WISHES – A New Initiative to Address a Longstanding Need

The Wellness Innovation Scholarship for Health Professions Education and Sciences (WISHES) education lab was created by Dr. Aliya Kassam in March 2019, in order to address the sparsity of research and scholarship in wellness with regard to learners in the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM). The wellness of learners in faculties of medicine in Canada is an ongoing and increasing concern, with many experiencing mental and physical health issues in, and sometimes as a result of, a stressful environment.

WISHES was designed to be the CSM hub for state of the art, evidence-based techniques to enhance and sustain learner wellness, as well as a source of advocacy for and awareness of learner wellness issues. It brings together practitioners and scholars to collaborate on learner wellness projects focused on the areas of mental health, physical health, occupational health, social health and intellectual health.

Dr. Kassam leads WISHES, supported by the WISHES Advisory Committee which is comprised of learners, faculty and staff from the CSM. The Advisory Committee reports to the Senior Associate Dean Education and the Strategic Education Council of the CSM. The initiative works in partnership with the Office of Health and Medical Education Scholarship (OHMES), and also receives administrative support from this source. A start-up grant of $15,000 was received in March 2019 from the Strategic Education Council. This grant has been used to fund initiatives in the first year of operations including a symposium at which local learner wellness scholarship was presented, an environmental scan of learner wellness programming at Canadian faculties of medicine, and a seminar on pronouns and LGBTQIA2S+ terminology.

WISHES has had a number of successes in its first year of operations, and is grateful to its many supporters. Although it is a local scholarly initiative, it is intended to inform and benefit learner wellness in the CSM and beyond. We look forward to realizing this through research, innovation, and information sharing in partnership with our many stakeholders.
WISHES Advisory Committee

The inaugural meeting of the WISHES Advisory Committee was held in May 2019 and included representatives from the Cumming School of Medicine, the Faculties of Nursing and Kinesiology, and the Campus Mental Health Strategy. The group agreed that the focus of WISHES would remain within the CSM, but connections would be maintained with other faculties/departments in the University of Calgary in order to pursue collaborations. Following this meeting and a July retreat, the WISHES Advisory Committee terms of reference and membership were established, and a Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles were drafted.

The role of the committee is to advise WISHES on matters relating to program development and operation, and to create a platform to unify and increase learner wellness scholarship initiatives. The committee meets quarterly and work is beginning on a number of projects including design-based research to inform wellness infrastructure, a learner needs assessment survey, and a study based on interviews with learners and faculty to inform program development.

WISHES Advisory Committee 2019-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aliya Kassam, Chair</th>
<th>Todd Hill</th>
<th>Franco Rizzuti</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bev Adams</td>
<td>Johanna Holm</td>
<td>Amanda Roze des Ordons</td>
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<td>Allison Brown</td>
<td>Carol Hutchison</td>
<td>Shannon Ruzycki</td>
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<td>Andy Bulloch</td>
<td>Emily Macphail</td>
<td>Richelle Schindler</td>
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<td>Rachel Ellaway</td>
<td>Mike Paget</td>
<td>Stephanie Smith</td>
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WISHES Funding

A start-up grant of $15,000 was received in March 2019 from the Strategic Education Council (SEC). The funding has been used as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>$15,000</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Less Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Scan – Research Assistant</td>
<td>$ 4,225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee</td>
<td>$ 314</td>
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<tr>
<td>WISHES Symposium</td>
<td>$ 4,559</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses (laptop for study, seminar, etc)</td>
<td>$ 2,078</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,176</strong></td>
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**Funding Remaining**

$3,824

The remaining funds will be used to support WISHES initiatives in 2020-21, including interview incentives for the needs assessment, publication fees and the Delphi study. WISHES will be pursuing external funding opportunities in order to fund future activities.
WISHES Activities & Projects

WISHES Symposium

The inaugural WISHES Symposium was held on October 10, 2019 at the Health Sciences Centre. The event included a keynote address by Lauren Vogel (Journalist, CMAJ) a poster session, local research and innovation presentations, and a wellness challenge. There were 49 attendees, with representation from the Cumming School of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Nursing, Social Work, and the Werklund School of Education.

The event provided an opportunity for scholars with common interests in learner and health professional wellness research to connect and share their thoughts. The Wellness Challenge encouraged attendees to consider the various aspects of wellness (physical, mental, social, occupational, and intellectual) and to share their ideas on how wellness in these areas can be promoted and what research questions would support this. Attendees’ comments/ideas have been captured in a summary document which will be used to inform future research. There are plans to host the symposium on an annual basis.

We would like to thank the symposium planning committee (Aliya Kassam, Richelle Schindler, Johanna Holm, Nisha John, and Gretchen Greer) and our volunteer event photographer, Kristen Story, for making this event possible.

Pronouns & LGBTQIA2S+ Seminar

To mark the end of the year, WISHES in conjunction with the Student, Advising and Wellness (SAW) Office at CSM hosted a seminar for all learners, faculty and staff to educate themselves on pronouns and LGBTQIA2S+ terminology. Tiffany Sostar was the guest speaker and is a dynamic bisexual, non-binary, narrative therapist who works within gender and sexually diverse communities. There were 44 people in attendance at the session which gave a brief overview of the changing language landscape and why it matters for the CSM community to keep up with the shift.
Learner Wellness Programming Environmental Scan

One of the first initiatives started under the WISHES purview was an on-line environmental scan of learner wellness programming in faculties of medicine across Canada, intended to inform decision-making regarding learner wellness infrastructure in the CSM.

