

“It’s all about you being successful as a student.”

Mental Health and Wellness at a Post-Secondary Institution in Ontario:

A Governmentality Analysis

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ABSTRACT

A mental health crisis is happening on post-secondary campuses in Ontario today. Post-secondary institutions provide mental health services to students in an effort to respond to this crisis and manage students in distress. The management of students and the implementation of these mental health services is the main concern of this thesis, more specifically, the ways in which these services expose conscious and/or unconscious beliefs about student mental health. By extension, these beliefs constitute the ways in which we can think about, talk about, and know about patient safety. The object of study is the intersection of the neo-liberal university with the ‘good’ student and the resulting effects of this relationship on the development and implementation of mental health services. These intersections themselves create possibilities for acting on students in distress, but that also create unintended contradictions in the services themselves. An examination of this intersection can address a gap in the literature on post-secondary student mental health.

The conceptual framework used in this study is primarily built from Michel Foucault’s concepts of subjectivity, and governmentality. The object of consideration is limited in this study to senior employees directly involved in student mental health at a university in Ontario. Documents are analysed to show how student mental health problems have been problematized nationally, provincially and locally and, thus, a behaviour to be regulated with governing practices. Data from interviews with senior University employees and observations of wellness events are analysed to examine the imbrication of advanced liberal rationalities and techniques in the implementation of mental health services on campus. The thesis argues that the development of these services is not an unproblematic process, whereby services and activities act simply as neutral tools to improve the mental health and well-being of students. Rather, these services aim

to produce successful, enterprising students. Discourses of mental health and student success produce certain truths about practices and student subjectivities, obscuring and narrowing the definition of health and well-being and creating contradictions for students experiencing mental distress. In particular, this thesis shows how the University's objectives for providing mental health services have implications for the development of mental health services and the governing of post-secondary in advanced liberal ways.

Key words: post-secondary students, mental health, governmentality, discourse, subjectivity, neo-liberal university

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This thesis is dedicated to all of the post-secondary students who strive to do their best every day of their academic career, despite being completely overwhelmed and not knowing what is going on. Hang in there.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A mental health crisis is happening on post-secondary campuses in Ontario today. Post-secondary institutions are deploying an assembly of mental health and wellness technologies as advanced liberal technique of governing students. In general, this study explores the strategies and tactics through which these technologies are implemented, and the productive effects of student mental health discourses. By this, I mean how the ways in which discourses produce ways in which we can think about, talk about, and know about student mental health at this particular moment in time, in this particular culture, work to shape the possibilities of people acting together while providing mental health services to students. More specifically, this thesis examines the intersections of student mental health discourses with student success discourses and the involvement of these discourses in the constitution and governing of the ‘free’ post-secondary student, wherein the student is not “organised and regulated through compulsion, but through acts of choice” (Rose, 1996b: 54). Mental health is a public health issue in Canada, notably among youth, adolescents, and post-secondary students: “mental health problems experienced by children, youth, and young adults are increasing with estimated rates of at least 50 percent by 2020” (Ontario University and College Health Association (OUCHA), 2017). This thesis demonstrates the ways in which this crisis has been socially constructed in particular ways that can be temporally and culturally located. As student mental health discourses intersect with student success discourses, an examination of the intersection can provide insight into the rationality for existing student mental health services on campuses in Ontario.

The purpose of this chapter is to frame the research question and introduce conceptual and theoretical issues pertinent to analyzing the governing of students with mental health issues via technologies of the self. The objectives of this chapter are to provide a background on the

research problem, outline the significance and the scope of the study, provide a conceptual frame by which to consider the research question, and provide an overview of the chapters that constitute this thesis.

1.1 Background to the Research Problem

Mental health in Canada is a public health issue. It is a major concern among youth, adolescents, and post-secondary students: “mental health problems experienced by children, youth, and young adults are increasing with estimated rates of at least 50 percent by 2020” (Ontario University and College Health Association (OUCHA), 2017). The transitions from late adolescence into early adulthood presents a multitude of new life experiences, stages, and stressors for young people. Their ability to cope and navigate these challenges will be tested again and again. This is especially true for post-secondary students who are possibly leaving home for the first time, living (semi) independently, with limited or no supervision, maybe working on the side, and fully responsible for managing their time and homework load. It is interesting to consider statistics that report that “three quarters of lifetime mental disorders have first onset by the typical post-secondary education age range of 18-24” and that the “greatest concentration of 18-24-year olds is in Ontario’s colleges and universities,” (OUCHA, 2017: 3). In 2016, “65% of [post-secondary] students reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety in the previous year (up from 58% in 2013)”, “46% of students reported feeling so depressed in the previous year it was difficult to function”, and 14% had seriously considered suicide within the previous year (College Student Alliance, & The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Colleges Ontario, & The Council of Ontario Universities, 2017). Anxiety, depression, addictions, eating disorders and attempts at suicide are among the most prevalent mental health disorders taking a toll on college and university students today. In lights of these statistics, it is no surprise

that efforts have been made at all levels of government (federal, provincial, and institutional) to respond to this student mental health crisis. Many post-secondary institutions within the province of Ontario have, in partnership with the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH), created respective campus mental health initiatives that aim to help colleges and universities respond to this overwhelming demand for services and improve their ability to support student mental health and well-being. These initiatives often include a mental health strategy, particular to the post-secondary institution in question, but developed under the umbrella of the provincial mental health and addiction strategy *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* (2011). Some institutions have adopted the Okanagan Charter, which aims to help “post-secondary schools embed health into all aspects of campus culture and lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally” (International Conference on Health Promoting Universities & Colleges, 2015: 3).

Yet, despite all the many efforts of the government, mental health organizations, and institutions to respond to this crisis, students continue to struggle with mental health issues and the severity of the situation is not waning. Gaps in care and fragmented services on campuses are often identified as relevant barriers for improvement, and strategies and recommendations for addressing these issues are frequently touted as the magic bullet to helping students. Campaigns to raise awareness and reduce stigma, implementing evidence-based frameworks, and creating ‘healthy campuses’ and supportive environments for students are consistently promoted as solutions to this crisis. Of particular note is the way mental health initiatives and strategies are presented as a solution to managing students and creating campus communities that foster mental well-being and learning. The assumptions underpinning the proliferation of campus mental health strategies in the past decade is that if post-secondary institutions create a supportive

campus environment, students will gain self-management competencies and coping skills and flourish. Therefore, post-secondary institutions must adopt a mental health strategy in order to respond to the needs of their students and ensure their success, both in academia and in life. In sum, the move to addressing the mental health crisis on post-secondary campuses is a necessary response. While on a surface level, the rationale behind taking a systemic approach to support student mental health and learning seems plausible, a much closer analysis is required to explain how such forms of intervention came to be ‘truthful’, and what the possible unintended consequences this shift might have on the development of mental health services.

1.2 Scope and Purpose of the Study

As mentioned, there is no doubt that many post-secondary institutions are taking action to address the student mental health crisis happening on their campuses. While some have adopted and implemented a whole-of-campus approach and framework, others have implemented mental health projects and programs, peer support and mentoring, health promotion initiatives and activities, counselling, self-help apps, online resources, and so on (CICMH, n.d.).

This thesis does not seek to analyze the effectiveness of these initiatives and resources or explain why they may or may not be beneficial or used by students. Nor is it an analysis of any post-secondary student mental health policies and services. The study is an analysis of the technologies, rationalities, and subjectivities brought together in the context of post-secondary student mental health as they intersect with the beliefs and knowledge of the individuals who work on developing student mental health policies and services. This study argues that this intersection creates unintended consequences and misalignments in services for students.

This study does not seek to criticize the work that is being done at post-secondary institutions to support student mental health. Rather, this study is an exploration of the

relationships between the technologies and rationalities that are part of student mental health and wellness discourses and the governing of students with mental health problems in advanced liberal way. This study hopes to incite critical consideration of the ways in which discourses of student mental health are constructed and the implications of these discourses for the development of mental health services at a post-secondary institution in Ontario.

1.2.1 Conceptual framework for this study

This thesis uses a governmentality approach, (Foucault, 1991a), in the analysis of the advanced liberal ways of governing students with mental health problems in the context of the post-secondary institution. This section outlines the specific concepts used in the analysis conducted in this study.

Discourse: In this study, discourse is considered as a larger system of meaning, wherein the examination of what is being said is to be studied “as events and functional segments gradually coming together” (xvii) as a coherent system outside of the individual (Foucault, 1970/1981). This is in contrast to a definition of discourse as locally constructed.

Power: Power is considered here in terms of its productive effects. Foucault suggests a productive framing of power, where power produces things, including discourse (Foucault, 1977/1980d). Foucault highlighted power as a structure of actions as “a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions” (Foucault, 1982: 789). In this consideration, power means relations and designates relationships; it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Considering the exercise of power as an ensemble of actions integrated into a disparate field of possibilities (Foucault, 1982) opens up the consideration of resistance, where “there are no relations of power without resistances” (Foucault, 1977/1980d: 142).

Truth and knowledge: Truth, knowledge, and power are inextricably wound up in one another; as “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Foucault, 1975/1980b: 52) and “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault, 1977/1995: 27).

Subject/subjectivity: Foucault’s work focuses on the process by which subjectivities are made, to what purpose, and to what degree of success. Within this framework, forms of governing can presuppose a preferred subjectivity, but cannot determine it. A form of governing is successful to the extent that individuals come to experience themselves through the presupposed capacities.

Governmentality: Foucault’s concept of governmentality brings together the concepts of power, knowledge, and subjectification. To govern is “to structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982: 789-790). The ‘mentality’ part of the word governmentality can be thought of like rationalities of governing (Dean, 2010), which refer to relatively systematic ways of thinking about governing (Dean, 2010). These rationalities set up relationships and conditions of possibility for governing.

Thus, an *analytics of governmentality* explores the forms of knowledge and technologies deployed in the regulation of conduct, examining the conditions under which regimes of practice came into being, are transformed, and maintained (Rose, 1993). What is more, a governmentality analysis provides a conceptual connection between the concepts of power, truth, and subjectification. Since we govern ourselves and others by what we come to understand as true, governing entails not only relations of power and authority within institutions, but also issues of self (Dean, 2010). The interplay between knowledge, power, and action is productive in that it produces possibilities for action (Gilbert & Powell, 2010). Thus, the governmentality analytic

creates the possibility to think about the relationships between power, truth, knowledge, and subjectivities within a particular institutional setting. Resistance creates unpredictability and, by extension, possibilities for (un)intended consequences as a result of the application of specific rationalities and their associated technologies.

1.2.2 Research question

The central research question that is addressed in this thesis is as follows: *What are the effects of the intersection of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and governmentality of student mental health on services at a post-secondary campus in Ontario?*

The key research sub-questions that guide the interrogation of the central research question are:

- 1) How did mental health or mental well-being come to be seen as a technique through which students can be governed?
- 2) What are the rationalities and techniques of governing through which mental health policies and services are translated and performed in practice in the context of a post-secondary institution in Ontario?
- 3) What are the effects of mental health policies and services on the practice of governing of students at a post-secondary institution in Ontario?

1.3 Overview of Chapters

This thesis is composed of seven chapters: the current introductory Chapter 1 aims to frame the research problem and introduce the underlying conceptual and theoretical issues. Chapter 2 presents the governmentality approach as a conceptual framework for examining the effects of the rise of the neo-liberal university in governing of students in general, as well as students with mental health problems. The central objective of this chapter is to show the overall utility of applying a governmentality analysis to analyze the practices of governing students with

mental health problems in an advanced liberal way. To do this, I divided the chapter into three main sections: the rise of the neo-liberal university, governmentality and the neo-liberal university, and governmentality and student mental health. Each section folds into the next, enabling the analysis of governing students with mental health problems in the context of the neo-liberal university.

Chapter 3 provides context for conducting this study. Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach used in this thesis. Concepts from the writings contained within governmentality as an analytics of government (Dean, 2010) are employed to develop a methodological framework for addressing the research questions that support this thesis. This chapter also outlines the qualitative research methods undertaken in this study, consisting of semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The utility of the methods used are also discussed.

Chapters 5 through 7 are analytical chapters. Together, these chapters address the main research question: *What are the effects of the intersection of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and governmentality of student mental health on services at a post-secondary campus in Ontario?* The overarching argument is that practices for governing students with mental health problems in ways that are consistent with advanced liberal techniques, enacted from certain truths about student mental health, requires particular subjectivities from students, and therefore produce unintended contradictions and misaligned services for students. Briefly, the argument begins with the problematization of post-secondary student mental health problems as they manifest in federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents, then moves to an analytical description of mental health discourses deployed in these texts, thereby revealing the rationality for the problematic (Chapter 5), before localizing the problematic at a particular post-secondary

institution in Ontario and highlighting the institutional response to the problematic with the use of advanced liberal governing techniques for student success shaped by truths about student mental health, culminating in an analysis of the student subjectivities created by the neo-liberal university (Chapter 6). These chapters build upon one another in such a way that the overarching argument is best understood within the context of all four analytical chapters. Chapter 7 outlines the key findings of the thesis and raises possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to situate this study within the existing literature and explore how this literature relates to this thesis. The first objective of this chapter is to present the rise of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution in North America, specifically in Canada, and to locate the post-secondary student within this institution as a consumer and entrepreneur. Then, having located this study within this intersection, the chapter turns to the examination of the concept of governmentality and the practice of governing post-secondary students at the neo-liberal post-secondary institution. The constitution of the ‘good’ student is outlined in this sub-section of the chapter as a unit of analysis in the investigation of this practice as a technique of governing. The third objective of this chapter applies the concept of governmentality to the post-secondary student with mental health problems. This third section highlights the problematization of post-secondary students with mental health problems and examines the rationale for governing these students with the use of governing technologies.

2.2 The Rise of the Neo-liberal Economy

In the 1970s, a neo-liberal economic agenda was on the rise in the Western world. “Neo-liberalism, as a specific mode of government, is variously articulated as advanced liberalism, neo-conservatism, economic liberalism and economic rationalism” (Davies et al., 2006: 306). Although it developed in various iterations around the world, each version comprised the ideas of

a liberal humanity expressed as philosophy (a relation between the individual and the social, in terms of character, ethics and morality, and the exercise of autonomy, responsibility, freedom and choice); a liberal economics (a relation between the individual, government and the market); and a conservative form of government (generally associated with a right politics that emphasises a withdrawal of government from the welfare state). (Davies et al., 2006: 306)

The emergence of neo-liberalism was a transformation, or rather expansion, of the regulated market to the free market and minimal regulation of the economy. The new aspect of this liberalism comes from the ways in which neo-liberalism alters the liberal economic theory to correspond to new material conditions (Turner, 2008). It was a (re)turn to free market economic practices and a *laissez-faire* economic theory, but that expanded beyond just the economy and into all aspects of human life. “Proponents of neoliberalism view the market as the natural and inevitable organizing and evaluative force in all social, cultural, and economic matters (Saunders, 2010: 46). They believe that free trade and competition are natural forces that will bring about economic growth and global prosperity. This, in turn, will benefit all individuals; if this is a lack of growth and prosperity, this is caused by external interferences in the market’s operations (Harman, 2008). Ultimately, believers of neo-liberalism view free markets as the way to maximum amounts of wealth for those who put in the hard work and effort. Any external interferences with these ‘natural’ processes (such as state intervention and welfare programs) should be eliminated to allow free engagement with the market (Saunders, 2010). In this way, the

economy becomes part of all social relations and everything in society can be commodified and marketed, including relationships, cultures, and social institutions such as schools (Baez, 2007). When social relations become imbedded in the economy, as opposed to the reverse, the market can then put a price on everything and inherently determine what would be an efficient economic and personal decision. All individual choices are thus individual economic choices.

2.2.1 The Role of the state

With the rise of neo-liberalism, state interference was restricted, and, with it, welfare programs were reduced, abolished, or privatized. The role of the state was substantially redefined, and its power is instead directed in different ways toward economic rationality (Baez, 2007) and facilitating free market operations. In the absence of the administrative state, individuals are now configured as responsible “entrepreneurial actors across all dimension of their lives” (Brown, 2003: 38), capable of making successful and rational choices that will improve their financial state, and thus be responsible and profitable citizens of one’s society and economy. The rationality behind the neoliberal individual stems from the embeddedness of society and culture in the economy, and the same belief of economic rationality is also applied to the social sphere. With reduced state intervention, individuals are free and autonomous to pursue their (economic) interests. If they encounter any challenges in pursuing their own interests, these are not social problems, but individual challenges and fully the responsibility of the individual. From a neoliberal perspective, continued existence of a welfare state suggests an incentive for laziness or idleness, and consequently it is believed that the state should institute “new forms of surveillance, performance appraisal and accountability” (Olssen, 2016: 130). Thus, neoliberalism enables a transfer of risk from the state to the individual, which results in heightened individualism and responsabilisation through competition (Davies et al., 2006: 307).

A natural output of neo-liberal ideology is the redefinition of individuals as purchasers and consumers, given that every aspect of society now has a price and can be commodified and marketed. This applies to everything in their lives, from educational and professional decisions, personal relationships, and hobbies. The goal for the entrepreneurial neoliberal individual is to always be acting to enhance human capital (Saunders, 2010).

2.2.2 Neo-liberalism and the post-secondary institution

Similar to the pervasive shift that occurred in North America in the 1970s to a neo-liberal ideology, higher educational institutions also experienced a shift in the pursuit of this neoliberal agenda. Changes in economic structure, as well as the change in purpose of higher education have been well documented (Aronowitz, 2000; Ayers, 2005; Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Hill, 2003; Levin, 2005; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). With the welfare state falling to the wayside and social services being reduced, drastic cuts in state funding were made to public higher education. In place of state funding, a marketized model was introduced, largely transferring the cost of education to the individual, or the ‘user’ (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016). Not only are students now required to purchase these former public services at a market price/value, they are also now responsible for the financial risk that comes with the cost. In this way, the government is protected from the risk of marketing higher education as a commodity. Application of neo-liberal policies and economic rationalities to making decisions has transformed the university to be increasingly governed as a traditional business, and so faculty are regarded as traditional workers, while students are viewed as customers (Saunders, 2010).

While the commercialization in higher education has existed long before its pervasive expansion in the 1970s (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016), that of the 21st century differs in that “commercialization is [now] normalised and its operational values and purposes have been

encoded in the systems of all types of universities” (Lynch, 2006: 2). The neoliberal university, which is focused on meeting the needs of the market and generating revenue, is contrasted with the university that previously focused on civic engagement, democratic education, and learning for its own sake (Saunders, 2010). This being said, Saunders (2010) highlights that the claims of the university as a democratic institution is hardly altruistic. Therefore, it seems that the corporatization and marketization of the higher education institution was taking place to fulfill its monetary needs (or desires) a century or more prior to the rise of neoliberalism. What the neoliberal agenda has enabled, however, is a “substantial accentuation of its previous functions...[wherein] the scope and extent of these profit-driven, corporate ends, as well as how many students, faculty, administrators, and policy makers explicitly support and embrace these capitalistic goals and priorities” (Saunders, 2010: 55).

What Saunders is highlighting is a shift from the purpose of the higher education institution for the purposes of producing marketable, commercially-oriented professionals rather than public-interest oriented, which places a higher value on marketable individualism than on public interest values. What is more is that, in light of the reduced social funding model, tuition and other related fees are increased and left fully responsible to manage this imbalance and financial burden. The higher education institutions also now look to the students to generate this loss of income from the State. The continuous increased raises in tuition, even in times of economic prosperity exemplifies an economic agenda where generating revenue from private sources (or students) is not a necessity, but a more fundamental shift in the institutional economic logic (Saunders, 2010). The attention, resources, and interests of higher-education institutions has largely shifted to faculties and subjects that can enable institutions to generate the most revenue, via private or public sources, because these are the areas that create the most

marketable individuals. In Canada, the government does play a role in determining which areas should be a priority for post-secondary institutions and creates incentives for them to meet these priorities (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016). In Canada, higher education has become less of a mechanism for creating academic-humanist and citizenship values and more for creating instruments such as competition, private interest, and profit (Kirby, 2012). The purpose of a higher education is thus redefined to develop highly skilled and knowledgeable workers. The knowledge obtained through an education is a valuable commodity, required to fulfill the economic needs of both private and public sectors. This ‘knowledge economy’ demonstrates the significantly changing role of knowledge, wherein it has become a form of capital (Burton-Jones, 1999). In the knowledge economy, the lines between learner and worker (and ultimately between manager and worker) is blurred because individuals are now responsible for their own knowledge capital. In the present neo-liberal era, post-secondary education is unmistakably designed to meet the needs of the economy, with student development and educational outcomes increasingly narrowed to focus on career training and development (Saunders, 2010). Therefore, as a rational economic actor, a student will obtain an education for the economic status it will ultimately produce.

2.2.3 The Student as consumer

With the rise of the neo-liberal university, we have seen the purpose and goal of the post-secondary institution change to produce skilled workers to meet the economic demands of society. For students, obtaining an education is no longer about becoming a well-rounded citizen, but about gaining knowledge capital. Not only has there been a shift in the ulterior purpose of academic institutions, there has also been a shift in the role of the student as rational actor. “Neoliberal policies have effectively transformed students with higher education from students

to customers” (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016: 62). In this same vein, students have become purchasers and their education, a commodity. Students in North America have always purchased their education by way of tuition fees, this economic exchange was not their primary identity; students were primarily learners (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016; Saunders, 2010). In the neoliberal university, the institution-student relationship is a service provider-customer relationship. Students are redefined as consumers “who possess roles, rights, and obligations analogous to those of private customers in the market place” (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016: 63). There is an evolution of a consumer culture wherein students are more concerned with acquiring a degree and career skills above acquiring knowledge and the sake of general education. Given that individuals in the neo-liberal world are constantly striving to improve and compete with their peers for economic gain, students in higher education are certainly more focused on themselves and how they can market their skills and knowledge and less concerned with being part of a knowledge community. “Students’ involvement and identify within the institution becomes increasingly defined by their consumer orientation” (Saunders, 2010: 61). In return, institutions operate and respond to their students’ demands in the same way as a business and a degree becomes viewed as something (a commodity) that an individual must obtain in order to enter the job market.

This change in approach to gaining a higher education has considerable implications for students and their ability to develop processes for deeper thinking and understanding. The consumerist approach means that students as consumers are less focused on learning how to challenge themselves and their beliefs, master a skill, or grow as an individual. Rather, all students require is to obtain the highest mark possible that will enable them to remain competitive and achieve the economic success desired (Saunders, 2010). The neo-liberal

approach to higher education also redefines the relationship between students and faculty members. Students as consumers have expectations from the faculty, for example the provision of a syllabus that will act as a type of contract that must not be altered or create any unexpected challenges throughout the semester. This contract comes back to and highlights the roles, rights, and obligations of all parties involved. The neo-liberal student as consumer expects the acquisition of a certain credential and, as such, the provider of the “goods and services” is expected to provide the relevant competencies and skills. This changes the way academic content is developed as well as how the quality of teaching is measured. “[Q]uality teaching is judged not by campus professionals but by provincial policymakers who make their assessment on the basis of standardized data and outcomes measures” (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016: 65).

