



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.

Who could use this toolkit?

- Student leaders involved in student government or student organizations;
- Program planners in post-secondary student services or administration;
- Mental health professionals who work with post-secondary students.

What purposes could this toolkit serve?

- Providing justification for student-centered and student-led approaches to addressing post-secondary student mental health;
- Supporting student leaders during their terms with creating, implementing, and evaluating student mental health initiatives;
- Supporting students who are involved in the creation, delivery, or evaluation of mental health initiatives through student organizations or institutional initiatives;
- Informing the development and evaluation of student-centered initiatives to support student mental health;
- Offering helpful tools to be used in everyday practice by students, staff, and faculty.

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A conceptual tool provides framing perspectives for the toolkit.

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What is mental health? Why does it matter how mental health is defined? This conceptual tool reviews key concepts like mental health, mental wellness, mental illness, and addictions in the post-secondary context.

p. 13 *Framing Student Led Initiatives*

Mental health initiatives for students, by students can be an effective way to build mentally healthy campuses. This conceptual tool provides rationale for collaborative and student-led mental health initiatives.

Practical Tools

A practical tool is a resource that can be used in day-to-day practice.

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This tool shows prospective or incoming student leaders how to best utilize this toolkit during their term and achieve the goal of mentally healthy campuses.

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Tackling complex systems challenges like mental health requires a host of factors to work together. A maturity model is a scorecard that helps organizations understand their own capability and capacity to create and influence desired change.

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Key to any successful mental health initiative is ongoing learning and evaluation. The Evaluation and Learning Framework is a starting point for measuring, reporting, and evaluating mental health initiatives.

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Student leaders and program planners who are organizing mental health initiatives must have a strategic perspective to ensure success. This tool offers strategic ways that mental health initiatives can be delivered from start to finish.

References

p. 52 A list of resources related to mental health, mental illness, frameworks, etc.

Overview of "Mental Health"

Conceptual Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

Overview of "Mental Health"

Helping people to be comfortable talking about and taking action on mental issues is complicated because the terms are used in so many different ways. Clarifying what you mean by these terms is important for you to be purposeful about choosing your strategies for supporting students and other members of a campus community. It also helps you better understand how you want to orient your evaluation and learning. Understanding key definitions helps you orient a mentally healthy campus strategy around a core narrative, bringing coherence to actions.

After reading this conceptual tool, you will be able to...

1. Define key concepts: mental wellness, mental illness, and mentally healthy campuses.
2. Identify how having common understandings of key concepts can contribute toward a mentally healthy campus strategy.
3. Access important resources on postsecondary student mental wellness.

It's Normal for Humans to...

Recognizing normal human experiences and brain development in the context of mental wellness and illness helps us understand why systemic factors matter more than individual willpower and behavior. It is key for students to recognize which stressors are more impactful for them, what they're already doing to cope, and the difference between mild, moderate and severe levels of stress, anxiety, and other emotions. That helps us know what actions are most appropriate to take, which habits are helpful and which we need to change in mental health initiatives.

Humans experience stress and emotions.

Some degree of stress is necessary to life. Sometimes we add to our own stress level – such as not getting enough sleep, not eating nutritiously, isolating ourselves from others, or letting negative thoughts pervade our minds. This makes us less able to cope when stressors in our external lives are added. How we respond to stress, and whether we access support from friends, family and sometimes others is the key.

Emotions can include fear, anxiety, grief, happiness and others. *Grief*, the experience of loss, influences both mental and physical experiences. We have a tendency to avoid processing these losses, and over time that can take a toll. Sometimes it helps to seek grief counselling as a support in the course of our journey. Anxiety and fear are closely related. While *fear* relates to threats in the moment, *anxiety* is about anticipating a threat that may or may not happen in the future. Experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. Short-term stress relief activities, like meditation, creative activities or talking about it to a friend or peer supporter. can be enough to 'bounce back' to normal.

Humans move through developmental stages.

It's also normal for humans to move through developmental stages, both physically and mentally, throughout our lives. Brain development occurs over a longer time than previously thought. The later years involve development of executive functions, which influence adaptive skills such as planning and self-regulation. Advances in neurological research demonstrate our ability to continuously to learn and make decisions, and to find ways to regulate stress and improve mental wellness in productive ways.

Humans develop skills and attitudes towards these normal experiences.

Part of success in postsecondary education is developing better habits and attitudes to cope with the increased stress and emotions. The life stage of ages 18 –24 is one that usually involves navigating many transitions. Developing healthy habits and attitudes is so important for students – it isn't just to survive the years of post secondary education. It will hold long term benefits for careers and later stages of life.

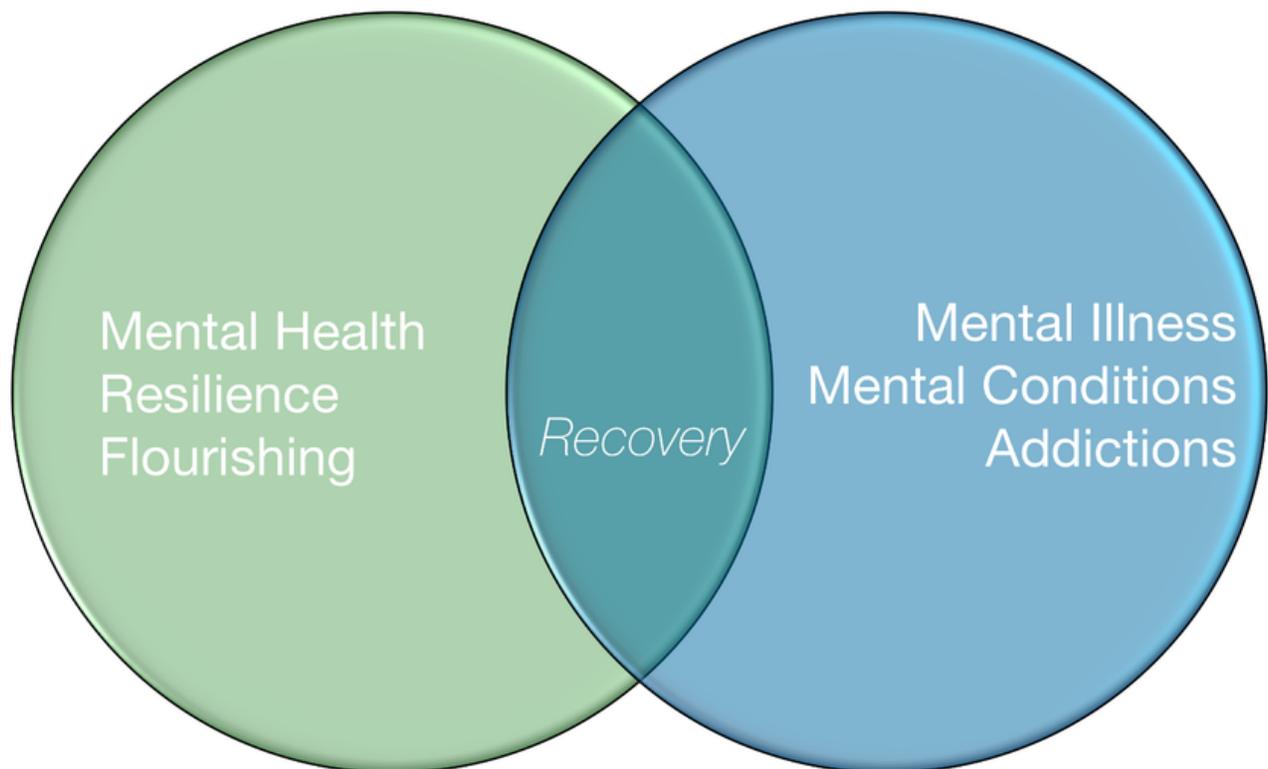
Understanding Mental Wellness

There are five key foundations that are important to understanding mental wellness:

1. Mental wellness and mental illness or issues are not opposites, but are a continuum;
2. Mental wellness is process as well as a state;
3. Mental wellness is both individual and collective;
4. Mental wellness relates to brain development and observable behaviours and states;

We are influenced by, and influence, our environments. We contribute to, as well as benefit from positive enabling environments.

This visual may help to see the difference between but relationship of mental wellness and mental illness. Although mental illness and mental health/wellness are separate concepts, they are overlapping and exist on a continuum/



View the Framing Mentally Healthy Campuses Conceptual Tool **p. 13** for a deeper exploration of these foundations.

Understanding Mental Wellness - cont.

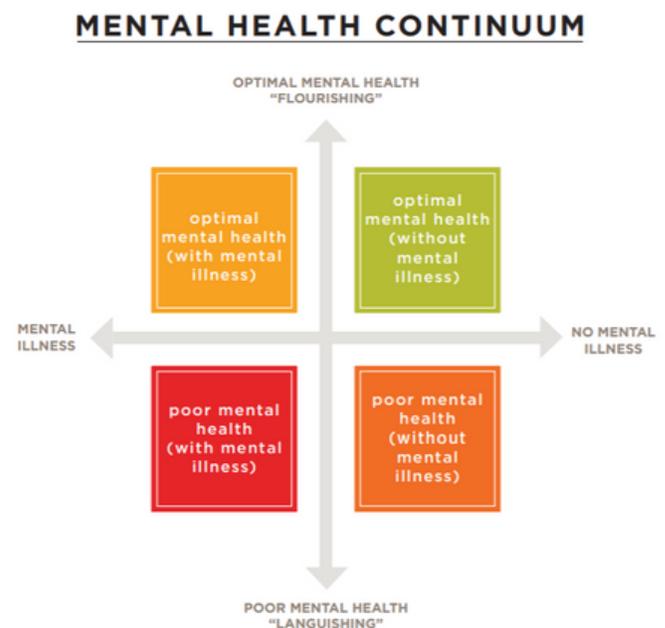
This conceptual tool describes five aspects of mental wellness:

1. There are multiple, interdependent aspects to mental wellness, including emotional, cognitive and relational aspects. These develop along their own trajectories and influence each other.
2. Different people prize different aspects of wellness.
3. Mental wellness skills and assets are learnable.
4. You can build mental wellness skills even further – from Resilience to Life Assets.
5. Mental wellness relates to the collective as well as to an individual – a Mentally Healthy Campus as a collective expression of mental wellness.

