

Student Mental Health Strategy 2018/2020



sait.ca

A large, stylized quote icon consisting of two thick, dark blue chevrons pointing towards the top right, set against a background of abstract, layered blue shapes that resemble foliage or water ripples.

Student success is at the core of
SAIT's values, and mental well-being
is vital to that success."

– Dr. David Ross, President and CEO, SAIT

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Executive summary

There is strong research evidence to support that mental health and well-being is linked to student success and that post-secondary institutions can be designed to have a positive impact on student mental health.

Canadian Association of College and University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association, 2013

SAIT is committed to student success – achieved through active engagement and the provision of high-quality programming and support services. This student-first culture resonates throughout SAIT's strategic direction and Education Plan.

A growing body of research indicates mental health and well-being is an increasing concern for students. In support of our commitment to student success, we have a community responsibility to respond to the changing needs of our diverse student population.

Mental well-being is an academic priority at SAIT – it has the potential to impact a student's ability to pursue their studies, be engaged with their peers and instructors, and achieve success inside and outside the classroom.

Focus groups conducted to inform this strategy revealed our students want to take responsibility for their own mental well-being. However, they reported often being hindered by institutional factors beyond their control.

By implementing a campus-wide Student Mental Health Strategy, SAIT will create a climate for learning that empowers our students to thrive.

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STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

SAIT's mental health strategy was developed in alignment with the *Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach*, a joint initiative between the Canadian Association of Colleges and University Student Services (CACUSS) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). The guide is designed to help colleges, institutes and universities plan comprehensive action supporting student mental well-being on campus.

Student success is the top priority in SAIT's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, *Think Big. Think Applied Education*. This Student Mental Health Strategy aims to foster an inclusive and supportive learning community – one that will recognize and respond to the diverse needs of our students in a way that is both timely and appropriate.

The strategy also includes a tactical approach that ensures our employees are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to help support the mental health and well-being of our students.

As outlined in SAIT's 2017-2020 Education Plan, *Big Thinking, Applied*, the institution's guiding principle is that students come first in everything we do. The plan recognizes an optimal learning experience takes a collaborative community with engaged students and dedicated faculty and staff.

This strategy supports SAIT's commitment to continuing to provide a safe, healthy and welcoming environment for all members of our community.

The strategy also includes a tactical approach that ensures our employees are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to help support the mental health and well-being of our students.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. SAIT takes pride in being a student-focused campus. Helping our learners thrive is a shared responsibility.
2. SAIT's academic program structure – which includes a cohort model of training – presents a unique post-secondary learning experience. We will strive to increase flexibility within that structure and improve the responsiveness of our institutional policies and processes to the needs of our learners.
3. The evolution of this strategy will ensure SAIT continues to focus on proactive, preventative and holistic approaches to supporting our student body.
4. Through health promotion initiatives and a focus on mental health literacy, SAIT will empower our students with awareness and resiliency and help them prepare for successful careers and lives.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

Since forming in February 2017, SAIT's Mental Health Task Force has undertaken extensive research and conducted focus groups to determine the best direction for this strategy. Taking a systemic approach, the task force developed an action plan comprising the following five goals:

1. Incorporate mental health into policies, procedures and program structures.
2. Foster a supportive and inclusive campus.
3. Increase resilience and mental health literacy.
4. Enhance services to support student mental health and well-being.
5. Respond to students in distress.



Foundations for this strategy

WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH

Although the terms mental health and mental illness are often used interchangeably, it's important to understand the differences between the two concepts.

MENTAL HEALTH

"A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."

– *World Health Organization, 2014*

MENTAL ILLNESS

"Characterized by changes in mood, thinking and behaviour that are associated with a particular level of distress and/or dysfunction."

– *Government of Alberta, 2011, in Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework, 2015*

We all experience different levels of mental health – just as we all experience different levels of physical health. Periodic mental health difficulties aren't always indicative of a diagnosable mental illness (Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework, 2015). Rather than viewing mental health and mental illness as opposing concepts, it can be helpful to view mental health as existing on a continuum.

Developed by sociologist Corey Keyes, the Keyes' model of intersecting continuums allows us to understand how optimal mental health ("flourishing") and poor mental health ("languishing") interact with mental illness (or the lack thereof) (2002). As the model (pictured right) proposes, your mental health can range from languishing to flourishing regardless of the presence of mental illness. The model also demonstrates how, from any point on the continuum, a person can move from flourishing to languishing

Viewing Keyes' model through a post-secondary lens, it can be inferred that students with mental illness can flourish, and students without mental illness can languish due to the stressors in their lives (Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework, 2015).