2.2.4 Audit culture

It is here, in the regulated, standardized, and managed audit culture of post-secondary institutions, that lies a paradox. Audit culture is “a *condition*[sic]: one shaped by the use of modern techniques and principles of financial audit, but in contexts far removed from the world of financial accountancy” (Shore, 2008: 279). Audit culture can be characterized in contexts where the same techniques and values of accountancy are the primary organizing principles in governing and managing human behaviour, as well as in the new environment and practices that are created as a result (Shore, 2008). The rise of audit culture grew out of increasing concerns for quality assurance and the crisis of trust that accompanied the New Public Management reforms of the 1980s (Shore, 2008). Traditional systems of voluntary regulation were undermined in the fallout of the failures of various professions involving regulatory bodies, such as medicine, the military, banks, the Catholic Church, etc. (Shore, 2008; Shore & Wright, 2015). These were replaced with audit systems, intended to restore the public confidence by introducing a system of

verification and inspection. However, it is this very system of audit and its supposed design to promote transparency and efficiency that is, in reality, creating indicators that become targets and auditees (institutions, individuals, etc.) that are transformed into auditable entities (Shore & Wright, 2015). The idea of accountability is confused with accountancy, and so what is meant to be transparent and answerable to the public is transformed into a measure of productivity, economic efficiency and value for money (Shore, 2008).

The perverse effects of audit culture can be observed at post-secondary institutions and in their shift from a place of higher learning to the corporate enterprise, whose focus is on producing marketable students to meet the economic demands of society and maximizing economic return and investment (Shore, 2008). As previously discussed, the cuts in government funding to post-secondary institutions means that higher education has become marketed as a valuable commodity and institutions thus operate as private businesses, selling quality education to their student customers. In order to ensure the public that it is providing a quality service and product to its customers, the audit culture “in higher education applies auditability mechanisms that are known by such names as performance indicators, benchmarks, quality assurance protocols...” (Craig et al., 2014: 7). A post-secondary institution’s performance can now be quantified, based on the aforementioned indicators. This change to an entrepreneurial and business model for higher education institutions has a perverse effect on academia itself. If post-secondary institutions are first and foremost corporate enterprises then the primary concern is how the institution will achieve value for money. They needed to be more efficient and more competitive (Shore, 2008), which usually meant increasing the number of students admitted without increasing the number of full-time faculty and staff.

The managerial strategies of the 1980s New Public Management (Shore & Wright, 2015) set out to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching and research. It was the government's view that efficiency and savings would not decrease the standard of teaching and research because a new quality assurance procedure was introduced at the time. By adopting audit culture and the behaviours that enable it to persist without being challenged, it becomes even more entrenched in academic operations. Philosopher Michael Power (1997) has noted that audit procedures "transform the environments to which they are applied" (90) and organizations and institutions reshape their values around that which is measured. In this way, audit culture has a governance effect that aims to make institutions more accountable to its funders, stakeholders, consumers, to the government and public (Shore & Wright, 2015) by setting performance indicators and assessing against benchmarks.

Audit culture is the epitome of the neo-liberal idea of the regulatory state and governance at a distance (Shore, 2008). Similar to neo-liberal policies, audit culture policies are disciplinary technologies that aim to instill new norms of conduct into the workforce (Rose, 1999). The external regulatory mechanism of audit and accountability have transformed the conduct of institutions and their employees by setting measurable and achievable objectives. The state has in fact transformed the conduct and purpose of higher education institutions to produce individuals that meet its economic demands. And it has done this, not through direct interference, but by inculcating post-secondary institutions to align with its own political goals and adopt behaviours to make this happen. Anthropologists Shore and Wright (1999, 2000, 2015) argue that with the emergence of the New Public Management, post-secondary institutions have adopted practices of performance measurement and management that are centrally based in neo-liberal notions of

individualisation and competitiveness. These practices focus on producing the optimally productive and performing student.

All in all, the regulatory measures instilled by audit culture align with philosopher Michel Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality, wherein rationalities of governing deploy technologies, such as the audit, to act indirectly upon individuals to achieve a certain objective. Foucault posited that institutions and individuals can be governed at a distance, without the use of force or coercion, and for the purposes of efficiency and productivity through relatively marginal instruments such as the audit. In the same way that individuals can be governed, they also self-govern through what Foucault (1977) called disciplinary practices. As I have already described, audits and performance management mechanism such as school exams are examples of such practices. These practices are ways in which routine activities become normalized and taken for granted but shape individual behaviour to align with that which is desired by those with most power (Craig et al., 2014).

In this section, I outlined the emergence of audit culture as a neo-liberal governing technique to shape individual behaviour for economic purposes. In the context of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution, the audit has become a central organizing principle to measure its production of 'good' students. The next section explains in further detail the concept of governmentality and the post-secondary institution as an advanced liberal technique of government.

2.3 Governmentality and the Neo-liberal Post-Secondary Institution

The previous section outlined the rise of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and the implications of this transformation from gaining knowledge for the betterment of society to knowledge as a commodity to be bought and sold and to produce citizens to fit the particular

needs of the economy. The notion of students as consumers of education for the purposes of becoming economically productive citizens was introduced to highlight the outcome of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution in North America. Similarly, audit culture was also highlighted as another outcome of neo-liberal ideology to regulate and control institutions for economic purposes. In this section, I will expand on Foucault's concept of governmentality and how it explains neo-liberalism as a mode of governing at-a-distance with the use of advanced liberal (neo-liberal) techniques.

The audit, as has been discussed, derives its ability to control from its capacity to act upon systems that in turn also control individuals. Thus, the practice of auditing is a technique deployed to make an institution governable. The audit is a mundane practice used to judge an institution for its capacity to produce results and to hold it accountable. This practice has become so taken-for-granted and pervasive as an instrument of internal management of institutions that such mechanisms remain unquestioned. Increasingly, they are "also used to assess performance and encourage people to think of themselves as calculating, responsible, self-managing subjects" (Shore & Wright, 2015: 421). Audit culture, and similar mechanisms, is what Foucault (1980) referred to as a rationality of governance, or governmentality, and a corresponding set of practices. Governmentality is a complex construct that includes the ways social institutions endeavor to guide, shape, and direct the behaviour of others and the ways individuals govern themselves and their actions (Foucault, 1991). Thus, the concept of governmentality is useful for understanding the duality of an actor or institution acting as governor and governed, such as the student as consumer *and* entrepreneur, and for understanding the multiple techniques of guiding behaviours in a neo-liberal state (Talburt, 2005). Using Foucault's theory of governmentality,

this section explores how such regimes of governance can be applied to the managed post-secondary institution with advanced liberal techniques.

2.3.1 Governmentality – the art of government

As I have discussed, the advanced liberal corporatization of post-secondary institutions and commodification of education has not led to a diminishment of government control, but rather to a shift in the modes of exercising power and control. Control is exercised indirectly and through multiple locations and in multiple forms. These forms constitute “a market governed by rationalities of competition, accountability, and consumer demand [that work] through the deregulated choices of individual citizens” (Miklaucic, 2003: 327-328). Herein lies Foucault’s ‘art of government.’ Foucault aimed to understand the art of government that emerged in the sixteenth century and the series of problems and concerns that arose with this liberal form of governing individuals, families, and populations. He suggested that liberalism is “an art of governing that arises as a critique of excessive government—a search for a technology of government that can address the recurrent complaint that authorities are governing too much” (Rose et al., 2006: 84).

Foucault’s contributions to contemporary social science include the analysis of power and knowledge, work on the understanding of the emergence of the modern self through disciplinary technologies, and analysis of governmentality (Turner, 1997). Foucault saw power to be operating and disguised through a social system and set of day-to-day practices carried out at the local level. Through these practices, individuals are controlled and disciplined, and society is managed. Foucault’s ideas about power were developed through his work in ‘governmentality,’ that is to say the mechanism for regulating and controlling populations through an apparatus of security (Gutting, 1989). These apparatuses in liberal government do

not, however, act upon the actions of individuals to suppress their freedom, but to maximize their capacities and to produce active citizens. Government as the “‘conduct of conduct’ entails the idea that the one governed is...an actor and therefore a locus of freedom” (Dean, 2010: 21). Therefore, governmentality is not simply about control and regulation. Dean (2010) explains that it is about rational activity, undertaken by employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape behaviour and conduct in all aspects of human life. Without direct control, neoliberal forms of government fall back on techniques and mechanisms for governing *through* society, using programs that then shape and guide responsible, self-disciplining social subjects (Hay, 2003).

The technologies of governing involve aligning the interests of individuals, such as students and faculty members, with collective interests and naturalising those interests, associated behaviours, and abilities through the creation and surveillance of norms for education and teaching (Talburt, 2005). In this way, this technique of governing seeks to determine the correct way of managing individuals so that there is a continuity and alignment between the ideals of, in this case, the institution and students. When individual behaviour is aligned with collective interests, it then contributes to the needs of the whole and strengthens it through productivity (Talburt, 2005). In the case of post-secondary institutions

the governance of self and others for both safety and profit ties individual to collective, or corporate, aims (or the common good). Considered in relation to universities, which face perpetual problems, individual responsibility for revenue generation and the garnering of prestige serve collective aims and become normative orientations for faculty work and the purposes of research and teaching. Budget ‘crises’ and ‘incentives’ align faculty behaviors with the market in order to save the self and the ‘common good’. (Talburt, 2005: 487)

In the post-secondary institution setting, technologies of measurement, such as performance indicators, benchmarking, audits, etc., act as a form of government by shaping conduct into the

optimization of performance (Dean, 1999). By calling on the responsibility of the institution and its employees to serve the public good through the use of performance technologies, they become enmeshed in technologies that constitute forms of power that work on the individual and the collective (Talburt, 2005).

Technologies of performance not only provide an instrument for judging institutions, they also provide the knowledge needed in order to make them governable. In order for a government to be able to act upon the action of a population, or a specific institution, one must have *knowledge* of this particular population, which brings us back to one of Foucault's contributions as previously mentioned. Power and knowledge are so interconnected that to increase power, there must also be an increase in knowledge and vice-versa. This method of governing is not reliant upon sovereign force or even discipline. It depends upon the willingness of individuals to exercise their own autonomy and responsibility to pursue their interests in ways that align with the collective. As such, individuals are governed at a distance, a technique of governing based on the rationality of indirect interference and the imposition of a form of conduct of force "through a delicate affiliation of a loose assemblage of agents and agencies into a functioning network" (Miller & Rose, 1990: 9-10).

This section has outlined how the art of modern government is reconstituting different forms of power within "this concern for the population and its optimization (in terms of wealth, health, happiness, prosperity, efficiency), and the forms of knowledge and technical means appropriate to it" (Dean, 2010: 30, parenthesis in original). Through their self-governance, students align themselves with an advanced liberal rationality of the post-secondary institution. They are both governed and self-governed (Dean, 2010) and become subjects to this form of power and the knowledge that is produced from this governance. Foucault's work on

governmentality focused on the process by which subjectivities are made and to what purpose. Forms of government do not determine forms of subjectivity, but rather can presuppose a preferred form of subjectivity. In this way, governing implies a “way of acting on conduct to elicit various identifications for various reasons” (Dean, 2010: 44). The next section will outline the subjectivities of students at neo-liberal post-secondary institutions that are required in this power/knowledge relationship.

2.3.2 Governmentality and the ‘good’ student

In the previous section, I outlined how neo-liberalism acts as a mode of governing on post-secondary institutions with the use of advanced liberal techniques to govern and be governed at-a-distance, ultimately to produce active citizens in line with the economy’s needs. Similarly, post-secondary students are governed and self-govern, accepting the subjectivity of student as consumer and entrepreneur of one’s education. This section will build on the power/knowledge relationship that results from this reconstituted form of control of the post-secondary student.

“Without direct control, neo-liberal forms of government rely on ‘mechanisms for governing ‘through society,’ through programs that shape, guide, channel – and upon *responsible*, self-disciplining social subjects” (Hay, 2003: 166). Through the perception of having freedom to make one’s own choices and be responsible for one’s academic career, the post-secondary student is in fact governed by the post-secondary institution with a particular means in mind: creating the docile, ‘good’ student (Grant, 1997). With the use of technologies of domination, which originate in the institution, and those of the self, “students are disciplined both by the institution and by themselves to become more like the norm of the ‘good’ student” (Grant, 1997: 101). ‘Good’ students position themselves as subjects, as a particular type of person

(Foucault, 1988, 2005) and accept the truths that the post-secondary institution produces about what it means to be ‘good’ and docile.

Similar to the audit, which is a technology deployed to make a post-secondary institution knowable and governable, students are made knowable and governable through the administration of assignments, examinations, and tests. And similar to the results of an audit, these instruments produce results with which the skill and productivity of students can be measured and judged. Like with the audit, these practices create self-actualizing subjects and docile bodies that exercise a form of power on themselves without direct interference from the post-secondary institution or the state. Foucault (1995) theorized that power circulates via institutional practices across different regimes of practice, such as education, and this power produces what individuals accept as truth. This can be seen in the power/knowledge dynamic between students and formal education that is presented to them as authoritative, valued and worth knowing and doing to be a ‘good’ and successful student. As students accept this truth and subject themselves to it, the technologies of power “are mobilized and facilitate the creation of technologies of self that serve a process of self-actualization through which individuals are disposed to act and talk the truth of the regime” (Worthman & Troiano, 2019: 264). Through these tactics and technologies of the self, the student becomes self-regulated, or self-governed. ‘Good’ and successful students exercise their individual freedom as consumers and entrepreneurs, responsible for making smart choices about their education, doing well in school, graduating, and finding employment. Any discrepancies from the norm are considered to be abnormal or deviant behaviours and the fault and responsibility of the individual to correct. Thus, students are governed at-a-distance through the use of mundane instruments of knowledge or advanced liberal techniques (texts and examinations) and expertise (professors and

administrators), ultimately for the purposes of producing active and productive citizens, which they are led to believe is in their best interest.

Institutions act on students through education as a technique of governing, but students also act upon themselves and become experts of their own choices and responsibilities. This shift to individual responsibility has occurred, as we have discussed above, in the rise of the neo-liberal state. Forms of self-governance link autonomy with responsibility and risk and decision-making are transferred to the individual through action known as the new prudentialism. This is a “type of technology that removes the key conception of regulating individuals by collectivist risk management, and throws back upon the individual the responsibility for managing risk” (O’Malley, 1996: 196-7). ‘Good’ students, as prudent and self-enterprising citizens, by way of their expertise and knowledge, are expected to and responsible for making calculated choices that will maximize their lives and productivity. Foucault (1986) referred to this ‘care of the self’, wherein technologies of knowledge are applied to gain skills and knowledge for the purposes of gaining greater self-control and self-understanding. In the case of post-secondary students, they have freedom and agency to make choices about their education with rational, economic logic of a consumer. Advanced liberal techniques of governance thus allow for state control to be dispersed across all aspects of social life and, as a result, organize and control all sectors of society for the economic benefit of the population.

As post-secondary students accept institutional practices and games of truth, they sustain and propagate the belief of what it is to be a ‘good’ student. In this way, a discourse is constructed and accepted by students. Here, I take a moment to repeat the meaning of ‘discourse’:

Discourses are . . . about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and

social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations . . .
Thus, discourses construct certain possibilities for thought. (Ball, 1990: 17)

Discourse refers to a system of meaning, a set of ideas and practices with particular conditions, that determines what is sayable and knowable (Foucault, 1970/1981) about the ‘good’ student. This discourse contributes to the reordering of relationships between students and the post-secondary institution and has implications for the student subjectivity. Therefore, ‘good’ student discourse participates in the governing of students in ways that are consistent with advanced liberal rationalities. Thus the ‘good’ student discourse shapes the parameters of what is appropriate and normal for post-secondary students and provides guidelines about how they should regulate and experience their bodies (Lupton, 1997). While the hegemonic discourse of the ‘good’ student is largely accepted by post-secondary students, the student-subject subjectivity is resisted in many ways, thereby threatening the disciplinary function of the post-secondary institution. As such, poor student behaviour (e.g. poor marks, absence from class, lack of studying, drop-out, etc.) and lack of academic success is considered to be undesirable, problematic, and as impeding students from working on themselves for their own economic benefit (Grant, 1997) and the benefit of society as a whole.

In this section, I continued to build on the concept of governmentality and the constitution of the ‘good’ student subjectivity that is created and maintained through advanced liberal governing techniques at post-secondary institutions. The acceptance of this subjectivity by students enables the post-secondary institution to govern students at-a-distance and students to self-govern, thereby ensuring that they behave as they should (Foucault, 1991) and that the goals of the student align with that of the institution for the common good. The ‘good’ student becomes normalized, the desirable outcome, and students who obey are made governable, docile bodies. However, students who reject this identity resist the disciplinary power of the post-

secondary institution. In the next section, I will outline how this resistance to or negotiation of the normalized, constructed idea of the ‘good’ student is considered problematic for neo-liberal post-secondary institutions.

2.3.3. *Problematic of government*

In this section, I will introduce the problematic of government and relate this to the construction and perpetuation of the ‘good’ student as the desirable subjectivity by post-secondary institutions and students. As Rose and Miller (1992) explain, government “is a *problematizing* activity...The ideals of government are intrinsically linked to the problems around which it circulates, the failings it seeks to rectify, the ills it seeks to cure” (181, italics in the original). This section explains the political rationality that is made manifest through the problematization of governing students who resist the ‘good’ student subjectivity. This section also outlines the programmes of government that emerge from this rationality and that aim to regulate the ‘good’ student.

The art of government as it appears in all this literature is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce the *oeconomy*, that is the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth and family (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making it thrive-how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family, in the management of the State. (Foucault, 1979: 10)

It is with this problematic in mind that we can consider the term ‘government’ by Foucault’s phrase the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 1982: 220-1; 2007: 192-3), or the regulation of our behaviour. Essentially, government is “any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms for a variety of ends” (Dean, 1999: 10). Therefore, governmentality is essentially a way of problematizing life, or conduct, and seeking to act upon it with a specific goal in mind. Crime, poverty and unemployment are just a few examples of undesirable conduct that weakens a population, its efficiency and productivity,

and therefore requires management and regulation through various technologies of government. In this sense, and as we have already seen, a technology refers to an assembly of forms of knowledge with a variety of mechanical devices and an assortment of little techniques oriented to produce certain practical outcomes and capable of reshaping the roles and practices for humans (Rose: 1999). Governmentality thus asks the question of how best to manage and exercise power over the population and its conduct so as to ensure the good of each and of all.

In the *Lectures at the College de France*, Foucault (2003) argued that at the end of the 18th century, endemics were viewed as incapacitating phenomena because they were difficult to eradicate, sapped the population's strength, led to a fall in production, and placed a large strain on a society's resources. These illnesses were affecting a population, weakened it by perpetually gnawing. As such, these endemics fall under the concern with governing all aspects of life of a population and require regulatory mechanisms to eradicate or neutralise the debilitating effects (Foucault, 2003). In the 18th century, the population and its overall health had emerged as an object of intervention, one that was of great value and that could be regulated for economic management, notably with the use of statistical data (i.e. birth rates, death rates, population growth). Therefore, it was necessary to organize around the population an apparatus of security to ensure the subjection of its individuals and their constant increase in utility (Foucault, 2000). Here, the problematizing activity of government is can be observed: before illness could become a concept or a valuing process, it first had to be inscribed as problematic (Dillon & Lobo-Guerrero, 2008). Discourses of illness and health gave rise to various kinds of governmental technologies and political rationalities, derived from the knowledge gathered on the population and experts. Thus, health and illness of a population is called into question given the potential for debilitating or productive effects on a population. Population health is made into an object of

knowledge and made governable through technologies of government. Similarly, in the context of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution, the student has emerged as the object of intervention, a commodity that can be regulated at-a-distance by the institution for economic productivity. The student becomes problematized when the ‘good’ student subjectivity is rejected and presents a threat to the goal of the institution to fulfill the needs of the economy by producing active, docile, and ‘good’ students.

Today, social problems are treated as permanent problems of control and management that weaken our population and economy, and thus the state as a whole. Programmes of governments are created to act on individuals in order to control this problematic behaviour. Rose and Miller (1990) explain that many programmes seek to align individuals in the pursuit of political, economic, and social objectives as the key to effectiveness. These are translated into the values and decisions of individuals, functioning as self-steering mechanisms. They are autonomous and free, but ultimately the programmes rely on the capacity of the individuals as well as a range of technologies that act on these capacities, “organizing and orienting them in the decisions and actions that seem most ‘personal’, and that confront them in the multitude of everyday tasks entailed in managing their own existence” (Rose & Miller, 1990: 19). It is argued that the personal capacities of individuals can be managed in such a way so as to then achieve socially desirable goals, strengthening the population, its productivity and economy. Aspects of life are problematized but solutions for overcoming such problems are suggested through the various programmes, techniques of government and the knowledge of experts. This administration of various aspects of human life emerged to ensure that social issues and conduct that could prevent or disrupt an individual’s efficient functioning could be mitigated. This problematic can be seen in society today, in the way productive behaviour is normalized and

behaviour that has disruptive economic effects is constructed as undesirable and the result of poor economic choices on behalf of the individual.

This section introduced Foucault's concept of the problematics of government as a way to examine how power is exercised in modern societies. Rose and Miller (1992) argue that an investigation of problematics of government entails an analysis of political rationalities (the why), but also governmental technologies (the how) used to exercise power at-a-distance. Through this analysis, it is possible to understand the ways in which the lives of individuals, groups, or in this case, post-secondary students, are connected by a plurality of networks to the goals of the authorities or post-secondary institution.

Political power is exercised today through a profusion of shifting alliances between diverse authorities in projects to govern a multitude of facets of economic activity, social life and individual conduct. Power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of 'making up' citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom. (Rose & Miller, 1992: 174)

The neo-liberal post-secondary institution is an example of a technology that operates from a particular rationality (neo-liberalism) and that deploys advanced liberal techniques for the control and regulation of the 'good' student and that promote the entrepreneurial individual, endowed with freedom and autonomy to maximize the quality of one's life (Rose & Miller, 1992).

In this section, I have shown how the post-secondary institution uses advanced liberal rationalities and technologies to regulate and manage students and shape the notion of what it means to be 'good', or successful. Now that I have properly outlined the intersection of the neo-liberal university with the concept of governmentality for governing the 'good' student, I can outline the process for such an application to the post-secondary student experiencing mental health problems.

2.4 Governmentality and Post-secondary Students with Mental Health Problems

As I have explained above, the concept of governmentality refers to both the processes of governing and a mentality of governing, or a way to think about how individuals, or a population, are governed and also self-govern without direct interference of the state. It is an art, as well as a rationality, that can be applied to a plurality of fields to thereby control the collective behaviour of a population through a suite of mundane, every-day tactics. This governing happens at-a-distance through institutions (i.e. education, prisons, health care, military) and through actions that are generally taken for granted (i.e. dieting, exercising, pursuing higher education, staying employed) but that benefit the population as a whole. With the population becoming an object of intervention and analysis contributing to the strength of the State, its health and welfare becomes the primary focus and ultimate end. As I also previously explained, any endemic issues that weaken the population and its economic processes require management and regulation. This section examines the literature on the problematic of students with mental health issues within the context of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution. It also examines the evolution of campus counselling services in North America and how mental health and health promotion strategies and services have emerged in response to this problematic and to render mentally distressed students governable in an advanced liberal way.

2.4.1 *Post-secondary students with mental health problems*

The alleged rise in mental health issues and levels of serious psychological distress in North America (Twenge et al., 2019), notably among adolescents and young adults, presents a significant social and economic problem from a governmentality perspective. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), one in five people in Canada will experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year, and by age 40, about 50% of the population

will have or have had a mental illness. Individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 are more likely to experience mental health and/or substance use disorders, and it is between these ages that 70-75% of mental health problems arise (CAMH, n.d.). The economic cost of mental illnesses to the Canadian economy, via the health care system, was estimated at \$51 billion per year (CAMH, n.d.). This number includes health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in health-related quality of life. Alarming, in any given week, at least 500,000 employed individuals are unable to work due to mental health issues (CAMH, n.d.). According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) (2017), the most common mental illnesses limiting the daily living and impacting the health of individuals in Canada included anxiety, mood, and substance use disorders, followed by dementia and cognitive impairments. This same MHCC report reinforces the CAMH's statistics regarding the highest impact on and rate of problems among young adults, especially ages 20 to 29. This age range represents a time when individuals are generally in post-secondary education and/or beginning their careers. If ever there were an endemic, commonly labeled as an epidemic in the public health world, that is sapping the Canadian population's strength, costing money, and leading to a fall in productivity, the current state of mental health in Canada is it.