Multiple, interdependent aspects

There are multiple, interdependent aspects to mental wellness and these develop along their own trajectories. The *emotional realm* includes feelings and functioning, such as positive feelings (e.g., happiness), positive psychological functioning (e.g., self-acceptance), and positive social functioning (e.g., social integration). The *cognitive realm* includes developmental stages of cognitive abilities to resolve situations with higher ambiguity and complexity. The *relational realm* includes a sense of belonging, referring to attitudes and skills for relating to others. *Indigenous ways of knowing* define mental wellness as the balance of the mental, pyhysical, spiritual, and emotional.

The emotional, cognitive and relational aspects of wellness develop along their own trajectories, separate from mental illness, addictions or mental issues the person may have. This is the basis of Keyes' model, recognizing that mental health and mental issues are not opposites, but two separate continua. Wellness does not mean no illness. Developing greater degrees of wellness isn't just for people who have no symptoms of mental illness. The Mental Health Commission of Canada describe the process of developing wellness after an illness or addiction as a recovery process.



View the [Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework](#).
View the [First Nations Mental Health Continuum Framework](#).
View the [Mental Health Strategy for Canada](#).

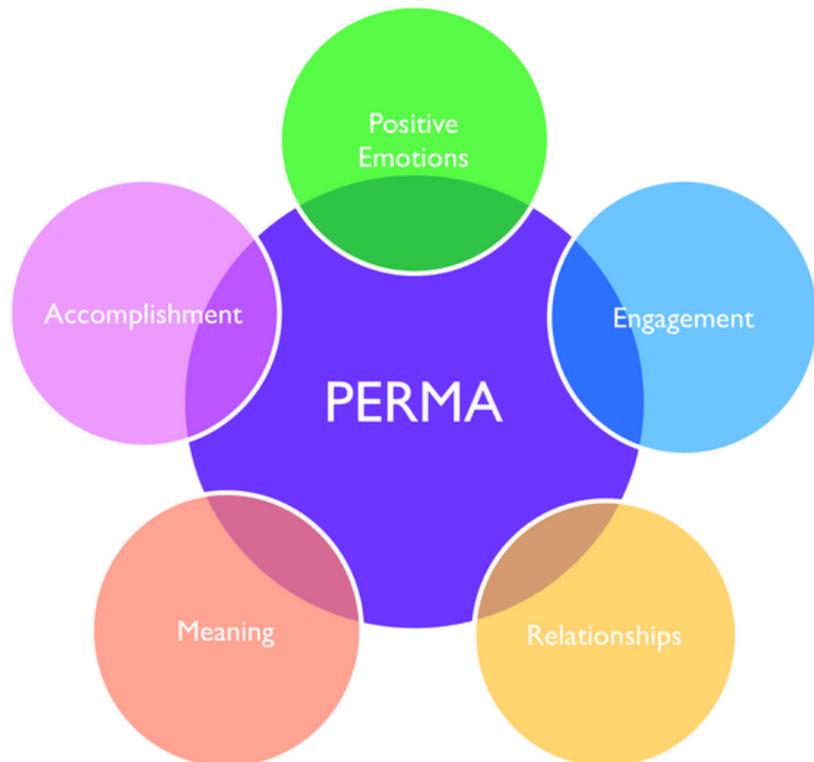
Understanding Mental Wellness - cont.

Different People Value Different Aspects

Everyone has a personal perspective on what 'wellness' means to them, and this can vary in different situations or at different ages. While most have a mixture, for some, relationships with family and friends is most important, for others it might be their cognitive competencies, or their physical energy, or stamina. For others it is their sense of belonging. The preferred balance of all aspects is personal. Illness on the other hand, is professionally defined. While there are assessment tools for various aspects of wellness, they may be limited to one professional view and not reflect all that a person values. Our cultural background will influence our worldview of what we consider wellness or illness. But an overarching understanding of what wellness is emerging. The field of positive psychology has chosen to move beyond the disease model and focus on people with illness that has dominated psychology.

But an overarching understanding of what wellness is emerging. The field of positive psychology has chosen to move beyond the disease model and focus on people with illness that has dominated psychology. One model describes five elements essential to human wellbeing, with the acronym PERMA:

- P = Positive emotion
- E = Engagement
- R = Relationships
- M = Meaning
- A = Accomplishments.



Watch a [TEDTalk on the PERMA Model.](#)

Understanding Mental Wellness - cont.

Mental Wellness Skills and Attitudes are Learnable

Developing mental wellness isn't much like going to a professional to be treated for a disease – mental wellness skills attitudes and knowledge all develop through learning and improving self-awareness. An investment in developing mental wellness pays off in many parts of our lives. Employers are demanding emotional, psychological, cognitive, and relational competencies. Understanding how to contribute to our brain development also helps to build the foundation for higher level thinking, planning and self-regulation and strengthens the other mental wellness competencies. Learning goes beyond coping in the moment, or simply doing activities without understanding why they are important or relevant. To learn from experience, we must pay attention to our experience – as if seeing the actions we take as a kind of experiment – worth watching for the results the actions produce in different situations.

Different things work for different people so the first key to action learning is paying attention to some key things:

Which types of stress, or which times of day, week, or year are most challenging for you, and how does a combination of stressors impact?
Which types of stress relief work in the moment (breathing fully, some creative activity etc.) and which types aren't as helpful for you?
Which types of stress management help as basic life practices (e.g., eating nutritiously, proper sleep, exercise, creative activities) and what types aren't so useful for you?
How you best organize stress management practices to work in your life so you use them consistently, as a practice (scheduled blocks of time, multiple-outcome practices such as standing desks, short breaks to move, ceremonial practices)?
Acknowledging and celebrating progress helps keep your momentum going. Which ways of learning from experience, recognizing your progress and identifying possible adaptive actions work best for you?

This isn't a completely linear situation – behaviour alone won't necessarily create an impact – so paying attention to these things in different contexts is important. The continuous process of learning from experience and adapting is what makes mental wellness a process as well as a state, and what enables us to develop to our fullest potential. Since we learn from each other in our social environment, this process also involves supporting one another. Practice, and reinforcing what works will help you become more and more able to regulate stressful activities, so you can reliably access these strategies even when under pressure.

Understanding Mental Wellness - cont.

From Resilience to Life Assets

Some use the term 'resilience' to describe mental wellness – 'bouncing back' after a stressful event, ambiguous situation or a challenging time. Being resilient does not mean that you don't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have or are experiencing stressful events or trauma. And it isn't about controlling the stress (trying to control it actually can make it more stressful). It's about regulating stress and your response. Resilience involves a number of actions. In addition to connecting with resources such as caring and supportive relationships that a person has developed over time, one can use coping or stress management tools to regain their usual functioning state. Combinations of mind-body activities such as yoga or meditation, creative activities such as art (even colouring), breathing exercises, movement of different kinds, socializing with trusted friends and colleagues are all activities that might equally be used for stress management or prevention – the key for resilience and mental wellness is to recognize what works for you.

Taking action to bounce back to one's usual functioning state is important. However, a person who is more purposeful about using growth oriented resilience practices and continuously learning from their ongoing experiences can advance from "bouncing back" to "bouncing forward". This helps a person to improve substantially over time through increasing developmental stages.

"Assets" isn't a common term to hear when talking mental wellness. Having reliable access to emotional, cognitive and relational capabilities helps you demonstrate your potential for more challenging work, to develop better relationships, and to be a more compassionate citizen. Committing to moving from resilience to assets requires more attention to self-discovery of deeper patterns and developing growth-oriented resilience.

Resilience  **Life Assets**

Growth oriented resilience, or purposefully and continuously improving one's skills, attitudes and knowledge aims to develop more effective ways for coping and even thriving in the face of greater ambiguity and stress. If a person takes the time to understand their own particular patterns and underlying assumptions, then they can call upon those strategies consciously and effectively under stressful conditions. This makes those understandings and skills an asset.

Understanding Mental Wellness - cont.

Collective Mental Wellness

Mental wellness is a characteristic of a collective, not just an individual. So we can consider what constitutes mental wellness of a family, community, society as well as places such as a campus, a school, or a workplace. Having significant differences between some groups in a community, society or campus is not a sign of mental wellness of that collective. The social norms that make up a culture are an important characteristic and strategies such as social justice, advocating for policy changes that reduce or eliminate the structural factors that keep those differences beyond the capacity of an individual to influence are important to the mental wellness of both individuals and the collective.

“Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet. Health promoting universities and colleges infuse health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates. By doing so, health promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, well-being, equity and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society.”

-The Okanagan Charter

So What? How does this influence my student-led mental health initiative?

You may choose to frame your strategy around mental wellness rather than mental illness. That would mean that you are concerned with how all students build mental wellness whether or not they are starting from a place of having symptoms of mental illness or issues. Those with mental illness or issues can build mental wellness / resilience in associating with their illness. Those who have no such symptoms can build their mental wellness / resilience to manage and learn from their experience of stress and distressing emotional situations.

Because it is critical for each of us to understand ourselves and how we learn, it is important to help students to understand why they take what actions and how to assess whether those are working for them, not just to supply solutions. Understanding mental wellness can also help you advocate for resources to undertake activities related to building mental wellness as well as treating or preventing mental illness, addictions and mental issues.

Understanding Mental Illness, Addictions, and Stigma

Mental Illness

The term 'mental illnesses' can relate to a wide variety of conditions or experiences. Traditionally these focus on an individual, though the impacts will be felt more broadly across the person's family and close network. Some mental illnesses occur on a spectrum from mild to severe and at the mild end can be part of life's normal lows. While all mental issues might be considered as having a spectrum, the more common ones are anxiety and depression. While we usually think of mental illness as a characteristic of an individual, it is possible to apply the concept to a group, community or society.

Addictions

Addictions are illnesses, not failures of will or character. Actions more consistent with normal use (e.g. alcohol as substance use), can spiral into addictive behaviour when use becomes continued, or acts become compulsive and interfere with ordinary life responsibilities such as school, work, relationships or health.

Stigma

Being stigmatized or marginalized can impact a person's sense of belonging, self worth and self-confidence or shame. They also impact the person who is doing the stigmatizing although that may not be recognized. Social norms as well as physical environments and structural factors such as policy all influence the degree to which a person or group is excluded or limited. While your particular initiative might highlight stigma of mental illness, the broad range of marginalization crosses racism, socio-economic challenges, and social norms that privilege strength over weakness.

So What? How does this influence my student-led mental health initiative?

