

Student Leader Guide

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

Introduction

About the Tools and Toolkits

These tools and toolkits are hosted by **Healthy Campus Alberta**, a provincial community of practice committed to cultivating caring campus communities in Alberta. Originally developed by **Alberta Campus Mental Health Innovation** (an initiative carried out by the **Alberta Students Executive Council**), the tools and toolkits are learning-focused, living documents that serve to support our community of practice.

About the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit

This toolkit was developed for student leaders in post secondary institutions who are planning and implementing student mental health initiatives on their campus. Others who are planning and delivering post secondary mental health initiatives may also find the toolkit useful for their purposes, including those aimed at students as well as faculty and staff, or those aspiring to take their institution to a new level of mentally healthy campus. It will be particularly useful to understand the roles and contributions that students, student leaders and student associations can make in advancing the impact of mentally healthy campuses.

About the Student Leader Guide

The **Student Leader Guide** tool gives a brief overview of how you may use the different tools in the toolkit throughout your own experience as a student leader. Throughout every stage, consider how you will evaluate how things worked and learn so that you are improving your own abilities and the capacity of your student group. It will be most helpful for elected student government leaders, but can also be used by students in departmental/faculty groups or student clubs.

Who could use this tool?

- Student leaders.

What purposes could this tool serve?

- Guiding student leaders through their terms as they work to create mentally healthy campuses;
- Introducing new student leaders, or anyone new to the toolkits, on how to use the Student Led Initiative Toolkit.

Background

Using the Toolkit during Your Term

The Student Led Initiatives Toolkit can be a useful guide. This tool gives some suggestions for how you can use the toolkit during your time as a student leader. It is structured around five parts of the student leader journey.

Getting Started

Planning and Strategy

Delivering Programs and Projects

Reflections and Reporting

Transition

Each phase has several suggested actions:

Diagnose. Questions to diagnose and understand what matters at that point in time.

Do. Key activities to consider, both at your campus and collectively.

Collective Considerations. Working together creates far greater impact than working alone, consider how.



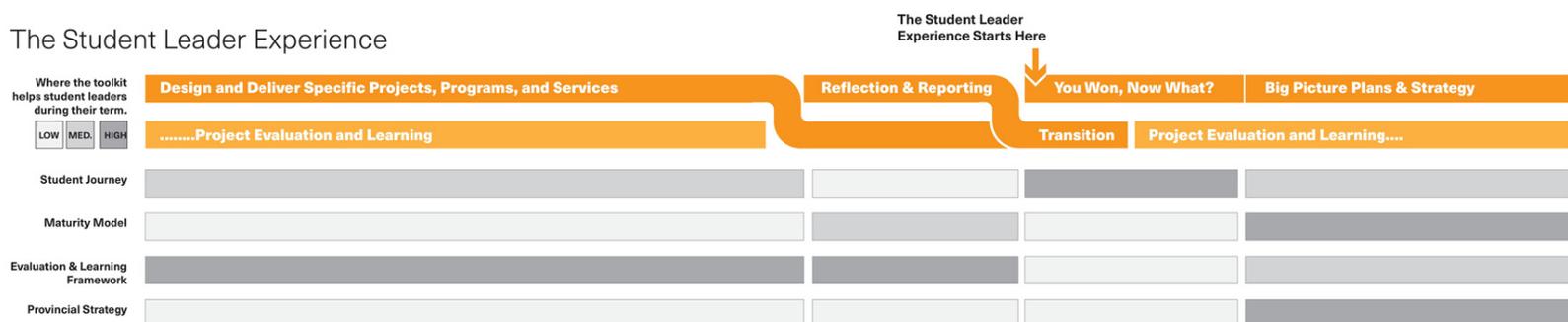
Tools

How the toolkit tools help you at this point in your term.

The Student Leader Journey

As a student leader, you have many demands and stresses yourself. Working on mental wellness is an opportunity to improve your own wellness habits. Student leaders are on their own journey, and this toolkit is here to support that. Role model healthy self-care habits and utilize resources as you need.

The Student Leader Experience



Getting Started

Congratulations, you've been appointed to your position! Now what? You have big plans, ambitions, and ideas that motivated you to run. Along with other orientation, the tools can help you understand the opportunities and responsibilities of your portfolio, especially regarding mental wellness. Supporting a mentally health campus takes both a big picture view and specific focused activities throughout the year.

Diagnose.

- What is mental wellness? What does it mean to have a mentally healthy campus?
- What have been the greatest successes? Where is our momentum?
- Who are our key partners? Who else plays in the mental wellness community in and around your school?

Do.

- Review any internal documents on mental health initiatives.
- Review the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.
- Work with your predecessor to meet and sustain relationships with partners.
- Work to understand mental wellness as a connected, complex system, rather than a set of separate activities.

Collective Considerations.

- Look over resources from provincial groups and the Healthy Campus Alberta Community of Practice.
- Attend a conference from ASEC, CAUSE, or other student collective.
- Attend a Healthy Campus Community of Practice meeting or learning opportunity.



Student Journey Map. Use the student journey during your orientation to help you develop your perspective. Look at things through the lens of the student experience. Manage your efforts as a portfolio that balances different needs throughout the year.

Maturity Model. You may find the maturity model interesting now but we suggest waiting until you are shifting into your big picture planning and strategy.

Evaluation and Learning Framework. The Evaluation and Learning Framework will help you during your planning, and then especially during your evaluation.

Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses. Skimming this will help orient you to an overall picture of your own campus activities and how you can connect to provincial efforts.