Narrowing in on post-secondary students in Canada, specifically in Ontario, the reality is certainly bleak. It is already known that mental health issues most commonly emerge during adolescence and young adulthood, and that post-secondary students in Ontario are increasingly identifying with depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies (American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA), 2016). The increasing number of students seeking mental health services on campuses across Canada has been a concern since the 1980s (Coniglio et al., 2005; Crozier & Willihnganz, 2005; Cairns et al.,

2010). Post-secondary students are seeking help more for complex and severe psychological issues and less for academic or educational advice and developmental issues (Guinee & Ness, 2000; Robbins et al., 1985) and more for psychological concerns (Erdur-Baker et al, 2006). These increases in students using campus counselling services have more or less forced post-secondary institutions to try and accommodate the demand despite limited budgets and resources and the convoluted role of institutions in mental health service provision (Coordinating Committee of Vice Presidents, 2015). The clash between the rising number of students identifying with mental health issues, the consequent rising demand for mental health services by students, and the inability of institutions to keep up with the demand, presents a complex situation for students and institutions alike. Research shows that when post-secondary students do in fact seek treatment for mental health issues, the top five concerns presented are anxiety, depression, relationship problems, stress, and family, followed by academic performance, interpersonal functioning, grief/loss, and mood instability (Locke et al., 2016; Cairns et al., 2010), and common factors affecting student academic performance are stress, sleep difficulties, and anxiety (ACHA-NCHA, 2016).

2.4.2 Rationality for governing students with mental health problems

In the previous section, I introduced the problematic of post-secondary students with mental health issues. As Rose and Miller (1992) explain, government “is a *problematizing* activity...The ideals of government are intrinsically linked to the problems around which it circulates, the failings it seeks to rectify, the ills it seeks to cure” (181, italics in the original). This section explains the political rationality that is made manifest through the problematization of governing students with mental health issues.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the goal of government is to maintain a productive population for the benefit of all and, from the neo-liberal perspective, for individuals to be responsible, enterprising citizens who ‘freely’ choose to maximize their own wealth because they believe it is what is best. Social problems and failures (e.g. unemployment, poverty, homelessness, lack of education, etc.) weaken society and interfere with productivity. The rationality for, or systematic way of thinking about, dealing with such problems is based on the accepted regime of truth that they are weakening society. This rationality sets up the conditions of possibility that make them problematic.

In the case of post-secondary students struggling with mental health issues, applying Foucault’s concept of governmentality is useful for analyzing the problematic that these students present to the neo-liberal institution and the rationality for this problematizing activity. As outlined above, the number of students identifying with a mental health problem is rising. The category and severity of such problems range from relationship concerns (e.g. parent/family, conflict, intimacy, loneliness, etc.) to mood disorders (e.g. anxiety/stress, general anxiety, depression, grief/loss, sadness, etc.) to academic issues (e.g. low grades, procrastination, test anxiety, etc.) (Cairns et al. 2010).

Such abnormal behaviours interfere with the production of the ‘good’ student and student success, threatening the very purpose and goal of the post-secondary institution. As more students are experiencing overwhelming anxiety and feeling too depressed to fully function as a productive student, their abnormal or risky behaviour prevents students from attending class, writing assignments and exams, completing full semesters or graduating at all. Mental health issues are reducing student productivity, but also interfering with the institutional techniques that ultimately make students to be governable, docile bodies. Thus, from a post-secondary

institution's governing standpoint, students with mental health issues need to be regulated and managed in such a way so that they can regain their status as 'good' and successful students and active members of the student body and population as a whole.

2.4.3 Governing the student mental health problem

With the possible field of action made visible (student mental health), Foucault's concept of governmentality can be useful for analyzing the neo-liberal institution's response to this problematic and the governmental technologies that have been introduced in an effort to control and manage the behaviour of these students in an advanced liberal way. This section will outline the history and emergence of these technologies and techniques deployed in the regulation of students with mental distress.

Evolution of campus counselling services in North America.

As with the post-secondary institution, the nature and role of campus counselling services in North America also evolved over the twentieth century (Hodges, 2001). As early as the 1930s and 40s there was confusion and debate over the role of university counselling and who should be responsible for providing it. At the time, counselling was provided by members of faculty who had no professional psychological training but were able to provide academic and vocational guidance (Hodges, 2001). Following World War II, many veterans enrolled in higher education, supported financially by welfare programs, and the counselling movement assisted with the influx of students and their vocational planning and academic development (Forest, 1989). The expansion of campus vocational services helped to pave the way for counsellors to address students' social and personal concerns within a counselling setting (Aubrey, 1977). Following the influx of veterans enrolling in higher education, the Civil Rights and women's movements broke down social barriers for ethnic minorities and women in pursuing their

education. As a result, there was vast growth of the student population, which “provided a sense of pluralism and a much more complex social and cultural environment” (Hodges, 2001: 163).

Counselling, which had once been part of the faculty domain, evolved into a separate professional service with its own set of protocols for helping students and more specialized training for providers (Forester, 1977). The field of campus counselling was influenced by the changes taking place in the fields of counselling and psychology in North America at the time. As such, what began as training for members of faculty to assist students in all aspect of their development grew and changed into a specialized field and profession with specific techniques and assessment instruments (Hodges, 2001).

Philosophical approach

Over the course of the twentieth century, campus counselling services evolved and largely in response to various historical events the changing student demographic and need. As mentioned, the early educational guidance movement of the 1930s and 40s focused on helping students in leaving home to go to school and eventually find employment (Sweeney, 2001). At that time, the philosophical approach to counselling in higher education was a focus on the student and the multiple dimensions of development that occur during these years, such as interpersonal, emotional, physical and spiritual (Hodges, 2001). Not only was the approach to focus on the student’s development, campus counselling services also adopted a humanistic approach that recognized and embraced the uniqueness, growth and development of the whole person (Hodges, 2001). As the role of campus counselling services and identity grew clearer and distinct from student health and academic services, its approach also changed to be able to address the complex personal and social concerns of students.

This developmental movement within counselling services remained prominent for several decades but has been largely overshadowed in recent decades by the rise of the medical

model (diagnosis and prescription) (Gallagher et al., 1999) and the clinical approach, which downplays the value of a community-based model. With the clinical approach, mental health issues are considered from a medical perspective and the complementary nature of counseling and clinical services is often absent. Out of necessity, campus counselling centres have moved away from the traditional developmental approach of addressing the complex social and cultural issues that students experience in transitioning to higher education. This change in approach in some institutions comes as a result of the increase of students pursuing higher education with severe mental illness (LaFollette, 2009). Other trends suggest that the shift to the medical model has been in response to the increase of severity of psychological issues in students and in an attempt to address the “mental health crisis on university campuses” (LaFollette, 2009:116). This crisis on campuses is adding pressure on institutions to address the growing number of serious problems that students bring to school. It is “forcing counseling centers to choose between helping students with normal developmental problems, providing consultation to students, faculty, and administrators, or delivering more clinical services” (Barreira & Snider, 2010: 30).

Campus counseling services, generally called mental health or wellness services, now often focus on promoting individuality, autonomy, coping skills and resilience, and personal responsibility. This neo-liberal mission of campus counselling services coincides with the post-secondary institution’s larger educational mission and “the success of the [institution’s] educational mission depends on students having as few emotional barriers as possible impeding their capacity to take advantage of the educational opportunities the [institution] offers” (Siggins, 2010: 144).

In this section, I have outlined the evolution of the campus counselling services in North America and the shift in primary purpose of counselling centres from academic advising to

evaluation and treatment of mild to severe psychological disorders. The immense growth in post-secondary populations and diversity of student demographic brings increased and diverse demand for counselling services. Post-secondary institutions are attempting to respond to the sky-rocketing demand, but few have the resources to do so (LaFollette, 2009). In the next section, I will outline the neo-liberal, governmental technologies that have emerged to address the growing demand for mental health and counselling services on campuses.

2.4.4 Emergence of contemporary governing techniques for student mental health

Given that the student demand for mental health services is increasing, many post-secondary institutions are going beyond just providing mental health counselling services by “expanding efforts to *prevent mental health problems from arising* and to *promote the mental health of all students*” (Davidson & Locke, 2010: 267, italics in original). The implementation of such programs focuses on preventative measures, which are generally more cost-effective than treatment measures (Bhuyan, 2004).

The paradigm shift in the counselling approach (developmental to medical) is reflected in the transformed nature of the post-secondary counselling service and explosion of health-related programs and interventions on campuses (Wyn, 2007). In addition to the clinical approach used by campus counselling services to try to respond to the sky-rocketing demand for mental health services, many institutions have adopted a public health approach to address the social and environmental factors that can influence student mental health problems. A public health approach focuses on preventing health problems as well as promoting the health of the overall population, as opposed to focusing on treatment. An entire spectrum of mental health interventions has appeared under the public health approach, including mental health promotion, prevention of mental illness, treatment, and maintenance (IOM, 2009). These types of

interventions focus on (1) enhancing individuals' ability to achieve control over one's life and a positive sense of self-esteem, well-being, as well as a strengthened ability to cope with adversity; (2) preventing disorders from developing through reducing risk factors and protective factors; (3) reducing the duration, severity, and recurrence of a disorder; and (4) supporting individuals in managing a disorder (Davidson & Locke, 2010).

While the public health approach asserts that health- and safety-related behaviours are shaped by the individual as well as by the individual's environment (Davidson & Locke, 2010), its framework for intervention does not focus on making social and structural changes to factors which impede health and well-being of a population (Ayo, 2012). Instead, it encourages the autonomous individual to 'freely' choose to follow the imperatives set out by health promotion programmes and take full responsibility for making the necessary behaviour changes to achieve health and well-being (Ayo, 2010: 100). In this way, health promotion techniques and programmes reflect and reinforce the "prevailing political ideology of neo-liberalism and consist of advanced liberal governing techniques for creating the 'good' and 'healthy' student" (Ayo, 2012: 100).

Health Promotion

A common type of public health intervention found on post-secondary campuses are health promotion programmes, which focus on well-being as an end in itself rather than preventing illness and work from a lifestyle or health behaviour approach. These programmes focus on enabling students "to increase control over their health and its determinants, and thereby improve their health" (WHO, 1998). Health promotion has shifted the focus of prevention onto the individual and focus on improving an individual's resources (e.g. self-efficacy, self-esteem, social supports, etc.), thereby empowering them to make the necessary lifestyle and behaviour changes to be 'healthy' (Skinner & Bercovitz, 1996). This goal is

consistent with an advanced liberal technique of governing, where individuals are fully responsible for their health and well-being, and failure to make appropriate choices to thrive has come to be seen as a personal failure requiring accountability (Ayo, 2012). Health promotion policies and programmes largely ignore the fundamentals of health and, instead, “major established social determinants of health are rendered as poor personal choices made by freely choosing citizens” (Ayo, 2012: 102). In this way, health promotion initiatives promote self-regulation practices in favour of addressing social determinants of health and the social systems and structural factors that contribute to (student) mental health problems. Similarly, the illusion of empowering individuals to take control over their health reflects a neo-liberal governmental technique of transferring the responsibility to make ‘healthy’ and good choices to the individual.

Self-help

Other examples of governmental techniques that have gained momentum on post-secondary campuses, and that build on the health promotion approach in an effort to control and regulate students at-a-distance are self-help and well-being (or wellness) initiatives. Self-help is “an activity presumed to be voluntary and individualistic. Based upon notions such as choice, autonomy and freedom, self-help relies upon the principle of individuality and entails self-modification and ‘improvement’” (Rimke, 2000: 62). Though it is not a new concept, recent self-help rhetoric extends from a psychologically-oriented culture, wherein psychology is a form of expert knowledge and considered to be an authority on how individuals should understand themselves (Rimke, 2000). Self-help techniques operate by rationalising the concept of responsibility and by inciting individuals to self-govern because the benefits of helping one’s self will help to maximize one’s opportunities (Covey, 1989), which is what individuals are led to believe is best. In reality, self-help techniques represent a mode of self-government and self-regulation, which seeks to govern subjects to produce prudent, active citizens. In this process, the

“self becomes an object of knowledge *and* a subject/object of governance” (Rimke, 2000: 68), under the gaze of an external gaze (authority or expert) and the gaze of one’s self. On post-secondary campuses, students are encouraged to pursue the health benefits of self-help activities such as mindfulness, meditation and breathing techniques, yoga, pet therapy, stress-management, etc. in order to reconstruct a healthy subjectivity. In so doing, they freely choose to self-govern and for their own benefit.

Well-being/wellness

Similarly, the concept of well-being or wellness, while not new, has become another by-product and goal of the health promotion movement that renders individuals governable and self-governed. The consensus around well-being is that health should be a top priority for everyone and that “each individual can and should strive to achieve a state of optimal functioning” (Kirkland, 2014: 959), not just a life without disease. Post-secondary institutions understand that student well-being is related to student academic success and, therefore, wellness programs and initiative have a stake in the overall health of students. Wellness and well-being have become buzzwords that capture the complex problems of success in modernity: living well (Kirkland, 2014). Living well represents the connection between ‘proper’ attitude, correct practice, and individual responsibility, where individuals carry a personal responsibility to always be striving to make good lifestyle choices and self-care decisions to improve the quality of their life. In the 1990s, managed care was blossoming and wellness in North America became highly managerialized within organizations seeking to lower their health care costs (Kirkland, 2014). As a result, the meaning of well-being has been narrowing and institutionalized into a form of corporate wellness. Wellness programming has been adopted by post-secondary institutions in an effort to encourage the “striving, becoming, improving” (Kirkland, 2014: 973) student reaching full potential. From the sociological perspective, this ‘wellness culture’ has been criticized for

being a form of social control and this aligns with the governmental technology for governing students at-a-distance and enabling them to self-govern. “Striving for wellness is a personal responsibility that an individual can achieve if she really wants to, and if she fails to undertake it, it must be because she lacks information, access, or incentive” (Kirkland, 2014: 978). Thus, wellness and well-being initiatives at post-secondary institution act as neo-liberal techniques of governing students so that they strive to live ‘well’ and make wise behavioural and lifestyle choices that will enable them to succeed academically. In this way, the concept of well-being weakens structural approaches to health.

Health promotion initiatives and services provided to students are implemented based on the neo-liberal corporatization and commodification of health that encourages and assists students in becoming consumers and enterprising individuals (Ayo, 2010). The rise of the neo-liberal, self-enterprising individual has been accompanied by the rise of risk management and the use of technologies of the self, such as ‘psy’ sciences and the health industry (including health promotion) to promote self-management and personal health (O’Malley, 1996). Through these new approaches to governing individuals at a distance, as well as the rise of health ‘experts’, students have become active and prudent subjects in managing their health. The

healthy and wise citizen is taught that insurance against health risks is based upon consumption of both the dominant ideals of what it means to be healthy and the goods and services which reinforces them. (Ayo, 2010: 103)

On post-secondary campuses in Ontario, mental health services and health promotion initiatives are directed at regulating student behaviour and the individual body is targeted as the site of intervention and regulation (Ayo, 2010; CICMH, n.d.) and not at the overarching educational system. The rationale for targeting the individual student through such an approach is that mental health is essential to students’ academic success and their ability to be enterprising, active

citizens (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013). Therefore, mental health services that focus on controlling and regulating undesirable behaviour, such as mental distress, through the promotion of well-being and self-care are reflective of a neo-liberal technology of governing.

In this section, I have discussed the governmental technologies that have emerged to regulate post-secondary students dealing with mental health problems. As I have shown, it is with these advanced liberal governing techniques that the neo-liberal post-secondary institution aims not only to govern students, but that students self-govern as well. These techniques commonly include short-term individual counselling to support students in achieving academic success by working with students to overcome barriers to this success, to build resilience, and promote physical and mental health. The campus counselling approach continues to focus on the individual, but the focus is to help students get back on track with the use of strength-based, solution-focused therapy models, which focus on creating hopeful futures and helping individuals make the choices and changes necessary to move forward in their lives. Health promotion programs on campuses also aim to empower students to live healthy lives and achieve academic success by enabling students to take control over their own health and well-being. (WHO, 1986).

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have first presented the existing literature on neo-liberalism as an ideology and the rise of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution in North America in the twentieth century. I have also outlined the implications of accountability (the audit) and the New Public Management for post-secondary institutions and the transformation of its role to produce active citizens in alignment with society's economic needs. Second, I presented the existing literature on the concepts of governmentality and advanced liberal techniques. I tied the concept

of governmentality to the neo-liberal post-secondary institution to show how neo-liberalism as a mentality of government acts to indirectly manage post-secondary institutions and the ‘good’ student alike. In this way, the post-secondary institution is an apparatus of security that employs various mechanisms for governing its population with a goal of producing responsible and prudent citizens. Finally, I have introduced the literature on the rise of post-secondary students in Ontario identifying with mental health issues. The problematization of student mental health problems can be located in the sky-rocketing demand for mental health services on campuses and the increased potential for students to fail academically, thereby interfering with the post-secondary’s role to produce active citizens. In an attempt to manage and regulate the risky and unpredictable behaviour of students dealing with mental health problems, post-secondary institutions in Ontario have implemented a suite of governing technologies, such as counselling, health promotion, and wellness initiatives, to help students self-manage in ways that have become socially acceptable. As a result, the ‘good’ student discourse is discursive in that it communicates to students their ‘appropriate’ behaviour through the way it values certain practices, while discarding others. Through this power/knowledge relation, students with mental health problems are positioned as autonomous, docile and enterprising bodies that are governed and self-govern.

This section has laid the foundation for applying a governmentality analytic to better understand the existing approaches at post-secondary institutions for addressing the mental health crisis on their campuses. A governmentality analytic will bring attention to the interplays between policy, organizational change, mental health practices, and associated subjectivities. The assumption of governmentality and the ways in which student subjectivities are being constituted is an important line of inquiry. This analysis attempts to address the complexities of knowledge,

power, and subjectivity that inform how the discourses of mental health and well-being intersect with practice in the context of the neo-liberal university. Thus, this study has practical implications for addressing post-secondary student mental health. In the next chapter, I will provide the context in which my research is situated, thereby laying out the statement of the problem and introducing the research question that this study aims to answer.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALIZATION

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I presented a review of the existing literature on the neo-liberal ideology that is imbedded in every aspect of Western society. The literature shows how neo-liberalism has expanded far beyond the economy and has infiltrated all of society's institutions, including that of education. In this light, I showed the transformation of the post-secondary institution in the West from education as a public interest and good to that of an enterprise, where education is now a commodity to be sold and students are consumers. Neo-liberalism, an art of government, presents us with a form of governmentality in which the *homo oeconomicus* is someone who is eminently governable. This economic subject represents new forms of power and regulation and, from these new forms, we can see the link between a *governmentality* that acts on its environment by perceiving its variables as problematic. I presented, as an example of such a problematic, the post-secondary student experiencing mental health issues who is hindered from succeeding academically as a result. In an attempt to manage the failing, mentally-distressed student, post-secondary institutions provide them with support and services that ultimately aim to produce prudent, self-regulating individuals who are responsible for getting

back to being ‘good’ students. I argue that these mental health services aim to position students in such a way that normalizes these stressful experiences and seeks to make them resilient and capable of coping solely for the purposes of ensuring their academic success. It is in this context that I present my thesis project. In this chapter, I will present the statement of the problem and the context in which it lies.

3.2 Review of the Research Question

The existing literature and research on student mental health present arguments for a rise both in the number of individuals experiencing mental health issues (Twenge et al., 2019) and the number of post-secondary students in Ontario identifying with mental health issues (ACHA-NCHA II, 2016). An Internet search of the phrase ‘mental health crisis on campus’ provides a number of media examples of this serious issue. National news outlets, including *Maclean’s* (“The Mental Health Crisis on Campus,” 2016), *CBC News* (“Lives at stake: campus counsellors say they’re drowning in mental health needs,” 2016), *Montreal Gazette* (“Crisis on campus: Universities struggle with students in distress,” 2017), as well as local and institutional media publications, such as York University’s *The Trauma & Mental Health Report* (“Mental Health Crisis on Canadian Campuses,” 2018), *The Journal* (“U of T mental health crisis can’t wait another day,” 2019), and *The Daily Hive* (“Stuck in time: Students say U of T is facing a mental health crisis,” 2019) have gone so far as to label the situation as a *crisis* on post-secondary campuses all across Canada.

This labeling is happening at a time when efforts to increase awareness of mental health problems and encourage individuals to seek help is also increasingly common. This is true for every stage of life, from secondary and post-secondary awareness campaigns all the way to employee assistance and workplace wellness programs. The Ontario government has also

responded to the mental health crisis by developing mental health strategies, standards, and recommendations for taking action (MOHLTC, 2011). However, despite these actions, the demand for services and supports is not declining. On the contrary, the demand for services, especially on post-secondary campuses is skyrocketing. This is met with questions and concerns about responsibility for addressing this crisis. Despite the mental health crisis being a social problem, deeply rooted in social, structural, and historical determinants, it has been constructed as an individual, psychological problem. Institutions, who have a stake in how this crisis is perceived, apply the stamp of ‘problem’, set the parameters for ‘solving’ it, and use tools (e.g. media, health promotion campaigns, etc.) to ensure that the broader society shares the psychological explanation (Ward Jr., 2002). In response to the mental health crisis on campuses, post-secondary institutions in the western societies, like Canada, have reacted by promoting health promotion and wellness initiatives, self-care events and activities, and peer-mentoring and counselling services. Institutions have put the responsibility for addressing mental distress on the student, thereby protecting those who benefit from treating such issues as a psychological rather than social problem (Ward Jr., 2002). The moral panic around post-secondary student mental health provides a beneficial approach for institutions that might stand to lose from structural changes that could be required to address mental distress perceived as a social problem. However, this study argues that this neo-liberal approach to responding to the crisis results in unintended consequences.

Existing research examines mental health distress among post-secondary students, the implications for student well-being and academic outcomes (Sharp & Theiler, 2018), as well as help-seeking behaviour and mental health service utilization among students (Laidlaw et al., 2016; Lipson et al., 2015). Existing research has also looked at the barriers (such as campus culture,

peer-pressure, perceived stigma, lack of availability of services and accommodations, negative previous experiences, failed or overly optimistic expectations, and individual beliefs and behaviours) that contribute to the policy-practice gaps that occur on post-secondary campuses (Giamos et al., 2017; Mowbray et al., 2006; Hudson et al., 2018; DiPlacito-DeRango, 2016) and that can help to explain why implementing mental health policies and services on campuses is not helping to reduce the student demand. Additionally, literature on social determinants of health highlights that health promotion initiatives, such as those provided on post-secondary campuses, focus on downstream, individual behaviour and lifestyle changes, and largely neglect the broader social and economic factors that are known to contribute to poor physical and mental health (Bunton et al., 1995; Labonte, 1992; Lyons & Lavalley, 2000; Labonte & Penfold; Labonte, 1994; Jarvis & Wardle, 1999).

While it is valuable to understand the potential for misalignment of mental health services on campuses and the barriers to their use by students, it seems that there is a gap in the research that looks at the problematization of student mental health by the groups or individuals who benefit from doing. By looking at this problematization process and the rationality for managing a behaviour that is less than desirable by post-secondary institution, this study will fill a gap in the research on governmentality of student mental health and provide clarity about the conditions under which this process takes place. Using a governmentality analysis (Dean, 2010), I will endeavor to answer the central research question that this thesis addresses: *What are the effects of the intersection of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and governmentality of student mental health on services at a post-secondary campus in Ontario?*

The three key research sub-questions that guide the interrogation of the central research question are:

- 1) How did mental health or mental well-being come to be seen as a technique through which students can be governed?
- 2) What are the rationalities and technologies of governing through which mental health policies and services are translated and performed in practice in the context of a post-secondary institution in Ontario?
- 3) What are the effects of mental health policies and services on the practice of governing of students at a post-secondary institution in Ontario?

