

# **Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 Annual Report**

**Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness)  
May 9, 2023**

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## Introduction to the Report

The inaugural Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) Annual Report 2022-2023 is a synopsis of the collective work across the Carleton community in supporting student mental health and wellness. This annual report highlights some of the initiatives, programs, and services supporting student mental health and wellness, and outlines progress towards the 30 recommendations identified in the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026. This annual report cannot capture an exhaustive list of initiatives, supports, and services, but we will continue to collaborate with community partners to ensure diverse representation of the wide variety of efforts to support student mental health and wellness in each SMHF Annual Report.

## Algonquin Territory Acknowledgement

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus upon the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishinabeg nation. We recognize that the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 must reflect the values of the Algonquin people. Accordingly, we must strive to further strengthen relationships between Carleton and the Algonquin communities, and endeavor to accelerate the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, ways of teaching and healing, and knowledge in our campus practices.

## Guiding Values

**Collaboration:** We engage students, staff, faculty, and external community partners to facilitate and support the sharing of knowledge, experience, and expertise to develop innovative and effective programs and practices.

**Holistic Environment:** We recognize that mental health and wellness exist on a continuum and are influenced by many sociocultural factors present in the learning environment and community. We will support a variety of complementary strategies to enhance mental health and substance use health, wellness, coping skills, and resilience at all levels of the institution to create an environment where all students can thrive.

**Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion:** We believe that in order to provide a healthy and supportive environment, we need to understand students' unique needs and ensure our services are accessible, inclusive, and respectful of all cultures and identities.

**Continuous Improvement:** We strive to create a culture of continuous improvement, recognizing the need for continued evaluation of programs, services, and initiatives, and for the implementation of emerging best practices as they become available.

## A Message from the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness)

Welcome to the Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) Annual Report 2022-2023. This report showcases a collection of achievements across the Carleton community and shares the amazing work of our staff, faculty, and students in supporting mental health and wellness. Within these pages, you will see the collaborative efforts of our community and the rollout of the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026, including new initiatives and data.

Throughout the fall and winter of 2021/2022, we held an extensive consultation process and developed the new SMHF 2022-2026. This newly refreshed Framework highlights our holistic approach to wellness, while continuing to foster relationships across and beyond the campus to provide comprehensive supports for our student population. As you will read in this report, the SMHF guides us forward and provides a framework for our community.

Organizationally, we are also evolving to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our students. July 2022 marked the inaugural creation of the Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness). The newly created Student Health and Wellness portfolio brings together Health Services, Wellness Services, Attendant Services, the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC), and From Intention to Action (FITA). This amalgamation enables a more holistic, coordinated and collaborative approach to care and support for the health and wellness of students. Alongside this organizational restructuring, we also saw the opening of a new counselling waiting room in suite 2500 of the Carleton Technology and Training Centre (CTTC) and the movement of the Care and Support Team, Manager of Mental Health Strategy and Initiatives, and Health Promotion to suite 3600 CTTC.

Over the last few years, we have seen the demand for access and supports for mental health and wellness from our students. The COVID-19 pandemic added a complexity of challenges in ways no one could have predicted. The impact of social isolation, everchanging world events, and the ongoing unknowns has led to students reaching out in record numbers. I am extremely proud of each and every team member within my office for their continuing passion in serving our students within the Carleton community.

Students are the heart of our community and we hope that by highlighting all the work being done, it will help demonstrate our commitment and dedication to student wellness. I am optimistic that over the next few years we will continue to lead the way in ensuring students develop skills to promote effective mental health. In addition, my hope is to continue to foster relationships with community members to drive innovation in mental health and wellness initiatives across our campus.

Regardless of where students are in their educational journey, the ongoing issues they face continue to affect them. I encourage anyone struggling to reach out and get connected. I hope this report provides a better understanding of the services, programs, and initiatives we strive to provide our students.

Kristie Tousignant  
Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness)

## Executive Summary

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*Aspiration Statement: We will strive for wellness by proactively promoting a holistic and intersectional approach to student mental health and wellness, and by strategically coordinating our programs, services, and initiatives to build skills and strengthen resilience.*

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The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF) launched in May 2022 and successfully completed its first year of implementation in 2022-2023, culminating in this first ever Student Mental Health Framework Annual Report. This year, like the last few years, has been a time of growth and adjustment for our students and community. With welcoming three cohorts of students to campus at once and students adjusting to life at Carleton and in Ottawa, there have been many opportunities to support the unique needs of our student population.

The SMHF Annual Report provides an overview of key outcomes from across our community during the first year of Framework implementation. It should be noted that this report is not able to encapsulate a complete overview of mental health initiatives taking place across the Carleton community, instead, under each Area of Focus 5-10 examples of initiatives that support the SMHF recommendations have been highlighted. The outcomes in the SMHF Annual Report would not be possible without the immense input and shared knowledge of students, faculty, staff, and external community partners. It is through the input of our community that we are able to showcase the tremendous work being done in support of student wellness.

Over the past year, 3 recommendations are in the planning phase; 19 recommendations are underway; 4 recommendations have the status of continuous, meaning that key targets have been accomplished although work continues; and 4 recommendations are upcoming in the near-to-mid term. Since the launch of the SMHF, definitive actions have been taken on 26 of the 30 recommendations. For a comprehensive overview of the progress toward our objectives and recommendations, please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

## Year in Review: Highlights from May 2022 – April 2023

### Mental Health

- 13,897** visits to Counselling Services
- 2,020** sessions by From Intention to Action
- 29%** of students with PMC report mental health as primary disability
- 1,316** new students registered with PMC
- 701** Care Reports submitted

### Health

- 34,622** visits to Medical Services
- 250+** community members trained to administer Naloxone
- 24,444** hours of care provided by Attendant Services

### Health Promotion

- 3,585+** students attended Health Promotion events, workshops, and tabling
- 550** Virtual Care Packages sent
- 600+** students attended the Spirituality Centre's Pause Table

### Community

- 600+** first-year students participated in First Year Connections
- 2,500+** meetings through First Year Connections
- 20+** plots allotted to members of the community for gardening by GSA
- 300+** attendees at the World Mental Health Day Conference, hosted by The Royal

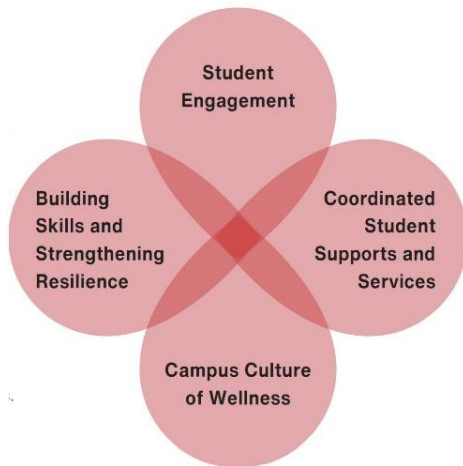
### Therapy Dogs

- 7** new dogs trained
- 1,200+** students visiting Therapy Dogs
- 82** visits held



This list is not exhaustive. If you have a mental health and wellness initiatives happening on campus, we'd love to hear about it! Email [wellness@carleton.ca](mailto:wellness@carleton.ca)

## Student Mental Health Framework Highlights from the Areas of Focus



The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF) outlines four Areas of Focus comprising 12 objectives and 30 recommendations. The Areas of Focus are interdependent and help to support overall student mental health and wellness at Carleton University.

