



Student Mental Health Policy Annual Report 2025

Student Mental Health Framework Implementation



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Executive Summary

In September 2024, Carleton received the Minister's Student Mental Health Directive under Bill 166. As required by the Act, the Student Mental Health Policy was approved by the Senior Management Committee to describe the programs, policies, services and supports available at Carleton University in respect to student mental health.

At Carleton, supporting student mental health and wellness has been guided for many years by the university's Student Mental Health Frameworks, the third iteration of which was launched in May 2022. The Student Mental Health Policy and related legislation require that an annual report be presented to the Board of Governors for information on the implementation and effectiveness of the policy. This Student Mental Health Policy Annual Report encompasses both the reporting requirements for the new Student Mental Health Policy, as well as the 2025 Annual Report on activities related to our Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF).

Through the cross-representational Student Mental Health Advisory Committee and key stakeholders across the university, significant strides have been made in meeting the SMHF recommendations. This Student Mental Health Policy Annual Report 2025 provides an overview of key outcomes across the university during the third year of implementing our comprehensive SMHF. The student mental health initiatives across campus are extensive and diverse. This work fosters a resilient student body, enhances student retention, and creates pathways for academic success, ultimately leading to graduation. While this report cannot encapsulate a complete overview of all activities, it highlights select examples under each area of focus that support the SMHF recommendations.

In 2024-25, definitive action has been taken on all 30 recommendations, with 15 recommendations having the status of continuous, meaning that activities are complete, but implementation is an ongoing process with no definitive end date; 12 recommendations are considered complete; and 3 recommendations are underway. For a comprehensive overview of the progress toward our objectives and recommendations, please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

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.



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

Over the past year, we have observed a significant increase in the mental health challenges of our students. Factors such as academic pressure, financial stress, personal and family issues, social isolation, societal pressures and ongoing global events are contributing to the heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression and substance use we are seeing within our student body. Along with the increased mental health challenges faced by students, we are seeing an unprecedented demand for support services on campus. As we continue to navigate the complexities of increased demand for mental health support, it is essential to continuously assess and evaluate our community's response to meeting our students' needs.

This Student Mental Health Policy Annual Report provides an opportunity to showcase the initiatives in student mental health and wellness that contribute to our supportive and inclusive environment at Carleton University. Through quality improvements like the new counselling model in Health and Counselling Services, the addition of the substance use physician, expanding psychiatry resources and the wide variety of wellness initiatives led by our community, we've seen a collective effort in supporting student mental health. Throughout this report, you will see how Carleton community members prioritized implementing the Student Mental Health Framework recommendations and helped to improve service delivery to meet the changing needs of our students. Together, we are creating a campus environment where everyone feels valued, supported and empowered.

Lastly, my thanks go out to all the faculties, departments and services within the Carleton community that champion mental health and wellness initiatives that lead to creating safe spaces for our students to grow, learn and thrive.

Warm Regards,

Kristie Tousignant

Kristie Tousignant

Associate Vice-President (Student Health and Wellness)



By the Numbers: A Year in Review


Student Services:

57,529 visits to Health and Counselling Services: 16,020 Counselling and 41,509 Health Clinic (includes psychiatry and GP Psychotherapy)	31 care conferences held	832 Care Reports submitted, 655+ students supported through 3,357+ interactions
38 groups offered through Health and Counselling Services (HCS) and Paul Menton Centre (PMC)	68 substance use health consultations provided by HCS and the Umbrella Project	64% of students with PMC report mental health and ADHD as primary disability
90 students supported by the Student at Risk Evaluation Team (SARET)	26,360 hours of care provided by Attendant Services	1,483 new students registered with the PMC and 5,152 total students were served
	3,131 sessions by From Intention to Action (FITA)	

Community Support:

130 community members trained to administer Naloxone	4,050 food hampers distributed to students by the Carleton University Students' Association's (CUSA) Unified Support Centre
2,300+ students engaged in Health Promotion events, workshops and tabling	
3,000+ students attended the Spirituality Centre's Pause Tables	1,370+ interactions with the Wellness Desk, in addition to hosting 190 Therapy Dog sessions for 3,100+ students outside of the Wellness Desk
20+ All People All Pathways Peer support sessions offered in partnership with the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA)	1,500+ students in Neuroscience and Engineering completed an academic resiliency course called Rethinking Resilience
550 first-year students participated in First-Year Connections	

Therapy Dogs:

7 new Therapy Dogs trained, total of 20 on campus
350+ visits held
5,500+ students visited Therapy Dogs


2024-2025 Spotlights

Counselling Services: A New Model of Care

In response to the growing demand for mental health support on campus, Counselling Services undertook a comprehensive review of its service delivery model to identify ways to reduce wait times and ensure timely, equitable access to care. With support from the Office of Quality Initiatives, the team worked over the 2024 summer term to design and implement a new single-session model of care, eliminating the traditional intake process and transforming how students access counselling support. This is an aspect of a three-part approach that diversifies access: (1) single-session counselling, (2) short-term counselling and (3) group therapy and workshops.

