

Youth Voice: Priorities of a national network of Youth Mental Health Advocates

Pratik Nair

Evaluation and Knowledge Translation Lead

jack .org

Hinna Hafeez

Knowledge Translation Intern, Dalhousie
University Jack Chapter member, Campus
Assessment Tool leader

jack .org

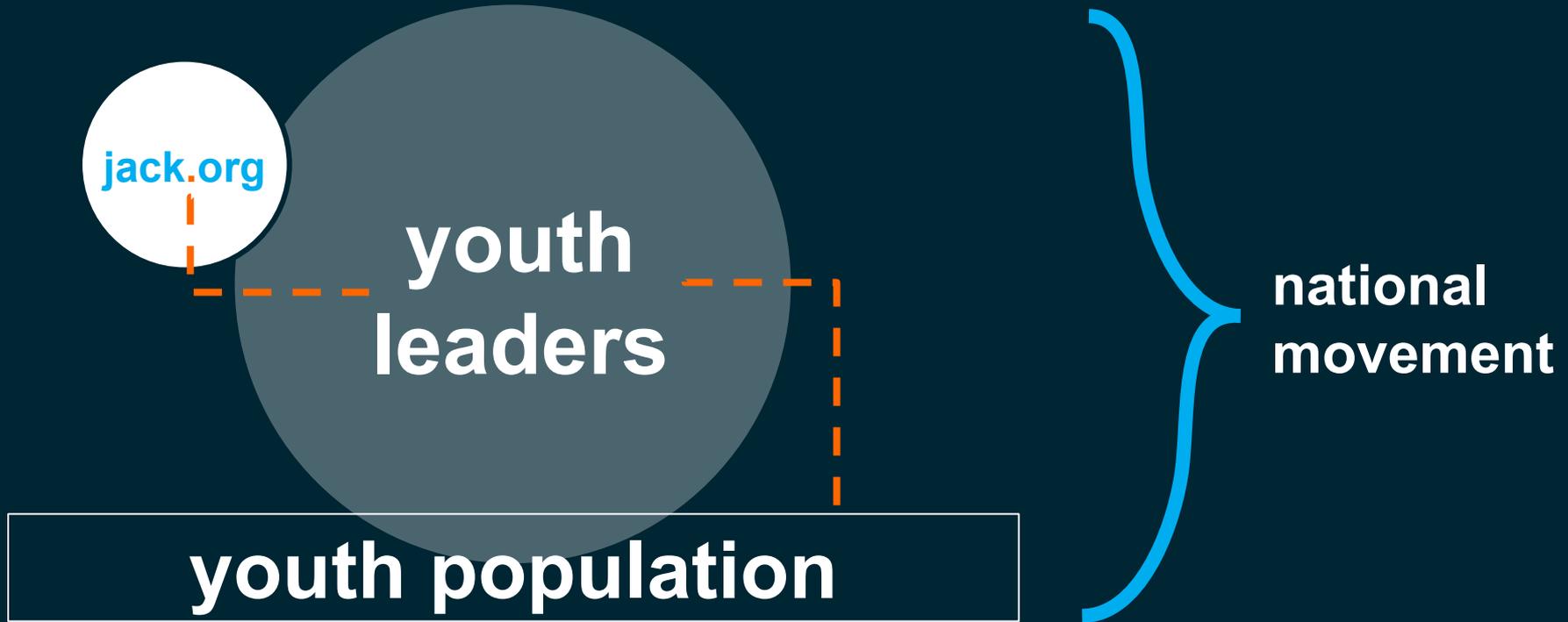
we want

A Canada where every young person **reaches out** for the help they need and **gets the help** they deserve

Canada's only **national network** of
young leaders revolutionizing
mental health

so we **built**

our approach .





Jack Talks



Jack Chapters



Jack Summits

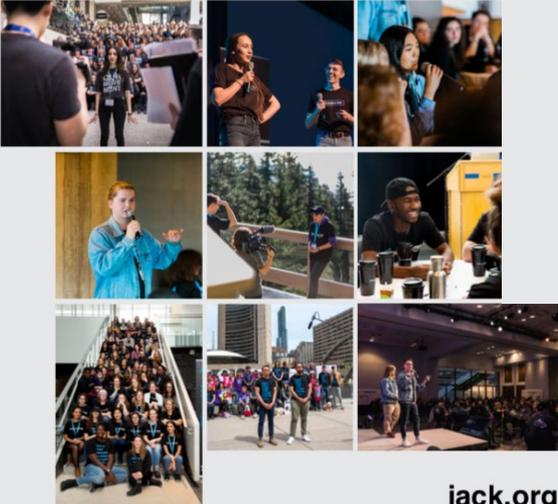


the network

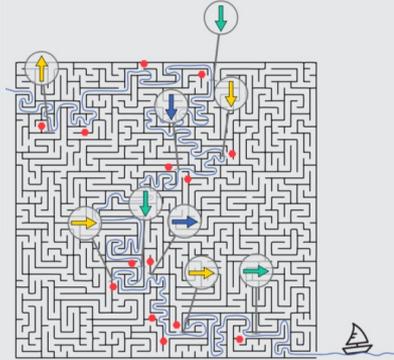
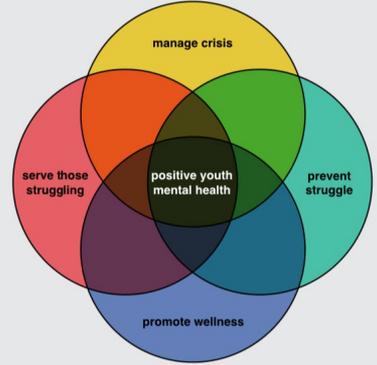
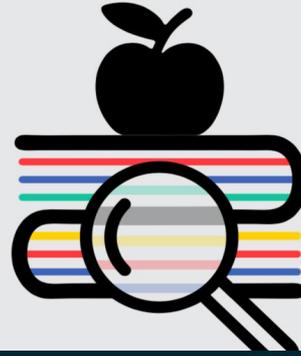
Youth Voice Report

2019

Youth Voice Report.



jack.org



jack.org

Youth Voice Report

Why we did it?