Our first year of implementation saw tremendous success, with 4 recommendations in a continuous phase, 3 in a planning stage and 19 currently underway. Of the 30 recommendations, 26 have had some form of action initiated during this first year. The Student Mental Health Advisory Committee has been integral in the implementation, acting as communicators and advocates for the Framework across the Carleton community.

The following sections highlight examples of initiatives by some of our community members related to each Area of Focus. As a reminder, this snapshot is not exhaustive; the Framework is meant to encourage, inspire and support the many independently led mental health and wellness initiatives across campus, which cannot all be contained within this report.

### **Area of Focus #1: Student Engagement**

The SMHF would not be possible without the support, passion, and knowledge of our student population. Despite this being the third year of semi-irregular studies for our students, their willingness to engage with mental health and wellness programming and to take leadership roles is admirable. Our students continued to engage with our programming, provide feedback on initiatives, and lead these innovative programs while better establishing partnerships with services on campus to support our students.

#### **Highlights:**

- The Muslim Students' Association partnered with the Spirituality Centre to provide Sister Circles and Brother Circles for Muslim students on campus, while welcoming a new Muslim Chaplain to our volunteers.
- Equity and Inclusive Communities hosted Plant Potting and Decorating activities in Residence to support students coming together and destressing.
- The Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness) and the Health Promotion team partnered with CUSA's Wellness Centre to support their *In This Together* campaign. Health Promotion provided educational and engaging materials on substance use health and general wellness.
- Carleton's Health Promotion team, consisting of four Health Promotion Team Leaders, two Health Science Placement students, and two Psychology Placement students, supported the implementation of health-based recommendations through their four topic areas: mental health, sexual health, substance use health, and healthy living. The Health Promotion Team has connected with over 3,000 students this year.

- The Student Mental Health Advisory Committee saw active participation from Carleton student groups including the Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA), Graduate Students' Association (GSA), and Rideau River Residence Association (RRRA) to learn about how our student associations are supporting our student populations and how we can better work together.
- The GSA Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator worked with Counselling Services' Graduate Counsellor to bring back Healing Spaces, a safe space event with a first session focused on "Guiding You on Your Journey to Recovery"
- The Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness) has partnered with the Department of Psychology to leverage graduate student expertise in surveying faculty members on campus. This survey is to assess how faculty are feeling about mental health supports on campus, how confident and comfortable they are with the topics, and will be used to inform future initiatives and how we engage faculty.

### **Area of Focus #2: Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience**

It was a unique year for our Carleton community members – not only were many of our staff and faculty returning to campus, but we were also welcoming three cohorts of students to campus. Because of this, there was a need to develop specific strategies to encourage personal growth, the development of self-awareness, and the acquisition of effective coping skills to ultimately strengthen resiliency in students.

#### **Highlights:**

- The new Carleton Wellness website was launched in late summer 2022 with a focus on ease of access for information and navigation. The new website highlights mental health, healthy living, spirituality, substance use health, and additional resources.
- The Carleton University Wellness Services Navigator was launched in May 2022 to help navigate Carleton students to a curated list of mental health and wellness resources. The Navigator was the result of collaboration with Dr. Kim Hellemans, Dr. Zachary Patterson, Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment), and various student groups.
- Carleton's First Year Connections Mentorship Program supported over 600 first-year students in their transition to university during the fall 2022 term. New this year, the First Year Connections program introduced a Returning Ravens Stream which supported over 125 upper year students who started in-person studies for the first time. Over 2,500 meetings were facilitated by 150 trained peer mentors who supported students in connecting with the Carleton community, adjusting to post-secondary education, and developing plans for success focused on the eight dimensions of wellness.
- Equity and Inclusive Communities hosted a variety of workshops to support student resiliency, including (but not limited to):
  - We Heal Together: Seeds Yoga with Yami Kani: a yoga class specifically designed for survivors/victims/those affected by sexual and gender-based violence
  - Embodiment through Yoga, Journaling, and Dialogue: through gentle yoga, journaling prompts, and open discussion, participants explored a variety of questions related to socially constructed myths and their bodies



- Confidence, Consent, and Communication – A Workshop with Venus Envy: focused on creating a positive relationship with sex, moving beyond judgement and stigma to embrace what works for you.
- The GSA, in collaboration with Equity and Inclusive Communities, hosted a workshop for graduate students to educate students on the essence of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and best ways to enhance equity, diversity, and inclusion practices individually and collectively.
- Carleton’s Health Promotion Team ran an incredibly successful Mental Wellness Fair for Let’s Talk Week that saw over 600 students engaging with our mental health and wellness partners, learning about our services, and how to better integrate self-care into their routines.
- As part of The Royal’s World Mental Health Day Virtual Conference, a session was offered on digital dependency and its impact on mental health. Dr. Gail Beck from The Royal talked about the extent of social media usage, its impact on mental health, and how students can manage their own social media use to determine how it is impacting their lives.
- All People All Pathways is a substance use peer support meeting led by the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA). They have hosted 88 meetings since December 2021 with 319 cumulative participants and will continue to offer the service for the foreseeable future.

### **Area of Focus #3: Coordinated Student Supports and Services**

Over the years, as mental health and wellness programs at Carleton have been expanded, navigating the many resources, webpages, and levels of support has proven to be difficult. It was a priority in this first implementation year to ease some of this navigation related stress for our community members while simultaneously increasing knowledge of campus resources, programs, and services. We set out to continue to build capacity in our faculty, staff, and student leaders when it comes to supporting students, and began looking ahead to what training, resources, and information is critical for our community members to know.

#### **Highlights:**

- Updated our Student Support documents which outline student services and programs, aligned with our streamlined “Stepped Approach”. These documents, available in both print and digital, included Supporting Students in Distress, the Mental Health and Wellness Resource Guide, and Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence.
- Acquired a service code for Breaking Free Online, a self -management tool for substance use to enable students to access the program free of charge and use the program in conjunction with services provided by Health Services and Wellness Services.
- A new position, Wellness Coordinator, has been created through the generous support of Carleton donors and is expected to begin in May 2023 to lead a brand new initiative: The Wellness Desk in MacOdrum Library. This position will support students in navigating resources and connecting to support, especially at times of distress.

- Following the launch of the SMHF, the Resource Guide for Mental Health was updated to follow a similar stepped model approach as the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Supporting Students in Distress documents were updated to reflect best practices of responding and referring. Documents will continue to be updated as needed.
- The Care and Support Team continued to offer training and workshops for faculty, staff, and students, including offering *Supporting Students in Distress*, *Building Student Resilience*, and *Supporting Student Well-Being: Understanding the Care Report*. Over 730 members of the Carleton community completed training with the Care and Support Team this year.
- Carleton's Spirituality Centre and its chaplains returned to in-person office hours and events after two years online. The services of the Spirituality Centre have been integrated into the updated mental health and wellness resources, and the Spirituality Centre continues to integrate into the community.
- Counselling Services has expanded their counselling team to enhance support for our diverse community, including a Trans/2SLGBTQ+ counsellor, a racialized counsellor in both the main counselling clinic and in Residence, as well as a term eating disorder counsellor.
- Counselling Services has created a new waiting room in 2500 CTTC for students waiting to see a counsellor so they no longer have to wait in the waiting room for the main medical clinic. Additionally, Counselling Services now has their own receptionist to help improve access to Counselling Services.
- A new office, Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness), was created to better streamline our mental health and wellness services while creating a cohesive approach to student support.
- Completed partnership agreements with Naloxone Care and CAPSA to solidify the services they provide to the campus community.

