities, we are well-versed in kind of navigating those, especially on the fairly prominent study abroad countries, just kind of the context aside from that, as we've been delivering this support globally for over 30 years, so have had to kind of work with and make sure we are kind of up-to-date on how we work in local authorities in countries outside of our own. So that's the kind of study abroad support piece.

Stephanie Walker:

With respect to the within Canada piece, so the support we're providing is not kind of an ongoing therapeutic counseling engagement in the traditional sense. What we're providing is the in-the-moment consultation, identifying risk, identifying the issue, providing kind of a supportive discussion in the moment, and then exploring options that are needed if counseling on an ongoing way is required, either kind of on campus, as we talked about, or in the community. So that's the approach that we're taking. I should note that we do have clinicians across the country, including in BC as well, so the support is coming from a variety of provinces, a variety of areas. The key piece to note there too, is that if that student is at risk, then the same procedures are followed again, notifying local authorities or on-campus designated security or anyone else as needed. So that's kind of the process that we take there.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. The next question is from Lacey, how long, in general, is the wait time for students who call in to be linked to a counselor on the phone? One student relayed waiting for an hour for a call back, but not receiving one.

Stephanie Walker:

Thanks for letting us know about that. It's one of these ones where it's hard to say... That's not our usual situation by any stretch of the imagination. Our support is essentially instantaneous. Once the student selects their language and they select whether it's urgent or not, it's a fairly kind of quick transition. So, unusual to hear that a student would be getting a call back. But this is where I would absolutely suggest if we can use the feedback portal or even the email address. Either way, our team, quality assurance wise, definitely wants to look into situations like that, because it's not the standard. So to look and see how it happened.

Stephanie Walker:

So if we can get consent from that student to kind of reach back out to them, if they can come through the channel, we can even, for example, take the phone number that the student called from and kind of reverse-lookup and see what happened, if that's the case. So really appreciate you highlighting that, for sure, and those are the absolute situations where we would love to hear that feedback as soon as we can and to make sure that, A, the student's connected appropriately as they need to be and B, that we can kind of address any issues where a student kind of didn't get the service that they thought they were going to get.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Question from Marcus. Marcus, do you want to ask the question, Marcus? Marcus' question was, how can students book a counselor? I'm not sure if there's something more specific you wanted, Marcus. Okay. Well, maybe I'll move on to the next question.

Stephanie Walker:

I can even [crosstalk 01:00:57]. I can give you just a quick summary. Is that-

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Sure.

Stephanie Walker:

We don't actually do booking of counselors specifically. So through the Here2Talk program, it would be in-the-moment, so there's no kind of actually booking of counselors through this program. And if the student needs to book an appointment, then we help them with those two referral channels that we talked about earlier. Hopefully, that helps.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Sarah, you had a question. Would you like to ask it? Her-

Sarah:

[inaudible 01:01:27] this information. Oh, [inaudible 01:01:30] the video. Hi. So I'm just wondering if you have any stats on how many students have accessed Here2Talk since it started.

Stephanie Walker:

I don't know if, Nurie, you want to share how you folks are kind of communicating, or the plans for communicating the stats.

Nurie Aliperti :

Yeah, I can touch on that. So as the service is still fairly new... We launched Here2Talk on April 16th, so we're just over a couple months in. We are planning down the road... Likely, later this year or early in 2021, we're going to be sharing publicly some very high level summary stats on user levels, the sort of typical information that you might expect around how many students have accessed. We won't be reporting or having any details on a per-institution basis, it will be regionally based. And that is really because of the privacy and personal information requirements with our privacy legislation. Protecting students' information is paramount, and so we've worked really closely Stephanie's team to ensure that those requirements are being met.

Sarah:

Great. Thank you. I look forward to seeing that.

Nurie Aliperti :

You're welcome.

Duane Seibel:

The next question from Andrea, how long is the clinical consult, on average, on phone and chat?

Stephanie Walker:

It's a good question. And it does vary. I would say on average, our numbers are looking... Actually, we need to pull the numbers. I know, Nurie, we chatted about them today. We're looking around the same for both, essentially. So it's a different approach for chat and for telephone consultation. Oftentimes, we're looking at about the 45 minute range for the telephonic support. Chat tends to be slightly less, just based on the modality of it. So those would be kind of high level numbers.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Next question, how are you different from My SSP student support program?

