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Starter Kit: For the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

IN THE COVID-19 CONTEXT AND BEYOND

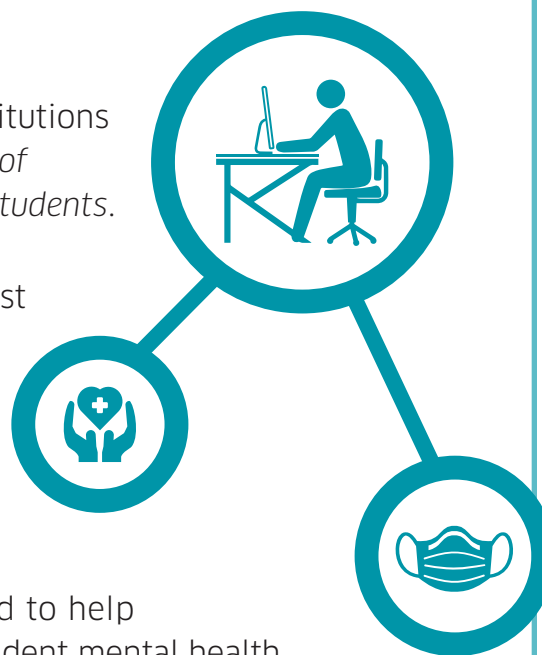
About the Starter Kit

This tool is designed to support Canadian post-secondary institutions as they begin aligning with the voluntary *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*.

Three out of every four mental health problems have been first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many are in or just out of post-secondary education. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic heightened many of the issues students were already facing, making it even more challenging for institutions to support them.

The Standard was developed in response to these needs and to help post-secondary institutions create environments that foster student mental health and well-being. Building on the success of the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, it gives post-secondary institutions a framework and guiding principles to support the development of policies, procedures, and practices that promote student mental health and well-being – during COVID-19 and beyond.

Post-secondary institutions can use this Starter Kit as an initial resource to build momentum toward aligning with the Standard.



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Access your Copy of the Standard Today!

[Download the Standard](#) from the CSA Group website and get additional resources and support from the [CSA Community](#).




A Note on the Standard

The *National Standard for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students* is the first of its kind in the world. Championed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in collaboration with CSA Group, it was developed through extensive outreach, research and dialogues with students, post-secondary administrators, decision makers, governments, and people with lived and living experience of mental illness. The Standard was drafted by a Technical Committee that included broad stakeholder representation based on a balanced matrix approach. It is meant to build on the work that many post-secondary institutions have already done in this area – and to inspire further actions.

More Support for Your Journey with the Standard

The CSA Community's Centre of Outreach, Resources and Engagement (CORE) is an online, collaborative community where post-secondary institutions can share resources and best practices to support their alignment with the Standard.

CORE also offers supplemental resources developed by the Technical Committee that created the Standard, along with general resources on student mental health: documents, discussion threads, blogs, videos, and more.

 [Create your free account](#) to access everything CORE has to offer.

JOIN CORE TODAY!



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A Framework for Supporting Student Mental Health

Pursuing a post-secondary education is an exciting time for many learners. But it can also be a time of stress – often involving a move away from home, unfamiliar environments, new relationships, heavy workloads, pressure to succeed, financial concerns, and more. The uncertainty and health-related concerns associated with COVID-19 present additional stressors. Combined, these factors can take a toll on mental health and well-being, especially for students with underlying conditions or who face additional difficulties due to disability, racial inequality, or systemic inequities.

The ***National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*** can guide institutions in their ongoing efforts to prioritize student mental health and support student success, whether they're just starting the process or have been doing so for years.

The Standard gives post-secondary institutions an opportunity to affirm their commitment to student mental health and well-being while benefiting from expert knowledge and insight that is underpinned by a set of core principles: to be student-centric, inclusive, informed, harm reducing, health promoting, community building, and focused on continuous improvement.

Many post-secondary institutions are already doing outstanding work through mental health policies, administration and student-led initiatives, and targeted strategies with established key performance indicators. The Standard provides a way to build on those efforts with a voluntary, flexible framework that can be adapted to the unique realities of each institution and community, whether large or small, urban or rural, and with any student mix – international or local, fresh out of high school or with workforce experience, Indigenous students, people with disabilities and more.



Introduction

The Impacts of COVID-19



COVID-19 has affected every post-secondary institution in Canada. For students, it has disrupted their usual ways of learning and raised questions about classes, accommodations, graduation, and personal health and safety. Many students attending institutions from out of province or other countries have had to return home – beyond the reach of the mental health services available to them in person at their school. [Read our two-pager](#) on how COVID-19 has affected post-secondary approaches to supporting student mental health and the actions some institutions are taking.

A Clear and Pressing Need

Introduction



Over **60%** of students say they've felt "more than average" or "tremendous" stress in the past year.



Almost **90%** say they've felt overwhelmed at some point.



More than **40%** say stress has affected their academic performance.



Around **16%** have seriously considered suicide, and almost **3%** attempted suicide in the past year.

2019 National College Health Assessment

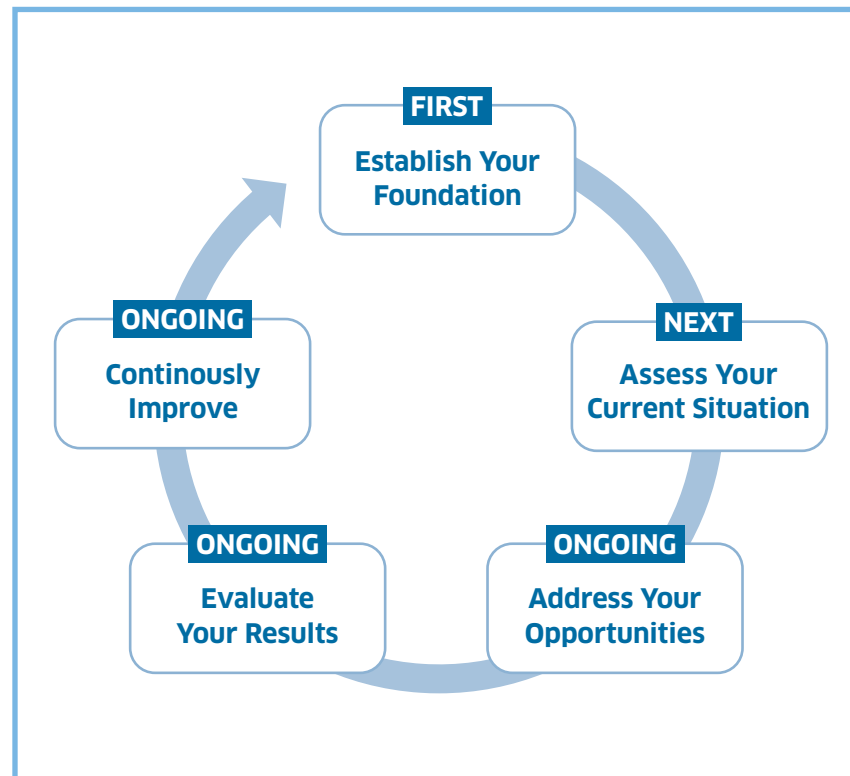
Starting the Journey

Aligning with any standard is a journey that requires good planning and often a flexible, multi-year approach. The **National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students** is designed to follow a five-stage framework that starts with establishing a foundation and builds toward continuous improvement.

To help you get started, we've divided that process into three steps: FIRST, NEXT, and ONGOING. In the following pages, we explain what each step entails. For further details, see the expanded infographic in the [Tools and Resources](#) section.



Starting the Journey



FIRST: Download the Standard and Get Buy-in

Building momentum and support are key first steps in any implementation process. Focus on getting buy-in from decision makers and those who'll champion the Standard at your institution, including senior administrators, students, and even members of the broader community.



Suggested Actions

Things you'll likely want to do in the first stage of the journey:

1 Get familiar with the Standard.
[Download and read](#) the Standard to understand what's involved and where you might want to focus first.

2 Find a champion. A highly visible champion with authority to make decisions and allocate resources can be a powerful asset. Get this person involved early to set the tone and marshal others around the cause.

3 Appoint a dedicated leader for your institution's work with the Standard.
While this work will involve many people over time, having a single person lead the process will help it remain a priority.