#### **Area of Focus #4: Campus Culture of Wellness**

As our student population changes and our Framework begins implementation, the campus wide approach to mental health and wellness is as important as ever. We continued to see engagement with our Student Mental Health Advisory Committee, comprised of staff and faculty across the university, which enabled us to continue to foster the growth and outreach of the Framework. This has been timed excellently with the latest edition of the Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan, currently being updated.

#### **Highlights:**

- The GSA Garden opens to the Carleton community every summer, allotting plots and giving many access to plant a personal garden which contributes to the wellness of members by tackling food insecurity and providing the therapeutic benefits that come with gardening. In summer 2022, GSA allotted over 20 plots to members of the community for gardening.

- 24 members of the community added the Student Mental Health and Well-Being concentration to their Student Support Certificate. Some of these trainings included the Care and Support Team's *Supporting Students in Distress* workshop, which had over 200 community members attend.
- The Okanagan Charter is being taken through the necessary stages for approval, and is on track to be presented to the leadership team in summer 2023.
- We continue to work with the Carleton community and our guiding documents when it comes to implementing initiatives under this Framework. With representatives from a variety of departments comprising our Student Mental Health Advisory Committee, we are continuing our commitment to the greater Carleton University goals and strategic direction.
- Health Services trialed having a Doctor to provide specialized care for Indigenous students on Tuesday afternoons. Health Services is currently looking at options to continue this service offering.
- To date, there have been two Circle of Care meetings with Campus Safety Services, Equity and Inclusive Communities, Housing and Residence Life, the Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement, Health Services, and Counselling Services present. These meetings will continue to progress the development of the Circle of Care protocol.

## What's Next for the Student Mental Health Framework

The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF) has successfully completed its first implementation year. Building from our previous Frameworks, it is imperative for us to think about how we need to continue to serve our students, address their needs, and become innovative in the programming and initiatives we offer to meet the ongoing impact to mental health we are seeing in our student population. We also know it is important that student mental health and wellness are, and continue to be, seen as a priority, not only within mental health and wellness services, but across the Carleton community. This focus needs to be apparent in our pedagogical practices, the care we provide, and how Carleton views mental health and wellness under our strategic wellness pillar.

Looking ahead, we will begin the process of developing a staff and faculty toolkit to focus on sharing similar mental health and wellness information while integrating practices into the classroom. The first step is to get a better understanding of where our community is at in terms of comfort and understanding of mental health and wellness services and approaches, as well as working with them to get a better understanding of what would be practical. This work will be supported by graduate-student expertise coming from the Department of Psychology.

With the upcoming signature of the Okanagan Charter, we are looking to further embed health promotion best practices into all aspects of campus culture. We are also intending to solidify partnerships with the community to have a better system for knowledge and resource sharing, while expanding the scope of resources under the Health Promotion team. Through establishing the new Wellness Coordinator, we will be able to better serve our students across campus, and be more present in high-stress environments.

Following the leadership of Healthy Workplace, we will contribute to and support the new Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan starting development over the next year. Like supporting student mental health and wellness, it is vital that our staff and faculty have their mental health and wellness supported too.

## Appendix 1: Areas of Focus and Recommendations Status

This Appendix contains the Objectives and Recommendations directly outlined in the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF). A status column has been added with the following indicators:

- **Planning:** activities (e.g., planning, coordination) have been initiated in the current reporting cycle
- **Underway:** activities are currently underway and being implemented
- **Continuous:** activities are complete, but implementation is an ongoing process with no definitive end date
- **Upcoming:** activities are planned in the near-to-mid term

The table below can be summarized as follows:

- **3** recommendations are in the planning phase
- **19** recommendations are underway
- **4** recommendations are considered in the continuous phase
- **4** recommendations are upcoming

It is worth noting as recommendations are actioned that implementation is an ongoing process with no definitive end. This is reflective of mental health and wellness not being an end state, but instead a continuous state of adaptation. With our first reporting year completed, definitive actions have been taken on 26 of the 30 recommendations.

### *Area of Focus #1: Student Engagement*

Recommendations	Status
1. Increase student involvement in the implementation of all areas of focus in this Framework through developing and strengthening partnerships with students, staff, and faculty.	Underway
2. Further develop partnerships with student-led groups and support their innovative ideas and initiatives that promote a holistic approach to mental health and wellness.	Underway
3. Continue to support and engage the Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee in developing and implementing student-led initiatives.	Underway
4. Leverage the results of existing student surveys and explore the implementation of additional surveys to better capture and improve the overall health and wellness of our students.	Planning
5. Develop and implement assessment and evaluation tools for existing programs and services to ensure they are meeting students' needs.	Planning
6. Assess opportunities to engage graduate-level student expertise in researching and evaluating mental health and wellness initiatives on campus.	Underway

### Area of Focus #2: Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience

Recommendations	Status
1. Update the wellness website to provide access to comprehensive information on mental health and wellness to students, staff, faculty, and parents, including building resilience and coping skills, substance use health, and streamlining resource navigation.	Continuous
2. Provide regular training using an intersectional approach to enable students, staff, and faculty to assist students in a way that is respectful of culture and identities, and which reflects the diversity of Carleton community members.	Underway
3. Enhance online modules, workshops, and programming using an intersectional approach that introduces students to the concepts of overall wellness and thriving within the university environment, with a particular focus on key areas like nutrition, physical health, finances, living on your own, loneliness, and isolation.	Underway
4. Develop programming and initiatives to provide students with opportunities and resources that will help them to recognize personal strengths, develop coping skills, and build resilience.	Underway
5. Enhance training, events, and knowledge sharing of mental health and wellness services to contribute to overall student wellness, with a particular focus on encouraging health-seeking behaviours.	Underway
6. Develop and implement training, education, and resources to reduce harms in different online environments, such as social media.	Underway
7. Support the development and implementation of a substance use health and harm reduction strategy that is focused on support, resources, education, and partnerships.	Underway

### Area of Focus #3: Coordinated Student Supports and Services

Recommendations	Status
1. Update related documents that outline student services and programs, and align with a streamlined “Stepped Approach” depending on need for the range of mental health and wellness services available at Carleton.	Continuous
2. Update and regularly provide referral training for faculty, staff, and students in key roles, including providing template responses when referring students to additional supports that takes into consideration the individual and cultural needs of our diverse student body.	Underway
3. Integrate faith-based and spirituality resources and approaches as an integral component for supporting mental health and wellness.	Underway
4. Assess and respond to student demand and need for additional counselling services using an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens.	Underway
5. Review the delivery structure of student mental health and wellness services at Carleton to respond to student mental health and wellness challenges in a	Continuous

coordinated way, while simultaneously addressing cultural barriers to service use.	
6. Continue to promote the Care Report to the entire campus community and encourage its use to flag indicators of concern so that our community can respond in the most appropriate way.	Underway
7. Maintain and foster new collaborative partnerships with community partners that allow for better student access to community-based mental health services, including working with hospitals on coordinated discharge processes, and liaising with off-campus services for after-hours care.	Underway