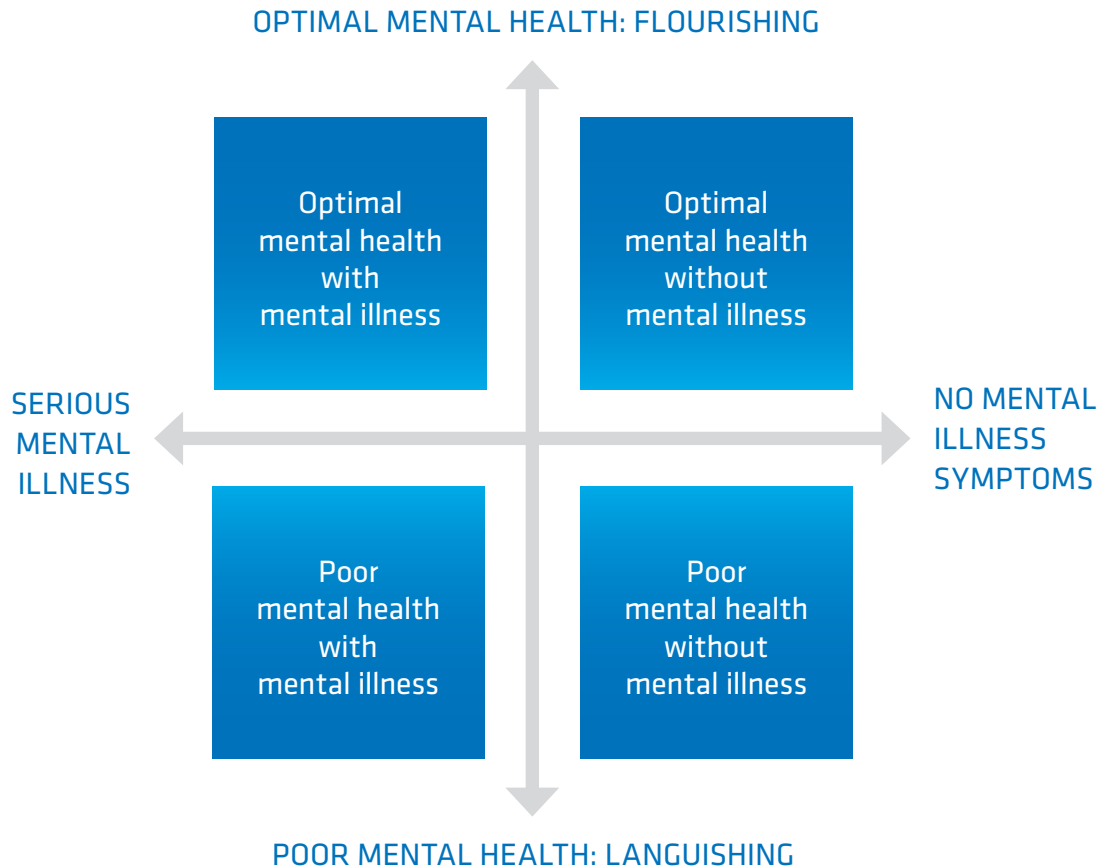


Figure 1: Keyes' model of intersecting continuums

Adapted from: Keyes, as cited in MacKean, 2011, citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.737.6978&rep=rep1&type=pdf

NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT DATA

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) surveys post-secondary students on a comprehensive range of health issues. SAIT students will have the opportunity to complete the NCHA survey for the first time in winter 2019, with results available as early as April 2019.

In 2016, students from 10 other Alberta post-secondary institutions responded to the NCHA survey. The data shows that stress, anxiety and sleep difficulties were the top three most common impediments to academic performance. More than 7,000 students were surveyed, and the majority expressed feeling overwhelmed, lonely or hopeless at some time in the preceding 12 months. In addition, a disturbing proportion of students had seriously considered suicide (NCHA, 2016).

There is positive news: nearly half of students identified as flourishing. Additionally, most students felt their post-secondary institution had a sincere interest in their well-being and reported feeling they were part of a community.

NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORKS

A rising demand for mental health services in post-secondary institutions and a broadening awareness of the role these institutions play in developing healthy, engaged and resilient people led to the creation of a national framework for post-secondary student mental health. The Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) collaborated on the framework, outlining a systems-based, holistic approach to building campus communities that foster mental well-being and learning (CACUSS and CMHA, 2013), see figure 2.

The provincial framework builds on the national framework, adding the perspective and priorities of Alberta campuses. It provides comprehensive, systemic, Alberta-specific ideas for creating healthy, inclusive, resilient campus communities (Alberta post-secondary mental health and addiction framework, 2015). Steps for developing a post-secondary mental health strategy are outlined in Figure 3. These steps are embedded in each goal of SAIT's action plan.



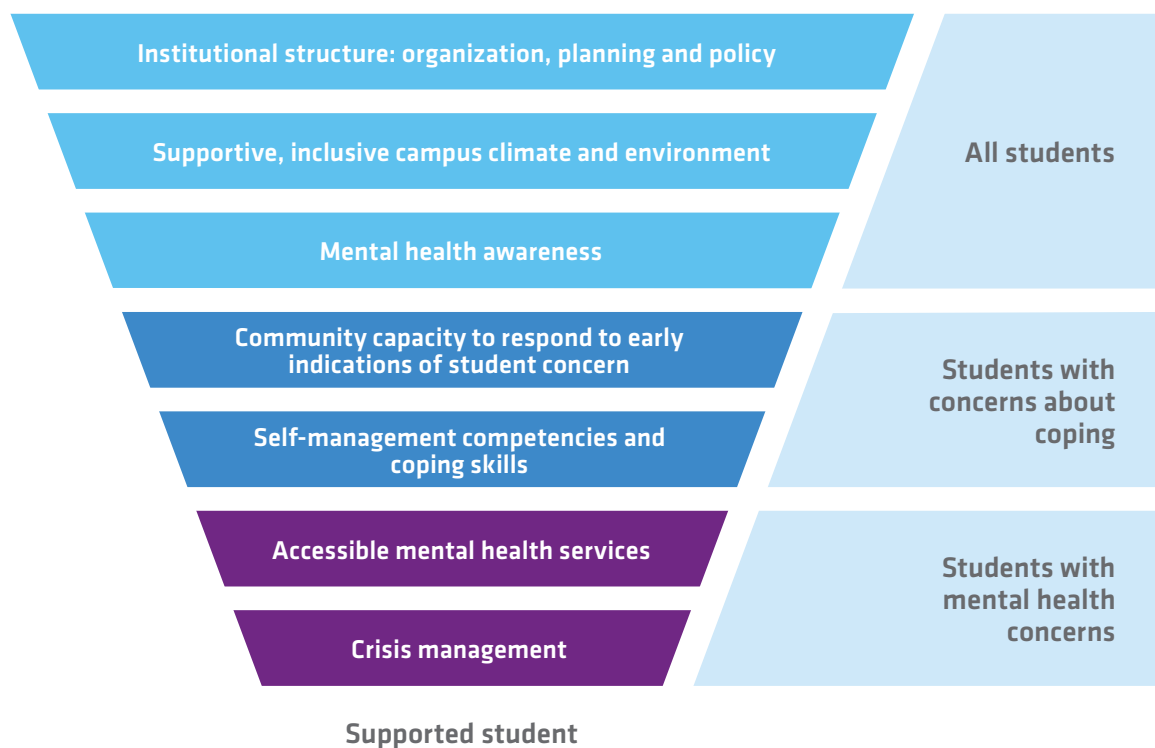


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for post-secondary student mental health

Adapted from: CACUSS and CMHA, 2013, healthycampuses.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The-National-Guide.pdf
 Link National framework: Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach

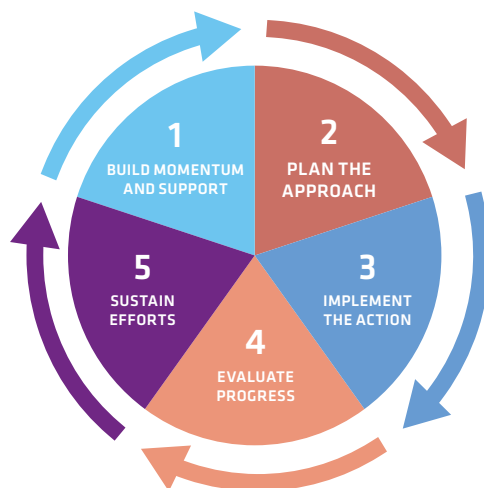


Figure 3: Five steps for creating a student mental health strategy

Adapted from Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework, 2015, healthycampusalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mental-Health-Framework_Final-Feb-4.pdf

Mental Health Strategy Task Force

In February 2017, SAIT formed a Mental Health Strategy Task Force reflecting a range of SAIT stakeholders. The mandate of the task force was to produce a Student Mental Health Strategy for the institution.

