



King's Community Support Centre expands in London with free counselling by social work students

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London, ON – In less than one year, a free social work counselling program by King's University College that supports vulnerable populations in London has expanded its reach to help meet skyrocketing demand. The field education program, [King's Community Support Centre \(KCSC\)](#), originally assisted people in need via partnerships with the Salvation Army and Mission Services in London. Now, the program is connected with the Unity Project; it is also supporting the city of London housing stability program as well as the social services workforce currently experiencing burnout.

Free counselling is provided by King's undergraduate and masters students from the School of Social Work, to help prepare people who are seeking housing as well as those needing help to remain housed. Research shows there is more involved with successful housing for vulnerable people than just providing a roof over one's head. The barrier-free counselling is often for mental health issues and other traumas, and recovery from substance use, all of which can be underlying issues in the city of London's health and homelessness project.

"The impact that the students are having is tremendous," says M.K. Arundel, Coordinator of Field Education for the School of Social Work at King's University College. "Community members would have otherwise faced a significant waitlist for this kind of support. The demand is too great right now for service. Our students are able to help respond to the needs of the community without the community having to wait and without any other barriers such as cost or a cap on the amount of service," adds Arundel.

The innovative program has expanded to now include upwards of 15 students who provide counselling in many locations, including online, at partner sites and even in casual settings that best suit the client, such as outdoor parks or cafes.

Students on a placement at the King's Community Support Centre are learning outside of the classroom, experiencing client relationships first hand and providing support using the skills they have learned in the classroom. They bring a new energy and a holistic approach to the practice and subsequently improve life circumstances for those in need.

“It is wonderful, rich learning for our students and it’s a tremendous response to the health and homelessness initiative in London. We are proud and honoured to be part of, and to contribute to, any solutions that London can establish for this crucial social issue,” adds Arundel.

Besides helping the most vulnerable rebuild dignity and renew hope through trauma-related counselling, the King’s Community Support Centre is also reaching out to the community support workforce, offering resources and sessions including sharing circles, training and professional development. This is a collaborative effort with the provision of supplementary support to our hard-working frontline workforce as the city deals with the health and homelessness crisis.

For more information, please visit <https://socialwork.kings.uwo.ca/field-education/kings-community-support-centre/>.

About King’s University College

King’s University College at Western University is a Canadian liberal arts university college with its roots in the Catholic intellectual tradition. As one of Canada's top university colleges, King's students benefit from a personalized experience, learning in small classes led by outstanding professors, and being part of a close community on a beautiful campus.

King’s is recognized, both nationally and internationally, for its excellent academic programs, commitment to research excellence, generous scholarships and comprehensive student services. Offering degree programs in the arts, social sciences, management and social work, King’s is home to approximately 3500 full- and part-time students from across Canada as well as 23 other countries. Institutionally autonomous, King’s is academically affiliated with Western University, and King’s graduates receive a Western University degree.

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