



# **STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2014-2017**



**University  
of Victoria**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Mental Health Strategy is a framework to provide direction for the Division of Student Affairs and the broader university community to comprehensively and proactively review resources and opportunities for mental health promotion, planning, and responsiveness in support of our student community. It is intended as a framework for the development and implementation of action plans to support positive student mental health and well-being in order to enhance all students' potential for success.

Through specific goals, strategies, and recommendations this plan is designed to help:

- eliminate barriers;
- build more supportive and inclusive campus environments and services;
- attract and retain students; and
- reduce and eliminate stigma surrounding student mental health issues.

This strategy builds on evidence-based research and best practices across the continuum of well-being and care and offers a comprehensive plan for transforming our approach to student mental health.

The Student Mental Health Strategy is informed and guided by:

- **University of Victoria Strategic Plan - “A Vision for the Future - Building on Excellence”** - through the university's commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equal rights, fairness, removing barriers, and accommodation. Intended outcomes for the various objectives and strategies included in this plan also correspond with the university's strategic plan.

- **University of Victoria Student Affairs ‘Vision, Mission and Values’** - through the Division of Student Affairs' commitment to develop and deliver a transformational experience for students by providing integrated and comprehensive support services to our diverse campus community.
- **Canadian Mental Health Strategy** - through complementing and supporting the Canadian Mental Health Strategy by defining a comprehensive approach to improving mental health and well-being that targets post-secondary students.
- **British Columbia - ‘Health Minds Healthy People’** - through mental health promotion, stigma reduction, substance use harm reduction goals for British Columbians.
- **Association of University and Colleges in Canada - Mental Health: A Guide and Checklist for Presidents** - through alignment with AUCC guidelines and key considerations for leading an institutional response to student mental health concerns.
- **Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association** - through building on and implementing CACUSS's Post-Secondary Student Mental Health Guide to a Systematic Approach.
- **Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Standards and Guidelines** - through ensuring that our mental health priorities and strategies are informed and guided by high, internationally recognized standards, guidelines, and practices.



To help achieve the university's broader vision, mission, and values as set out in the University of Victoria Strategic Plan (A Vision for the Future, Building on Excellence - 2012), this plan focuses on four primary goals specifically related to optimizing student mental health:

- 1. Embed student mental health policy within institutional strategic planning**
- 2. Build a more welcoming, connected and supportive university community**
- 3. Enhance the university community's ability to support students who may be at-risk**
- 4. Enhance supports for students who are experiencing distress or in crisis**

All university community members are encouraged to take an active role in assisting with the realization of the goals, objectives, and strategies included in this plan by:

- being aware of and helping promote this plan;
- developing area-specific goals and objectives that are consistent with this plan and include goals for student success, learning and development in operational plans; and
- providing training and support opportunities to realize departmental and institutional objectives surrounding positive student mental health.

The goal in implementing this strategy is to ensure a highly coordinated and strategic use of resources related to student mental health, ensure areas providing student services are working from common principles and goals, and that the university effectively measures the work undertaken to support student success.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Mental health and well-being is imperative to all students' academic and personal success; personal growth and identity development; ability to reach their potential; and full and meaningful participation in all aspects of life.
2. We acknowledge and celebrate differences and model inclusivity. Many factors impact student mental health and well-being including: physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual. Building strong relationships, communities, and support services foster meaningful connection, respect, and a culture of belonging.
3. A holistic and comprehensive approach to student mental health is imperative; all university community members have an impact and a role to play in supporting students including students assisting and supporting each other.
4. Students should be provided with opportunities to share their knowledge and life experiences and UVic should be a place where students know that they are safe, respected, and valued.
5. Through targeted and accessible programs, services and supports students can better achieve their academic and personal goals and maintain their well-being throughout university experience.

## GOALS

## KEY STRATEGIES

Embed student mental health policy within institutional strategic planning

- Cultivate leadership and instill accountability for student mental health promotion and integration at all levels of the university
- Review, update, and implement policies and practices that value students' well-being and dignity and provide multiple opportunities for success
- Increase data collection and assessment of key indicators of student mental health for UVic student population
- Partner with faculty who are research experts in areas of student mental health in order to inform the delivery of student focussed programs and services
- Develop institutional awareness of the impact of policies and practices that may create undue inequity and stress and provide policy evaluation tools

Build a more welcoming, connected and supportive university community

- Foster student-led and faculty-based programs to facilitate connection and meaningful engagement across campus
- Provide a more seamless transition throughout students' academic cycle from recruitment to orientation through graduation
- Emphasize a climate of student-centered service and service excellence
- Promote the participation of diverse student populations in multiple aspects of university life
- Build student-focused spaces across campus that are welcoming, inclusive, and safe
- Promote the importance of social connectedness for all students with other students, faculty, staff, and student-related services, resources and groups
- Prepare students and build resilience in responding to academic and personal pressures
- Provide students with feedback on their progress early in their program and provide information on the broad range of supporting academic, career, and health and wellness resources
- Provide faculty and staff with information on student development competencies

