



Good2Talk Evaluation Summary

Background

Good2Talk is a post-secondary helpline funded through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. It provides Ontario's post-secondary students with bilingual, confidential and anonymous professional counselling, information and referral services 24/7/365. Good2Talk is a partnership among four organizations: ConnexOntario, Kids Help Phone, Ontario 211, and the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

The evaluation of Good2Talk was led by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health with support from each of the partner organizations. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine if Good2Talk was helpful to post-secondary students in addressing their mental health and addictions needs. The evaluation looked at how Good2Talk was delivered, what demographic it was serving, if stakeholders were satisfied with the service and if it was meeting its intended outcomes. Specific outcomes examined included callers' perceived problem severity, awareness of personal strengths, hope, perceived distress, coping skills, identification of next steps and options, and awareness of appropriate supports.

Methodology

To obtain answers to the evaluation questions, information was gathered from both callers and campus professionals. Callers who agreed and met the inclusion criteria (e.g. not currently in distress) were invited to participate in a post-intervention telephone survey. An online survey was also sent to campus professionals throughout Ontario with the invitation to provide additional information by participating in a focus group.

Caller survey results

During the evaluation period (September-November 2014) 219 Good2Talk callers completed the caller survey. All participants were post-secondary students with an average age of 23, ranging between 17 and 52 years of age. The majority of respondents were female (66%), spoke English as their primary language (93%) and attended university (72%).

We measured caller satisfaction with questions about future use and call experience. Callers were asked if they would call Good2Talk again if they needed help. 94% said they would. Equally impressive is that 94% of callers also said if a friend had a personal problem they would encourage them to call Good2Talk for support. In terms of call experience, a majority of callers agreed that after receiving counselling, information or referral they were helped with at least one concern they wanted to address. More callers felt this way after receiving counselling or information than they did after referral. It is important to note that immediately after the call the caller would not know if the referral had helped address their concern. We also asked callers if they felt listened to and heard by the counsellor or information referral specialist they spoke to, and over 90% of callers reported that they did.



We also asked questions to help determine how their call to Good2Talk helped them. Below are the results for counselling and information and referral calls.

Of the callers that received counselling:

- 89% felt less distressed
- 87% felt better able to cope with their concern
- 85% felt more aware of personal strengths and abilities
- 81% felt more confident to do something about the problem they called about
- 81% felt more hopeful
- 80% felt they had a better plan for how to handle their concern

Of the callers that received information and/or referral:

- 95% had a better plan for how to handle their concern
- 87% felt like there were more options
- 84% felt more aware of available services after their information and/or referral call to Good2Talk
- 70% intended to follow-up on the referral they received and of those 94% stated it was clear to them how to take the next steps in contacting the referral.

Campus survey results

82 campus professionals from Ontario's colleges and universities completed the survey. The sample consisted of a variety of professional roles including administration, counsellors, health professionals, accessibility staff and other staff members. The majority of respondents were from the university setting (66%).

The majority of respondents recommended Good2Talk to post-secondary students (84%). Of those who did not recommend it, reasons included they were not aware of the service, they did not feel it was relevant to their position, the students they worked with required more specific supports, it was only relevant to those in crisis and it can be awkward to recommend such services. Of those who referred to the helpline most recommended it to 1-5 students per week (47%). The top three reasons for referring to Good2Talk were after-hours crisis support, support between appointments and the particular student would benefit from an anonymous service.

Campus focus group findings

Two online focus groups were conducted with even representation from both the college and university post-secondary environments. A variety of professions were represented including those from support services, administration and faculty. Four content areas were identified: (1) how Good2Talk helps, (2) what they liked about it or impressions they had, (3) what to improve, (4) how to expand.



Good2Talk was identified as helping students in a variety of ways. Specifically, post-secondary professionals appreciated that Good2Talk was available 24/7/365, had short wait times and was bilingual. In terms of their impressions, they reported generally that student feedback was positive, although there were a few isolated incidents where reviews were mixed. Post-secondary professionals found Good2Talk to be student-friendly, both in terms of marketing and service delivery. They also felt that because Good2Talk was staffed by professionals, it had enhanced credibility.

Suggestions for the future of Good2Talk included ongoing training for information and referral specialists and counsellors, and expansion into web- and text-based services (not currently included in funding model). It was also discussed that it would be helpful for Good2Talk to share information back with campus regarding why students are calling as it could help inform campus mental health programming. Overall, campus professionals seem to support Good2Talk as a required support for post-secondary students.

Summary

The evaluation demonstrated that the post-secondary community, staff and students, report being satisfied with Good2Talk and would like to see it continue. While there is always room for improvement, it appears Good2Talk is seen as a valuable service that is important in supporting post-secondary students' mental health and emotional well-being. To ensure it remains a valuable service there are plans to continue evaluating Good2Talk over the next couple of years.