Launched in September 2024, the single-session model is designed to offer quick, accessible and effective support through focused, one-time counselling sessions. This approach helps students address immediate concerns, develop actionable plans and connect with relevant resources. It is particularly effective for those in crisis or for students who are unsure about committing to ongoing therapy.

Since implementation, the model has significantly reduced wait times and improved access. On average, students can now book an appointment online within one to two business days. Compared to fall 2023, this shift in service delivery increased the capacity to see students by 54% in fall 2024. Beyond improved access, the model has also demonstrated strong positive outcomes. Between September 2024 and March 2025, 405 feedback responses were collected from 340 clients. Among them, 79% reported that single-session counselling was mostly or very helpful in addressing their concerns, 81% found it helpful in developing a plan and 87% said they would recommend the service to a friend.

The dedication and innovation shown by the Counselling Services team have not only enhanced the student experience, but also exemplified their commitment to service excellence. In recognition of their work, the team was awarded the Service Excellence Award for Innovative Change Initiative in February 2025.



Expanded Carleton Therapy Dog Program

The impact of Carleton's Therapy Dog Program extends beyond having dogs on campus. It is an intentional, low barrier initiative that offers emotional support and practical resources, fosters a culture of wellness and provides a sense of inclusion and calm within a hectic academic environment. Therapy dogs and their handlers provide opportunities to normalize conversations about mental health and can serve as a bridge to learning about and accessing resources and support on campus. Our campus-wide safety net also continues to grow by providing training to handlers and student ambassadors in resource navigation and how to identify students who are struggling.

On January 11, 2025, Carleton's Therapy Dog Program certified a new cohort of 7 new therapy dogs, expanding the team to a total of 20 dogs. During this academic year, the therapy dogs and their handlers conducted more than 350 visits across campus, facilitating over 5,500 interactions to help students reduce stress and engage in supportive conversations with peers, staff and faculty.

In addition to increasing program capacity, actions were taken to increase reach. Detailed profiles of each therapy dog were developed and shared on social media. The profiles gave students clear information about each therapy dog's personality, the physical space where the office hours were being held and physical traits like level of shedding. This helps students choose a therapy dog that best matches their preferences, as well as their emotional and environmental needs. Handlers also received additional training to better support neurodivergent students during Therapy Dog office hours. This training focused on recognizing how neurodivergent students might express their needs or feelings differently, creating a welcoming environment through clear expectations, and using specific language and communication styles that work well for all students. In its seventh year, the program continues to have a tangible impact on students' lives, expanding capacity and making therapy dog sessions more inclusive and accessible to a diverse student population.

Highlights from the Four Areas of Focus

The Student Mental Health Framework (SMHF) is designed to inspire, empower and support individuals and groups across campus to take initiative in promoting mental health and wellness. The four SMHF areas of focus are interdependent, and together help to support overall student mental health and wellness at Carleton.

The initiatives highlighted in this Annual Report are not exhaustive and represent just a portion of the impactful and valuable work being led by members of our community.



Area of Focus #1: Student Engagement

Our students continue to show their commitment to mental health and wellness on campus, sharing their enthusiasm, expertise and experiences with the wider community. They actively engage in programs, offer valuable feedback on initiatives and spearhead creative efforts to support each other.

