

Non-Credit Course Change Request

New Proposal

Date Submitted: 07/26/24 2:50 pm

Viewing: **Climate Change and Youth Mental Health**

Last edit: 07/26/24 2:50 pm

Changes proposed by: Stefania Maggi (stefaniamaggi)

In Workflow

1. MC Committee
2. PRE SCCASP
3. SCCASP
4. MC Registrar
5. MC Ministry

Approval Path

1. 08/19/24 1:56 pm
Natalie Phelan
(nataliephelan):
Approved for MC
Committee

Institution Type	University
Institution Name	Carleton University
Is your proposal a Micro-Credential or Professional Development?	Micro-credential
Title	Climate Change and Youth Mental Health
Course Code	
Program Type	21 - Career, technical or professional training programs
Link to Webpage	not yet available
Departmental Contact Name	Stefania Maggi
Departmental Contact Email	stefaniamaggi@cunet.carleton.ca
Number of Weeks of Delivery	6
Number of Instructional Hours	42
Delivery Mode	Online
Continuing Education	Yes
CIP Code	422101 - Environmental Psychology.
NOC Code 1	4130 - Social and community service professionals
NOC Code 2	42201 - Social and community service workers
NOC Code 3	4220 - Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services

Is this course/program stackable into another credential type?

No

Was this micro-credential developed in partnership with a specific employer partner?

Yes

If Yes, please list employer(s) and/or industry(s):

Employer(s) and/or Industry(s)
Families Canada

Is the program being delivered through another institution?

No

Tuition (\$) TBD

Fees (\$) TBD

Books, Supplies and Equipment Costs (\$) 0

Anticipated Start Date of Course/Program

Date
May 1 2025

Utilize 'DD-MMM-YYYY' format. Example: 30-DEC-2016

Estimated Headcount for First Intake 50

Course/Program Description

The new Micro-credential in Climate Change and Youth Mental Health is designed to meet the needs of learners working at the intersection of climate change and youth mental health. This micro-credential will advance competences among community, health and school professionals working with families, children and youth who have been affected by the impacts of climate change.

Additional Comments

This Micro-Credential has received funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and has the endorsement of the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic.

Credit Status of Program/Course Noncredit

Academic Faculty? Yes

Academic Unit Department of Psychology

Faculty Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Academic Level Professional

Describe the reasons for proposing this micro-credential. How does it benefit your department/division, align with campus/divisional goals, and/or add value to existing programs and activities?

The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident as they permeate multiple aspects of our lives. However, young people are the most vulnerable to present and future consequences of climate change. Globally, 70% of youth have reported debilitating climate change anxiety. In Canada, 60% young people shared similar experiences with eco-anxiety, and in Ontario as many as 73% university students reported experiencing anxiety when thinking about climate change, while more than 80% worried about the future of nature and future generations because of climate change. If not processed, these emotions may develop into chronic mental health conditions. Therefore, professionals working with youth are faced with a new challenge: offering programs and services that effectively support young people in coping with eco-anxiety and the associated existential threats that climate change poses to their mental health. Because of the emerging nature of climate change impacts, however, few family and youth support professionals have received formal training on climate change and mental health. Research we have conducted with our community partners has shown that Ontario family and youth support professionals have low levels of confidence in their ability to effectively meet the emerging climate change mental health needs of their clients. This micro-credential will fill a gap in the labour market by advancing training in a priority area for professionals working in the community to support family and youth mental health in the context of the climate change crisis.

The proposed Micro-Credential will in part contribute to advancing Carleton's Strategic Integrated Plan. By tackling the issue of climate change, this course will position Carleton at the forefront of educational institutions prepared showing proactive initiatives to address one of the most pressing needs that society is facing in the present and will continue facing in the foreseeable future. With a focus on climate change and youth mental health, the course will also contribute more specifically to two of Carleton's Strategic Integrated Plan directions: 1) Serve Ottawa, Serve the World; and 2) Strive for Wellness, Strive for Sustainability.

Finally, this course is well aligned with the Department of Psychology efforts to extend its offerings in the mental health field and to reach learners at different levels of their career development.

Describe how this micro-credential will benefit learners. What are the educational and career objectives of the badging opportunity (i.e., teaching new skills, up-skilling)? This information may be included in digital badges and can help provide learners with language to help articulate their learning on future applications, cover letters, and in interviews.

As the impacts of climate change are predicted to increase and become stronger, community and youth mental health issues are also likely to become more serious. Frontline professionals, such as family support workers and youth mental health workers, are among the first to notice when someone is going through difficult times because of the challenges associated with surviving an extreme weather event or because of the difficult feelings brought up by eco-anxiety and other climate emotions. Offering prompt and compassionate care to families and communities in the context of the climate crisis is something every professional understands the need for. However, not every professional feels equally prepared to do so. The self-paced, online, asynchronous Micro-Credential in Climate Change and Youth Mental Health will guide learners through a series of modules centered around real-life scenarios and case-study analyses. Different modules will broaden the learners' knowledge and skills about different topics such as, for example, eco-anxiety, the importance of positive emotions, different types of climate action, active listening, and coping and resilience.