3.3 Summary

In this section, I have presented the statement of the problem and the context in which my research is situated. I have provided an explanation for this research by showing how student mental health issues have become labeled as a crisis by the media across Canada. This thesis seeks to fill a gap in the research pertaining to this mental health crisis by using a governmentality approach to better understand how a University in Ontario is governing mental distress—an undesirable behaviour—among its students. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodological approach of this thesis and conceptual tools used to examine the governing techniques employed at the institution via the implementation and practice of mental health policies and services on campus.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined the theoretical approach of my thesis and presented the research questions that have guided my project. In this chapter, I move from a theoretical orientation to an explanation of how student mental health services are examined in my study. I

will present the methodology (general approach to studying research topics) and methods (specific research techniques) used to explore and analyze the rationalities and technologies employed at a post-secondary institution in Ontario to govern students with mental health problems. Therefore, I will first explore how the concept of governmentality works methodologically to inform my analysis of student mental health services, especially in the way that these services are deemed beneficial by senior University employees. Second, I will describe the techniques of data collection, and forms of data analysis.

4.2 Methodology

In this thesis, I have drawn from the governmentality literature to inform the theoretical analytics with which I explore modes of governing-at-a-distance that then make up the methodological framework. Dean (2010) provides an analytic frame for such a governmentality methodology, or analytic, based on Foucault's concept and his own research. An analytics of government is "a type of study concerned with an analysis of the specific conditions under which particular entities emerge, exist and change...[it] examines the conditions under which regimes of practices come into being, are maintained and are transformed" (Dean, 2010: 30-31).

Dean explains that practices are sets of ways of going about doing things, but also institutional in that they can be routinized or embedded in our everyday lives. What is also important in Dean's explanation of institutional practices is that they include the different ways in which practices can be thought, made into an object of knowledge, and thus subject to problematizations (2010). A set of practices or regimes that has become routinized is a taken-for-granted way of doing things, but they operate in such a way (through technologies, techniques, and mechanisms) that attempts to achieve a certain goal with certain effects. Simply put, the central concern of the analytics of government is thus "how we govern and are governed within

different regimes, and the conditions under which such regimes emerge, continue to operate and are transformed” (Dean, 2010: 33). What Dean aims to do is to emphasize the *how* of

government as an institutional practice by distinguishing four dimensions of the analytics:

(1) *Visibility*: characteristic forms of visibility, ways of seeing and perceiving; the ways in which things are made visible, “who or what is to be governed, how relations of authority and obedience are constituted in space, how different locales and agents are to be connected with one another, what problems are to be solved and what objectives are to be sought” (Dean, 2010: 41).

(2) *Techne*: distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, procedures for the production of truth; Dean (1999) refers to this dimension of the analytic as the technologies of thinking and questioning; by “what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished” (30).

(3) *Episteme*: specific ways of acting, intervening and directing, made up of particular types of practical rationality; the exploration of the rationality used for the production of truth, “what forms of thought, knowledge, expertise, strategies, means of calculation, or rationality are employed in the practices of governing? How does that seek to transform these practices? How do these practices give rise to specific forms of truth?” (Dean, 2010: 42). Applying a governmentality analytic makes it possible to examine how practices have become acceptable and legitimized, based on a particular body of knowledge (e.g. audit); and,

(4) *Subjectivities*: characteristic ways of forming subjects and selves (Dean, 2010); “what forms of person, self, and identity are presupposed by different practices of government and what sorts of transformations do these practices seek?” (Dean, 2010: 43). This dimension of the analytic looks at the way in which practices of government contribute to the formation of institutional and individual subjectivities and the manner in which they seek to change them (Dean, 2010).

These four dimensions of Dean's analytic of government can provide a way of thinking about how we conduct ourselves and others, and how we think about ourselves and others when we are doing this (Dean, 2010). When thinking about ways of governing, this methodology "seeks to make explicit the thought that, while often taking a material form, is largely tacit in the way in which we govern and are governed" (Dean, 1999: 36).

A governmentality-informed methodology can be useful when exploring these rationalities and technologies of governing, and for better understanding the alignment or misalignment between policies and practices. Thus, such an approach is well suited to deconstruct assumptions of student mental health and mental health practices, making visible intended and unintended consequences as they intersect with other systems of governing.

4.3 Methods

The aim of this study is to better understand how senior University employees, who are directly involved in student mental health at a university in Ontario (University of Ontario), justify specific mental health services as being beneficial for students. It also seeks to understand the relationship between these senior employees' beliefs about student mental health and the implicit goal and purpose of the mental health services provided to students on campus. Therefore, this research calls for an analytical approach that explores the implicit goal and purpose of student mental health services, something that may not be divulged in way these services are promoted to students.

Consequently, I chose to use a case study. A case study is defined as a qualitative research method that "enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context" (Zainal, 2007: 1) and "explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions" (Zainal, 2007: 1-2). In

my case, the case study thus allows me to study a limited number of senior University employees in the context of the role they play in student mental health.

To increase the validity of my case study, I triangulated with other methods of data collection (Zainal, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984; Restivo & Apostolidis, 2019). In this study, using more than one method can provide richer data. In this case, this means data on the senior University employees' beliefs about student mental health and mental health services on campus. Being able to validate my data is important in this study because the number of senior employees directly involved in student mental health at the University is limited. Consequently, the principle forms of evidence in this study are derived from semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and field notes, and analysis of documents pertaining to student mental health (e.g. Canadian federal, provincial and organizational policy documents, University Student Newspaper publications, University promotional materials for events and services, University Action Group status report, University Student Wellness committee documents, Academic Services annual report, University website, etc.).

4.4 Sources of Data

As I have mentioned, this study draws its findings from multiple forms of data, including semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and field notes, and analysis of publicly available documents pertaining to student mental health. In this section, I will describe my data collection process.

4.4.1 Interviews

The primary source of my data collected and used in this thesis is the semi-structured interview. I conducted four semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with various senior University employees, directly involved in student mental health at the University. All four of

my interviews were conducted over the course of the winter semester in 2019 and were held on campus in each participant's office.

The interviews lasted on average 45-60 minutes, were audio recorded, and were guided with the use of an interview guide (Appendix A), that I modified for each interview, based on the respondent's professional role at the University. My interview questions also evolved throughout the interview, or were more or less structured, depending on the "chattiness" of each participant and the need to keep the conversation focused on my prepared questions. I began each interview by reading out loud to my respondents the purpose my study and the interview. I also explained why I had selected them as a participant in my study and what incites I felt they could provide.

Sampling

As mentioned above, the number of knowledgeable individuals whose roles are primarily or solely involved with student mental health services at the University is limited. In fact, there are only four senior employees whose job is directly related to overseeing or managing student mental health issues and services. I will introduce them here, using pseudonyms:

Marc: senior employee who oversees non-academic student services, including Academic Services. The Academic Services houses a counselling services unit, which provides mental health counselling and services on campus to students.

Sandra: senior employee who works in academic and counselling services.

Justine: junior employee who works in academic and counselling services.

Alexandra: senior employee who works in mental health on campus, for students and staff.

In order to select my study participants, I used nonrandom, purposive sampling procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a), where in participants are selected using parameters that coincide with processes that are being explored (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). As such, my participants were chosen based on their role in student mental health at the University. Though

the number of participants is limited, these employees are the only individuals who can provide rich and valid data on the existence, development, and implementation of policies and services for student mental health from the University administration's perspective. Thus, I can justify my reasoning in limiting my study only to these individuals and using this interview data (in addition to my other sources of data) to provide generalizing conclusions.

Interview process technique

Given my desire to use a naturalist technique in my interviews and gain the most authentic and contextual insights from my participants as possible, I revealed to them only that I was aiming to better understand how the University's central administration develop their mental health framework or strategies and then translated these into services for students. In each interview, I focused on capturing their insights into this process and how or why they believe the existing services to be beneficial for students. I did not want to influence their answers by giving any hint of my own personal beliefs about the existing services. Using the naturalist technique, and open-ended questions, my participants were incited to reveal their perspectives of student mental health problems as well as their beliefs about how to address this issue, thereby providing their perspective as employees of the University's administration.

Prior to beginning the data collection phase of my study, I developed my interview guide with the research question and concepts put forth in my research proposal. Given that I was transcribing my interviews immediately after they took place, I was able to make the necessary un-scripted adjustments to my interview guided over time.

4.4.2 Anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent

In order to pursue this qualitative research project, with interviews and observations, I was required to obtain ethics approval from my institution's Research Ethics Board. I received

ethics approval for my research project in December 2018. Involving human participants in research projects raises ethical issues that must be considered, such as anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Given that few people at the institution where I conducted my research hold a role that oversees student mental health on behalf of the University administration, I chose to guarantee the anonymity of my participants. To do so, I undertook to use pseudonyms for the names of my participants (see above). I also omitted the name of the institution where I conducted my research. I have identified the institution in question as the ‘University of Ontario.’ Names of events, committees, campus activities for student mental health, action group, academic and counselling services, and student newspaper have also been replaced with a more generic term (e.g. week-long wellness event) or pseudonym.

Once my ethics approval was received, I contacted my select participants individually via email, inviting them to participate in my study. Attached to the email was an information letter and consent form, explaining my study and research objectives, research methods (including an audio recording, if permitted), reason for their participation, as well as a copy of my consent form (Annex C). To ensure that I had obtained the informed consent of my participants, prior to beginning the interview I read the attached consent form and reiterated the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity of their personal information in my report. This was to ensure that they understood the parameters of their voluntary participation in my study and knew they could end the interview at any point.

Overall, my interview participants were very willing respond to my questions. There was a sense of accomplishment and pride in their answers when telling me about the work that is being done on campus to address the demand from students for mental health support. This is especially true when describing the revamped counselling service and its new model of care,

which had been implemented the previous fall (2018). From certain respondents, however, there was a sense of frustration about the challenges that remain to figure out how to create a more cohesive, less disjointed network of services and supports on campus, as well as the lack of financial resources for mental health services and staff.

4.5 Observations

In addition to the qualitative interviews, data was also gathered through overt participant-observations of public activities held on campus during a week-long wellness event in winter 2019. Overt non-participant observation was also conducted during a Committee for Student Wellness meeting, held on campus in spring 2019 at the University.

The events held during the wellness event were at various times and locations on campus and covered various health and mental health topics (e.g. a stop-smoking booth, make-your-own kombucha workshop, yoga sessions, mental health discussion panel, financial literacy, meditation, reiki, discussions about mental health and social media, benefits of exercise and sleep, pet and massage therapy, etc.) I chose to observe these events because of their focus on student health and wellness and, thus, the reflection they make of how student health and wellness (or rather the ways in which we can achieve wellness) is perceived by those involved in wellness on campus at the University in question.

Additionally, these events were all open to the public, which made it easy for me to attend and observe while taking field notes of my observations. Following each event, I reviewed my field notes, interpreting and analyzing my observations with comments and jotting down other thoughts for further analysis. I made note of the type of event, main topic or theme, speaker, attendance and audience. I made a conscious effort simply to observe what was

happening and being said and to jot down separately any cerebral or visceral reactions, thoughts, or interpretations I had in the moment.

I obtained permission to attend and observe a Committee on Student Wellness meeting. These meetings are open to members only. Therefore, I requested and obtained permission from the chair to attend as an observer. The Committee is composed of many of the people whom I interviewed, namely senior employees at the University who oversee or are involved with student mental health and wellness, as well as students (student groups) and other University staff members. The purpose of the Committee is to be raise awareness of issues that affect, negatively or positively, the wellbeing of students and develop appropriate action in response to the identified issues.

I attended and observed a meeting in the spring of 2019. The meeting lasted approximately two hours and was attended by the chair, senior employees involved in student mental health and wellness, student representatives, and other non-academic University staff. I took notes of my observations and thoughts throughout the meeting. Following the meeting, I analyzed my field notes, drawing connections to data collecting from my interviews and other observations.

4.6 Documents

Data for my study was also collected from publicly available documents, including the aforementioned Committee terms of reference and webpage, web pages for the wellness event, the Academic Services annual report and web content, the University Student Newspaper articles, the University's Action Group status report, and the University's web pages. These documents were obtained, viewed, or downloaded in winter and spring 2019.

Web content from the week-long wellness event on campus was especially beneficial for this study because each activity included a brief description of the event and its focus. As noted above for the observation of these events, given that these activities are held and promoted to students and staff on campus as wellness events, they reflect how wellness (or rather the ways in which we can achieve wellness) is perceived by the University's administration. This also implies that the University administration and its employees believe that these events are beneficial to students and staff in achieving wellness or wellbeing.

Other documents used in this study were media publications, published by the University Student Newspaper that referenced the mental health 'crisis' on campuses across Canada and Ontario, as well as the following publicly available federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents:

Scoping Review of Current Literature, Summary: Post-Secondary Student Mental Health (Linden et al., 2018);

Mental Health in Ontario's Post-Secondary Education System (Popovic, 2012);

Mental health and well-being in post-secondary education settings (Mackean, 2011);

Supporting the Mental Health of Emerging Adults in Ontario's Post-Secondary System (Ontario University and College Health Association (OCHA), 2017);

Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach (Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) & the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), 2013); and,

In it Together, Taking Action on Student Mental Health, (Council of Ontario Universities (COU) et al., 2017)

4.7 Analysis (approach and coding process)

This study made use of the broad strategies of analysis recommended by Dean (2010) as representing an analytics of government. The framework used to extract data from the interviews, observations and documents was thus built from the work of Dean's (2010) governmentality analytic, addressing elements of visibility, techne, episteme, and subjectivity.

With these four dimensions, I examined political rationalities as well as governmental techniques

to investigate how the regimes of governing for student mental health at the Institution are maintained and formed. This includes how these practices can be called into question and made into an object of knowledge, thus the logic for these activities.

I applied a triangulation method in my data analysis. An inductive, thematic categorization of the interviews was applied in order to effectively analyze the overarching themes in the data. Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). With these themes, a researcher can attempt to describe patterns across an entire data set and gain a better understanding of the story that ties these themes together.

I applied a thematic analysis in this study because I wanted to use a method that would that would enable me to report my participants’ perceptions, beliefs and justifications, and the way they perceive these justifications. In this way, a thematic analysis has helped me unravel these perceptions and beliefs, and identify the themes found within the data and use these themes to make sense of the story being told.

4.7.1 Interviews

I transcribed the recordings of my interviews immediately after each interview for analysis. Using my own coding process (not unlike that of NVivo), I categorized and indexed the interview responses, using thematic inductive analysis. This coding strategy is common for analyzing qualitative data when using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), “using a rigorous process of reviewing transcripts and other documents line by line and assigning codes based on a priori and/or emergent topics or themes” (Palinkas, 2014: 857). Continuous analysis and comparison of my interviews enabled me to narrow or combine my categories into three

overarching themes: neo-liberal ideology and the ‘good’ student, governmentality and mental health, and wellness or well-being for student success. I chose an inductive approach to analyzing my data because I wanted to see what story was woven throughout the interviews as opposed to trying to fit the data into a pre-existing code or preconception. This is a data-driven analysis.

4.7.2 Observations

When I had completed the review of my observation notes taken during the wellness events and Committee meeting, and developed my interpretations and analysis of my notes, I began a comprehensive thematic analysis of this data, using the same categories as for my interview data. Using these overarching themes, I developed a thematic framework for analyzing my observation data. I also continuously analyzed and compared my interview and observation data to identify and narrow overarching themes. The larger themes of neoliberal ideology and the active student, governmentality and mental health, and wellness or wellbeing and student success were quickly identified in the data. It is also interesting to note that much of the data that I gathered in my interviews were repeated at this meeting, providing validation and richness of each source of data.

4.7.3 Documents

All of the documents analyzed for this study pertained to student mental health. The relevance of analyzing such documents is to shed light on how student mental health issues are problematized nationally, provincially, and locally. Ultimately, these documents provide a starting point, from which an analysis can be done, for defining what problem is to be solved and what mentality and machinery of government (Rose, 1999) have been constructed and invented to manage and control this problem.

For all of the documents analyzed, I used a thematic analysis, looking for overarching themes present in the documents. An analysis of these documents can reveal the author's beliefs about student mental health, how this is defining the field or behaviour that is to be governed, what problems are to be solved, and who is to be governed as a result of this problematization. The analysis of these documents is addressed in later chapters.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological framework used in this study. I first examined how the concept of governmentality works as an approach in this study. Following the section on the methodology used, I described in detail how my research was designed, and the techniques used within this study that enable me to analyze student mental health services at the University of Ontario as a programme of government. Conducting a single-case study required a triangulation of methods (interviews, observations, and document analysis), supported by an analytics of government. Combining a thematic analysis with an analytics of government proved to be effective in examining the University's senior employees' beliefs about student mental health as a problem, what services and supports they believe are beneficial for student mental health and why, as well as the technologies and mechanisms used at the University to implement such a programme of government.

CHAPTER 5

CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how post-secondary students with mental health issues are made visible as a problem to be solved and in need of regulation. Using an analytics of

government (Dean, 2010), this chapter begins to address the questions of (a) how student mental health issues are problematized and in need of a solution; and, (b) how discourses of student mental health make it possible to think about this issue in a specific way, thereby rendering students with mental health issues governable.

To address these questions, this chapter undertakes the analysis of Canadian federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents pertaining to student mental health in the post-secondary education setting. First, this chapter demonstrates how student mental health problems, and the student mental health crisis, is constructed in these documents as a neo-liberal problem for post-secondary institutions requiring a solution. Specifically, the way student mental health problems are presented in these documents as limiting student well-being and thus interfering with academic success (i.e. retention, course/program completion, and graduation), entering the workforce, and—ultimately—producing economically. The analysis of the advanced liberal forms of governing contained within these policy documents provides an outline of the conditions of possibility in which solutions to student mental health are developed and implemented on post-secondary campuses, which is the major concern of this thesis. Second, this chapter examines the student mental health discourses as they manifest in these documents. It is argued that the discourses deployed in these texts are productive in that they shape, create, and organize knowledge about student mental health problems. It is with this knowledge that student mental health can then be *thought* and it is determined what is allowable to think about, say, or do within student mental health discourses in the context of post-secondary institutions. It also makes it possible to consider the rationality behind this problematization and, therefore, the reasons that motivate institutions to address this specific problem.

5.2 Problematizing Student Mental Health

An analytics of government first begins with an examination of a particular context in which governing is called into question (Dean, 2010), or *problematization*. This conceptual term refers to the action of calling into question some aspect of the “conduct of conduct” (Dean, 2010: 38), and in this case, the regulation of post-secondary students with mental health issues. Even prior to asking the question of how to govern or regulate, the analysis of this problematization must take place. The problematization of post-secondary student mental health is to examine the specific situation in which governing student behaviour becomes a problem. It is to bring attention to the sets of practices and forms of knowledge that have constructed the specific problem, for which a response (e.g. mental health policies, services, etc.) is needed. This section demonstrates how student mental health on post-secondary campuses in Canada, specifically in Ontario, is problematized.

In the first chapter of this study, I introduced the mental health crisis that is happening on post-secondary campuses today, and the rising public and institutional concern for this crisis. In the past decade (and earlier), concern for student mental health problems and the mental health crisis on campuses across Canada has been expressed in various federal, provincial and organizational policy documents (i.e. Linden et al., 2018; Popovic, 2012; Mackean, 2011; OUCHA, 2017; CACUSS & CMHA, 2013; COU et al., 2017). These documents draw attention to the urgency for post-secondary institutions to respond to and address these student mental health problems given their negative impact on student academic and professional success. Based on literature and environmental scans of mental health and well-being in post-secondary settings, these policy documents and organizational reports state that mental health issues are “identified by students as having the greatest impact on their academic success” (Mackean, 2011:

6). Student mental health is a high priority for colleges and universities (Mackean, 2011: 6), in addition to making effective support a pressing issue on campuses (College Student Alliance (CSA), Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), Colleges Ontario, and Council of Ontario Universities (COU), 2017: 1). To identify student mental health as a problem is to call into question the governance of this behaviour and begins the process of problematization by focusing on the particular practices and forms of knowledge, such as these documents, that construct the ‘problem’ in need of a solution. Building on this analysis, the next section aims to demonstrate how these federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents in fact construct this crisis as a neo-liberal problem.

5.2.1 A Neo-liberal Problem

As outlined in the previous section, Canadian federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents (Linden et al., 2018; Popovic, 2012; Mackean, 2011; OUCHA, 2017; CACUSS & CMHA, 2013; and COU, 2017) articulate concern for the student mental health crisis taking place on post-secondary campuses across Canada and Ontario. These documents begin the problematization process by constructing it as a neo-liberal problem for post-secondary institutions.

Although supporting students with mental health challenges and their well-being is one of the most pressing issues on post-secondary campuses (COU, 2017), and an utmost priority for many post-secondary institutions (Linden et al., 2018), the focus of this institutional concern is not simply with ensuring student health and well-being. Instead, good mental health is framed in as a “resource for living” and a means for helping “people succeed in school, [and] at work” (MOHLT, 2011). In the aforementioned documents, there are numerous implicit and explicit examples of a neo-liberal goal that underlies these calls to support students in their mental health

and well-being. For example, both Mackean's (2011) literature and environment scan of Canada's mental health and well-being in post-secondary education settings makes a case for supporting students with mental distress that goes beyond the goal of health:

There is an increasingly strong evidence base supporting the recognition of the centrality of student mental health and well-being to good learning and academic success, and hence the importance of designing post-secondary institutional settings that truly promote mental well-being for all. (8)

It continues by emphasizing that the "development of a college/university environment that promotes mental health and well-being will benefit the entire campus community, supporting learning and success" (2011: 10). Further on yet, it summarizes its case for supporting student mental health and well-being on campuses by referencing the fact that there is

increasingly strong evidence that student mental health is a critical foundation from which students can optimize their learning, reach their potential, and achieve success in their academic endeavours (Silverman, Underhile & Keeling, 2008). Data also clearly show that students identify mental health issues as affecting their learning and academic performance. (35)

Similarly, the *Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach* (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013) begins with the premise that

mental health is essential to students' academic success as well as their ability to participate fully and meaningfully throughout all aspects of their lives and throughout their lifespan. (7)

As part of its approach to student mental health, this guide stresses the significant impact that crises can have on students' mental health and academic success. Therefore, it encourages post-secondary institutions to take this into consideration when developing their mental health framework:

Assess student mental health and how it impacts student success. Collect multi-modal data for the campus community to show the importance of relevance of issues. (23)

Post-secondary institutions and student organizations are increasingly understanding that support for student mental health can maintain and/or improve student retention. This is reflected in the OUCHA 2017 policy paper:

There is an increasing recognition that mental health issues are a growing concern that impact the business of post-secondary education. Anxiety and depression are among the most prevalent afflictions impacting post-secondary students, and several studies have linked these directly to academic performance and student attrition. (6)

Similarly, this concern is expressed in Linden et al.'s 2018 policy paper:

Only 35% of students reported that experiencing stress had not negatively impacted their academic performance. The literature has repeatedly linked students' stress and distress to negative academic outcomes, including reduced academic achievement, challenges with alertness and reduced ability to focus, and student attrition and retention. (4)

Students facing mental health issues are less likely to succeed academically and are more likely to drop out. Lack of academic success increases the risk of drop out, which leads to lower retention and graduate rates. From the perspective of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution, where education is a business and students are consumers (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000), mental health problems are creating a neo-liberal problem.