You can frame your initiative around mental illness, addictions and mental issues and focus on the subset of students who are at risk or who have illness, addictions and issues. This is a very common way to frame a strategy. Even if you do not wish to provide the professional services associated with treatment or supporting students at risk, there are many strategies that students have employed to increase accessibility, knowledge or reduce the stigma associated with having a mental illness.

Framing Mentally Healthy Campuses

Conceptual Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

Framing Mentally Healthy Campuses

It is important to think about the frame, or boundaries of a student led mental health initiative. Your frame directs which fields of knowledge you'll want to consider in developing activities. Let's say you set the frame as relating to individual people who have or are at risk of developing severe and persistent mental illness. That means you'll limit your activities to those that fields such as psychiatry and psychology consider appropriate for treatment, support or prevention of such illnesses. On the other hand, if you choose a mental wellness oriented and mentally healthy campus frame, you'll choose activities that are directed by the fields of knowledge in community health/ community development, therapeutic landscapes and positive mental health. This conceptual tool brings intentionality to the possibilities of frames for student led mental health initiatives.

After reading this conceptual tool, you will be able to...

1. Define a "mentally healthy campus" and explain why viewing campuses as communities
2. Articulate why postsecondary students are well-positioned to create and contribute to mentally healthy campuses.

The ACMHI Story

The Alberta Campus Mental Health Innovation (ACMHI) project began in 2012 with one member of the Alberta Student Executive Council (ASEC) engaging fellow members in taking action on existing and growing mental health challenges. The desire was to embark on a collective approach to improving students' mental health and reducing stigma on member campuses. Over the course of three years, 2013/14 to 2015/16, ASEC and ACMHI then implemented their innovation strategy. ACMHI undertook a set of activities in its third and fourth year to develop a series of legacy resources from the innovation. One of these was to create a set of Legacy Tools in a web-based Toolkit for future Student Leaders. These toolkits are now available on the Healthy Campus Alberta website.

Innovation Approach

Over and above any specific innovative projects that Student Leaders developed on their own campus, five characteristics made the ACMHI initiative innovative:

Led by Student Leaders. Student Leaders of member associations in ASEC conceived and implemented the initiative over the course of several years, to meet their collective and individual aims.

Centred on the Student Experience. Student leaders, being students themselves, have a natural orientation to choose activities that would align with the student experience, and how students contribute to the whole of the mental health of the campus.

Collective Approach. Innovation occurred at the members' individual campus level and at the collective level. This enabled a range of relatively small, medium and large post secondary institutions to benefit from individual and collective strategies.

Mental Wellness Orientation. Student leaders captured the essence of the broad definition of positive mental health for both individuals and groups: more than the absence of illness.

Whole System Approach. The frame for the initiative was a Mentally Healthy Campus, and not simply mental health or mental illness of individuals.

Individual and Collective Approach

At the individual campus level, student leaders developed proposals that, if approved, were implemented on their campus in collaboration with university administration and the community. At the collective level, ASEC and ACHMI created a provincial advocacy strategy, managed funding logistics, and worked collaboratively to establish Healthy Campus Alberta.



Toolkits



Foundations of a Mentally Healthy Campus

What is a Mentally Healthy Campus?

A post secondary campus is more than people – whether students, staff, faculty or administration – more than buildings, classrooms and the landscaping, although these are what we can see when we arrive on a campus. We can think of a post secondary campus as community. Recognizing a campus as a community helps us to pay attention to the reality that a whole variety of elements work together to create and maintain the campus community's culture. People, whether students, faculty or staff are both beneficiaries and contributors. Physical buildings and layout are not just vehicles for holding classes, offices and research labs, but are factors that influence the health and safety of all the people in the campus community. The overall culture either stewards the positive interaction of all these elements, or runs in a way that hampers or damages them.

Key Foundations

There are five key foundations that are important to understanding mental wellness:

- Mental wellness and mental illness or issues are not opposites, but are a continuum;
- Mental wellness is process as well as a state;
- Mental wellness is both individual and collective;
- Mental wellness relates to brain development and observable behaviours and states;
- We are influenced by, and influence, our environments. We contribute to, as well as benefit from positive enabling environments.

Learn More about Mental Health



View the [Overview of Mental Health Conceptual Tool p. 4](#) to understand key concepts related to mental health.



View the [Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework](#).
View the [First Nations Mental Health Continuum Framework](#).
View the [Mental Health Strategy for Canada](#).

Foundations of a Mentally Healthy Campus cont.

The Whole Systems Approach

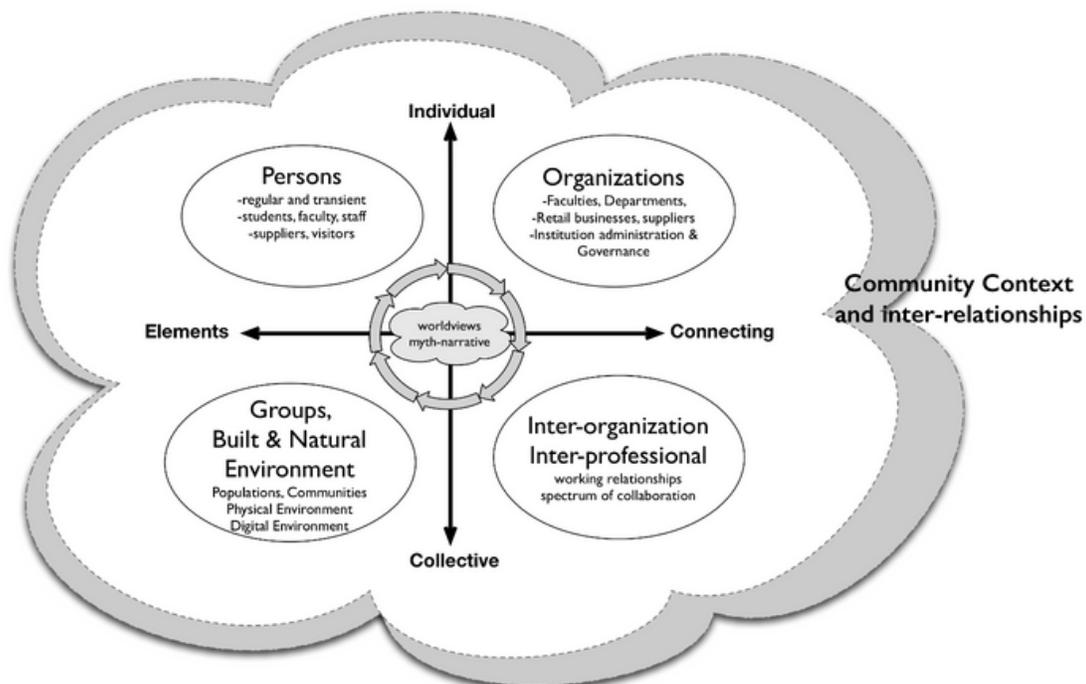
Viewing a campus as a community is a whole system approach, which understands that overall impact is created by the interactions of all its elements. According to this approach, a mentally healthy campus community...

- is one where all of its elements – people, environments and collective culture work together to promote the mental well-being of all of its members, the inclusiveness of its culture and the sustainability of the physical environment;
- both contributes to, and benefits from mentally healthy communities and regions in which it is located.

Factors and resources associated with a mentally healthy campus community are visualized in the graphic, including:

- *Persons* as individuals (and services directed at individuals);
- *Groups, Built and Natural Environment* (and services directed at these elements);
- *Organizations*;
- *Inter-organization and inter-professional* working relationships and collaborations.

These factors are nested within *community context and inter-relationships*.



By taking a whole system approach, and taking action on all the other elements of a mentally healthy campus, planners can make sure their strategy both influences the wide range of factors that influence people's mental health AND helps those elements to influence each other. This creates a momentum; a movement that is self-reinforcing and can magnify the impact.

Why Students?

Why are post secondary students a critical group?

Having mental wellness as well as mental illness and issues support helps make the best use of the investment in post secondary education.

There is growing evidence that student mental health is a critical foundation for students to optimize their learning and be successful in their academic work. Students who experience mental illness also experience poor academic performance, increased anxiety, and loss of interest in learning. Many life assets are important soft skills valued by employers in a dynamic changing world. Influencing post secondary students to develop positive mental wellness habits and beliefs, has a great return on investment over and above the improvement in academic performance. It is an investment in future parents; employers and employees; educators and health providers and other helping professions, neighbours and citizens, throughout their lives.

Post secondary education is an important time in people's development.

Most people who are going to have lifelong mental health issues will be diagnosed before they turn 24 years of age. This is also an important time of life for developing habits and beliefs. So, developing healthy ways of coping with life challenges can help create helpful and lasting life habits. Older students are in life transitions and are still at a point where the potential for changing habits and beliefs is possible. Better treatment protocols and resources support people to live more normalized lives, and improve the ability to succeed in higher education. It is critical that there are adequate resources for supporting people to maintain their treatment plans while in the high stress environment of postsecondary education is critical.

Post secondary institutions are considered to be high-stress environments.

Student surveys show that many students experience high stress, anxiety and sleep difficulties, which have a negative impact on their academic performance. Some post secondary institutions or programs can be more high stress or competitive than others. Learning healthy choices in the face of a high stress environment is good preparation for one's future. Post secondary campuses are a community, enabling the development of positive relational skills, beliefs and attitudes through developmental stages.

Student led initiatives help students develop skills and experience.

Students who conceive, plan and implement mental health and illness initiatives are developing important life and career skills over and above their improved awareness of mental health, mental illness and issues, and the importance of reducing stigma to their own wellbeing.

Why Work Together?

Working Together

There are many strategies

to choose from when attempting to improve mental wellness, and treat or prevent mental illness and mental health issues. One is to focus directly on the desired outcome in individual people; another is to address the systemic factors that lead to the desired outcome. The physical, social, and policy environment are important systemic factors to consider. Collective action, or working together, is a part of a whole systems approach, recognizing that many people and units within the institution's structure, provide services addressing mental wellness and mental illness / issues.

It's helpful to focus on shared outcomes when you want to work with others. Being creative about how to create a desired outcome can lead to some powerful partnerships. Here's a sample of the range of actions that a Student Leader might consider taking:

Do – deliver service directly.

Advocate – encourage others to take action themselves.

Partner – share with another group, with either partner leading. If done well, this can make resources stretch farther and the initiative benefits from the differing strengths of the partners.

