



**HOEM**  
MENTAL WELLNESS  
STRATEGY

## Purpose

The HOEM Mental Wellness Strategy is a framework for proactively and reactively promoting mental wellness in our students and staff. The purpose of this strategy is to enhance our students' potential for long-term success.

To help achieve this mission, this plan focuses on four main objectives:

1. Enhance mental wellness education, awareness and training for staff and students
2. Holistically build mental resiliency in students
3. Enhance support for students experiencing distress or crisis
4. Build a supportive and connected student community

## Participation and Responsibility

All HOEM full-time, part-time and temporary staff members are expected to take an active role in implementing this plan by:

- Being aware of the importance of student mental wellness
- Following area-specific initiatives within this plan
- Participating in training and educational opportunities related to mental wellness

## Guiding Principles

1. **We are always optimistic.** We take a positive approach to mental wellness, which assumes that students already have the capacity to thrive.

2. **Student mental wellness should be approached holistically.** There are many factors that contribute to mental wellness including physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural. Each are equal in importance.
3. **Everyone is unique.** We celebrate diversity and understand that mental wellness is not one size fits all. We work within a student-centred approach that considers each individual's needs.
4. **We will work in cooperation with student support offices at partner schools** to provide the best possible care and student experience.
5. **Students and staff will be provided the opportunity to collaborate and support each other in fostering mental wellness.** Feedback will always be considered, and we will work together to constantly improve our methods of support.

## Student Mental Health

Postsecondary education brings significant change for students. Often it is the first time that individuals venture out to build a life independent from their families. This can introduce many new stressors on top of the pressure of academics. The age range of 18-25 is also when many mental illnesses are first recognized and diagnosed.

Regardless of their background, students require a healthy support network outside of academics. This plan will help support our students' academic success and long-term success throughout university and beyond.

## Canadian Student Mental Health Statistics

(National College Health Assessment 2016)

- 26.3% of post-secondary students reported having been diagnosed or treated by a professional for one or more mental health conditions in the last 12 months (with anxiety and depression being the most frequent).

- 60.6% reported feeling overall more than the average level of stress during the last 12 months.
- 59.6% reported feeling at some point like things were hopeless in the last 12 months, including 24.5% in the last two weeks.
- 64.5% reported feeling overwhelming anxiety at some point in the last 12 months, including 28.5% in the last two weeks.
- 44.4% reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function at some point on the last 12 months, including 17,1% in the last two weeks.
- 13% reported having seriously considered suicide at some point in the last 12 weeks, including 3% in the last two weeks.

## Current Initiatives

### O1: Enhance mental wellness education, awareness and training for staff and students

- Three annual safeTALK training sessions on suicide prevention hosted for HOEM students. To encourage attendance, these training sessions are free of charge. Trainings are held:
  - October
  - January
  - March
- safeTALK training is mandatory for all HOEM (CSCI) staff. All current staff that have not been trained must be retroactively trained.
- Educational awareness campaigns. Topics will line up with the academic year:
  - September – October: time management and basic skills for success
  - November – December: stress relief, mindfulness and relaxation techniques
  - January – February: maintaining motivation and beating the winter blues
  - March – April: long-term strategies to stay positive and reframe the negative

- Partnerships with student services to enhance awareness for on-campus offerings.
- Wellness resource page on website:
  - University resources
  - External community resources
  - Online resources
  - Mental health policy

### O2: Holistically build mental resiliency in students

- Partnership with Inkblot to provide 2 free virtual counselling sessions to every student and free mental health awareness training. Subsequent counselling sessions can be submitted through student benefits.
- Quarterly workshops with professional wellness and performance coaches in line with quarterly educational and awareness campaigns
- Monthly volunteer opportunities
- Stress relief events and workshops during key times throughout the academic year
- Daily fitness classes and monthly specialty fitness classes (note: the format of these classes is altered to follow COVID-19 guidelines)
- Monthly cooking and nutrition workshops
- Monthly HOEM Schooled workshops teaching important life skills
- Academic peer support program within the building

## O3: Enhance support for students experiencing distress or crisis

All student inquiries regarding distress or crisis are to be responded to by a staff member who is trained in ASIST or another form of crisis intervention.

HOEM is to ensure that we have up-to-date emergency contact information for all residents.

