



**SPO**

# | *Seeking Peer Outreach*

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*An integrated, tiered approach to address stigma and isolation in medical education*

**Presenting:** Meghan Peterson  
Medical College of Wisconsin – Central Wisconsin

**Authors:**

M Peterson<sup>1</sup>; M Lieb<sup>1</sup>; M O’Hair<sup>1</sup>; S Jackson<sup>1</sup>; S Kjellesvig<sup>1</sup>;  
S Kohlbeck<sup>2</sup>; K Corcoran<sup>2</sup>; J Fritz, PhD<sup>1</sup>; D Cipriano, PhD<sup>2</sup>

1. Medical College of Wisconsin – Central Wisconsin

2. Medical College of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

# *Presentation Summary*

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Healthcare providers have a higher rate of suicide than other professions

Stressors beginning in **medical education** could be driving this trend

- Intervention: change in culture during medical education

A novel program integrating **peer support** in a **tiered public health model** was developed for the Medical College of Wisconsin

- Prevent suicide
- Promote mental wellness

# Problem Statement

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Healthcare providers have a **higher rate of suicide** than the general population.

(Frank et. al., 2000; Pospos et. al., 2019)

The **stigma** of psychiatric diagnoses and of mental health treatment may decrease healthcare workers', students', and educators' willingness to seek help for their wellbeing

(Fischbein & Bonfine, 2019; Knaak et. al., 2017)

**October 26, 2020**

Dear Medical Students,

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the unexpected death of [REDACTED], a fourth-year medical student at the MCW Milwaukee campus. This past weekend, [REDACTED]'s brother posted news of his passing on social media sites yesterday and requested that people respect the family's privacy in this moment of profound grief.

# Impact on Physicians

Attending physicians: ↑ risk suicide, despite ↓ risk all-cause mortality

(Frank et. al., 2000; Torre et. al., 2005)

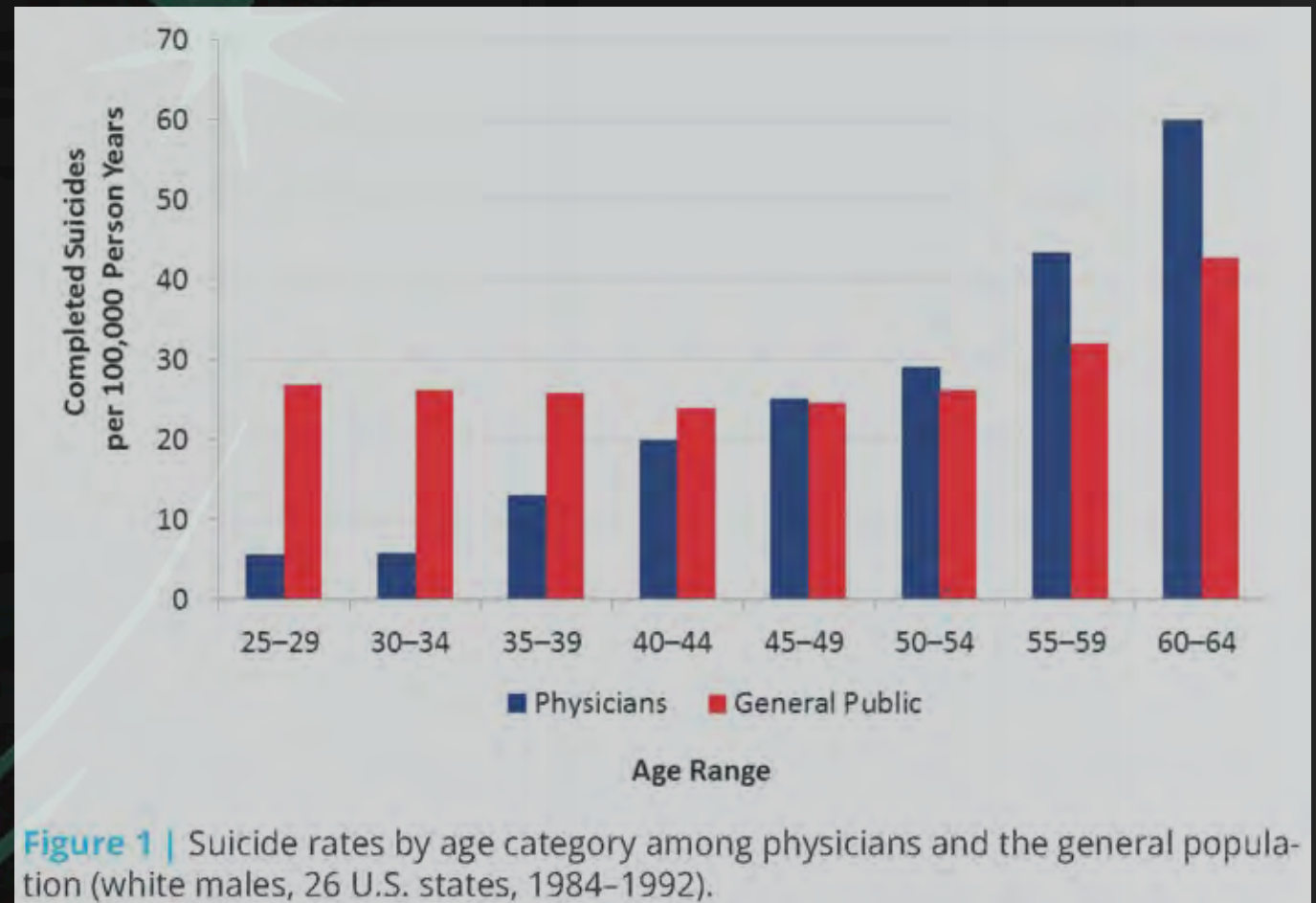
Resident physicians:  
2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death