Collectively Act – engage with a wide range of people or groups. This requires some sort of coordinating body that facilitates discussions towards a shared vision and agenda, helps develop shared measures and evaluation, and undertakes common functions.

Celebrate – recognize others who are contributing to your shared end.



Collective action, done well, builds on successes over time. As strengths are built, they lead to unforeseen opportunities and better use of everyone's resources. This builds synergy (the impact becomes stronger and stronger over time as it builds on itself. This is the 'flywheel' effect.



Read about the flywheel effect in the Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses Practical Tool **p. 46**

Why Student Led?

Student led mental health initiatives offer multiple advantages.

Peers influence students.

Students are often more comfortable talking about difficult situations with fellow students who they trust.

Students have lived experience.

Students have a better grasp on the realities of the current student experience than others, even those who are on campus. This is not to say that others have no grasp of the student experience, but the student perspective is a valuable piece of the puzzle.

The student experience is holistic.

Part of the student experience is that it involves more than just the time on campus. Students' experience is a whole person experience in a whole life and a whole community – work, family, personal relationships are all part of a person's experience and events in one ripple through all the others – there's a domino effect. It's hard for others to see all those other parts of a student's experience and remember they're part of the puzzle.

Students can be innovative.

Students are not necessarily limited by traditional views of mental health strategies. If innovation is desired, then student-led initiatives offer an opportunity to explore approaches that are driven by different worldviews. Successful initiatives can then be leveraged in a comprehensive strategy.

Students are creative.

They can often find less expensive ways of achieving a desired outcome.

Students themselves are impacted.

Students involved in conceiving, designing and implementing mental health initiatives develop a deeper understanding of mental wellness and mental health issues than most students. So developing and implementing the strategy helps them develop skills such as strategy development, project management and evaluation. They also learn more about the leadership challenges involved in changing culture, decisions that involve ethics of resource allocation, and other leadership dilemmas.

Student Leader Guide

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

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.



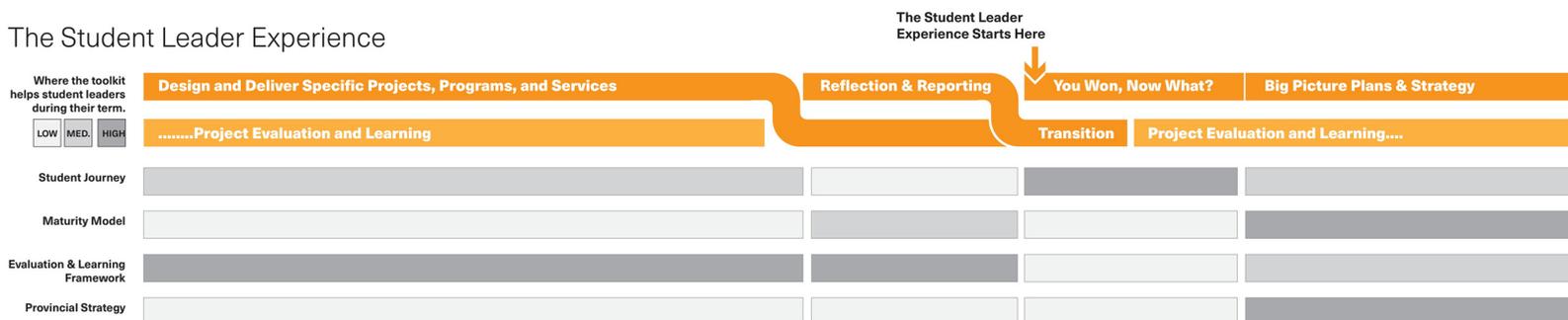
Tools

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?

Student Journey Map

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

About the Student Journey Map

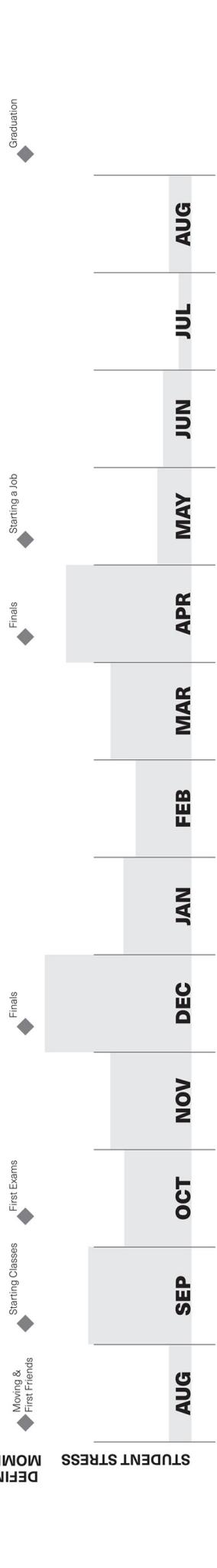
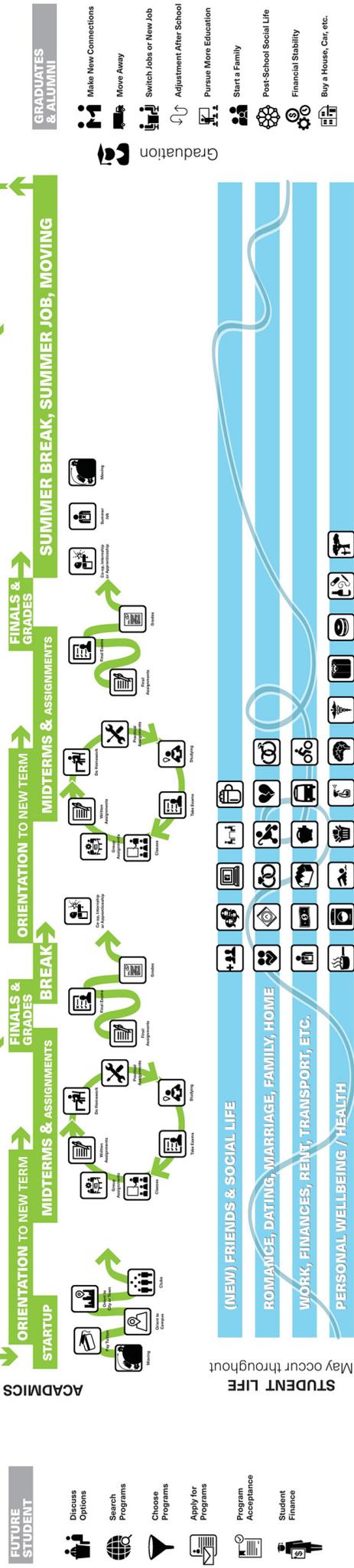
The **Student Journey Map** is a diagram that considers the whole experience of students during their education. It covers a typical twelve month cycle that includes two terms—however, the same cycle repeats: preparation, early adjustment, regular classes and assignments, and then end-of-term assignments and exams.

Who could use this tool?

- Student leaders;
- Program planners;
- Mental health professionals.

What purposes could this tool serve?

- Informing the development and evaluation of initiatives to support student mental health;
- Serving as a "check-in" to remind student services professionals and/or mental health professionals about the stages and common stressors in the student journey;
- Informing the creation and evaluation of campus mental health strategies.



The Student Leader Experience



Rotate **clockwise** to view, or [download the PDF here.](#)

Using the Student Journey Map

Students' experiences are embedded in their whole life experiences – social life, love and relationships; finances, work, and personal health and wellbeing. These experiences outside the 'student' role are important to mental health and mental illness. Highlighting a student's whole life experience while they are at post secondary is one of the ways that a mentally healthy campus can improve its degree of student-centredness.

Academics. The first row shows activities related to academic life—from orientation to exams. It also shows actions that prospective students and graduates take before and after their student experience.

Student Life. The second row shows various aspects of student life that can provide support or may create additional stresses. Throughout this cycle students experience stress in different ways—it may be from the academic work of classes and homework, or it may be from various elements of student life. These student life elements are represented throughout the experience and include social life, love and relationships, finances and work, and health and wellbeing.

Typical Stress. The third row graphs levels of typical student stress across the student experience cycle. Not every student follows this cycle – some have much more stress at the beginning of the year – some are more stressed over the summer months, perhaps because they take summer classes, perhaps because their job is much more stressful than school. Perhaps different programs or faculties have different patterns.

Student Leader Cycle. Finally, the fourth row maps the typical stages of a student leader's term in office against the overall student experience. These stages of a student leader's term may vary in their timing but everyone will need to work through each stage.

Mentally Healthy Campuses Maturity Model

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

About the Maturity Model

The **Mentally Healthy Campuses Maturity Model** gives more detail about the actions that are necessary to build a Mentally Healthy Campus. A maturity model is a scorecard that helps organizations understand their own capability and capacity to create and influence desired change. Because it is visual, it is helpful for explaining your progress to others who you might want to be advocating for resources or permission to make improvements.

Who could use this tool?

- Student leaders;
- Program planners.

What purposes could this tool serve?