By completing this Micro-Credential in Climate Change and Youth Mental Health learners will acquire a unique blend of climate change awareness, mental health expertise, communication skills, and a solution-oriented mindset. These attributes not only are highly desirable across industries, but they will also position graduates as valuable assets capable of making a tangible difference in addressing the complex challenges posed by climate change on youth mental health.

If applicable, describe any external value propositions of this micro-credential. What purpose might it serve for outside stakeholders such as employers, professional organizations, and future academic institutions where students may enroll?

According to the Ontario Provincial Climate Change Impact Assessment Technical Report (PCCIA, 2023), Ontarians' health is at significant risk of suffering from current and future impacts of climate change, especially those associated with surviving an extreme weather event. Similarly, according to the Canada in a Changing Climate: Synthesis Report (Lulham et al., 2023), health authorities across the country have identified climate change as a significant risk factor for increased mental health problems of a broad range, including grief, worry, anxiety and trauma. The report clearly states that based on the existing evidence and "without further adaptation measures, the toll on mental health related to climate change impacts in Canada is likely to rise with continued warming" (page 23).

Already, thousands of families across Canada are increasingly relying on professional care to address their climate change related needs. These care providers include not only first responders, and social workers, but also social and community service workers, such as community-based family and youth support workers, drop-in centre workers, life skills instructors, mental health workers, and community development workers. In addition, this micro-credential may be of interest to educators from elementary to post-secondary level.

Furthermore, research has shown that as the climate change crisis evolves, professionals are seeing an uprise in parents and children seeking resources related to climate change (Clayton et al., 2017) and that the services families seek range from coping strategies for eco-anxiety, to education about climate change, how to become part of the solution, and get involved with climate action. More importantly, the current body of research outlines a common theme across several service sectors, where professionals do not feel properly equipped to adequately serve clients who have been impacted by climate change (MacDougal, 2023; Silva & Coburn, 2021; Bell, E, 2011).

In Ontario, professionals working in the family and youth support sector are typically required to complete a college diploma, however it is not uncommon for formal education requirements to be replaced with evidence of prior work experience. Furthermore, opportunities for professional development on climate change and youth mental health are only now beginning to emerge due to the recent nature of this issue. This Micro-credential will help address the pressing need for increased professionalization among social and community service workers in climate change and youth mental health, a priority area that is projected to become an even greater concern for Ontarians.

Target Learner Population

Please describe the target learner population, admission requirements and/or steps to declare or enrol in the course/program, as well as how the division will manage enrolments, and monitor learning progress.

Climate change is affecting every corner of the province of Ontario. However, Northern Ontario, is especially vulnerable to the impacts and consequences of climate change. For example, in Northern Ontario, much like the rest of Northern Canada, temperature fluctuations are projected to be twice the global average and severe weather events (e.g., wildfires) are becoming more common than in other regions of the country. These climate hazards cause trauma and anxiety and can result in lost livelihoods fostering poor mental health outcomes such as substance misuse, depression, and suicide. These impacts can be further exacerbated by other contextual factors characterizing Northern Ontario communities such as the fact that many of these communities are rural and remote, they are resource dependent, and they have high levels of unemployment. Professionals working in these contexts, may themselves be at higher risk of experiencing the impacts of climate change that are in turn heightened by other vulnerabilities. For example, social and community service workers, especially those working with families and young children, are likely to be females, and the literature has shown females to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than males. Living in remote areas that, especially in the winter months, are not easily accessible, imposes significant limitation on the social and community service workers from Northern Ontario who may be looking to expand their repertoire of professionalizing credentials outside of their small communities. Therefore, the target of this Micro-credential will be social and community service workers from Northern Ontario.

Course/Program Requirements, Criteria and Learning Outcomes (to be included in badge metadata)

What are the specific course/program requirements (courses, experiences, workshops, projects, etc.)?

The duration of this Micro-credential is 42 hours, distributed over 6 modules (7 hours for module). This is the time estimated to review content, complete knowledge checks and other assignments. Each module is designed to facilitate the Micro-credential's learning objectives in the three areas of knowledge, skills, and action:

Knowledge (3 hours): the knowledge section of the modules is where learners will expand their knowledge about climate change and mental health. For example, in the module on eco-anxiety, learners will learn about different definitions for this phenomenon; how it differs from other forms of anxiety; and various statistics showing how prevalent it is in Ontario, in Canada and around the world. At the same time, they will learn how young people talk about their experiences with eco-anxiety and will learn from professionals in various settings who have interacted with youth affected by eco-anxiety. The knowledge that learners will acquire in this Micro-credential is both factual and experiential. This knowledge will be shared through different mediums such as written text, video and audio. The content will be broken down in small, digestible parts requiring no more than 20min to be completed. For example, each module will have multiple videos and podcasts, and several short readings. Each video, podcast and reading will be followed by a knowledge check.

