Supporting Students

Mental Health and Wellness

KING'S
Western University · Canada

Table of Contents

Why is this Important?
Students' Mental Health

Supporting student mental health is a central component of academic success, requires faculty/staff engagement a whole campus/systematic approach, a commitment to mental wellness at all levels (students, faculty/staff, administration), as well as policies/practices.
(Okanagan Charter, 2015; Plieto-De Rango, 2017; MacKean, 2011)

Students are at higher risk for struggles with mental health and wellness; feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed; higher risk for mental illness-age.
(CICMH, 2020; Hellmans et al., 2021)

Mental health issues are often first noticed within the classroom; learning environment. Mental health issues impact students' ability to learn, as well as their academic performance/success.
(MacKean, 2011; Plieto-De Rango, 2017; Stanton et al., 2016)

There is an increase in students' academic-related stress (almost 60% across Ontario), as well as depression and suicidal ideation and demand for campus mental health services.
(Baik, 2019; Matthews & Csiernik, 2019; NCHA, 2016)

Under half of students access needed services, preferring informal supports (peers, faculty). Students often do not disclose due to mental health stigma.
(Plieto-De Rango, 2017; Wada et al., 2019)

Role of Faculty
Curriculum Design

Faculty/staff play a vital role in co-creating the learning environment and reducing stressors, through positive teaching practices, beliefs/attitudes, caring and respect, and promoting student well-being, which all positively impact students' educational experience *(Baik, 2019)*.

Curriculum design can impact workloads/due dates, stress/anxiety, and student wellness. An inclusive, intersectional approach and flexible curriculum using universal design principles, can help to greatly reduce students' stress *(Dyjur, 2017; Stanton et al., 2016)*.

Create safe space for students to make meaningful contributions and connections (Lane et al., 2018)

Building a supportive environment and fostering deeper relationships/trust with students is often critical for students to find the courage to seek mental health resources *(Gulliver et al., 2018)*

Broader administrative support-King's Wellness Committee has adopted the Okanagan Charter as part of their Campus Framework. We need a commitment to "embed health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates" and to "lead health promotion action and collaborate locally and globally" *(CICMH, n.d., p. 9)*

Curriculum infusion-bring health issues/life skills into the curriculum (e.g. sleep hygiene, stress management) through readings, assignments, and discussions to increase students' KSA's (knowledge, skills, attitudes), and to reinforce course content *(Riley & McWilliams, 2007)*.

Strengthen campus 'safety net' by training all faculty/staff/students to recognize signs of mental health distress and reduced well-being, how to approach students effectively, and where to direct them for mental health resources and support.

Important to notice signs/symptoms of mental health issues (e.g. absent/disengaged, late assignments, anxiety/anger).