- Over 8 years we've built a network of 2800 youth mental health advocates
- In every province and territory
- Requests from decision makers and policy influencers

What we asked:

- What creates mental health struggle among young people?
- What prevents young people from accessing help when they need it?
- How do campus communities promote, protect, and support youth mental health?

Youth Voice Report

Representative of all Canadian Youth?

No.

What we had access to?

4 Es

- **Expansive** Network of Advocates
- Lived **Experience** of Struggle, Illness, and Mental Health Care
- **Eager** to Contribute
- Advocacy **Expertise**

The Process

Jack.org Network Registration Survey 2018-2019					
Section 6: Your Voice					
Finally, we want to hear your insights on your community. Environments can sometimes affect mental health negatively. Taking some time to reflect on your own community, please rate your agreement with the following statements.					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My peers and I face constant academic pressure, and this negatively affects our mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My peers and I often have trouble making ends meet financially, and this negatively affects our mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My peers and I face social pressure (i.e. bullying) that negatively affects our mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
For my peers and I, social media negatively affects my mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My peers and I have enough time for self care *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My peers and I are consulted on decisions that affect our mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Are there any other factors that contribute to negative mental health that we missed? If yes, please describe below.					

Across Canada, only 1 in 4 young people who are struggling with their mental health actually get the help they need and deserve. This is due to a variety of barriers that differ across Canada's diverse communities. Thinking about your own community, what factors do you think prevent people from accessing care? Using the scale provided, please rank the significance of the following barriers to hel-seeking behaviour in your community.

	Not a significant barrier at all	2	Neutral	4	Extremely significant barrier
Few mental health resources available close to where people live *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long wait times for mental health services *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The types of mental health services available are not culturally appropriate *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community don't believe that treatments for mental health are effective *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community fear that reaching out for help may make the problem worse *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community fear that if they reach out for mental health support they will lose important relationships *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community feel ashamed that they are struggling with their mental health *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community believe that people should be able to deal with their mental health struggles on their own *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community don't know when or why to get help *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in my community don't know what types of mental health services are available *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any other factors that contribute to negative mental health that we missed? If yes, please describe below.					

The Process

PHASE 1
Identifying the Problem

1 How do people think about mental health in your community?

PHASE 2
Goal Setting

1 What goals can we set to address the problem?

PHASE 3
Taking Action Together

1 How can you take back so much of the power of the Northern Summit to work to improve mental health in your community?

PHASE 4
Youth Voice

1 If you could speak to an adult ally (i.e. principal, policy maker) for support to improve youth mental health, what would you tell them?

northern
jack summit

jack.org

The Process



PHASE 4

Youth Voice

Government of - Canada
- Nunavut
- NWT

northern
jack summit

1 If you could speak to an adult ally (i.e. principal, policy maker) for support to improve youth mental health, what would you tell them?

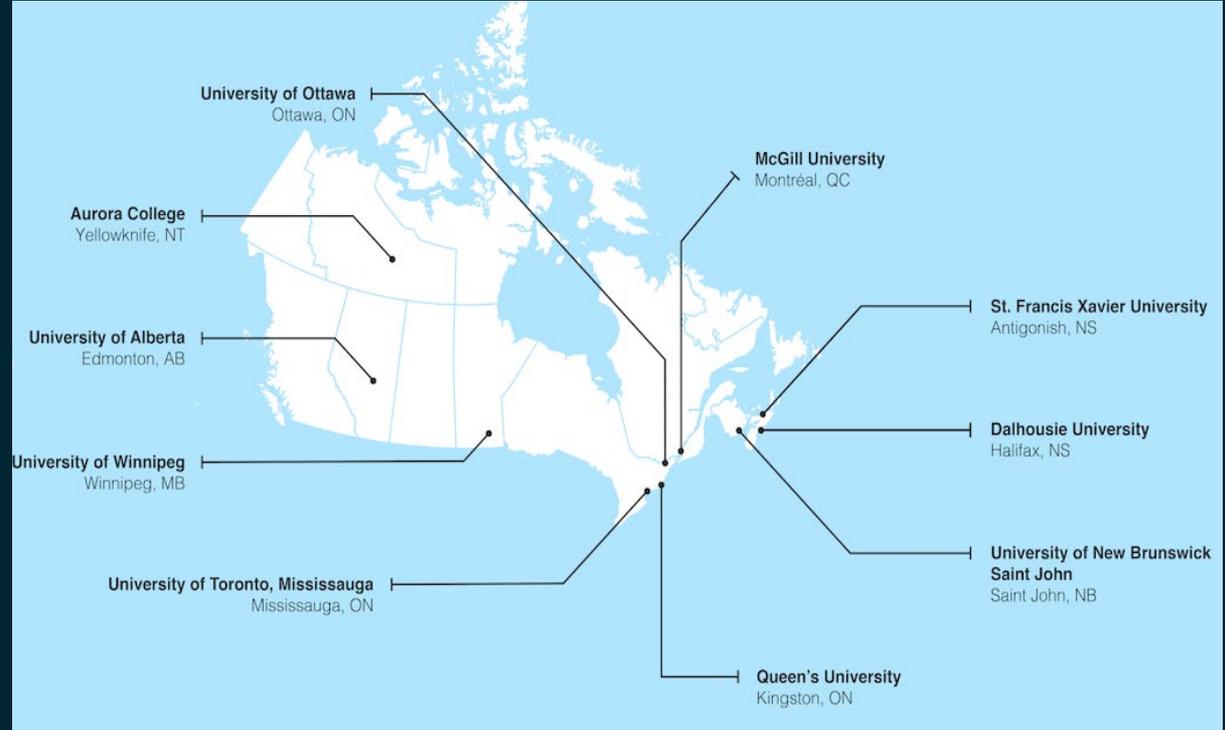
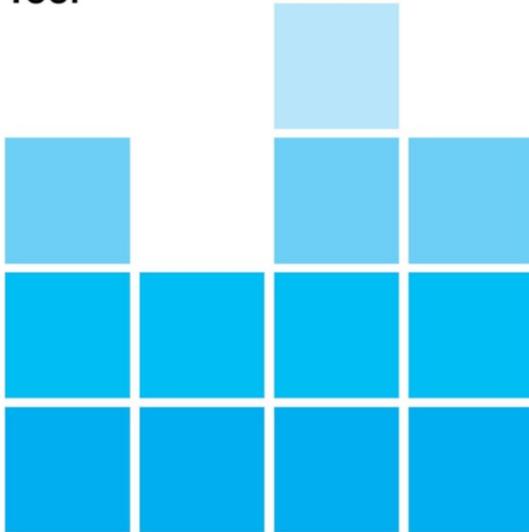
- continue funding our programs
- education → counselling programs / social work.
- Create a curriculum that prioritizes mental health
- Support non-profit orgs.
- Emergency Services - Mental Health First Aid
 - referable to counsellors → addiction issues
- long term services
- Can't have mental health if your needs aren't being met.
↳ food security.

