



Student Mental Health Framework

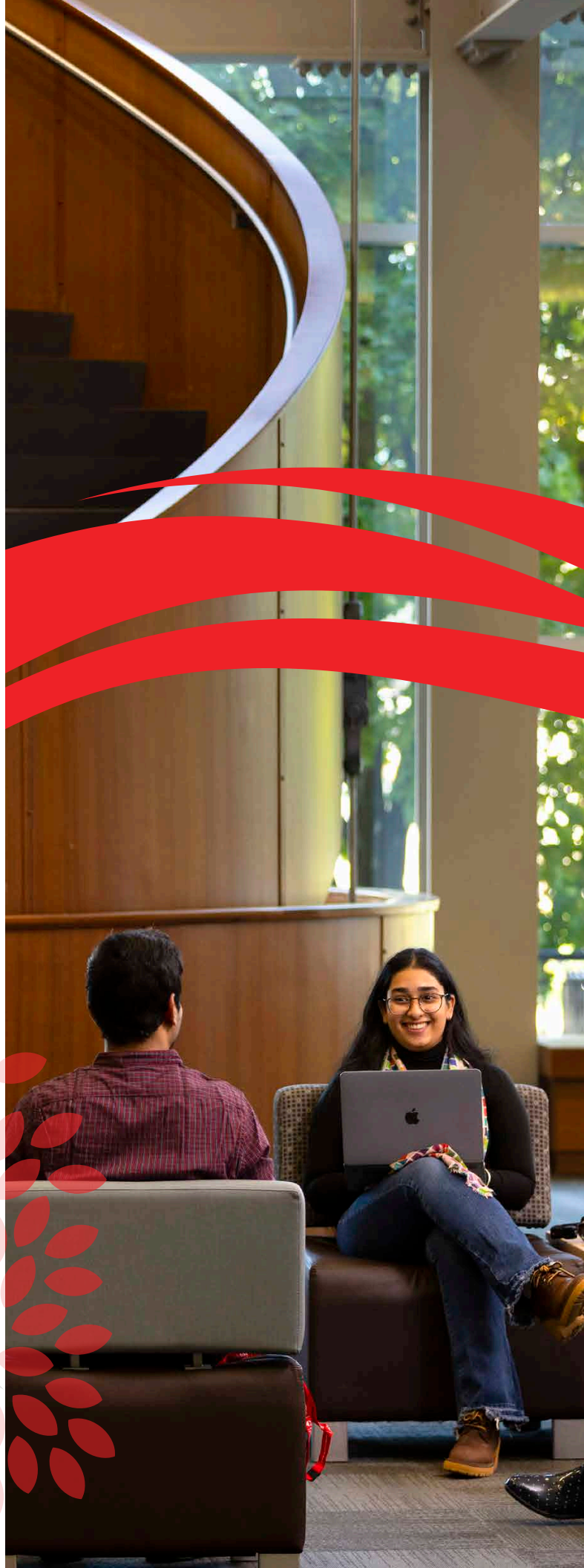
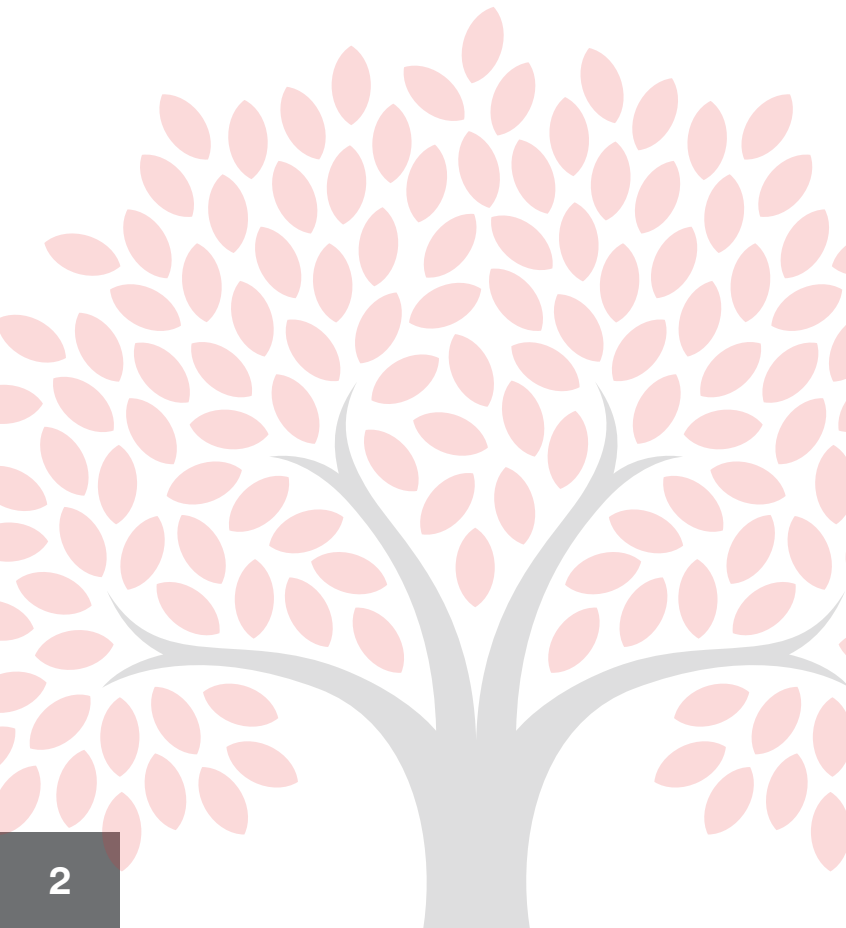
**Annual Report
2023**