Stephanie Walker:

Great question there. I think there's some pretty significant differences. And I don't want to call specifically out to the the My SSP, which is the Morneau Shepell student support. I can speak generally to any other kind of clinical supports. I don't want to kind of be biased in any way here. But some differences to some of the other programs that are available for students. So I feel like this program, Here2Talk, is built as kind of a base of care, or kind of a first step for students, knowing that it is single session, it's kind of not integrated with kind of campus counseling centers. The reporting and the referrals and all those types of things are fairly separate between this program and campus resources, whereas some of the other programs that are available do kind of integrate a little bit differently, support various languages for international students.

Stephanie Walker:

Also, I think one of the key pieces is ongoing, or appointment-based support would typically be included in other programs as well. And this, Here2Talk, has kind of built a base as that single session model, as opposed to anything ongoing or kind of appointment-based support. I think the other piece too, to highlight as the difference is the referrals that campuses can make from their own work into some of the other programs that are available outside. So maybe a specific student that needs to be supported remotely, those clinicians are able to kind of refer into other programs, whereas the Here2Talk program tends to be quite standalone and is kind of almost a public health approach, versus kind of an integrated approach with specific campuses, if that helps.

Duane Seibel:

Thank you. A question from Chantelle, given the increase in awareness around how dangerous wellness checks done by police are, do students consent to such a practice? I know that many trans-specific resources state that they will never call the police, given the danger this poses to the person.

Stephanie Walker:

Absolutely. And this is something that I should have maybe highlighted a little bit more, is that in that process, we will be telling the student throughout the process what our recommended practice here is. If we're looking at student safety, that is our typical first port of call, but the question is to the student. We feel that you are in danger and we feel that we need to bring in a supportive resource. So in that case, if the student would prefer that it might pose a danger to the student, then we are not going down

that path, and it will become more of a clinical discussion on the part of our team with the individual to look at how we can get them to safety, what the most appropriate way is to keep them safe or to get them safe, and that may not be the police, just given the circumstances there.

Stephanie Walker:

So I think the bottom line to confirm is that we're never sending local authorities to somebody without telling them. It's not kind of how we do our work in any way. They are up-to-date through the entire process, and if that is not the right approach for them, then we'll find another approach if they don't feel safe. So thanks for pointing that out, I should've highlighted that.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. We're nearing the end of the questions. So at this point, I'll ask two, maybe three more, and then we'll close. The next question from Andrea, can staff make a warm referral to this program? Example, offer a call, and together with the student, in the case where the student wants to call and is nervous about making that call?

Stephanie Walker:

That's another great question. And the answer is, yes, this can happen. I would kind of wrap around the fact that it has to be voluntary on the part of the student. So it can't be a case of, I'm a professor and a student's in my office and they're not willing to call, so I'm going to do it for them. We won't be able to accept that on the other end. But if it's a position for, "Let's call it together. I can help you get connected with this resource," then we can absolutely accommodate that. So the key piece is the voluntary piece.

Duane Seibel:

Andrea also wonders where she can get promotional material for this service.

Stephanie Walker:

Nurie, do you want to tackle that one?

Nurie Aliperti :

Yeah, sure. I can definitely [inaudible 01:08:14]. About a month ago, we did send out a one-pager high level summary of Here2Talk to all of our institutions, both public and private. Now, we can also share that with individuals through this discussion as well. It's basically a one-page summary of Here2Talk. And we don't know yet quite what the details are and what that might look like, but we are anticipating that we will have a more broad, province-wide campaign in the fall as well. But again, we don't know yet quite what that looks like. And as far as the promotional materials, we do expect that to be part of our fall campaign, other than the one-page summary that we recently distributed to our institutions.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. And the final question, what advantage is it to refer a student to your program versus My SSP?

Stephanie Walker:

It kind of is a different approach for both, but there's... This program is single session, in-the-moment support for the student, and if that's sufficient, then that's a good way to go. If the student is looking for any kind of loop backs to kind of campus in a more formal way or additional languages or those types of

things, then you may want to go down the My SSP path, I think would be the differentiator there. I think Here2Talk has been established as a really great kind of base of care that kind of provides students across the province... Irrespective of what other programming they have, it provides a great base to make sure that all students have that base level of support throughout BC. And various campuses have various other supports that might be available in addition to that, but I think this one's kind of been a great base level to make sure that everybody has something.

Closing

Duane Seibel:

Okay. Well, on behalf of BCcampus, I'd like to thank Louis, Stephanie, Nurie and Cody for being available and sharing this information and answering your questions. I also would like to thank you for participating. You can access this recording and other recordings of the BCcampus webinars at the link that I'm posting right now. Please visit the BCcampus website to get more information about BCcampus or to subscribe to their newsletter to be kept up-to-date about upcoming webinars and events, I'm posting that now. I also want to provide a shout out to Paula, who is providing the background technical support. Hope to see you all back in a webinar soon. Thank you.