Planning and Strategy

During this phase you will refine your vision and goals, define specific outcomes, and create a plan for moving ahead on those outcomes. That plan will include a portfolio of projects and programs, and will let you apply for funding. During your time developing your vision and specific activities you will find all the toolkit tools to be helpful—this is the stage where they are the most important in setting you on the right course.

Diagnose.

- What is the big picture vision already? How can we build on it?
- What are students' needs on campus?
- Where do we want to play in the wellness and illness efforts across campus?
- How will we succeed in those areas? How can we measure our success?

Do.

- Work to build momentum by focusing on successes, momentum, and relationships.
- Create a list of specific projects, activities, and initiatives that help tell a bigger story that supports your vision and a mentally healthy campus.
- Make evaluation part of your plan throughout the year.
- Set a quarterly objective and measurable results that will let you know you achieved it.
- Consider funding priorities as you plan. Apply for grants.

Collective Considerations.

- Look at past activities in other institutions for new ideas.
- Share your early ideas with peers at other schools for feedback.
- Get feedback and advice on your evaluation plans.



Use all the tools at this stage to inform your planning and strategy.

Delivering Programs and Projects

Once you've created your strategy, it's time to put those plans to action! When the school year begins, students will be on campus and you will be able to deliver your programs and carry out your projects. Before delivery begins, and during the school year, keep the following considerations in mind.

Diagnose.

- Who else can work on these projects or programs? How much can be delegated?
- Is there similar work in our community where we could partner?
- What behaviours do we want to change with this specific project or program?
- How can we connect a project or program to that behaviour?
- What resources do we need in terms of people, time, space, budget, etc.?

Do.

- Define someone as the project or program coordinator. Assign other team members as needed and available.
- Recruit volunteers and coordinate with partners. Ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them so they have clarity on the intended outcomes and results as well as their role.
- Assign daily and weekly tasks for the team. Report on those tasks as needed.

Collective Considerations.

- How might you partner on any individual project?
- Is there an opportunity to turn individual projects into collective action?



Student Journey Map. Use the student journey as a quick check to focus on a specific part of the student experience with your individual project. How will projects connect to support a specific journey stage? How do they connect across stages?

Maturity Model. Use the maturity model to guide a range of projects to deliberately work on different aspects of a mentally healthy campus.

Evaluation and Learning Framework. Build evaluation checkpoints for inputs, outputs, and outcomes in individual projects. Also plan for time to reflect on projects and take what you learn to adjust. Evaluation and learning should be integrated into every project that you undertake—this makes it much easier in your final reporting.

Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses. Ensure that individual projects are contributing to the whole. How will individual projects build the momentum in your overall flywheel? How do they connect to each other?

Reflection and Reporting

Reflection and reporting is an opportunity to think about how to improve, and a responsibility to share what you have done to meet your commitments with funders. If you have done small bits of evaluation and reflection through the year, your final reporting will be simple and easy!

Diagnose.

- Who needs to be consulted or informed?
- What has our evaluation and learning taught us over the year?
- Do we need to do any more evaluation or learning?
- Is there any additional evaluation to learn something to push the flywheel further?

Do.

- Summarize your evaluation and learning throughout the year, not just at the end.
- Complete any final evaluation efforts, including collating and analyzing individual project evaluation data.
- Create final reporting and documentation for projects and programs to demonstrate what you did and what sort of impact it had.
- Think about your audiences – successors, administration, funders, or others.

Collective Considerations.

- Who else can you share the success stories with in your community? Can you build more momentum and partnerships?
- How does your work contribute to efforts across the province?



Student Journey Map. Where did you act in the student journey? What kinds of supports did you provide across the spectrum of student experiences?

Maturity Model. The maturity model (even at a high level without all the detail) helps to think of mentally healthy campuses as connected systems. Consider how your work (and your reporting) shows the connections in that holistic view.

Evaluation and Learning Framework. Instead of simply going through the obligatory motions, ask what evaluation has taught you—and take the opportunity in reflection and reporting to pass on what you've learned.

Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses. What went well? What could be improved? How did individual activities push your own big picture plans, vision, and the overall campus strategy? How might you adjust your own efforts?

Transition

You will have highs and lows over the course of your term as a student leader. You likely didn't get the chance to do everything you wanted to—but you have done important work. Take a deep breath—you've done a lot. Congratulations! Your role now is to guide others in using the tools in the future. Introduce them, give high and low points, and orient incoming leaders on how best to use the tools given your own experience.

Diagnose.

- Who is my successor? How can I build a strong relationship with them so that the relationships I have with mental wellness partners can be transferred smoothly?
- What does my successor need to know to build on success and improve on what we have already started?
- How can I make space for my successor's ideas and legacy?
- What do other incoming student leaders need to know about mental wellness?

Do.

- Create transition documents.
- Spend time with successor and be available afterwards.
- Introduce new student leaders to projects, programs, and partners-especially partners.
- Work to help the incoming team understand mental wellness as a complex connected system, and not just a set of one-off student activities or clinical treatments.

Collective Considerations.

- Connect with your ASEC (or CAUS, etc.) peers for support and sharing as you shift roles.
- Share tips on getting the most from the collective student groups.



Student Journey Map. Use the student journey map to help orient incoming leaders, especially your successor.

Maturity Model. Given the complexity of the maturity model, you may want to simply reference high points as you share your insight and learning with others..

Evaluation and Learning Framework. You are done the majority of your evaluation and learning—but you can help orient others to the ELF and your own lessons learned in evaluation. Reinforce the importance of evaluation early and often to promote continuous learning and to reduce the reporting scramble at the end of the year.

Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses. Reference the Mentally Healthy Campus Strategy to show the big picture, and how the vision and story of the work has unfolded so far on your campus.