**Students experiencing distress or crisis should be treated according to a standard set of guidelines, which is shared with HOEM office staff.**

## O4: Build a supportive and connected student community

- Provide structured opportunities for social connection. Specific focus placed on orientation month to help students build relationships early in the school year.
- Provide unstructured opportunities for informal and organic community building led by HOEM residence advisors.
- Oversee the formation of clubs in order to connect like-minded students
- Celebrate students and involve them in building the HOEM Community:
  - Student success newsletter features
  - Student artwork and schoolwork displays
  - Personalized birthday messages
- Roommate matching program
- HOEMie matching program for students to meet new friends
- Partnerships with on-campus student groups
- Programming focused on connecting international students at the beginning of the year
- Peer support program led by Inkblot (coming soon!). This will allow students who are trained in active listening and referral to facilitate support for other students.

- Student mental wellness club consisting of HOEM staff members and students. Meetings occur bi-weekly to discuss student wellness throughout the building and to develop new initiatives for supporting student mental wellness.

HOEM will not take an active role in promoting any corporate mental health initiatives (e.g. Bell Let's Talk). If students or Residence Advisors are interested in supporting a specific corporate mental health initiative, they must have any promotional materials approved by HOEM management. Initiatives will be approved on a case by case basis.

## Appendix: Resources

### Community Resources

#### Support Phone Lines

**Distress Centres of Greater Toronto** (Open 24/7)  
416-408-4357

**Canada Suicide Prevention Service**  
Call: 1-833-456-4566 (Open 24/7)  
Text: 45645

**Good 2 Talk** (Postsecondary Students Open 24/7)  
1-866-925-5454

**LGBTQ Youthline**  
Call: 1-800-268-9688  
Text: 647-694-4275

**Drug and Alcohol Helpline**  
1-866-531-2600

#### Counselling and Referrals

**St. Michael's Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Services – Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT)**  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergencies: 416-808-2222

**CAMH**  
416-535-8501 ext. 2

**Family Services Toronto** (Walk-in Counselling)  
Free counselling every Wednesday at 355 Church Street. Regular hours 3:30 – 7:30 pm with the last registration at 6:15 pm. Call: 416-595-9618

**Skylark Children, Youth & Families**  
Free walk-in counselling at 65 Wellesley Street East, Unit 500. Call 416-482-0081 x 333.

#### Low Cost Therapy Options

**Affordable Therapy Network of Toronto**  
[www.affordabletherapytoronto.com/therapists](http://www.affordabletherapytoronto.com/therapists)  
Browse through this list of low-cost therapists and select one based on who stands out for you. Contact the therapist directly to request an appointment.

#### Gestalt Therapy – Student Clinic

Low-cost therapy at \$40 per session provided by student therapists. Call 416-964-9464, extension 18. You will be contacted within 10 business days and referred to a student therapist who will contact you to set up an appointment.

#### Affordable Counselling Toronto

Counselling provided on a sliding scale  
[info@affordablecounselling.ca](mailto:info@affordablecounselling.ca)  
1-647-558-7468

#### Sexual Assault

**Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Care Centre at Women's College Hospital**  
416-323-6040

#### Toronto Rape Crisis Centre / Multicultural Women Against Rape

Crisis Line: 416-597-8808  
Admin Line: 416-597-1171

#### Assaulted Women's Helpline

Crisis line: 416-863-0511  
Admin line: 416-364-4144

## Postsecondary Resources

### Ryerson University

**Ryerson Centre for Student  
Development and Counselling**

416-979-5195

**Ryerson Medical Centre**

416-979-5070

**Ryerson Office of Sexual Violence  
Support and Education**

416-979-5000 ext. 3596

osvse@ryerson.ca

### University of Toronto

**University of Toronto Health & Wellness Services**

(Call for mental health and physical health)

416-978-8030

Best time to call:

Tuesdays from 2 – 4:30 pm

Wednesdays from 2 – 4:30 pm

Thursdays from 9 am – 4:30 pm

Fridays from 9 am – 2 pm

U of T Drop-in counselling services can be found  
here (change based on academic year):

[www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc/services-offered](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc/services-offered)

### OCAD

**OCAD Counselling and Wellness Services**

416-977-6000 ext. 260

[hwc@ocadu.ca](mailto:hwc@ocadu.ca)

Walk-in counselling services also available,  
9 am – 3:30 pm, 230 Richmond St. W., Level 6.  
Call or visit to access health and dental, crisis,  
and additional student services.

### George Brown College

**George Brown College Counselling Services**

**St. James:** 200 King St. E., Room 582C

Phone: 416-415-5000 ext. 2107

Fax: 416-415-2272)

**Casa Loma:** 160 Kendal Ave., E., Room C317

Phone: 416-415-5000 ext. 4585

Fax: 416-415-4582

**Waterfront:** 51 Dockside Dr., Room 225

Phone: 416-415-5000 ext. 5370

George Brown Health Benefits

Student Association

Email: [healthbenefits@sagbc.ca](mailto:healthbenefits@sagbc.ca)

Phone: 416-415-5000 Ext. 2443