Highlights:

- The Carleton Undergraduate Students' Association's (CUSA) Unified Support Centre (USC) is a volunteer-based space offering the Food Centre Service for on-campus food support and advocacy, and the Foot Patrol Service for evening-focused safety support. Recognizing the connection between wellness, access, security and community support, the USC addresses basic needs and personal safety to help students thrive. This year, the Food Centre provided over 4,050 food hampers and supported more than 650 unique students through its Emergency Essentials Assistance Program. Additionally, Foot Patrol completed over 100 safe walks and campus patrols, ensuring reliable safety support after dark.
- The Campus Activity Board (CAB) is a student-led group that provides innovative and engaging programming to Carleton students. CAB hosted over 20 events for more than 1,100 students, providing an opportunity to meet and interact with new friends in a safe and healthy environment. Popular monthly events included EPIC Bingo, Paint Nights and Movie Nights. A Wellness Night, in collaboration with the Therapy Dogs, was introduced in the winter 2025 term.
- Stigma Ends At CU, a student-led campaign at Carleton University, organized several events to raise awareness and address substance use health. They trained students in using non-stigmatizing language and harm reduction techniques, including Naloxone administration and partying safer. Collaborations included a community panel on *Harm Reduction in the Modern World* with guest speakers from a variety of organizations, as well as a MAX Ottawa workshop on harm reduction techniques. Stigma Ends At CU also engaged students through classroom visits and community tabling to educate on reducing stigma and promoting safer substance use.
- The student-led CUCannabisCrew campaign ran an event in residence discussing cannabis use and harm reduction techniques and posted regularly about the science of cannabis and harm reduction.
- The Science Student Success Centre (SSSC) ran several events to target wellness on campus, including Science Kindness Week, which was organized by the SSSC Volunteer Community Team during the fall and winter terms. Multiple events were offered to help foster community within the Faculty of Science and target wellness. The Wellness Calendar for the week included daily activities such as trivia and cookie decorating. Students also posted sticky notes with positive messages in MacOdrum Library throughout the week.
- The SSSC EDI Student Volunteer Team hosted the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) Global Women's Breakfast Event, held on International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 10, 2025. Leaders in STEM were invited to connect with students through a panel, discussion and pancake breakfast.
- In fall 2024, Carleton students voted in favour of an Athletics Fitness Centre Expansion, which will lay the foundation for the future of Carleton Athletics for generations to come. The expanded facility will feature state-of-the-art cardio, weight and fitness equipment, along with four new multipurpose rooms and a dedicated women-only area.

- Sprott Business Student Society and Sprott clubs hosted numerous events, including a Charity Golf tournament, a Peer Exchange Connect event, Study and Chill sessions, as well as a new Fun Friday initiative organized each week by a student club to ease stress and support student wellness. 22 Sprott Student Ambassadors volunteered to contribute to the Sprott community, helping fellow students build connections and enhance engagement. The program included a Peer Coaching Team dedicated to sharing their personal experiences to support others in achieving their goals through drop-in sessions, one-to-one coaching and events.
- The CUSA Think Tank is researching student mental health and wellness by collaborating with university departments to gain insights into student mental health on campus and at institutions across the province, and to understand the coordinated services and resources available to students. A survey has been developed to gather information from students to help identify the current state of mental health on our campus, as well as Carleton's strengths and gaps in supports. The CUSA Think Tank and the CUSA Advocacy Team also developed Housing 101, a comprehensive guide providing information to support students through the housing search and any housing complications that may arise.
- To better capture student needs and ensure continuous improvement in our initiatives and programs, several Student Feedback Forms were developed and implemented this year. These forms provide students with a direct avenue to share their experiences and provide suggestions about services and programs, creating a meaningful opportunity to ensure our supports remain effective and relevant. Student feedback forms were developed for the Therapy Dog Program, the Student Care and Support Team, the Wellness Desk and Health and Counselling Services. In just three weeks, 102 students provided feedback for the Carleton Therapy Dogs, a show of appreciation and support for this beloved program. As a result of the feedback, efforts to enhance accessibility are in progress to offer low sensory office hours for fall 2025.
- The Housing and Residence Life community worked with student volunteers in the Mental Health Champions program to plan and host a variety of wellness events for students living in residence, fostering a community where positive mental health and wellbeing are prioritized. Events provided opportunities to practice a variety of wellness skills, from promoting movement through a Salsa Dance Night and yoga classes to planning crafts and activities that cultivate creativity. The Ice Cream Study Break was a particularly popular event, attracting over 600 students. The event featured ice cream, mindful activity kits and other games and activities aimed at promoting decompression and stress relief.
- The Office of the Associate Vice President (Student Health and Wellness) provided 17 part-time, placement and co-op opportunities to students in addition to the Student Mental Health Engagement Committee, increasing student involvement in implementing wellness initiatives and programs. Our student leaders worked across campus and collaborated with campus partners to engage peers, improve health literacy and embed wellness into campus culture. The Health Promotion Team introduced a new initiative, the Connect Series, to build student engagement and connections to wellness practices. Overall, the Student Wellness Navigators and Health Promotion Team connected with over 3,030 students through a total of 70 events, including tabling, workshops, fairs, collaborations and events held at the Wellness Desk.
- Carleton participated in the Canadian Post-Secondary Alcohol and Drug Survey (CPADS) in winter 2025, achieving above a 20% response rate. The data will be available in May, providing a baseline of substance use needs within the Carleton community and helping to better direct resources to students.
- A variety of events celebrated Black History Month (BHM) in February 2025. The Umoja Black Community Engagement Program partnered with Residence Life to host a vibrant Open Mic Night and collaborated with the International Student Services Office (ISSO) and Career Services to host an Academic and Career Pathway Event, offering valuable insights for students' future success. Housing and Residence Life also held a BHM Panel and hosted a BHM art contest for Black students in residence, with the winning submission displayed as the backdrop behind the Residence Desk.