The Process

jack.org

Jack.org

Campus
Assessment
Tool



jack.org

The CAT @ Dalhousie University

- Why we wanted to do the CAT at Dal?
- How we did the CAT at Dal?
 - On-boarding and monthly calls with KTE @ jack.org
 - Online Research
 - Director of Counselling
 - Student Health Promotion
 - Surveyed 318 peers on campus
 - Social media
 - Faculty
 - Student groups
 - In-person canvassing



The Process

Section 1: The Campus Checklist

- What key mental health services, programs and policies exist on campus?
- Online resources, staff on campus

Does your campus have a counselling centre?

Does your school have a mental health policy?

Does your school have a policy for withdrawal from classes without penalization for mental health reasons?

The Process

Section 2: Diverse Service Availability

- Are mental health resources on campus accessible to diverse equity-seeking groups?
- Online resources, staff on campus, student union

Are mental health services covered by your student health plan?

Are there specialized counsellors/nurses on your campus (eating disorder nurse, sexual health nurse, etc.)?

In what languages are services provided?

The Process

Section 3: Quality & Satisfaction

- How aware, satisfied and comfortable are students with the mental health services on campus?
- Surveying students on campus

I am aware of my school's mental health resources.

I feel as though services are available if I or a friend should ever need them.

I feel there are barriers to accessing mental health services.

The Process

Section 4: Barriers & Accessibility

- What are the barriers to accessing mental health services on campus?
- Surveying students on campus

If I were struggling with my mental health, I would seek out counselling resources on campus.

I feel as if professors and/or staff would think differently of me if they knew I sought mental health support.

The Process

Section 5: Health Promoting Environment

- What policies or programs promote positive student mental health on campus?
- Online resources, staff on campus, student union

Do school staff and faculty promote taking study breaks?

Does your school offer financial assistance?

Does your school have a food bank or a free food program?

Our Findings

- **The Good:**
 - Student Health and Wellness Centre
 - Student Declaration of Absence
- **The Challenges:**
 - Wait times
 - Peer Support
- **What can we do about it?**
 - Share this information with you
 - Advocate!

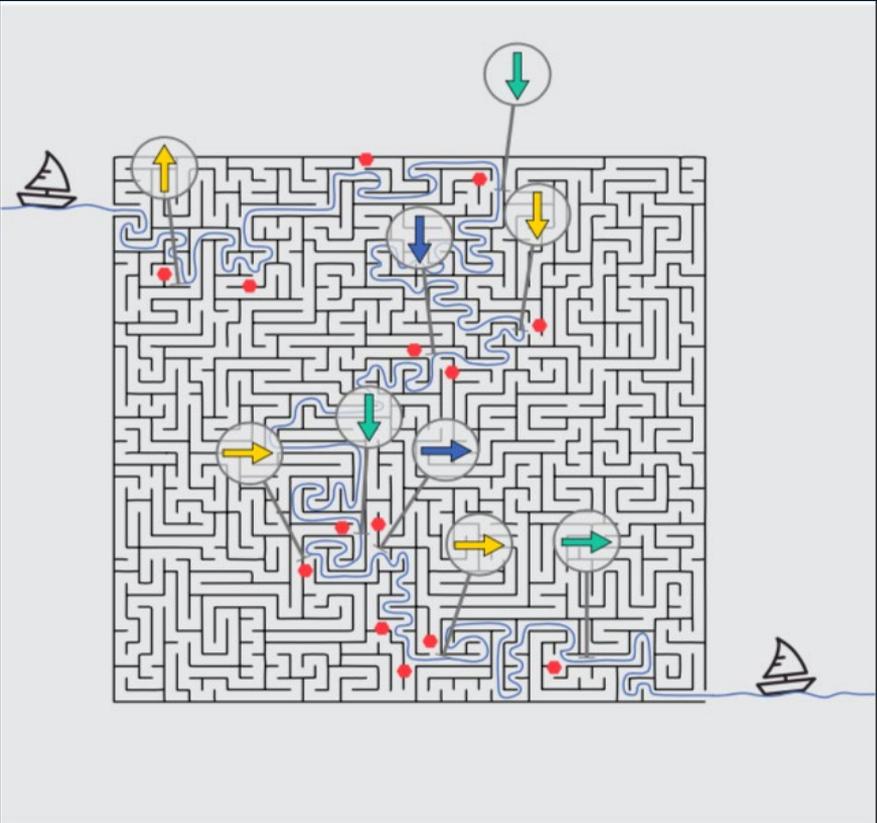
The Process

- After analysis, we corroborated results with broader research
- What were other people in the space suggesting would improve youth mental health outcomes?
- In the end, we developed five recommendations that decision makers could act on to promote youth mental health
- Trying to connect recommendations to improvements in mental health outcomes



1

Help young people navigate the mental health care system



1

Help young people navigate the mental health care system

- 72% didn't know what types of mental health services were available; 62% cited difficulty navigating the system
- Currently, primary care providers are the gatekeeper to MH
 - Ignore broad suite of MH supports
 - Wait times of 2 months
- Navigators help!
 - Stepped Care Model, South Shore Health
 - 10% decrease in counselling hours, 6% increase in satisfaction
 - 8 months ---> 4 weeks
- Peer navigators help even more!