Meeting regularly, the task force participated in a series of webinars and workshop sessions, focusing largely on a review of the national framework, provincial framework and several other benchmark strategy documents (see Appendix B: Further reading for links).

The task force then engaged in a gap analysis based on the framework, which identified key components for developing the strategy. In addition, the task force conducted focus groups with both employees (spring 2017) and students (fall 2017) (Student mental health student and employee focus group report, 2017).

One of the dominant themes from the employee focus groups was a desire for access to additional training related to supporting student mental health and well-being.

The student focus groups revealed students want to take responsibility for their own mental health and well-being.

Another dominant theme was the desire for enhanced communication regarding program expectations and workload. Participating students reported a desire for more information on existing support resources, including how they can help students meet expectations, manage workload and maintain well-being.

Additional themes included: resilience, prevention and promotion, inclusiveness, community, flexibility and responsiveness. These themes, along with the synthesis of the task force's learnings, directed the establishment of this strategy's guiding principles and led to the development of the action plan on the following pages.

This plan aims to take a systemic approach as proposed in the national framework:

A systemic approach to campus mental health “is comprehensive, and views the whole campus as the domain to be addressed and as responsible for enhancing and maintaining the mental health of community members; extends the focus beyond the individual and strategies such as treatment, skill building and awareness to the whole campus including its environment, organizational structure, policies and practices.” (CACUSS and CMHA, 2013).



Action plan



Student success is at the core of everything we do. Each member of the SAIT community has a role to play in realizing that success.”

– Brad Donaldson, Vice President, Academic, SAIT

1

2

3

4

5

GOAL 1 INCORPORATE MENTAL HEALTH INTO POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROGRAM STRUCTURES

SAIT's policies, procedures and program structures will be reviewed and updated to ensure students receive timely, appropriate and supportive messaging regarding mental well-being. Additional policies will be created to mobilize all campus community members in the shared goal of student success. Improved flexibility will be integrated into our program structures to better enable our students to thrive.

GOAL 2 FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUS

SAIT is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive campus for both our current and prospective students. Our marketing and communication channels will celebrate the diversity of our student and staff populations. Universal design principles will be integrated into our physical spaces and curriculum. Students will be offered diversity and inclusion training to prepare them for the workplace, and instructors will receive training on student development. We'll also create and promote opportunities for students to connect both inside the classroom and across campus through group work and social opportunities, and through our physical spaces.

GOAL 3 INCREASE RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

SAIT will continue to support student success by promoting personal and academic resiliency throughout the entire student experience – from discussing workload expectations with prospective students to providing preventative supports for incoming and current students. Student communication will prioritize resource awareness and mental health understanding.

GOAL 4 ENHANCE SERVICES TO SUPPORT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Good mental health is essential to the academic success and engagement of our students. We'll enhance our support services for student mental health by providing faculty and staff with training in the early identification and referral of students. We'll also promote timely access to appropriate services and evaluate existing services to ensure we meet the mental health and well-being needs of our students.

GOAL 5 RESPOND TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SAIT will build partnerships with provincial service providers and community organizations to assist students. Faculty and front-line staff will receive training – customized to the SAIT community – in recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health concerns, talking to people in distress and making referrals. We'll also work to improve how employees respond to contextual barriers that may impede the academic success and well-being of our students.

1

Incorporate mental health into policies, procedures and program structures

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure students receive timely and appropriate messaging.
- Review, update and create policies that promote positive mental health and well-being, and foster inclusivity.
- Improve the flexibility of our program structures.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- An appeal process for students who are academically withdrawn has been added to AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression.
- Procedures AD.2.13.1 Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence and HS.1.2.1 Prevention of Violence are in place.
- Some programs are looking into staggering assessments and optimizing course design and organization to better distribute students' workload.
- AC.3.16.1 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities has been reviewed to include accommodation for students with acute mental distress.
- Brightspace courses have links to available resources for students.

