

Mental health clinic for Ottawa youth expands operation

BY CHRIS COBB, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN OCTOBER 14, 2011



Emily, a success story of the Youth Services Bureau Mental Health Walk-in Clinic, was on hand on Friday, Oct. 14, 2011, for the announcement of additional funding from the City of Ottawa and Bell Canada to help with operating the clinic.

Photograph by: Wayne Cuddington, Ottawa Citizen

OTTAWA — A walk-in counselling centre launched in January for emotionally troubled youth and their families has been expanded from one to two days a week.

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa announced Friday that the mental health walk-in clinic at 2301 Carling Ave. will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The clinic offers a one-time counselling session of about 90 minutes followed by a referrals to other services where counsellors deem it necessary.

Since it opened, the clinic has seen 225 clients.

“If you can help young people understand their strengths, one session is often enough,” said clinic co-ordinator Ted Charette Friday. “But it’s all in the moment. It’s not like going to the dentist to get your teeth cleaned. When you need help you need it now. So people can come back to the clinic whenever they want.”

According to Ottawa Public Health research, a quarter of youth between the ages of 12 and 20 report

having mental health issues and one in 12 say they have contemplated suicide.

About one third of the people seen by counsellors at the centre since January were self-referrals and around 30 per cent were referred by school guidance counsellors. The centre also saw parents alone or youth and parents together.

According to Charette, if all Ottawa-area young people in need of mental health counselling sought help at the clinic, it would likely be overwhelmed even if it was able to open seven days a week.

“We’re hoping to build more awareness of what we have to offer,” he said.

The clinic’s extra day is being funded with \$80,000 from Ottawa Public Health and a \$40,000 grant from the Bell Canada “Let’s Talk” campaign. (bell.ca/LetsTalk).

The clinic allows walk-ins but also encourages potential clients to call ahead at 613-562-3004 so counsellors can be prepared. The clinic opens between noon and 8 p.m. and is on Carling between Woodroffe Ave and Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre.

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