THE HIVE STRATEGY

Healthy Institution Valuing Engagement

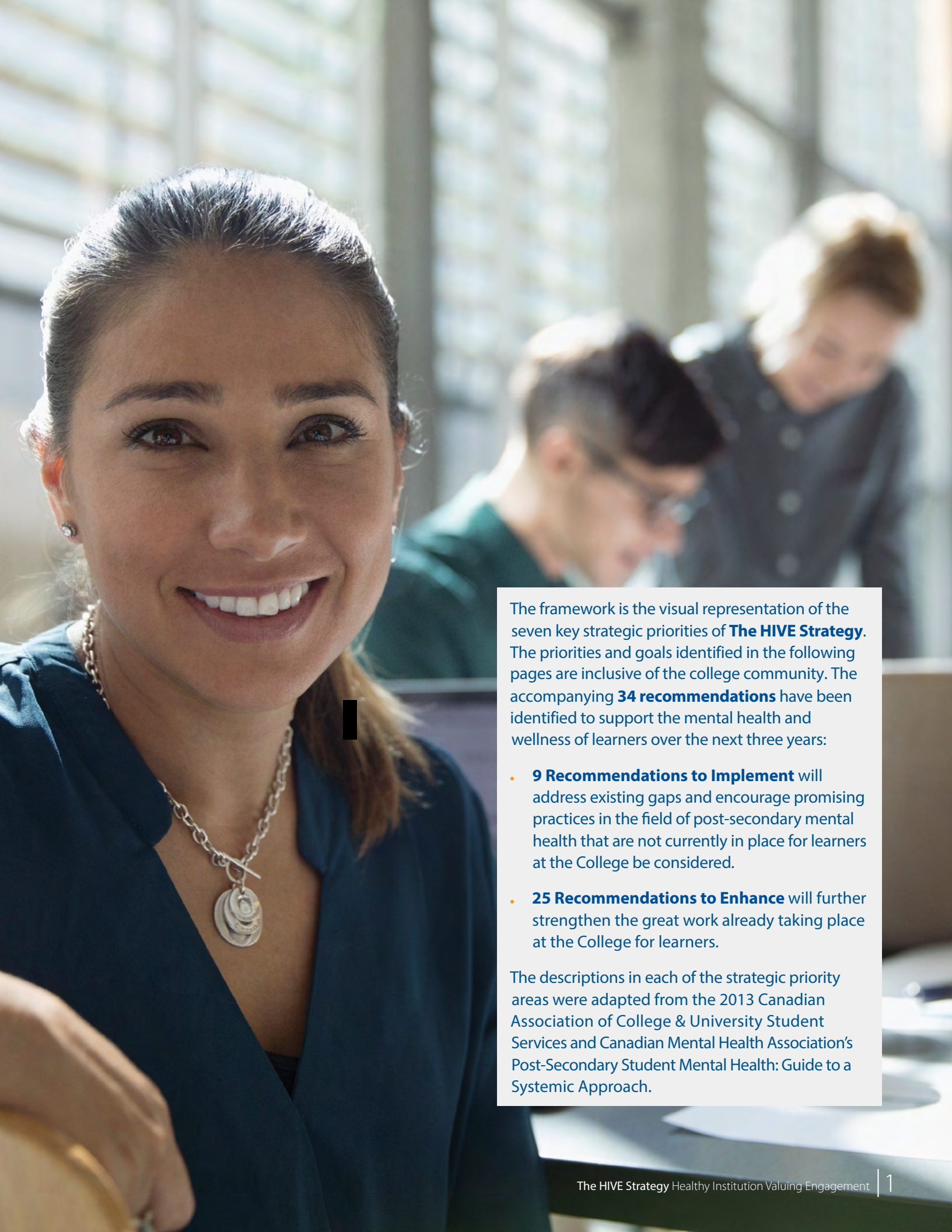HIVE

BowValley COLLEGE

THE HIVE STRATEGY

The framework is the visual representation of the seven key strategic priorities of **The HIVE Strategy**. The priorities and goals identified in the following pages are inclusive of the college community. The accompanying **34 recommendations** have been identified to support the mental health and wellness of learners over the next three years:

- **9 Recommendations to Implement** will address existing gaps and encourage promising practices in the field of post-secondary mental health that are not currently in place for learners at the College be considered.

- **25 Recommendations to Enhance** will further strengthen the great work already taking place at the College for learners.

The descriptions in each of the strategic priority areas were adapted from the 2013 Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association's Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – INCLUSION

Inclusion

This priority acknowledges the diverse experiences and intersectionality associated with age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, identity, culture, spirituality, and ethnicity of each member of Bow Valley College community. Bow Valley College environment supports meaningful engagement and participation, improves resiliency and removes barriers to full participation for all. Behaviours and attitudes that embrace acceptance, respect, and equitable treatment of individuals, contribute to a supportive inclusive environment.