Skill and Action (4 hours): learners will improve their skills and enhance their capacity for action through analysis and discussion of case studies. Case studies will include, a) ad-hoc situations and scenarios developed in partnership with community partners showcasing real-life challenges and solutions in the context of Ontario social and community service sector; b) narratives from young people being affected by climate change in different ways (e.g., surviving an extreme weather event, feeling hopeless and powerless; finding strength in climate action) in Ontario and other parts of Canada; and c) evidence-informed and solution-oriented approaches to address climate change youth mental health issues in various settings (e.g., school, community, health). Delivery of case-studies will also be multimedia and learners will immerse themselves into the unique scenarios and vignettes by examining written text, watching videos and listening to audio content. Case-studies will be broken down in small, digestible parts requiring no more than 20min to be completed. Each sub-section of the case studies is followed by self-assessments that asks learners to: a) **connect** specific aspects of the case study to factual or experiential knowledge learnt in other sections of the course; b) **reflect** on one or more aspects of the case study, for example, considering a different perspective or propose an alternative narrative; and c) **apply** lessons learnt from the analysis of the case study to the unique circumstances of the learner's challenges and opportunities to shape intention and motivate action.

This Micro-credential's structure characterized by small, digestible parts is designed to facilitate integration of course activities into a busy schedule such as that expected of professionals working in this sector.

Describe the criteria learners must demonstrate to fulfill this micro-credential’s requirements, learning outcomes and (if applicable) competencies.

Learners will demonstrate enhanced knowledge in the following content areas: 1) Impacts of climate change (physical, socio-political, mental health); 2) Developmental processes towards ecological awareness; 3) Coping, resilience and thriving through climatic and ecological crises 4) Communicating with children and youth about climate change and its impacts; 5) Supporting children and youth navigate climate change impacts and participation in adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Target Skills and Competences Social and community service workers work are often employed by a public institution such as a municipal, provincial or national government. They can be found in early years centres, school boards, community mental health agencies, correctional facilities, shelters, and substance abuse facilities. Given how present they are in the community, it is not surprising that professionals working in this sector are among the first to encounter clients who suffer from the mental health impacts of climate change.

These workers’ primary responsibilities are to offer a variety of programs and services to assist their clients with personal or social issues. In the context of climate change, these can be as diverse as the needs of the clients. For example, a family service worker may provide social support to a family who has survived a natural disaster; or a mental health worker might help a young person understand how to maintain their mental health while coping with their eco-anxiety.

Regardless of the specific services and programs that these professionals may deliver, they will require the same competences to do it effectively. The proposed Micro-credential focuses on a specific subset of such competences that the published literature has identified as key qualities anyone working with youth mental health in the context of climate change may possess. These include social perceptiveness, active listening and negotiating.

In addition to the above competencies, this Micro-credential will also promote changes in the following personal attributes: stress tolerance and concern for others. These personal attributes are important targets for this Micro-credential because enhancing professionals’ resilience (stress tolerance) and compassionate care (concern about others) will reduce burnout in a category of workers who is especially prone to it.

Learners’ competences will be assessed through responses to multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions. For example, after learning about a case study, learners will be asked questions to assess learners’ understanding of the reasons why client or/and professionals in the scenarios have acted in a particular way (social perceptiveness), and their ability to pay attention to important detail of a conversation or background information (active listening).

Negotiating skills are composite competences. They include elements of both active listening and social perceptiveness, but also the ability to negotiate with the clients a specific plan of action that makes sense for the client and aligns with best practices in climate change and mental health. Therefore, negotiating skills will be tested with various types of questions, some testing knowledge of best practices, while others evaluating learners’ capacity for matching specific situations to preferable solutions.

Finally, changes in personal attributes will be promoted through experiential assignments. Stress tolerance and concern about others will be supported through optional experiential assignments that are based on mindfulness and nature connection.

Learners will not be formally evaluated on these personal attributes. However, they will have opportunities to share and discuss their experiences with other learners in a section of the course dedicated to resilience and compassion, where they will also have access to relevant resources.

Skills Tagging: What skills are acquired or demonstrated in the micro-credential? Skills tags are usually one or two words. Please list one skill per line. Click the green “plus” icon to add a new field for each skill.

Skills
social perceptiveness
active listening
negotiating
conern for others

Skills
stress tolerance

Budget, Cost, and Equitable Access

Describe the anticipated costs, if any, the department/division will incur in offering the course/program. (What might be incremental or true costs you would not normally incur? What expenses will be covered with existing resources?)

Budget Costs of delivering the course is still being determined

Explain the rationale for determining the rate for the course/program.

TBD

Is the course/program designed to breakeven or generate sufficient revenue to cover the cost of delivering the course/program?

We are developing a business plan that will generate sufficient revenue not only to sustain the delivery of the course but also to allow for growth and improvements.

If there is excess revenue beyond expenses, how will that be used?

Part of the excess funds will be placed in a fund to ensure healthy financial stability of this project. Any other leftover funds will be equally distributed between the partners.

Upload Attachments

Reviewer Comments