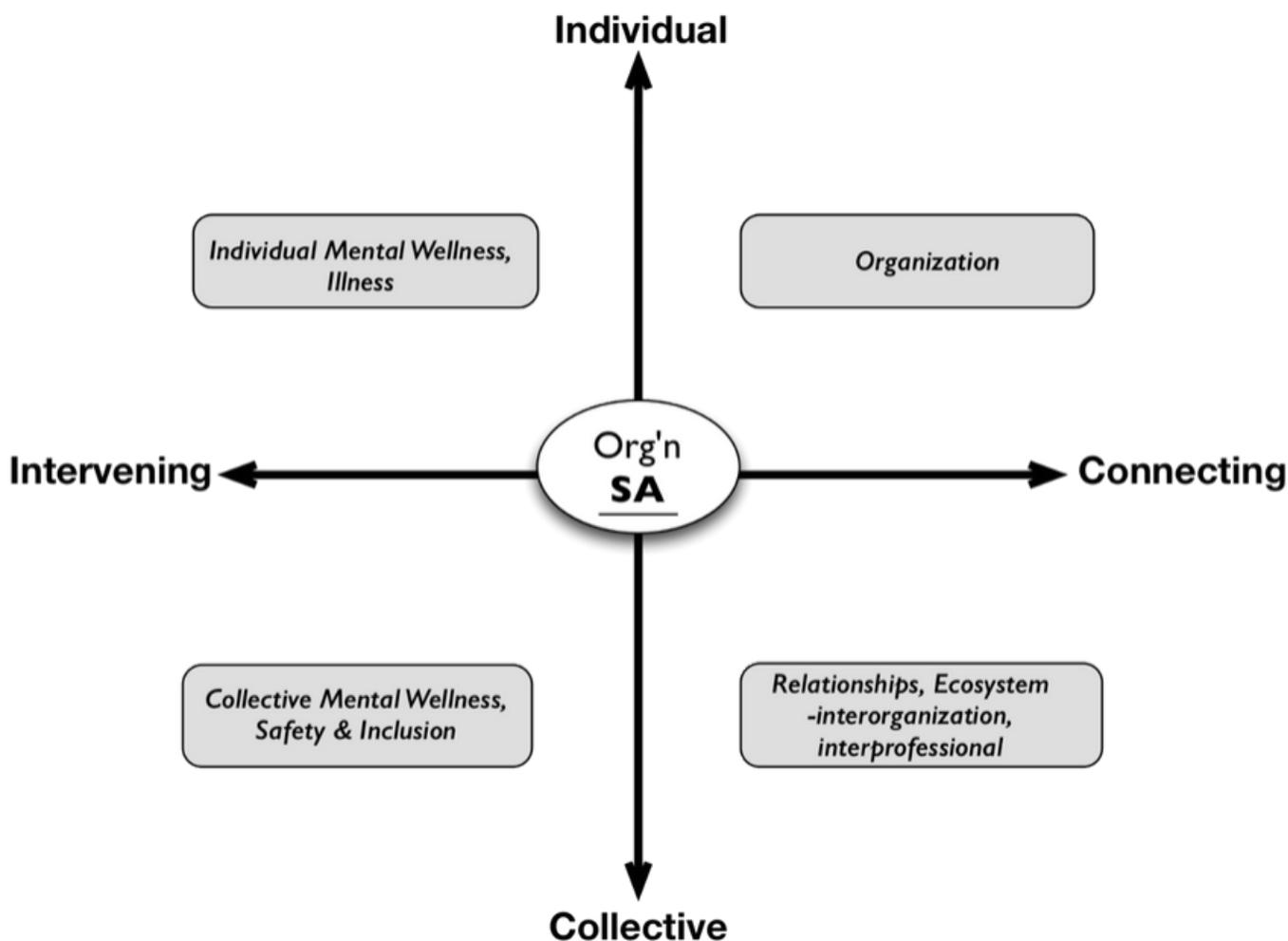
- Mapping current mental health initiatives;
- Identifying areas for growth and improvement;
- Sparking discussion about innovating mental health initiatives that fit the context of individual institutions.

Background

What is a Maturity Model?

A maturity model is a tool that helps you have a visual picture of where you are presently, and where you might want to go next. It also is a tool that helps you continuously improve your processes and the way you organize to achieve your aim of increasingly mentally healthy campuses. In other words, it is a tool you can use to complement your evaluation of outcomes you've achieved – a maturity model focuses on the capability to create change, rather than the change itself. When we talk about maturity, we are not talking about whether individuals in the organization are juvenile or mature. Instead, we are talking about how confident an organization can be that it can routinely deliver on its commitments, and work effectively with others to foster a mentally healthy campus.

Mentally Healthy Campus Maturity Model - Basic



Understanding the Maturity Model

Individual to Collective

The top to bottom axis is Individual to Collective. At the top, actions can focus on individual people or on a single organization. At the bottom, actions can focus on groups of people or the physical environment, as well as on the ecosystem of many professionals and many organizations.

Intervening to Connecting

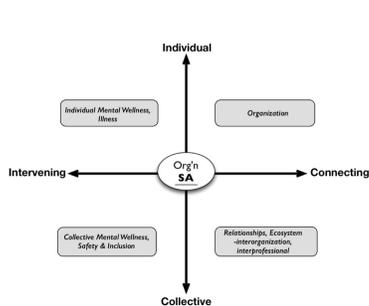
On the left side are Intervening actions. These are actions to improve mental health and reduce stigma. On the right side are Connecting actions. These actions are about coordinating and structuring effort, whether in a single organization or in the ecosystem of many people and organizations.

The Four Quadrants

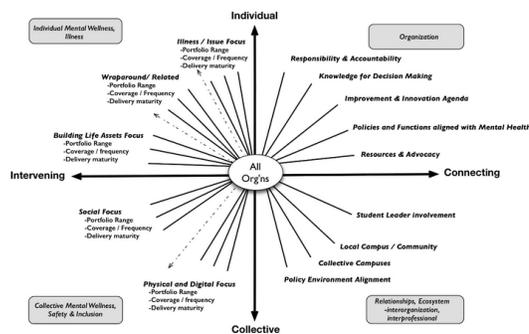
- *Individual Interventions (Upper Left)* – interventions or services related to individual people, for example students, faculty, staff or visitors.
- *Collective Interventions (Lower Left)* – interventions or services related to groups (social environment) or the physical environment of the campus.
- *Individual Connections (Upper Right)* – the leadership and management functions that help you plan and deliver the interventions.
- *Collective Connections (Lower Right)* – the partnerships or ‘ecosystem’ of other organizations that you are working with, which magnifies your effort.

Levels

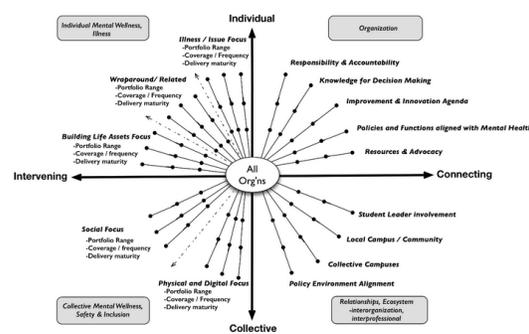
There are three increasing complex maturity models: basic, detailed, and advanced.



Basic



Detailed



Advanced

Understanding the Maturity Model cont.

Individual Interventions

A wide variety of services and activities can be aimed at providing professional services, or at influencing or changing people's behaviour, beliefs and attitudes, including:

- *Illness / Issues.* Addressing or avoiding mental illness, addictions or mental issues, including reducing stress.
- *Wraparound / Related.* Supporting students who may be challenged by situations that are not directly mental health or mental issue related but contribute to the student's mental well-being or stress.
- *Mental Wellness and Life Assets.* Helping the individual grow their mental wellness and life assets. This approach starts with the idea that mental well-being means building capabilities or assets that are really skills for engaging with any kind of challenge throughout life.

Examples

1

Illness / Issues: stress relief (puppy days or colouring corners); peer support programs or peer counseling programs; training like Mental Health First Aid; information brochures; bathroom posters.

2

Wraparound / Related: food banks and nutrition information; legal advice clinics; financial literacy; parenting skills and healthy relationships

3

Mental Wellness and Life Assets: The activities used for short-term coping and stress management are also ones that help you build your mental wellness skills, if combined with mindfulness, reflection and action learning.

Collective Interventions

These include both social and physical strategies, as well as strategies that influence the digital or policy environments. While specific activities within these may be focused on the individual, the key is that groups engage together so there is some shared experience.

Examples

1

Physical strategies: advocating for gender-neutral bathrooms or better lighting in parking lots; creating a dedicated Student Support Centre for student-led activities or another type of facility.

2

Social strategies: Community Conversation on Mental Health in an area of a campus where many students walk; weekly Wellness Wednesdays held in high traffic areas.

Understanding the Maturity Model cont.

Individual Connections

This relates to your organization's capabilities to plan and deliver services or activities related to your strategy for improving mental wellness or addressing mental health issues. These include a range of functions. Consider the following questions:

How are you organized to plan and implement your mental health strategy? (This means your designated leadership and accountability for the mental health strategy.)

What information do you gather or access to help you make decisions about what to do and how you are doing?

This might include your evaluation and learning data. It could also include information from another department, such as the proportion of prescriptions in your health insurance package for mental health issues, or the number of students who drop out of school. (This information is your Knowledge for Decision Making.)

What is your balance of services that continue over time with some improvement, compared to new actions or services that you are testing? (In other words, what is your Improvement and Innovation Agenda?)

How do you act as an employer? Do you treat your employees in ways that help them improve their mental health and reduce stigma? Do you do your business in ways most aligned with a mentally healthy campus? (In other words, are Policies and Functions aligned with mental health?)

Collective Connections

These relate to the range of working partnerships that are actively engaged in the improvement of student mental health and reduced stigma on post secondary campuses. this quadrant is important for sustainability. When one player has a crisis or has fewer resources for a time (this could be time, funds or attention), then others can keep the momentum going. Collective Connections can help spark the culture shift and sustainability efforts required to maintain mentally healthy campuses. Your actions may apply to one of the following:

Student led initiatives – What degree of engagement do student leaders have in your campus strategy? Are student leaders actually engaged in leading the planning and implementation of initiatives?

Local campus and community relationships – Who are all the professionals and organizations you work with on shared actions, across your institution and with your local community?

Collective actions – How are you supporting, learning from, and engaging with other student groups to improve the whole group? How will you support provincial actions? For example, will you participate actively in the Healthy Campus Alberta Community of Practice?

Policy environments - Are the policy environments, whether at the institutions or in the provincial and federal ministries, aligned with the aim of improving student mental health and reduced stigma? If the policy environment is not aligned, this will signal the need for advocacy over taking direct action.

Using the Maturity Model

Basic Model. The Maturity Model helps develop and describe strategy in a way that is not just a list of actions or services. Use the worksheet on the next page as a team or individual activity.

Compile.

Identify all the activities or services that your organization offers. Large initiatives can be separated out into several individual activities. For each initiative, identify when it will be implemented, or a time period. Then, identify which end of each continuum the initiative aligns with: collective or individual? intervention or connection? Then, mark where on maturity model the initiative would be.

Prioritize.