GOALS	KEY STRATEGIES
Enhance the university community's ability to support students who may be at-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create systems and programs that better identify students who are vulnerable or struggling and help them connect with supports before concerns become more serious</li> <li>• Provide programs and resources to assist students to self-assess and develop self-management skills that increase resilience</li> <li>• Create opportunities for students to learn from and feel supported by their peers</li> <li>• Provide learning opportunities and resources for students, faculty &amp; staff to recognize early warning signs that a student may be experiencing difficulty, how to reach out to the student, and how to help connect the student to the resources and supports they need, including referral to mental health services when required</li> <li>• Provide consultative services and enhanced support to faculty and staff when they are aware of a student experiencing challenges who may need additional support</li> </ul>
Enhance support for students who are experiencing distress or in crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide mental health services that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student centered: informed by strength-based approaches that enhance students' abilities to play an active role in their care plan;</li> <li>• professionally staffed;</li> <li>• interdisciplinary and evidence-based; sensitive to the dimensions of diversity in the student population; and</li> <li>• readily accessible to at-risk, vulnerable student populations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide a range of services, supports and options that can assist those in distress or in crisis including access to specialized services</li> <li>• Develop coordinated and collaborative processes across campus service units, to support students with complex, chronic mental health concerns and facilitate a more seamless continuum of care.</li> <li>• Develop effective referral systems and relationships with community mental health resources</li> <li>• Establish processes for dealing with urgent situations that involve concern for the welfare of students and others.</li> <li>• Develop processes and practices for effective case management for students who are in distress or in emergency situations.</li> <li>• Develop resources for students to build their capacity to identify, assist and refer students in distress or in crisis to appropriate services.</li> </ul>

# STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

## WHY THE FOCUS ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH?

Post-secondary education is a time when many students experience significant developmental change. This is often when students explore their values and identity and make important academic, social, and life choices. The 18 - 25 age range is also when many mental illnesses first present and are initially diagnosed.

The University of Victoria is a destination university; with a large number of our students being away from home and their support networks, many for the first time. Many students underestimate the stress of transition to university and it is not uncommon for students to feel anxious about their surroundings, social experiences, and academic expectations. Challenges students face academically and socially may become overwhelming. Competition, family pressures, financial stressors, and employment uncertainty can add to an already stressful experience. These pressures often compound over the course of a student's academic career.

For some students, it takes more to thrive. For students who arrive at university with mental health diagnoses, stress and competition can exacerbate symptoms especially over time. Stress, anxiety, depression, and harmful substance use are very prevalent in post secondary students and many students report that these symptoms and behaviours affect their physical health, mental health, learning, and personal success (NCHA, 2009).

There is a clear relationship between learning and health and a direct connection between the academic mission of the university and student well-

being (CAS Standards). There is also strong evidence connecting student mental health to learning and academic success (Anasari, 2010). When a student adapts to the university setting by engaging in their course work and developing a healthy support network, they can navigate their surroundings with increased confidence. Programs and supports that help students build resilience and healthy coping strategies help foster personal and academic success.

This plan will help guide how we support our undergraduate and graduate students and the ways in which we can improve collaboration throughout all levels of the university while helping to build a highly integrated network of student programs and support services that are responsive to student mental health issues.

This plan recognizes that the type of support each individual student needs is varied, complex and changes throughout a student's academic career. To respond to the diverse needs of our students, this plan provides strategies and recommendations to help:

- encourage all students to make positive personal and academic choices and utilize services such as peer-to-peer supports;
- the university community identify and support at-risk students by recognizing early signs of academic and personal difficulties; and
- the university community plan for and respond to student mental health issues and crises.



## PROFILE OF OUR STUDENTS

- 20,199** total student enrollment (84.3% undergraduate, 15.7% graduate)
- 27.8%** of undergraduates are under 20 years of age
- 70%** of students arrive from outside the Victoria area
- 2,282** students live in residence

## STUDENTS ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT UVIC

- 7,955** mental health visits to a General Practitioner within UVic Health Services (April 2012 - March 2013)
- 2,365** psychiatry visits to UVic Health Services (April 2012 - March 2013)
- 2,141** clients for **4,982** total individual counselling sessions at UVic Counselling Services in 2012-2013
- 6,470** individual and group counselling sessions provided by UVic Counselling Services in 2012-2013
- 636** hours of group counselling at UVic Counselling Services on a variety of different topics, with a total of **2,283** attendances in 2012-2013
- 1,043** students registered with the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (27% of which are registered with mental health issues) (May, 2013)

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey gives insights into how students are doing with regard to mental health and helps gain a current profile of health trends within the campus community. The following are some of the key findings related to mental health from the spring, 2013 survey of University of Victoria students in relation to a national post-secondary student reference group from spring, 2013.

## NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT (NCHA) STATISTICS RELATED TO STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Students Reported Experiencing the Following Any Time Within Last 12 Months:	University of Victoria Student Population (NCHA Spring 2013) <sup>1</sup>	National Student Population Response (NCHA Spring 2013) <sup>2</sup>
Felt overwhelmed by all they had to do	89.9%	89.3%
Felt exhausted (not from physical activity)	87.6%	86.9%
Felt very lonely	64.4%	63.9%
Felt very sad	68.2%	68.5%
Felt things were hopeless	51.7%	53.8%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	54.2%	56.5%
Felt overwhelming anger	36.6%	42.2%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	36.4%	37.5%
Seriously considered suicide	9.1%	9.5%

<sup>1</sup> Based on results of the ACHA-NCHA II Spring 2013 survey for the University of Victoria consisting of 1,454 student respondents. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: University of Victoria Executive Summary Spring 2013. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Based on results of the ACHA-NCHA II Spring 2013 survey for the Canadian Consortium Reference Group consisting of 34,039 respondents. American College Health Association - National College Health Assessment II: Canadian Consortium Reference Group Executive Summary Spring 2013. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; 2013.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are informed and guided by the collaborative work of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services' (CACUSS) Post-Secondary Student Mental Health Strategy committees. These principles help shape and reinforce our commitment to student mental health and well-being within our campus communities.

1. Mental health and well-being is imperative to all students':
  - academic and personal success;
  - personal growth and identity development;
  - ability to reach their potential; and
  - full and meaningful participation in all aspects of life.
2. We acknowledge and celebrate differences and model inclusivity. Many factors impact student mental health and well-being including: physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual. Building strong relationships, communities, and support services foster meaningful connection, respect, and a culture of belonging.
3. A holistic and comprehensive approach to student mental health is imperative; all university community members have an impact and a role to play in supporting students including students assisting and supporting each other.
4. Students should be provided with opportunities to share their knowledge and life experiences and UVic should be a place where students know that they are safe, respected, and valued.
5. Through targeted and accessible programs, services and supports students can better achieve their academic and personal goals and maintain their well-being throughout university experience.



# IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY

The goal in implementing this strategy is to ensure a highly coordinated and strategic use of resources related to student mental health, ensure areas providing student services are working from common principles and goals, and that the university effectively measures the work undertaken to support student success.

Given that students, faculty and staff have complex and dynamic relationships, holistic mental wellness requires comprehensive support for each member of our campus community. However, the focus of this framework is on student mental health and does not provide recommendations specifically related to the mental health of faculty and staff.

All university community members are encouraged to take an active role in assisting with the realization of the goals, objectives and strategies included in this plan by:

- being aware of and helping promote this plan;
- developing area-specific goals and objectives that are consistent with this plan and include goals for student success, learning, and development in operational plans; and
- providing training and support opportunities to realize departmental and institutional objectives surrounding positive student mental health.



# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section sets out the goals, objectives, strategies, and recommendations related to student mental health that are imperative in helping to respond to the diverse needs of our student community.

## GOAL 1

### Embed student mental health policy within institutional strategic planning

**Objective 1.1:** Align policies and practices that support optimal student mental health with the university's strategic goals, planning, and resource allocation decisions

#### KEY STRATEGIES

- Cultivate leadership and instill accountability for student mental health promotion and integration at all levels of the university
- Review, update and implement policies and practices that value students' well-being and dignity and provide multiple opportunities for success
- Increase data collection and assessment of key indicators of student mental health for UVic student population
- Partner with faculty who are research experts in areas of student health and mental health in order to inform the delivery of student focussed programs and services
- Develop institutional awareness of the impact of policies and practices that may create undue inequity and stress and provide policy evaluation tools



## CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Simplifying and standardizing policies and administrative practices that impact student well-being, retention and success
- Establishing accountability for student mental health initiatives within Student Affairs' units
- Promoting the principles of universal instructional design and the use of accessible course materials
- Providing Mental Health First Aid for Youth training for approximately 150 Student Affairs staff
- Advancing mental health awareness and stigma reduction on campus by the Mental Health Task Force
- Front-line staff who administer student-focused programs and services receive customer service training which includes student mental health components
- Implementing new procedures for the provision of academic accommodations to undergraduate students with disabilities
- Formalizing the priority access request process for students with disabilities living in residence
- Creating the Healthy Student Campus Advisory Committee to support and advise student health, success, and learning
- Participating on the National Post Secondary Student Mental Health Strategy committee and the Provincial Healthy Minds/Healthy Campuses Network
- Formalizing collaborations with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and other community resources to more effectively deliver on-campus services and support.





## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMBEDDING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING 2014-2016

### RESEARCH, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

- Ensure the university has up-to-date emergency contact information for all students
- Develop and resource a student mental health advisory committee
- Develop procedures for the provision of academic accommodations for graduate students with disabilities
- Develop a tool to assist with a systematic review of policies and procedures through a student mental health lens
- Review residence contracts and policies through a student mental health lens
- Review and update academic concession policy and procedures
- Institute mandatory basic health coverage for all students entering the university
- Support student societies in expanding mental health benefit coverage options for students

### PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- Incorporate student mental health objectives into annual service plans for units that provide services to students
- Integrate professional standards and guidelines into student-centred programs and services
- Regularly collect and assess data on UVic student population through the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Develop a UVic specific training program for faculty and staff on student mental health
- Continue communicating and educating faculty and staff on academic accommodation procedures and the duty to accommodate students with mental health issues
- Encourage the adoption of universal design principles to enhance accessibility for all students

### COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Educate faculty and staff members on programs and services that support student well-being, retention, and success
- Review academic concession practices and supporting processes at both the undergraduate and graduate level
- Partner with student associations and student groups to increase student participation in policy development and review in key areas
- Ensure collaborative partnerships are developed with units on campus that encounter students with mental health concerns (e.g., faculties, EQHR, Campus Security, Ombudsperson, Libraries, etc)
- Formalize collaborations and agreements with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and community resources to ensure enhanced service support to students

## GOAL 2

# Build a more welcoming, connected and supportive university community

**Objective 2.1:** Create welcoming, supportive and inclusive environments for all students to help build meaningful connections

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Foster student-led and faculty-based programs to facilitate connection and meaningful engagement across campus
- Provide a more seamless transition throughout students' academic cycle from recruitment to orientation through graduation
- Emphasize a climate of student-centered service and service excellence
- Promote the participation of diverse student populations in multiple aspects of university life
- Build student-focused spaces across campus that are welcoming, inclusive, and safe

### CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Student orientation programming that connects students to communities, resources and helps ease transition to university life.
- The Positive Space Network is a group of university community members who work to make the university a safer and more inclusive space for people of all genders and sexualities.
- The LE, NONET Campus Cousins program supports new Indigenous students prior to their arrival on campus and provides assistance with their transition to university life through one-on-one support and the organization of student focused events and activities.
- The Peer Helper program provides students who are trained in listening, support and referral skills to facilitate safe, comfortable and confidential support for other students.
- The Creating a Caring Community program supports Indigenous students in achieving success and provides students with a more holistic, balanced experience by nurturing the cultural, social, and physical aspects of their journey at the university.
- Transition and planning support is provided for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD to improve the transition from high-school to the university.
- Mental Health fair held on campus bi-annually to connect community and campus mental health resources
- Creation of multi-stall gender inclusive washrooms within the Student Union Building

**Objective 2.2: Optimize students’ opportunities to connect to an integrated network of student programs, services and supports that enhance their personal and academic success**

**KEY STRATEGIES**

- Promote the importance of social connectedness for all students with other students, faculty, staff, and student-related services, resources, and groups
- Prepare students and build resilience in responding to academic and personal pressures
- Provide students with feedback on their progress early in their program and provide information on the broad range of supporting academic, career and health and wellness resources
- Provide faculty and staff with information on student development competencies

**CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES**

- Creation of a Welcome Centre to provide students and visitors with a first point of contact to navigate the university, helping to reduce student stress by answering questions and directing students to appropriate resources and supports on campus
- Provision of academic support and services (e.g., research help, academic advising, study solutions, peer-helping) for students through the Learning Commons so that students have access to effective and integrated academic assistance
- Introduction of an International Learning Commons area that provides dedicated space for international students to access help, information, resources, academic programming, services and events to support success and help foster an inclusive university community
- Development of a standardized recommended statement for course syllabi that welcomes discussion about accessibility needs
- Provision of academic coaching programs through group workshops and individual coaching
- Establishment of an Elders’ Voices program to guide students in Indigenous ways of knowing and being
- Establishment of a Tutor Matching Program to provide students with mental health conditions the opportunity to work with a trained student to achieve a better understanding of specific course material
- Building of the Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities (CARSA) to provide space to provide enhanced fitness, health and wellness programming and a space for CanAssist, to develop and deliver technologies, programs, and services to improve the quality of life for people living with disabilities
- Provision of student group workshops such as stress management, improving sleep, diet, healthy living and meditation
- Registered dietician in University Food Services provides general and specialized nutrition information and services including healthy meal planning for residence students
- Subscription to Student Health 101 (a monthly e-health magazine for students that covers a wide range of health and wellness topics and tips for optimal student health and wellness)

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A MORE WELCOMING, CONNECTED AND SUPPORTIVE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY 2014-2016

RESEARCH, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING	PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the diversity and inclusivity of the campus community is reflected in publications, websites, and other student-focused materials</li> <li>• Enhance and reorganize student-focused websites to make student mental health information more accessible</li> <li>• Develop a standardized recommended statement for inclusion in course syllabi to highlight and reinforce the importance of maintaining mental health and opportunities for assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance programs that prepare students with mental health concerns for transition to post secondary experience - academic challenges, lifestyle changes, etc</li> <li>• Provide timely information to students on a broad range of available health and wellness resources and the connection to academic success</li> <li>• Use data from the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey to better understand the needs of our student population and improve related programs and services</li> <li>• Facilitate the development of student's self-management competencies in healthy lifestyle, sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and relationships</li> <li>• Support students in creating a positive work/life balance and effective self-care habits</li> <li>• Increase programming on substance use that help students make informed decisions</li> <li>• Provide access to online self-assessment resources related to student mental health</li> <li>• Pilot a residence resource centre that acts as a satellite location for health, wellness and academic support services</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A MORE WELCOMING, CONNECTED AND SUPPORTIVE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY 2014-2016