Thus, these policy documents demonstrate the construction of student mental health problems as a neo-liberal problem in that they prevent students from succeeding academically and educational institutions from producing graduates. In this construction, the risk of mental distress and lack of well-being is an economic one, for students, for post-secondary institutions, and for society as whole. Students facing these challenges are at risk of failed academic success and, ultimately, citizenship. This is implied in Mackean's paper:

Ultimately, students who experience good learning and success in their post-secondary education, and who have a better understanding of how to maintain mental wellbeing, manage mental health problems if/when they emerge and/or live with their psychosocial disabilities, are better able to engage as mentally

healthy citizens in their communities and society. This is a huge benefit to the future of our global community. (8-9)

As such, not only do mental health problems impede academic success and institutional performativity, they also have the potential to prevent students from becoming economically responsible and productive citizens, thereby hindering society as a whole.

In these policy documents, students with mental health problems are thus constructed as a particular kind of problem: a neo-liberal problem. This way of seeing these students brings focus to a form of knowledge about student mental health and reflects the political rationality for constructing the problem in this way. Student mental health has been called into question and problematized as needing regulation or a solution in order to regulate this undesirable behaviour. The federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents aim to solve this problematic. In so doing, they set the conditions of possibility for thinking about, talking about, and acting on student mental health issues. By extension, they also contain discourses about student mental health. In the next section, I will build on this construction of the problematic and examine the discourses in these documents that produce a particular set of ideas about governing students with mental health problems.

5.3 Discourses of Student Mental Health

The previous analytical sections demonstrated how federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents construct the student mental health crisis as a neo-liberal problem. In these documents, mental distress is problematized as preventing students from achieving academic success and the University from producing successful and productive students. Continuing with this analytic, this section aims to examine the ways in which student mental health discourses contained in the aforementioned documents frame student mental health within a particular systems of meaning. This is to say that these discourses produce socially accepted, but

historically contingent, knowledge about student mental health that constitutes the nature of student mental health/structures the way in which mental health is perceived, thereby governing what can and cannot be said or known about it. Framing student mental health discourses in this way provides a conceptual link between language and practice. It connects what people say with what people do and delimits what is sayable or not sayable about the topic. Given that mental health services for students are developed and implemented based on what is known to be true about student mental health, the knowledge (and by extension, truth) created by these student mental health discourses defines these students. Discourses define the relations of power between social actors, shape the contours of subjectivity, and construct the “given” of a particular social moment. These discourses thus produce certain practices through which students with mental health problems are governed.

This discourse and constructed possibility for thinking about student mental health problems is articulated in the aforementioned policy documents. There is a rhetorical uniformity in the way student mental health is presented as a neo-liberal problem in the federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents. This uniformity shows a shared definition of student mental health and emphasize the negative effects of mental distress on students. These documents share a process by which mental health problems are presented as problematic, highlighting how the process itself is located in a situated knowledge of how the transition to post-secondary education can be difficult and negatively affect students and their mental health.

First, there is uniformity the way that the documents acknowledge the vulnerability for and high-risk of mental health problems among youth and young adults at this very transitional stage in their lives. This transition period entails multiple factors contributing to student vulnerability:

- a developmental vulnerability to social pressures, including substance abuse;
- life stressors (e.g., moving away from home; transitioning from high school to college/university); and,
- the college and university environment itself, which is often described as competitive and stressful. (Mackean, 2011: 10)

Similarly, Linden et al. (2018) articulates contributing factors to student vulnerability:

Juggling academic, financial, family and personal demands, are some of the new experiences that our students share. Some students, transitioning directly from secondary school, may be away from home, family and friends for the first time. Others may face challenges in reintegrating into student life, after having been in the workforce for years. (1)

OUCHA's 2017 report also highlights the vulnerable transition period:

Emerging Adults attending post-secondary education go through a number of complex transitions:

- They transition to less structured and often stressful post-secondary learning environments;
- Many move from living at home and being supported by their parents to living away from home without significant daily family support, and;
- Their identities shift from child/youth to adult, requiring new skills and approaches to finances, relationships and life planning. (4)

Second, there is uniformity in the way these policy documents acknowledge the (sudden)

increase in stress associated with the transition to post-secondary education and the toll that this can take on student mental health. For example:

Studies have shown that stress, sleep loss, and depression are commonplace in the student population. (Popovic, 2012: 2)

The majority of Canadian post-secondary students (58%) identified academic stressors as their most significant source of stress. A significant source of stress for many students was revealed to be perceived safety on campus, revealing subthemes such as pressure to engage in substance abuse, sexual harassment and assault, and physical and emotional abuse or assault. (Linden et al., 2018: 5)

The increased responsibility for making critical decisions can leave students feeling overwhelmed, isolated and helpless. (COU et al., 2017: 1)

Third, there is uniformity in the way in which students who are feeling overwhelmed by the stressful transition to post-secondary education are constructed as lacking effective coping skills

and resiliency. This is often implicitly expressed in documents in the way they make recommendations for addressing student mental health problems. For example, the *Post Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach* (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013) highlights self-management competences and coping skills as a key component in their approach to student mental health:

Self-management competences and coping skills strengthen students' resilience and ability to manage the multiple demands of student life. They also decrease vulnerability to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. (18)

The guide also suggests that self-management competencies and coping skills strengthen students' ability to flourish and manage the range of demands they may face, as well as to be able to find meaning, purpose and satisfaction in their lives as students (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013). Other policy documents draw attention to students' apparent lack of coping skills:

Students who are struggling to cope with anything from anxiety to addictions are encouraged to seek help (COU et al., 2017: 1)

With the prominence of mental health issues in children and youth, it is imperative that Ontario's education systems foster resilience in its students...students who are resilient are more likely to effectively cope with the stresses and challenges that accompany post-secondary education.

To mitigate the possibility of a student feeling overwhelmed, transition programming that helps students learn ways to cope with anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses must be developed. (COU et al., 2017: 7)

In order to help students develop into mentally healthy citizens, they must be aware of practices and actions that contribute to their mental health. These factors can be stress-coping exercises, the development of a school/work balance...(Popovic, 2012: 18).

Finally, these documents commonly highlight the connection between mental health problems and associated 'risky' behaviour. For example,

research shows that 5% of college students prematurely end their education because of a mental illness and that disorders of anxiety, mood, problematic substance use, and conduct are strong predictors of academic failure (Popovic, 2012: 10)

Mental illness can make it difficult for students to relate to others and increase students' loneliness and isolation. Students with mental health issues may also experience problems with their physical health, such as sleep difficulties and exhaustion. (COU et al., 2017: 1)

Acute and chronic stressors affecting post-secondary students put them at risk for a wide range of mental health issues, including, but not limited to, acute stress disorder, depression, anxiety, anger, and burnout. Such problems can lead, or be coincident with, other negative outcomes such as substance misuse, relationship difficulties, absenteeism/drop-out, addictive behaviours, and suicide. (Linden et al., 2018: 1)

What is revealed here is the rhetorical uniformity, a specific discourse, used in these documents that produces knowledge about post-secondary students: they are vulnerable, at risk for compounding behavioural problems, and need to learn effective coping skills in order to manage this stressful time. This discourse produces a collective understanding and acceptance of this reality. It becomes an accepted truth.

Furthermore, these documents articulate uniformity in linking the prevalence of mental distress, brought on by this stressful transition, with weakened academic performance. In Popovic's 2012 policy paper, mental health (anxiety, depression) was listed as the most frequently identified student health challenge/issue (Patterson & Kline, 2008:19, cited in Popovic, 2012: 9). The most frequent impact of this issue was identified as "effect on academic performance" (Patterson & Kline, 2008:19, cited in Popovic, 2012: 9). This report goes on to show that mood and anxiety disorders were the most prevalent individual diagnoses in Ontario's colleges and that the impact of these issues were visible in the students' academic work:

college service providers reported that 67.7% of all students they saw were experiencing academic challenges, most frequently difficulties maintaining concentration, being easily distracted, frequent absences from class, not having enough energy to complete academic work and difficulties with organization. (Popovic, 2012: 10)

The discourses used in these policy documents uniformly defines post-secondary students: seemingly fragile with a lack of resilience, which puts them at very high risk for mental

distress during their post-secondary careers. They produce a form of thought and knowledge about post-secondary students who experience any mental distress at all during this transition time and years of post-secondary education, which in turn becomes accepted as knowledge and truth from which a solution can be found. In this way, discourses in these documents create a reality about post-secondary students and their mental health that ultimately seeks to render students with mental health problems governable. By extension, these discourses inform practices of governing, thereby supporting the rationality that this behaviour is problematic, interferes with an academic career and success, and requires regulation. Student mental health then emerges as a domain within which truth is produced and becomes a strategic element for governing.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has begun the analytics of government that gives priority to ‘how’ questions, specifically, how student mental health issues are problematized. This process “directs us to attend to the practices of government that form the basis on which problematizations are made” (Dean, 2010: 39). This analysis is an attempt to understand how student mental health has to be thought. In order to do this, this chapter first examined how post-secondary student mental health problems are made visible in Canadian federal, provincial, and organization policy documents as a neo-liberal problem. The examination of this field of visibility makes it possible to picture who and what is to be governed, what problems are to be solved, and what objectives are to be sought (Dean, 2010). By examining the rationality that lies behind this problematic, it is again the aim of this analysis to better understand who and what is to be governed and for what reason.

Second, this chapter demonstrated how Canadian federal, provincial, and organization policy documents shape student mental health discourses and define post-secondary students as

vulnerable, susceptible to stress and anxiety, factors which commonly negatively affect academic success. Such discourse creates a certain accepted truth about students in distress, but also reveal the political rationality for problematizing student mental health problems and making them governable. They create a common language and knowledge as well as the technical means to govern (Cannizzo, 2015). In the next chapter, I will explore the problematization of student mental health at a post-secondary institution in Ontario, specifically how this institution has responded to this problem with governing practices.

CHAPTER 6

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on how student mental health issues as a problem are made constructed as a neo-liberal problem in various Canadian federal, provincial, and organization policy documents. This problematization reveals the rationality for addressing the mental health crisis happening on campuses in Canada: these issues interfere with academic success and thus with an institution's ability to produce successful graduates. The previous chapters also sought to bring to light the discourses of post-secondary student mental health as they are articulated in the policy documents and that locate the post-secondary student within a specific problematic. These discourses produce an accepted form of knowledge and truth about post-secondary education being a stressful time, during which students are vulnerable and at risk for experiencing mental distress, which in turn can impede their academic success and therefore needs to be addressed. Such truth disqualifies other meanings or understandings about student mental health, thereby perpetuating this reality. By determining what is knowable, sayable, and thinkable about student mental health, discourse becomes a governing technique. It also exposes the rationality that lies

beneath the production of such forms of truth, in this case that mental distress impedes academic success and is an undesirable behaviour to be regulated.

In this chapter, I will continue this governmentality analysis by examining the response to the mental health crisis at a post-secondary institution in Ontario (hereafter referred to as the University of Ontario or the University). This chapter seeks to examine the various governing practices, such as health promotion and wellness initiatives and activities, self-directed wellness apps and modules, and mental health services, employed at the University to respond to the growing public and institutional concern for student mental health on its campus. It seeks to understand how such practices are made possible, based on specific knowledge and truths about how mental distress should be addressed. This chapter is based on an analysis of articles published in the University Student Newspaper, interviews with University employees who are directly involved with the development and implementation of mental health services on campus, as well as observations of wellness-related events and activities on campus.

As such, this chapter continues to address the analytical questions of (a) how are student mental health problems made visible and problematized in a particular way at the University, (b) how do the discourses of student mental health, wellness, and academic success make it possible to think in particular ways about the provision of mental health services, and, (c) how do the policies and knowledges that have become associated with addressing student mental health create (and perpetuate) truths about students with mental health problems.

6.2 Localizing the Problematic

As previously discussed, the mental health crisis on campuses across Canada has been identified as a growing public concern and constructed as a neo-liberal problem. The discourses used to construct this problem emphasize the risk that students with mental health problems

present to post-secondary institutions by interfering with academic success and the production of active citizens for the economic benefit of society. Institutions are faced with pressures from many angles to respond to this crisis. The University of Ontario, which is the focus of this study, is no exception. Attention to this crisis has been drawn by the University Student Newspaper and other documents, locating not only the problematic but also the response in the context of the University. In 2017, in response to a letter to the editor following the death of a student on campus, where in the University administration was asked to make mental health a priority, a senior University employee wrote the following:

I want to assure all members, especially students, that the [University of Ontario] is fully committed to ensuring the well-being of our students and staff and ensuring they have access to the services they require.

Ensuring our students have access to mental health resources is a top priority and we are committed to improving our services. (University Student Newspaper, 2017)

However, the response did not stop there:

We want everyone who is part of our campus to be able to access the tools they require *to succeed in their studies and work and to be able to participate fully in [university] life*. This, of course, includes having access to mental health services.

We know that one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness during their lives and that young people are particularly vulnerable. (University Student Newspaper, 2017, emphasis added)

While there is concern for the incident and state of student mental health, this response reveals the University's motivations for addressing the mental health crisis on its campus. In fact, the response is consistent with an advanced liberal rationality for addressing the problem: students need to be able to succeed academically and mental health problems prevent this from happening. With the student mental health crisis and its problematization being made visible here, it is possible to examine how the University administration has responded to this problematic through various mechanisms that aim to make students with mental health problems

governable. From this response, discourses and forms of knowledge about student mental health will emerge, revealing the rationality for the institutional response.

Though the University has not yet introduced an official, campus-wide mental health policy or framework, in a 2017 interview with the president of the University stated that

what we'd like to develop is an integrated mental health policy and wellbeing approach on the campus. It's all linked, if you exercise, you do sports, you will probably have fewer chances of being ill, it might help your mental health. So we have to look at it as a holistic approach, but that's many years down the road. I'm not sure we have the sports facilities we deserve on our campus, for instance, and that the access is wide enough for the real needs of our community. (University Student Newspaper, 2017)

In a more recent interview with the president, when asked to comment about what is being done this year to hopefully prevent further student deaths presumably linked to mental health issues, this idea of an integrated, holistic approach is mentioned again:

For the last two years, we've invested a great deal of effort into mental health issues. I think we're not as bad as we used to be. I think that there's much more sensitivity on campus and people are more willing — that being a professor, faculty member, a staff member or a student — to say they're in distress, to listen, to go and consult. Access to the (mental health) system, we're told, is easier.

This being said, we're trying this year to come up with a sort of integrated plan. In the last two years, we've taken many initiatives left and right and it's quite impressive the number of things we've done, but now we want people to understand the body of where we're going and what we hope to achieve. (University Student Newspaper, 2019)

From the president's consistent responses, the University administration's response to managing the mental health crisis on its campus is to develop an integrated, whole-of-campus mental health policy. This means supporting student mental health and wellness not only through counselling services, but everywhere on campus with “many initiatives left and right” (Student Newspaper, 2019), in student residences and sports facilities, for example.

This integrated approach to addressing student mental health is reflective of the use of technologies of governing. Consistent with a governmentality analysis, these technologies are

necessary for the formation and operation of government, or here the regulation of students with mental health problems. In the next section, I will examine the technologies of governing students employed at the University in response to the mental health crisis.

6.3 Technologies of Governing Students with Mental Health Problems

As I have discussed in the previous section, the student mental health crisis has been problematized within the context of the University as requiring regulation and management. Applying an analytics of government in this section, I will examine how the process of regulating and managing this crisis is carried out at the University with the use of governing technologies. By extension, I will also explore the underlying rationality for addressing student mental health in this way and how the technologies are conducive to the University's rationality for governing, consistent with an advanced liberal mentality. The goal of this section is thus to explore how the University uses various mental health initiatives and practices to act upon the conduct of its students (in a way that it knows to be true and legitimate), thereby achieving a certain end: successful students. This is based on an analysis of documents pertaining to student mental health and wellness at the University and respondent interviews.

6.3.1 Culture of wellness

As highlighted above, in the interviews published by the Student Newspaper, the president explains that the focus for addressing the student mental health crisis and rising demand for adequate mental health services has been on developing an integrated, whole-of-campus approach. As part of this effort, the president created the Action Group in 2018,

whose mandate is to better coordinate activities on mental health and wellness at the [University of Ontario] via an action plan, including clear accountabilities for the implementation of initiatives, projects and services. (Action Group, 2019)

In a 2019 status report issued by this action group, it is explained that this integrated plan to support mental health and wellness on campus has involved engaging the whole university community:

we have engaged our students and employees, as well as our community partners to join us in helping affect this culture change focused on wellbeing. Part of shifting our collective campus consciousness to better promote health and wellness is to improve the awareness and access to resources and services available to our community members. (University Action Group, 2019)

Of note here, is the group's efforts to make a shift on campus to a "culture of wellness, with more integrated and coordinated programming and projects" (University Action Group, 2019: 4). According to the report, making this shift entails partnering with student and employee groups to "use their skills to promote Wellness" (2019: 4) on campus with workshops and health challenges, as well as the introduction of new wellness-related initiatives and tools. The group's goal is to

work towards a stronger campus culture of wellness leading to access to streamlined services – where everyone has a role to play. (University Action Group, 2019)

Here, this 'culture of wellness' demonstrates the Action Group's use of technical means for governing student mental health and wellness. In creating a culture of wellness, the Action Group aims to govern students indirectly (e.g. through workshops, fun health challenges, self-guided stress management modules), so as to shape, guide, manage and regulate their conduct (Rose, 1999). In this context, this means improving student mental wellbeing and health and creating 'good' students by encouraging them to willingly participate in these activities for their own benefit. Through these initiatives then, students are given the capacity to fulfill their potential as 'good' students and take charge of their mental health. The University acts on these students at a distance through these initiatives, and students act upon themselves as subjects free

to improve their mental health through acts of choice (Rose, 1999). Ultimately, however, these mental health and wellness initiatives and activities are imbued with aspirations for shaping the conduct of students with mental illness in the hope of producing ‘good’ students. For example, health promotion initiatives such as mindfulness challenges, stress management workshops, ‘wellness Wednesdays’, and a project to encourage students to take the stairs (Action Group, 2019) are all examples of campus initiatives wherein students are encouraged to manage their own health and well-being. However, by participating in campus activities to manage one’s stress, be mindful, engage in one’s well-being, and be active, students are making responsible and necessary behavioral changes required to achieve a socially acceptable state of well-being, according to the University. And this, at the will of the University administration, but without direct interference on its behalf. Thus, students are governed as well as self-governed (Rose, 1993).

In the Actions Group’s status report, the concept of ‘wellness’ is not explicitly defined. Nor is it explicitly explained what a “culture of wellness with more integrated and coordinated programming” (Action Group, 2019) looks like or how these mental health and wellness initiatives could address the mental health crisis on campus. That being said, in his interviews with the Student Newspaper, the University president does explain with respect to an integrated mental health policy and well-being approach:

It’s all linked, if you exercise, you do sports, you will probably have fewer chances of being ill, it might help your mental health. So we have to look at it as a holistic approach, but that’s many years down the road. I’m not sure we have the sports facilities we deserve on our campus, for instance, and that the access is wide enough for the real needs of our community. (University Student Newspaper, 2017)

Similarly, in my interview with Marc, the senior University employee who oversee non-academic student services (including mental health and wellness) and member of the Action

Group, he does not directly define mental health or wellness, though we speak about it at great length. That being said, Marc implicitly describes his understanding of student wellness when he describes the funding initiatives for mental health services that have been created with various campus partners. He explains that the funding received goes

to anything that will help our students have a positive experience and find the wellness they need to be successful in the classroom. (Marc, 2019)

Wellness, then, is whatever helps students to succeed academically. He proceeds to explain that he and his management team are always looking for opportunities to promote wellness on campus. When I asked him if this brainstorming of ideas then trickles down to the actual services, he confirms it does and tells me he and his team are looking at ways they can

be in a better position to take care of our students...And there is a lot of research, which shows the link between physical activity and wellbeing. So, we are looking at a number of key projects that will give students more opportunities for physical activities, cuz right now for a [university] of our size, the facilities we have and the programming we have is really inadequate. And our students, our entire community, deserves a lot better.

That will [create] school-life balance, work-life balance. Mind, body and soul, right? If you're well physically you'll be better emotionally, if you eat well too. (Marc, 2019)

The concept of wellness is seemingly understood as a resource: a resource for academic success and a resource for overall health. In this understanding of wellness as a resource, it is also presumed that, without wellness, students are otherwise unable to succeed academically. Wellness, as an advanced liberal governing technique is reflected in Marc's comments, notably in his statement above that wellness is the result of the prudent individual choosing to live a balanced lifestyle and take care of ones' self by being active and eating well.

This perspective is further shared with me in another interview with the senior employee who oversees the Academic Services counselling unit, with respect to managing mental health and personal wellness:

It's hard work taking charge of our wellness. Even as individuals who don't identify as struggling with mental health concerns or issues. It is still a challenge every day to be able to say, okay how do I balance my responsibilities. How do I take care of myself? We all know we have to eat well, we have to sleep enough, we have to drink less caffeine or less alcohol. But it's about setting intentions and being mindful and actually taking action, doing things concretely every day to be able to take care of one's self, [and] one's mental health or physical health for that matter. (Justine, 2019)

Justine describes her understanding of how wellness stems from the individual's ability to find balance, to make responsible, prudent choices, and to self-manage in all aspects of life. Similar to the perspective expressed by Marc, wellness is a resource for a successful life, but that ultimately arises from the individual's choice, responsibility, and control.

6.3.2 Wellness defined

As I have highlighted, the Action Group's effort to create a culture of wellness for the purposes of addressing the student mental health crisis is demonstrative of an advanced liberal technique of governing. Though 'wellness' is not defined in so many words within the Action Group's 2019 status report, the focus on shifting to a culture of wellness by promoting and delivering wellness initiatives on campus implicitly defines the concept. Wellness is also implicitly defined in activities held on campus, such as the annual, week-long wellness event. This section will focus on my observation and analysis of these public events. Through the analysis of these events, this section provides an analytical description of how wellness is defined and operates as an advanced liberal governing technique.

According to the Action Group's status report, this week-long wellness event is an annual event that consists of workshops, events, conducted by alumni, students, employees and community experts and stakeholders. (2019)

During the week in question, every day offered a variety of events for students, professors, and university staff. Given that these events are part of a week-long event that the Action Group considers to be part of the shift to a culture of wellness, they implicitly define the components of

an individual's life that makes up one's well-being. Such events and workshops include the following:

Break it off! – an initiative aimed at helping young adults quit smoking and stay smoke-free. Visit the booth to test your quit smoking *knowledge*.

Make your own kombucha – kombucha has many *health benefits*!

Your Fitness Passport! *Take part in the daily challenges* found on the fitness passport

Yoga – *unwind* with a good yoga session

Mental health discussion panel – students will have an opportunity to *learn about mental health*, its effects on students, common mental health conditions faced in post-secondary school

Financial literacy – studies have shown that *financial literacy* is strongly linked to physical and mental wellbeing. We will review the basics of *financial wellness*

Wellness Café – free coffee, snacks, pet therapy and personal training, Q&A with a dietitian, and much more

Practicing Centering Prayers – a simple method of *meditation* that aims to deepen our relationship with the Source of our being

Practices for spiritual wellness/guided meditation – cultivate *spiritual wellness* and benefit our mental health, guided meditation to help you *de-stress* by using breathing and *mindfulness* techniques

Social media your mental health conference – discussion about how advances in technology and the internet are affecting our mental health. We will tackle how to *take control of habits and patterns* relating to our mental health online

Benefits of exercise – keynotes speakers will offer *knowledge and tips* on exercise for therapy and disease *prevention*, stress *management* and relationships, building a daily plan for *your best health*

Sleeping well for dummies! – workshop on sleep hygiene, learn how to sleep better and *increase your productivity*!