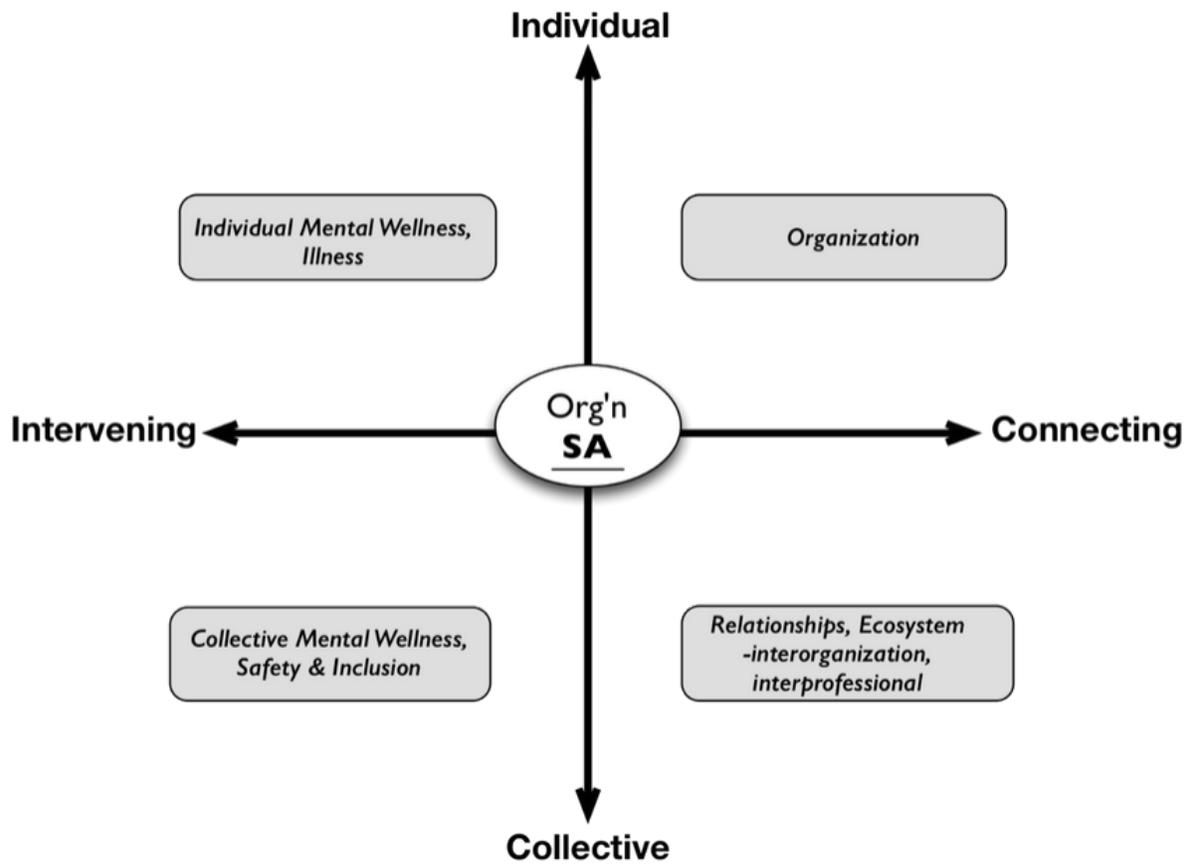
Mapping the time sequence for activities may help you see where you have too many activities to actually manage them well with the resources you have. Consider asking another organization to do the activities where you do not have the time or expertise. Add these to your list for consideration in your plan for advocacy.

Assess.

The most effective way to continuously improve your mentally healthy campus is to make sure you have actions in all the Quadrants, whatever your level of complexity. Gather your project team and consider what the map tells you. Does it identify quadrants that have been less emphasized and might be good candidates for future initiatives? Are there areas you could undertake yourself? Are there areas for advocacy?

Adjust.

Adjust your strategy to include those actions or services you can actually achieve with the resources and time you have.

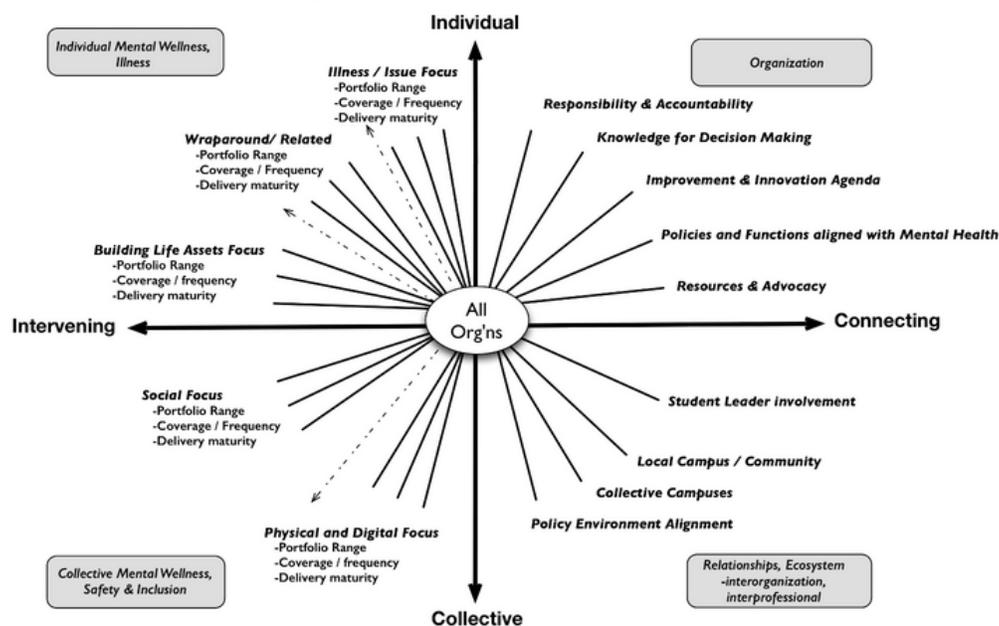


Mental Health Initiative Mapping

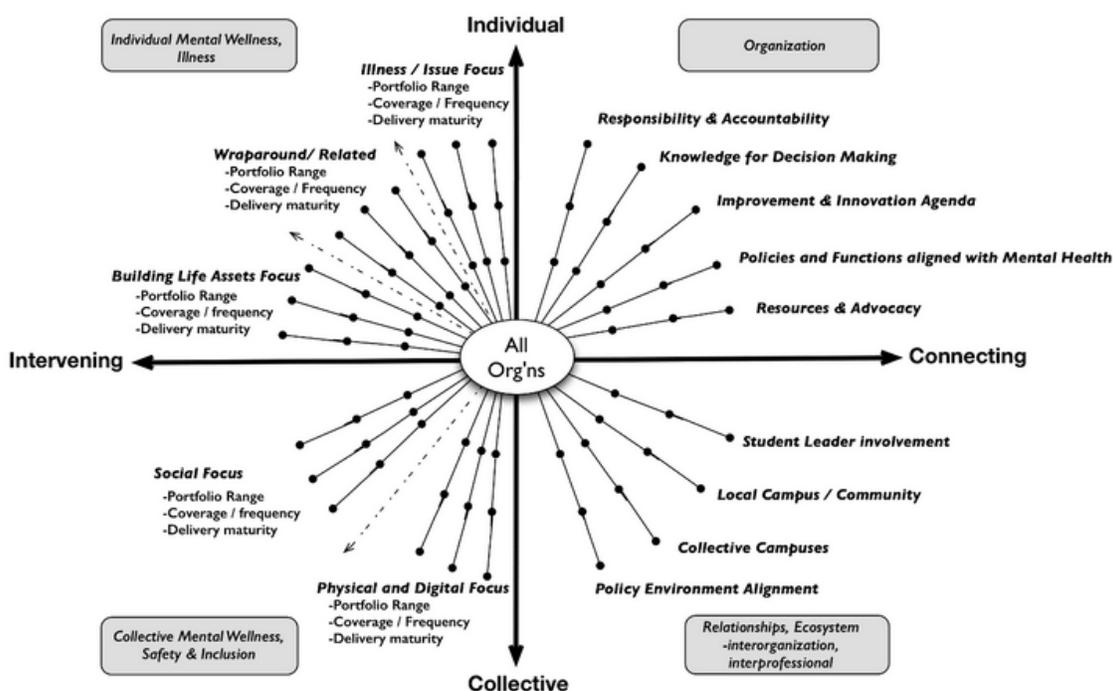
<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Individual or Collective?</i>	<i>Intervention or Connection?</i>

Using the Maturity Model cont.

Detailed Model. This involves describing the different dimensions of your activities, programs and initiatives in each quadrant. This level of detail is most helpful when you have developed a solid foundation for activities and have a better sense of your long term big picture strategy, and are working purposefully with partners.



Advanced model. The Advanced level involves describing the maturity of your processes at each of successive developmental stages for each of the different dimensions of your activities, programs and initiatives in each quadrant. It also allows you to map the degree of reach you've achieved with the initiatives .



Evaluation and Learning Framework

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

About the Evaluation and Learning Framework

The **Evaluation and Learning Framework** aims to position evaluation and learning as activities that help you know the impact you're having (or not). This helps you to know whether you will have a greater impact if you adapt what you're doing, and also helps you know when conditions have changed so that what you did before is no longer as effective. Evaluation can provide you useful information for the decisions you'll need to make, as well as being accountable to your funder. It can provide you useful information for advocacy, and for celebrations.

Who could use this tool?

- Student leaders;
- Program planners.

What purposes could this tool serve?

- Informing the evaluation of initiatives to support student mental health;
- Serving as a starting point for a comprehensive evaluation strategy for mental health initiatives;
- Informing the creation and evaluation of campus mental health strategies.

Getting Started

First a caution. Note that the examples in this tool are meant to clarify concepts, not prescribe what you do. Use them only if they actually apply to your situation. The examples refer to single events or services: this is where you'll need to start. Describing a detailed evaluation and learning strategy may be something you'll want to do if you've advanced beyond thinking about single projects or activities.

Does evaluation only mean quantifying what we did and what we achieved?

Over the years, evaluation practice has evolved. Early evaluators were preoccupied with quantitative information to prove that a given program would produce a given result. Large scale evaluations, where large amounts of money and effort will be expended still tend to emphasize that method as a way to prove that public funds for a particular program achieve the intended results. Even for those purposes however, evaluation practice is evolving. As we recognize that most decision makers need information for deciding on increasingly complex problems, we recognize that they can't just rely on quantitative methods, assessed by outside experts. So different types of evaluation methods are being used. The increasing expectation of citizen and other stakeholder engagement means that evaluations are increasingly planned and conducted using participative methods.

Why evaluate?

You may be required to evaluate as a condition of receiving funding. But you might also want to evaluate for your own purposes. Maybe you want to learn what works, so you can adapt your strategy over time. Or you want to get better and better at doing whatever you do – improving efficiency so you can make your resources go further. Learning how to get better, and learning what strategies work better than others is important. If evaluation is to be your friend you need to think about what your needs are. What decisions will you want to make?