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Develop resources for students, faculty and staff that connect to student development theory
- Provide information to faculty and staff regarding health, wellness and demographic trends on the current student population
- Provide additional Positive Space Network training for students, faculty and staff to ensure more welcoming and inclusive environments
- Enhance training on confidentiality and the protection of personal student information
- Increase students' awareness and understanding of early signs of difficulties and strategies for addressing academic and personal challenges
- Develop programs that raise awareness and eradicate stigma and discrimination against students with mental health issues
- Develop programs that raise awareness and eradicate stigma and discrimination against marginalized students
- Provide training on service excellence to front-line staff

### COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Partner with academic programs to develop specific strategies and courses for student health and wellness
- Partner with Healthy Minds/Centre for Addictions Research of BC to develop campus planning to address harmful substance use
- Collaborate with the International Learning Commons to provide integrated support services for international students
- Work with employers to ensure that the accommodation needs of students with mental health issues are addressed during co-op opportunities
- Provide university community members with opportunities to understand mental health issues by learning from individuals with lived experience
- Collaborate with the UVSS, GSS and advocacy groups to further develop safe spaces and services for marginalized students





## GOAL 3

# Enhance the university community's ability to support students who may be at-risk

**Objective 3.1:** Develop the university community's capacity to identify students experiencing challenges early and connect students to resources that can help them succeed

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Create systems and programs that better identify students who are vulnerable or struggling and help them connect with supports before concerns become more serious
- Provide programs and resources to assist students to self-assess and develop self-management skills that increase resilience
- Create opportunities for students to learn from and feel supported by their peers
- Provide learning opportunities and resources for students, faculty & staff to recognize early warning signs that a student may be experiencing difficulty, how to reach out to the student and how to help connect the student to the resources and supports they need, including referral to mental health services when required
- Provide consultative services and enhanced support to faculty and staff when they are aware of a student experiencing challenges who may need additional support

### CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Group programming and resources that support healthy student response to and management of stress (e.g., group counselling, mediation workshops, Student Health 101, etc)
- The Learning Strategist Program provides students with mental health issues the opportunity to develop, implement, and hone learning and coping strategies
- Provision of training to residence life professional and student staff on mental health training including protocols for contacting security, health and counselling services in urgent situations
- Provision of an online CMHA mental health self assessment tool offered through Counselling Services' website
- Provision of consultation and support for faculty and staff from Counselling, Health Services, and the RCSD to help address concerning student behaviours
- Development of a protocol for the assessment and response to reports involving students who exhibit concerning behaviour(s) in and out of the classroom
- Development of an early alert pilot project to identify students who may be at-risk and connect them with appropriate supports, services and resources
- Counselling Services' development of policies and procedures for suicide assessment

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO MAY BE AT RISK 2014-2016

RESEARCH, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING	PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and align accessibility, academic accommodation, and student mental health initiatives</li> <li>• Implement a protocol that focuses on students of concern including assessing and determining appropriate responses and supports</li> <li>• Provide guidance for instructors, chairs and deans for responding to concerning student behaviour including when to engage formal processes</li> <li>• Map a campus-wide approach to suicide prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance communication to faculty and staff on the availability of consultation and referrals to Counselling, Health Services and other supports</li> <li>• Develop user-friendly web resources for managing concerning behaviour appropriately</li> <li>• Broaden peer helping initiatives across Student Affairs</li> <li>• Establish programs that provide individualized support to help all students meet wellness, learning and career goals</li> <li>• Continue to ensure that there are specific resources and initiatives directed to vulnerable student populations</li> <li>• Collaborate with national partners to develop online self assessment resources and tools for students</li> <li>• Establish a case management approach to support students of concern</li> <li>• Develop campus suicide prevention training programming</li> </ul>
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness that diverse student populations may require different or additional supports</li> <li>• Encourage help-seeking and helping behaviours across campus and in virtual environments</li> <li>• Communicate broadly across the university how to identify and address signs of distress and how to support a student in distress</li> <li>• Strengthen faculty and staff ability to identify students at risk, address behaviour, set expectations and know where and when to refer</li> <li>• Provide Mental Health First aid training for student leaders and peer helpers</li> <li>• Identify particular staff/faculty for specific mental health awareness and suicide prevention training opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the role and benefits of academic advising to help reduce student stress and help ensure students are academically on-track</li> <li>• Work with faculty and staff to recognize early signs of student mental health concerns</li> <li>• Improve collaboration with student societies and expand partnerships to help address student mental health issues</li> <li>• Support the development of local peer support programs that are connected to national peer networks</li> </ul>

## GOAL 4

# Enhance support for students who are experiencing distress or in crisis

**Objective 4.1: Provide high-quality mental health services for students needing professional mental health care**

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Provide mental health services that are:
  - student centered: informed by strength-based approaches that enhance students' abilities to play an active role in their care plan;
  - professionally staffed;
  - interdisciplinary and evidence-based; sensitive to the dimensions of diversity in the student population; and
  - readily accessible to at-risk, vulnerable student populations.
- Provide a range of services, supports and options that can assist those in distress or in crisis including access to specialized services
- Develop coordinated and collaborative processes across campus based service areas to support students with complex, chronic mental health concerns and facilitate a more seamless continuum of care.
- Develop effective referral systems and relationships with community mental health resources

### CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Provision of high-quality individual and group clinical and counselling services for a wide range of concerns including students experiencing psychological or behavioural difficulties
- Counselling Services provides urgent daily bookings and emergency appointments for students in crisis
- Health Services provides same day, urgent and scheduled appointments for patient-centred clinical services (with access to nurses, physicians and psychiatrists) to provide advanced assessment, treatment plans, care coordination, and regular follow-up
- Counselling Services and Health Services providing consultation services for faculty and staff to help identify and address student mental health concerns
- Partnerships have been established across campus to support responses to critical incidents
- Development of expanded mental health services such as an Eating Disorder Program and Mood and Anxiety Program in collaboration with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Installation of new washroom signage across campus to include updated contact information for emergency and other assistance

## Objective 4.2: Develop the capacity for responding to students in crisis

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Establish processes for dealing with urgent situations that involve concern for the welfare of students and others.
- Develop processes and practices for effective case management for students who are in distress or in emergency situations.
- Develop resources for students to build their capacity to identify, assist and refer students in distress or in crisis to appropriate services.

### CURRENT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Collaborations between Campus Security, Counselling Services, Health Services, and Residence Services to provide safe, supportive, and seamless care for students and other community members in response to mental health crises
- Provision of training for Campus Security and first responders in emergency mental health response
- Development of a Student of Concern protocol and supporting committee
- Emergency management coordination with Campus Security, Student Affairs, and campus and community partners
- Implementation of the university Violence and Threatening Behaviour policy to ensure the university can respond immediately and effectively to any act of violence or threatening behaviour



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING DISTRESS OR IN CRISIS 2014-2016

RESEARCH, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING	PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance policies that address privacy and confidentiality concerns to more effectively coordinate shared care approaches</li> <li>• Establish policies and practices for involving a student's personal support network when appropriate</li> <li>• Develop policies on voluntary and involuntary withdrawal and re-admission to the university</li> <li>• Develop and resource a case manager position to more effectively coordinate campus resources for assisting students with complex mental health</li> <li>• Review policies and procedures for disclosing student personal information in emergency or compelling circumstances</li> <li>• Establish campus-wide suicide prevention policy</li> <li>• Develop a protocol in collaboration with the Vancouver Island Health Authority that enables sharing of clinical patient information for admission and discharge, when appropriate</li> <li>• Establish formal protocols for after-hours responses to crises by the university</li> <li>• Create policies for ensuring timely outreach and care is offered to students affected by a crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the use of individual care plans that are oriented to recovery and well-being</li> <li>• Ensure campus mental health professionals are informed on student development theory, learning resources and other campus policies and resources</li> <li>• Explore and provide care coordination and more diverse treatment options for students in distress or those in crisis</li> <li>• Communicate availability of consultative services by Counselling, Health Services, and the RCSD</li> <li>• Expand and provide counselling and medical support for students affected by addiction and unhealthy substance use</li> <li>• Develop an early psychosis intervention program on campus</li> <li>• Develop programming to support students impacted by critical incidents</li> <li>• Develop programming to support faculty and staff impacted by critical student incidents</li> </ul>



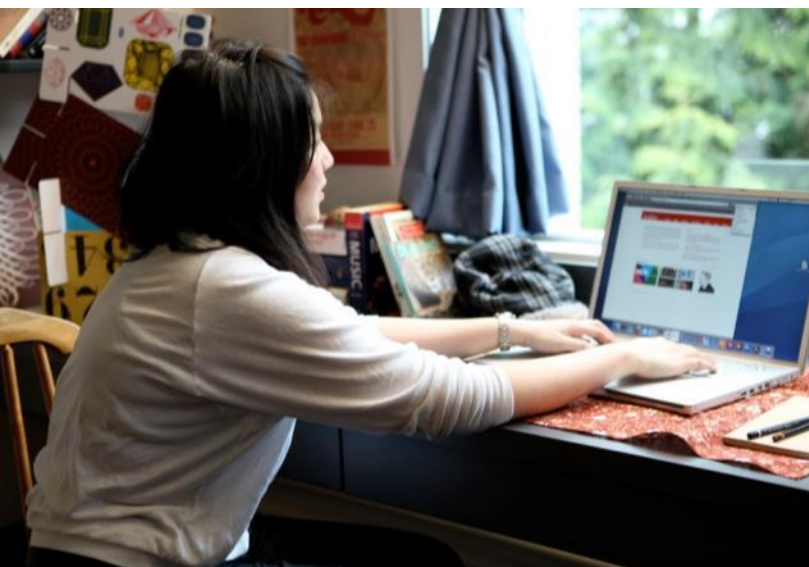
## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMBEDDING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING 2014-2016

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Provide faculty information on ways of responding to a student demonstrating or expressing mental health concerns
- Provide faculty and staff information on suicide prevention training
- Provide training campus-wide and accessible resources to help ensure staff and faculty are aware of emergency and crisis response procedures
- Ensure that all staff and faculty understand their role during crisis management and emergency response

### COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Expand relationships with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and community agencies to enhance continuity of care for students requiring additional support.
- Enhance relationships with community programs that support students while at UVic and transition students to external supports upon graduation
- Enhance collaboration with the Vancouver Island Health Authority when students are hospitalized to ensure a more seamless continuum of care and a more effective transition back to university
- Formalize relationships with hospitals and community resources to share student personal information, with consent, to ensure appropriate follow up by professional staff
- Ensure that appropriate connections are made to community-based after-hours referral services



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- National Post-Secondary Student Mental Health Strategy Committee
  - Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)
  - Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
  - University of Victoria Mental Health Task Force
  - Healthy Minds/Healthy Campuses - Canadian Mental Health Association - BC
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The University of Victoria - Student Mental Health Strategy is informed and guided by:

- **University of Victoria Strategic Plan - “A Vision for the Future - Building on Excellence”** - through the university’s commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equal rights, fairness, removing barriers and accommodation. Intended outcomes for the various objectives and strategies included in this plan also correspond with the university’s strategic plan.
- **University of Victoria Student Affairs ‘Vision, Mission and Values’** - through the Division of Student Affairs’ commitment to develop and deliver a transformational experience for students by providing integrated and comprehensive support services to our diverse campus community.
- **Canadian Mental Health Strategy** - through complementing and supporting the Canadian Mental Health Strategy by defining a comprehensive approach to improving mental health and wellbeing that targets post-secondary students.
- **British Columbia - ‘Health Minds Healthy People’** - through mental health promotion, stigma reduction, substance use harm reduction goals for British Columbians.
- **Association of University and Colleges in Canada - Mental Health: A Guide and Checklist for Presidents** - through alignment with AUCC guidelines and key considerations for leading an institutional response to student mental health concerns.
- **Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association** - through building on and implementing CACUSS’s Post-Secondary Student Mental Health Guide to a Systematic Approach.
- **Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Standards and Guidelines** - through ensuring that our mental health priorities and strategies are informed and guided by high, internationally recognized standards, guidelines and practices.

## APPENDIX A

# CURRENT CAMPUS-BASED SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

### CAMPUS-BASED SERVICES SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Counselling Services</b> 250-721-8341 <a href="http://www.coun.uvic.ca">www.coun.uvic.ca</a>	<p>Fosters student awareness, success, engagement, and well-being through the provision of individual and group counselling sessions for students. Professional counsellors help students manage personal, career and academic concerns. A variety of counselling options are available to enable students to use new skills and strategies for managing stress and challenges.</p> <p>Appointment options for students include brief check-in sessions, urgent daily bookings and emergency appointments for students in crisis. Consultation for faculty, staff, parents and students is also provided.</p> <p>Counselling Services oversees the Peer Helping program and provides graduate practicum placements in Counselling and Clinical Psychology.</p>
<b>Indigenous Counselling Services</b> 250-721-8341 <a href="http://www.coun.uvic.ca">www.coun.uvic.ca</a>	<p>Indigenous Counselling Services provides a welcoming place of sharing, caring and healing for all UVic Indigenous students, to address all levels of life's concerns in a respectful, emotionally safe and confidential setting. Indigenous Counselling provides compassion and responsible care, and acknowledges the history of colonization and its ongoing traumatic impact on Indigenous peoples.</p>
<b>Health Services</b> 250-721-8492 <a href="http://www.health.uvic.ca">www.health.uvic.ca</a>	<p>Offers comprehensive mental health and psychiatry care for students. Physicians and nurses provide initial clinical assessment and care management for students with mental health issues, and referral is made to on-site psychiatrists for more severe conditions. Health Services collaborates with campus and community partners to deliver integrated programs, including an Eating Disorder Program, a Mood-Anxiety clinic, and links to Vancouver Island Health Authority services as required.</p> <p>On campus psychiatrists provide advanced clinical assessment, individual and group psychotherapy, and pharmacological review. Health Services participates in campus initiatives to offer mental health preventive education and the development of strategies for early alert and identification of students at-risk.</p>

## CAMPUS-BASED SERVICES SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Office of the Associate Vice-President Student Affairs</b> 250-721-6421 <a href="mailto:avpsasec@uvic.ca">avpsasec@uvic.ca</a>	The office of the Associate Vice-President Student Affairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinates responses to student emergencies and crises;</li> <li>• ensures effective integration and collaboration of student programming and services across areas of recruitment, admission, registration, and student support services; and</li> <li>• administers the university non-academic misconduct policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD)</b> 250-472-4947 <a href="http://www.rcsd.uvic.ca">www.rcsd.uvic.ca</a>	Provides services and coordinates academic accommodations for students and acts as a resource to work with the university community to help create a more accessible learning environment. The RCSD provides classroom supports, tutoring and learning strategist programming, technology support, academic coaching, as well as other related services.
<b>Campus Security Services</b> 250-721-7599 (24 hour emergency) 250-721-6683 (non-emergency) <a href="http://www.uvic.ca/security">www.uvic.ca/security</a>	Campus Security Services are the first responders to campus incidents. Campus Security provides a number of supports and services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis management</li> <li>• Medical emergency response</li> <li>• Coordination of responses to student emergencies and crises</li> <li>• Safewalk</li> <li>• Coordination of referrals to campus and community resources</li> </ul>
<b>Equity and Human Rights Office</b> 250-721-8488 <a href="mailto:eqsec@uvic.ca">eqsec@uvic.ca</a>	Provides leadership in the development and coordination of plans, policies and procedures which support the university's commitments to provide equitable access to and participation in employment and educational opportunities. This includes the development and implementation of educational programs, investigating human rights complaints, assisting with dispute resolution, providing consultation on implementing equity plans and advising the University on reaching its strategic goals in these areas.

