Lakehead University: Enhancing Student Mental Health through a Campus-Wide Population Health Hub

Greenspace Platform: Population Health Hub
Population Served: Post-secondary students
Program Type: Campus-wide mental health support
Key Features: Personalized Assessments, Self-Guided Resources, Referral Support

9,700	700+	2,061	90%
Student Population	Number of Students with Accounts	Assessments Completed	User Engagement

In 2022, Lakehead University launched **WellU**, a Greenspace Population Health platform designed to drive proactive, accessible, and personalized mental health support across their diverse student body. The WellU hub functions as a one-stop digital front door to resources and services where students can engage in self-guided mental health check-ins, explore their comprehensive library of curated resources, and be quickly connected to on-campus and community support services whenever needed.

BEFORE

Prior to WellU, Lakehead's mental health service providers faced challenges common to many post-secondary institutions:

1. **Limited proactive engagement:** Mental health resources were often accessed reactively, rather than as part of a preventative, student-centered approach.
2. **Lack of centralized access:** Students had to navigate a fragmented system to find support and lacked awareness about what resources were available and how to access them.
3. **Faculty support limitations:** Staff and faculty often struggled with how to best respond to students in need of support and where to refer students, especially for those with lower acuity mental health challenges.
4. **Limited access outcome data:** Lakehead lacked aggregated data around student usage and outcomes to inform mental health strategy improvements, funding proposals, and administrative reports on student wellness.

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“We don't want to only provide resources for students who are unwell; we want the whole community to have access, because maybe they're doing well now but in a year they're not. All students should know exactly where to go to easily find and access the resources they need.”

Irene Pugliese
MSW, RSW, Manager of Wellness Services, Student Health and Wellness, Lakehead University

Lakehead initially adopted Greenspace’s clinical MBC platform to support students during therapy and while waiting for appointments. However, they quickly observed an unexpected trend: students who did not return for follow-up sessions continued to engage with assessments outside of care, demonstrating that students valued the opportunity to check in on their mental health independently, without necessarily seeking formal counseling.

Recognizing this preference for self-directed support, Lakehead launched Greenspace’s Population Health Hub to support their full student body. The new model empowered students to complete mental health check-ins on their own time, better understand their own mental health, and choose from recommended mental health and SDoH resources and services based on their specific challenges. This shift not only aligned with student needs, but also streamlined referrals for faculty and staff by offering a single, centralized tool for wellness support.

AFTER

3	93%	14%	1,908
Avg Assessments Per User	Of Logged In Users Access Resources	Avg Symptom Improvement (5+ assessments)	Total Unique Visitors

1. **Personalized Student Experience:** Lakehead tailored their hub assessments and resources to reflect the unique needs of their student body, including international students, BIPOC students, and those in high-stress academic programs. This personalized approach has helped ensure they have highly relevant resources and services for all students and ultimately improved their student wellness support strategy by ensuring their student body has the mental health support they need, whenever they need it.

2. **Integration into Orientation and Onboarding:** To normalize usage and promote early engagement, the WellU platform was embedded into student orientation processes, positioning it as a proactive wellness tool rather than a crisis resource.

3. **Limited access outcome data:** The hub is designed to support faculty and staff. Faculty and staff can now easily navigate sensitive discussion and support their students by referring them to WellU, knowing it provides clear, appropriate options for care for all levels of mental health challenges.

“We want to provide great support to the whole spectrum of students... not just those who are actively looking for mental health support. We need to ensure that all students can easily find and access the support they need, regardless of the level of their challenges.”

Irene Pugliese
MSW, RSW, Manager of Wellness Services, Student Health and Wellness, Lakehead University

THE RESULTS

Since implementing Greenspace, Encompass has seen transformative improvements across its programs and organization:

Campus-Wide Reach

All students have a centralized place to go when in need of mental health support. WellU has nearly 2,000 unique visitors, and over 700 students have created accounts, with more than 90% of those students actively accessing services, demonstrating strong uptake and continued engagement.

Mental Health Awareness and Agency

By encouraging regular check-ins, WellU helps students build mental health literacy, better understand their own mental health, track their own wellness over time, and take more agency in their care journeys.

Early Identification and Support

As an early alert system, WellU helps surface mental health concerns before they escalate, connecting students to supports that match their level of need.

Data for Decision-Making

The platform has become an irreplaceable source of anonymized data to inform student wellness support strategy improvements, funding requests and reporting requirements.

“Our intake forms asks students what brought them into counseling, and we’ve had students report that the WellU platform suggested they make an appointment based on their check-in results. Those students maybe wouldn’t have come until things got much worse... but because the platform suggested it, they made their 1:1 care appointment and received the help they needed.”

Irene Pugliese
MSW, RSW, Manager of Wellness Services, Student Health and Wellness, Lakehead University

Lakehead University’s approach demonstrates how population health technology can extend beyond in-person care to support whole-campus wellness. Their success with WellU underscores the power of proactive, integrated mental health support where all students know exactly where to go to easily find and access the support they need. Lakehead’s implementation, student usage and outcomes sets a standard for a high-impact campus wellness model for other post-secondary institutions striving to meet the evolving mental health needs of their students.

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What's Next for WellU Key

The WellU initiative continues to evolve, with continued efforts aimed at improving navigation, enhancing personalization, and better meeting the needs of Lakehead's diverse student population. As the fall semester kicks off, promotion of the hub is in full swing across campus, through student orientation, classroom visits, and outreach initiatives, with the goal of ensuring that every student knows where to go for mental health support. Ongoing efforts are focused on increasing sign-ups and sustained engagement, positioning WellU as a core part of the student experience from day one.

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