72% 72% of faculty/staff willing to support students

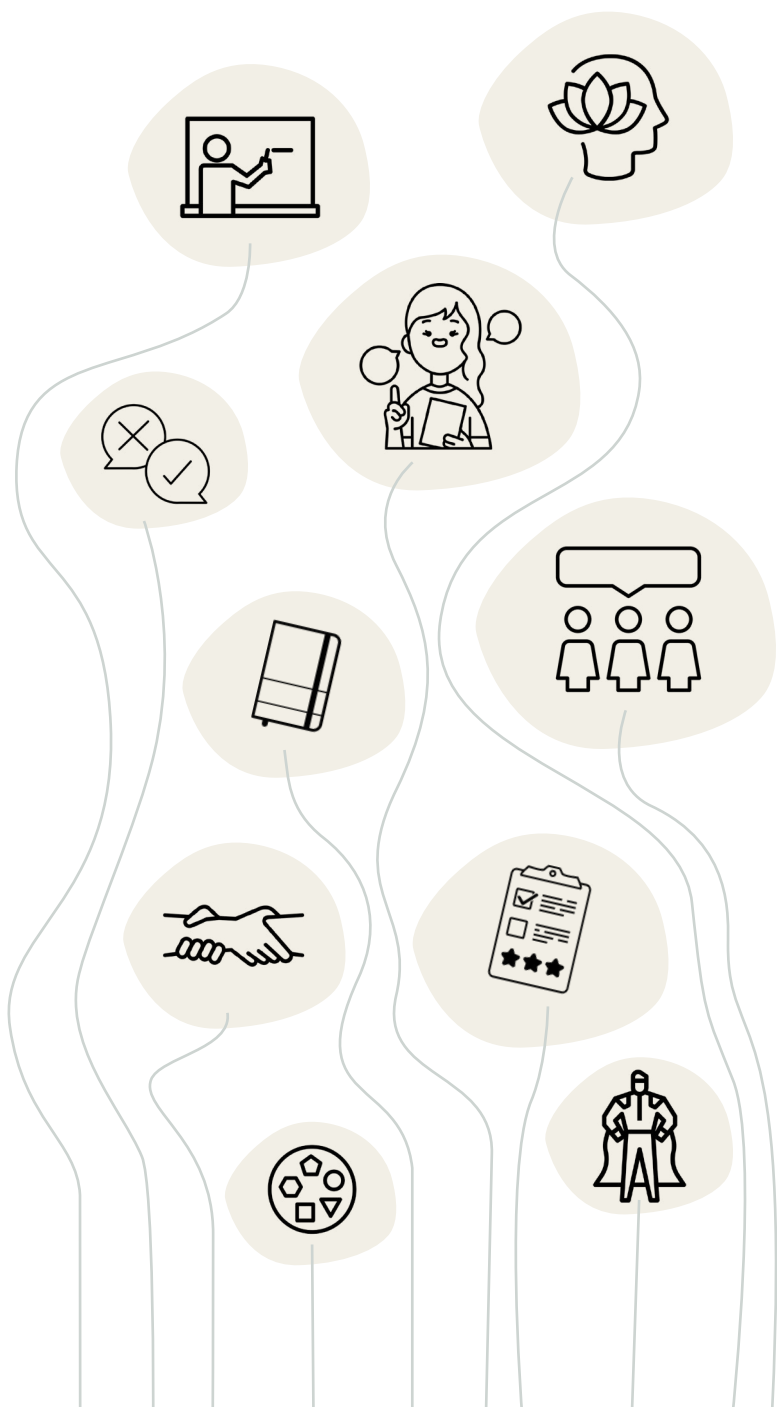**60%** 60% feel insufficiently informed on mental health

67% 67% desire further training (e.g. students services, procedures, specific MH issues).

(Gulliver et al., 2018)

Adapted from Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (n.d.). *Mental health and the learning environment: A toolkit for faculty and staff.*

Creating Conditions for Well-Being

Simon Fraser University

Promote services/supports
(e.g. health tips, mindfulness, resilience resources)

Be supportive, learned-centered
(e.g. show caring, active learning)

Encourage real-life learning
(e.g. news clips, guest speakers, experiential activities)

Be flexible with assignments, deadlines
(e.g. offer choices/Universal Design, encourage feedback)

Encourage social connection, class check-in
(e.g. group work, discussions)

Foster personal development to increase resilience/skills
(e.g. journal, reflection)

Provide resources to meet challenges
(e.g. clear expectations, feedback, rubrics)

Promote civic engagement
(e.g. community service learning, kindness acts)

Foster positive classroom culture
(e.g. model well-being practices)

Foster inclusion, EDI principles
(e.g. respect, safety, Universal Design, BIPOC content)

See https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments.html

Creating Conditions for Well-Being

Curriculum Infusion

- ✓ Infuse health topics into course content: readings, guest speakers, discussion, projects, community-based experiential learning

    https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments.html

- ✓ ACSD Speakers Bureau: presentations, primarily requested by faculty, related to student topics around exam anxiety and test stress, accessing support resources at King's and in the community, coping in the Pandemic, and self-care in post-secondary

    Contact ACSD (Accessibility, Counselling, and Student Development) to request a speaker: ACSD - *ACSD@kings.uwo.ca*

    - ✓ Work with Centre for Teaching and Learning Western staff to add health/well-being course components.