## CAMPUS-BASED SERVICES SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Residence Services</b> 250-721-8395 <a href="mailto:housing@uvic.ca">housing@uvic.ca</a>	<p>Offers a number of programs and training opportunities designed to support the mental health and well-being of students living in residence. Counselling Services provides training to residence life staff to assist them in identifying signs and symptoms of mental health distress as well as an overview of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. The focus is on listening to the student's needs, community assistance and referral. Residence community leaders are provided with scenario-based training that they may encounter within the residence community including suicide intervention, sexual assault response, mental health response, inclusive language, and medical emergency. Training is provided for senior community leaders around critical incident and crisis response on how to assist community leaders and students in after-hours crisis response and referral. Residence Services also offers priority access providing a range of housing styles for students with disabilities.</p> <p>In addition to paraprofessional residence life staff, professional residence life coordinators (RLCs) are trained to respond to and refer students who are faced with mental health challenges. The RLCs play an integral role in connecting students to resources on campus and in the community, especially after-hours (e.g. eliciting help from the Emergency Mental Health Crisis Response Team after-hours).</p>
<b>Multifaith Services</b> 250-721-8338 <a href="mailto:chaplain@uvic.ca">chaplain@uvic.ca</a> <a href="http://www.uvic.ca/multifaith">www.uvic.ca/multifaith</a>	<p>Multifaith Services is available for all students interested in exploring spirituality or connecting with their faith community. Interfaith Chaplains are available to meet with students and provide spiritual and religious support, which includes mediation practice, as well as religious celebrations and services such as weekday mass and weekly prayer.</p>



## CAMPUS PROGRAMS SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<b>Peer Helping</b>	Supported by Counselling Services, Peer Helpers are a diverse group of student volunteers trained in listening, support and referral skills. Peer Helpers participate in an extensive, ongoing supervised training program in order to provide caring, confidential support to students. Peer Helpers staff drop-in offices and participate on community outreach committees. Counselling Services provides training to Peer Helpers throughout the academic year on a variety of topics including active listening, anxiety, depression and study solutions.
<b>Mental Health First Aid Training</b>	An on-campus training program that helps faculty and staff develop the skills to identify when someone is struggling with mental health issues or in distress and how to connect them with appropriate services. It is primarily focussed on adults who interact with youth.
<b>Privacy</b>	The university has a robust privacy program to help protect sensitive personal information including student medical records. The university has a dedicated Procedure for the Disclosure of Student Personal Information in Emergency or Compelling Circumstances which sets out procedures for circumstances where there is concern for the health or safety of a student or others at the university and it is not possible to obtain the student's consent to use or disclose his or her personal information.
<b>Human Rights Volunteer Program</b>	The Human Rights Education Volunteers (HREV) is an initiative of the Equity and Human Rights Office that promotes inclusive, respectful and welcoming study and work environments on campus. The program's goal is to provide trained volunteers with the opportunity to design and facilitate educational workshops for members of the university community.

## OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<b>University of Victoria Mental Health Task Force</b>	<p>Brings together students, faculty and staff to coordinate activities to promote mental health and support people in the university community with mental health issues as well as those who deliver mental health services on campus. The task force focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing the university community's awareness of mental health resources on and off campus;</li> <li>• working to reduce and eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness;</li> <li>• providing mental health focussed events and workshops on campus; and</li> <li>• facilitating a coordinated response to mental health issues at UVic through sharing information, discussions, and connecting those concerned with mental illness.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Health 101</b>	is a monthly e-health magazine that covers a wide range of health and wellness topics for the university student.
<b>UVic Eating Disorder Clinic</b>	Provides on-site treatment, support and education for clients with eating disorders and disordered eating. It is also a portal for accessing referrals to other regional and provincial eating disorder programs and intensive treatment. Students with an eating disorder or disordered eating patterns can access the clinic by referral from either a Health Services physician or Counselling Services counsellor
<b>Student of Concern Committee</b>	Reviews reports concerning threatening and/or concerning behaviour on an individual basis to gather information, decide on an appropriate course of action, recommend relevant intervention strategies and provide support and referral to those involved. It conducts an immediate and coordinated assessment of each individual situation where a student is deemed to be at risk. It is also responsible for communicating and collaborating with university administration, as well as debriefing affected individuals, units or departments. The goal of this team is to minimize risk through early intervention and accurate assessment and by identifying specific behaviour patterns and predispositions associated with threatening and violent behaviour.
<b>Positive Space Network (PSN)</b>	A visible network of students, faculty, staff and alumni who are working to make the University of Victoria a safer and more inclusive space for people of all genders and sexualities. The PSN seeks to work with and strengthen the services that already exist at UVic by creating a network that supports and connects people working toward inclusion, promotes best practices, links researchers and provides support and resources for individuals.