(Yaghmour et. al., 2017)



↑ risk suicide and **burnout**

(Milner et. al., 2016)



# Relevance: Medical Students

Beginning vs. end of  
medical school:

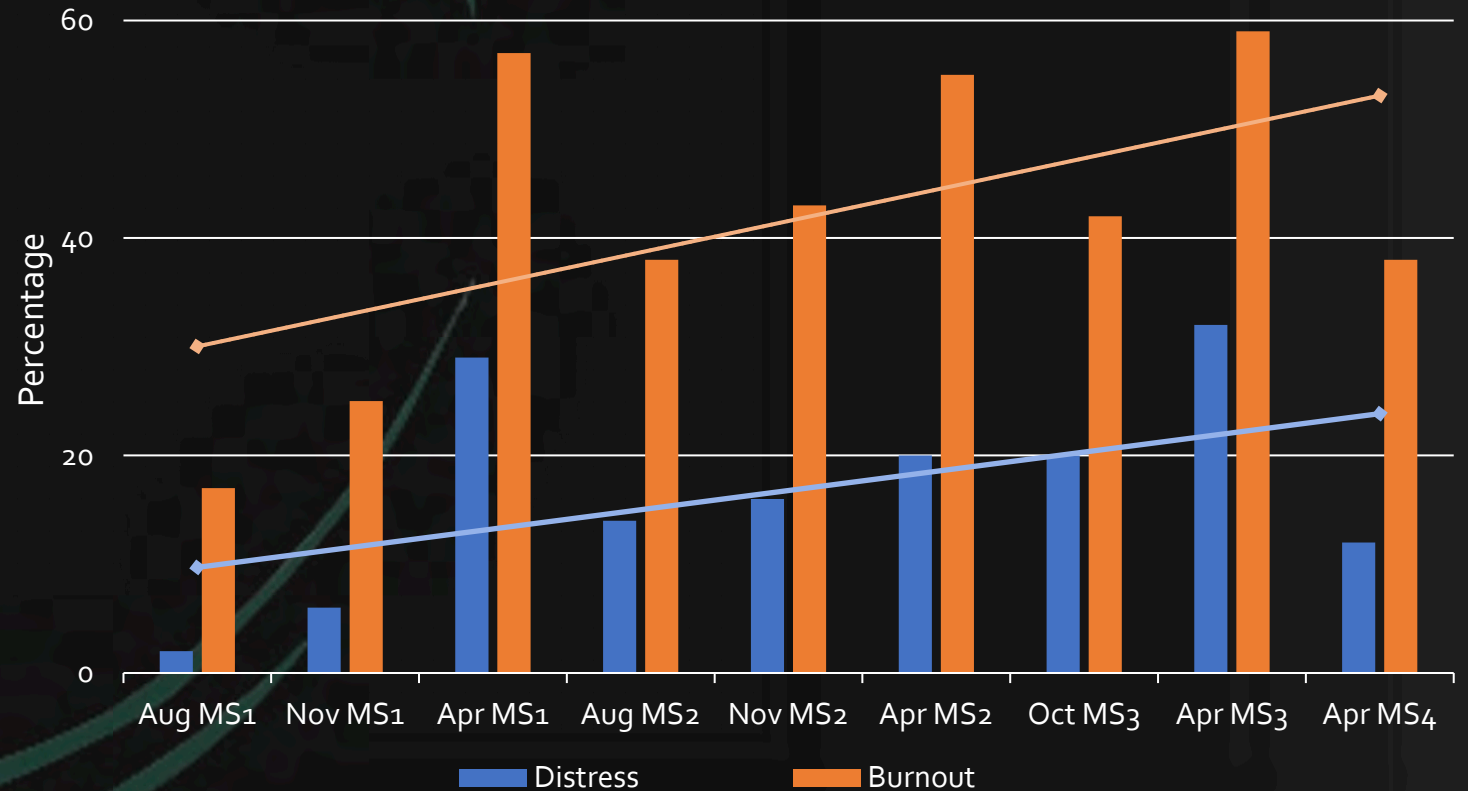
**Distress:** 2% → 12%

**Burnout:** 17% → 38%

(Adapted from Hansell et. al., 2019)

**Depression** peak: end of MS<sub>1</sub>

(Wolf et. al., 1998)



# Relevance: Pharmacy Students

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**Depression:** Reported by **18%** of pharmacy students

- **Less likely** to seek help (**11%**)
- Higher levels of **stigma** regarding mental health treatment

(Fischbein & Bonfine, 2019)