Area of Focus #2: Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience

As students' needs evolve, our supports and approaches also adapt to enhance resilience and build positive coping skills. Over the past year, there have been numerous valuable offerings, such as an academic resiliency course, campus training opportunities and harm reduction strategies. These efforts aim to strengthen our community and support student wellbeing.

Highlights:

- The Carleton community is working together to target food insecurity on campus, reflecting our collective commitment to address identified student needs. The Sprott Undergraduate Clubs Room opened Aunt Becky's Kitchen, a pantry for Sprott students to access food at no additional cost. Health and Counselling Services (HCS), spearheaded by Dr. Audrey Ling and through donations of the HCS staff, has snacks readily available for students to grab from the Snack Door as they leave the clinic. Furthermore, the Spirituality Centre collaborated with community faith partners to sponsor the Pause Tables, an event providing free food and drinks to over 3,000 students during the fall and winter exam period.
- The Sprott School of Business has dedicated community spaces to support student mental health and wellbeing. The Sprott Undergraduate Clubs Room is now open to all Sprott undergraduate students on weekdays. This space plays an important role in fostering a sense of belonging and community among



students. A meditation space is used daily for personal practice and prayer, and plans are underway to introduce additional programming in this space that will further promote wellness, peer connection and a culture of care.

- In summer 2024, the Resilience Institute Workshop Series was offered to Sprott online MBA students. This initiative consisted of a self-assessment, a toolkit and workshops to support students in measuring, tracking and identifying strengths, risk factors and practices to thrive amidst stress and change.
- Wellness Services continued to partner with the Graduate Students' Association, Teaching and Learning Services, HCS and other campus partners to provide training to students on wellness supports, service navigation and helpful coping skills. The Student Care and Support Team provided 10 training sessions to student leaders across campus on how to recognize when peers are struggling, how to respond supportively and how to navigate resources effectively. These training sessions are intended to help build capacity across campus to provide student leaders with practical information and opportunities to apply their learning. Information on how to use the Care Report to connect peers to the Student Care and Support Team for follow-up is always highlighted.
- The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) continued to provide a variety of groups for students to build and enhance coping skills and social connections, including the Social Communication Group, the ADHD group, the Graduate Student Writing Group, as well as a group to provide support and social opportunities for students with chronic medical disabilities.
- The School of Social Work, within the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs, piloted a Peer Mental Health Support Group Program in the winter 2025 term. The goal of the group sessions was to provide a safe place to share experiences, emotions, struggles with mental health and future goals and concerns. Sessions were led by student leaders who received training, in collaboration with Wellness Services, as

well as ongoing supervision from an external community partner. Pre- and post-quantitative evaluations on the mental health of participants were conducted, as well as a qualitative evaluation at the end of the pilot. A report will be made available in May 2025.

