



Nomination

Mental health and addictions

Dufferin Area FHT - Mental Health Team

“Investing in Intake”: Increasing Patient Engagement and Reducing Wait-times for Mental Health Services within the Dufferin Area FHT



Since the initiation of a pilot project in September 2016 to implement a more patient-centred, person-directed intake process for mental health counselling/supports, the DAFHT Mental Health Team has witnessed reduced wait-times, increased patient engagement, and improved assessment/triage support with patients, providers, and community partners. 52% of patients seeking mental health counselling are now seen for an initial appointment in less than two weeks; while 74% of patients seeking services are seen in less than four weeks. I believe this effort by the Dufferin Area FHT to value and invest in ‘first contacts’ and change former intake practices to be more responsive, respectful, and timely is worthy of recognition.

Informal and individual patient feedback regarding the new mental health intake process has been collected, but no quantitative evaluation has been undertaken to date. Many patients have expressed satisfaction with the responsiveness of a returned call by the intake therapist or team member, as well the opportunity for a conversation about their needs and resources with the organization, the community and on-line supports. Physicians have also expressed satisfaction with the simplification of the referral process.