4 Identify key stakeholders.
Involve representatives from any stakeholder group that will be impacted by the Standard, including students, faculty, and staff – not only in upfront consultations but as active participants and contributors all the way through.

First

Key Considerations

Share Responsibility

Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility. Post-secondary institutions cannot meet this growing challenge alone. An approach that encompasses all students, faculty, and staff within the post-secondary community, and all stakeholders in the broader community, is vital.

Be Inclusive

It's critical to involve students in your initiative. While individual mental health needs can be unique, reaching out to a broad representation of students is important – especially toward those without equitable access to opportunities and services. This group can include racialized student populations and students with disabilities. If your institution has areas that support students with disabilities,

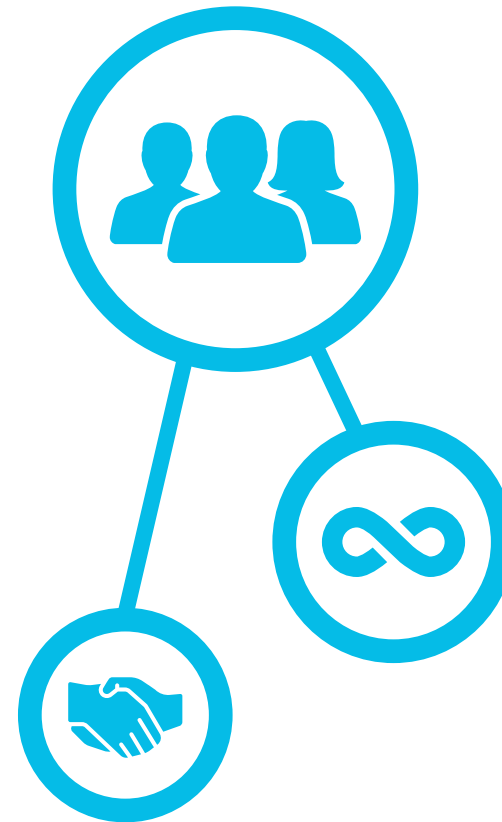
Indigenous students, LGBTQ2+ students, or similar student support areas, include their experience and knowledge into aligning with the Standard. If you have a student advisory group to support implementation of the Standard, refresh the membership regularly. You want to be sure as many voices as possible are heard.

Work Together with Faculty

Because faculty have direct, frequent contact with students, they are essential partners in any student mental health and wellness effort. Keep in mind, however, that not all faculty members and instructors will be comfortable addressing mental health issues. To help ensure their engagement with new procedures and referrals to mental health supports, include them in the process and listen to their thoughts on the challenges students are experiencing and the types of assistance they need.

Identify a Skilled Project Leader

When choosing someone to lead the process, look for expertise in project management and implementation science. Knowledge of mental health is also important, but ideally you'll want a leader with a good mix of post-secondary experience and project skills.



First

“Most of our services are built around coming to campus, so we’ve had to adjust our thinking and find *new ways to deliver those services* now that our campus is closed due to COVID-19.”

Campus wellness and support services director



Toolbox



The Complete Standard

The full text of the Standard

[Download the file >](#)



Video about the Standard

A quick overview of the Standard and why it matters

[Watch the video >](#)



FAQs

Answers to common questions about the Standard

[View all FAQs >](#)



Spotlight on the Standard

A short backgrounder

[Read the Spotlight >](#)



Summary of the Standard

A quick-reference guide to what's in the Standard

[Read the summary >](#)



Getting Buy-in: PowerPoint

A short, customizable presentation on the Standard to help you get buy-in within your institution

[Download the slides >](#)



CSA CORE Resources

Check out Section 5.2 for resources to support institutional-level activities.

CHECK OUT SECTION 5.2

First

NEXT: Assess and Plan

Once you've started your journey toward aligning with the Standard, the next step is developing a clearer sense of your current situation – what's unique to your institution, the mental health and well-being of your students, and other factors – and starting to build your plans and strategies for implementation.



Suggested Actions

Some things you can do to assess your current situation and make a plan:

- 1 Review your current policies.** Identify existing policies that support student mental health and well-being – such as those related to sexual harassment, suicide prevention, accommodation, and substance use – and understand how these could contribute to improved mental health and be modified to reduce undue stress and anxiety for students.
- 2 Gather data.** Collect data from as many sources and on as many factors and elements as possible, and gather the details of your current policies, services, resources, programs, and student outcomes.
- 3 Set priorities and actions.** See what your data is telling you. Analyze it for patterns and opportunities. Based on what you find, set priorities and goals, then determine what actions are needed to achieve them.
- 4 Create a communications plan.** Beyond direct project stakeholders, you'll need the support of your entire post-secondary community. A communications plan can help you get the message out about what you're doing, why you're doing it, and how everyone can help.
- 5 Think about the students' experience.** Navigating a school's administrative processes can be a challenge for students seeking support – for example, how to access mental health services or arrange for an accommodation. Map out those journeys from beginning to end and identify ways to make the steps more accessible, supportive, safe, and inclusive.

Next

Key Considerations

Consider all Policies

As you look at current policies, go beyond those explicitly related to mental health (such as accommodation policies). Other policies – for example, on exam grading, attendance, course registrations/withdrawals – can have an indirect impact on mental health and should be included in your review.

Think Beyond “Resources”

While time, money, and people are all usually needed to propel new initiatives, resources can be scarce. But you can also gain traction without major investments, sometimes just by

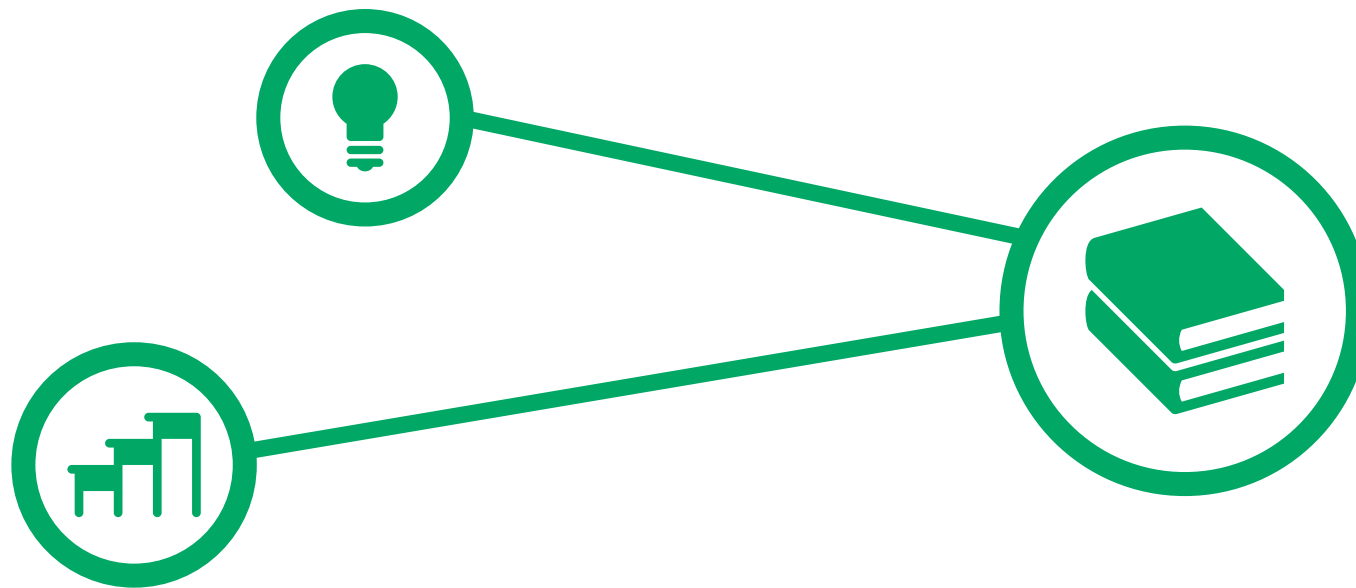
changing *how* you do things. Look for ways to streamline or optimize the investments you’ve already made by collaborating across services or making other small adjustments. Many institutions find that they’re already doing more with their investments than they even realized.