*Area of Focus #4: Campus Culture of Wellness*

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Enhance the availability of training that is culturally aware and sensitive for faculty, staff, and student leaders to support students in crisis.	Underway
2. Develop a university postvention strategy to reduce suicide risk and promote healing after a death by suicide.	Upcoming
3. Ensure collaboration with the employee mental health strategy and Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan, so as to have faculty and staff well supported as they support students.	Planning
4. Sign and implement the Okanagan Charter, committing to its calls to action to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration.	Underway
5. Ensure continued collaboration with Carleton's many documents, frameworks, and strategies, including, but not limited to, the Coordinated Accessibility Strategy, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan, Honouring Each Other, and Kinàmàgawin.	Continuous
6. In line with Kinàmàgawin Call to Action # 8, develop a Circle of Care Protocol for Indigenous students in crisis, in consultation with the Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement, Health and Counselling Services, and the Office of Student Affairs.	Underway
7. Investigate ways to incorporate green spaces and environmental wellness into mental health and wellness programming in consultation with key stakeholders.	Underway
8. Create opportunities for staff and faculty to work together and learn from each other when integrating mental health and wellness practices, seeking to integrate research and evidence-based practices inside and outside of the classroom.	Upcoming
9. Develop and distribute a mental health toolkit for faculty that includes curriculum infusion, how to recognize when a student may need support, and how to support their own mental health.	Upcoming
10. In consultation with faculty, investigate and implement best practices for supporting student mental health and wellness into the curriculum and classroom, including course design and delivery.	Upcoming

# **Student Mental Health Framework Annual Report 2022-2023**

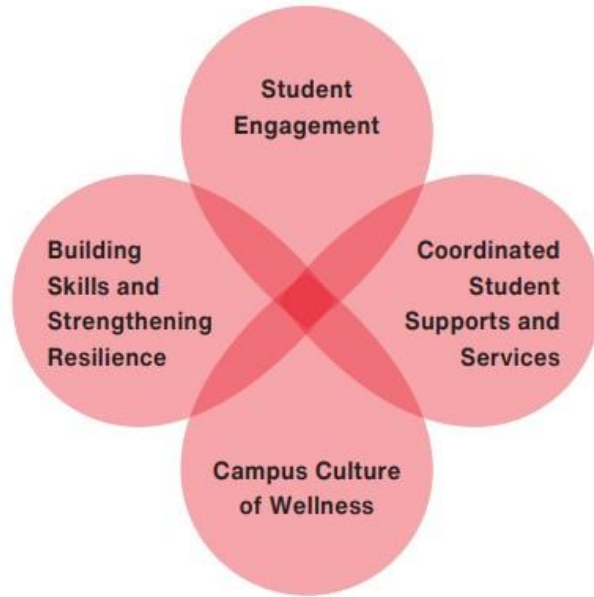
Board of Governors

June 2023

Presented by Kristie Tousignant



# SMHF 2022-2026 Areas of Focus + Guiding Values



- Collaboration
- Holistic Environment
- Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion
- Continuous Improvement

**Student Engagement:** 6 recommendations

**Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience:** 7 recommendations

**Coordinated Student Supports and Services:** 7 recommendations

**Campus Culture of Wellness:** 10 recommendations

# Progress on Recommendations

3

- Planning

19

- Underway

4

- Continuous

4

- Upcoming

26/30

- Definitive actions

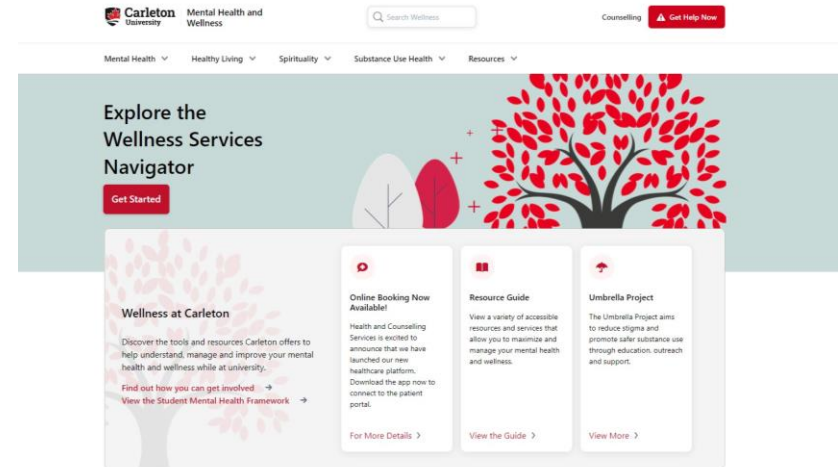
# Student Engagement Highlights (Action on 6/6)

- Partnership between Spirituality Centre and Muslim Students' Association
- Over 3,000 students engaged with the Health Promotion Team
- Wellness Services partnered with CUSA's Wellness Centre to support *In This Together* for mental health and substance use health
- Equity and Inclusive Communities hosted Plant Potting and Decorating activities in Residence to support destressing



# Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience Highlights (Action on 7/7)

- New Carleton Wellness website was launched
- Wellness Services Navigator was launched
- First Year Connections in the Student Experience Office supported over 600 first-year students
- Equity and Inclusive Communities hosted a variety of workshops to support student resiliency
- All People All Pathways, led by Communication Addictions Peer Support Association, continued to host peer support meetings for students, faculty, and staff



# Coordinated Student Supports and Services Highlights (Action on 7/7)

- New Office of the Associate Vice President Student Health and Wellness was formed
- Student Support documents updated with streamlined “Stepped Approach”
- Expected this upcoming year, new Wellness Coordinator position will lead the new initiative: The Wellness Desk in MacOdrum Library
- Acquired *Breaking Free Online*, a self-management tool for substance use
- Counselling Services expanded their team to include a Trans/2SLGBTQ+ counsellor, a racialized counsellor, and a term eating disorder counsellor

## Mental Health

**13,897** visits to Counselling Services

**2,020** sessions by From Intention to Action

**29%** of students with PMC report mental health as primary disability

**1,316** new students registered with PMC

**701** Care Reports submitted

## Health

**34,622** visits to Medical Services

**250+** community members trained to administer Naloxone

**24,444** hours of care provided by Attendant Services

# Campus Culture of Wellness Highlights (Action on 6/10)

- Graduate Students' Association opened their GSA Garden, allowing community members access to personal gardens
- 24 people added the Student Mental Health and Well-Being concentration to their Student Support Certificate
- The [Okanagan Charter](#) is being taken through necessary stages for approval
- Two Circle of Care meetings have been held to support Indigenous students in crisis
- Health Services trialed having a Doctor to provide specialized care for Indigenous students



## Next Steps (12 months)

- Publish first ever Student Mental Health Framework Annual Report
- Gain a better understanding of where our community is at in terms of comfort and understanding of mental health and wellness services
- Develop a staff and faculty toolkit
- Implement best practices from the Okanagan Charter into our community
- Contribute to the new Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan
- Continue to engage with our students and student leaders for feedback

# Special Thanks To...

- Student Mental Health Advisory Committee
- Accessibility Institute
- Campus Safety Services
- Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement
- Equity and Inclusive Communities
- Health and Wellness Services
- Housing and Residence Life
- Office of Quality Initiatives
- Office of the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment)
- Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities
- CUSA (including CUSA Wellness Centre)
- GSA
- Health Promotion Team
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Community Addictions and Peer Support Association
- Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health
- Ottawa Public Health



**Thank you!**





**Student  
Mental Health  
Framework**  
2022-2026

**Carleton**  
University



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# Acknowledgements

The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 emerged from the need to evolve our previous Framework, review our programs and services, consider new trends and best practices, and collaborate with the community to develop a more holistic approach to student mental health and wellness. We would like to acknowledge the work and support of the Student Mental Health Advisory Committee in the development and ongoing implementation of this Framework.