- The International Student Services Office hosted the Global Café, a welcoming drop-in space designed to foster connection and community, providing an opportunity for students to engage in informal conversation, cultural exchange and light activities. This initiative offers important social support, especially for international students and those new to Carleton, helping to ease transitions, combat isolation and create a sense of belonging on campus. 15 Global Cafés were hosted this year with over 100 students attending.
- An academic resiliency course called Rethinking Resilience, created by Drs. Kim Hellemans and Ashley Thompson, in collaboration with Dr. Alison Flynn from the University of Ottawa, was designed to teach students about the importance of stress, coping and resilience so that students can build skills toward academic resilience and reduce stress associated with university life. The course consists of four online, interactive modules. Over 1,500 students in Neuroscience and Engineering have completed the course with evidence that it shifts understanding about resilience and significantly reduces student stress levels.
- Through a partnership with Sivummut Solutions and the Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (CICSE), five Carleton Inuit students travelled to Cambridge Bay, Nunavut to work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station. Students participated in land-based programming centered on Inuit ecological knowledge and learned about Arctic research opportunities.
- The Indigenous Peer Mentorship Program employed five Indigenous undergraduate students to support 23 Carleton students' integration into university life. The program focused on creating a sense of belonging, retention and connection to culture.
- The Umbrella Project offered four Opioid Awareness and Substance Use Stigma training sessions to members of the Carleton community. Over 130 registrants were provided with education about the opioid crisis and impacts of stigma, as well as training on how to use Narcan in response to an opioid overdose. Those who completed the training were provided with access to Narcan kits in partnership with the campus pharmacy. The Umbrella Project also launched print resources for commonly used substances in our community, including Safer Cannabis Use and Safer Tripping. These resources focus on providing information about safer use strategies and support for those looking to achieve their substance use health goals.
- The Umbrella Project collaborated with the YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program and the Responsible Gambling Council to enhance resources and prevention for students regarding digital literacy and gambling harms in response to an increase in online and sports betting since legislative changes were introduced in Ontario in 2021.
- The Office of Student Affairs signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Center on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA). This agreement further strengthens the collaboration between the CCSA and Carleton University's Umbrella Project Substance Use Health Strategy. The initiative was supported by Wellness Services and the Department of Neuroscience, represented by Dr. Kim Hellemans.
- In partnership with the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA), the Umbrella Project offered over 20 All People All Pathways peer support sessions to students seeking a safe space to discuss substance use health goals and needs.



Area of Focus #3: Coordinated Student Supports and Services

A key strength of the Carleton community is our ongoing commitment to improving our supports and services through evidence-based best practices, proactively empowering and nurturing student growth. We continue to strengthen and refine our student services, emphasizing a holistic and intersectional approach to wellbeing.

Highlights:

- In alignment with Bill 166: Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024, Carleton University developed a comprehensive Student Mental Health Policy, which was approved in October 2024. This policy serves to complement our existing Student Mental Health Framework and outlines the programs, services and support available to students. While Bill 166 aimed to address gaps in mental health care across Ontario campuses, Carleton has exceeded the provincial requirements, reflecting our strong commitment to proactive mental health education, integrated care and a supportive campus environment. Carleton continues to prioritize mental health as a core part of student success and wellbeing. Centralized access to wellness supports can be viewed on the Carleton Wellness website: wellness.carleton.ca.
- Following the successful student referendum to increase the mental health fee, Health and Counselling Services (HCS) was able to hire a dedicated Group Counsellor to expand access to mental health care. This new role allowed HCS to significantly grow group programming, offering 38 therapeutic, support and skills-based groups and workshops over the year. This increase in support has not only addressed the rising demand for mental health services but has also emphasized prevention, peer connection and early intervention as holistic factors in improving student wellbeing. Group sessions included a support group for African, Caribbean and Black students in winter 2025, which provided a space for students to share lived experiences, build resilience and support their mental health, as well as a Queer Support Group, which offered a safe and affirming environment for 2SLGBTQ+ students to connect and access resources. In addition, HCS piloted a men's mental health workshop, "MANifest Wellness", which was well-attended and received positive feedback.
- HCS fostered a community collaboration with social workers at four Ottawa hospitals to develop a Discharge Planning Tool that is now being utilized to support the transition of student care from the ER or in-patient psychiatry services to HCS. This collaboration allows for ongoing communication with area hospitals and improved coordinated care for students with complex health needs.
- The Care Report is an online referral system designed to proactively identify and coordinate support for students experiencing challenges by referring them to the Student Care and Support Team. The Care Report continues to be well-utilized as an early intervention tool, with various faculties and departments submitting multiple Care Reports. Continued training and consultation with the campus community on how to use the



Care Report, when to submit one and what to expect after submitting it contributed to a 20% increase in utilization for fall 2024 compared to the previous year. This increased awareness of resources and supports for students indicates that we are moving towards our goal to build capacity and create a campus-wide safety net for struggling students.

- The Wellness Desk is a dedicated space in MacOdrum Library for students to learn about resources, connect with a Wellness Navigator and take some time to pause during stressful times of the year.