Severe **depression:** Over **25%** of pharmacy students

(Sabourin et. al., 2019)

U.S. incidence of  
adult depression:

**9.0%**

(CDC, 2010)

# Relevance: Other Graduate Students

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**Suicide risk: 21.2%** of graduate students

(Bruns & Letcher, 2018)

**Burnout: 17.0%** of dental students

(Campos et. al., 2012)

**Barriers:** Suicidal graduate students **do not** access mental health services

(Moffitt et. al., 2014)



# Relevance: Medical Faculty

## Burnout:

- 41.3% of pharmacy faculty
- 59% of anesthesiology chairs
- 70% of otolaryngology faculty

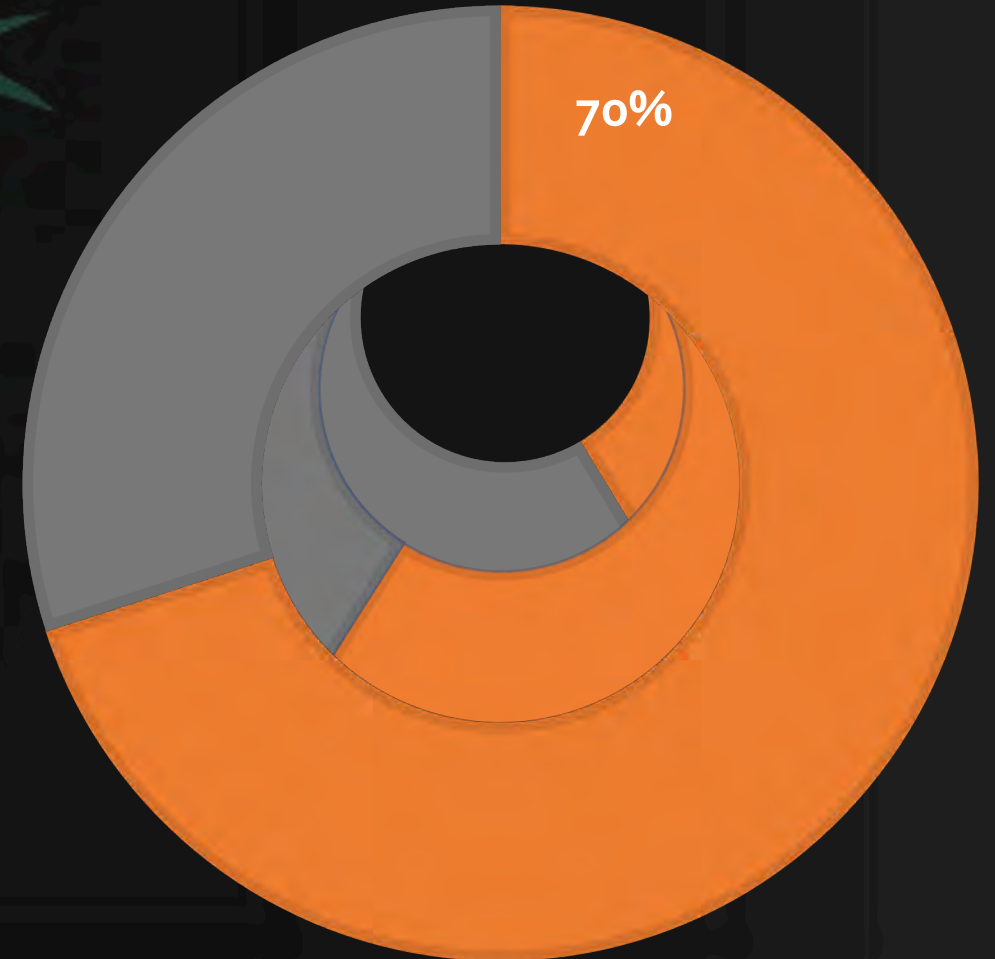
## Increased in:

- Assistant professors



(De Oliveira et. al, 2011; El-Ibiary et. al., 2017; Golub et. al., 2008)

## ANESTHESIOLOGY





# *Mental Wellness: Barriers and Solutions*

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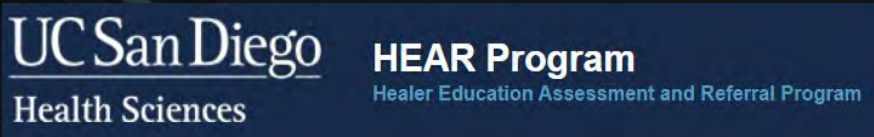
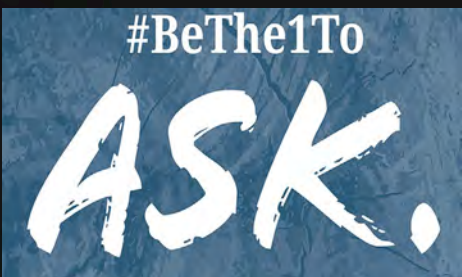
cost  
lack of time  
fear  
confidentiality  
stigma  
unwanted intervention

(Adapted from Givens et. al., 2002)

Culture change as  
early as medical  
education.

(Wallace, 2012)

# What has been done before



# What is SPO\*?

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Scope: All MCW students,  
faculty, and staff