Focus on Transition Points

Transitioning from high school to post-secondary school, between programs and degree levels, or from graduation into the workforce are often the most stressful points in students’ lives. Providing guidance to students, who may be struggling as they navigate these changes, can be key.

Mental Health for All

If your institution is implementing or familiar with the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, it can be a helpful reference for inspiring your journey with the Standard and, where possible, for considering strategies to reinforce or create a universal culture of mental health and well-being for all members in your post-secondary community.



Next

“ A lot of implementation is about *connecting the dots* between the services and programs that already exist and then *filling the gaps*. ”

Healthy workplace administrator



Toolbox

Sample Internal Audit Tool

Use this comprehensive tool – from the Standard in a fillable PDF format – to gain insight into the mental health needs of your students.

[Check out the tool >](#)



Workplace Standard

Learn more about the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* to complement your student mental health and well-being activities.

[Read the Workplace Standard >](#)



COMING SOON – Self-assessment Tool

Watch for updates to this starter kit! This new tool will help you align with the Standard by walking you through a systemic assessment of your strengths and areas for improvement.



CSA CORE Resources

Check out Section 5.3 for resources to support planning activities.

CHECK OUT SECTION 5.3

Next

ONGOING: Implement, Evaluate, and Continuously Improve

Your team is in place, your plan is in development. It's time to start putting things into motion: Introduce your new policies, launch your new programs, and track your results so you can adjust them as you go.



Suggested Actions

Some steps you can take to implement your plan:

1 Leverage existing policies, processes and programs. Fine-tune your institution's existing mental health resources to align them with the Standard. If you've already implemented the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, apply any lessons learned to the implementation of the *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*.

2 Provide training for staff and faculty. Change can be challenging at the best of times. But when circumstances, requirements, and expectations fluctuate – as they have during the COVID-19 pandemic – the uncertainty can create even more stress. Under these conditions, staff and faculty may be especially resistant to or nervous about changes or new processes.

Training can ease a lot of those concerns by helping people understand what's behind the adjustments and reorienting them toward what's now expected. Likewise, regular refreshers will keep teams up to date on any new developments, remind them of things they may have forgotten, and ensure that you deliver consistent messaging across your school.

3 Build in privacy and confidentiality. Understand your institutional and legal requirements around information privacy and confidentiality and make sure they're embedded in how you implement the Standard.

4 Create an evaluation plan. Based on the goals you set, identify the key data indicators to track, determine your desired outcomes, and establish your targets for improvement. Set a schedule for measuring indicators and create a committee to gather and assess the data – one that includes diverse student representatives.

5 Review results and adjust. If something's working well, see if you can apply that success in other areas. If something's *not* working, consider how to make it better – with input from students, faculty, and staff.

6 Share your results. Plan to report your results to your internal community and external community, as appropriate in keeping with your privacy and confidentiality policies. The aim is not to compare your institution to others but rather to contribute to sector-wide continuous improvement and better student outcomes.

Ongoing

Key Considerations

Break Down Silos

Look for ways to increase the communication and alignment among internal structures that impact student mental health and well-being at your institution. These may include mechanisms to coordinate mental health activities and supports across student and staff groups – for example, a shared events calendar to help ensure that school-wide events complement each other and build momentum.

Expand Your Definition of Mental Health Support

Every student is unique and has their own mental health support needs. Not everyone experiencing mental health issues needs formal counselling from a trained mental health professional. Sometimes, an informal chat with a peer supporter, time with a therapy animal, a guided relaxation activity, or a few hours in a dedicated common space away from everyday stresses can make a big difference. During COVID-19, some schools have established online forums to continue offering such a casual community environment and help students connect. Such initiatives won't replace formal treatment for the students who need it, but they can help foster a sense of community and belonging.

Engage All Staff and Faculty

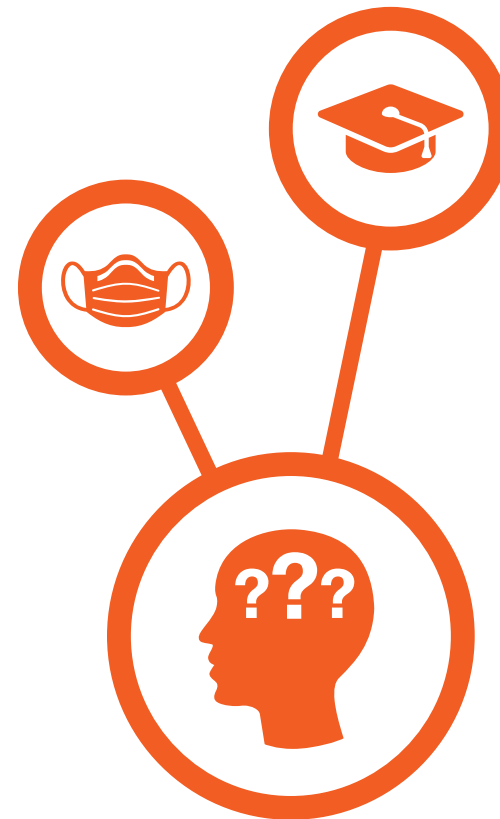
Consider your institution's different staffing and compensation structures and how these relate to training and development. See if there are ways to incentivize training or structure opportunities for everyone – such as hosting a short-format session to cover the key highlights of your initiatives. Focusing on key points can help to ensure that staff members feel their time is being well spent.

Take Care of Your International Students

Due to COVID-19, many international students have returned to their home countries for the foreseeable future. As a result, students may no longer have access to the supports or services they used when physically present. Look for ways to continue supporting them, such as reaching out to mental health service providers in their home countries or expanding the coverage region for the health insurance you offer.

Look to Your Community

Some institutions are located near community supports that can benefit student mental health and well-being. Art therapy groups, support groups, and other community partners can often bring services to students, on campus (or may offer virtual services during the pandemic).



Ongoing

“ Student mental health isn’t a one-off project.
It’s an ongoing commitment that extends
beyond implementation. ”

Counselling and accessibility services administrator



Toolbox



Post-secondary Mental Health Strategies

Links to other institutions’ mental health strategies for ideas and best practices

[Visit the website >](#)



What’s Changed With COVID-19

A two-page summary on how the pandemic has affected post-secondary approaches to student mental health

[Read the summary >](#)



CSA CORE Resources

Check out Sections 5.4 and 5.5 for resources to support the creation of mental health frameworks and evaluation plans.

[VIEW SECTIONS 5.4 AND 5.5](#)



Measurement Surveys

To help you assess student mental health at your institution and measure your progress

[Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey >](#)

[National College Health Assessment – Canadian Reference >](#)

[National Survey of Student Engagement >](#)



Implementation Infographic

A one-page graphic showing the stages of implementation, with details on what each entails

[View the infographic >](#)

Ongoing

An Important Step Toward Student Mental Health and Well-being

Awareness about post-secondary students' mental health needs has perhaps never been greater. With the ***National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students***, and its supporting resources, institutions will have more guidance and knowledge than ever before to meet them – in the current COVID-19 context and beyond.

The Standard recognizes that this work is a journey of continuous improvement, and that every institution has its own starting point. Its flexible and adaptable framework meets your institution where it's at, and its phased approach makes focusing on your top priorities easy.

We hope the Starter Kit has helped you to begin aligning with the Standard. As your journey moves forward, we invite you to become a member of the [CSA CORE community](#) and take full advantage of the available support, resources, and insights.

BECOME A MEMBER



Conclusion

Tools and Resources

We've collected all Starter Kit resources and links in one place to help you find what you need – and get started!

Links

By Stage

FIRST

[The Complete Standard >](#)

[Video on the Standard >](#)

[FAQs >](#)

[Getting buy-in PowerPoint >](#)

[CSA CORE resources >](#)

[Spotlight on the Standard >](#)

[Summary of the Standard >](#)

NEXT

[Workplace Standard >](#)

[CSA CORE resources >](#)

SRDC self-assessment tool (coming soon!)

ONGOING

[Post-secondary mental health strategies >](#)

Measurement surveys:

[Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey >](#)

[National College Health Assessment – Canadian Reference >](#)

[National Survey of Student Engagement >](#)

[CSA CORE resources >](#)

[What's Changed with COVID-19 >](#)

[Implementation Infographic >](#)





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Starter Kit:

For the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

TOOL: SUMMARY OF THE STANDARD

Quick-reference Summary

National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

A concise overview of the Standard, why it's important and what's in it.