Students have become more aware of the Wellness Desk since its inception in September 2023, with visits increasing by 40% compared to last year. The Wellness Desk's "Meet the..." series, which was developed to increase awareness of supports and services on campus, invited representatives from nine departments and engaged over 210 students in discussions. The Wellness Desk also continued their partnership with the Therapy Dog program, ensuring that students have access to wellness support if needed while visiting the therapy dogs. Approximately 3,100+ students attended 190 Therapy Dog sessions held outside of the Wellness Desk.

- The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (CISCE) developed an integrative Circle of Care Protocol to support Indigenous students in distress. Campus partners are working together with CISCE to revise existing protocols and procedures through the lens of traditional Indigenous views of wellness and health and are also developing ongoing consultation agreements with CISCE to ensure coordinated support is available.
- The ISSO Immigration Advising team supported over 3,300 student appointments, with a focus on navigating complex cases due to the recently updated Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. The ISSO also hosted a range of events, from educational offerings about off-campus housing and how to file income tax, to peer-led engagement activities like snowshoeing in Gatineau Park and visiting the Vanier Sugar Shack.
- Aligning with Carleton's substance use health and harm reduction approach, which recognizes that substance use impacts are influenced by a student's individual, social, physical and mental wellbeing, physician consultations are now offered to both students and staff who may have concerns about their substance use. Dr. Elena Paraskevopoulos is a family physician and addiction medicine specialist who has joined the team at HCS. Her dual role – also working at The Royal Ottawa Hospital's Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program – brings specialized expertise and strengthens community partnerships, improving both access to care and continuity of support. In total, HCS and the Umbrella Project offered 68 substance use health consultations to students to provide resources and support self-determined goals.



Area of Focus #4: Campus Culture of Wellness

Creating a campus environment that fosters wellness means encouraging and promoting all aspects of health. Through a wide variety of events, training, resources and programs, we continue to strengthen Carleton's culture of wellness.

Highlights:

- The Student Support Certificate (SSC) offers a wide variety of professional development workshops to enhance faculty and staff's capacity to support students. Several new workshops were offered this year, including "Inequities on Campus: Understanding Identity, Bias and Oppression," as well as "Understanding Indigenous Peoples: Foundations of Knowledge and Learning" and "Supporting Indigenous Students: Pathways to Success at Carleton" in partnership with CISCE. The SSC had almost 200 participants in 13 unique learning opportunities during the winter 2025 term. Across all workshops, participants' average satisfaction rating was 9.1/10 and their ability to apply what they learned was 4.6/5.
- Instructors and staff in the Indigenous Enriched Support Program supported co-teaching models by incorporating more Elder/Knowledge Keeper visits into the curriculum and emphasizing a holistic approach to education.

- Carleton celebrated World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2024, by collaborating with the Dare to Be Vulnerable Project to host an on-campus event which engaged the campus community in courageous, vulnerable and inspiring conversations about mental health. Seven individuals, representing students, staff and faculty, shared personal stories about their mental health, as well as how they have navigated their experiences and challenges to find a way forward.
- Healthy Workplace offered eight workshops to faculty, staff and students, including a new Managers and Mental Health Workshop, which was completed by 70 managers. They held 23 events, covering topics such as sleep, managing stress, finances and nutrition, as well as activities such as yoga and meditation. In April 2025, a “Kin on Kampus” tour was offered as an introduction to learning the Anishinaabemowin, English and scientific names of trees across Carleton University’s campus, amalgamating western and Indigenous knowledge to promote relationships between humans and non-humans and settlers and Indigenous Peoples. In total, 1,209 staff and faculty registered for Healthy Workplace events and professional development workshops and 238 staff and faculty engaged in the 12 ongoing lunchtime leagues.
- Carleton’s Healthy Workplace initiatives have been continually evolving to best support the needs of staff and faculty. The renewal of the Healthy Workplace Strategic Plan is underway, informed by the campus community and key stakeholders, as well as campus-wide strategies and frameworks.
- Several campus departments hosted Lunch and Learns for faculty and staff to foster connection and provide practical information and resources. The PMC hosted three Lunch and Learns for faculty to enhance effective support for students with disabilities, with topics such as supporting neurodivergent students and practical strategies to establish accessible evaluation methods. The Student Care and Support Team hosted three sessions, encouraging the community to meet the team, as well as key collaborators like Campus Safety Services and the Manager of Conduct and Harm Reduction, and learn more about the resource.
- The Office of the Dean of Science ran an event on inclusive mentoring practices for all faculty on supporting student wellness, and the Associate Dean of Science (Student Recruitment, Wellness and Success) Dr. Kim Hellemans, worked closely with unit heads and teaching mentors to provide advice and guidance on best practices to support student wellness as it relates to course design by considering flexible and compassionate teaching practices. Dr. Hellemans also co-hosts an award-winning podcast with Dr. Jim Davies called Minding the Brain, which has included several episodes on mental health and wellness, such as the neuroscience of emotions and eating disorders.
- Recognizing the crucial role that faculty and staff play in student mental health, Wellness Services initiated the creation of a Staff and Faculty Toolkit to support student mental health. This Toolkit will be a consolidation of wellness information and resources available to Carleton staff and faculty to help create more supportive, inclusive and responsive learning environments. Over the past year, the office conducted cross-campus consultations with faculty, staff and students to ensure the framework reflects diverse perspectives and meets the needs of the Carleton community.
- Faculty across campus are working to embed wellness into learning environments and curriculum. For example, professors in the Department of English Language and Literature are supporting student mental health by promoting mental health resources and teaching coping skills in classes, as well as offering flexible grading and deadlines. In addition, faculty in the department are incorporating mental health readings into syllabi and introducing class discussions on topics related to mental health, illustrating a commitment to infusing student mental health into course design and delivery.
- To reduce the stigma surrounding mental health challenges and promote student wellbeing, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has taken steps to foster a supportive environment where students feel encouraged to seek help by introducing mental health allies for each of its three programs. The primary goal of the voluntary Mental Health Ally role is to ensure that