We would also like to acknowledge the members of the Carleton community and our external partners for engaging in the consultation process of this Framework, and for providing continuous feedback as we continue to strive for wellness on campus. During the consultation process, feedback was collected through closed meetings, guided group information and feedback sessions, online feedback forms, and email submissions. The input and feedback have provided us with critical perspectives and ideas for the development of this Framework. We wish to thank the Office of Quality Initiatives for facilitating the many feedback and information sessions throughout the consultation process. The development of this Framework has benefitted immensely from the input and shared knowledge of students, faculty, staff, and external community partners to create a guiding document that represents the voices of our diverse communities.



## Algonquin Territory Acknowledgement

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus upon the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishinabeg nation. We recognize that the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 must reflect the values of the Algonquin people. Accordingly, we must strive to further strengthen relationships between Carleton and the Algonquin communities, and endeavour to accelerate the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, ways of teaching and healing, and knowledge in our campus practices.

# Student Mental Health and Wellness: Starting from Strength

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Carleton University is a dynamic, diverse, and innovative university with over 31,000 undergraduate and graduate students and approximately 5,300 faculty and staff. We remain committed to creating a culture where the mental health and wellness of our students is prioritized. Since the first Framework was launched in 2009, Carleton has been striving for continuous improvement, which led to the development and launch of the Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) 2.0 in October 2016. The SMHF 2.0 had the goal of building a holistic, campus-wide approach to mental health and well-being. Since its launch, students, staff, and faculty have been working collaboratively to implement the 38 recommendations under six areas of focus, which were all addressed or implemented as of the fall 2021 term. This section provides a summary of the key accomplishments achieved under SMHF 2.0, which enables us to start the revised Framework from a place of strength.

## Enhancing Mental Health Support

Diversifying and increasing access to mental health support was a key objective of the SMHF 2.0. Since fall 2018, Carleton University undergraduate students have been able to access Empower Me, a 24/7 off-campus professional mental health service that aims to contribute to a resilient student community. As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also partnered with International SOS' 24/7 Emotional Support service in 2020. This service allows students studying outside of Canada to connect with mental health professionals and counselling services in over 60 languages to support their mental, emotional, and physical wellness.

To help meet the mental health needs of our students, the Health and Counselling Services team grew from six counsellors to 12 full-time counsellors and two part-time counsellors. This 133% increase in counselling services includes the addition of a same-day intake triage counsellor in 2020 and a crisis counsellor for all clients reaching out to counselling services. These two new counsellors assist students in quickly connecting with the counselling services and resources that best fit their mental health needs and has enabled the university to provide same-day counselling services to students in crisis. We also have several specialized counsellors providing mental health services for our diverse student communities, including 2SLGBTQ+, trans and non-binary, racialized, Indigenous, graduate, international, and residence students. Health and Counselling Services has also partnered with The Royal to increase psychiatric assessments, reducing the wait times for students accessing psychiatric care.



In the spring of 2018, a second KORU Mindfulness teacher was trained to provide students with mindfulness and meditation sessions to decrease stress and support resiliency development and satisfaction in life. The Care and Support team in the Office of Student Affairs also grew by 200% — enabling staff to connect with more students for individualized support with resource navigation.

## Increasing Awareness, Training, and Education

We have continued to produce and update various support documents and resources for members of our community, including *Supporting Students in Distress*, to assist faculty and staff in recognizing when a student is in distress and how to respond effectively; *Collaborative Resources for Mental Health and Well-being*, to assist in matching students to the appropriate level of support based on their specific needs; and *Supporting a Friend*, designed by students to help them support friends who may be in distress.

In addition, Supporting Students in Distress training sessions were offered regularly to staff, faculty, and student leaders. Supporting a Friend workshops were also offered, with the development and delivery of these sessions being overseen by students. We have continued to offer suicide prevention skills training through

safeTALK and LivingWorks Start as part of student leader and peer mentor training schedules, as well as to all faculty and staff.

The Umbrella Project, Carleton's Harm Reduction Strategy, was implemented to reduce stigma and promote safer substance use through education, outreach, and support. Since 2019, Carleton has distributed 300 Naloxone Training Kits and has offered more than 70 sessions of All People All Pathways to Carleton community members, a peer support group facilitated by individuals with lived or living experience with substance use and addiction.

## Building Thriving Communities

The Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee was formed in fall 2017 to create engagement opportunities and to foster conversations on mental health and wellness on campus for students and by students. This included continuous improvements to student wellness programming and experiential learning through promotional campaigns and events. In the fall 2018 term, we launched the Carleton Therapy Dog program, the first of its kind in Canada, where faculty and staff had their personal dogs trained to be Carleton Therapy Dogs, providing comfort and support to students and helping to build thriving communities.





# Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026

We are committed to further evolving our Student Mental Health Framework to highlight a more holistic approach to student mental health and wellness by further incorporating spirituality, substance use health, Indigenous ways of healing, cyberbullying prevention, and pedagogy in addition to our already extensive programming and expanded counselling support.

The development of this Framework was influenced by the complexity of global challenges that were present at the time of its creation. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the mental health and wellness of all members of our community. We know there will be many more challenges on the road ahead but are confident that this Framework will guide us in supporting our students as we transition back to in-person classes, support

services, and social engagements. Ensuring that equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and Indigenous perspectives are woven into the fabric of this document and any related work plans remains a priority. We know there is still much work to be done, and we are committed to ensuring that the implementation of the recommendations in this Framework aligns with these values and takes an intersectional approach to mental health and wellness for all members of our community.

## Aspiration Statement

We will strive for wellness by proactively promoting a holistic and intersectional approach to student mental health and wellness, and by strategically coordinating our programs, services, and initiatives to build skills and strengthen resilience.

## Guiding Values

### Collaboration:

We engage students, staff, faculty, and external community partners to facilitate and support the sharing of knowledge, experience, and expertise to develop innovative and effective programs and practices.

### Holistic Environment:

We recognize that mental health and wellness exist on a continuum and are influenced by many sociocultural factors present in the learning environment and community. We will support a variety of complementary strategies to enhance mental health and substance use health, wellness, coping skills, and resilience at all levels of the institution to create an environment where all students can thrive.

### Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion:

We believe that in order to provide a healthy and supportive environment, we need to understand our students' unique needs and ensure our services are accessible, inclusive, and respectful of all cultures and identities.

### Continuous Improvement:

We strive to create a culture of continuous improvement, recognizing the need for continued evaluation of programs, services, and initiatives, and for the implementation of emerging best practices as they become available.