The *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students* is the world's first standard to help post-secondary institutions support positive mental health and well-being for students. Its voluntary guidelines were developed by an expert technical committee and informed by dialogue with students, administrators, service providers, health agencies, governments, and individuals with lived and living experience of mental illness from across the country.

Why this Standard

Three out of every four mental health problems have been first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many are in or just out of post-secondary education. More than half of all students surveyed in the 2019 National College Health Assessment said they had experienced feeling depressed to the point of finding it hard to function. Nearly 70% had felt overwhelmed by anxiety – and almost 90% said they had felt overwhelmed by everything they were expected to do.

Post-secondary institutions in Canada have done a lot of work to implement student mental health strategies and initiatives: now with a voluntary systematic pan-Canadian framework for sharing knowledge-based best practices, there's a chance to work toward even more positive outcomes for more people.

Benefits of Implementing the Standard

The Standard is expected to help institutions:

- Raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental illness
- Improve connection and belonging within their learning communities
- Increase on- and off-campus access to student supports
- Promote life and resilience skills for school, work and daily life
- Provide healthier and safer learning environments
- Improve opportunities for student success



Download the *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students* from the CSA Group.

DOWNLOAD



What's in the Standard?

The Standard is adaptable for any post-secondary institution: each can decide what is achievable given its specific situation, resources and local or community context, and each can set its own priorities. Using a knowledge-informed framework, the Standard creates a platform for key messages while helping an institution focus its energy and resources on assessing capacity and priorities. Here's a quick overview of the actionable areas:

FIRST

Leadership

Recommended actions:

- Demonstrate ongoing and visible commitment to the Standard
- Dedicate resources to implementation
- Oversee and promote implementation
- Set measurable objectives and evaluate progress against them

Policy and Practice

Recommended actions:

- Review existing policies with a mental health and well-being lens
- Make it a requirement to consider mental health in all future policies and decisions
- Include student mental health in strategic goals, planning, resource allocation decisions and community relationships

NEXT

Stakeholder Engagement

Recommended actions:

- Keep in contact with all stakeholders, including students
- Work with student unions, associations and groups (including equity-seeking groups)
- Involve students in all evaluation processes
- Share results with students
- Get meaningful input from diverse groups of students

Planning

Recommended actions:

- Gather data on psychosocial, institutional and other factors; student needs; and the current state of policies, services, resources, programs and student outcomes
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Set priorities, goals, objectives and targets, as well as applicable actions
- Report on progress

Strategy Development

Recommended actions:

- Create a supportive, safe and inclusive environment
- Increase literacy and reduce stigma through training, campaigns and culturally inclusive mental health awareness activities
- Set clear and consistent policies to ensure accessibility and accommodations
- Promote early recognition of distress and intervention
- Offer a range of mental health supports
- Coordinate services across all service areas

ONGOING

Privacy and Confidentiality

Recommended actions:

- Ensure all interactions with students respect privacy and confidentiality principles and laws
- Share no private and personal health information without informed consent, except as required by law

Tracking your Progress

Recommended actions:

- Create an evaluation plan with clear structure, process and outcome indicators
- Ensure the plan includes a process for reporting and sharing the results

Improvement

Recommended actions:

- Evaluate continuously
- Review results and make improvements
- Share contextualized results and knowledge with your internal community.
- Share knowledge and best practices to support the continuous improvement of the broader post-secondary community

For the full details, download the *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*.

DOWNLOAD



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Starter Kit: **For the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students**

TOOL: LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19

What's Changed with COVID-19

The first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic brought uncertainty on many fronts for post-secondary students: about classes, graduation, living situations and physical health. Some had to continue working at high-risk jobs or return to unsafe living situations. Others who are also parents have had to contend with the added challenges of managing their children's at-home education. For those already facing mental health problems or illnesses, the pandemic added a whole new layer of stress and anxiety.

Canadian post-secondary institutions are continuing their efforts to support students in the pandemic context. Here are some of the lessons they've learned:

Communication Matters More than Ever

Having access to clear, timely information can go a long way toward easing student stress and uncertainty. Some institutions have increased their outreach with:

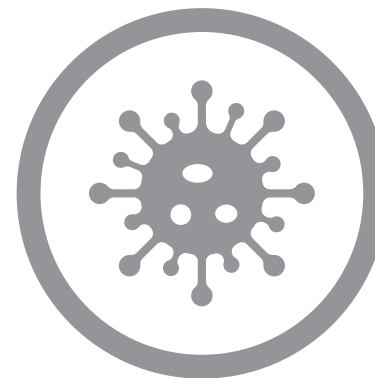
- Dedicated COVID-19 web pages and regular e-newsletters
- Specific information on institutional and community mental health resources and links to information from public health authorities
- Guidance about risky behaviours the pandemic may give rise to (such as overconsuming alcohol, using drugs alone, reusing needles, etc.)
- Virtual town hall meetings as well as casual online "drop-ins" where students can connect without any specific agenda

Online Platforms Require New Approaches

Online meeting platforms have been essential to the continuity of classes, meetings, counselling services and other typically in-person activities. It's important to leverage their strengths – and be mindful of their weaknesses:

- Some students prefer online classes and services because they're convenient, eliminate travel time and more. But it's harder to maintain strong, trusting connections through a screen, which could dissuade some students from participating in online offerings. It may be important to think creatively about how to offer a mix that meets the broadest set of needs, as possible.

- In an online format, some of the in-person cues that indicate a student may be struggling or in distress are less apparent. Schools may choose to offer training that helps faculty, instructors and other meeting leaders adapt to these new ways of working and interacting.



It's Hard to Support Students When Physical Campuses Are Closed

With many post-secondary institutions moving to online instruction, and with several residences at least partially closed, students who used to have access to on-campus supports may now be elsewhere. For those remaining in the same province, switching to online supports is straightforward and doesn't affect access or insurance coverage. But for those even one province over – or on the other side of the globe – accessing the services they need can be a challenge.

- Some institutions say some Canadian regulators and insurers have been flexible about allowing cross-jurisdictional continuity for students who had been receiving campus-based services. But it's not yet clear what kind of access will be available to students who haven't previously used campus mental health services.
- Some institutions have been trying to build their networks with mental health service providers abroad so they can connect international students with supports in their home countries.
- Others are looking at expanding the coverage region for the health insurance they offer so students can get services wherever they are.

Adaptability Is Key

Because of the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, there is little or no existing guidance on how to navigate it.

- Institutions are all engaged in their own problem-solving efforts – “building the scaffolding while standing on it”. That requires a lot of agility and flexibility.
- While every post-secondary institution is different, many of the COVID-19 challenges are common, as is the ultimate aim: to support the mental health and well-being of students. Finding ways to share experiences, what works and what doesn't can help move the whole community toward that goal.

- Post-secondary institutions can share experiences and resources and access additional guidance in the COVID-19 section of the [CSA Community's Centre of Outreach, Resources and Engagement](#).