students know they have a designated point of contact within the department, someone they can approach for guidance on available mental health resources at the university and who can help connect them or their peers with the appropriate support services. To raise awareness of this initiative, the Mental Health Allies are promoted in course outlines and introduced during student orientation.

- Campus Safety Services (CSS) led many large-scale initiatives throughout the year, including their fourth Annual Orange Ribbon Campaign to raise donations for the Minwaashin Lodge, a student food drive with the Unified Support Centre (USC) to collect donations for their food hamper program, fundraisers to raise money for emergency first responders and Special Olympics Ontario and numerous tabling events to connect with the Carleton community and increase awareness of the services they provide.
- CSS offered de-escalation training designed to help campus partners recognize early indicators of anger, hostility or violence to resolve conflicts safely and effectively. Seven training sessions were provided this year to various campus partners, including the Wellness Desk and the Transgender Media Lab.
- Wellness Services is responding to the Okanagan Charter Calls to Action by piloting a Spotlight Series. This series of interviews highlights impactful campus initiatives that have incorporated a wellness lens during the development and implementation phases, shining a spotlight on the resources, spaces and people at Carleton that are improving the wellbeing of our campus community. The series kicked off by interviewing the Services Fulfillment and Development Supervisor at the USC to talk about the centre's food hamper and foot patrol initiatives, as well as the Executive Director of Housing and Residence Life regarding the construction of the new student residence, Rideau House.
- The Mental Health and Well-Being Research and Training Hub (MeWeRTH) hosted a Mental Health Day in October and a Let's Talk event in January. Both events attracted over 100 people, including many members from the community. This year, MeWeRTH director, Dr. Joanna Pozzulo, launched the MeWeRTH's Reading for Well-Being Community Book Club, along with a successful podcast, which includes members from across Canada.

What's Next for the Student Mental Health Framework

As we move into the fourth and final year of implementing our Student Mental Health Framework 2022-2026 (SMHF), all 30 objectives outlined in the framework have either been completed, are ongoing or are currently underway. This milestone reflects a dedicated and sustained commitment from our campus community to supporting student mental health and wellness in meaningful, measurable ways. As we look to the year ahead, our strategic priorities will focus on continuous improvement through evaluation and assessment, strengthening prevention and early intervention, increasing campus engagement and collaboration and deepening our commitment to the Calls to Action of the Okanagan Charter by fostering a learning environment that supports student mental health and wellness.

Ongoing Evaluation and Assessment

In fall 2025, Carleton will participate in the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS). The CCWS is a Canadian assessment tool that, through a confidential survey, provides information on students' impressions of the campus climate related to mental health, their feelings about how well they fit in and how supportive the campus is toward their learning process and academic success. Having current data about students' health will help to identify priorities for intervention, enhance campus-wide health promotion and prevention services and inform policies and practices. Conducting ongoing assessment of our student population will also help to ensure responsiveness to the evolving, diverse needs of students. Once completed, Carleton will have access to data from other institutions provincially and across Canada to better understand issues affecting the broader post-secondary population, allowing institutions to share policies and practices that will build healthier campus communities.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

Engagement and collaboration with campus partners is at the heart of implementing Carleton's Student Mental Health Framework. We rely on the passion and dedication of our community to collectively move forward our goals to create a supportive and inclusive environment with a shared responsibility for student wellness. As such, we will continue to co-create solutions with students, staff, and faculty, and will endeavor to deepen partnerships with internal and external stakeholders. Collaboration with other health-promoting institutions locally, nationally and globally will allow us to share successful strategies and learnings through communities of practice and regional meetings.



