

# From Intention to Action

University of Toronto 2 year pilot program  
2015-2017

***fitA***  
*from intention to Action*



# Context.

- Large, complex institution
- Student population has high rate of academic achievement, perfectionism and academic stress
- Pilot was implemented by the Academic Success Centre
- Emphasis on processing school-related anxiety, building academic skills, stress management and supportive therapy

# U of T approach.

- 12 appointment flow-through model, Sept-April
- 4 interns: 2 M.Ed. Counselling Psych; 2 MSW
- Interdisciplinary team – Psychologist, Social Worker, (1 day each); Learning Strategist (4 days)
- Program Coordinator screened all incoming students & took on bulk of assessment feedback under supervision

# U of T adaptations.

- Slightly different assessment suite: BASC-III, BRIEF, LASSI
- Developed intern skill in assessment formulation & report writing over time
- Program Coordinator and Psychologist supported assessment feedback – integrated into therapy
- Learning strategist available to supplement learning support in FITA appointments with intern observing and participating

# challenges.

- More resource-intensive than expected
- Lots of training and support required while onboarding interns
- Experienced a bottleneck with intake & assessment
- Being housed outside of Health & Wellness meant developing record management systems in accordance with PHIPA
- Research ethics application a big undertaking

# challenges.

- Challenge to identify exclusion criteria that worked at our institution
- Having a flexible, flow-through approach led to students often cancelling & rescheduling appointments – struggled with weekly commitment
- Interns felt they reached their capacity at 4 appointments per day

# Successes.

- Being in the Academic Success Centre allowed increased access for students who would not seek mental health support
- Having a learning strategist coordinate the program strengthened the learning components of the FITA program
- Interdisciplinary team created a rich learning environment for interns and staff

# insights & recommendations.

- Blended work resonates well with students - important to have a therapeutic space where the lens is on academic functioning and development
- Definitely implement FITA if funding became available
- Start early with intern training and screening/intakes
- Develop focussed experiential training: what interns need to be able to do in the next 2-3 weeks
- Identify population and establish exclusion criteria & commitment policy



# insights & recommendations.

- Consider a cohort and semester-based model
- Use an assessment (OQ) to screen
- Start with a small assessment suite and add others according to needs
- Interns benefited in their work by consolidating assessment information and generating formulations and recommendations for students