Examples

1

You might want to know whether students are interested in engaging with a particular initiative, or a particular way of delivering it. If not, you can change the initiative or the way you implement.

2

You may want to make sure your student group's mental health strategy builds momentum and impact from year to year, so your evaluation requirements include informing your successors.

3

If you are a student leader who takes a big picture governance approach and have staff who do the detailed planning and implementing, you will want to think about what evaluative information you want them to produce. You might want to be able to understand how the Big Picture Strategy needs to change, or understand more about what resources are really required to pull off different initiatives. You can't evaluate everything so will need to consider what resources are required to do different levels of evaluation. You probably don't want to spend more on evaluation than you do on providing services!

Getting Started cont.

There's more than one answer to the question 'How to evaluate?'

Sometimes you don't need to do formal evaluation studies for your purposes – you just watch how many people show up to your events and decide to keep it the same or change depending on that alone. Or you pay attention to how frustrating the planning and delivery of an initiative is and decide that you could reduce the frustration and wasted resources by a different planning process, or writing down the usual steps so you don't have to remember them all the time. The informality of those processes doesn't change the fact that you are evaluating, or learning what works and what doesn't. However the informality might make it harder to make your case to a funder for continuing the service. If that's what you want to be able to do, you might want to keep some records of your observations and have a more formal analysis and reporting process.

You may want to use a participative approach for at least some of the steps. People are more likely to buy into the conclusions and recommendations if they've been a part of the process, but it does take more effort and planning. One important time to use participative approaches is when you're trying to build a collaborative approach across many campus departments and community agencies. Having your partners involved in the planning, and then in the analysis or sense-making stages helps everyone understand and own the changes you might make as a result.

Sense-making is the process of collectively bringing everyone's perspectives to the table to ask, "What does this information mean and what does it indicate we should do". Having a group with different perspectives makes that assessment much more robust, but it does require more careful facilitation and openness to differing opinions.

Examples

The process of recording need not be a lot of effort.

1

You could gather your team and do a 10 minute debrief at the end of an event and ask – "What would we Change, Drop, Add and Keep"? Everyone puts their thoughts on a sticky note (one thought per sticky note) and posts them on a flip chart with the 4 columns. Take a photo and put it in the file. Next time you're planning that type of initiative you can check the file to remind yourself.

Every 6 months you can have a 'Learning Circle' where you and your team can look at all the field reviews and identify common patterns that you can improve with training or documenting process or other strategies.

Getting Started cont.

Consider the collective

Collective information means information that covers a number of campuses. For collective evaluation, information can come from many sources. Some of it will come from reports of individual campus initiatives. At the collective level though, you will also want to learn about how to improve collective actions, as well as to report on their effectiveness. This supports many purposes:

- Sharing what works so that other campus members can build on what works in campuses that share common characteristics;
- Understanding how to modify collective actions;
- Understanding the range and portfolio of actions that improve post-secondary students' mental health and reduced stigma.
- Being able to demonstrate how and why student led initiatives are an important contribution to the overall strategy for mental health and reduced stigma.

What information do you need to make the decisions you want?

This may seem like a strange place to start, when you know what initiatives you're putting in place – isn't it just about figuring out what to measure? That's certainly where people often start, but starting with the end in mind can be helpful.

"Why do I think that will be useful to do?"

And when you have an answer, ask "Why do I think that will be valuable or helpful?" Ask yourself "Why?" to the answer you get, and repeat that more times. At each step, you'll end up with one piece of the chain of outcomes that you expect to result from your actions. You'll find that, at some level, you're making assumptions that you haven't questioned.

"Who will likely be interested and willing to participate in my event, service or activity?"

Be reasonable about the types and numbers of students who you will even connect with. Why might you want to know that? You might want to gather information about the characteristics of the students who participate. You may want to go further and make sure you know which ones say they found the event or service helpful or not.

"How does the service or activity run?"

You might want to know the following information if the decisions you want to make are ones to improve the operation of a service or activity.

"Am I at an early stage of development?"

In the earliest stages of an innovation you'll want to understand mostly about whether your delivery system works. Evaluating and learning as you go helps you make decisions on how to do it better the next time. Is long term implementation of the new initiative possible given underlying administrative or policy realities? If yes, you may need to consider advocating for policy change.

Getting Started cont.

Consider creative ways to gather information

The type of evaluation and learning you do depends on what you want to learn. Think about what you need to know to make the decisions you want to make in an informed way, and worry about how you can do a good job about collecting and understanding that information. Ask yourself – can I get the information in a way that also engages other students in conversations about mental health, mental illness and issues, or reducing the secrecy around talking about mental illness openly?

Examples

- 1 Host a painting party and ask people to work in a group to draw images that describe their experience – and then post them, so others can see that there's more than one way to respond to a situation.
- 2 Set out 5 jars, each labeled with a different type of stressor and give participants 3 marbles to put in the appropriate jar(s). People can put a marble in 3 jars, or put all the marbles in one jar if they wanted to indicate that type of stressor was really important. Students walking by can see that others have the same kind(s) of stressors as they do. Perhaps you could use the jars and marbles as a way for students to indicate what types of stress reduction actions they find most helpful. For your reporting, you could take a photo of the images or the jars. If you do it at the beginning of the year and the end this will help you show whether or not there were any changes.

Inputs and Outputs

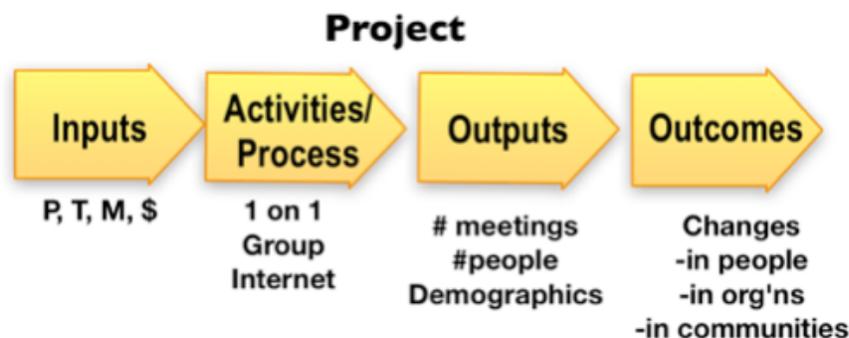
One way to look at your action or service is to understand different components. First, briefly describe the action or service. This should include a description of the type of student it's aimed at, the frequency it's provided, and where the service is provided.

What are *Inputs* (e.g. time, funding, materials, physical space, expertise)?

What are *Activities* (e.g. providing brochures, holding workshops, providing counseling)?

What are *Outputs* (e.g. numbers of people participating, numbers of events)? These are measures of effort and used to be all that anyone gathered.

What are the expected *Outcomes*? These are the changes in a person or other entity that come as a result of the activities.



Getting Started cont.

Inputs and Outputs: Example

Mental Health Awareness Campaign

<i>Input</i>	Time, funding, design and print costs, costs for frames and mounts for bathroom stall doors.
<i>Activity</i>	Information posters on bathroom stall doors that tell students about what resources are available to them for counseling or events, some introductory information about mental illness or mental well-being and how to identify warning signs.
<i>Output</i>	Amount of time for design and print-ready copy, costs for materials, and numbers of maintenance people able to install the frames, time of people who refresh the posters weekly.
<i>Outcome</i>	First, a student needs to read and understand the information, and find it relevant. If they've understood and found it relevant, a student will know where to find resources they need them. Third, if they know where counseling is located and how to make an appointment, the student will access services when they need them. Then if the student participates in counseling they will have coping strategies, perhaps are referred to a physician for medication etc. If all those outcomes are achieved, you could claim an outcome – the student has supports required to successfully manage their mental illness. Perhaps further outcomes include academic performance – the student will be able to maintain the necessary GPA to stay enrolled in classes.

Common use of information

Don't think you have to do it all yourself. Sometimes you might have to work with others on campus to access their information. Sometimes those departments will want your information on services you've provided to see if they can draw a conclusion about whether their change in academic outcomes is related to your services or activities.

Reporting and Momentum

You need to report at the end of the term, so you have to do the analysis and sense making at least for those reports. If you can make a regular habit of calling a learning circle – even for the last 10 minutes of a regular meeting – that will help create the culture of inquiry and adapting that you want.



Check out [BetterEvaluation](#) for more resources.

Steps for Evaluation and Planning

Purpose

--

Roles

--

Audiences

--

Stakeholders

--

Information

--

Timeline

--

*Data
Collection*

--

*Data Analysis
& Learning*

--

Resources

--

*Documenting
& Reflecting*

--

Using the Evaluation and Learning Framework

Note you may not work through these questions in order. The Evaluation and Learning Framework can be filled out by your team as a learning and planning activity. For each section, consider the following:

- Purpose: What do you want to be able to learn or decide? Meeting your funder's requirements is enough, but you can add some for your own purposes.
- Roles: Who will be responsible for making sure the evaluation and learning processes are done? Are there other roles that need to be identified?
- Audience: Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation and learning?
- Information: What information do you need to make what decisions? What do you want your intended audiences to know or do differently? Sometimes it helps to identify the questions you'd like answers to, and then identify the information you'd need to answer those questions.
- Stakeholders: Which stakeholders will it help to have involved? At what stage?
- Information: From what sources should the information be collected? This might include students; insurance company benefits used; faculty; or counselors .
- Timeline: You'll have created a timeline for your project activities. Create a separate line for the evaluation and learning activities.
- Data Collection: How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion?
- Data Analysis & Learning: Combine the data and analyse it. Then you need to ask 'what does this mean'? What time and process do you need to plan for to do the analysis? Learning from the data helps answer questions like 'what are we learning that we didn't know when we started', 'how can we do better next time at delivering these kinds of initiatives', 'what would we do next'. Create a learning circle in your team.
- Resources: What resources - monetary and otherwise - are available for all the parts of the evaluation and learning activities?
- Documenting & Reflecting: Pull all this into a documented evaluation plan with activities, timelines and resources. Following the evaluation and learning process you may want to reflect on what evaluation capacity you'd like to build or improve in yourself.

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.

Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses

Practical Tool



Part of the Student Led Initiatives Toolkit.

About Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses

The **Strategies for Mentally Healthy Campuses** tool outlines areas where students can bring their strengths to creating mentally healthy post secondary campuses in Alberta. Creating a mentally healthy campus requires ongoing change across systems and society, from individual actions and attitudes to collective efforts in community formation and collaboration. This tool shows where to play (what areas to prioritize) and how to win (principles and actions to succeed).