- All MCW campuses & schools
- URIM & academia

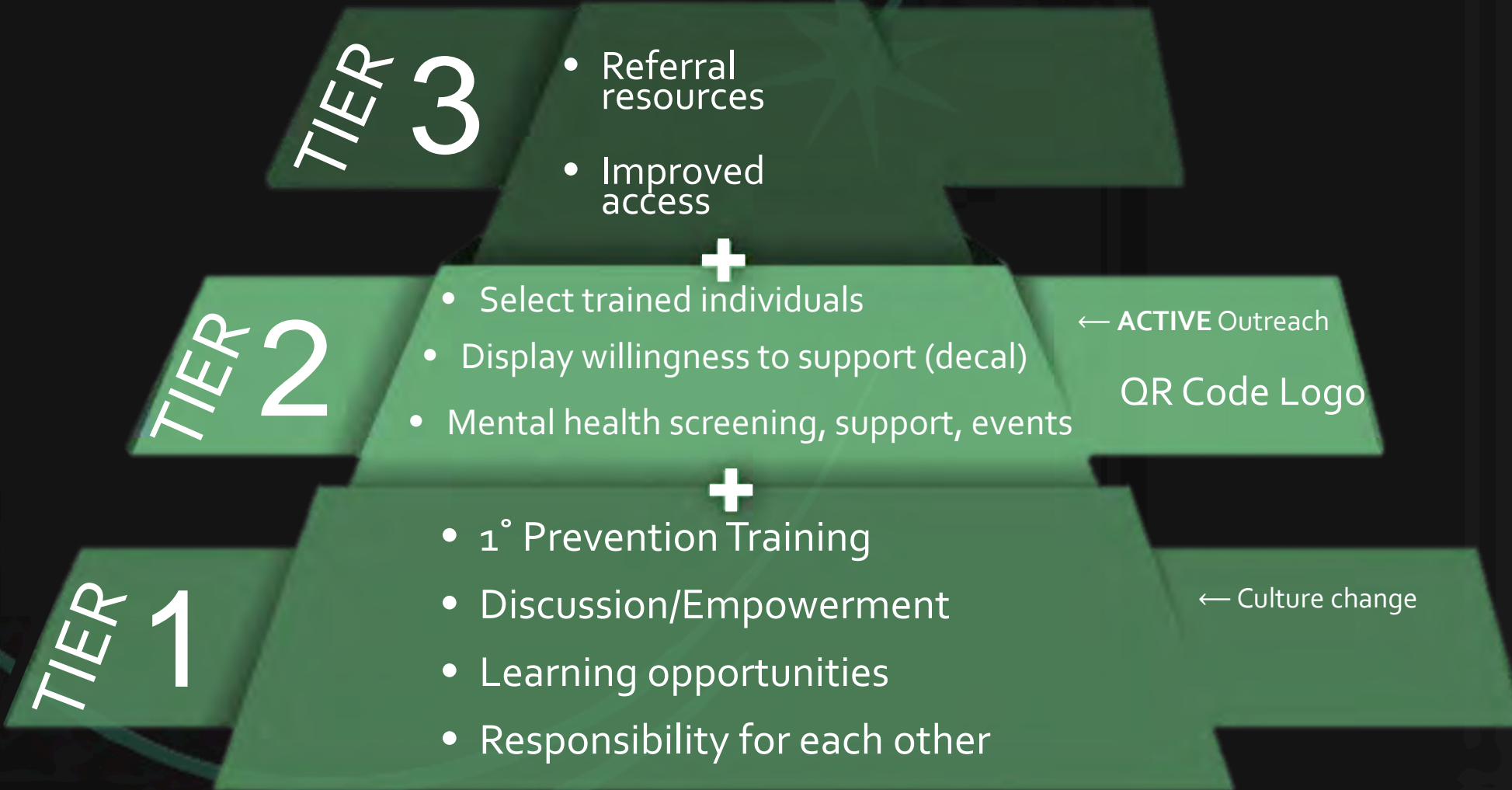
## Suicide Prevention Council (SPC):

- Academic Affairs
- Public Safety
- Office of Communications
- Corporate Compliance
- Human Resources
- Faculty Affairs
- General Counsel
- Student learners

Seeking Peer Outreach (SPO\*): **student-led initiative** of SPC

# Approach

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# MCW-CW Pilot Program

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3  
TIER

Peer support networks

- Anonymous platform
- Increased accessibility

2  
TIER

Normalization of mental health discussions

- Reflective exercises
- Discussions in Navigation Teams (4C Coaching)

1  
TIER

# *Lessons Learned*

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## MCW annual mental health climate survey

- Institution-wide
- Pertinent risk factors

## Population-specific initiatives

- **Stigma** → Normalization
- **Isolation** → Peer support

## Enhanced accessibility to resources

- Embedded QR code

# Lessons Learned

**CHOOSE YOUR WALK:**

**September 18th  
Merrill, WI**



Out of the Darkness  
Community Walk  
\*Hosted by AFSP\*  
Registration 9 am (Free)  
Event 10:30 am - Noon



**September 25th  
Wausau, WI**



Walk for Suicide and  
Mental Health Awareness  
\*Hosted by PSMC\*  
Registration 9 am (Free)  
Event 10 am - Noon  
Sign up by Sept 10th for a  
free t-shirt!

**The Navigation Team  
with the most people  
signed up AND the most  
donations wins a  
trophy!**

- Send your registration screenshot or bib number to [cknight@mcw.edu](mailto:cknight@mcw.edu)! Donations will be recorded on an honor basis.
- Pro Tip: Want the most people? Ask faculty, staff, family, friends, and upper classmen to join you!

Brought to you by:



Questions? Email Marissa at [mohar@mcw.edu](mailto:mohar@mcw.edu)

## Tier 2 Training:

- Comfortable handling mental health crisis: **50%**
- ↑ Safe language for suicide prevention

## Future Plans:

- Peer support & wellness activities
- Program evaluation
- Further integration within learning communities
- Institute-wide launch

# Significance

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## Culture change:

- Learning new skills
- Providing framework for individual & community growth

Diminish existing barriers to seeking and receiving mental wellness

Applicable to all members of MCW





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**SPO**

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| *Seeking Peer Outreach*

Thank you for your time and attention!

Questions?