Carleton
University



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction to the Report | 3 |
| Algonquin Territory Acknowledgement | 3 |
| Guiding Values | 3 |
| A Message from the Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness) | 4 |
| Executive Summary | 5 |
| Year in Review: Highlights from May 2022 – April 2023 | 6 |
| Student Mental Health Framework Highlights from the Areas of Focus | 7 |
| Area of Focus #1: Student Engagement | 8 |
| Area of Focus #2: Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience | 9 |
| Area of Focus #3: Coordinated Student Supports and Services | 10 |
| Area of Focus #4: Campus Culture of Wellness | 11 |
| What's Next for the Student Mental Health Framework | 12 |
| Appendix 1: Areas of Focus and Recommendations Status | 13 |



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.

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.

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.



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 (SMHF) 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

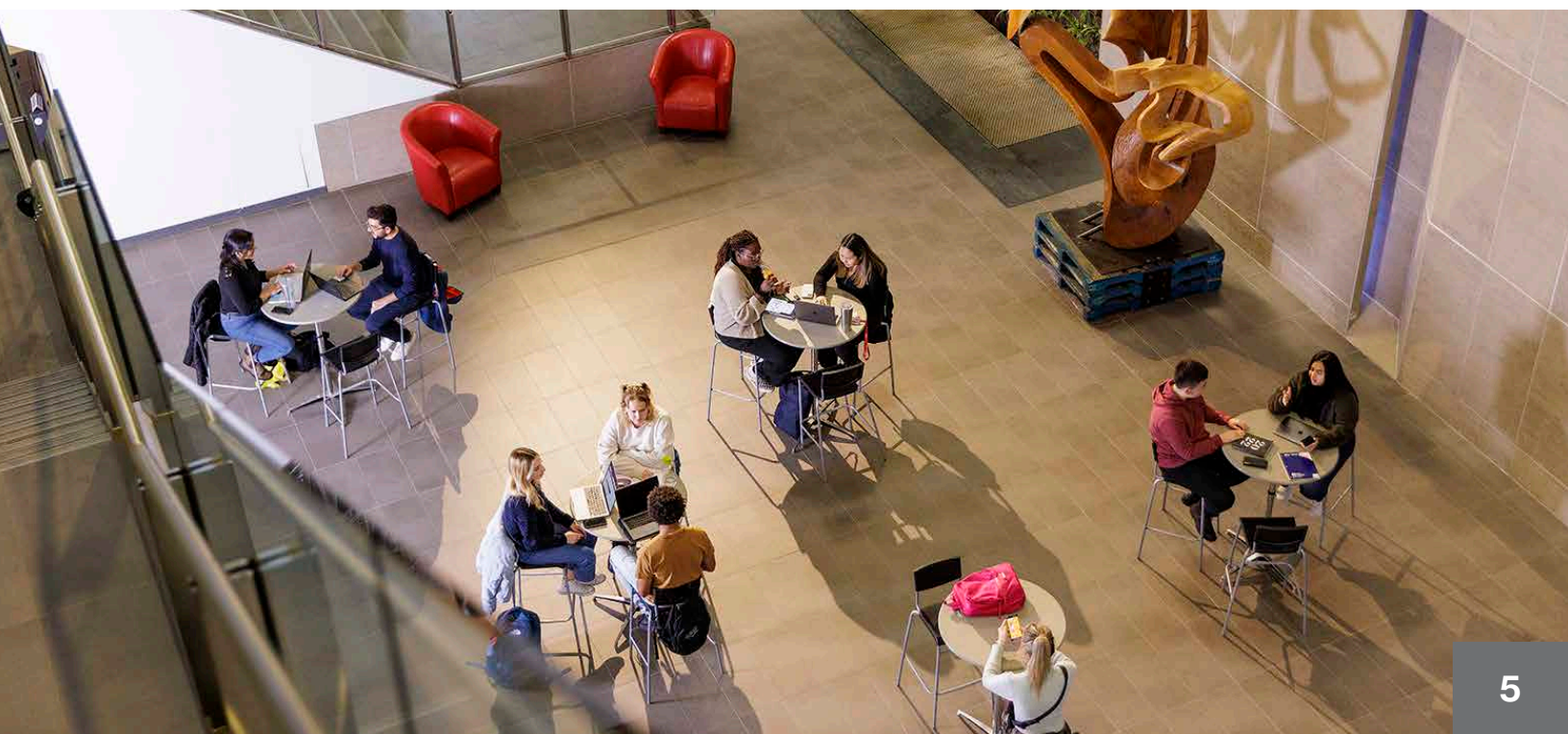
Aspiration Statement: We will strive for wellness by proactively promoting a holistic and intersectional approach to student mental health and wellness, and by strategically coordinating our programs, services, and initiatives to build skills and strengthen resilience.

The Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) 2022-2026 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 2023 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 |

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 |

Health

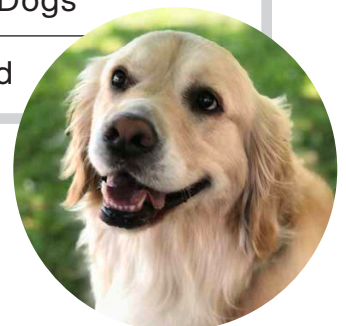
| | |
|---------------|--|
| 34,622 | visits to Medical Services |
| 250+ | community members trained to administer Naloxone |
| 24,444 | hours of care provided by Attendant Services |

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 |

Therapy Dogs

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 7 | new dogs trained |
| 1,200+ | student visits to the Therapy Dogs |
| 82 | visits held |



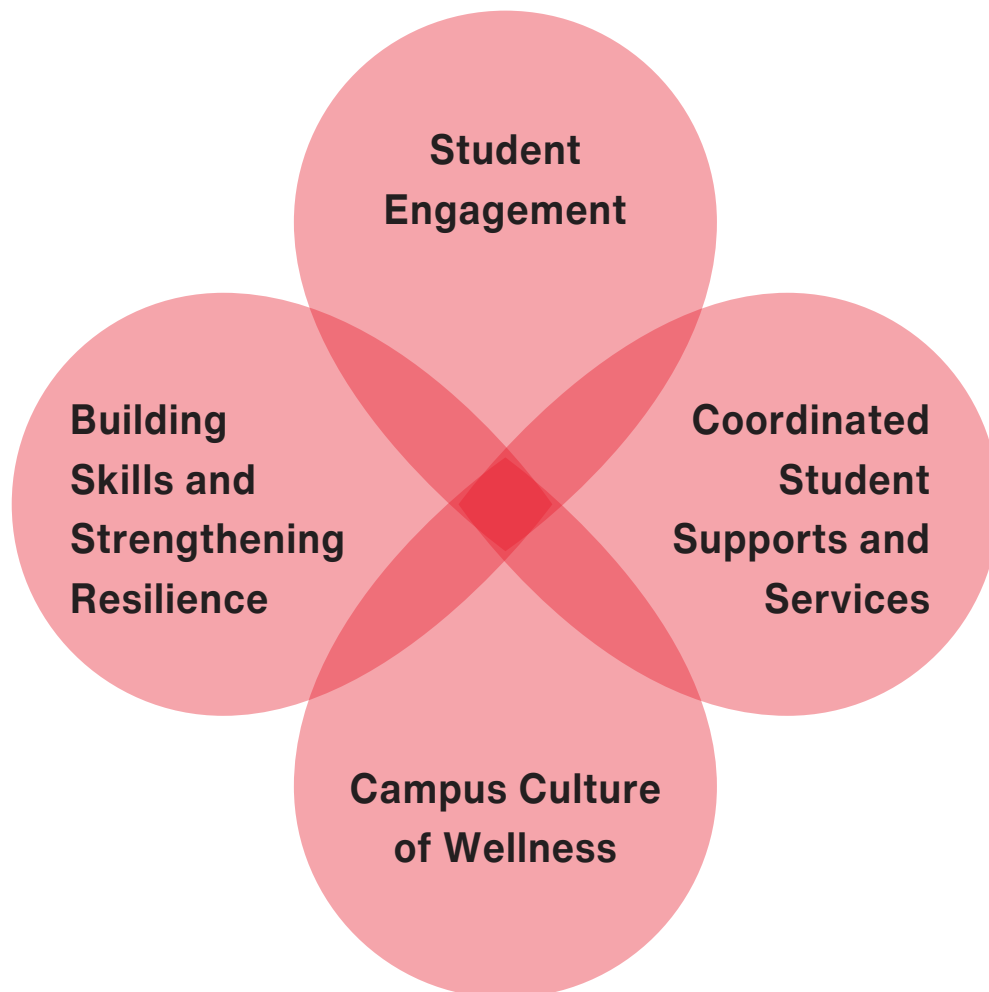
This list is not exhaustive. If you have a mental health and wellness initiative happening on campus, we'd love to hear about it! Email wellness@carleton.ca