A. ENSURE STUDENTS RECEIVE TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE MESSAGING

i. Executive support	Responsible	Schedule
Issue a statement of support regarding the institution's commitment to mental health and well-being.	• Executive Management Council	2019
Sign on to the Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.	• Executive Management Council	2019
Embed a focus on mental health in future strategic and education plans.	• Executive Management Council	June 2020
ii. Student advising and feedback	Responsible	Schedule
Review academic probation and withdrawal messaging to use supportive language.	• Communications	June 2019
Advise and prepare international students appropriately regarding authorized academic leave, waitlists and not meeting minimum requirements.	• International Centre • Admissions	ongoing
Encourage faculty to inform students in person and in course materials about available resources, focusing on prevention and early detection of academic and/or personal stressors.	• Centre for Learning and Teaching • Academic chairs	ongoing



B. REVIEW, UPDATE AND CREATE POLICIES THAT PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, AND FOSTER INCLUSIVITY

i. Policy updates	Responsible	Schedule
Review and update attendance policy documents (AC.3.8, AC.3.8.1 and Schedule A, and AC.3.8.2 and Schedule A) to ensure flexibility. Consider one mental health day per semester for an excused absence.	• Academic Council Policy Subcommittee	June 2019
Review and update student code of conduct documents (AC.3.4, AC.3.4.1 and Schedules A, B, C and D) to ensure fairness and positive mental health promotion.	• Academic Council Policy Subcommittee	June 2019
Explore adding a fall reading week. Update AC.2.1.1 as required.	• Academic Council Policy Subcommittee	June 2019
Review all policy documents for gender-inclusive language.	• Policy and Procedures Committee	June 2020
Ensure a medical leave process to allow students to re-enter their program without reapplying.	• Academic Council Policy Subcommittee	June 2020



C. IMPROVE THE FLEXIBILITY OF OUR PROGRAM STRUCTURES

i. Program design	Responsible	Schedule
Redesign PREP 100 to include content on mental health and diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Coaching • Student Development and Counselling 	June 2019
Offer orientation to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Academic chairs 	ongoing
Review students' workload as part of the Program Quality Assurance self-assessment process and create three- and four-year pathway options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Quality and Development • Academic chairs 	ongoing
Improve support for practicum placements in all programs, ensuring placements outside of Calgary are supportive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic chairs 	ongoing
Embed principles of universal design for learning (UDL) in all courses to reduce the number of students requesting accommodations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning Teaching • Centre for Applied Education Innovation • Academic chairs 	Centre for Learning and Teaching to incorporate UDL principles into curriculum maintenance training in 2018/19
Explore building personal and resiliency skills into program outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Centre for Applied Education Innovation • Academic chairs 	ongoing
Work toward offering flexible pathways into, between and through all programs, including apprenticeships (e.g., open studies, delivery and scheduling options).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer Options 	ongoing

2

Foster a supportive and inclusive campus

OBJECTIVES

- Establish SAIT as an inclusive campus for prospective and current students.
- Ensure curriculum and in-class practices are inclusive.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Student Experience, International Centre, Chinook Lodge Resource Centre, Accessibility Services, Student Development and Counselling, Academic Coaching, Reg Erhardt Library, Athletics and Recreation and the SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) host cross-campus mental health and well-being outreach and awareness events.
- Accessibility workshops on teaching students with disabilities and on supports available to students with documented disabilities are held regularly.
- The Accessibility Services team won the City of Calgary Access Recognition Award in 2017.
- A Gender and Sexuality Inclusion Committee was created in 2017.
- Standardized acknowledgement of Indigenous lands is available for use at events and in classes and is being used by Executive Management Council at key SAIT events.
- SAIT offers Pride at Work Canada's online course LGBT 101 to employees.
- Some gender-neutral accessible washrooms are now available.
- Focus groups and surveys on diversity, identity and inclusiveness are conducted.

