

# Student Diversity Profiles

*Practical Tool*



Part of the Holistic Mental Health Approaches 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 Holistic Mental Health Approaches Toolkit

This toolkit is an introduction to systemic and comprehensive approaches to a mentally healthy campus and community strategy. It has been developed to support the policy-mandated collaboration of the Alberta post-secondary student mental health strategy. Achieving the intended outcomes of this strategy requires post-secondary institutions, student leaders, healthcare organizations and community support agencies to work closely together to align services and supports, and navigate student transitions. This requires common understanding of terms and diverse worldviews, shared frameworks, and tools. This toolkit can be used to support purposeful, theory-based approaches for designing and implementing health promoting and health-enabling environments strategies.

## About Student Diversity Profiles

The **Student Diversity Profiles** tool provides some tools for considering the possible diversity of student experiences, and can be used for the range of strategies involved in a comprehensive strategy (i.e. one that aims to cover both health promotion and illness or disorder diagnosis, treatment, and recovery-oriented services).

### **Who could use this tool?**

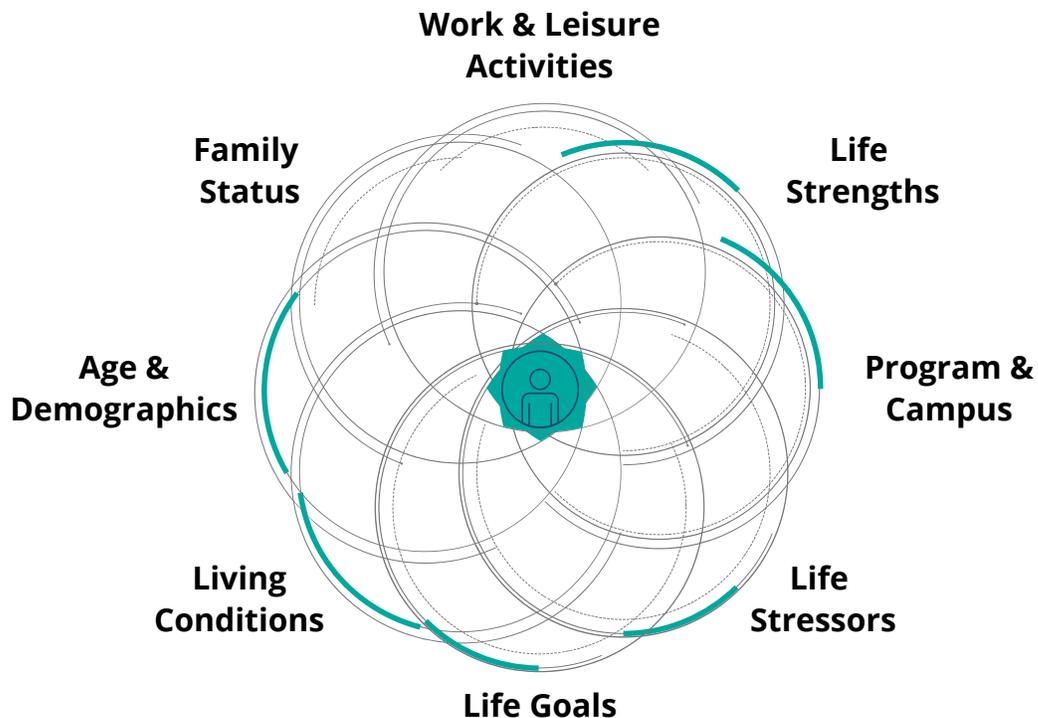
- Individual services, programs, and organizations
- Regional hubs;
- Funders and government.

### **What purposes could this tool serve?**

- Learning about the student experience and ways to center the student experience in mental health strategies;
- Offering helpful tools to be used in everyday practice by staff, and faculty.