Goal:
Bow Valley College is a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

> "Inclusion and kindness are the best way to support each other, while well or unwell."
> **Learner Feedback**

A supportive, inclusive environment is perhaps the most important priority for establishing a sense of safety and belonging. There is a symbiotic relationship between each of the priorities of the HIVE Strategy and a campus that supports the inclusion of all its learners. Attending to this priority with the support of the other six core priorities will further endorse Bow Valley Colleges' reputation as a healthy environment. It is for this reason, inclusion is the central priority in the framework.

Recommendations to Implement

- Barriers to participation for all learners of Bow Valley College are identified and addressed.

> "Inclusivity workshops – LGBTQ+, Indigenous, cultural, sexual identity…" would address barriers.
> **Employee and Learner Feedback**

Recommendations to Enhance

- Continue to increase institution-wide capacity understanding, appreciation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Ways of Knowing through education and training, relationships with Indigenous communities, policy, curriculum, partnerships, employment opportunities and service provision.[1]

- Acknowledgement and support of the unique needs of the diverse learner community in policy and practice.

- Continue to foster a culture of inclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.[2]

> "Teach the TRC's Calls to Action about the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools for all."
> **Learner Feedback**

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1 In further support of the goals established for the Bow Valley College Indigenization Strategy.

2 In further support of the goals established for the Bow Valley College Diversity Advantage Action Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – INFRASTRUCTURE

Bow Valley College acknowledges mental health and well-being as a shared responsibility across the whole college community. Senior leaders, policies and spaces contribute to the institution's culture by reinforcing certain values, beliefs and behaviors and discouraging others. Strategic goals, policies and practices have an impact on the overall mental health and well-being of all learners.

Goal:

Mental health is integral to the culture and operations of Bow Valley College.

"Mental health is a gauge of the organization's overall health."

Employee Feedback

Recommendations to Implement

- Establish a formal governance and accountability structure and working committees to support the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of the HIVE Strategy for learners at Bow Valley College.

- Consider membership in the Canadian Health Promoting Universities and Colleges Network.

Recommendations to Enhance

- Consider adopting the Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting universities and Colleges.

- Align resources to support the planning, implementation, knowledge dissemination and evaluation of the HIVE Strategy for learners.

- Policies and procedures are developed and revised with a "mental health lens." Policies should be culturally responsive, accessible and support the psychological health and safety of the learner community.

- Future learner spaces are intentionally designed to foster and support social cohesion, a sense of belonging, mental health and well-being.

- The potential impacts that change can have on learners of Bow Valley College community are considered as part of the change management process.

- Contribute to the development of the National Standard for Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in Post-Secondary Institutions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – AWARENESS

Mental health awareness and literacy challenge the systemic barriers of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that can have a significant impact on mental health. Knowledge and understanding support the prevention and management of mental health issues and help create resilience and a sense of well-being.

Goal:

Mental health literacy is actively promoted and endorsed.

"Increasing awareness is key. Unless [you] are trained in the field of familiar with the subject, most people are very uncomfortable talking/dealing with mental health issues."

Employee Feedback

Recommendations to Implement

- Create a comprehensive communication plan to promote college-wide awareness of the HIVE Strategy.

- The HIVE Strategy along with research, resources and events should be centrally located and accessible to the whole college community.

- Integrate formal mental health literacy and education into faculty onboarding (Ignite program) and orientation/transition programming for learners.

Recommendations to Enhance

- Inclusive, universal, anti-stigmatizing language is used in all learner communications and activities throughout Bow Valley College.

- Expand training opportunities that are responsive to emerging trends, best practices and the evolving needs of learners.

- Training is intersectional and respects the diversity, culture and identity of individuals.

- Support curriculum development with a mental health lens applying Universal Design for Learning Principles and support faculty with UDL informed teaching and learning practice.

Learners believe that mental health should be tied to the delivery of course curriculum. Eighty-one (81) per cent of employees supported this in the employee survey.

Employee and Learner Feedback

Engagement

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – ENGAGEMENT

Individuals who are actively engaged are generally more resilient and have the coping skills to manage normal life stresses; they are able to contribute to the broader community, and participate in opportunities that enhance their sense of well-being and belonging. These self-management competences and coping skills support the individual's capacity to flourish and decrease vulnerabilities associated with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

Goal:

Opportunities exist to build interpersonal connections and strengthen resiliency.

"Creating a positive reference about school and an emotional bond to the organization is important."