Student Mental Health Framework Highlights from the Areas of Focus

The Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) 2022-2026 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 Mental Health and 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, the 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 (SMHF) 2022-2026 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 (SMHF) 2022-2026. 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

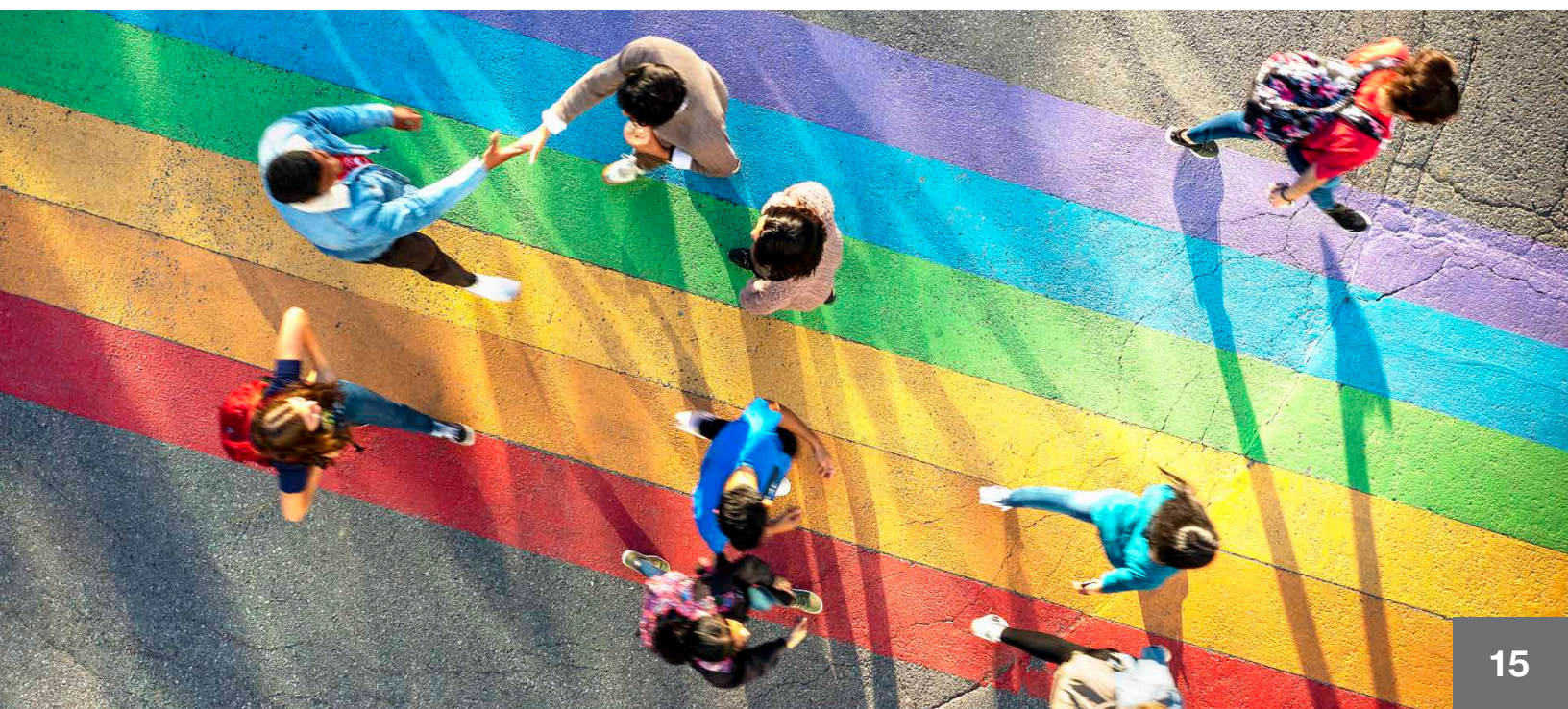
| Recommendations | | Status |
|-----------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Update the wellness website to provide access to comprehensive information on mental health and wellness to students, staff, faculty, and parents, including building resilience and coping skills, substance use health, and streamlining 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 coordinated way, while simultaneously addressing cultural barriers to service use. | Continuous |
| 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

| Recommendations | | Status |
|-----------------|--|------------|
| 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 |





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