# Student Diversity

Students' mental health journeys are shaped by their identity and life experiences. Every campus has diverse student populations. The purpose of this worksheet is to help characterize the diversity of students who are served by campus mental health services. Understanding this diversity is one step toward a holistic mental health approach. As the graphic shows, students' identities - and mental health journeys - are a constellation of intersecting characteristics



## How to Use this Tool

Using the worksheet on the next page, think of students who you may have encountered on your campus. Write down the range of characteristics that students may have within each domain. Then, use the next page to make several student profiles from these ranges of characteristics. The starter set of student profiles shows some examples.



***Student Diversity Profiles***



***Student Scenarios***



***Service Mapping***

This can be an individual exercise or completed as a team activity.

## Student Diversity Profile Worksheet - Part 1

*Age & Demographics*

*Life Goals*

*Living Conditions*

*Life Stressors*

*Program & Campus*

*Life Strengths*

*Family Status*

*Work & Leisure Activities*

## Student Diversity Profile Worksheet - Part 2

### *Student Profile Template*

*Age & Demographics*

*Program & Campus*

*Living Conditions*

*Life Goals*

*Life Stressors*

*Life Strengths*

*Family Status*

*Work & Leisure Activities*

### *Student Profile Template*

*Age & Demographics*

*Program & Campus*

*Living Conditions*

*Life Goals*

*Life Stressors*

*Life Strengths*

*Family Status*

*Work & Leisure Activities*

# Student Profiles Starter Set

There is a wide diversity of student characteristics that influence the design of strategies, whether those are positive mental health- or illness-oriented strategies. Vignettes are quick ways to illustrate student diversity. Although they do not benefit from the deeper research required for personae, they can be helpful to 'road test' prototype services, to assure that the design is not limited to the developers' experience base.



**Sarah**

- Age 22
- Single
- Lives alone with her toddler, distant from nuclear family but has aunts and uncles in the community where she lives.
- Canadian Born, Schooled
- Sarah works part time. She's getting to know people in the community but depends on Skype to keep connections with her old friends. She's a member of the young mothers' club at the library that meets weekly.
- Small college in small city 1 year certificate program, by distance learning. No school clubs or other activities.
- Life stressors: balancing work, school, finances and parenting.



**Colin**

- Age 24
- Single, but casually dating
- Living at home
- Canadian Born / Schooled
- Polytechnic apprenticeship in carpentry
- Life stressors: Colin is pretty laid back so not much seems to bother him. He has to finance his own schooling and sometimes worries about being in debt.

# Student Profiles Starter Set cont.



**Jiixin Lin**

- Age 29 and her husband
- Canadian Born, schooled
- Married with a young daughter
- Rich network of family and friends
- PhD candidate at an Urban university
- Volunteers weekly at the seniors' centre
- Husband' scareer is demanding and requires international travel.
- Life stressors: balancing research, studying, parenting, household management when her husband is travelling.



**Mona**

- Age 35
- Born and raised on Fishing Lake Metis Settlement in northern Alberta
- Single
- Kids (2 x teenagers) living with her
- Canadian Born / Schooled
- BSW at a small urban college – on completion, looking to take an education certificate
- No student activities so far, but seeing a poster for a History club and thinks that might be interesting.
- Works part time as a delivery truck driver
- Life stressors: Mona raised 2 kids as a single mother. One daughter is going through a rough patch and she worries about her.

# Student Profiles Starter Set cont.



**Cyndie**

- Age 19
- Single, living in residence
- Identifies as LGBTQ2S
- Canadian Born / Schooled
- Urban university passionate about its Varsity teams
- 4 year Baccalaureate program with expectations of graduate studies.
- Parents are paying for her schooling.
- Serious athlete, trying out for varsity basketball team
- Life stressors: Living apart from supportive family is challenging but Cyndie is gradually making friends. She hasn't come out to her friends and she is cautious about stigma.



**Petr**

- Age 40
- Scandinavian, lives in grad student residences
- Wife back in Sweden caring for an ill family member
- Study permit
- Computer science graduate student at a large urban university
- Member of a Student team in a robotics competition
- Life stressors: Financial stresses and a highly competitive graduate supervisor cause Petr stress. He worries that his wife's caregiving is wearing her down.