Pet therapy/massage therapy – stressed? Need a break? Come *relax* with our certified therapy dogs or with a mini-massage. (University of Ontario, n.d., emphasis added)

These events permeated the campus and were widely promoted to students and staff alike, reinforcing the belief that managing these areas of life will achieve improved (mental) health and wellness and capacity for individual success. These events provide students with the opportunity and choice to be ‘well’ and, by extension, a ‘good’ student. In this way, the activities associated with the concept of wellness are deployed by the University as self-governing techniques to regulate undesirable behaviour and produce successful students. Wellness is perceived as requiring individuals to take control in these various areas of their lives. Consistent with Marc and Justine’s understandings of wellness, taking control of one’s life by making these responsible, prudent choices is representative of personal wellness.

Discourse of wellness

Further to the analysis of the week-long wellness events as demonstrating the use of technologies of the self to govern student mental health and wellbeing, this section focuses on the discourse of wellness that is used on the University’s Mental Health and Wellness homepage as a governing technique. Similar to the status report issued by the Action Group (2019), and its lack of explicit definition of wellness, the Mental Health and Wellness homepage (n.d.) does not provide a definition for what it is to be ‘well.’ Nevertheless, the web page does state the following:

The [University of Ontario] is committed to the well-being of its students and staff. Ensuring that everyone can experience good overall health allows them to be successful in their work and participate fully in [university] life. The [University’s] core values include preparing students to become leaders and encouraging and enabling our employees to achieve personal growth and wellness.

The website is being rolled out in phases and will evolve with time in an effort to better help you and those you care about achieve balance and well-being.
(University of Ontario, n.d.)

Here again, wellness is reflected as a resource for students and staff to be achieve balance and thus be successful in their work and life. Similar to the discourses in the policy documents analyzed in chapter 5, the discourse used on this web page produces knowledge about student well-being and a particular reality wherein well-being is necessary for academic success. This discourse is again conducive to the University's rationality for helping students improve their mental health and well-being, which is to produce successful students.

The discourse of wellness as a technique for governing and self-governing is also reflected in a section of the University's Mental Health and Wellness webpage that outlines the seven pillars of wellness. Yet again, wellness is not explicitly defined on the webpage. However, seven pillars are presented along with their definitions, as follows:

Financial - Understanding your financial situation and your relationship with money, so you can make sound decisions.

Intellectual - Inspiring a sense of curiosity by opening your mind to new experiences, concepts and skills that are mentally stimulating and creative.

Social - Making meaningful connections with people by taking an active part in your community and maintaining positive relationships.

Environmental - Making efforts to protect and sustain your surrounding environment to promote health and wellbeing.

Emotional - Being emotionally balanced, understanding yourself and seeking support, if necessary.

Physical - Adopting healthy habits and minimizing risky behaviours that may affect your wellbeing.

Spiritual - Fostering a sense of inner peace and harmony while participating in activities that support one's beliefs and values. (University of Ontario, n.d.)

Here, it is inferred that these seven pillars are the areas of life that the University associates with an individual's overall well-being and, ultimately, a successful life. The definitions provided for each pillar are examples of self-governing techniques for individuals, namely students, to

achieve a state of wellness in their personal lives. These pillars also align with the type of events and workshops that were held during the week-long wellness event, reinforcing the University's notion that if students are to achieve balance and wellness, they need to focus on these areas of their lives.

From these webpages, as well as the definitions of the seven pillars, and the descriptions of the wellness events, a discourse of wellness begins to emerge along with the rationality for governing students through such technologies of the self. As with the discourse of student mental health, the discourse of wellness makes it possible to talk and think about wellness in a particular way. In so doing, new forms of knowledge about wellness are produced, through which practices of governing are enabled. In the context of the University, discourses of wellness aim to organize students in such a way so that they can be governed in alignment with the University's goals. Based on the seven pillars outlined above, the discourse of wellness become wrapped up in a broader discourse of the prudent and 'good' student who aims to find balance and make responsible choices with respect to one's finances, mind, social life, environment, emotional life, physical life, and spiritual life. From this state of balance and wellness, students can succeed.

As such, promoting a culture of wellness on campus and encouraging students to self-manage and manage their mental health is not an impartial goal on behalf of the University administration. Rather, it aims to enable students to succeed academically by reaching graduation. The wellness discourse in the Action Group status report and in interviews with Marc and Justine reflects the administration's knowledge and accepted truth about student mental health and wellness. In the context of the University, practices for governing students with mental health problems are thus shaped and enacted from the knowledge that these senior employees hold to be true: "overall health and wellness will allow students to be successful in

their work and participate fully in [university] life” (University of Ontario, n.d.). Building on this knowledge and accepted truth about student mental health and wellness, in the next section, I will examine another technology of governing deployed at the University, specifically its counselling services.

6.3.3 Counselling Services

The shift to a culture of wellness at the University is of particular interest when considering how the University enacts its practices of government for addressing student mental health problems. In the fall of 2018, and as part of the University administration’s efforts to shift to a culture focused on wellbeing (Action Group, 2019), the University’s Academic Services rolled out a revamped version of its counselling services. The revamp was also an effort to respond to dissatisfaction among students regarding long wait times to see a counsellor and to implement a more efficient system to handle student demand. In an interview the senior University employee who oversees the Academic Services, the need for revamping the counselling services was explained as follows:

There’s a lot of confusion [around] our counselling unit. Their focus should be, and is, counselling to support student success. We are not a service where a student with a diagnosed mental health disability, such as you know, serious depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, any type of diagnosis like that, we’re not a health care professional. All of our psychotherapists are registered with the psychotherapist college of Ontario. So, they’re qualified to do that work, but that’s not what we’re about. (Sandra, 2019)

She continued to explain that by revamping the counselling service, they are trying to create a shift. They want the Academic Services counselling unit to be about supporting student well-being, but for academic success, not to support students who need medical treatment.

Here, the rationality for the revamped services is clearly articulated. The goal of the counselling unit of the Academic Services is to help students, but within the scope of its mandate, which is to “support student so that they can thrive and find their own path to academic success” (Academic Services, 2018: 2). Similarly, during my interview with Justine, she explained to me that

the [Academic Services’] mandate is one of academic success and not one of health or mental health, specifically. However, part of our services are, or part of our mandate is to focus on student wellness as part of the mandate to support academic success. This is why [Academic Services] has a counselling service. (2019)

She also explained that the previous model was a more traditional counselling model, where students were to call and make an appointment to meet with a counsellor for an initial triage appointment. Depending on the outcome of that appointment, the student would be placed on a wait list for short-term counselling or referred externally, based on the need.

As such, Academic Services wanted a more student-centred and accessible model that would fit with their mandate of wellness and success. With this in mind, they looked to adapt and implement a model that was

designed for primary health care systems to try and be more efficient and see patients sooner. But also, see patients in terms of what was most important to them at that time and not necessarily looking at every single aspect of their health, but primarily what was the main concern and trying to address that quickly. (Justine, 2019)

Justine further explained to me that this model is appealing for post-secondary institutions because the ‘stepped-care’ model provides a

range of options or resources, varying from low intensity services and resources to high intensity depending on the student’s level of need. But also on their level of readiness. Because, just because we might be experiencing as a student levels of stress or anxiety or emotional distress or dysregulation, it doesn’t necessarily mean that everybody needs or is ready for therapy. There might be other options and resources that would better meet the need at that moment in time and so the

idea is to offer a wide range of options to students instead of just having the one or two options. (2019)

Here the idea of students having options is of interest. In an article published by the University Student Newspaper on the rollout of the revamped counselling services, it states that

the stepped care model comes a seven-step pathway, with different access points for students to engage with throughout their academic journey.

This model allows students to be self-directed in their own development, where [the Academic Services] will be a supporting player. (2018)

As part of the new model, the counselling unit had introduced a new walk-in clinic to replace the previous triage procedure with long wait times, a new therapeutic group counselling program, and a self-directed online module system (Student Newspaper, 2018).

What is demonstrated in this article, as well as the above description of the new student-centred model and added services, is the students' assumed ability to be self-directed in their own care.

The revamped counselling services is thus built from a model that is consistent with an advanced liberal technique of governing wherein the students have the 'freedom' to customize the service to their needs. Student freedom to direct their own development and care with this model is, however, a process of the government and self-governing of the student through systems of domination (Dean, 1999: 165).

The self-governed student with mental health problems

Out of this rationality and technologies of the self, comes the creation of a 'voluntary' self-regulation. It thus becomes possible for the University administration to govern students with mental health problems, without any form of direct management but in line with its own objectives. Instead, it governs through the 'responsibilised' and 'educated' aspirations of students, which are to do well academically, graduate, and find a job. The student, under this advanced liberal rule, is made into an entrepreneur of the self, maximizing his or her choices and capacities as an 'active citizen' (Dean, 1999; Gordon, 1991; Rose, 1999), and showing individual

responsibility to govern over their conduct and behaviour. Promoting self-directed mental health and wellness initiatives and activities, such as meditation, time-management and mindfulness apps, is an example of this indirect form of governance. Students are encouraged to self-manage and acquire the necessary skills and attitudes that seemingly form the basis for greater self-control over mental distress, because it is believed that this is in their best interest. They are given the opportunity to use these tools to maximize their abilities to become better self-managed students and led to believe that this is the normal way to be successful in their studies and life.

The logic of choice and freedom or autonomy to self-govern appears in my interviews with senior employees directly involved in student mental health. During these interviews, each respondent touted the revamped counselling service as providing students with a model of care that provides them with options or flexibility in their care and ‘enables’ them to be more self-directed in their own mental health and wellness. The benefits of this self-governing, student-centred nature of this model is articulated in the way it is described by Sandra:

[We]’ve moved to a more developmental approach where [we focus on] what are your strengths and how can you build on your strengths to help you manage the areas in your life or the triggers or type of situation where you struggle a little bit more. So, it’s more of a focus on the strength rather and focusing on the individual’s deficits or challenges. (2019)

Further on in our interview, she explains that another component of the revamp was introducing a different framework of intervention, where preventative action forms the base, followed by proactive and specialized action. Preventative action is the point at which students have higher autonomy and self-management, use lower-intensity support and guidance resources, and have greater chances of being successful academically. The overall goal is to get all students back to a state of wellness by indirectly governing students and inciting them to self-govern:

So, what we do try is if we do have students that need these specialized types of services, our objective is to support them in a way that brings them back to the

bottom of the pyramid. Because when we're at the bottom of the pyramid, student autonomy and self-management is higher. This is where it's a lot of self-directed learning, it's really the student taking charge of themselves, of their learning, of their wellness, of their mental health. And if they're more in control of that, chances are things will go better for them. (Sandra, 2019)

She follows this up by articulating the advanced liberal rationality for their objective:

The intention is we're going to get you the support that you need *so that you develop the skills, the competencies that you need* to be able to be in a more autonomous (sic) and self-directed state of mind. (2019, emphasis added)

This objective is reflective of the discourses of student mental health articulated in the federal, provincial, and organizational documents analyzed in chapter six. It is consistent with the knowledge formed about students with mental health problems as lacking the skills and abilities to self-manage. In this way, the revamped counselling model is believed to be beneficial for helping students in distress in the way that it manages and regulates student mental health problems through its self-directed services.

The logic in providing counselling services to students that enable them to experience more autonomy and a higher level of competency by choosing from program options based on their needs and strengths (University of Ontario, n.d.) is evident in my interviews with Sandra and Justine. Forms of knowledge about students with mental health problems are also reflected in their descriptions of the new counselling model and support their rationality for developing and implementing the model, which is consistent with an advanced liberal rationality wherein students are to be self-enterprising individuals, active and empowered in making choices about their mental health for their own benefit (Rose, 1999).

This section examined the University's revamped counselling services, deployed as an advanced liberal governing technique. Advanced liberal government works through forms of freedom and individual agency, but it is also involved in the use of indirect means of regulating

that agency. Governing the freedom of students through the self-directed, stepped-care model aims to maximize students' capacities to manage their mental health for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of the University, whose mandate is to produce socially and economically viable citizens. Thus, the supposed benefits of the counselling services occur through self-directed engagement by the students with the various mental health services offered. In the next section, I will further examine the rationality for not only the revamped counselling services, but also the shift to a culture of wellness at the University.

6.3.4 Student success

In its 2017-2018 annual report, the Academic Services reports on a “New, Progressive Service Delivery Model” that “will have a significant impact on the [University] community,”

(6) including:

- an increase in the number of student community members who feel a deeper sense of autonomy and competency in achieving success at the [University];
- an increased sense of general student wellness;
- an increased rate of student retention after one and two years; and,
- better access to services. (Academic Services, 2018: 6)

In this description of the new counselling service model, it becomes clear that this is not a neutral governing technique, wherein the sole purpose is to help student wellness and improved management of student mental health. Instead, it is underpinned by neo-liberal goals of student retention and success at school. The rationality for student success can be explored in my interviews with all of the senior University employees directly involved in student mental health.

In my interview with Justine, who oversees the Academic Services counselling unit, she explained that the counselling unit is trying to implement a strength-based approach to help students take charge of their academic success. Instead of hand holding, which isn't necessarily helpful, the revamp is an effort to help students recognize their level of responsibility in terms of

their academic success (Justine, 2019). She also explained that what the counselling unit is trying to do is foster autonomy in students by teaching them what they

need to know to be able to take charge. And, when to take charge, you know to work to try and make things happen before things get out of hand. So you know, if you know that you get stressed around exams, go to the walk-in early in the semester and connect with a counsellor and see, what are my options, how can I learn, you know, strategies to help me deal with this so I am not struggling when an exam time comes around.

The idea with [the stepped-care model] is really to help students develop their autonomy within a model, a system, where they know what's available and where to go and they can navigate that system effectively.

Researcher: And ultimately for student success?

Justine: Exactly, for student success. (2019)

My interview with Justine reveals that more than just providing mental health services to students, the counselling unit's objective is to educate students and develop student mental health literacy. In so doing, students will learn how to use their strengths to cope in difficult situations, which will ultimately help them succeed. Here again, Justine articulates an advanced liberal rationality for self-directed mental health services:

The idea is to empower yourself. The best way to do that is through information and knowledge. The more I know, the more I can figure out what works for me...[we can say] here's everything else you might want to consider or look into to get you on your way to where you want to go, to help you reach your goals. Trying to empower and develop that autonomy, which are very important skills and attributes beyond graduation too. Trying to develop transferrable, long-lasting skills rather than just fixing someone's problem or concern without involving them in the process. (2019)

The discourse of student success reveals a prominent neo-liberal rationality through which practices for governing students with mental health problems are enacted. Not only is student success expressed as the ultimate goal and motivation for providing students with academic services, but Sandra makes it very clear that the focus of all of the academic services, counselling or otherwise, is to support students in their academic success. Sandra and other employees

involved in student mental health consider the academic and counselling services to help and empower students to learn how to self-manage and gain life skills. For her and her colleagues, this is a potential solution for addressing student mental distress, because ultimately this will help them succeed in school and in life.

The student success discourse is also deployed in my interview with Marc, who also makes the distinction between his own mandate as the senior employee who oversees non-academic activities at an educational institution versus a mandate of treating students with mental health problems

[My] role is to support our students to be successful in the classroom, by providing non-academic services [but that] support the academic mandate of the university...So, it's about the student experience. It's about student engagement. And it's as I said, to help students transition to post-secondary education...So, our role is really just to create conditions for students to be successful. And that involves providing a lot of support services like counselling for mental health, for example. (Marc, 2019)

Further into our conversation, he again references his mandate to provide an environment for students to be successful, not to provide mental health services. He explains that that would fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Health, whereas education (and producing graduates) is the University's mandate. The rationality for providing any mental health and wellness supports and services thus clearly stems from the mandate to support students academically, and not really for their mental well-being.

Student mental health problems are understood to interfere with student success; and student success is revealed as the rationality and motivation for regulating this undesirable conduct with the use of governing techniques like the counselling services. Both Marc and Sandra referred to the positive benefits of academic and non-academic services on student retention and success. In this way, the objectives of the counselling services and wellness

initiatives on campus align with the University's mandate for student success. Again, this is done by governing students at-a-distance and in an advanced liberal way by providing services to students with mental health issues with the goal of 'empowering' them to take control over their distress.

In my interview with Marc, he speaks to this student empowerment when he remarks that, despite the University having limited resources for mental health and wellness services,

there's a lot of stuff that students can do for themselves. So, it's about self-empowering students to leverage available resources, [self-directed online modules] or others, to maybe address some of the issues they might be struggling with. (Marc, 2019)

Thus, reasonable and rational students in distress that want to get better and succeed are expected to choose to participate in these mental health and wellness initiatives. Students are "not merely free to choose, but are obliged to be free, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice" (Rose, 1999: 87). Freedom, or the choice of becoming empowered, is not a state, but a way of acting upon oneself.

What is relevant for the purpose of this study's analysis is how student wellness is not an impartial goal but is promoted under the guise of mental health and wellness. Furthermore, the University administration's goal of student success reveals an underlying economic discourse, wherein the success of students leads to graduation rates and, thus, greater performance outputs. Students who succeed are thus prudent, economically productive citizens. Not only do these results fulfill the University's neo-liberal mandate, they benefit society as a whole: the 'free' subject is mobilized so as to reach self-realisation through their own individual activity, which enhances national economic health all while generating individual freedom (Rose, 1999).

This section examined the University's technologies for governing student mental health and wellness as well as the underlying rationality and motivation for seeking to manage and

control student mental distress. The wellness services offered on campus demonstrate the use of a web of governing technologies to achieve the University administration's goal of creating an environment focused on wellness as a way to manage and regulate individuals with undesirable behaviour. These technologies are consistent with an advanced liberal mentality of government in the way they act indirectly on students as subjects who are autonomous and free to realize their own mental health and well-being. The discourse of wellness used at the University reflects the belief that 'good' students will endeavor to be mentally and physically well, because this is what is thought to be best for them. Therefore, they freely choose to engage in wellness activities in the pursuit of well-being, but ultimately to ensure their academic success. This rationality for deploying such governing practices is of particular interest because it is here that the truths held by the senior employees are revealed. The next section will explore these truths.

6.4 Truths About Student Mental Health, Wellness, and Success

In alignment with the analytics of government, it is possible to analyze the mentality of government that operates within regimes of practices, such as the mental health and wellness services provided to students on campus at the University. What is interesting in this analysis is how these practices are formed and maintained, based on assumed and taken-for-granted knowledge about student mental health and wellness. By applying an analytics of government to the University's governing practices for student mental health, in this section I seek to examine the accepted truths held by the University's senior employees, produced from forms of knowledge and expertise about student mental health and wellness, and that shape the services provided to students.

6.4.1 The student alone is responsible

In the previous sections, there was an analytical suggestion that student success is promoted at the University by senior employees under the guise of student mental health and wellness. Furthermore, the student mental health discourse as a concern with the prevention of student success presents a performance or outcomes-based view of the benefits for supporting students in preventing and dealing with mental distress. This is confirmed in my interview with a senior University employee who oversees mental health initiatives campus-wide when discussing the Academic Services and peer mentors on campus:

It is important for a student to thrive. [Academic Services] is about them getting through [post-secondary education] but learning the skills so that when they hit the workforce they know how to negotiate, advocate, what tools work for themselves. (Alexandra, 2019)

When I commented about the similarities in the way that the Academic Services seemed to promote thriving academically and thriving mentally, she confirmed that this was exactly the goal in what these services aim to do for students, as well as teach them to deal with adversity in the workplace and in life (Alexandra, 2019). In this interview, as well as in my interview with Sandra, the assumption that students need to learn proper coping skills and manage their wellness to be able to get ahead of any distress is prevalent. To not do these things is to make irresponsible, unwise choices:

A student needs to recognize and understand what his or her role is in all of this big picture. There's some basic behaviours that a student—the transition from high school to university is a big transition—and what we see is students coming in saying, “finally I'm free from my parents.” And engaging in behaviours that impede their own wellness. So, you know...And so it starts there, you know, awareness, informing [yourself]. Everyone on this planet we believe has this responsibility to inform, educate themselves on what are healthy lifestyle habits that support wellness. That starts there. When something starts not being [okay] or you're not in a good headspace at a point in time, you're starting to struggle with time management or what not, get some help... You know, coming in, making the effort to come in and see that maybe I'm not getting some of this stuff and I don't

want things to slide into bringing me in a state of un-wellness and so forth.
(Sandra, 2019)

Alexandra and Sandra's comments reveal a form of knowledge about post-secondary students, notably that engaging in certain behaviours impedes student wellness, but by educating themselves, increasing their mental health literacy, they can realize they need help or support. In this way, the student needs to gain this self-awareness to be able to self-manage and prevent further destructive behaviour. This suggests that the responsibility for making the necessary behavioural changes falls solely on the students who are prudent and capable of self-managing and fulfilling their capacity as "creatures of self-responsibility and self-mastery (Rose, 1999: 95)

6.4.2 Stress is a normal part of post-secondary education

While my interview participants all recognize the need to support students in the difficult transition to university, and tout the benefits for academic success, services are still only provided according to what is acceptable to be true about post-secondary student mental health. This is articulated during my interviews with the senior University employees when mental distress is acknowledged and accepted as being a potential problem for students, but a problem that can nevertheless be addressed, overcome, and prevented because it really is just a normal part of being in school. According to Marc,

not everything is really mental health related either. That's the other thing. Exams, for example. It's stressful, it's normal. It's normal! It's okay! And um, I think over the years it seems like everything has fallen into this category as 'it's a mental health issue. It's a mental health issue.'... So, I think it's about educating the community about the resources that are available. Educating about strategies to cope. And also just normalizing things. (2019)

Marc referred to this 'normal' stress a number of times during my interview with him. He emphasized that mental health and wellness is really all about students learning how to cope so that they can succeed:

I think for me it's all about the success of students and helping alleviate some of the stressors too. And normalizing a lot of the stuff. (Marc, 2019)

According to Marc, normalizing stress would make the experience a lot less stressful for students. Here, his assumption produces a form of knowledge that post-secondary university is a stressful time; however, this is completely normal. Marc continued to expand on this belief by sharing a personal experience that took place with a group of 30 first-year students in residence:

I asked them about what's your experience like so far, and what do you like, what you don't like, and one question I asked them was, "What keeps you up at night?" And I couldn't believe it, almost all 30 of them was like, "Will I have a job when in four years?" I'm like, guys are you kidding me? You're in your first year. They were like, legitimately stressed out about will I have a job in four years. Cut yourselves some slack. Enjoy the journey. (Marc, 2019, emphasis added)

Here, he seemed genuinely shocked and surprised that first-year students would experience "legitimate" stress over finding a job and express such a concern so early on in their academic careers. Despite the fact that Marc is responsible for supporting students and creating an environment for them to succeed, he dismisses this situation as being stress-worthy. Instead, he reveals what he believes to be true about their distress over finding a job, as well as the type of student subjectivity he presupposes, which is that finding a job is not something to stress out about and this is just a normal part of life. Therefore, there is no reason for students to stress out about it and they should be capable of self-regulating in this context.

This suggests this stress among students is to be expected and it should not really be cause for interference with one's success. So, it is certainly reasonable for students to seek tools and resources to help them manage their stress, such as meditation or breathing apps, time-management tools, or even mentor services. But his belief that student distress is simply 'normal' stress implies that these tools should be enough for students to learn the skills they need to cope. Students should not really need more intensive services like counselling to cope or manage with

what he believes to be normal stress related to exams or finding a job after graduation. Marc's comments also reflect his belief that school-related stress and anxiety do not fall within the 'mental health' category because they can simply be managed with better coping skills.

