MITMedical
Care for our community

Increasing accessibility of MIT Mental Health & Counseling and augmenting personalized support

About MIT MH&C

Student MH&C sees ~21% of students annually

Works with students to identify, understand and solve problems (anxiety, stress, depression)
- Open 5 days a week M-Th 8:30AM- 7PM, F 8:30-5PM
- Call for appts (617) 253-2916 M-F working hours
- Call evenings and weekends (617) 253-4481
- Walk-in sessions M-F 2-4 PM

Team composition / roles – 39 staff members
- Registration / Front Desk – 4 staff
- Referral coordinator / access coordinators – 3 staff
- Psychiatrists, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners, Psychologists, Licensed social worker, clinical nurse specialists – diagnosis and decision on patient treatment plan – 27 FTE

Project methodology and approach

Internal stakeholder research and analysis
- Understand current process flow for MH&C visits, pain points, and opportunities for improvement
- Evaluate counseling center throughput, resource use, and performance indicators for access
- Catalog and assess community mental health resources outside of MH&C

Academic and market research
- Understand new approaches implemented by other counseling centers to address student demand
- Determine use cases in digital mental health
- Research and evaluate digital mental health platforms suitable for needs at MIT

Data analysis

Wait times	- Examined time between intake and first sessions, and time between subsequent visits - Downward trend in mean days to first visit suggests improved access in 2018
Volume over time	- Visit volume and provider throughput peaks during busy academic periods - Seasonality in volume and provider throughput suggest demand-sensitive surge capability
Types of visits	- 45 min-long counseling sessions are the most common appointment type - Short returns and group therapy account for ~10% of visits each
Resource allocation	- "High utilizers" account for a significant proportion of arrived visits and are more likely to be complex with more than one diagnosed conditions

Project overview

Underlying challenges at MIT MH&C
- Mismatch between student demand and availability of MIT MH&C
  - Among a subset of low-to-moderate acuity patients, perceived need for greater immediacy and frequency of interactions with providers
  - Seasonal surges in demand during busy academic periods of each semester
- Student desire for personalized, convenient treatment options and diverse student preferences for receiving mental health support

Project objectives
- Augment accessibility of MH&C support services and engagement between traditional in-person visits to enhance patient satisfaction
  - Identify change(s) in care pathway and/or operational model to better address student demand
  - Evaluate potential digital mental health solution(s) for supplementing care

Recommendations

Increase capacity
- Hiring an additional provider can increase capacity by 7.5%
- Converting 20% of long returns to short returns can increase capacity by 9%

Introduction of a digital mental health solution
- Skill-based telehealth groups offer students the opportunity to access services from their own environment during more convenient times

Consider a stepped care model and integration of mental health resources across campus
- Provide students with a centralized site that aggregates clinical and sub-clinical mental health resources on campus
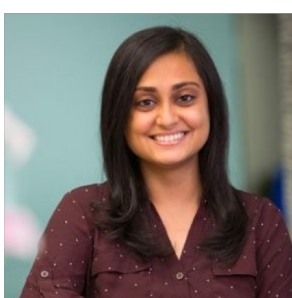
Improve data collection
- Student satisfaction survey (Press Ganey) on annual basis and post-visit satisfaction surveys
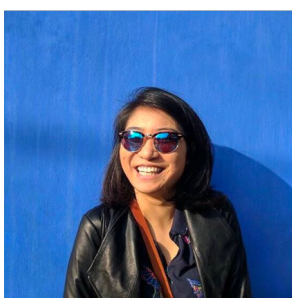- Wait days tracking (granularity)

Team
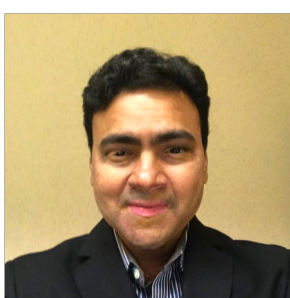
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