For more guidance on supporting student mental health, download *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*

DOWNLOAD





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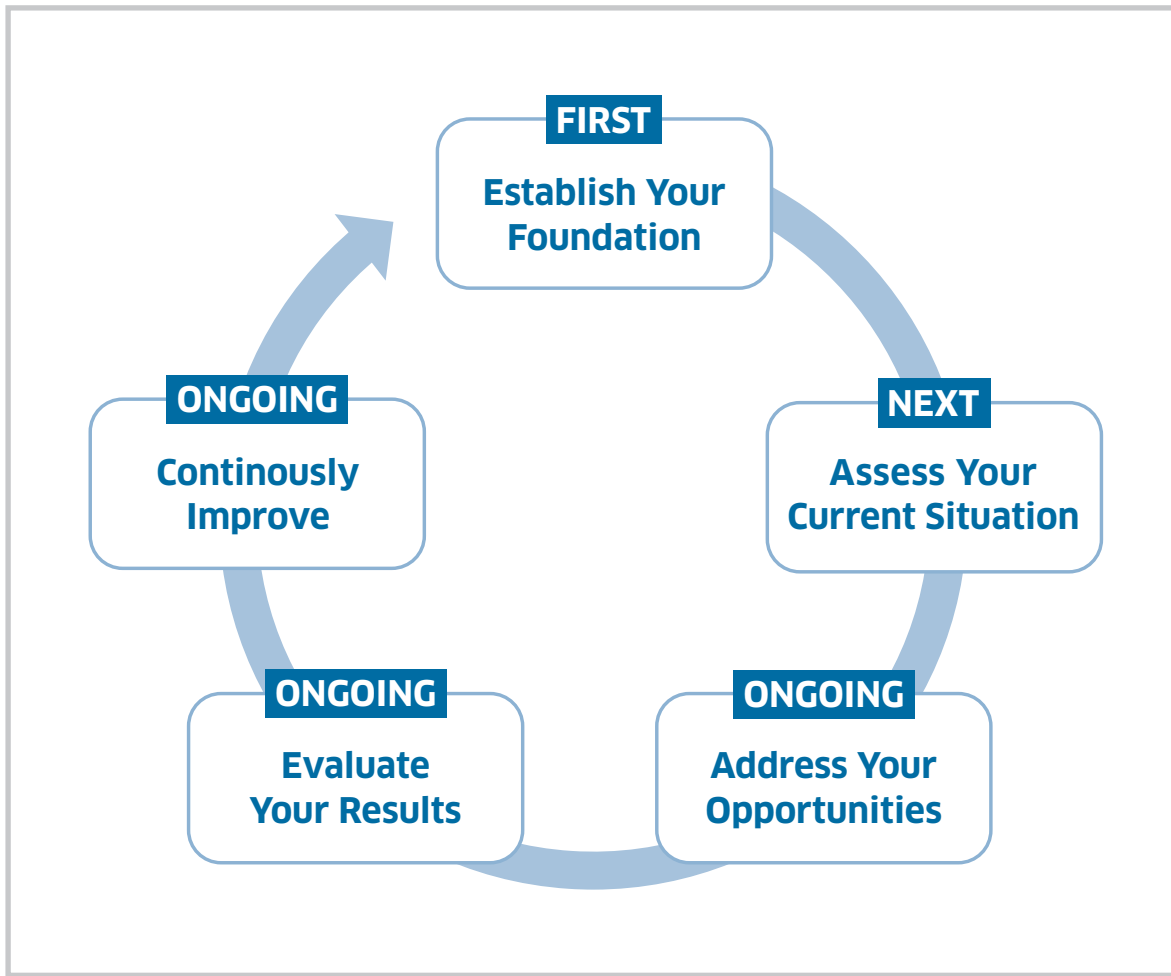
Starter Kit:

For the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

TOOL: THE STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Stages of Implementation

Aligning with any standard is a journey that requires good planning and often a flexible, multi-year approach. The **National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students** is designed to follow a five-stage framework that starts with establishing a foundation and builds to continuous improvement.



STEPS

Related actionable areas in the Standard*

FIRST

Establish your foundation

A strong foundation starts with getting the right buy-in to carry your initiative forward. Depending on your institution, you might need the support of senior administrators, students, faculty, campus service providers or others. Buy-in comes when people understand why mental health matters and how the Standard can help.

Leadership (5.2.2)

Commitment, policy and practices (5.2.3)

NEXT

Assess your current situation

The best plans are informed by data, such as the current state of student mental health at your institution, the services and programs you have in place now, and opportunities for improvement. With that information, you can identify opportunities, set priorities and develop a plan based on the framework proposed by the Standard.

Stakeholder participation and engagement (5.2.5)

Planning (5.3)

Components of a socio-ecological based framework for mental health and well-being (5.4)

ONGOING

Address your opportunities

Start putting your plan into action: developing new policies or reviewing existing ones using a mental health lens, or launching programs, services and other initiatives that will help you support and promote student mental health and well-being.

Confidentiality (5.2.4)

Evaluation and reporting (5.5)

Continuous improvement (6.1)

Track your results

Choosing key performance indicators to measure and tracking them regularly will help you identify what's working to achieve the results you're looking for, and what areas still need improvement.

Continuously improve

Based on your data, emerging evidence and best practices, you can make changes to your programs, policies and services.

*Numbers indicate the related section/clause in the Standard.



CSA Z2003:20 *Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students* Project Update – September 2020

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), in collaboration with CSA Group (as the standards development organization), has championed the development of the CSA Z2003:20, *Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students* standard. This standard is the first of its kind in the world drawing on expertise, including [scoping research](#) as well as cross-country dialogues with students, administrators, service providers, health agencies, governments, and individuals with lived and living experience of mental illness. Together, these diverse voices build on the exceptional work of Canada's post-secondary institutions and aspire for further actions through principle-led approaches.

Post-secondary student mental health is a critical issue

More than three in four mental illnesses are first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 25 – a time when many are studying at the post-secondary level. The 2019 National College Health Assessment by the American College Health Association found that 52 per cent of post-secondary students in Canada felt so depressed it was difficult to function (an increase from 46 per cent in 2016). About 69 per cent reported feeling overwhelmed by anxiety (up four per cent since 2016). While many post-secondary institutions have been diligent in implementing student mental health and well-being strategies and initiatives in their learning communities, sharing knowledge-based, best practices through a systematic pan-Canadian framework can lead to further benefits.

The standard

CSA Z2003:20 *Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students* is the world's first standard in this area. Based on holistic and upstream approaches, the standard is voluntary and is meant to influence, shape, and set benchmarks for creating healthy and safe environments among post-secondary institutions and communities.

These voluntary guidelines support the following outcomes:

- raise awareness around mental health and decrease mental illness-related stigma
- greater levels of relational connection and sense of belonging within the learning community
- increase access to student supports, on and off campus
- promote life and resiliency skills students can use at school, work, and in daily life
- provide healthier and safer institutional environments
- improve opportunities for student success and flourishing.

The standard is adaptable for any post-secondary institution: each can decide what is achievable given its specific situation, resources, and the local or community context, and each can determine priorities based on their most pressing opportunity or challenge. Using a knowledge-informed framework, the standard creates a platform for key

messages and priority setting while helping an institution focus its energy and resources on assessing capacity and priorities. The standard is underpinned by a commitment to continuous improvement; regardless of where an institution starts, improvements can be made to student mental health and well-being over time.

Supporting the standard is an online resource centre that includes a compendium of additional guidance for the community, access to the [Best Practices Network in Canadian Higher Education](#), and other resources, models, and tools, including a CSA Z2003 internal audit instrument.

Supporting Resources and Tools

CSA Community online resource centre

Enabling access, implementation, and ongoing dialogue with the community by

- providing access to complimentary copies of the standard
- hosting access to a template for the CSA Z2003 Annex A: Sample internal audit tool
- sharing additional guidance on many topics, including policy, executive sponsors, privacy and confidentiality, learning environment strategies, data gathering and evaluation, crisis management and postvention, and aligning efforts with [CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013: Psychological health and safety in the workplace](#) standard.

Responding to student and institutional needs

The standard responds to the mental health complexities in the post-secondary community. It provides institutions with a broad range of solutions to foster the conditions in which students can flourish in terms of student success including their health, safety and wellbeing. The CSA Technical Committee that developed the standard is composed of a balanced matrix of technical and subject matter experts across relevant interest groups.

From the Introduction...

This standard presents an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to affirm their commitment to promote positive student mental health and well-being. Achieving this requires an approach based on compassion and informed by human rights. This Standard is an instrument to ignite further action. With recognition of the complex and varying needs of Canadian post-secondary institutions, the Technical Committee sought to provide guidance with an emphasis on continuous improvement to address the factors relevant to the mental health and well-being of post-secondary students. In undertaking this journey, post-secondary institutions will strengthen their contributions to the cultural, ecological, social, and economic sustainability of their communities and wider society. By embedding mental health and well-being into learning environments, everyday operations, business practices, policies, and academic mandates, post-secondary institutions will inspire lifelong learning and foster more creative and innovative communities.

Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility. Post-secondary institutions cannot meet this growing challenge alone. An approach to supporting student mental health and well-being that encompasses all students, faculty, and staff within the post-secondary community, in addition to all stakeholders in the broader community, is vital.