A. ESTABLISH SAIT AS AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS

i. Communication	Responsible	Schedule
Ensure marketing and recruitment tools capture student and employee diversity in images and language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Communications 	ongoing
Ensure diverse groups have a web presence on sait.ca and SAITNOW. Use communication channels to promote an inclusive campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Communications 	June 2019
Ensure students can choose their gender identity, preferred name and preferred pronoun in class lists, and email and data management systems (Outlook, Banner).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Registrar 	June 2019
ii. Campus spaces and support services	Responsible	Schedule
Use universal design principles in physical spaces to create an inclusive learning environment that promotes well-being. Ensure accessibility beyond building code, access to natural light, and space for collaboration and quiet study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Management 	ongoing
Develop and promote peer mentor programs, supports for LGBTQ students and for under-represented students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Gender and Sexuality Inclusion Committee • SAITSA 	ongoing
Create opportunities for students to connect, such as common spaces, social media, clubs, etc. Provide safe, respectful opportunities for culture-sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Communications • Chinook Lodge • SAITSA 	ongoing
iii. Training	Responsible	Schedule
Offer training for students on inclusion and diversity to prepare them for a diverse workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Academic Coaching • Instructors 	June 2019
Review PREP 100 and ETHI 110 for opportunities to include information on diversity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Coaching 	June 2019
Implement a sexual violence prevention strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner and Academic Services 	June 2019

B. ENSURE CURRICULUM AND IN-CLASS PRACTICES ARE INCLUSIVE

i. Curriculum development and maintenance	Responsible	Schedule
Review curriculum for diversity, gender inclusivity and Indigenous content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Centre for Applied Education Innovation • Academic chairs • Chinook Lodge Resource Centre • Gender and Sexuality Inclusion Committee 	ongoing
Use universal design for learning (UDL) principles in curriculum to create a more inclusive learning environment. Ensure curriculum developers and faculty have training in UDL principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Centre for Applied Education Innovation • Instructors 	ongoing
ii. Classroom opportunities	Responsible	Schedule
Coach instructors on how to foster inclusivity in the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching 	June 2019
Facilitate connections in the classroom and teach students how to work in groups with diverse members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors 	ongoing



3

Increase resilience and mental health literacy

OBJECTIVES

- Increase the personal and academic resilience of our students.
- Increase student awareness of mental health and well-being.
- Reduce the stigma of mental health.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Student Health 101, a student-driven monthly e-magazine, is available on sait.ca.
- SAITSA has a Peer Support Centre.
- A mental health promotion specialist has been hired.
- Student Development and Counselling, Athletics and Recreation, SAITSA and the Health Services Clinic run several annual awareness campaigns.
- The Make Some Noise for Mental Health campaign hosted by Athletics and Recreation won the Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addiction True Imagination Award in 2016.
- Student Development and Counselling offers in-class workshops and online tools on stress management and resiliency skills.

A. INCREASE THE PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC RESILIENCE OF OUR STUDENTS

i. Preparing students	Responsible	Schedule
Create an <i>Are You Ready?</i> video or another tool to prepare students for the rigour of SAIT programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Marketing • Student Development and Counselling • Student Experience 	June 2020
Use program information sessions, Open House and orientation to discuss workload expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Marketing • Academic chairs 	ongoing
Provide preventative supports for international students – before and as soon as they arrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Centre 	ongoing
Cover resilience and mental health and well-being in PREP 100, Orientation Week and First8, as well as PREP 145 and first-day orientation for apprentices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Coaching • Student Experience • Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing
Ensure Student Health 101 e-magazine is promoted to students each month by direct email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications 	June 2019



B. INCREASE STUDENT AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

i. Communications and outreach	Responsible	Schedule
Provide mental health and well-being resource documents in multiple formats for students and employees. Must be accessible on and off campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling • SAITSA 	June 2019
Create a communication strategy for informing students about resources and campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications 	June 2019
Remind students about SAIT resources throughout the academic year and at stressful times during their program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Instructors • Student Development and Counselling • Outreach and Wellness Leaders 	ongoing
ii. Formal training	Responsible	Schedule
Offer training for faculty and front-line employees on early indicators of stress and making proactive referrals, which promote well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing
Explore opportunities to collaborate with SAITSA peer volunteers to train on mental health topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling • SAITSA 	ongoing



C. REDUCE THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH

i. Dispelling myths	Responsible	Schedule
Offer, promote and evaluate anti-stigma campaigns related to mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Development and Counselling• Athletics and Recreation• SAITSA	ongoing

Make Some Noise for Mental Health is a campus-wide campaign created by the SAIT Trojans to raise awareness and reduce stigmas surrounding mental health and wellness.

