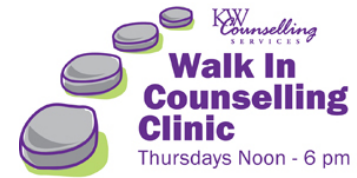


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## **KW Counselling Services' Walk In Counselling Clinic more effective than traditional counselling**

In a comparison of KW Counselling Services' Walk In Counselling Clinic to traditional counselling, Walk In Counselling is proven to be more effective according to an article published in *The Journal of Mental Health* last month.

The clinic is a pioneering local innovation and sees up to 80 people each week on Thursdays between noon and 6pm. "As far as we know, this is the largest volume seen by any walk in counselling clinic in the world," says Leslie Josling, Executive Director of KW Counselling Services.

In 2012-2014, the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) funded a two year study with the Economics Department at the University of Waterloo as well as the Social Work Department at Wilfrid Laurier University to examine the cost and clinical effectiveness of the Walk in Counselling Clinic at KW Counselling Services with comparison to a control group (a traditional counselling agency).

"Our research findings tell us that our Walk In Counselling Clinic is very clinically effective," says Leslie Josling. "Though clients served by both models improve over time we found that Walk In clients improve faster than those served by the traditional model. We were pleased to find that the difference in improvement for Walk In clients compared to the traditional model is more pronounced for clients with complex needs including abuse, trauma and serious mental illness." Additionally, the research demonstrated that people presenting with depression and anxiety also fare better.

The published article notes "Being able to access service quickly and easily was very important to participants who utilized the WICC." As one WICC participant explained, "it was nice, because... when you have these things on your mind you kind of want to get it off right away."

"Unexpectedly," says Josling, "we found that men may find Walk In particularly accessible. Fully half of the clients we saw at Walk In were men, whereas only 37% of clients who use the traditional counselling model are men."

The Walk In Counselling Clinic is also popular amongst youth. Approximately 27% of visitors to the Walk In Counselling Clinic are youth under the age of 20. More than 20% of visitors to the Walk In Counselling Clinic are women who are living in an abusive relationship or who have experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and sexual violence.

"More published papers are forthcoming," says Carol Stalker, Professor Emeritus at WLU. "We are going to report on how clients with complex needs, (including coping with abuse, psychological trauma, serious mental illness or child welfare concerns), especially showed more

pronounced improvement after attending the Walk In Counselling Clinic compared to clients of the traditional model of service delivery who reported similar presenting problems. We're also going to write further about how and why clients valued the accessibility of the walk in model and their particular experiences seeking help." Stalker notes this research is "only the first step towards providing the knowledge we need to understand what kinds of issues are best addressed by this model. More research on the Walk In Counselling model is needed."

"KW Counselling Service's Vision is for a community where no one is left behind," says Josling. "The Walk in Counselling Clinic makes therapeutically potent services more accessible. Walk In Counselling provides timely intervention to those who need it which is refreshing in a world full of waiting lists and service barriers".