My interview with Marc reveals another contradiction when I asked him if the students' concerns about finding a job are taken into consideration or if they influence the types of services made available to students on campus:

Yes, absolutely...we have a career centre—our career services should be engaging with students at year one, not at year four to help them start planning and give them the tools to be better prepared. Giving them opportunities to set themselves apart. It's highly competitive. (Marc, 2019)

Here, he recognizes the need to provide career services to students early on and also recognizes that students need to set themselves apart because the job market is competitive. Yet this contradicts his reaction and comments about first-year students stressing out about finding a job:

[W]hen they were telling me that stress keeps them up at night, I said well help me understand. I think I knew this, but they said, well you know when you went to university it was like not everybody went to university. Now it's like an undergraduate [degree] is like a high school [degree]. So, you're like everybody has the same thing. (Marc, 2019)

Again, Marc's comments are conflicting and confusing: the students' reaction surprises him because it is different from the knowledge that he knows about finding a job and the associated stress. All the while, he seems to know in fact that the playing field is not what it once was.

He then speaks to the reality of the uneven playing field; further revealing truths about what students can or should do to find a job:

So now you have to think about, well, what can you do to set yourself apart. Graduate studies...so we talked about, okay there's volunteer opportunities, there's a whole bunch of other experiential learning opportunities that you can get engaged in that will help you shine. You know, on your resume and it's not about the resume anyways, it's all about networking. 85% of the jobs are about networking, so get out there. Meet people. (Marc, 2019)

This interview reveals a number of contradictions that arise when analyzing the socially accepted truths that shape the University's practices for governing students with mental health problems. From this analysis, it is clear that Marc and his team aim to govern students in distress with practices formed from specific truths about the student experience. These truths also reveal the advanced liberal rationality for governing these students in a particular way. As such, contradictions arise if these employees are seeking to govern students with mental health problems by providing relevant services but all the while normalizing their distress and expecting students to act upon themselves based on socially acceptable truths. As a result of these contradictions, tensions are likely to arise between the student conduct that is presupposed and expected by the senior employees and the type of student conduct that is created through these conflicting governing practices.

6.4.3 Not everyone needs counselling

Finally, another accepted truth within the wellness discourse is that not every student in requires counselling. This is explained during a number of my respondent interviews when they describe the revamped counselling service and its stepped-care model. The premise behind this model is explained in the following quotes:

[N]ot everybody needs to see a counsellor, really. We want to make sure that people who actually get to see a counsellor really need the support of a counsellor. So, we want to make sure that those limited resources are best used for the needs of the students who need it. (Marc, 2019)

[I]t's not that they don't get counselling...it's that if it is not what you need, why are we giving that to you? Yes, it is the most expensive [resource] but that's not necessarily what someone needs...

[There's the single-session counselling] that is a bit different from the walk-in, where you're actually going to help someone with a plan. And that really tends to work with students with more, mild clinical or just sort of situational issues. Issues with a boyfriend or girlfriend, possibly that's not violent not risky but they just need to be like, I need strategies for dealing with my crying or whatever,

anxiety that's stress related, possibly fear of talking to a graduate supervisor and dealing with that relationship. (Alexandra, 2019)

Here, Alexandra explains that sometimes single session is all the support a student needs. They leave with a plan and with access or knowledge of some resources and supports (2019). It was also suggested by Sandra that students do not necessary need counselling, because in order for counselling to be effective, students need to be ready to do the heavy lifting (2019). If a student is simply looking for someone to fix them, things will not “progress in the right direction” (2019). These comments continue to show the employees’ beliefs about what may be categorized or count as a mental health issue and the extent to which it should be addressed by the University and with which services.

The accepted truth that not all students in distress need counselling session is also reflected in the way the counselling services were revamped to implement the stepped-care model. Students can access the walk-in clinic, or they can make an appointment, but both of these face-to-face sessions are conducted on the premise of a one-time encounter with the student. Students will walk away with a plan or strategy for self-managing whatever issue is causing them distress in the moment so that they are able to continue on with their education. It is assumed that, in general, the distress experienced by post-secondary students will likely be resolved with low-intensity services, directed by the students themselves.

From the analysis of these truths, formed out of discourses of student wellness and success, this study reveals the University administration’s rationality for governing student distress. The quotes from my interviews above reveal how the Action Group’s culture of wellness and the new counselling service model draw upon and are motivated by the aforementioned forms of knowledge and truths about student mental health. They also reveal the logic that supports these practices of governing of the self and others.

The senior University employees who are directly involved in student mental health on campus articulated that in order for students to succeed, they need to increase their mental health literacy, take charge of their own wellness and mental health care, engage in self-directed processes for managing stressors that are a normal part of the post-secondary experience, and develop coping skills and healthy behaviours. Drawing from a particular knowledge and expertise (i.e. pedagogy and psychology) about student development and learning makes it possible for the senior employees to think and speak about student mental health and wellness in a particular way. Through these truths and rationality that support the response to the student mental health problem, students are made into objects to be governed for academic success. As such, the aims and objectives of practices for governing student mental health are defined (Dean, 2010).

This chapter has explored the case study that forms the basis of this study. It has demonstrated the University's creation of governable subjects by problematizing student mental health on its campus and creating an institutional response through the enactment of advanced liberal governing techniques. These techniques have revealed the rationality for deploying, such techniques as a culture of wellness, counselling services, and self-directed practices; ultimately, creating these practices are motivated by the University's disciplinary mandate of producing successful, enterprising, and docile graduates. In this way, the underlying goal of regulating student mental health is carried out under the guise of promoting student wellness. The intersection of student mental health and wellness with student success demonstrates the complexity of addressing mental health problems in the context of a post-secondary institution. The practices of governing students are thus not neutral in nature; they are reflective of certain truths held by members of the University administration. The analytical intent of this chapter has

been to explore the creation of these truths and conditions of possibility for addressing student mental health at the University.

6.5 Student subjectivities

An analytic of governmentality reveals that government is both enabled (and limited) by the “expertise, vocabulary, theories, ideas, philosophies and other forms of knowledge” (Dean, 2010: 25) that are available (e.g. derived from social sciences). In particular, the ‘psy’ sciences have suggested that certain practices (i.e. psychological and psychiatric) have made it possible for humans to speak and conduct themselves in new ways (Rose, 1996). As discussed in the previous chapter, out of this knowledge and expertise about student mental health and academic success, practices for governing a particular conduct can be formed, such as the University’s counselling services.

Within the context of the post-secondary student in general, and with the standardization of individuality that has evolved with the neo-liberal governmentality, post-secondary institutions employ technologies of domination and of the self to act upon and discipline students. Through technologies of economic rationalism, managerialism, marketisation, and entrepreneurialism, the students’ own choice to self-manage is experienced as their own rationality, driven from within (Bansel & Davies, 2010). In this way, disciplined both by the institution and by themselves, a ‘good’ student subjectivity is constructed. This section extends my analysis of the governing practices for student mental health at the University in an attempt to demonstrate how the beliefs held by senior University employees interviewed in this study, shape a specific type of student subject, i.e. the ‘good’ student. This section also examines the (un)intended consequences that arise as a result of this process.

6.5.1 Constructing the ‘Good’ Student

In the previous chapters, I applied a governmentality analysis to explore the practices that exist at the University of Ontario to govern students, specifically those with mental health problems. The objective of such an analysis is to examine how such practices are sustained and characterize truths about students, and in this case of about student wellness for academic success. The different dimensions of the analytics aim to delve into the rationalities and motivations of the University administration that make governing practices possible, and the subjectivities that are created as a result. As I have discussed at length in chapter 6, governing practices, such as creating a culture of wellness, implementing health promotion initiatives like mindfulness challenges, and self-directed mental health services, act on students indirectly. These mechanisms strive to align the objectives of students for being well with those of the University: to succeed academically. These practices of governing student mental health and the knowledge and accepted truths held by University employees about student mental health, reflect the ideal type of student subjectivity consciously or unconsciously desired by the University administration, i.e. the ‘good’ student subjectivity. This is based on an analysis of the University’s web pages as well as observations of events held on campus during the week-long wellness event.

The hegemonic good student.

Before further explore the ‘good’ student subjectivity, it is of use to recall its definition. The ‘good’ student has been defined in the literature as the “student who is good at doing what examinations require; who applies him or herself to the necessary study to succeed; and who does in fact succeed” (McLeod & Yates, 2006: 52). As such, the ‘good’ student subjectivity is located within the practices created to govern conduct, such as the post-secondary institution, but also within the advanced liberal objectives of such an institution. The objective of the ‘good’

student to self-govern by applying him or herself in order to reach graduation thus aligns with that of the University to produce self-governed students who graduate successfully. These objectives are consistent with the prudent, enterprising student who is assumed capable of self-mastery, self-governance in order to maximize their ability to success in life In the context of the University of Ontario, its objectives and presumptions about the ‘good’ student subjectivity can be observed through the analysis of its webpages, notably the “Students” (University of Ontario, n.d.) page.

On this page, under the “student essentials” section, the “Student Guide” and “Mental Health and Wellness” are provided as options for students to provide information and support as they navigate their individual experience on campus. Immediately, students are imbued with the ‘choice’ to take up a subject position that is compatible with a neo-liberal governmentality. Students are actively positioned as the enterprising, prudent individual making choices about their student experience and well-being. The ‘good’ student discourse is present in the options students have to inform themselves:

Student Guide: How to make the best of your time at the [university].
Graduate studies: What you need to know on enrolment, scholarships, resources, and more.
Accounts, emails, and support: Get help with your username, password, wi-fi or computer labs.
Library and study rooms: Access a world of knowledge and support.
Important dates and deadlines: Find out when to enrol, when to pay your fees and more.
Mental Health and Wellness: Resources to take care of yourself and others.
Sexual violence: support and prevention
Hands-on learning: Learn by doing through coop program, work-study program or by volunteering.
Eating on campus
Finding your way around: everything you need to know to get around and make it to class on time. (University of Ontario, n.d.)

Here, through discourse and norms about the student life, the University is seeking to foster a particular type of subjectivity in the production of students who actively seek to inform themselves to that they can do what is necessary to succeed. Rather than through any form of direct influence or coercion, students are instead given the opportunity to ‘freely’ make these choices. And it is presumed that students acting on themselves and based on what is thought to be in their own interests will construct themselves as the self-regulating, self-subjugated ‘good’ student. These students are fully responsible for their academic experience, a necessary feature of advanced liberal governance.

The University’s objectives and efforts to produce subjected and docile students (Grant, 1997) is further highlighted on the “Student Guide” webpage, under “The basics” section. Neo-liberal discourses of the prudent student appear here in the advice to students:

To make sure things start off on the right foot, there are a few things you’ll need to do right away—register for your courses, pay your tuition fees and become familiar with your timetable and class locations. Doing so will ensure things run smoothly for your right from the start. (University of Ontario, n.d.)

Although it is not stated explicitly that students will be a ‘good’ student if they follow the advice presented to them in this guide, it suggests that this advice will assist them in achieving academic success and having a smooth student experience if they follow it. It is also very explicit that students may need support along the way, so the University has provided them with resources (technologies for self-governing) to use to ensure that any difficulties, stressors, or impediments do not interfere with their academic careers. Nevertheless, students are

in the director’s chair here at [the University] and the one who’ll set the stage for a truly unique and unforgettable [academic] experience. Land the role you want at uOntario! (University of Ontario, n.d.)

Here, the University’s ‘action at a distance’ to shape the successful student is made clear in this student guide. It “steers rather than rows” (Dean, 2007: 48), meaning the University encourages

and expects a particular behaviour of its students, expressed in the student guide, but it does not determine how they behave.

In this way, the Student Guide itself is reflective of the conduct the University desires of its students as well as the presumptions about the actions they will take and experiences they will pursue to maximize their capacity as ‘good’ students:

Succeed in your studies, Acquire work experience, Take care of money matters,
Find your way about, Decide on a place to live and food choices, Have fun and
get involved, Take care of yourself, Know your rights and remedies, and
Activities for new students (University of Ontario, n.d.)

These categories reveal the truths that the University holds about the areas of life in which students need to self-manage in order to succeed, and thus the behaviours that promote the ‘good’ student subjectivity. This is made possible through socially accepted norms about student life. Through no coercion on behalf of the University, students become active subjects with agency over their own lives. By behaving as active, prudent citizens and by adhering to the instructions given in the Student Guide, students enact the subject position that is presented to them on the University’s webpages. To deviate from this subject position is to be abnormal or risky and could result in an unsuccessful academic experience.

Another example of the construction of the ‘good’ student at the University as the prudent, enterprising individual was revealed during my observation of an activity during the week-long wellness event on campus. The event in question was a very well-attended talk, given by an internationally-renowned coach in performance psychology who has worked with Olympic athletes. The event was in fact a motivational talk that aimed to instruct students on how to perform well in stressful situations, such as post-secondary education. He spoke of the need for students to develop their “mental toughness” and position themselves to “succeed big” (Keynote speaker, 2019). According to this speaker,

pressure is all about perspective. It is what it is. Focus on the situation at hand, not against it. Deal with it; it's reality. Pressure is a good thing. You want it. (2019)

He spoke further about staying motivated, creating a manifesto with controllable goals, and knowing the 'why' in what one is doing. Being able to do these things involves giving 'sens' to one's life:

S-sleep (get enough sleep)

E-energy (energy management, pacing, efficiency)

N-nutrition (quality in is quality out)

S-stress management (perspective, mindset about your situation in order to improve your grades, positive thinking and breathing with purpose) (Keynote speaker, 2019)

In closing, the speaker sums up his message to students on surviving and thriving in their academic careers:

Challenge yourself to be a university Olympian. Find your why, use breathing exercises for stress management. Just move. (Keynote speaker, 2019)

The discourse of success present in these quotes explicitly reveal the type of conduct that is desirable and expected of the 'good' student.

Discourses of student experience and academic success are at the forefront of the University's webpages, reinforcing the accepted truths about the 'good' student subjectivity. As students navigate these resources and apply them to their own student experiences, they are enacting the 'good' student subjectivity and giving legitimacy to the particular truths and practices of governing students. At the same time, however, another type of student subject is constructed by the University web pages, resources, and discourses, that is the student with mental distress. As I explained in chapter 5, the creation of such domains of subjects with a specific vocabulary is a necessary step to creating a governable subject. These vocabularies and discourses reveal mentalities of government, such as governing students in order to achieve academic success, but they also frame the associated student subjectivities. In the next section, I

will examine how the University constructs various student subjectivities, particularly that of students in distress.

6.5.2 More than one way to be a ‘good’ student

Given that vocabularies and discourses form associated subjectivities, and that subjectivities are “always located at specific ‘nodal points’ of specific communication circuits” (Lyotard, 1984: 15), it follows that there is more than one way to be a ‘good’ student. It is the organization of the various discourses that are ‘given a voice’ that inform subjectivities (Thompson, 2010). As such, on the “Student guide” webpage, the presence of a link for “Take care of yourself” suggests a nodal point where student mental health and success intersect. There is recognition that students are at risk for mental distress as part of their academic experience. However, this technology of the self also suggests that a ‘good’ student experiencing mental distress will in fact take care of themselves. In so doing, they will “bring forth their subjectivities for disciplining, to become a particular type of person” (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006: 183) by making use of the University’s resources. In this way, the enterprising, prudent student in this situation will actively self-govern.

On this webpage, discourses reveal the type of person the University expects from its students:

School, work, family, friends... they all play an important part in our lives. But don’t forget about the most important of all — you! By taking good care of your physical and mental health, you are well on your way to creating the foundation for success in all areas of your life. (University of Ontario, n.d.)

Further down, students are advised to make use of the University’s many resources:

Health insurance and medical services, including sexually transmitted infection testing, vaccine clinics and travel clinics;

Health and physical activity services: Stay healthy by getting in shape and staying active. Get more information on the different sports and training activities on

campus and the many services offered to help you maintain a healthy lifestyle or overcome any health problems you may be experiencing;

A healthy mind, a healthy body: Taking good care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. The University provides a number of free services for students to help you overcome any challenges you may be facing, whether personal or academic, that are preventing you from reaching your goals and making the most of your time at university. (University of Ontario, n.d.)

The University recognizes that students may experience physical and mental distress during their academic career. In an attempt to govern this undesirable behaviour, a certain type of student subjectivity is created and promoted through these discourses about student mental health and well-being. The University presupposes that a student in distress can and will manage and overcome their mental distress by taking responsibility for and control of one's health, staying healthy by participating in health promotion and self-care activities, thus maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle, and proactively using self-directed counselling services should the need occur. These are the University's expectations of its students who are experiencing mental or physical challenges are quite clear. Through these truths about student mental health, students become active subjects with certain capabilities to self-govern without direct influence from the University itself.

In this section, I have examined the student subjectivities that are presupposed of students at the University, from the perspective of this neo-liberal institution. However, constituting students in a particular way for the purposes of producing successful students is not without unintended consequences. In the next section, I will examine the consequences of subjecting students to the 'good' and enterprising student position.

6.6 Unintended Consequences

In the previous section, I explored the subjectivities that are elicited and fostered through practices and technologies of government at the University of Ontario. Based on an analysis of the University's webpage, I examined the student subjectivities that are fashioned by the University in an effort to align student priorities with its own. This fashioning of such subjectivities is based on capacities of students assumed by the senior employees who are directly involved in student mental health on campus. As I explained in the previous section, they foster the construction of a particular type of student from what they believe to be true, and normal, about post-secondary students and their experiences with mental distress. This subjection process can lead to various unintended consequences.

6.6.1 *Resistance to the 'good' student subjectivity*

Post-secondary institutions are demonstrative of technologies of the self and of a culture of autonomy and individualism, which constitutes students as subjects who believe that they are solely responsible for their academic success. As I have discussed above, these technologies of the self, as well as accepted truths, create a particular kind of ideal subject that the University administration desires and expects of its students. Similarly, this culture of autonomy and individualism constitutes students with mental health problems as responsible for their mental health and wellness. Knowledge and accepted truths about student mental health help to shape a particular kind of subjectivity about these students, one that presupposes they have the capacity to self-manage, especially in 'normal' stressful situations.

However, tensions arise when students do not "obey" or accept the docile 'good' student subjectivity. The "process of constituting subjects is riddled with conflicts and contradictions, there is always spaces for resistance" (Grant, 1997: 111). Because students are acting subjects,

there is potential for unpredictability as a result of discursive governing practices. There is the potential for students with mental health problems to act other than in a docile way. This unpredictability reflects resistance to the truths that are formed from the power-knowledge relation that exists between the University employees and its students.

As I have already shown in my analysis, this power-knowledge relation, which forms truths and shapes subjectivities, is perpetuated when students accept the subjectivity in question. That being said, there “is always the possibility that the acting subject, who is both the target and source of power relations, may contest the dominant meanings and oppressive positions constructed by the discursive field in which she or he is located” (Grant, 1997: 111), because there is “freedom, construed as the potential for autonomous recalcitrance” (Howley & Hartnett, 1992: 272). In the context of the student with mental health problems, there is possibility of or opportunity that, through their own conscious awareness and unconscious desires, they will resist subjection by the University administration. In this way, through their own agency, students can find ways to resist or negotiate the ‘good’ student discourses and subjectivity constituted by the University.

An example of this agency and resistance (or negotiation) of the student subjectivity is reflected in my interview with Alexandra, when I asked her if she was finding that the revamped counselling service was working well and if students were responding well. Despite not being able to provide a concrete answer due to a lack of data, she revealed to me that the new service model was seemingly alleviating some stress for those providing the services. She explained that this was because students could see someone right away and start managing the situation:

The other things that happens is that if someone gets ten [counselling] sessions and they know they are getting ten, they use ten because they waited six weeks for them. And a lot of times, they don’t need those sessions, or they need 12, whatever. But because it was always like, I’m going to get this and I need this.

It's not that people are hoarding resources, it's more that, they don't mentally change, because they see a number. Whereas, if you say okay, just go to the walk-in and we are going to try these three things, we are going to try this workbook and I think you might want to go to the walk-in/pet therapy, and if this I not what works for you, you just come back to us and we will try something new...People are less panicky. (2019)

Alexandra's remarks reveal the truths that she holds about counselling sessions for students, which is that counselling is not necessary for everyone and certainly not more than one session for everyone. During my interview with Alexandra, she explained that the old counselling model was not working. The Academic Services were overwhelmed, and students were unhappy with the wait times. However, as she explains, the new model is seemingly improved because it has made it possible to address those issue. At the same time that this new model aims to respond to student needs in a more timely manner, it is also reflective of the student conduct that the Academic Services desires. This is that students in distress are first to try self-directed, self-care activities to manage their stress, they are to seek help before an issue becomes so big that it impedes with their academic success, but ultimately, they are to get 'back on track' to being a 'good' student by using the least costly, least intensive resources.

The University's motivations for constructing this particular type of student subject, by mobilizing a range of governing techniques and practices, have been examined in this study. In the same way that the senior employees involved in student mental health aim to create the docile, enterprising student, free to make choices about their healthy, students are also constituting their subjectivity, shaped in their actions and 'free' choices by these discourses of student mental health, wellness, and success. If students' "subjectivities comprise a set of conceptions, procedures beliefs and values and dispositions that are, in part, non-conscious," they "quickly become conscious when something we experience doesn't fit" (Billett, 2006: 6). Given that students' agency lies within this constitution, they can constitute alternate

subjectivities and thus find openings for resistance and subversion to the student mental health, wellness, and success discourses deployed at the University. However, the opportunity for and unpredictability of these alternate subjectivities may increase the tensions between the University administration and students as subjects. The unpredictable student subject presents an unruly resource that poses a range of challenges to the governing practices, and thus to the University.

In this section, I have analyzed the tensions, controversies, and challenges that arise with the subjection of the ‘good’ student subjectivity and opportunities for its resistance. My analysis of the interviews with the senior University employees also showed how the mentality of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution as a business generates unintended consequences and misalignments in the way student mental health services are provided and even deemed necessary. This analysis has continued to consider the question of how students with mental health problems are constituted as subjects who submit to the power-knowledge relations by seeking help to self-manage and become more autonomous in their mental health care. However, they are also constituted as subjects who exercise power in that they are unpredictable and do not always conduct themselves as obedient, productive students.

6.7 Summary

This chapter set out to analyze the ways in which the University of Ontario has responded to the mental health crisis on its campus with the use of governing practices and technologies. To examine the processes for managing and regulating student mental health problems, this chapter drew on an analysis of the University’s web pages, interviews with these senior employees, and from my observations of a wellness event held at the University. The analysis in this chapter sought to examine the mentality that supports these governing practices and in doing so, it revealed the University’s motivations for implementing various mental health and wellness

initiatives. Notably, discourses of wellness and student success were analyzed and showed how they organize knowledge about student mental health, creating a common language and knowledge as well as the technical means to govern (Cannizzo, 2015). The discourses also reveal the University's rationale for governing undesirable student behaviour and motivation for aligning students' objectives with that of its own, which is to achieve academic success and graduation.

Furthermore, the governing practices and technologies implemented at this University analyzed in this chapter reveal the accepted truths held by the University's senior employees involved in student mental health. These truths are reflected in the implementation of mental health initiatives and services, given that they are informed by these truths and individuals act on what they know to be true. Such beliefs about student mental health were revealed in interviews with senior University employees and show contradictions in how services are provided to students. What is more, these truths produce a certain kind of student subject, the 'good' student, that is perpetuated when accepted and enacted by students when they engage in the activities and initiatives offered by the University. When they seek to self-manage by using the self-directed wellness apps and techniques, they adopt a particular subject position. The analysis in this chapter has illuminated the University's motivations for shaping this particular type of student subjectivity, which is the docile, enterprising student. It has also shown, by extension, the type of behaviour that is presupposed of students, especially of those who experience any kind of mental distress that might interfere with their academic success. However, this particular subjectivity is not always accepted by students, which can produce unintended consequences for both the senior employees at the University as well as its students. The contradictions and tensions uncovered in

this analysis reflect important misalignments in the mental health services provided to students at the University.