A count was done of each of these services across the schools to highlight common services in place, how they are structured, and what gaps may exist. This information was then categorized with two different wellness frameworks – BASICS* and WISHES** - to demonstrate which aspects of wellness are most frequently addressed by the programs/services offered. Both frameworks demonstrated that the majority of services/programs available have an Affect/Mental Health and Body/Physical Health focus.

Findings from the scan were presented as a poster at the 2020 OHMES Symposium, and will be presented at the International Conference on Residency Education in Vancouver in September 2020. Results will be shared with senior CSM leadership, and a manuscript is pending.

** The WISHES Framework (Dr. Aliya Kassam, University of Calgary)

Publications & Presentations

Acknowledging a Holistic Framework for Learner Wellness: The Human Capabilities Approach. A Letter to the Editor, Academic Medicine (Vol 95, No. 1 January 2020, 9-10) was authored by Dr. Aliya Kassam and Dr. Rachel Ellaway.

An Environmental Scan of the Wellness Infrastructure in Canadian Medical Schools: Implications for Frameworks and Programming was presented by Dr. Aliya Kassam as a poster at the 2020 OHMES Symposium.

An Environmental Scan of the Wellness Infrastructure in Canadian Medical Schools: Implications for Frameworks and Programming

Gretchen Green, Nisha John, Aliya Kassam PhD,1,2
1. Office of Health and Medical Education Scholarship (OHMES); 2. Office of Postgraduate Medical Education, 1. Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

We acknowledge and honor the traditional territories of the Treaty 7 peoples. We acknowledge the past, present, and future generations of Stoney Nakoda, Blackfoot, and Tsuut’ina Nations who Nciskpرسمski the land, as well as the other and colonial histories.

BACKGROUND

Learner wellness is critical to the future of medicine as Canada’s population continues to age and the demands on our healthcare system increase. The importance of addressing learner wellness has become increasingly evident with the passage of the Ontario Medical Education Act, which requires medical schools to report data on student wellness and well-being, including mental health and well-being.

SUMMARY OF WORK

Our team implemented an environmental scan of the wellness infrastructure in Canadian medical schools, which provided insights into the current state of wellness programs and services across the country.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The environmental scan revealed a range of wellness programs and services available in Canadian medical schools, with a strong focus on mental health and physical health.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the environmental scan highlight the need for continued investment in learner wellness programs and infrastructure across Canadian medical schools.

Acknowledging a Holistic Framework for Learner Wellness: The Human Capabilities Approach

A Letter to the Editor, Academic Medicine (Vol 95, No. 1 January 2020, 9-10). This letter highlights the importance of a holistic framework for learner wellness, including the Human Capabilities Approach.

An Environmental Scan of the Wellness Infrastructure in Canadian Medical Schools: Implications for Frameworks and Programming

A poster presented at the 2020 OHMES Symposium, which outlines the findings of an environmental scan of wellness infrastructure in Canadian medical schools.

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*a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v,w,x,y,z

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CSM Learner Needs Assessment

A wellness needs assessment of CSM learners was planned for 2019-20 and 2020-21 in order to inform policy and program development within the CSM. However, with beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019-20, the focus shifted to how the pandemic has impacted learners at the CSM with regard to their personal well-being.

Phase I was an on-line survey conducted from April 7 – June 2, 2020 which explored the impact of the pandemic to determine the extent and nature of learner wellness initiatives to facilitate wellness in domains of mental health, physical health, occupational health, social health and intellectual health at individual, program (BHSc, BCR, GSE, UME and PGME) and system (higher education system and health care system) levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. The response rate was approximately 20% with 541 respondents across the five educational programs. Survey results are being analyzed and prepared for publication, with some preliminary results as follows:

Phase II will be conducted from June-August 2020, and will explore how learners describe their own wellness with respect to five domains of wellness at the individual, program and system levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from both phases of the study will inform with CSM policy and program development, as well as future pandemic planning with regard to learner wellness. The needs assessment will continue on an annual basis post-COVID-19 as a quality assurance measure and to remain accountable to learners’ needs.
Other WISHES Projects

Current projects that will continue in 2020-21 include a scoping review looking at wellness initiatives, a paper on the WISHES framework and its relevance to public health, and the development and psychometric testing of the WISHES scale – a 5 item scale that can be used to measure wellness within the 5 WISHES petals (ie. mental health, physical health, occupational health, social health and intellectual health). We will also be conducting an online Delphi study based on the results of the scoping review this fall.

WISHES Communications

As WISHES is a new initiative and still in the development stages, communications are done through a combination of independent and shared channels:

Website: WISHES currently has a webpage on the OHMES website at https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/office/ohmes/what-we-do/education-labs/wishes. However, work has begun on a stand-alone website which will be launched in 2020-21.

Twitter: WISHES established a Twitter account @CsmWishes in September 2019, and currently has 75 followers. The account is used primarily to promote WISHES events.

Newsletter: WISHES publishes an update in the quarterly OHMES newsletter. Information is shared regarding WISHES activities including events and research projects.
WISHES would not be possible without the support of:

Dr. Bev Adams, Senior Associate Dean Education
Strategic Education Council
WISHES Advisory Committee
WISHES Symposium planning committee, presenters and attendees
Office of Health & Medical Education Scholarship