1

Help young people
navigate the mental
health care system

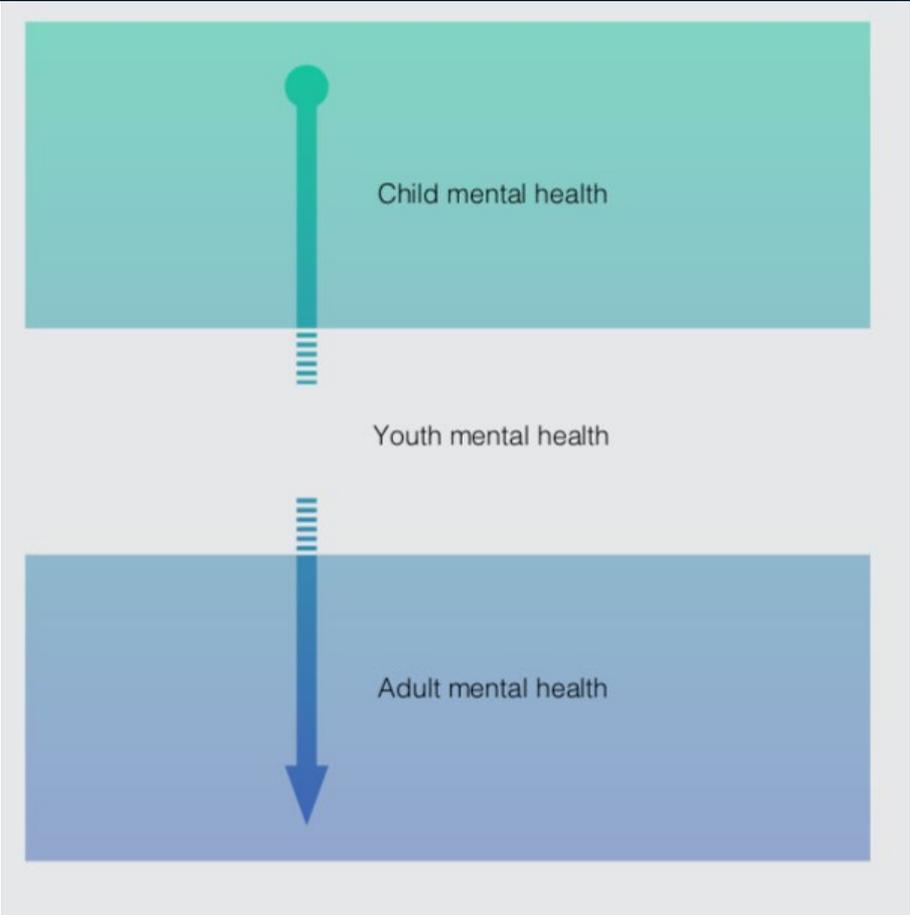
- Wellness Coordinator at University of New Brunswick, Saint John
<https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/studentservices/wellness-coordinator.html>



The screenshot shows the top portion of the University of New Brunswick website. At the top left is the UNB logo, followed by the text "UNIVERSITY of NEW BRUNSWICK" and "EST. 1785". Below this is a red navigation bar with white text for "Academics", "Admissions", "Money Matters", "Student Life", "Research", "Athletics", and "Giving to UNB". A small "UNB" logo is in the top right corner of the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar is a banner image of three students. The text "Student Services" is overlaid on the left side of the banner. Below the banner is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > UNB Saint John > Student Services > Wellness Coordinator". The main heading is "UNB Saint John Wellness Coordinator". The introductory text reads: "Student Services offers critical support to student persistence and retention through health, wellness, academic, and financial support services and programs to students. The Student Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator (SMHWC) is a new role to the Student Services Department. The SMHWC will serve as a navigator and coordinator for students seeking the services of the department with an emphasis on the holistic support of the student. This role is intended as a first point of contact for students in need of support services."

2

Engage young people on key decisions



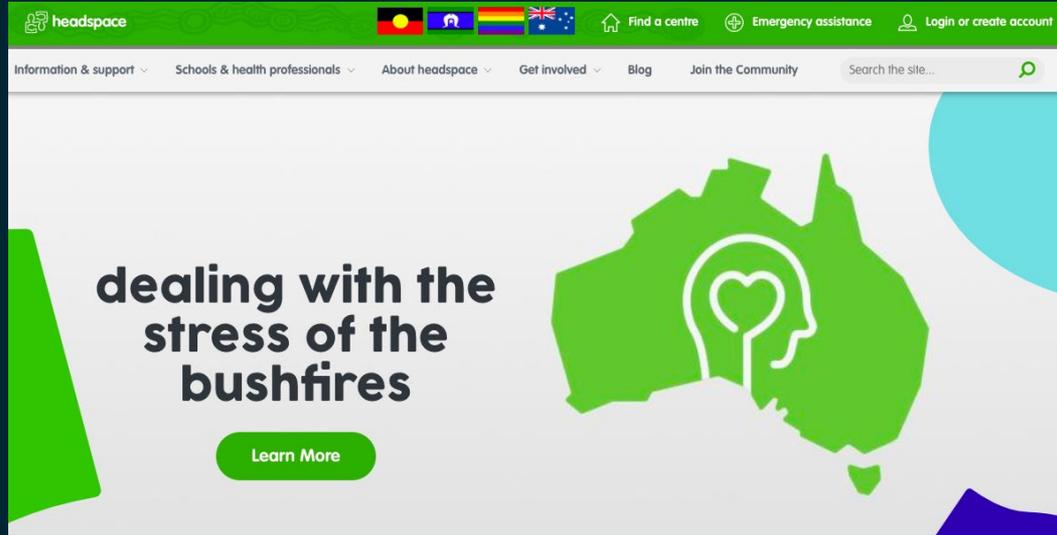
2

Engage young people on key decisions

- Only $\frac{1}{5}$ of those struggling get the support they need
- 64% aware of services on campus, only 43% comfortable accessing services
 - 48% believed services didn't meet youth needs
- CAMHS and AMHS
- WHO Adolescent Friendly Health Services Framework
- Young people need to be engaged in discussions of how services are delivered
 - YWHO, ACCESS Open Minds
- Also true in service settings:
 - The double stigma of Youth MH
 - MH Care is about options