CHAPTER 7

FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to integrate the framework of the study and the analytical findings with a final discussion of the potential implications of this study. In an effort to do so, I will provide a summary of the study, which situates the research question, the context in which this research question is being asked, and the methodology. I will then bring together my two analytical chapters for discussion.

Consistent with an analytics of government (Dean, 2010), the intention here is not to deliver an analysis of the University's mental health policies or deliver judgment on what might be right or wrong in terms of this particular attempt at regulating student conduct. Instead, this chapter seeks to examine what is at stake as we think and act in particular ways about student mental health (Dean, 2010). Using an analytics of government has made it possible to examine how the student mental health crisis on post-secondary campuses in Ontario is made visible. This visibility is discussed in the ways that student mental health discourse contributes to the power/knowledge relations between senior University employees and students. The discussion then moves to consider how the discourse of student success is deployed under the guise of touting student wellness. This chapter concludes this research project with final conclusions and key messages as well as suggestions for future research.

7.2 Study Summary

This study began with the construction of the student mental health crisis on post-secondary campuses in Canada and Ontario as a neo-liberal problem. This construction has been articulated in federal, provincial, organizational and institutional policy documents, and articles in the University Student Newspaper. The uniformity in thinking and talking about student mental health observed in these documents can be temporally and culturally located. This uniformity also sets up student mental health as a particular kind of discourse. Here, student mental health is considered in this study as constructed within a particular system of meaning, not simply a means of speech but “events and functional segments gradually coming together” (Foucault, 1970/1994: xvii). If we assume that this social reality is constructed and maintained in a certain way, then a discourse analysis of this concern makes it possible to consider and construct student mental health in other ways.

Current student mental health discourses are based on particular forms of knowledge, technologies, and ways of rendering student mental health visible. A main issue with respect to post-secondary students dealing with mental health problems is that this interferes with students’ ability to carry out their end of the contract, which is to be a ‘good’ student and consumer of education. Here, student mental health is inscribed in the problem of students’ inability to self-manage or be resilient in the face of ‘normal’ stressors associated with the transition to post-secondary education.

Using the conceptual framework of governmentality to explore what is at stake within the student mental health and student success discourses, this study examines the (un)intended consequences of thinking in particular ways about student mental health (Dean, 2010). The analytics of governmentality carried out in this study demonstrates how the development and

implementation of mental health services at the University contribute to shaping, in an advanced liberal way, students as sites of governing that constitute their subjectivities as ‘good’ and enterprising students. Specifically, in looking at the way these services shape students, I am narrowing in on the practices that enable the senior employees involved in student mental health to deploy techniques of governing with the intention of ensuring student success above all else. This facilitated with addressing the central research question of this thesis: *What are the effects of the intersection of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and governmentality of student mental health on services at a post-secondary campus in Ontario?*

The use of a case study made it possible to focus my analysis on the knowledges of senior University employees directly involved with decisions around student mental health policies and services at a post-secondary institution in Ontario. Data collected from interviews with these employees, as well as from my observations of wellness events at the University, were analyzed to examine the imbrication of advanced liberal rationalities and techniques of governing in the implementation of mental health and wellness services on campus. Federal, provincial, and organizational documents, media publications, and the University’s website were also analyzed to show how the emergence of advanced liberal rationalities for addressing post-secondary student mental health problems is in line with the disciplinary and economic function of institutions in producing ‘good’ and enterprising students. This thesis demonstrates that the implementation of mental health services at the University and the shift to a culture of wellness with more integrated programming is not an unproblematic process. In practice, these services are implemented with the ulterior goal of helping students thrive academically, which has implications for what and why a service is offered, as well as for the subjectivities of students seeking care. In particular, this thesis explored how mental health services, deemed beneficial for

students by the employees involved in their implementation, operate as advanced liberal techniques of domination and of the self.

Three key findings are presented below, which demonstrate the complexities of governing students with mental health problems through services driven by academic success.

7.3 Key Findings

Key Finding 1: The University administration and senior employees' mandate is not to treat student mental illness or mental distress. This being said, it is acknowledged that student mental health problems can hinder academic success, thereby interfering with the University's mandate to help students thrive academically and produce economically productive citizens. Engaging in a mental health and wellness discourse problematizes students with mental health issues, creating a sub-set of the student population as a calculable and governable space. A discourse of student mental health and wellness has been constituted in federal, provincial, and organizational policy documents, and by creating a culture of wellness at the University, through health promotion initiatives and activities. The discourse of student wellness has been observed at the University as being deployed by senior employees involved in student mental health. However, this purpose of employing the student wellness discourse is to set up the conditions of possibility for governing students with mental health problems in line with neo-liberal principles, and under the guise of student wellness. As a result, the mental health services at the University are provided only to the extent that they support the University's mandate.

Key finding 2: The discourse of wellness (as an advanced liberal governing technique) employed by senior University employees is wrapped up in a discourse of student success (as an even broader advanced liberal governing technique) – although the senior employees

involved in student mental health at the University are working to create a stronger campus culture of wellness and improve awareness of and access to mental health and wellness resources and services on campus, this is motivated by a goal of student success (retention and graduation).

This thesis has shown that from Marc, Sandra, Justine, and Alexandra's perspective, students dealing with mental health problems can be managed and addressed with more integrated and coordinated services and programming where the individual student is taking preventative and proactive action to manage their own health. The revamped counselling service is an example of such a resource, wherein the goal is to guide and support

students in achieving personal fulfillment and developing skill through a process centered on individual strengths and the ability to take charge of personal well-being to ensure academic success. (Academic Services, 2018)

The student-centered approach aims to “support and empower students so that they can thrive and find their own path to academic success and wellness” (University of Ontario, n.d.).

Using this rationality, “[w]ellbeing has become an official *discourse*” (Wyn, 2009a: 7, emphasis in original), “that has informed a plethora of objective knowledge and expertise in relation to young people” (Wrench et al., 2013: 732). When an economic imperative—such as ensuring student retention and graduation rates to produce economically productive citizens—determines a policy and the implementation of services, contradictions arise within the goals of these services. In the context of the University, the mandate and goals for mental health and wellness initiatives tend to be subsumed by narrow understandings of well-being (Wyn, 2007). What this thesis has shown is that the senior employees involved in student mental health at the University hold a narrow understanding of student well-being. Their understanding is subsumed by the discourse of student success. In this way, their belief in student-centered, self-directed

services and the self-managing, autonomous, and resilient student ignores complexities and structural factors that influence an individual's well-being.

Thus, this thesis demonstrates that the rationalities and technologies of governing, from which and with which student mental health services are developed, actually result in services that reinforce advanced liberal regimes of student success. As such, mental health policies and services come to be seen as a technique through which undesirable student behaviour can be managed and, thus, student priorities can be aligned with those of the neo-liberal university.

Key finding 3: Services provided on campus stem from a regime of truth (Foucault, 1981) about what it means to be a 'good' student and what the University administration believes students need to manage undesirable and 'risky' behaviour (e.g. improved coping skills, resilience, breathing and mindfulness techniques, stress and time management tools, yoga, meditation, pet therapy, limited counselling).

This regime of truth, constructed from forms of knowledge and expertise about student mental health, reflects the neo-liberal mentality that transfers the responsibility for 'risk' management to the individual (Rose, 1999). A consequence of rendering risk calculable is the normalization of an individual responsibility for maintaining health and well-being (White and Wyn, 2008). Such constructions underpin common-sense notions that health and well-being can be possessed on an individual basis (Wyn, 2009a).

I argue that the senior University employees' understanding of student well-being is influenced by such neo-liberal forms of truth about the 'good' student who is enterprising, self-managing, and capable of maximizing their potential because it is in their best interest. It limits their understanding of student mental health to ideas of 'risky' behaviours in response to normal stressors that are largely impeding students' success and ability to produce. This understanding

neglects that well-being is developed in and through a complex interrelationship of social, economic, cultural perceptions and practices (White and Wyn, 2008; Bennett, 2011; Eckersley 2011). This limited understanding is then reflected in the ‘good’ student subjectivity that they presuppose and the behaviour they expect from students. It also produces contradictions in the implementation of mental health services for students and send mixed signals to students in distress. Students are not expected to need mental health services to manage their stress, because stress is a normal part of post-secondary life. However, students are also expected to be self-enterprising, autonomous individuals, ‘free’ to choose how to manage their ‘stressful’ academic careers and futures and use the services made available to them (e.g. career services, mindfulness and meditation apps, self-care tools, etc.) to do so. Obtaining wellness through these governing technologies is constructed as a desired virtue and an ideal to be attained (Wyn, 2009a). In this way, stressors can become normalized and mental distress can be managed.

7.4 Implications of Analysis

As I have discussed, even though the senior University employees involved in student mental health speak about and use the term *student wellness* to promote student mental health and well-being on campus at the University, the discourse of student wellness is wrapped up in a larger discourse of student academic success. The implications of deploying student wellness as an advanced liberal governing technique for students with mental health problems are twofold:

(1) First, there is the conflict and tension that arise between the main goal of educational institutions and the goal of addressing post-secondary students’ mental health and well-being. The later exists in a contradictory relationship with the former. There is a disjunction between the promotion of a culture of wellness that does not consider alternate ‘good’ student

subjectivities and the “current educational policies which place an overwhelming emphasis on vocational and economic outcomes” (Wyn, 2007: 41).

Mental health services provided to students with the main purpose of helping students so that they can achieve academic success will potentially overlook the structural factors that contribute to poor mental health among students. If the employees in charge of implementing services for students only consider providing these services in so far as they help students academically and based on their beliefs about what ‘counts’ as mental distress, then it is likely that services offered will continue to create confusion among students and misalignment with student need. Since the neo-liberal university has changed its focus to providing vocationally-oriented education to produce prudential and active citizens, it is possible that this model of learning is not resulting in a good fit for what young people need to learn how to live well (Wyn, 2007). In the same way, I argue that mental health policies and services, developed from the same neo-liberal model, do not result in a good fit with what students need to address their mental health problems.

(2) Second, the mental health services on campus at the University, as a technology of governing with a practical goal of achieving student success, is a congenitally failing system. This builds on the previous point about the tensions that arise from conflicting goals and looks to the question of whether or not the services provided have achieved the ends desired. As Rose and Miller argue (1992),

Programmes [of government] complexify the real, so solutions for one programme tend to be the problems for another. Things, persons or events always appear to escape those bodies of knowledge that inform governmental programmes, refusing to respond according to the programmatic logic that seeks to govern them. Technologies produce unexpected problems, are utilized for their own ends by those who are supposed to merely operate them, are hampered by under-funding, professional rivalries, and the impossibility of producing the technical conditions that would make them work. (190)

This has implications for the translation of mental health policies into tangible services, because they are implemented and succeed (or not) based on how the senior University employees make judgements and decisions, draw conclusions, and propose changes about student mental health services (Miller & Rose, 1990).

In conclusion, this thesis has answered the central research question: *what are the effects of the intersection of the neo-liberal post-secondary institution and governmentality of student mental health on services at a post-secondary campus in Ontario?* The effects are that governing in such a manner results in tensions and disjunctions between the neo-liberal goal of the Institution (vocational and economic outcomes) and mental health services that promote student ‘wellness’ (e.g. positive social relationships and engagement, coping skills, stress and time management, management of the physical and mental self, etc.) when this discourse is ultimately deployed to achieve student success. Mental health and well-being become lumped in with the larger neo-liberal discourse of what it is to become somebody ‘well’, subverted to the broader goals of the University and a narrowed meaning of health and well-being (Wyn, 2007).

7.5 Contributions to the Literature and Implications for Policy

This thesis has contributed to governmentality studies in post-secondary student mental health. The use of the methodological framework of governmentality as diagnostic tool of government facilitated the analysis of discourses used by senior University employees who are involved in student mental health to constitute student wellness and success. While this thesis was concerned with how mental health and wellness come to be seen as techniques through which students can be governed in an advanced liberal way at the University, the emphasis of the study was to examine the rationality and regimes of truth about student mental health, from which mental health practices are enacted.

As Dean (2010) insists, an analytics of government “marks out a space to ask questions about government, authority and power, without attempting to formulate a set of general principles by which various form of the ‘conduct of conduct’ could be reformed” (48). The goal of using such a framework is to practice a form of criticism (Foucault, 1988d) that looks at the taken-for-granted way in which students with mental health problems are governed and self-govern, make this explicit, and create an opportunity for thinking about student mental health in a different way (Dean, 2010). An analytics of government is applied here to encourage the University’s administration to think about how they govern students with mental health issues, as well as how they think about themselves and students in this process. This thesis demonstrates that mental health policies and services, developed and implemented at the University can act as techniques of advanced liberal governing, co-opted by the economic goal of the neo-liberal university. As such, this study is an attempt to better understand the conditions under which these senior employees are thinking and acting, what is at stake when they try to govern in this particular way and think about student mental health in a particular way, and the effects and ramifications of this mentality. In conclusion, this study aims to create a space for these employees to make explicit their forms of rationality and thought that are inherent to student mental health services as a regime of practice at the University. In so doing, it can spur the possibility of thinking of and imagining student mental health in a different way.

7.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

For this study, I limited the object of inquiry to senior University employees directly involved in student mental health. Within the context of this study, I assume these employees are largely responsible for the development and implementation of mental health strategies and services offered to students on campus, in so far as this falls within their mandate.

In an effort to fit within the constraints of the research study, namely time and length of a master thesis, I limited the object of inquiry to these employees as accessed through interviews, observation of events that were held on the campus during the span of one week, and documents analysis.

Future research

A fruitful continuation of this research study would be to expand the object of inquiry to also include a sample of students who are or have experienced a mental health problem at the University. The purpose of this would be to examine their deployment of mental health and wellness discourses, and most significantly, their acceptance, rejection, or negotiation the University's 'good' student subjectivity. Interviews with my study participants, observations of public wellness events on campus, and document analysis provided important contribution by giving one perspective (that of authority) in the knowledge-power relation. Therefore, gaining the other perspective in this relationship, that of the student with mental health issues, could further explore the technology of governing as it acts upon students and as it is enacted through their constituted subjectivity.

Further qualitative research could explore how discourses of the 'good' student and student success intersect with student well-being, how and what forms of truth constitute alternate student subjectivities, what tensions or resistance arise in this process, and what are the implications for the self-governing student with mental health problems. The consideration of the student perspective was not included in this study and, as such, gaining this perspective would require a different conceptual framing.

The demand by post-secondary students for mental health services and supports is unlikely to fade and more research is needed to examine the value of existing services as they are decided upon and implemented on campuses across Ontario. The senior University employees

should be encouraged to consider the unintended consequences of promoting a culture of wellness as a resource for producing successful students as well as the consequences of creating a ‘good’ student subjectivity in line with neo-liberal goals. A greater awareness of how the educational goals of a post-secondary institution can co-opt their efforts, narrow the understanding of well-being, and normalize situations that are beyond an individual’s control could create the space for thinking about student mental health and well-being differently.

APPENDIX A: Sample Questions for Interviews

Opening questions – Demographic Information (all respondents)

What is your job title?

What is your role at the University?

Where exactly do you work on campus, location and department?

Core, open-ended questions (all respondents)

Existing policy and strategy:

Does the University have in place a mental health framework or policy document, that lays out its strategy for addressing student mental health and well-being?

(Is this document available to me? Where can it be accessed?)

(If yes) To the best of your knowledge, can you give me an overview of the mental health strategy or framework? What is it based on: best-practices, consultations, etc.?

When was it developed and/or implemented?

Who are the parties involved in its development and what is the reasoning for their involvement (subject matter experts)?

How was it developed/What are the processes that the University's policy makers and mental health service providers go through to decide on the content of this framework?

Specific to Academic Services (AS) employees:

To your knowledge, does the University also have an academic framework for student success?

For example, in order to ensure student retention and graduation, does the University establish a strategy and implement policies in this regard?

Can you tell me more about how these policies are decided upon? For example, do they build from best practices, etc.?

Who are the actors involved in this decision and development process? (any overlap between those who develop and those who implement in practice)

All respondents:

When those responsible for rolling out policies for student mental health at the University, how much, if any, consideration for the academic framework is given throughout this process? For example, AS provides services and programs to help students to “thrive and find your path to academic success” and these programs include academic support and writing programs, but also counselling and coaching programs. So, it is the combination of both academic and wellbeing services under one umbrella, so to speak. So, then does AS follow a framework that combines these two branches or perspectives/lenses for students? Or are they developed separately and then offered to students under the name AS?

Why do you think the programs are developed and implemented or operate in this way?

In practice:

From the existing mental health and wellbeing policies and framework, how do they translate into actual services and supports for students?

(More specifically, how have the University's policy makers and/or service providers come to the conclusion that, in the same way that academic writing support can help students succeed academically, so does counselling help students maintain mental wellbeing?)

To clarify: who decides that, based on this framework and its recommendations, we need such-and-such a service or we need to provide this kind of support for our students?

And so far, do you find that the services and programs offered are meeting the needs of its students with regard to their mental health and wellbeing?

If yes - how would you determine or measure that this is the case?

Why do you think these services are helpful? (Or not)

Have they identified areas where student need or demand is being unmet or not quite as helpful as it thinks it could be?

Tell me more about this, if you may.

AS employees:

I am aware of the Stepped-Care model that is being used in AS to deliver care and services to students. Can you tell me, generally, what this model is about and how it works?

Where does this evidence-based model come from?

How did the decision-makers at AS decide to choose this model and thus implement it, for example, what steps were involved in making this a reality?

I recently read AS's 2017-2018 Annual Report and in the section on the Stepped-Care service delivery model, one of the bullets mentions, "customizing the service to the needs of the student community by offering them different options" but the stepped model does quite clearly indicate a directional movement or process through which a student might move in obtaining or using services. Is this the idea behind this model or, if you are in fact customizing the service, meaning, could a student "skip over" options 1 through whatever?

Would you say that this stepped model reveals an expected trajectory for the student seeking services?

Can you walk me through the process a student would go through to access the counselling and coaching services at AS?

I was wondering if you also could tell me more about the accommodations process and the steps or requirements students go through in order to obtain such accommodations?

AS employees:

When a student comes to AS looking for academic support, from a governance perspective, what would you say is expected of the student? (i.e. what does AS expect on behalf of the student)

Is this process and expectation the same for students seeking counselling or mental support?

Could you walk me through both processes and the steps that would be taken for what would be considered a successful "journey" or use of the University's services?

Vision:

From what we have been discussing, it sounds (may or may not) like the individuals who play a role in student mental health and wellness have a fairly clear vision of how students will engage with the mental health and wellness services provided to them. Would you agree with this?

Yes: tell me why

No: tell me why

Do you think that this idea of what a student would or should do has an impact/effects which services are chosen and on the services are provided?

If you are at liberty and if you so wish to say, do you agree with the direction that has been taken to provide students with mental health and wellbeing supports and services?

Why or why not/please expand. Are there other options that you think would be more beneficial to students? What makes you say that?

How do you envision that these services would be more beneficial?

APPENDIX B: Invitation to Interview

Student Mental Health at the University of Ontario

Invitation to an Interview

You are invited to participate in an interview conducted by Melinda Simar, as part of a Master's in Sociology thesis research project on student mental health at the University of Ontario.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the interview is to examine how the governing bodies (decision-makers and service providers) at the University of Ontario develop and implement mental health policies, frameworks, strategies, services and supports for its students on campus, and what an assumed trajectory may be for a student dealing with a mental health issue. Given the recent reports published at the federal, provincial, and college/university levels with strategies and recommendations for responding to students identifying with mental health problems, and the Canada-wide campaign to support the mental health of all Canadians, but the continuing rise in demand by students for services and supports, I wish to examine the processes that the University follows to develop its mental health and wellbeing policies and translates these policies into services for students with mental health issues.

I will ask you for your insights into these decision-making and service implementation processes, as well as about best practices followed. I will also ask you for your insights on how these policies turn into the services that exist on campus for students and how these services are deemed most beneficial for students, based on the trajectory it is presumed students might follow throughout this process. I will also seek your insights into how the student mental health framework at the University co-exists with its academic framework. Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. We will meet in a private office (at your convenience) and the interview will last between 45-60 minutes, depending on your availability. I will audio record the interview for transcription and analysis.

There are no known risks to this research. However, I want to bring to your attention that, your answers could be attributed to you given the nature of your role at the University. To mitigate this risk, I will be using neither the name of the University, nor your exact job title in my final report. You will instead be represented as an "individual at a post-secondary institution in Ontario with a job related to student mental health and wellness policies/services." If, at any time, you wish to stop the interview, you may do so. Feel free to ask me any questions at any point, about the interview or about my study.

Participation: If you wish to participate in this study, please reply to this email to confirm your interest and suggest times and dates on which we might meet.

Incl. Informed Consent form

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form

Student Mental Health at the University of Ontario

Invitation to an Interview

You are invited to participate in an interview conducted by Melinda Simar, as part of a Master's in Sociology thesis research project.

About the Interview: The purpose of the interview is to examine how the governing bodies (decision-makers and service providers) at the University of Ottawa develop and implement mental health policies, frameworks, strategies, services and supports for its students on campus, and better understand what a presumed trajectory might be for a student dealing with a mental health issue. Given the recent reports published at the federal, provincial, and college/university levels with strategies and recommendations for responding to students identifying with mental health problems, and the Canada-wide campaign to support the mental health of all Canadians, but the continuing rise in demand by students for services and supports, I wish to examine the processes that the University follows to develop its mental health and wellbeing policies and translates these policies into services for students with mental health issues.

I will ask you for your insights into these decision-making and service implementation processes, as well as about best practices followed. I will also ask you for your insights on how these policies turn into the services that exist on campus for students, and how these services are deemed most beneficial for students, based on the trajectory it is presumed students might follow when faced with a mental health problem. I will also seek your insights into how the student mental health framework at the University co-exists with its academic framework. Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. We will meet in a private office (at your convenience) and the interview will last between 45-60 minutes, depending on your availability. I will audio record the interview for transcription and analysis.

Risks: There are no known risks. However, your answers could be attributed to you given the nature of your role at the University. To mitigate this risk, I will be using neither the name of the University, nor your exact job title in my final report. These will be replaced with broader terms, to represent the location of the university and your professional role. You are free to refuse answering any questions or stop the interview at anytime.

Benefits: This study will help to better understand the processes that a university's decision-makers follow when developing and implementing a mental health framework and policy, as well as how this is then translated into services for students on campus. By participating in this project, you are helping me contribute to the sociological literature and knowledge of mental health within sub-cultures/institutions.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The information you share will be treated confidentially and used only by myself and my thesis supervisor for the data collection and analysis components of the thesis project. Identifiers such as gender and age will not be used. I will not at any time use your name or professional job title. You will instead be represented as an "individual at a post-

secondary institution with a job related to student mental health and wellness policies/services.”
If, at any time, you wish to stop the interview, you may do so. Feel free to ask me any questions at any point, about the interview or about my study.

Conservation of data: The data collected, both audio recording, transcript, and interview notes will be kept in a secure manner by myself in my home office during the completion of this research project. It will be kept securely in the same manner for five years from the time of collection. All electronic files will be kept locked and encrypted on a password-protected USB key and on my personal laptop during the completion of the project and retention period.

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, you can decide whether the data gathered until the time of withdrawal is kept or discarded.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study that aims to examine the processes followed at the University of Ontario by its governing bodies to develop and implement student mental health policies and services, conducted by Melinda Simer as part of her Master’s in Sociology, Thesis option.

If I have any questions or require more information about the study itself, I may contact the project supervisor or the student mentioned above.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ontario, _____

Tel.: _____

Email: _____

There are two copies of the consent form, one for the participant, one for the researcher.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

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