# Areas of Focus: Objectives and Recommendations

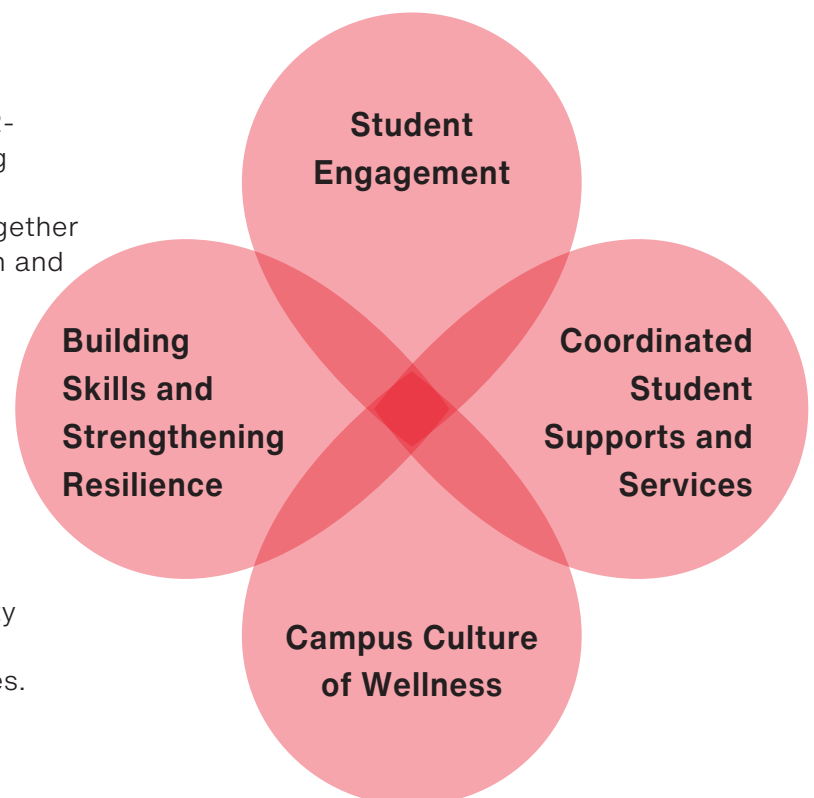


## Four Areas of Focus

The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 outlines four areas of focus comprising **12 objectives** and **30 recommendations**.

Each area of focus is interdependent and together help to support overall student mental health and wellness at Carleton.

These **four areas of focus** have evolved from the original six identified in the Student Mental Health Framework 2.0. This updated and streamlined approach reflects our ongoing focus and commitment to thrive in each of these overlapping areas over the next four years. We will continue to seek feedback from the university community and strive for equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of our services, programs, and initiatives.



# Student Engagement

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## Objectives

- Recognize and support student engagement opportunities across our diverse university environment with a focus on student involvement, mental health and wellness, and inclusivity.
- Increase opportunities for student engagement and feedback in mental health and wellness initiatives, services, programs, and associated policies.

## Recommendations

- Increase student involvement in the implementation of all areas of focus in this Framework through developing and strengthening partnerships with students, staff, and faculty.
- Further develop partnerships with student-led groups and support their innovative ideas and initiatives that promote a holistic approach to mental health and wellness.
- Continue to support and engage the Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee in developing and implementing student-led initiatives.
- Leverage the results of existing student surveys and explore the implementation of additional surveys to better capture and improve the overall health and wellness of our students.
- Develop and implement assessment and evaluation tools for existing programs and services to ensure they are meeting students' needs.
- Assess opportunities to engage graduate-level student expertise in researching and evaluating mental health and wellness initiatives on campus.



# Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience

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## Objectives

- Enhance collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to support anti-stigma programming and campaigns, and continue to work towards increasing all aspects of mental health and wellness awareness.
- Encourage personal growth through opportunities to develop self-awareness and the acquisition of effective coping skills to strengthen resiliency.
- Develop specific strategies and frameworks to support holistic and proactive approaches to mental health and wellness.



## Recommendations

- Update the wellness website to provide access to comprehensive information on mental health and wellness to students, staff, faculty, and parents, including building resilience and coping skills, substance use health, and streamlining resource navigation.
- Provide regular training using an intersectional approach to enable students, staff, and faculty to assist students in a way that is respectful of culture and identities, and which reflects the diversity of Carleton community members.
- Enhance online modules, workshops, and programming using an intersectional approach that introduces students to the concepts of overall wellness and thriving within the university environment, with a particular focus on key areas like nutrition, physical health, finances, living on your own, loneliness, and isolation.
- Develop programming and initiatives to provide students with opportunities and resources that will help them to recognize personal strengths, develop coping skills, and build resilience.
- Enhance training, events, and knowledge sharing of mental health and wellness services to contribute to overall student wellness, with a particular focus on encouraging health-seeking behaviours.
- Develop and implement training, education, and resources to reduce harms in different online environments, such as social media.
- Support the development and implementation of a substance use health and harm reduction strategy that is focused on support, resources, education, and partnerships.

# Coordinated Student Supports and Services

## Objectives

- Increase knowledge and ease of navigation of existing campus resources, programs, and services for mental health and wellness that are available to students.
- Build capacity to ensure the provision of effective and interconnected campus mental health and wellness services to ensure optimal responsiveness and ease of access.
- Further develop effective partner relationships between Carleton mental health-related services, provincial and municipal resource networks, and community partners, and maintain effective liaison and referral protocols in partnership with external mental health resources.

## Recommendations

- Update related documents that outline student services and programs, and align with a streamlined “Stepped Approach” depending on need for the range of mental health and wellness services available at Carleton.
- Update and regularly provide referral training for faculty, staff, and students in key roles, including providing template responses when referring students to additional supports that takes into consideration the individual and cultural needs of our diverse student body.
- Integrate faith-based and spirituality resources and approaches as an integral component for supporting mental health and wellness.
- Assess and respond to student demand and need for additional counselling services using an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens.
- Review the delivery structure of student mental health and wellness services at Carleton to respond to student mental health and wellness challenges in a coordinated way, while simultaneously addressing cultural barriers to service use.
- Continue to promote the Care Report to the entire campus community and encourage its use to flag indicators of concern so that our community can respond in the most appropriate way.
- Maintain and foster new collaborative partnerships with community partners that allow for better student access to community-based mental health services, including working with hospitals on coordinated discharge processes, and liaising with off-campus services for after-hours care.



# Campus Culture of Wellness

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## Objectives

- Increase awareness of signs of mental health distress, crisis, and suicidality; and enhance the appropriate coordinated responses and resources for referral.
- Strengthen institutional awareness of the impact of policies and practices that may create unintended stress for our students.
- Cultivate awareness of the importance of student mental health promotion and integration at all levels of the university, with a renewed commitment to continuous improvement and a particular emphasis on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Work collaboratively with faculty to establish a community of practice for integrating mental health and wellness into the curriculum and in the classroom.