        https://teaching.uwo.ca/

    - ✓ Include pre-written descriptions, website URLS, contact information for campus wellness resources (see links page 7)
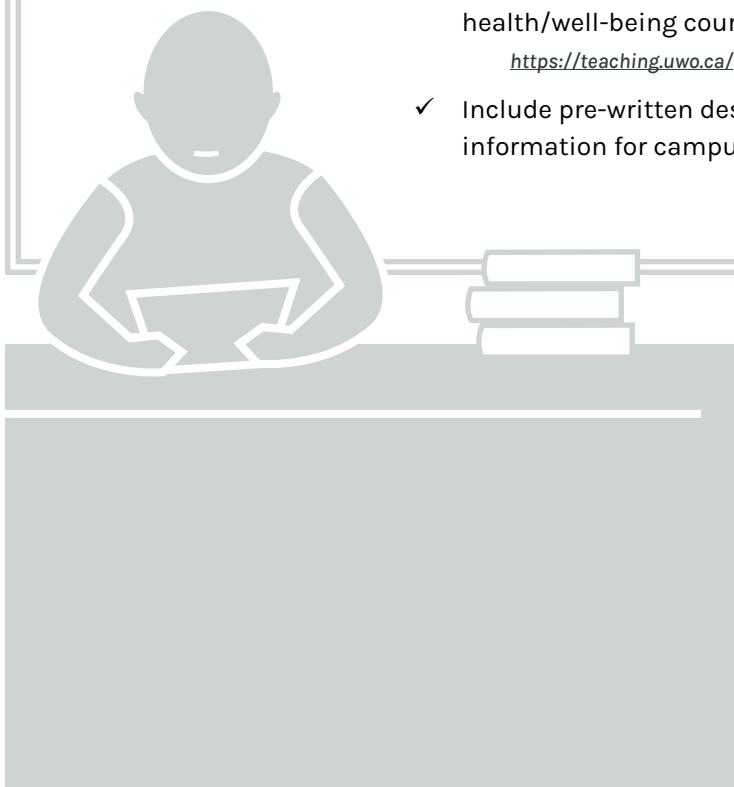
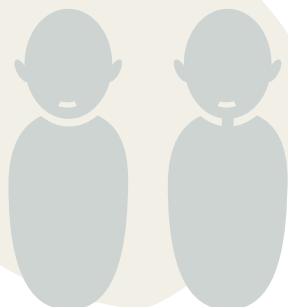# Creating Conditions for Well-Being

Faculty & Non-Academic Employees Mental Health and Wellness

- There are multiple stressors due to teaching/research/service load, the challenges of online/blended learning, pandemic restrictions, caregiving responsibilities, etc.

- Faculty/staff mental health and wellness is critical to support students' mental health. Institutional support is essential for the wellness of the whole King's community; need institutional support/value
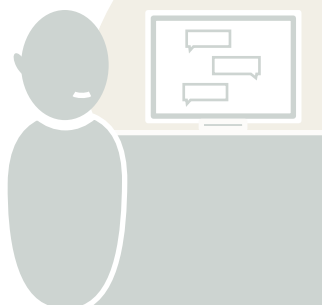
70%

70% faculty not at all/slightly familiar with support services on campus
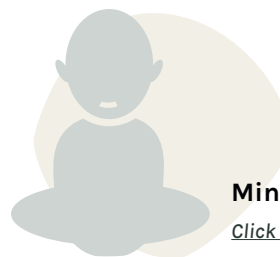*(Price et al., 2017)*

Personal Wellness Strategies

EAP
The EAP information is: *www.fseap.ca*;
        username: TO-HL-25124;
        passcode: myfseap
To log into King's Corporate Wellness Program with Employee Wellness Network:
Please create an account by logging into this link

Pastoral Counselling
Jim Donovan Panchaud:
Jim.Panchaud@kings.uwo.ca

Mindfulness and meditation
Click here for meditation Techniques

Seek support from departmental chair/supervisor and colleagues

Open conversations about mental health/wellness

Stay connected with social supports

Creating Conditions for Well-Being

Faculty & Non-Academic Employees Mental Health and Wellness:

Personal Wellness Strategies Cont.