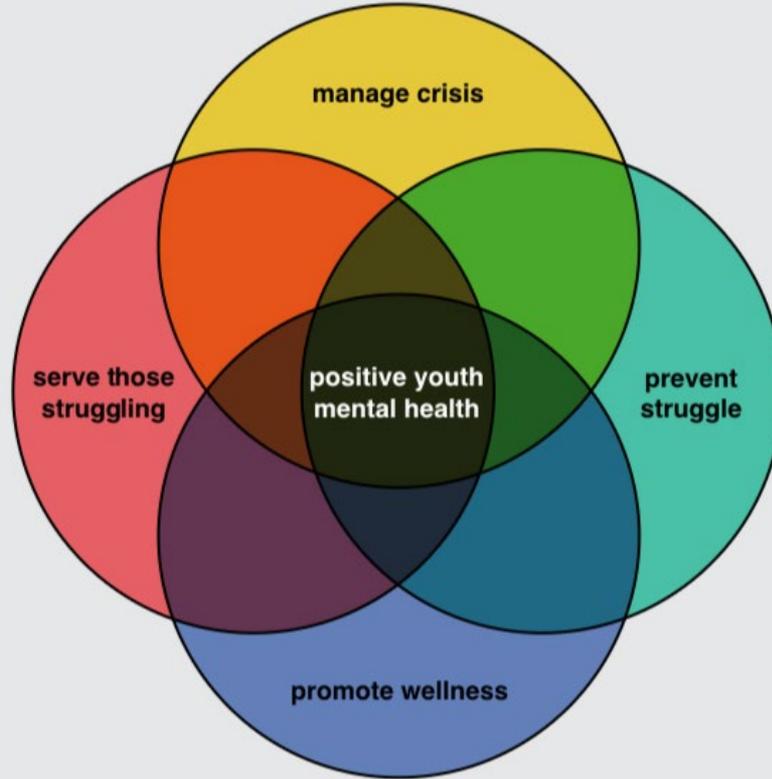
2

Engage young people on
key decisions



3

Protect, promote, and maintain positive mental health on campuses by...



3

Manage Crisis

Crisis Management Checklist:

- ✓ Ensure emergency health and safety services can respond to crisis on campus
- ✓ Provide students with information on the available emergency services
- ✓ Ensure crisis counsellors are on hand to manage and respond to crisis
- ✓ Draft, employ, and share suicide response and postvention policies

Does your campus have a suicide response/postvention plan?	Yes	Yes (But not available to students)	No
# of pilot schools:	0	3	7

3

Serve those struggling

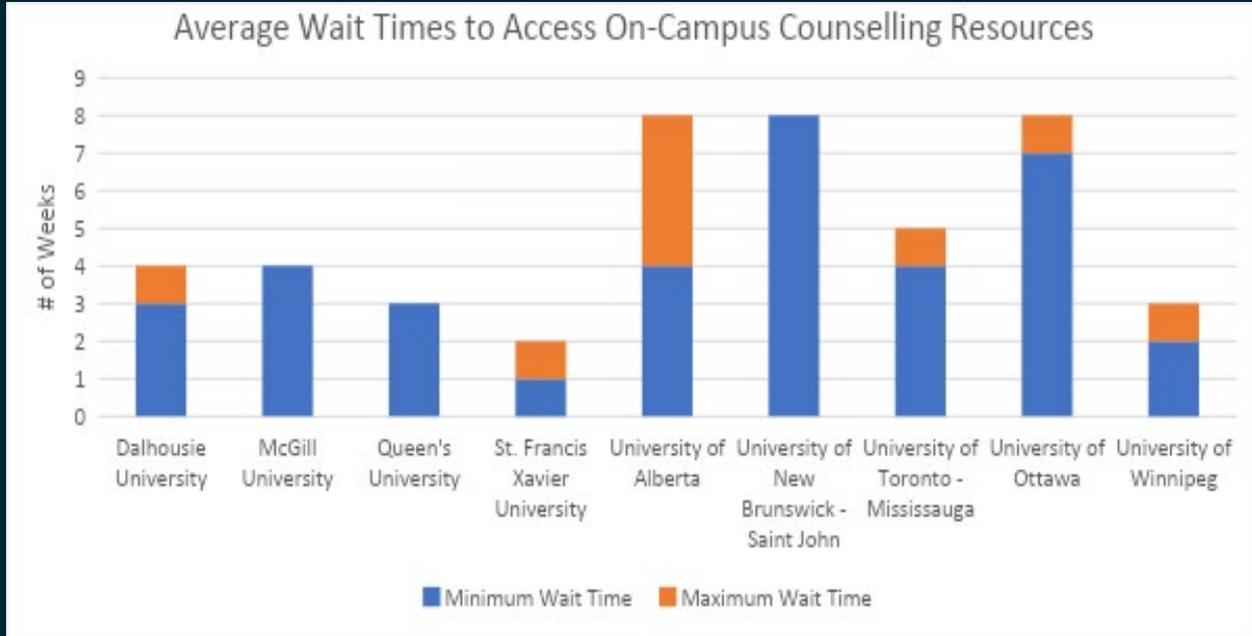
Struggle Support Checklist:

✓ Provide counselling services on campus

Does your campus have a counselling centre?	Yes	No
# of pilot schools:	10	0

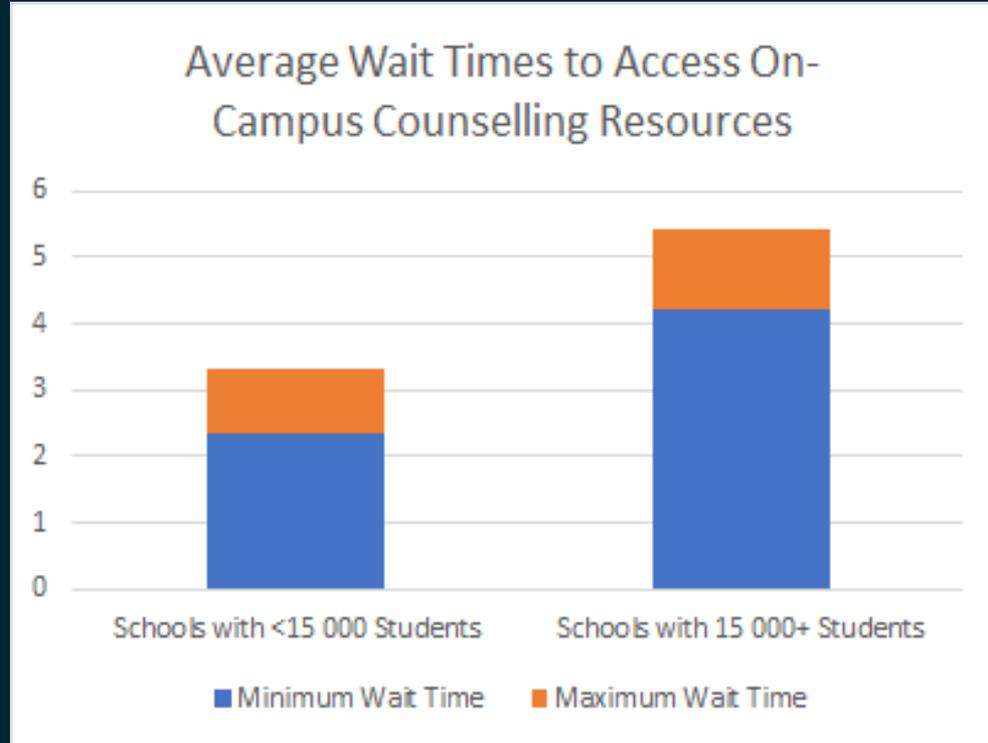
3

Serve those struggling



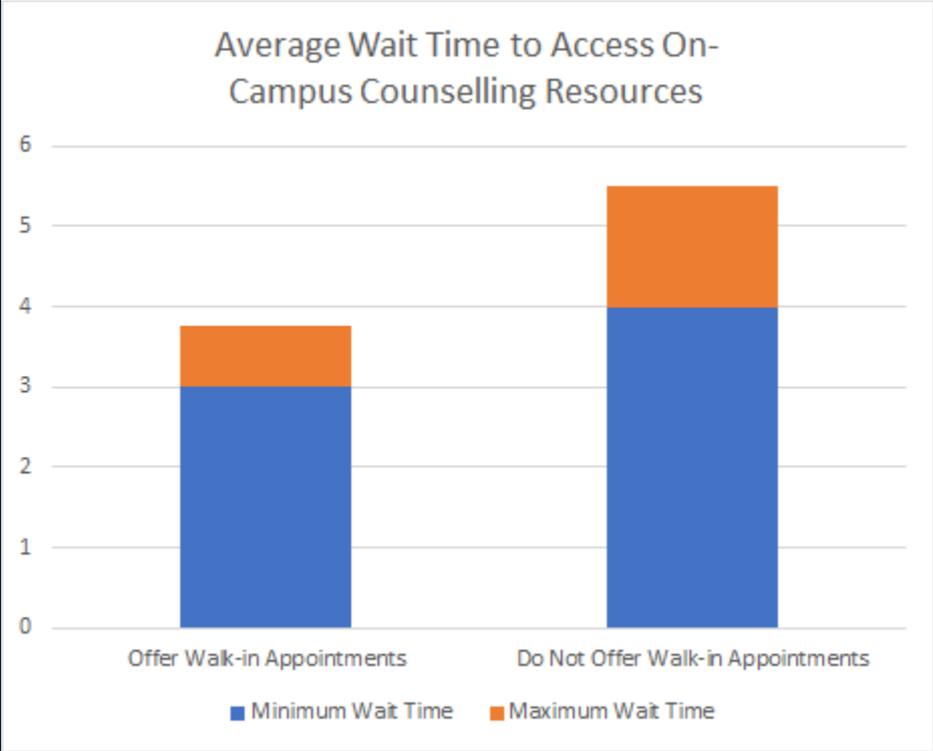
3

Serve those struggling



3

Serve those struggling



3

Serve those struggling

Struggle Support Checklist:

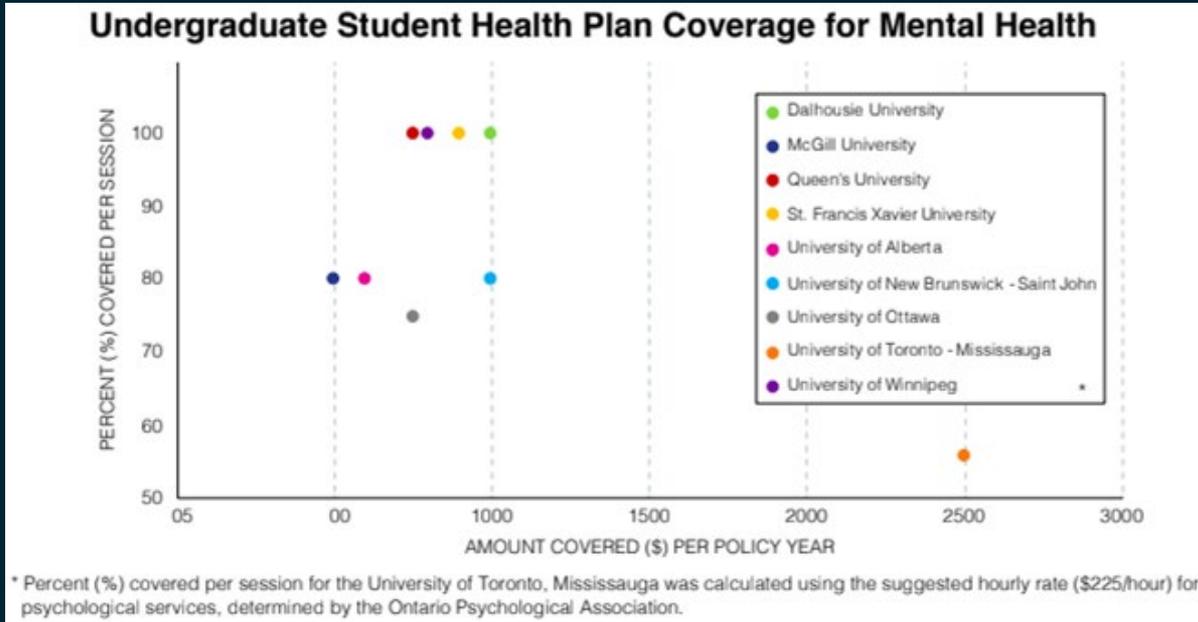
- ✓ Provide peer support options on campus

Does your campus have a peer support program?	Yes	No
# of pilot schools:	6	4

Serve those struggling

Struggle Support Checklist:

- ✓ Provide insurance coverage for access to off-campus counselling



3

Prevent mental health struggle

Mental Health Struggle Prevention Checklist:

- ✓ Implement and enact an Early Alert System

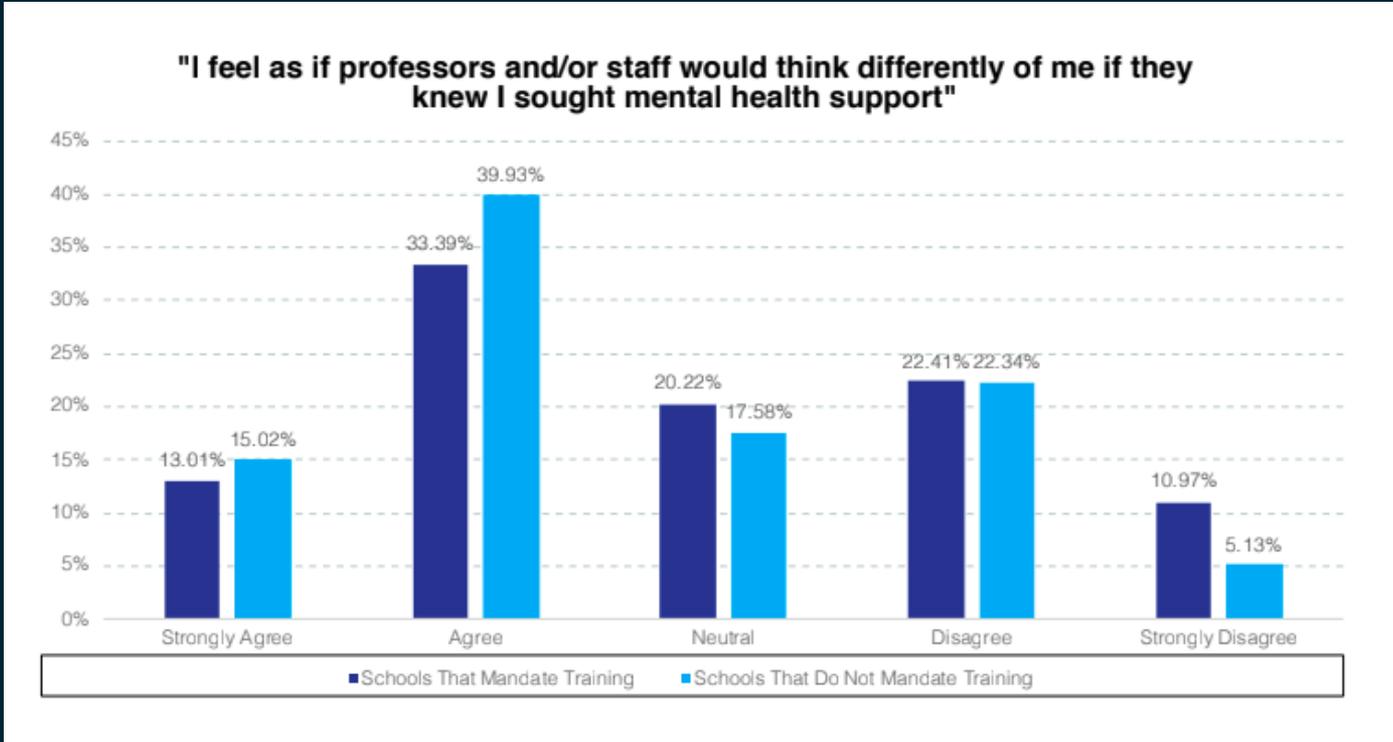
Does your campus have an early alert system?	Yes	No
# of pilot schools:	6	4

- ✓ Embed mental health education into academic orientation processes
- ✓ Equip faculty and staff with basic mental health training

Does your school offer mental health training (Mental Health First Aid, ASIST, Safe Talk) to faculty and/or staff?	8	2
--	---	---

3

Prevent mental health struggle



3

Promote Mental Health and Wellness

Mental Health and Wellness Promotion Checklist:

