

Walk-in counselling aims to tackle long waits for mental health services

By Julia Le
METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Brynne Wrigley has been battling anxiety and depression on and off since she was a teenager. The 30-year-old Burlington resident describes

how she was on an emotional rollercoaster at the time as she struggled with schoolwork, home life and moving to a new city. "Leaving all my friends behind was quite traumatic for me," she said. "Looking back, it wasn't as traumatic as some of the other

things I've been through, but I was very young and didn't know how to absorb it all." Although she saw school counsellors, she still felt alone and wasn't sure how to deal with how she was feeling.

"The dialogue wasn't really there. No one really talked about that type of thing back then," said Wrigley, who described how she somehow managed to get through that time, but hit a few more rough patches over the years before finally getting the help she needed. Last year, when her feelings of anxiety and depression resurfaced, she turned to her family doctor for help.

The doctor was able to connect Wrigley with a counselling service, however it would be a couple of months before she would be able to speak with a professional.

"It was frustrating," Wrigley said. "I had to wait 10 weeks and during that time I was in rough shape."

Wrigley isn't alone when it comes to the long wait times for mental health and addiction services in Halton.

According to one-Link, a single point of access for referrals to 10 mental health and addictions service providers funded by the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network, the need for services far exceeds the demand of available resources not only in

Halton, but across the province.

It can take days, weeks or months depending on the type of care you need, said Zoe Gordon, the manager of one-Link, Halton Healthcare.

"Most systems are based on waitlists just by virtue of the volumes," she said. "We see about 70 new referrals a day."

One-Link began in 2014 and provides screening of clients to better match them with what kind of service they may need. It also has service co-ordinators and peer mentors with limited addiction and mental health experience that give support to people and "most importantly hope while they wait for that necessary intake appointment to a more robust service delivery," said Gordon.

That interim support may look like a follow-up phone call to check in with that person to see how they are doing and how they are coping with their symptoms.

"We find a high majority of our referrals come from people who are expressing symptoms related to anxiety and also depression and people don't naturally know how to cope with those feelings, especially if they're new or if they come on suddenly," she said. "So our team is well equipped to give people some of those skills and strategies to help with their own self management while they wait for higher, intense professionals to be able

BBQ lunch or dinner

(client / staff appreciation, staff training meetings, birthday)

Menus start at **\$9.75 pp++** (based on 100 people)
(groups smaller than 100 welcome, call for pricing)
Including hamburger, hot dog, potato chips and a beverage

Call to confirm your date!
905 864 8511
www.redbbq.ca / info@redbbq.ca

Venue & Catering Services by
Alenilia

Canadian Mental Health Association

Halton Region Branch
Mental health for all

THANK YOU

to our generous sponsors for our Ride Don't Hide community bike ride on June 26, 2016

Platinum Sponsor

Family Fun Zone Activity Sponsor

Start/Finish Line Sponsor

Media Sponsor

For more information on Mental Health, Addictions or our services visit: www.halton.cmha.ca

Together we will end the #stigma of mental health and addictions

Thank you

FROM THE CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION OF HALTON
Due to the generosity of our sponsors, donors and volunteers we raised a historic **\$225,000** to support children, youth and families!

Thank you to our Lead Sponsors

PIONEER FAMILY POOLS
MERCEDES BENZ - OAKVILLE
LONGO BROTHERS FRUIT MARKETS INC

NATIONAL BANK CANADA
FREEDOM 55 FINANCIAL

Thank you to all our Sponsors

Bresqwa Burlington Nissan Burlington Toyota Chef Mike Benninger Christhome Driving CTI Debatte Elizabeth Interiors	Fairview Chrysler Geotab Halton Honda Kelly's Bake Shoppe Laird Survey Group Eli @ Home Michael O'Sullivan	Milton Real Estate Group Moses & Moses Parkgate Financial Pioneer Energy Purdy's Chocolatier RBC - Royal Bank RBC Wealth Management	Tara West Photography TD Bank The Printing House Ltd. Third Octet West of the City William's Distinctive Gems Zeljka Burazin Photography
---	--	---	--