Be creative about making time for daily movement

Consider having a regular 'tech shabbat'; 24/6 book by Tiffany Shlain

Determine what boundaries you are most comfortable with

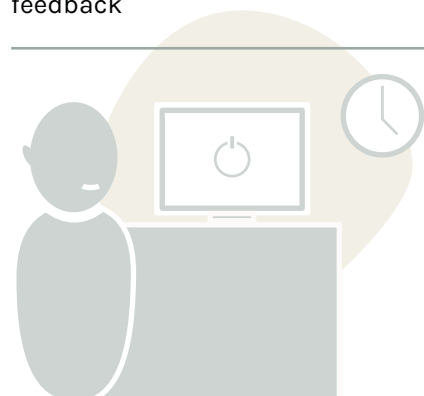Consider setting specific hours for answering student emails

Hold consistent office hours

When assigning students' work, allow yourself ample time to provide feedback

Take screen breaks throughout the day

**Take breaks every day for yourself, even if only for a few minutes**

Self-compassion can be a helpful antidote to stress

Click here for some examples

"Reclaiming Our Time": Women of Color Faculty and Radical Self-Care in the Academy. Donna J. Nicol and Jennifer A. Yee

Dedicate time every day for your other work and non-work related responsibilities

Make nutrition a priority
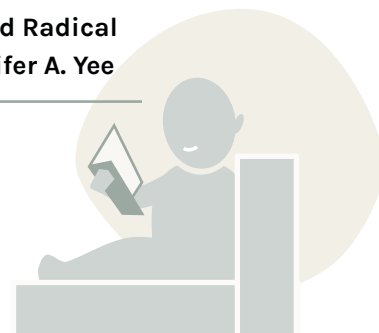
Recognizing and Responding to Students' Mental Health Concerns
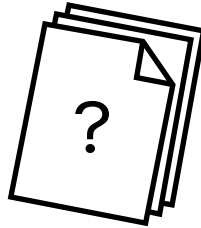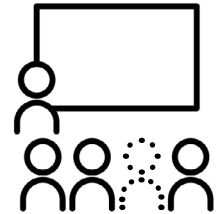
Recognizing *(CICMH, n.d., p.11)*

Academic
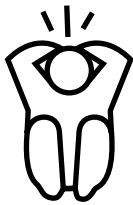
Decreased work quality
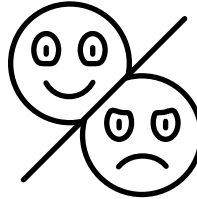
Missed assignments/ exams

Repeated absences

Behaviour/ Emotional

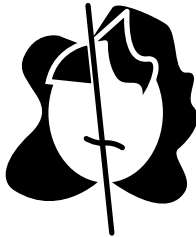Severe anxiety (e.g. panic attack)

Emotional regulation difficulties

Increased withdrawal OR highly animated

Physical

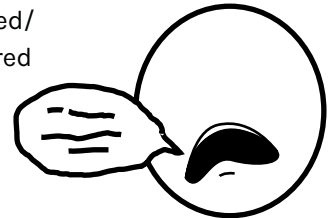Appearance changes (e.g. unkept)

Bloodshot/ watery/'glazed' eyes

Disorganized/ rapid/ slurred speech

Safety/Emergency

Hopeless/helpless statements

Despair, suicide comment/online post

Physical aggression, disruptive behaviour

Recognizing and Responding to Students' Mental Health Concerns

Actions Faculty Can Take *(CICMH, n.d.)*

Immediate

- Talk with the student in private about their concerns/changes, offer support, connect them to resources

- Define your personal limits, set boundaries (not trying to be a mental health expert, and not providing counselling), ask only information needed to make a referral to ACSD/external services

- Respect student confidentiality (only share with ADO/Dean if it is an emergency and safety is a concern)

Future Preparedness

- Take a mental health training course.
  For more information/videos to Recognize, Respond, Refer, Reflect, Click Here

- See training webinar/link and resources on the "Faculty Resources" OWL site, provided by Melanie Ann Atkins, Associate Director, TA Programs, Centre for Teaching and Learning at Western.
  "Mental Health E-learning module" from Melanie Ann Atkins at Western, Click Here

See https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments.html

Recognizing and Responding to Students' Mental Health Concerns

Support Services *(on course syllabi)*

All King's students are welcome to access support services through *Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development (ACSD) at King's*, including students with mental health or accessibility needs, mature students, Indigenous students, LGBTQ2S+ students, BIPOC students, and international students.

Mental Health@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Academic Support Services at King's through the Academic Dean's Office (ADO)

King's University College Student Council (KUCSC) offers many excellent supports for students, particularly a wide variety of wellness initiatives and events:

> KUCSC website: *https://www.kucsc.ca/*
> Facebook link: *https://www.facebook.com/kucsc*

Western University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including *the health insurance plan*.

Find more Wellness Tips here.

See *https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments.html*