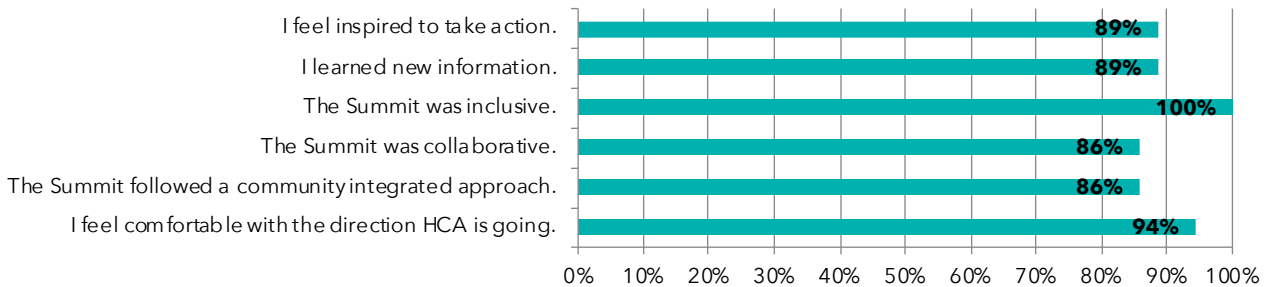


Healthy Campus Alberta 2020 Wellness Summit Report

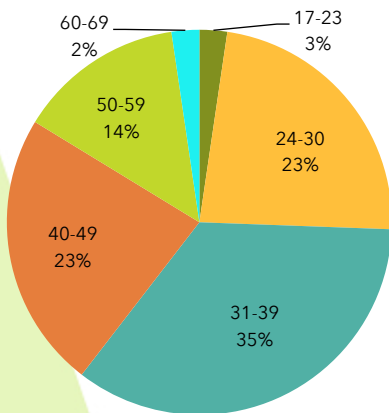
The Healthy Campus Alberta Wellness Summit is an annual event for the HCA Community of Practice to gather to learn, share, and celebrate the work being done across the province to strengthen post-secondary mental health and wellness. This year's event took place online in the form of a digital series, with two webinars on June 16 and 18 and the online Wellness Summit on June 23, 2020. Conversation was focused around the theme of **Moving Upstream**, as the community sought to explore how preventative and health-promoting initiatives can address the root causes and social determinants that influence post-secondary mental health.

With a total of 86 attendees at our first webinar, 61 at the second, and 140 attendees at the Summit, we had representation from **10** community organizations, **23** campuses from across Alberta, and **1** campus from British Columbia.

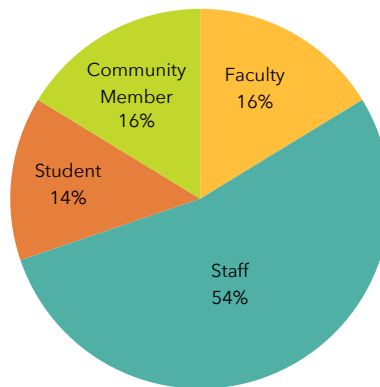
Attendees' Feedback



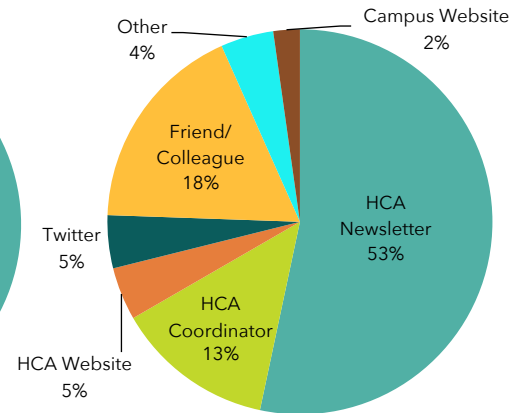
Attendees' Age



Attendees' Position



Heard About



What's Next?

HCA Community of Practice Meeting November 2020, online

Our Fall CoP meeting is an opportunity to learn about the direction of the community of practice and impact future priorities. More details coming soon!

"[I learned] the important role of small, everyday action and how it impacts collective action and momentum!"

"I will look for more ways to...build a culture of openness to mental health issues on campus."

"I am going to engage as a student and make sure my voice and the voices of my fellow students are heard!"

Event Summary

Pre-Summit Webinar #1

June 16 - Upstream 101, presented by Fabiola Aparicio-Ting

This webinar explored the concepts of prevention, health promotion and the social determinants of health, in the context of post-secondary mental health and wellness.

- 86 attendees, representation from 20 campuses and 3 community organizations
- [Link to the webinar recording](#)

Pre-Summit Webinar #2

June 18 - Facilitated Conversation: Envisioning Upstream, facilitated by Carla Kembel

This webinar discussed some of the challenges of moving upstream, encouraging attendees to tap into our collective capacity as we work to move this vision forward.