Who could use this tool?

- Student leaders.

What purposes could this tool serve?

- Creating a balanced strategy for a mentally healthy campus;
- Identifying options for action to put a strategy into play on campus;
- Scaling a mentally healthy campus strategy.

Background

The Mentally Healthy Campus Strategy

Student leaders are instrumental in the change to mentally healthy campuses. You serve as catalysts within communities. You are also leaders for young adults building lifelong foundations for wellness as they develop their independence alongside their education. Facing a long-term cultural and systems challenge like this can be overwhelming. However, small and focused efforts applied consistently in key areas will have a major impact. These activities foster cohesion, broaden and deepen relationships, and provide a foundation for long-term impacts. This is the principle of the flywheel, which builds momentum and directs the energy that comes from a series of small, coordinated, and regular inputs.

What is a mentally healthy campus?

A mentally healthy campus is a community where all of its people, environments and collective culture interact in ways that work together to promote the mental well-being of all its members, the inclusiveness of its culture and the sustainability of the physical environment. A mentally healthy campus consistently fosters mental wellness for each person who is a part of it. This includes students, faculty, and staff, and the broader community of which the campus is a part.

While most initiatives focus on students as the recipients of programs and services, the holistic view of a mentally healthy campus recognizes that each of us is a contributor and a recipient. Every person is involved in supporting others and in receiving support. This includes the administration, faculty, staff, health care providers, students, student leaders, and the broader community. The most effective efforts come by recognizing this dual nature of contribution through co-creation, and then receiving (through direct intervention and the overall wellness of the community). This potential for mutual investment and benefit exists for all people and institutions within the system.

This holistic, or whole system view also recognizes the contribution and beneficiary relationship between people, the social and physical environments, as well as the policy environment. In addition, the campus is recognized as contributing to, and benefiting from relationships with the larger communities in which it is nested. Thus, in a holistic strategy, programs and services will focus on the contributions and needs of individual populations or cohorts while recognizing the larger context and system.



Read more in the Framing Mentally
Healthy Campuses Conceptual Tool **p. 13**

A Strategic Perspective

Key Principles

The Whole System. A holistic, systemic viewpoint is essential for dealing with complex adaptive challenges like fostering mental wellness. To shift the system efficiently, effectively, and sustainably requires contributions from all groups, collaborating with students rather than simply providing programs for students.

The Student Experience. By understanding the overall experience of students, both student leaders and other collaborators can focus their efforts more effectively.

Student-Led Initiatives. These activities fill a role and achieve outcomes that no other contributor's work can fulfill.

Catalysts and Connectors. Students play a connector role, drawing the community together, including administration, faculty, staff, the student body, health care providers, and the wider community.



Read more in the Framing Mentally
Healthy Campuses Conceptual Tool **p. 13**

Focus Areas

Every campus is different, and students need to consider the needs of their student body, the context and culture of their institution, and the previous work that they can build on. Students usually leave treatment and risk reduction services to the institution to deliver, but are especially effective at prevention and promotion, and creating movements for cultural change to increase inclusion and decrease stigma.

Life Assets **Stigma and Culture** **Relationships** **Collaboration** **Continuity**



Read more in the Overview of Mental
Health Conceptual Tool **p. 4**

Using the Tools

The *Maturity Model* discusses in detail various elements that combine as a whole system to foster mental wellness.

The *Student Journey Map* shows the student experience as an individual's journey over time before, during, and after their educational experience.

In addition to outcomes, you want to track your capability to make the change you want. The *Evaluation and Learning Framework* fosters this continuous learning process.



Learn how to use the tools in the
Student Leader Guide **p. 20**

Options for Action

How to Win: Options for Action

Success comes from rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty in the daily life of campus. But that is not the only thing you can do to succeed and contribute to a mentally healthy campus. Winning is more than just doing it all yourself. Here are 15 ways of taking action and contributing.

Doing – Take action on your own. Plan and run your own programs.

Partnering – Work in collaboration with others. You may have a lead role, or you may support your collaborators as they lead.

Supporting – You may provide social, financial, reputational, moral, or other supports for a project or program, even if you are not directly responsible for any of it.

Endorsing – You may lend your reputation by vouching for someone or something.

Challenging – You may question, critique, and help refine a course of action.

Informing – You may provide your expertise, experience, and insights to mitigate risk and improve outcomes.

Celebrating – You may encourage, find joy, and strengthen others as they succeed. (Perhaps you may do this even more so when they fail, having worked hard in a good cause).

Amplifying – You may increase something through increasing awareness, adding your voice, and reaching new audiences.

Modeling – You may demonstrate for others what good looks like.

Delegating – You may identify necessary actions and find people who have the abilities and strengths required. You may delegate those actions to those who will do them best or learn the most from doing them.

Guiding – You may provide advice, direction, and input to improve both decision-making and actual project activities.

Funding – You may provide full or partial financial support. This can become stronger especially through finding money from multiple sources, and then directing it to specific programs or portfolios.

Governing – You may sit on a board or other body that provides oversight and governance to a specific set of initiatives.

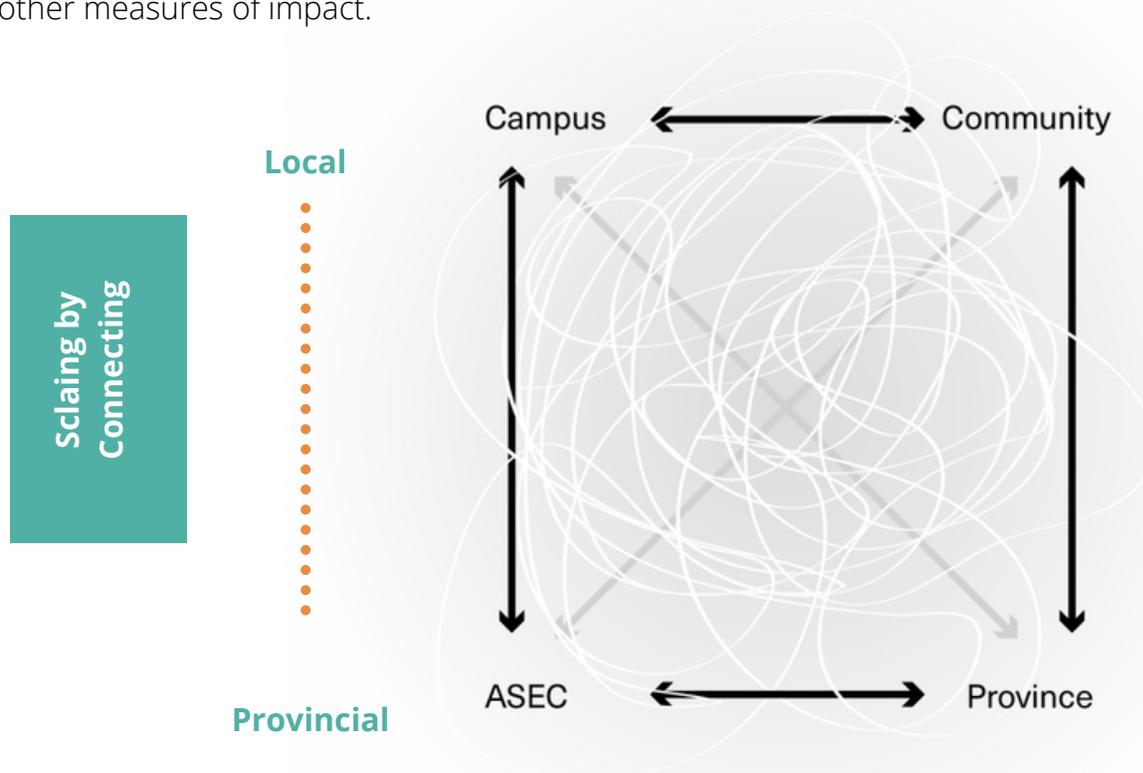
Evaluating and Learning – You may determine outputs and outcomes from a specific project or program, and then use that information to improve your own programs or those of others. Learning as you go helps you improve your processes of designing, planning, delivering and evaluating.

Validating – You may confirm or approve a concept, policy, or implementation.

Scaling and Connecting

Scale by Connecting

Moving from one or two small things to a regular emphasis on mental wellness as part of campus culture is an ongoing effort. Scaling up your mental wellness work requires student leaders to connect to others in order to support efforts on a greater scale. Scaling up can be in size, frequency, reach, number of collaborators, production quality, inclusion, or other measures of impact.



Local and Provincial Action

At local level (campus and community, upper horizontal line), student leaders connect to their campus, including the student body, administration, faculty and staff. They also connect to their local community, including local government, community programs, and local mental health programs and providers. Groups like ASEC or CAUS enable the network of member student associations to learn from each other and collaborate together and brings a collective student voice forward on the provincial stage.

Maturity Model

Scaling is at the heart of the maturity model. By considering the different elements of the model, student leaders can identify different areas to expand their efforts, which may include refinement or improvement of current initiatives.



Access the Mentally Healthy Campuses
Maturity Model Conceptual Tool **p. 29**

Scaling and Connecting cont.

The Flywheel

Facing a long-term cultural and systems challenge can be overwhelming. However, small and focused efforts applied consistently in key areas will have a major impact. These activities foster cohesion, broaden and deepen relationships, and provide a foundation for long-term impacts. This is the principle of the flywheel, which builds momentum and directs the energy that comes from a series of small, coordinated, and regular inputs. Keeping the flywheel spinning is its own kind of scaling—a scaling of momentum.



Scaling the Flywheel

This is the overall collection of coherent effort by student leadership and their partners across the campus community. Four specific areas maximize the momentum.

Manage your portfolio. The consistency and frequency of needed activities means that you need to manage your portfolio carefully. Shift your range of involvement from leading an activity to supporting it in other ways. In the big picture, building momentum in the flywheel outshines the credit for one or two projects.

Develop working relationships. To succeed you need strong working relationships with other contributors. As you scale your efforts, you will need to add to the number of relationships that you have. As you do so, also work on the quality of your current relationships to deepen and strengthen them for the long term

Develop a cycle of evaluation and learning. Use the Evaluation and Learning Framework to begin or strengthen how you understand the success of projects.

Invest in continuity. During transitions between student leadership (both incoming and outgoing), focus your time on continuity to minimize loss of momentum.

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