## Recommendations

- Enhance the availability of training that is culturally aware and sensitive for faculty, staff, and student leaders to support students in crisis.
- Develop a university postvention strategy to reduce suicide risk and promote healing after a death by suicide.
- Ensure collaboration with the employee mental health strategy and Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan, so as to have faculty and staff well supported as they support students.
- Sign and implement the Okanagan Charter, committing to its calls to action to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration.
- Ensure continued collaboration with Carleton's many documents, frameworks, and strategies, including, but not limited to, the Coordinated Accessibility Strategy, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan, Honouring Each Other, and Kinàmàgawin.
- In line with Kinàmàgawin Call to Action # 8, develop a Circle of Care Protocol for Indigenous students in crisis, in consultation with the Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement, Health and Counselling Services, and the Office of Student Affairs.
- Investigate ways to incorporate green spaces and environmental wellness into mental health and wellness programming in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Create opportunities for staff and faculty to work together and learn from each other when integrating mental health and wellness practices, seeking to integrate research and evidence-based practices inside and outside of the classroom.
- Develop and distribute a mental health toolkit for faculty that includes curriculum infusion, how to recognize when a student may need support, and how to support their own mental health.
- In consultation with faculty, investigate and implement best practices for supporting student mental health and wellness into the curriculum and classroom, including course design and delivery.



# Implementation and Evaluation

The implementation of the Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 will be accomplished through the combined efforts of the entire Carleton community. The Office of the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness) takes ownership and accountability for this Framework under the Office of the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment). This office will engage the cross-functional Student Mental Health Advisory Committee to undertake annual strategic planning for the Framework, including prioritizing the recommendations, assigning ownership, developing work plans that are measurable, and creating a four-year implementation plan for continued support.

There will be numerous ways for faculty, staff, students, and external community partners to be involved in the implementation of the various recommendations. The Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee will continue to explore ways to create engagement and

foster the conversation about mental health and wellness on campus, including the development of promotional campaigns and events. This committee of students will also have an important role in providing continuous feedback on the implementation of the Framework.

As the recommendations are prioritized and implemented, an additional assessment process will be established for individual recommendations in order to evaluate their impact and effectiveness in line with the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-being for Post-Secondary Students and related guiding documents. Necessary adjustments will be made where the recommendations do not achieve the intended results. New research and emerging best practices will also inform the ongoing implementation and evaluation of the Framework. Evaluation and research are critical for the ongoing public accountability of the Framework and enable us to optimally support student mental health and wellness.





## Reporting and Review

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The Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 charts our course for the next four years, identifying both short-term recommendations and longer-term objectives. To ensure we are continually working towards supporting student mental health and wellness, a planning, reporting, and review process has been outlined. To support transparency, an annual report on the implementation of the Framework will be shared with the campus community. This will help Carleton to highlight the innovations, contributions, and successes of the Framework, while also remaining accountable to its aspirations, values, and goals.

This Framework will undergo a collaborative consultation and review process every four years. Although this review will occur every four

years, it does not preclude students, faculty, and staff from providing ongoing feedback on the implementation of this Framework. The Student Mental Health Advisory Committee and Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee encourages all members of the Carleton community to engage with the Framework and provide continuous feedback to contribute to the mental health and wellness of our student community.

Striving for wellness is an ongoing process that demands continuous improvement, and we are grateful to the entire Carleton community for their dedication and engagement to this critical work.





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**Carleton**  
University





## **OKANAGAN CHARTER**

### **AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES**

An outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health  
Promoting Universities and Colleges / VII International Congress

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge this Charter was developed on the territory of the Okanagan Nation.

*This land doesn't belong to us. This land belongs to seven generations down the road. I pray that the water that we drink, the water that we swim in, will be there for our great great great grandchildren. As well as all over the world. I pray that the land that we walk on, the trees that we enjoy, will be there for our generations to come. These things, they all come together with health. Health of humans. Health of the animals. And health of the Mother Earth.*

- Closing Prayer by Okanagan Nation Elder, Grouse Barnes, at the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges

This Charter should be cited as:  
Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015).

Photos in this document represent the Charter values about people, places and planet (mentally and physically active people, "green" buildings, biodiversity), and also, the university and valley where the conference was hosted.



# **A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION FOR HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES**

Health promoting universities and colleges<sup>1</sup> transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

## **SHARED ASPIRATIONS**

Health promoting universities and colleges infuse health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates. By doing so, health promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, well-being, equity and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society.

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1. This Charter includes universities, colleges, institutes and so forth, that is, all organizations that comprise the higher education or post-secondary sector. It is important to note that terminology for health promotion in higher education varies depending on regional context. In South America and Europe, Health Promoting Universities is the common phrase; in the United Kingdom and Spain, Healthy Universities; and in North America, Healthy Campuses or Healthy Campus Communities.



## PURPOSE OF THE OKANAGAN CHARTER

The purpose of the Charter is threefold:

1. Guide and inspire action by providing a framework that reflects the latest concepts, processes and principles relevant to the Health Promoting Universities and Colleges movement, building upon advances since the 2005 Edmonton Charter.<sup>2</sup>
2. Generate dialogue and research that expands local, regional, national and international networks<sup>3</sup> and accelerates action on, off and between campuses.
3. Mobilize international, cross-sector action for the integration of health in all policies and practices, thus advancing the continued development of health promoting universities and colleges.

## TWO CALLS TO ACTION

The Charter has two Calls to Action for higher education institutions:

1. Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates.
2. Lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

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2. Edmonton Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Institutions of Higher Education.

3. We acknowledge that the terms local, regional, national, international and global are used differently in different contexts around the world. For brevity, the terms local and global will be used throughout this document, but understood to include regions and nations.



Cyclists in the Okanagan Valley. Photo Credit: tourismkelowna.com

## HEALTH PROMOTION

Health promotion action builds upon the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, which emphasizes the interconnectedness between individuals and their environments, and recognizes that “health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life: where they learn, work, play and love.”<sup>4</sup> Health is viewed holistically, reflecting “physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>5</sup>

Health promotion requires a positive, proactive approach, moving “beyond a focus on individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions”<sup>6</sup> that create and enhance health in settings, organizations and systems, and address health determinants. As such, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but must engage all sectors to take an explicit stance in favour of health, equity, social justice and sustainability for all, while recognizing that the well-being of people, places and the planet are interdependent.

Health is understood as an expanding concept defined through an emergent conversation around health, well-being and wellness.

Health promotion is understood as “the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants, and thereby improve their health.”<sup>7</sup>

Health of people depends on the life supporting ecosystems of the planet “made possible by biodiversity and the products and services derived” such as oxygen, clean water, food, habitable climate, aesthetic and spiritual experience, livelihoods and recreation.<sup>8</sup>

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4. World Health Organization (WHO), 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion
  5. WHO, 1946 One health definition example is the understanding of health (salud) as living life with autonomy, solidarity and pleasure.
  6. WHO, 2015 [http://www.who.int/topics/health\\_promotion/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/health_promotion/en/)
  7. WHO, 2005 Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World
  8. 2012 Our Planet, Our Health, Our Future | Human health and the Rio Conventions: biological diversity, climate change and desertification [http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/reports/health\\_rioconventions.pdf](http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/reports/health_rioconventions.pdf) and Canadian Public Health Association 2015 report: Ecological Determinants of Health <http://www.cpha.ca/uploads/policy/edh-brief.pdf>



Four Presidents from the province of British Columbia begin the Charter signing (The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser Student Society, Okanagan College and UBCO Student Union) followed by Conference delegates from around the world.

## THE UNIQUE ROLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education plays a central role in all aspects of the development of individuals, communities, societies and cultures – locally and globally.