Post-secondary institutions and students can utilize this Standard to bolster the co-creation of opportunities for students to develop competencies about, and capabilities that support, their health and wellness, address barriers to wellness which exist as part of the institution and its community, as well as offer a variety of services, programs, and policies to support the existing and emerging needs of students.

As we work to create safer and more supportive post-secondary communities across this country, and inspire action across the globe, the Technical Committee seeks to underline the need to work in respectful collaboration with Canada's diverse communities from coast to coast to coast. We recognize that this Standard has been developed and will be applied on traditional lands of Indigenous communities. This reality informs the work and initiatives put forth in the Standard, as we endeavour to support the health and success of all students. Embedded throughout the underlying principles and approach of this Standard is a celebration of the strength and power of students who showed up despite the obstacles and challenges in their path, to tell stories, and transform post-secondary environments into more inclusive and more equitable spaces where all students can flourish.

It is highly recommended that users of this Standard consider and integrate CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013, Psychological health and safety in the workplace — Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation for the staff and faculty of the institution. Addressing the mental health and well-being of staff and faculty working within post-secondary institutions is necessary to support an authentic movement for student mental health and well-being.

Scope

This Standard provides a foundation for a socio-ecological framework for the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of policies, programs, environments, and initiatives, including

- a) *promotion of student well-being through enhancement or creation of sustainable environments which reduce modifiable stressors or risk factors;*
- b) *recommendations for a systemic or holistic approach which include*
 - *addressing institutional level activities (e.g., leadership, commitment, confidentiality, and stakeholder participation and engagement);*
 - *psychosocial factors linked to mental health and well-being;*
 - *post-secondary environments;*
 - *literacy, education, and stigma reduction;*
 - *accessibility;*
 - *early intervention, mental health supports, and suicide prevention; and*
 - *crisis management and postvention;*
- c) *articulation of roles and responsibilities;*
- d) *protective factors to consider; and*
- e) *indicators to measure success.*

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EXCERPT - Annex A (informative)

Sample internal audit tool

Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students



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du Canada



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Standards Update Service

CSA Z2003:20

July 2020

Title: *Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students*

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CSA Z2003:20 Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students

EXCERPT - Annex A (informative) ·

Sample internal audit tool ·



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Annex A (informative)

Sample internal audit tool

Notes:

- 1) This Annex is not a mandatory part of this Standard.
- 2) This Annex is based on Annex E from CAN/CSA-Z1003/BNQ 9700-803. It has been modified to address the requirements and guidance within this Standard. For the purposes of this audit tool, the term “organization” refers to a post-secondary institution.

A.1

Table [A.1](#) is a sample audit tool that may be used by organizations to conduct internal audits. This audit tool may be modified to suit the size, nature, and complexity of the organization. The audit tool may also function as a “gap analysis” tool to highlight those areas that require further work to meet the requirements of this Standard.

Most organizations that implement this Standard will do so over a period of time. This Standard addresses different aspects of the subject at three levels:

- a) requirements (expressed with “shall” throughout the body of this Standard), which are mandatory aspects that are required in order to implement this Standard;
- b) recommendations (expressed with “should” throughout the body of this Standard), which suggest aspects that are deemed valuable for full implementation of this Standard, but not at the same level of requirements; and
- c) options which reflect best practices and are considered as “nice to have” parts of the socio-ecological framework for mental health and well-being.

The column labelled “Level” in Table [A.1](#) indicates those audit questions that relate to the item categories “a”, “b”, and “c”.

Note: The sample internal audit template might not include all the details included in the referenced clause.

Table A.1
Sample organizational audit tool
 (See Clause [A.1.](#))

