

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Student Mental Health
NO.:	ADMIN-243
RESPONSIBILITY:	Vice President, Academic and Students
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	January 2025

1. Introduction

Durham College is committed to prioritizing the mental health and wellbeing of its students, recognizing that mental health is integral to both academic success and personal growth.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines Durham College's approach to student mental health, detailing the range of services, programs, and resources provided to support and promote the mental health and well-being of students.

3. Definitions

3.1. Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. The College is dedicated to offering equitable and inclusive services to all students with mental health concerns, guided by policies that prioritize mental health considerations. It aims to provide culturally responsive mental health and wellness services, recognizing and respecting the diverse backgrounds and experiences of its students.
- 4.2. A College Wellness Committee (CWC) supports mental health across both campuses. Comprised of mental health practitioners and employees from diverse campus departments, the CWC uses data analysis, student feedback, and evidence-based tools to identify trends, gaps, and needs. It creates resources and provides recommendations for improving service coordination and the student experience.
- 4.3. The College has a Mental Health Framework, developed by the CWC, to ensure mental health services align with institutional priorities and national standards. This framework guides the design, implementation, and evaluation of services.
- 4.4. The College strives to ensure that employees have access to resources and training regarding mental health, enabling them to recognize signs of distress and respond effectively with appropriate referrals for students to mental health or emergency services.

4.5. Mental Health and Healthcare Services

- 4.5.1. Mental health and wellness services available to students offer a stepped-care model with a range of support options, including health promotion and prevention, digital self-serve resources, intake and early intervention, specialized mental health supports, crisis intervention and post-crisis care.
- 4.5.2. The Campus Health and Wellness Centre (CHWC) offers access to confidential and comprehensive services, including a medical clinic, a range of mental health services and health and wellness promotion.
- 4.5.3. Student members of the Durham College Student Association (DCSA) have access to a health insurance plan, mental health resources and support.

4.6. Health Promotion and Prevention

- 4.6.1. The College offers focused events, groups, workshops, and peer-led activities that support students in optimizing their mental health and wellness.
- 4.6.2. Campus and community services collaborate through outreach initiatives including social media platforms, tabling, classroom visits and employee meetings to increase health education, awareness of services and proactive engagement in care.
- 4.6.3. The College provides physical spaces designed to enhance health and wellness including recreation and fitness facilities, outdoor gardens and open spaces, an Indigenous centre, social hubs, and spiritual spaces.

4.7. Self-guided Supports and Early Intervention

- 4.7.1. The College has a centralized mental health resource platform called “Are you Okay”. This link is found on the top header of every Durham College website webpage.
- 4.7.2. The "Are You Okay?" webpage includes:
 - Campus and community contacts,
 - After-hours support,
 - Self-guided tools,
 - The Mental Health Framework,
 - The Wellness Directory, and
 - Employee supports.
- 4.7.3. The College provides digital resources to employees through its intranet portal called “Supporting Student Mental Health”. This link is found on the top header of every webpage on the employee portal.

- 4.7.4. Students seeking mental health supports may self-refer or be referred to the CHWC for mental health services.
- 4.8. Crisis, Post-crisis and Specialized Mental Health Supports
 - 4.8.1. Through collaboration with campus and community resources, the College endeavours to ensure timely responses, continuity of care, and tailored support for students facing mental health challenges. This approach reflects the College's dedication to student success and well-being.
 - 4.8.2. The "Supporting Student Mental Health" link on the College's intranet outlines ways employees may assist students in navigating mental health crises.
 - 4.8.3. Students seeking appointments with a mental health clinician at the CHWC are assessed to evaluate the urgency of their mental health needs. This assessment helps to prioritize appropriate support, which may include referrals to external services or healthcare providers, as well as scheduling individualized follow-up care.
 - 4.8.4. The College offers a range of in-house resources and collaborates with community organizations to provide specialized mental health supports to students.
- 4.9. Other Student Support Services
 - 4.9.1. The Wellness Directory, accessible through the "Are You Okay" webpage, provides guidance to campus services and resources tailored to students' self-identified needs across eight dimensions of wellness.
- 4.10. Academic Accommodations
 - 4.10.1. The College is committed to creating a campus community that is inclusive of all individuals. The Access and Support Centre (ASC) supports students with mental health diagnoses by providing individualized academic access plans to ensure equitable access to education. Services include confidential individual counselling, peer coaching, assistive technology, accessibility coaching and retroactive accommodations. Students may self-refer or be referred for services.
- 4.11. Mental Health Recognition and Intervention
 - 4.11.1. The College maintains various policies that consider mental health in decision-making and has an Assessment Team that collaborates to assess and review matters related to student behaviour that may be influenced by student mental health.

- 4.11.2. The Assessment Team may assign a designate to provide support to students in accessing resources and ensuring that appropriate accommodations can be provided. The Assessment Team may also assist with a transition to a withdrawal and/or support the student with a return to studies.
- 4.11.3. Students may also decide to step away or withdraw from their studies for their personal well-being, in accordance with the College's applicable policies and procedures.

5. College Analysis and Reporting on Student Mental Health Services

- 5.1. The College will collect anonymized data on student mental health services in compliance with privacy legislation.
- 5.2. The College will provide opportunities for voluntary student feedback on mental health services and needs through various modalities including but not limited to student satisfaction surveys, program evaluation, focus groups, and other data collection tools.
- 5.3. The College will annually report to its Board of Governors and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

6. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

7. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)
- The Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024: Issued pursuant to section 19 of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act