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Addressing Barriers to Mental Health Service Utilization Among Black Students at the University of Windsor

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Addressing Mental Health Service Utilization Among Black Students at the University of Windsor

A needs assessment was conducted for the University of Windsor's Office of the Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to identify gaps between current and desired conditions for mental health service utilization among Black students at the University of Windsor. As part of its assessment of current conditions, the study explored Black students' knowledge and attitudes towards the university's mental health services. Desired conditions, however, were characterized by students' descriptions of affirming mental health experiences in formal and informal community spaces. The study gathered data by surveys ($n=43$) and semi-structured interviews ($n=4$) conducted with Black students at the University of Windsor ($N=43$) and recruited via snowball sampling. Four pressing needs were identified: (1) Black students need to be aware of the mental health services/resources that are meant to center their experiences; (2) Black students need to feel a sense of belonging at the University of Windsor; (3) Black students need to feel supported in prioritizing and advocating for their wellness; and (4) Black students need to have their mental health needs met with cultural humility, transparency, and openness to community-building strategies less represented in the traditional medical care model.