The Okanagan Charter

As part of our continued commitment to the Calls to Action outlined in the Okanagan Charter, we will deepen our efforts to promote environments that support mental, emotional, physical and social wellness.

We will highlight current efforts and success stories aligned with the Charter's vision, continue to coordinate and promote ongoing professional development for staff and faculty and embed mental health knowledge and response strategies across all areas of campus life.

The Staff and Faculty Toolkit is an initiative that marks an important step in fostering a campus culture where mental health is understood, supported and prioritized across all levels of the student experience. With a draft of the toolkit completed, focus groups, further meetings with key stakeholders and a departmental trial will be implemented over summer 2025 with a rollout of the toolkit scheduled for fall 2025. We will also identify campus partners to support continued progress in building capacity to increase the inclusion of wellness principles in curriculum design, teaching practices and student engagement. We will launch a communications campaign to raise awareness about the Charter and what it means for our campus as well as outline a path to how Carleton can further become a health promoting institution.

Launching the Next Student Mental Health Framework

With our current Framework concluding in April 2026, in the coming year we will launch a comprehensive and transparent consultation with students, staff, faculty and external partners to gather insights and feedback to shape the next iteration of the Student Mental Health Framework at Carleton. This process will be grounded in the principles of inclusion, equity and lived experience. By building on what has worked and identifying areas for growth, we aim to co-create the next version of our strategy to continue guiding our campus-wide approach to student mental health and wellbeing.



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.
- **Complete:** Activities have been completed with no further implementation required.
- **Upcoming:** activities are planned in the near-to-mid term.

The table below can be summarized as follows:

- 12 recommendations are considered complete;
- 15 recommendations are in a continuous state;
- 3 recommendations are underway;
- 0 recommendations are considered in the planning phase; and
- 0 recommendation is in the upcoming phase.

It is worth noting 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 third reporting year completed, definitive actions have been taken on all 30 recommendations. We look forward to continuing to expand on the actions taken to provide holistic support for our community.

Area of Focus #1: Student Engagement

Recommendations	Status
Increase student involvement in the implementation of all areas of focus in this Framework through developing and strengthening partnerships with students, staff, and faculty.	Continuous
Further develop partnerships with student-led groups and support their innovative ideas and initiatives that promote a holistic approach to mental health and wellness.	Continuous
Continue to support and engage the Student Mental Health Student Engagement Committee in developing and implementing student-led initiatives.	Continuous

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.	Continuous
Develop and implement assessment and evaluation tools for existing programs and services to ensure they are meeting students' needs.	Complete
Assess opportunities to engage graduate-level student expertise in researching and evaluating mental health and wellness initiatives on campus.	Continuous

Area of Focus #2: Building Skills and Strengthening Resilience

Recommendations	Status
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.	Complete
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.	Continuous
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.	Continuous
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.	Continuous
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.	Continuous
Develop and implement training, education, and resources to reduce harm in different online environments, such as social media.	Complete

Support the development and implementation of a substance use health and harm reduction strategy that is focused on support, resources, education, and partnerships.	Complete
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Area of Focus #3: Coordinated Student Supports and Services

Recommendations	Status
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.	Complete
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.	Complete
Integrate faith-based and spirituality resources and approaches as an integral component for supporting mental health and wellness.	Complete
Assess and respond to student demand and need for additional counselling services using an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens.	Complete
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.	Complete
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.	Continuous
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.	Continuous

Area of Focus #4: Campus Culture of Wellness

Recommendations	Status
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Enhance the availability of training that is culturally aware and sensitive for faculty, staff, and student leaders to support students in crisis.	Complete
Develop a university postvention strategy to reduce suicide risk and promote healing after a death by suicide.	Complete
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.	Continuous
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.	Complete
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
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.	Continuous
Investigate ways to incorporate green spaces and environmental wellness into mental health and wellness programming in consultation with key stakeholders.	Continuous
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.	Underway
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.	Underway
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.	Underway



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