Employee Feedback

Recommendations to Enhance

- Provide opportunities to enhance interpersonal relationships and connections to foster a greater sense of belonging and engagement for learners.

- Explore opportunities to develop and enhance formal and informal learner peer supports across the institution.

- Encourage and support internal and external opportunities for civic engagement and community action for learners.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – PREVENTION

Building Bow Valley College community's capacity to effectively recognize and respond to an individual who may be experiencing difficulties or distress involves increasing awareness of early indicators. It also involves the capacity to preemptively reach out and connect individuals to resources and supports at the earliest possible time.

Goal:

Supports are available at the level most appropriate to the needs of the individual.

"It is important to establish fair and workable ways to judge/diagnose mental health and provide appropriate accommodations."

Employee Feedback

Recommendations to Implement

- Develop and implement early-alert systems for learners of Bow Valley College who are languishing or at-risk.

- Develop a collaborative, trauma-informed, stepped care model to ensure supports and resources are delivered at the level most appropriate to the needs of individual learners.

Recommendations to Enhance

- Intersectionality-based approaches to mental health that are respectful of culture and identity are in place as it pertains to prevention programming, services and initiatives for learners.

"I come from another country and I am gay… it's hard trying to find where I fit in."

"My culture is not very accepting of saying you have mental issues, I would be very worried to reach out for help if I needed it."

Learner Feedback

STRATEGIC PRIORITY –
ACCESS

Access

Mental health supports and services that are grounded in strength-based and recovery principles are a critical part of a systemic approach to supporting mental health and wellness. Accessibility is a key factor in ensuring those who require supports and services have the information needed to access them when needed.

Goal:
Coordinated, barrier-free supports and services are in place.

"I shouldn't have to tell my story over and over. When I need help, I just want to be able to go and get support without all the red tape."

Learner Feedback

Recommendations to Enhance

- Mental health services are sensitive to the needs of all learners including culturally diverse and marginalized populations.

- Ensure timely knowledge sharing through collaborative interdisciplinary relationships.

- Formalize learner referral processes to appropriate internal and community-based resources.

- Enhance access to all supports and services regardless of learner modality or location.

"Support for addicts seeking recovery…anyone who may be suffering from anxiety or depression… international learners…those suffering from intergenerational trauma…more inclusion and consideration in protecting the dignity of disadvantaged individuals" were identified by learners as being important to support their mental health on campus.

Learner Survey

"I think with the regional areas it is critical to provide access to local resources."

Employee Focus Group

Intervention

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – INTERVENTION

Crises such as acute distress and imminent risk of harm to self or others have a significant impact on the entire college community. Crisis management protocols are critical to ensure the safety of everyone and to effectively respond during and following crisis situations. This involves understanding how an institution's policies, provincial legislation and professional guidelines inform decisions about how information is shared and when to notify authorities when the safety of the individual or others is involved.

Goal:

Crisis management protocols are effective, efficient and timely.

"I'm thankful that I had a place to turn to when I was struggling. I really didn't think at one point that I would make it, but I did."

Learner Feedback

Recommendations to Implement

- Develop post-crisis supports and programs following critical incidents that impact Bow Valley College learners.

Recommendations to Enhance

- Effective communication and coordination of imminent risk protocols and procedures are in place, are broadly communicated, and align with institutional policies and relevant legislation.

- Crisis management plans specific to critical mental health incidents are in place.

- Compliance with established professional standards, guidelines and qualifications for mental health care providers.

WHY THE HIVE: HIVE, HEXAGONS, COLOURS AND BEES

When developing the Strategy, the goal was to create a visually appealing and easily identifiable framework that had deeper meaning and connection to Bow Valley College. Hives, hexagons, colours, and bees became the inspiration.

Bees…can carry 300 times their weight and are not aerodynamically designed to fly…and yet they can because they have adapted to do so. Much like the Bow Valley College community, bees are communal and active contributors to the success of the community and work collectively, simultaneously and constantly toward a common goal.

Scientifically

Hexagons make up the building blocks of creation and is found in the structure of DNA. Most organic compounds have carbon backbones which are hexagonal. These carbons are superabundant and bond well with other elements. Hexagons appear in honeycombs because they're the most efficient way to fill a space with the least amount of material and therefore neither waste space nor energy.

Spiritually

Hexagons are linked to the number six which is said to evoke enlightenment and light the path to areas where spiritual and mental balance, compassion, forgiveness or delicate diplomacy when dealing with sensitive matters is required.

Esoterically

Hexagons are a symbol of harmony and balance between emotions with analytical thought.

Symbolically

Hexagon represents harmony, balance, sincerity, love, truth and the potential for life.

Creatively

Thinking "outside the box" a three-dimensional square or takes on the shape of a hexagon.

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