



## Campus Mental Health Across Canada in 2020-21: The Ongoing Impact of COVID-19

A nationally representative survey of 69 post-secondary institutions across Canada captured what student affairs leaders had experienced.



“Initially, students (and staff) felt we would be “back to normal” soon. No one expected we would still be living with significant restrictions more than a year later.”

- Student affairs professional

### Pandemic Fatigue



**90%**

of student affairs  
leaders said students  
were experiencing  
“pandemic fatigue.”

Anxiety

Increased  
academic  
load

#### PANDEMIC FATIGUE:

Feeling tired of following public  
health directives like social  
distancing, wearing  
masks, washing  
hands, etc.

Social  
isolation

Financial  
challenges

“Many students feel the online learning experience is not equivalent and are struggling with their courses. This, of course, is added to the regular stresses of a university student and the particular stresses related to the pandemic.”

– Student affairs professional



## Social Isolation



More than **80%**

of student affairs leaders said **social isolation** among students was linked to depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

## Jurisdictional Issues

Due to restrictions by regulators, many mental health service providers faced challenges when seeking to support students abroad or in other provinces and territories.

**57%**

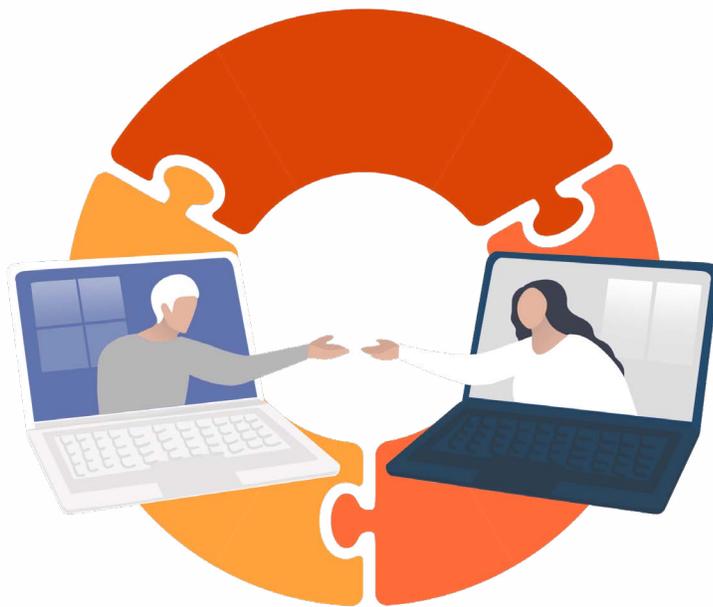
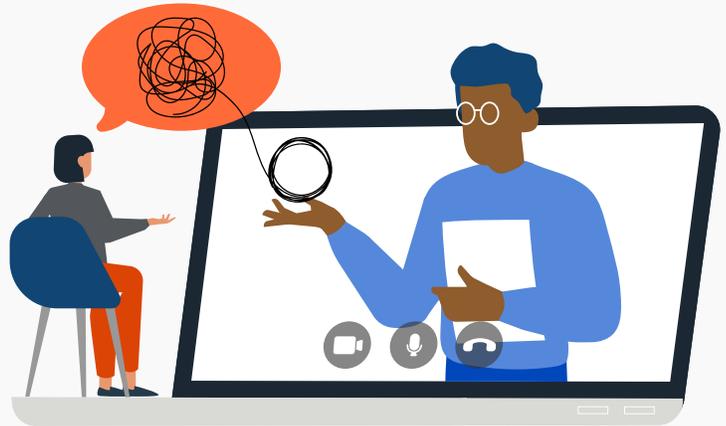
of professionals reported **jurisdiction issues** and are working with regulatory bodies for solutions.

“We provided mental health consultation for international students outside of [our] jurisdiction about how to use online resources, build general coping skills, access peer support groups, and find mental health services in their location. We worked with the International Student Advisors Office to assess risk and provide information about crisis resources as needed.”

– Student affairs professional

## Helpful COVID-related student resources

- Webinars (e.g., managing stress and anxiety, building resilience skills)
- Learning supports (e.g., study skills, exam preparation, time management)
- Virtual resources (e.g., website, apps, online groups)



## Positive changes

- Service delivery increased in flexibility (**63%**), quality (**53%**), and efficiency (**33%**).
- Self-care services improved (**46%**).
- Newly discovered ability to face uncertainty grew (**33%**).

## Ongoing campus needs for 2021-22 and beyond

### Infrastructure/ Capacity Building

e.g., staffing,  
stable funding,  
technology

### Skill Development

e.g., equity,  
diversity and  
inclusion, peer  
support, mental  
health literacy

### Communication Resources

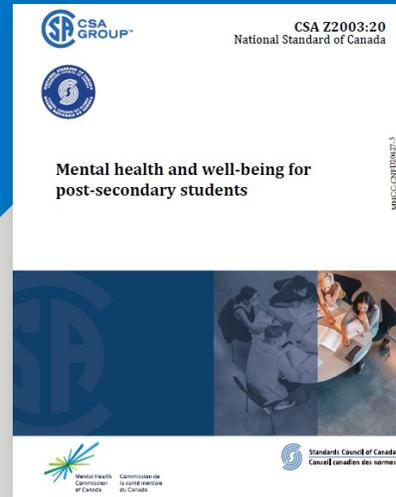
e.g., student  
engagement,  
social media

### Continuous Improvement

e.g., evaluation,  
evidence  
-informed  
approaches

# Looking for supportive resources?

The CSA Z2003:20 National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students (the Standard) – the first of its kind in the world – is a set of flexible, voluntary guidelines to help post-secondary institutions support the mental health and well-being of their students.



Across Canadian campuses – whether big or small, rural or urban – post-secondary change makers are working with the Standard and reaffirming their commitment to support their students' optimal mental health and well-being. Since its release in October 2020, the Standard has been downloaded from the CSA Group website **more than 2,000 times**.

To optimize your journey with the Standard, be sure to join the [Centre for Outreach, Resources, and Engagement \(CORE\)](#). Along with a Q&A and calendar of events, this online community features a series of compendiums with practical advice on supporting the Standard's recommendations. The range of topics includes privacy and confidentiality, data gathering and evaluation, crisis management, how to examine policies through a health and well-being lens, and more. Create your account today.

[Email MHCC](#) to receive a link to the report once published.



Rashid, T. & Di Genova, L. (2022). Campus Mental Health Across Canada in 2020-21: The Ongoing Impact of COVID-19. Perspectives from student affairs leaders. Canadian Association of Colleges and University Student Services (CACUSS); Toronto, Ontario & Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC); Full report available soon at <http://cacuss-campusmentalhealth.ca>.

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