4

Enhance services to support student mental health and well-being

OBJECTIVES

- Help employees identify and refer students who are languishing early.
- Support students' timely access to appropriate services.
- Improve employee responsiveness to contextual barriers that impede academic success and well-being.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Student Development and Counselling offers drop-in times, evening office hours and additional counsellors.
- Therapist Assisted Online resources, 7 Cups of Tea online chat, Check Your Mental Health and Check Your Drinking tools are available to students online outside office hours.
- Academic Coaching, Accessibility Services and counsellors are available at satellite campuses.
- Student Development and Counselling collaborates with Athletics and Recreation to refer eligible students to free fitness resources.
- Career planning as a prevention for mental health challenges is offered.
- The Behaviour Intervention Team – a team that responds to and supports students facing code of conduct challenges – is in place.
- Workshops on identifying students at risk and early intervention are offered.
- The Student Development and Counselling web page is being optimized to ensure that students and employees can easily access relevant information.

A. HELP EMPLOYEES IDENTIFY AND REFER STUDENTS WHO ARE LANGUISHING EARLY

i. Employee training and collaboration	Responsible	Schedule
Train faculty on how to identify a languishing student and directly refer or use the Early Alert program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Coaching Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing
Train faculty on setting Intelligent Agents in Brightspace to automatically email the student and academic chair if a student has attendance concerns, missed assignments or marks below C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Technology Services Centre for Learning and Teaching Brightspace champions 	ongoing
Collaborate with Residence Assistants to ensure early detection and referral of students who may be struggling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Development and Counselling Accessibility Services 	ongoing
Continue Student Development and Counselling collaboration with departments and schools to ensure coordinated, consistent solutions for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing



B. SUPPORT STUDENTS' TIMELY ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES

i. Access to Student Development and Counselling	Responsible	Schedule
Expand service hours to more evenings per week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling 	March 2020
Maintain case manager and mental health promotion specialist roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling 	March 2020
Establish and maintain multiple referral resources within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling 	March 2019
ii. Service offerings	Responsible	Schedule
Provide service options to other campuses at their locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Services 	ongoing
Pursue funding to ensure psychoeducational assessments are available to out-of-province and international students free of charge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni and Development • Accessibility Services 	June 2020
Establish and communicate guidelines about cannabis and other substances using a harm-reduction approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services Clinic • Communications 	June 2019
Survey students' mental health and wellness needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National College Health Assessment • Business Analytics and Intelligence 	January 2019

C. IMPROVE EMPLOYEE RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXTUAL BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING

i. Responding to contextual barriers	Responsible	Schedule
Establish enhanced transitions into SAIT for K-12 students with disabilities.	• Accessibility Services	June 2019
Consult with and provide support to employees dealing with students in crisis situations.	• Student Development and Counselling • Academic chairs	ongoing
Refer students to community supports and assist their return to studies after experiencing a mental illness.	• Accessibility Services	June 2019
Provide training on the impact of trauma on learning and appropriate response.	• Student Development and Counselling	June 2020



5

Respond to students in distress

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure all SAIT employees can identify signs and symptoms of stress and distress, and know how to refer students.
- Foster partnerships with service providers and community organizations to assist student access to these services.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Gatekeeper training is available to employees. This online tool trains employees on identifying and talking with students experiencing mental health challenges.
- Counsellors have first responder training for responding to someone who has experienced sexual violence. Several employees have suicide awareness training.
- A case manager has been hired.
- Through partnerships with the Distress Centre and Community Resource Team, 24/7 support is available to students by phone.
- At least one crisis timeslot is available every day in the Student Development and Counselling office.
- Information about sexual violence has been updated and placed more prominently on sait.ca.

A. ENSURE ALL SAIT EMPLOYEES CAN IDENTIFY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS AND DISTRESS, AND KNOW HOW TO REFER STUDENTS

i. Training and referrals	Responsible	Schedule
Train student-facing employees to quickly identify students at risk or in crisis and know how to refer them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing
Create a flowchart showing who to call in various situations and distribute to all SAIT employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Learner Services 	June 2019
Ensure the SAIT community is aware of the Student of Concern policy, Behaviour Intervention Team and how to report students of concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Learner Services 	June 2019
Ensure that Question Persuade Respond (QPR) suicide prevention training is offered to employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Student Development and Counselling 	June 2019
Train employees on how to respond when someone discloses they have experienced sexual violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Learning and Teaching • Student Development and Counselling 	June 2019
Ensure all SAIT employees understand the mandate of Student Development and Counselling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling 	ongoing
Implement a SAIT-wide Early Alert system for notifying the appropriate people when a student is at risk of dropping out or failing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner and Academic Services 	December 2018



B. FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST STUDENT ACCESS TO THESE SERVICES

i. Partnerships	Responsible	Schedule
Identify community resources and explore partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling • Accessibility Services 	ongoing
Create key categories of resources for distance and practicum students outside of Calgary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Development and Counselling • Accessibility Services 	June 2019



References

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Appendix A: About the development of this strategy

The Student Mental Health Strategy was drafted in spring 2018 based on a gap analysis and progress report compiled by SAIT's Mental Health Strategy Task Force.

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We thank the original task force team and all who have continued this vital work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The task force conducted an environmental scan of practices, strategies and resources that promote student mental health (see Appendix B: Further reading). To provide some local context for SAIT's strategy, Figure 4 lays out the progression of student mental health strategies in Alberta post-secondary institutions.

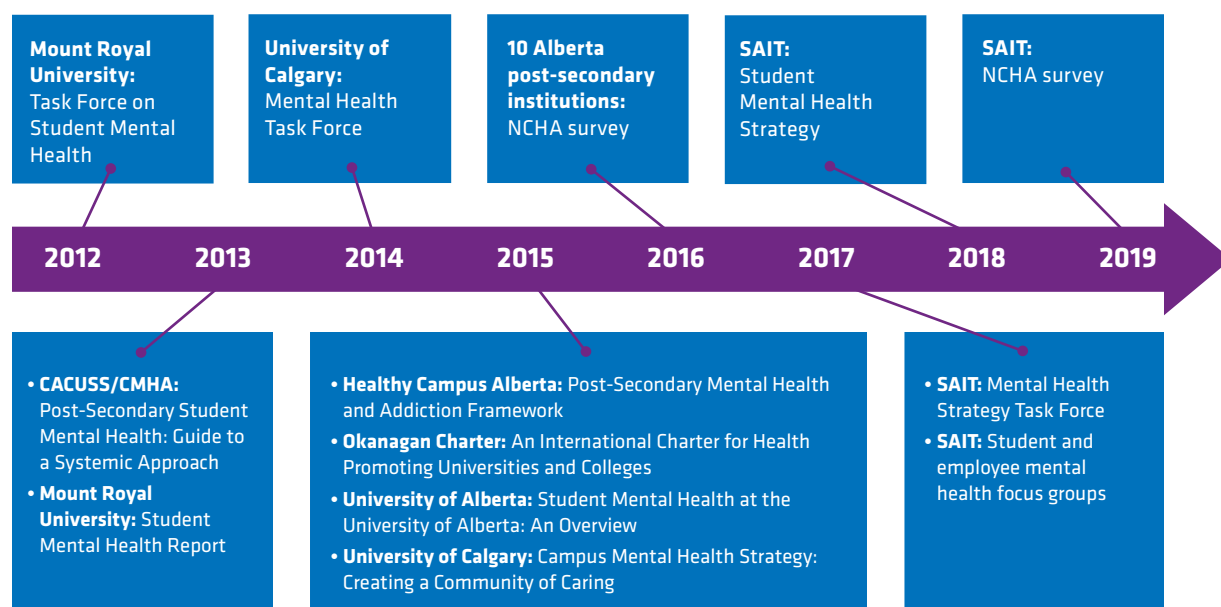


Figure 4: Timeline of Alberta's student mental health strategies

Appendix B: Further reading

These documents informed the development of this strategy and may be of interest to readers looking for more information on student mental health in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Corey Keyes: The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life (requires SAIT library login)
- Gail MacKean: Mental Health and Well-Being in Postsecondary Education Settings: A Literature and Environmental Scan to Support Planning and Action in Canada
- Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges
- Canadian Association of College and University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association: Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach
- Healthy Campus Alberta: Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework

BENCHMARK POST-SECONDARY MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

- Camosun College: Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2016-2020
- University of Victoria: Student Mental Health Strategy 2014-2017
- Mount Royal University: Student Mental Health Report
- University of Calgary: Campus Mental Health Strategy: Creating a Community of Caring
- University of Alberta: Student Mental Health at the University of Alberta: An Overview

DATA SOURCES

- American College Health Association National College Health Assessment II Alberta Canada Reference Group Spring 2016:
 - Executive Summary
 - Data Report