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| Clause 5.2.2 — Leadership | | | | | |
| 5.2.2.1 Executive sponsor The senior management and/or executive sponsor shall cultivate ongoing and sustained leadership and instill accountability for student mental health and well-being. | a | | | | |
| 5.2.2.2 Responsibilities People in senior management roles shall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) oversee and promote the development and implementation of the institution's framework; b) following the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion; support and reinforce the inclusion of all members of the post-secondary community in the implementation and promotion of the framework; c) develop and implement measurable objectives and targets related to this Standard, and regularly review (annually) and internally report on the institution's progress and performance in implementing this Standard; d) endorse and support the institution's framework, communicate key messages, and drive and sustain action across the institution; e) allocate resources (financial and human resources) to support student-centred initiatives that support mental health and well-being, as outlined in the framework; f) monitor the execution and ongoing sustainability of the framework; and g) ensure that the decision-making processes of the institution prioritize the mental health and well-being of students; and h) regularly review and respond to performance results. | a | | | | |
| Clause 5.2.3 — Commitment, policy, and practices | | | | | |
| 5.2.3.1 Strategic approach The policies and practices that support student mental health and well-being should inform the institution's strategic goals, planning, resource allocation decisions, and appropriate community relationships. As many post-secondary institutions in Canada are already on a journey towards reconciliation, this lens should also be incorporated in mental health and well-being policies | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| and practices for Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and administration. | | | | | |
| 5.2.3.2 Mental health and well-being lens The post-secondary institution shall implement a process to review existing policies with a student mental health and well-being lens and be informed by the guiding principles outlined in Clause 4.2. | a | | | | |
| 5.2.3.3 Commitment The post-secondary institution shall determine appropriate mechanisms that demonstrate their commitment to student mental health and well-being and the development and implementation of a systemic and holistic approach that supports student mental health. The institution shall ensure that these mechanisms are approved by senior leadership and the governing body (where applicable). | a | | | | |
| 5.2.3.4 Policy The approved mechanism shall be based on the institutional commitments to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) establish, promote, and maintain a framework in accordance with this Standard; b) align with the mission, ethics, and stated values of the institution; c) comply with all applicable human rights requirements and accessibility legislation, such as accommodation of students with disabilities; d) establish and implement a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the framework and implement changes as necessary; e) delegate authority necessary to assess, implement, and evaluate an effective framework; f) ensure that all members of the post-secondary community are actively encouraged to participate in the development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the framework; g) provide the required resources to develop, implement, evaluate, and maintain the framework; and h) recognize that it is everyone's responsibility to promote and enhance a supportive learning environment consistent with the principles of mutual respect, confidentiality, and cooperation. | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| Clause 5.2.4 — Confidentiality | | | | | |
| 5.2.4.1 Principles and intended outcomes Interactions with students shall be undertaken with a clear appreciation of the principles of privacy and confidentiality which apply to the entire post-secondary community and community partners, including but not limited to, administrators, faculty, staff, Elders, and substance use and addiction counsellors. All interactions with students should adhere to the specific provincial, territorial and federal legal privacy requirements. [See full clause for details.] | a | | | | |
| 5.2.4.2 Informed consent The institution and those representing the institution shall respect students' rights to confidentiality and ensure informed consent before sharing private and personal health information, with the exception of what is required by applicable law. | a | | | | |
| Clause 5.2.5 — Stakeholder participation and engagement | | | | | |
| 5.2.5 Stakeholder participation and engagement To ensure such participation, the post-secondary institution should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) engage stakeholders, including any community supports and providers, in active regular dialogue that facilitates understanding of stakeholders' needs, goals, and limitations; b) collaborate with student associations, student unions and student groups (including equity seeking groups such as but not limited to: racialized students and 2SLGBTQ+ students) to increase student participation in the development of the institution's framework and its review; c) promote inclusion of students involved in multiple aspects of student life; d) actively involve students in the evaluation process through the use of recognized methods and instruments such as focus groups, surveys, validated measurement tools, and audits; e) ensure that the results generated by the evaluation process and the resulting action plans are effectively communicated within the institution's post-secondary community (where applicable); and | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| f) ensure active and meaningful participation from all groups representing and reflecting the diversity of students, including those with lived experience and students from equity-seeking groups across post-secondary institutions, such as, but not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Indigenous students; ii) students with disabilities; and iii) international students. <p>Note: <i>The institution may establish different degrees of participation for different groups within post-secondary community.</i></p> | | | | | |
| Clause 5.3 — Planning | | | | | |
| 5.3.1 General The key change management steps should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) gathering assessment data to establish an institutional baseline or current state (see Clause 5.3.3) with an emphasis on assessing the psychosocial factors (see Clause 5.3.2); b) identifying strengths, problems, gaps, and opportunities [e.g., through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis]; c) setting of priorities, goals, objectives, and targets; d) determining strategies and interventions; e) building capacity to deliver strategies and interventions (e.g., through the application of a management system Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle); and f) reporting on progress of outcomes for approved strategies and interventions using the data collected (see Clauses 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.3.2 — Assessment of psychosocial factors | | | | | |
| 5.3.2.2 Assessment The post-secondary institution shall conduct an assessment of psychosocial factors. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.2.3 Institutional factors Factors to assess should include, but are not limited to, the following institutional factors, which might be influenced by dynamics between systems within the socio-ecological model, and that impact the mental | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| <p>health and well-being of post-secondary students (see Figure 4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) institutional culture and community (including substance use, social pressures, racism and discrimination, and other aspects contributing to the post-secondary environment); b) mental health supports; c) clear leadership and expectations; d) student engagement; e) equity, diversity, and inclusion; f) evaluation and academic success; g) civility and respect; h) pedagogy and learning environment strategies; i) financial and work obligations; j) safeguard from all forms of violence; k) cultural and spiritual safety, supports, and practices; and l) other chronic stressors as identified by students. | | | | | |
| <p>5.3.2.4 Other factors In addition to assessing institutional factors, the post-secondary institution should assess individual and interpersonal factors that safeguard mental health and well-being and include, but are not limited to,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ability to cope and manage stress (resilience); b) accessibility; c) colonialism and reconciliation; d) emotional, physical, and mental self-esteem; e) experience and confidence in managing multiple demands; f) family support; g) financial confidence and stability; h) health promotion (e.g., self-care, healthy eating, sleep, exercise, and recreation); i) historical and intergenerational trauma; j) positive interpersonal interactions; k) problem-solving and help-seeking; l) social support (e.g., peer, community); and m) spiritual care. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.3.3 — Gathering data | | | | | |
| <p>5.3.3.1 Student needs The post-secondary institution shall gather data on the specific needs of students related to mental health and well-being, and shall identify strengths, problems, gaps,</p> | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| and opportunities for continuous improvement and to set priorities for action. | | | | | |
| 5.3.3.2 Methods The institution shall establish a data gathering process using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. The degree of detail required will depend upon the complexity of the institution, the reasonable accessibility of reliable data, and the decision-making needs of the institution. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.3.3 Compliance Any collection of data shall comply with all privacy requirements, legislation, institutional ethics approvals, collective agreements, and policies. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.3.4 Records The institution shall keep a record of the data collected and of the methods used in data collection. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.3.5 Current state This stage should include assessment of current policies, services, resources, programs, and student outcomes across three socio-ecological levels: individual, institutional, and community. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.3.4 — Objectives and targets | | | | | |
| 5.3.4.2 Documentation The post-secondary institution shall document its framework's objectives and targets for the various functions and departments in the institution. The objectives and targets shall be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) measurable; b) consistent with the institution's approach to mental health and well being (see Clause 5.2.3), in compliance with legal requirements, accountabilities, and other requirements, and have a commitment to continuous improvement; c) based on past reviews, including past performance measures and any mental health data; d) based on the results of the data collection, psychosocial factors, and key opportunities for improvement that have been identified; e) determined after consultation with the post-secondary community employing an intersectional lens; f) aligned with the institution's operational and business requirements; and | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| g) reviewed and modified in planned intervals and according to changing information and conditions, as appropriate. | | | | | |
| 5.3.4.3 Allocation The post-secondary institution shall identify and allocate necessary resources and means to achieve its objectives and targets. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.4.4 Improvement The institution should consider objectives and targets that reinforce existing strengths and promote new opportunities for improving the mental health and well-being of the post-secondary community. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.3.5 — Action plans | | | | | |
| 5.3.5 Action plans The post-secondary institution shall establish and maintain an action plan which is inclusive, informed through student engagement, and reflective of a systemic approach for achieving its objectives and targets. | a | | | | |
| 5.3.5 Action plans The plan should include a) the designation of responsibility for achieving objectives and targets; b) identification of the means and time frame within which the objectives and targets are to be achieved; c) clarification of objectives, outcomes, and evaluation; d) anticipation and connection to internal/ external drivers and forging of links to relevant expertise; e) links to local, provincial, territorial, and national partners; f) aligning with relevant local, provincial, territorial, national, or international standards and accreditation criteria; g) mobilization of students in implementing the action plans; and h) links to internal stakeholders and post-secondary community members. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.2 — Supportive, safe, and inclusive post-secondary environment | | | | | |
| 5.4.2.2 Physical environment | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| <p>Creating a supportive, safe, and inclusive physical learning environment should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) creating a vibrant, accessible, and functional environment that serves the needs of the post-secondary institution's community; b) having comfortable and inviting physical and social spaces with opportunities for students to connect meaningfully and create community in institutional activities; c) physical spaces that encourage social connection, collaboration, and active learning among students and community members; d) providing spaces that highlight connections to the land and incorporating nature into interior spaces to enhance health and well-being; e) designs that are as flexible as possible in order to adapt to diverse needs and activities, and anticipate innovations in pedagogy and technology; f) accessible and inclusive spaces that support active and healthy lifestyles; g) spaces that demonstrate an accessible and inclusive design approach, incorporate effective access and control for people of all intersectionalities, and enhance sense of place; and h) creating spaces for diverse cultural practices and ceremonies, including but not limited to smudging, ablution, and multi-faith rooms. | | | | | |
