Overview

Through the Listening Phase of the Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF), feedback was provided on several areas. This updated draft framework addresses the feedback that was received by highlighting a more holistic approach to mental health and well-being including safe substance use and harm reduction, cyberbullying and social media use, increasing access to services, increased support in navigating services, investigating best practices for supporting mental health and well-being in curriculum and the classroom, and striving to ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are woven into this document.

When incorporating the feedback received, it was determined that the number of areas of focus could be streamlined to support the implementation of the enhanced framework. As a result, the previous areas of focus of Well-Being, Skills Building, and Resilience and Mental Health Awareness, Literacy, and Education were combined into one new section, Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience. Coordinated Crisis Management was embedded as an objective and a series of recommendations under the revised area of focus Campus Culture of Wellness.

This streamlined approach outlines four areas of focus with 12 objectives and 30 recommendations to support student mental health and well-being at Carleton. Each area of focus is interdependent of the other and together helps to support overall student mental health and well-being.

Additionally, an implementation and evaluation plan and a reporting and review process will be added to ensure that all recommendations are receiving ongoing feedback and that there is transparency and accountability with students, faculty and staff.
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Student Engagement

Objectives:

- Recognize and support student engagement opportunities across our diverse university environment with a focus on student engagement, mental health and well-being, and inclusivity.
- Increase opportunities for student engagement and feedback in mental health and well-being initiatives, services, programs, and policies developed and/or actively running on campus.

Recommendations:

- Increase student involvement in the implementation of all areas of focus of this framework through developing partnerships with students, staff, and faculty.
- Continue to develop partnerships with student-led groups and support their innovative ideas and initiatives that promote a holistic approach to mental health and well-being.
- 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 upon the overall health and well-being of our students.
- Develop and implement evaluation tools for existing programs and services to ensure we are meeting students' needs.
- Assess opportunities to engage graduate-level student expertise in research around mental health and well-being initiatives on campus.
Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience

Objectives:

- Enhance collaboration with internal and external community partners to support anti-stigma programming and campaigns and continue to work towards raising all aspects of mental health and well-being 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 well-being.

Recommendations:

- Update the wellness website to provide access to comprehensive information on mental health and well-being to students, staff, faculty, and parents, including building resilience and coping skills, substance use health, and streamlining resource navigation.
- Provide regular training with an intersectional approach to enable 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 well-being 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 the training, events, and knowledge sharing of mental health and well-being services to contribute to overall student well-being, 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 and resources, education, and partnerships.
Coordinated Student Support and Services

Objectives:

- Increase knowledge of existing campus resources, programs, and services for mental health and well-being that are available to students and how to navigate and support students seeking help.
- Build capacity to ensure the provision of effective and interconnected campus mental health and well-being services to ensure optimal service responsiveness and which are easy to access.
- Ensure the development of 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 the student support resources, which outlines student services and programs, and aligns with a streamlined “Stepped Approach” depending on need for the range of mental health and well-being services available at Carleton University.
- Update and regularly provide referral training for faculty, staff, and students in key roles, including providing template responses when referring students to additional supports.
- Integrate faith-based and spirituality resources and approaches as an integral component for supporting mental health and well-being.
- Assess and respond to student demand and need for additional counselling using an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens.
- Review the structure of delivery of student mental health and well-being services at Carleton to respond to student mental health and well-being challenges in a coordinated way.
- Continue to promote the Care Report to the entire campus community and encourage its use to flag indicators of concern so 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, working with the Royal Ottawa Hospital, and liaising with off-campus services for after-hours care.
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Campus Culture of Wellness

Objectives:

- Continue to build awareness of signs of mental health distress, crisis, and suicidality as well as the appropriate coordinated responses and resources for referral.
- Strengthen institutional awareness of the impact of policies and practices that may create unintended stress on 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, with a particular emphasis on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Work collaboratively with faculty to establish a community of practice for integrating mental health and well-being into the curriculum and in the classroom.

Recommendations:

- Enhance the availability of training offered to faculty and staff to support students in crisis.
- Develop a university postvention strategy to reduce risk and promote healing after a death by suicide.
- Ensure collaboration with the employee mental health strategy, Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan, to have faculty and staff supported when supporting students.
- Sign and implement the Okanagan Charter, with its calls to action being 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 Kinâmâgawin.
- In line with Kinâmâgawin Call to Action # 8, continue to develop the Circle of Care Protocol for Indigenous students in crisis consultation with the Centre for Indigenous Initiatives, Health and Counselling Services, and the Office of Student Affairs.
- Investigate ways to incorporate green spaces and environmental wellness into mental health and well-being 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 well-being practices while looking 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.
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- In consultation with faculty, investigate and implement best practices for supporting student mental health and well-being into the curriculum and classroom, including course design and delivery.

Implementation and Evaluation

The cross-functional Student Mental Health Advisory Committee will undertake an annual strategic planning cycle, prioritizing the recommendations, assigning ownership, developing work plans that are measurable and creating a four-year implementation plan and continued support. Additionally, there will be ways for faculty, staff, students, and external community partners to be involved in the implementation of various recommendations. The Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee will continue to look at ways to create engagement and foster the conversation around mental health and well-being on campus, including the development of promotional campaigns and events and will provide continuous feedback on the implementation of the framework. An evaluation process will be implemented for individual recommendations to assess their impact and effectiveness. Necessary adjustments will be made where the recommendations do not achieve intended results. New research and emerging best practices will also inform the implementation and evaluation of the framework.

Reporting and Review

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 the aspirations, values, and goals. The Student Mental Health 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 encourages all members of the Carleton community to engage with the framework and provide continuous feedback to contribute to the mental health and well-being of our community.