



Canadian Campus  
Wellbeing Survey

Bien-être sur les  
campus canadiens

## CCWS Addition of Mental Health Help Seeking Questions

### Technical Report Series

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## Acknowledgements

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## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Rationale</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Implications</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix A – CCWS Addition of Mental Health Help Seeking Questions</b> .....	<b>8</b>

## Introduction

The [Mental Health Commission of Canada's National Standard for Mental-Health and Mental-Wellbeing of Post-Secondary Students](#) ("the Standard", CSA Z2003:20) was developed as a set of voluntary, flexible guidelines to help Canada's post-secondary institution promote and support the mental health, well-being, and success of their students. The Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS) is seeking to align with this new national standard. Currently, the CCWS content overlaps with many individual and some community pieces of the Standard (see Figure 1, yellow boxes). Given that the CCWS is a student-level assessment of health and wellbeing, the CCWS team considered including willingness to disclose mental health issues, attitude towards help-seeking, and stigma (see Figure 1, red dash boxes) to further align with the individual indicators of the Standard.

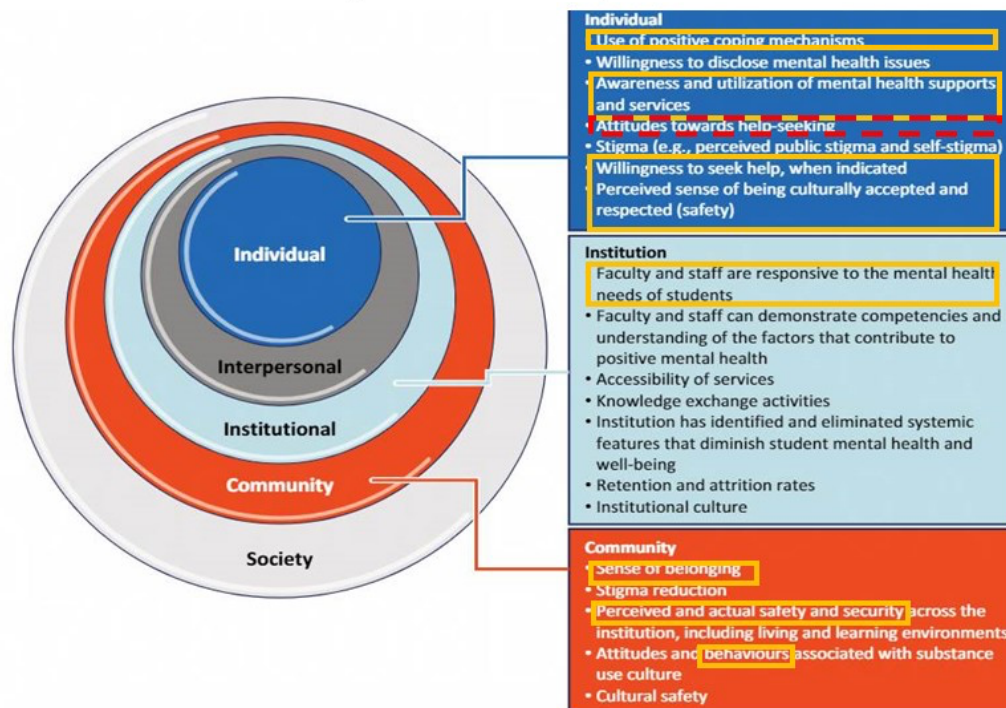


Figure 1. Mapping the CCWS on to The National Standard of Canada for Mental-Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students ("the Standard", CSA Z2003:20)

Individual indicators from the Standard that are not currently assessed include willingness to disclose mental health issues, attitudes towards help-seeking and stigma. Questions regarding attitudes and stigma were initially not included in the CCWS given feedback from the expert research panel that a more extensive set of questions were required to assess them, and that they would be best included in a separate module. The module could be deployed by institutions as an addition to the core CCWS module. Since the creation of the CCWS, there has not yet been any requests for such a module.

The CCWS was created before the release of the Standard and we propose adding three items that would allow all individual standard indicators to now be assessed by the CCWS, at least partially. This alignment may have benefits in terms of institutional interest and uptake of

the CCWS. The following items will be added to the core CCWS for students and employees beginning Winter 2023.

## Rationale

These questions (see Appendix A) allow CCWS users to assess an additional topic, attitudes toward help seeking, from the Standard, and also provide a partial reflection of willingness to disclose mental health issues (question 1) and stigma (question 3). The questions are short in nature and we do not anticipate much additional time required of respondents to complete the survey. The proposed items are widely used in population studies in the United States and Canada (e.g., Boyle et al., 1996; Jagdeo et al., 2009; Mojtabai et al., 2016; ten Have et al., 2010) and are well-established items for assessing attitudes toward help seeking.

## Implications

1. The survey content will be updated for both student and employee versions of the survey (English and French). This change will be communicated to interested institutions so that they can include them in their REB application, if required.
2. The Winter 2023 Implementation checklist will be updated to confirm whether participating post-secondary institutions included this change in their REB approval (if required). If this was not feasible given the timeline, these items will be excluded for those institutions.
3. From Winter 2023 onward, these items will be included in the core CCWS for both students and employees.
4. Following Mojtabai and colleagues (2016), responses will be coded so that a higher score indicates more positive attitudes.
5. There remains scope to create a dedicated module which has a more extensive set of questions related to stigma and/or mental health literacy.

## References

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<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-009-0050-4>

## Appendix A – CCWS Addition of Mental Health Help Seeking Questions

### Questions assessing attitudes toward mental health help seeking

1. If you had a serious emotional problem, would you...
  - a. definitely go for professional help
  - b. probably go for professional help
  - c. probably not go for professional help
  - d. definitely not go for professional help
2. How comfortable would you feel talking about personal problems with a professional?
  - a. Very comfortable
  - b. Somewhat comfortable
  - c. Not very comfortable
  - d. Not at all comfortable
3. How embarrassed would you be if your friends knew you were getting professional help for an emotional problem?
  - a. Very embarrassed
  - b. Somewhat embarrassed
  - c. Not very embarrassed
  - d. Not at all embarrassed