| <p>5.4.2.3 Learning environment Creating a supportive, safe, and inclusive learning environment should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) mentorship and student life programs, as well as supports for broader social determinants of health; b) inclusion of accessible learning principles throughout the curriculum; c) resources the learning community to promote equity, diversity, inclusivity, and anti-oppression; d) information about, and access to, spiritual and cultural communities, as well as culturally appropriate mental health and well-being supports for students; | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| e) academic programs that integrate opportunities for meaningful engagement and learning; f) processes that recognize and mitigate barriers for students with disabilities, such as informing students about their rights against prejudice and discrimination and their choice of mental health resources and supports; g) a culture that recognizes that the entire post-secondary community is responsible for the mental health and well-being of its members and that mental health affects learning; h) safeguards from all forms of violence, including but not limited to, racism, transphobia, bullying, and sexual assault; i) encourage empathy, kindness and civility; and j) the environment being informed by psychosocial factors and mitigating barriers (see Clause 5.3.2.3). | | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.3 — Literacy, education, and stigma reduction | | | | | |
| 5.4.3.2 Increasing competencies and understanding The post-secondary institution shall identify and deliver initiatives that promote an optimal mental health environment. | a | | | | |
| 5.4.3.2 Increasing competencies and understanding Recommended initiatives include, but are not limited to a) post-secondary community training on the social determinants of health and their impact on student learning and mental health; b) post-secondary community training on mental health literacy; c) post-secondary community training on harm reduction; d) implementing anti-stigma programming and campaigns; e) raising mental health awareness through programming and campaigns; f) consistent messaging promoting positive mental health across a range of communication channels; g) mental health awareness activities which are culturally inclusive; | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| h) an environment which encourages help-seeking and helping behaviours across the institutional community; i) increasing knowledge of community resources and services for mental health and well-being that are available to students; j) providing referral pathways to services and resources in the wider community and within the institution's community; and k) educating and equipping the post-secondary community to respond to early warning signs of mental health concerns and identify students who might need connection to resources and services. | | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.4 — Accessibility | | | | | |
| 5.4.4.2 Policies and procedures Post-secondary institutions shall develop clear and consistent accommodation policies and procedures for those students who disclose disabilities as well as those students with mental health concerns who might not yet have documentation. | a | | | | |
| 5.4.4.3 Key elements Key elements of these policies and procedures shall be consistent, transparent, use plain language, and be easily accessible to all members of the post-secondary community and should include a) reasonable modifications to policies and/or accommodations to remain in school; b) training and education for all post-secondary community members to help understand and apply these policies and procedures; c) clarification, clear communication, and coordinated implementation of required documentation to receive accommodations (e.g., medical notes as per legal requirements); d) available support during a critical event (individual) such as a mental health crisis or bereavement leave (e.g., securing permissions for deferred exams or assignments); and e) recognition of carers (caregivers) and available accommodations associated with their obligations. | a | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.5 — Early intervention | | | | | |
| 5.4.5.1 Recognition | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| Post-secondary institutions shall implement systems and programs to equip the post-secondary community with the knowledge to recognize, respond, and refer students who are exhibiting warning signs of mental health and well-being issues to appropriate resources and services. | | | | | |
| 5.4.5.2 Programs Early intervention approaches should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) programs and resources that encourage student agency and assist students to self-identify mental health needs and develop self-management skills at the student's discretion; b) navigators from the post-secondary community to help students connect to appropriate resources in mental health literacy to help recognize and respond to signs of declining mental health; c) creating space for students with disabilities; including but not limited to mental health challenges, and establishment of flexible pathways for resources; d) review of policies, processes, and resources to ensure they support values of student autonomy, equity, and inclusion; e) screening students for psychosocial needs when students seek primary care services, where appropriate; f) training for the post-secondary community to help recognize and respond to signs of declining mental health; g) providing consultative services and enhanced support to faculty and staff when they become aware of a student experiencing challenges who might need additional support; and h) helping students understand their rights to confidentiality and ensuring informed consent before sharing personal and personal health information. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.6 — Mental health supports | | | | | |
| 5.4.6.2 Equity Post-secondary institutions shall endeavor to provide or establish relationships with the broader community that facilitate and sustain equitable access to either the provision of, or connection to, financially accessible, culturally inclusive and safe, trauma and violence-informed mental health and well-being supports and affirmative care. | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| 5.4.6.3 Accessibility Mental health support services should be timely, coordinated, and accessible. These mental health supports may include institutional services, external providers, and/or community-based services | b | | | | |
| 5.4.6.3 Accessibility Support services and resources shall be communicated widely to students. | a | | | | |
| 5.4.6.4 Coordination These services should be streamlined and coordinated across the service areas to ensure that students are linked to the appropriate level of care. | b | | | | |
| 5.4.6.5 Approaches The development and maintenance of these services, designed in consultation with students, should support the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) be designed from a student-centred focus; b) provision of a range of supports along the mental health continuum, which are based on knowledge-informed, culturally inclusive practices; c) services which are sensitive and responsive to diverse needs, perspectives, and changing needs of students, including but not limited to, financial well-being (tuition and financial aid, food security, affordable housing); d) collaboration and partnerships with community mental health and addictions services, local hospitals, culturally appropriate service providers, spiritual leaders, Elders, student and assistance programs, and provincial and territorial networks; e) training on competencies for service providers to support equity-seeking groups; f) access to a broad range of services such as peer support, e-mental health, harm reduction, mindfulness, and sweat lodges; g) timely consultative services to administration, faculty, and staff to support specific student or program issues in accordance with provincial privacy and confidentiality legislation; h) where professional service providers are present, they are compliant with established professional standards and qualifications; | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|--|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| i) be supported through enhanced communication on availability of services and monitoring of outcomes; j) supporting the institutions journey to reconciliation by following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, institutions should recognize the distinct histories and resulting barriers; and k) programs and services that draw on the strengths and ways of knowing of Indigenous communities that provide mental health and wellbeing support for Indigenous students. | | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.6.6 — Suicide prevention Upstream efforts to provide suicide prevention awareness and resources for students are an effective way to reduce suicide attempts and suicide (World Health Organization, 2010). Post-secondary institutions should provide for suicide prevention initiatives, in the absence of crisis, and as a consistent effort. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.4.7 — Crisis management and postvention | | | | | |
| 5.4.7.2 Processes and protocols Post-secondary institutions shall develop, document, and sustain transparent processes/protocols for crisis management which include a) ongoing training and role clarity for post-secondary community on emergency procedures, crisis response, and postvention; b) awareness building about signs of mental health crisis; c) clear policies about protection of personal information and sharing of information; d) dissemination of information about services such as crisis hotlines; e) resources for post-secondary community to build their capacity to recognize, respond, and refer students in distress to appropriate services; f) efforts to support cross-training, communication, and coordination with community partners (e.g., first responders, emergency department, health care, security); g) identification of a post-secondary institution spokesperson responsible for engaging with media and/or other groups to address concerns; | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| h) information/programming for the post-secondary community impacted by critical incidents; i) review of legal and professional guidelines that can affect decision-making; j) resources to support a student and the broader community after a critical event (after a crisis); and k) the opportunity for responders to debrief and reflect following a critical incident. | | | | | |
| Clause 5.5 — Evaluation and reporting | | | | | |
| 5.5.1 General The post-secondary institution shall engage students and a broad range of stakeholders in the post-secondary community to determine (see Clause 5.2.5) a) what needs to be monitored and measured; b) the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid outcomes; c) the acceptance criteria to be used; d) when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed; e) when the outcomes from monitoring and measurement shall be analyzed and evaluated; and f) when and how the results will be disseminated to the relevant or affected community. | a | | | | |
| 5.5.2.1 Consideration The evaluation plan shall be considered throughout the planning and implementation stages. | a | | | | |
| 5.5.2.2 Structure, process, and outcome indicators The plan should include both process and outcome indicators, drawing on quantitative and qualitative information. | b | | | | |
| 5.5.2.3 Performance evaluation The post-secondary institution shall evaluate its performance and the effectiveness of the mental health and well-being framework. | a | | | | |
| 5.5.2.4 Improvement Post-secondary institutions should collect information about activities and outcomes of the strategies and interventions to inform efforts and to undertake future programming activities. Potential indicators may include indicators at various system levels: a) community and society; | b | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| b) institutional; and c) individual and interpersonal. <i>[See Clause 5.5.2.4 for specific indicators recommended at each system level.]</i> | | | | | |
| 5.5.2.5 Data sources Institutions should use data from various sources to better understand the needs of their student population and improve related programs and services. | b | | | | |
| Clause 5.5.3 — Institutional reporting | | | | | |
| 5.5.3.1 Dissemination The evaluation plan should include strategies for the dissemination and sharing of results with the post-secondary community and broader stakeholders as appropriate. | b | | | | |
| 5.5.3.2 Record retention The institution shall retain appropriate documented information as evidence of the monitoring, measurement, analysis, evaluation, and their outcomes. | a | | | | |
| Clause 6 — Continual improvement and sustaining efforts | | | | | |
| 6.1.2.1 Ongoing evaluation The post-secondary institution shall engage in a process of continuous improvement based on ongoing evaluation, sharing, and knowledge exchange with mental health and post-secondary communities. | a | | | | |
| 6.1.2.2 Shared results Contextualized results should be readily available and shared with all members of the internal post-secondary community. | b | | | | |
| 6.1.2.3 Outcomes The outcome of the evaluation/review process shall include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) opportunities for improvement and, where deficiencies/variances are identified, corrective actions to be implemented; b) a review and update of the organizational mechanisms and procedures specific to, or related to, the institution's framework for mental health and well-being, and work towards ensuring that mental health efforts are embedded into institutional culture and policies; c) a review and update of objectives, targets, and action plans; | a | | | | |

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Concluded)

| Item | Level | Yes | No | Findings | Comments |
|---|-------|-----|----|----------|----------|
| d) communication opportunities to enhance understanding and application of results; and e) feedback from the post-secondary community. | | | | | |
| Clause 6.1.3 — Advancing knowledge | | | | | |
| 6.1.3.2 Strategies As part of continuous improvement, post-secondary institutions should consider the following strategies: a) Use cross-functional approaches to embed an understanding and commitment to mental health and well-being across all disciplines and curricula, thus ensuring the development of future citizens with the capacity to act as agents for health promoting change beyond institutional communities. b) Advance research, communities of practice, teaching, and training for mental health promotion knowledge and action. Contribute to health promoting knowledge production, application, standard setting, and evaluation that advance multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research agendas. c) Lead and partner towards local and global action for mental health and well-being. Build and support inspiring and effective relationships and collaborations internal and external to the institutional community to develop, harness, and mobilize knowledge and action for health promotion locally and globally. | b | | | | |





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