- 61 attendees, representation from 20 campuses and 3 community organizations
- [Link to the conversation notes from the webinar](#)

Keynote Presentation: "It Starts Way Upstream" by Dr. Trevor Hancock

Dr. Trevor Hancock is a public health physician and population health promotion consultant who is recognized internationally for his work on health promotion and healthy cities and communities. His keynote explored some of the distal determinants of mental health, encouraging attendees to "question the givens" and think creatively about how campuses can create mentally healthy learning and working environments. [Click here for the recording.](#)

Breakout Discussions

Attendees took part in a series of interactive breakouts, where they explored successes, challenges, and new opportunities for learning and collaboration around our 6 subthemes.

Creating a Campus-Wide Strategy: Facilitated by Kevin Friese from the University of Alberta and Lois Hayward and Gina Marandola from SAIT, these discussions highlighted ways to leverage community strengths in the creation of a campus-wide mental health strategy. A key theme that emerged was the need for a campus-wide approach, as post-secondary mental health is a community responsibility. Specific strategies for gaining campus-wide momentum were discussed, including cross-campus collaboration, engaging senior leadership, and identifying mental health champions. Developing a common language was also identified as key to the success of a mental health strategy. Lastly, these conversations highlighted the necessity of conducting program evaluations and finding areas of alignment with institutional strategy to ensure sustainable and measurable success.

Centering Wellness in Teaching and Learning: Facilitated by Dr. Carmen Arth from Concordia University and Andrea Chute from MacEwan University, these sessions explored successful strategies for promoting positive mental health in the classroom. Andrea shared about the Pets Assisting with Student Success (PAWSS) program and highlighted how inviting dogs into the classroom environment can reduce student stress and support meaningful learning experiences. Dr. Arth highlighted the role of inclusion and diversity in supporting student wellness and explored strategies that educators, regardless of their content area, can implement in their classroom. Key strategies included highlighting wellness resources/events, striving for equitable and respectful classroom environments, and examining your own relationship to wellness as an educator.



Strengthening Personal Skills, Relationships, and Resilience: Facilitated by Corrie Mekar, Kelly Gallant from the University of Calgary, and Maura Frunza from the Students' Association of MacEwan University, these discussions explored strategies for building individual skills in coping, self-esteem, and resilience. A key theme that emerged was the importance of building strong relationships and community connections as a key facet of individual resilience. Resilience was recognized as a skill that can be nurtured and developed as a practice, and initiatives that cultivate resilience can be shared across contexts, as they are applicable to many institutions and situations. Presenters encouraged attendees to engage with grassroots, community-based and student led action to promote wellness and mental health on their campuses.

Building Supportive Campus Communities: Facilitated by Sydney Bennell from MacEwan University and Rachelle McGrath from Mount Royal University, these discussions engaged staff and students alike in exploring the definition of a "supportive campus community" and sharing examples of models, initiatives and best practices. Key values such as connection, collaboration, and respect emerged as foundations for building supportive communities, and many participants highlighted existing examples such as peer support programs, student spaces, and field trips. Although challenges with online learning, oversaturation, and difficulties engaging students were acknowledged, new opportunities for collaboration and breaking down barriers between students and staff were realized.

Collaborating with Health Services: Facilitated by Marie Wanty from Medicine Hat College (MHC) and Jackie Koughan from MacEwan University, these breakout sessions explored two unique models for mental health care delivery. The Stepped Care Model at MHC, which offers a range of interventions based on an intake assessment of student need, was implemented to address challenges with increased demand, severity, and diversity of mental health issues. At MacEwan, a unique partnership between two health centres has increased the breadth of services provided and decreased wait times. Though not without the challenges of collaboration and changing mindsets, these case studies offered new insights into the strengths of health collaborations based in trust, relationship-building, and strong communication.

Engaging with the Student Voice: Facilitated by Aaron So and William Yap, two students from the University of Calgary and Lakeland College, these discussions engaged a diverse group of wellness staff, counsellors, and student leaders around the "why" and "how" of centering students as key stakeholders in the development of campus mental health programming. A key theme that emerged was the importance of empowering students to take leadership on and champion campus mental health, through engagement opportunities such as staff positions, funding, leadership, and consultation. The conversation highlighted the need to engage students early-on in the planning process, through multiple modalities, and in meaningful and relational ways to ensure students feel valued and heard. The shift to online learning during COVID, difficult scheduling, and long-term student commitment were all raised as challenges to meaningful student engagement, although participants were able to reflect on past successes and new opportunities to tackle some of these challenges and work to better engage students.

[A more detailed summary of this year's Wellness Summit including resources can be found here.](#)