Higher education has a unique opportunity and responsibility to provide transformative education, engage the student voice, develop new knowledge and understanding, lead by example and advocate to decision-makers for the benefit of society. In the emergent knowledge society, higher education institutions are positioned to generate, share and implement knowledge and research findings to enhance health of citizens and communities both now and in the future.

A University or College is, by its very nature, an essential part of any systemic health promotion strategy, working collaboratively in trans-disciplinary and cross-sector ways. This Charter calls upon higher education institutions to incorporate health promotion values and principles into their mission, vision and strategic plans, and model and test approaches for the wider community and society.



The following opportunities exist on campuses:

- Advance the core mandate of higher education by improving human and environmental health and well-being, which are determinants of learning, productivity and engagement.
- Lead and influence by embedding health in knowledge production, student development, institutional policies and campus cultures, thus benefiting competencies of campus communities and setting an example for health promoting settings more broadly.
- Align with global agendas such as World Health Organization's Cross Sector Action and Health in All Policies and United Nations' Post-2015 Development Agenda, thus addressing social, environmental and economic determinants of health and improving equity, mental and physical well-being, social justice, respect for diversity, sustainability and food security.
- Provide transformational teaching and learning environments that enable and inspire students, faculty and staff<sup>9</sup> to become healthy and engaged citizens and leaders locally and globally.

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9. Members of campus communities are described in various ways around the world (e.g., the term staff may or may not include faculty and administrators). In this document, the term campus community is inclusive of everyone on campus. However, occasionally students, faculty, staff, administrators and others will be emphasized for clarity.





Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability at the University of British Columbia Vancouver

# AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The following framework provides two Calls to Action with key action areas and overall principles that together guide the development of Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.

## **Call to Action 1: Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates**

- 1.1 Embed health in all campus policies.** Review, create and coordinate campus policies and practices with attention to health, well-being and sustainability, so that all planning and decision-making takes account of and supports the flourishing of people, campuses, communities and our planet.
- 1.2 Create supportive campus environments.** Enhance the campus environment as a living laboratory, identifying opportunities to study and support health and well-being, as well as sustainability and resilience in the built, natural, social, economic, cultural, academic, organizational and learning environments.
- 1.3 Generate thriving communities and a culture of well-being.** Be proactive and intentional in creating empowered, connected and resilient campus communities that foster an ethic of care, compassion, collaboration and community action.
- 1.4 Support personal development.** Develop and create opportunities to build student, staff and faculty resilience, competence, personal capacity and life enhancing skills – and so support them to thrive and achieve their full potential and become engaged local and global citizens while respecting the environment.
- 1.5 Create or re-orient campus services.** Coordinate and design campus services to support equitable access, enhance health and well-being, optimize human and ecosystem potential and promote a supportive organizational culture.



Avocets (species at risk) at Robert Lake wetlands on Okanagan campus. The marsh provides habitat for over 100 species of birds and filters and purifies water. Photo credit: Dr. Robert Lalonde

## **Call to Action 2: Lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally**

- 2.1 Integrate health, well-being and sustainability in multiple disciplines to develop change agents.** Use cross-cutting approaches to embed an understanding and commitment to health, well-being and sustainability across all disciplines and curricula, thus ensuring the development of future citizens with the capacity to act as agents for health promoting change beyond campuses.
- 2.2 Advance research, teaching and training for health promotion knowledge and action.** Contribute to health promoting knowledge production, application, standard setting and evaluation that advance multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research agendas relevant to real world outcomes, and also, ensure training, learning, teaching and knowledge exchange that will benefit the future well-being of our communities, societies and planet.
- 2.3 Lead and partner towards local and global action for health promotion.** Build and support inspiring and effective relationships and collaborations on and off campus to develop, harness and mobilize knowledge and action for health promotion locally and globally.



## KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

The following are guiding principles for *how* to mobilize systemic and whole campus action.<sup>10</sup>

- **Use settings and whole system approaches**  
Use holistic settings and systems as the foci for inquiry and intervention, effectively drawing attention to the opportunities to create conditions for health in higher education. Set an example for health promotion action in other settings.
- **Ensure comprehensive and campus-wide approaches**  
Develop and implement multiple interconnected strategies that focus on everyone in the campus community.
- **Use participatory approaches and engage the voice of students and others**  
Set ambitious goals and allow for solutions and strategies to emerge through use of participatory approaches to engage broad, meaningful involvement from all stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, administrators and other decision makers. Set priorities and build multilevel commitments to action.
- **Develop trans-disciplinary collaborations and cross-sector partnerships**  
Develop collaborations and partnerships across disciplines and sectors, both within the campus community and with local and global partners, to support the development of whole campus action for health and the creation of knowledge and action for health promotion in communities more broadly.

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10. Higher education settings and contexts differ greatly around the world. These principles can and should be tailored accordingly.



- **Promote research, innovation and evidence-informed action**  
Ensure that research and innovation contribute evidence to guide the formulation of health enhancing policies and practices, thereby strengthening health and sustainability in campus communities and wider society. Based on evidence, revise action over time.
- **Build on strengths**  
Use an asset-based and salutogenic approach to recognize strengths, understand problems, celebrate successes and share lessons learned, creating opportunities for the continual enhancement of health and well-being on campus.
- **Value local and indigenous communities' contexts and priorities**  
Advance health promotion through engagement and an informed understanding of local and indigenous communities' contexts and priorities, and consideration of vulnerable and transitioning<sup>11</sup> populations' perspectives and experiences.
- **Act on an existing universal responsibility**  
Act on the "right to health" enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure health promotion action embodies principles of social justice, equity dignity and respect for diversity while recognizing the interconnectedness between people's health and health determinants, including social and economic systems and global ecological change.

The words local and indigenous are used with intention to recognize social and cultural diversity, inclusive of history, traditions, values and knowledge.

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11. Transitioning populations refers to the local and global movement of people, including immigrants and refugees of war, political oppression, environmental changes and disasters.



## ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OKANAGAN CHARTER

This international Charter was an outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges<sup>12</sup> held on the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus in Kelowna, Canada on June 22-25. The Charter development process engaged researchers, practitioners, administrators, students and policy makers from 45 countries.<sup>13</sup> The first draft of the Charter was based on input from 225 people through a pre-conference survey and expert interviews as well as a review of existing Charters and Declarations.

At the Conference, with the support of a writing team, 380 delegates critiqued and refined the Charter in a design lab and development sessions. Delegates were invited to bring forward into the Charter development, ideas from the multiple plenaries and concurrent sessions that comprised the scientific program.<sup>14</sup> On the final Conference day, higher education leaders and delegates, including network and organization representatives, signed a Pledge to bring the Charter back to their settings to inspire and catalyze further action towards the creation of health promoting universities and colleges. Representatives from the World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization joined in the Pledge.

Through dissemination and use of the Charter in higher education, network building and future conferences, our hope is that health promotion will be advanced internationally.

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12. The idea for the conference originated with colleagues from the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria and the Canadian Mental Health Association (a national non-governmental organization)
  13. Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, The Netherlands, United Kingdom (England, Scotland), United States, Uruguay, Venezuela
  14. Documents and videos about the Okanagan Charter development and Conference, including videos of plenaries, are available at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/53926>