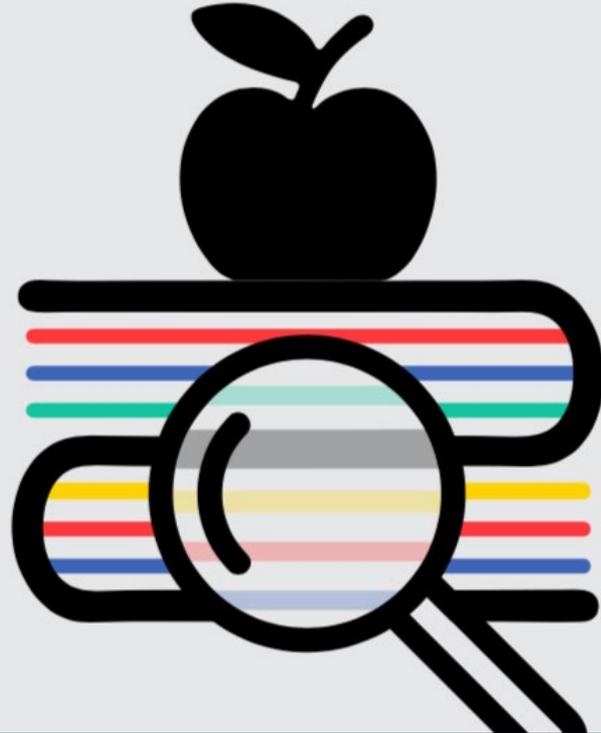
- ✓ Draft, implement, and share an institutional mental health policy

Does your campus have a mental health policy?	Yes	No
# of pilot schools:	3	7

- ✓ Provide accessibility services on campus
- ✓ Offer transition and support services on campus
- ✓ Permit students alternate exam and assignment options
- ✓ Employ Student Declaration of Absence procedures

4

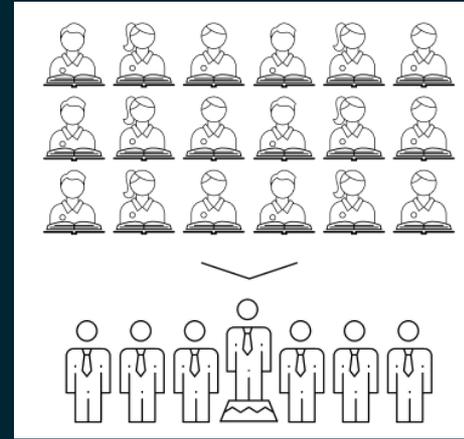
Reimagine teaching and assessment practices to alleviate mental health struggle among young people



4

Reimagine teaching and assessment practices

- 81% tied mental health struggle to academic pressure
- MH content in curriculums
- Building student resilience to cope with struggle
- Reimagine teaching and assessment practice
 - Build a constructivist learning environment
 - Allow students to choose style of assessment



5

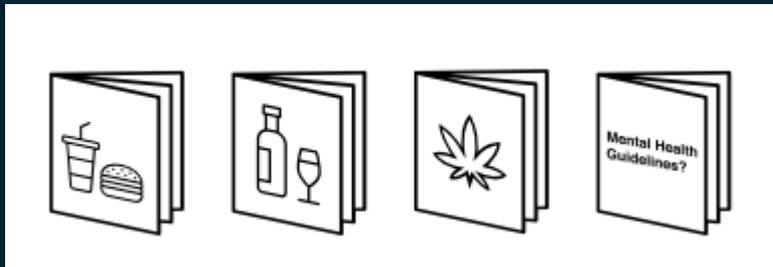
Encourage better social media practice by developing guidelines on healthy social media use



5

Encourage better social media practice

- 54% cited social media as a major stressor
- Not **how much** young people use social media, but **how** young people use social media
- Research and develop evidence-based guidelines
- Create safe digital environments
 - Share learnings across platforms and with the public



Encourage better social media practice

Shah first notes that the origin of the hidden like count test came from internal feedback from its various teams.

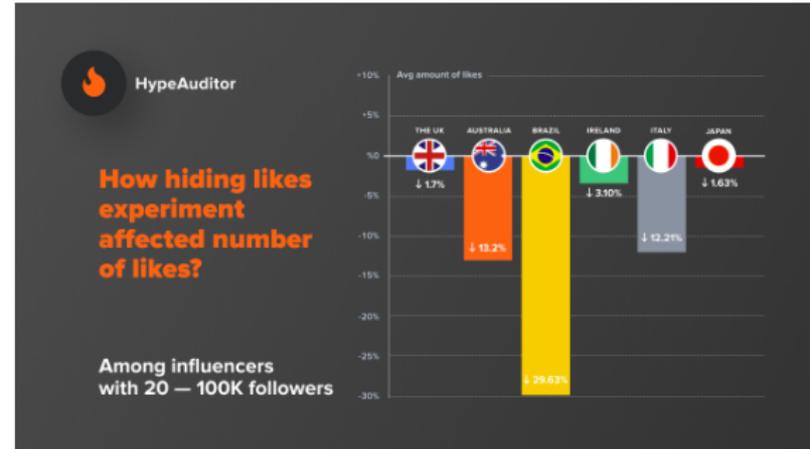
"This one came from the team that works on interactions and feed, so this team is incentivized to try to drive more likes [and] more comments, but in all of their user research, they heard so loud and clear that people felt like the public like count was a very high area of pressure for them when they produce content on Instagram [...] the act of expression itself is what we cared about, not the validation, or perceived validation, that a public like count gets people."

Shah says that when Instagram was first launched, a public Like count made sense ("that was sort of a norm at the time"), but now, particularly when you consider the rise of the Stories format, public engagement metrics are no longer the things that drive behavior.

"If people were deleting the stuff that they posted to feed because they felt like they were competing with themselves [or] they were competing with public figures and celebrities and influencers that they felt they could never be on an even playing field, we thought this was one of the most effective ways to even that playing field and remove some of that pressure for performing."

<https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/instagrams-vp-of-product-provides-insight-into-its-hidden-like-count-test/570610/>

Instagram's VP of Product Provides Insight into its Hidden Like Count Test



That test is confined to influencers only, but based on Shah's comments, this may well be indicative of the broader trends - that people are, in fact, seeing less engagement on their posts, overall, as a result of like counts being removed.

What Shah doesn't note, however, is how Instagram is measuring the relative success, or not, of the test.

thank you .

www.jack.org/yvr

www.jack.org/cat

@Nair_is_fair
@jackdotorg



jack .org