

SFU Press Releases Collection

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MEDIA RELEASE

SFU addresses mental health on and off campus through additional student support services

September 05, 2018

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Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) have launched a 24/7 multi-platform mental health and support service, called **My Student Support Program** (My SSP), for its students. This two-year pilot project will provide additional mental health resources for all SFU students, at no additional cost to students, to help address the growing demand for mental health services—a problem that is also impacting other young adults and post-secondary institutions across Canada.

SFU students now have immediate, confidential 24-hour access—from anywhere in the world—to counsellors through a phone or mobile app that will allow students to talk or instant message counsellors for emotional support needs such as managing relationships and adjusting to living away from home as well as crisis support.

The program offers both immediate and booked counselling options. Students can request to book an appointment with a counsellor who speaks a specific language or, for example, identifies as a specific gender, religion or as Indigenous.

In addition to having a counsellor at their fingertips, the downloadable student support program app can connect them to videos and articles to help support positive well-being such as achieving balance, sleep and mindfulness resources.

SFU's funding contribution for this initiative is part of the University's Student Experience Initiative, a formal three-year process led by the VP Academic Office to fund initiatives with potential to positively impact the student experience.

These mental health resources are provided in partnership with guard.me, a leading international student insurance provider, and Moreau Shepell, a leading global organization offering counselling that supplements the growing demand of mental health and wellness on campuses across North America.

Features:

- Masters level clinical counsellors experienced with students.
- Accessible to students living or studying abroad.
- Access to confidential, 24/7 counselling via app or phone.
- Ongoing counselling options available via phone, video or in-person.
- In app resources and videos, such as info about life of study skills, conflict management and relationships.

- Multiple language options.
- The mobile app is now available for download from either the Apple App store or Google Play.

QUOTES:

Tim Rahilly, SFU's vice provost and associate vice-president, students and international:

"My SSP will help provide mental health support and other resources to our students no matter where they are in the world. Students will have access to these resources should they need it even if they are living or studying abroad."

Samer Rihani, SFSS's VP Student Services:

"Having access to a larger, more diverse network of professionals means that students' unique circumstances can be more timely and easily matched with someone who may have lived experience with their circumstances. By offering this service to our students, we know that we'll be making our first step forward in destigmatizing mental health services and letting students know it's okay to not be okay."

Jasdeep Gill, SFSS VP External Relations:

"Our collaboration with SFU started in February 2017 when we observed an increased need of mental health services for students compared to what was available on campus. It was absolutely vital to us to recognize students' need for resources and flexibility, and we're thrilled to have come to this solution with SFU through Morneau Shepell's 24-hour, immediate support services. The Board of Directors is pleased to have finalized this agreement with SFU to support this pilot program."

Martin Mroz, SFU's health and counselling director:

"This two-year pilot project will provide increased access to mental health services and support for students at SFU and will complement our existing services and initiatives. I'm especially excited about the role that My SSP can play in helping staff and faculty support students. We have a lot of people at the university that want to help build a Healthy Campus Community and this will empower them to do that. My SPP will be situated amidst a strategy that addresses timely, accessible, supports for those in need; settings that promote well-being and a caring community; and health education as well as addressing mental health stigma."

Matthew McEvoy, Morneau Shepell's senior director, student support:

"We have developed a great relationship with guard.me over the past few years to provide exceptional service for our institutional partners and we are pleased to extend our offering to the students at SFU. We continue to see investments in mental health support across the country so we are thrilled that SFU is echoing this commitment for its students."

Keith Segal, guard.me president and chief executive officer:

"With such a diverse student population, it was imperative that SFU provide support to the entire SFU student population, including graduate students, undergraduate students, diverse international perspectives; LGTBQ+ students, indigenous students, student athletes, students with disabilities and more. We are honoured to be able to reach more students every day and to be a part of their journey toward a successful educational experience."

FAST FACTS:

- According to the Education Advisory Board, Canadian post-secondary institutions have seen a spike in the demand for mental health support services on campuses over the last five years. The 13 Canadian post-secondary institutions surveyed saw an average 35 per cent increase in the number of counselling appointments on campus.
- According to [Stats Canada](#), Canadians aged 15 to 24 had the highest rates of mood and anxiety disorders of all age groups.
- According to [Youth Mental Health Canada](#), suicide accounts for 24 per cent of all deaths among Canadians aged 15 to 24 years old.
- According to [Youth Mental Health Canada](#), 11 people die every day in Canada by suicide.
- SFU and SFSS partnered with guard.me International Student Insurance and Morneau Shepell, leaders in international counselling support, to introduce My SSP, a Mental Health Student Support Program

- The SSP provides 24/7 remote mental health and well-being support to all SFU students through the phone or mobile app.
- This confidential program is offered at no cost to students.

LEARN MORE:

- [Mental health services at SFU](#)

About Simon Fraser University:

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded more than 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is Canada's leading comprehensive research university and is ranked one of the top universities in the world. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities – Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey – SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 35,000 students, and boasts more than 150,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.

About Simon Fraser Student Society:

The Simon Fraser Student Society exists to improve the health and well-being, social, academic, and financial conditions of our undergraduate students. We provide assistance for campus events, advocate for issues that are important to our members, provide study and social spaces, support clubs and student groups, oversee the undergraduate health and dental plan and more. The SFSS is governed by a student- elected Board of Directors. The SFSS: for students, by students. The SFSS encourages you to make your time here at SFU a memorable experience.

About Morneau Shepell:

Morneau Shepell is the only human resources consulting and technology company that takes an integrated approach to employee well-being, health, benefits and retirement needs. The Company is the largest administrator of retirement and benefits plans and the largest provider of integrated absence management solutions in Canada. LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell is a total well-being solution that combines employee assistance, wellness, recognition and incentive programs. As a leader in strategic HR consulting and innovative pension design, the Company also helps clients solve complex workforce problems and provides integrated productivity, health and retirement solutions. Established in 1966, Morneau Shepell serves approximately 24,000 clients, ranging from small businesses to some of the largest corporations and associations. With more than 4,500 employees in offices across North America, Morneau Shepell provides services to organizations around the globe. Morneau Shepell is a publicly-traded company on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX: MSI). For more information, visit morneaushepell.com.

About guard.me:

guard.me International Insurance is one of the world's largest insurance providers in international education and a leader in addressing the changing needs of organizations and students around the globe. With almost 20 years' experience working with language schools, high schools, universities, colleges, industry associations and agents, guard.me takes pride in keeping international students safe when it matters most. That means creating insurance plans that can be used in every country and for every occasion. Whether students are leaving to go abroad or for international students studying in Canada and the USA, guard.me has a plan for every kind of educational opportunity.

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