

Partner Promotion Toolkit for the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), in collaboration with CSA Group, has championed a set of guidelines on post-secondary student mental health and well-being for use by the country's post-secondary institutions.

Now that the new [National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students](#) (Student Standard) is available, the MHCC is asking partners to help spread the news to their own audiences and networks.

This Partner Promotion Toolkit has been designed to make promoting the Student Standard easy.

Using your own communications channels, you can choose from a variety of ready-made resources to let people know how to download a free copy of the Student Standard, access supporting resources, join an online community, and more.

This toolkit includes:

1. A newsletter/blog
2. Key messages
3. Q&As
4. Social media posts
5. Graphics
6. A two-minute animated video
7. An infographic poster
8. A project spotlight
9. Calls to action

1. Newsletter/blog

Use the following item for newsletters, blogs, websites, and internal/external communications platforms available to post-secondary institutions, MHCC partners, and other stakeholders.

World's first Student Standard aims to help Canada's post-secondary institutions support positive mental health

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has released a new National Standard to guide the development of policies, procedures, and practices at post-secondary education institutions that promote positive student mental health and well-being.

The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students (Student Standard), the first of its kind in the world, is designed to enhance and expand strategies already in place by Canada's universities, colleges, and polytechnics.

Developed by an expert technical committee over two years, the Student Standard was informed by extensive dialogues from coast to coast with students, post-secondary administrators, service providers, health agencies, governments, and persons with lived and living experience of mental illness.

“We recognize that the majority of mental illnesses are first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many are in or just out of post-secondary education,” said Louise Bradley, president and CEO of the MHCC, which championed this work in collaboration with CSA Group, a global leader in standards development, with support from Bell Let’s Talk, The Rossy Foundation, The RBC Foundation, and Health Canada.

“Students may be experiencing even higher levels of stress and anxiety as the pandemic unfolds,” Bradley noted. “There is a clear and pressing need. The new Student Standard will help post-secondary institutions address this critical societal issue for our young people.”

The voluntary guidelines support numerous key outcomes, including:

- increased awareness about mental health and decreased stigma,
- healthier and safer institutional environments, and
- improved life and resiliency skills students can use at school, work, and in daily life.

Read the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students at mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard.

2. Key messages

The following key messages can help guide post-secondary institutions and other stakeholders in their conversations and communications about the Student Standard.

1. Post-secondary student mental health is a critical public health issue that requires action.

More than 60 per cent of students felt “more than average” to “tremendous” stress according to the 2019 National College Health Assessment. More than half felt so depressed they had a hard time functioning, and 16 per cent had seriously considered suicide. Three in four mental illnesses are first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many people are in or just out of post-secondary education.

The global pandemic has created even more uncertainty for students, while heightening their feelings of stress and anxiety over concerns about health and safety, isolation, finances, and the future.

2. The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students is the world’s first standard to help institutions support positive mental health outcomes for students.

The Student Standard provides post-secondary institutions with a framework and guiding principles to support the development of policies, procedures, and practices that promote student mental health and well-being. It’s the first of its kind in the world.

- 3. The Student Standard is an evidence-based framework for enhancing existing mental health strategies and developing new ones. It promotes consistent messages and actions to raise awareness and support positive mental health outcomes.**

The Student Standard was developed by an expert technical committee and informed by extensive coast-to-coast dialogues with students, post-secondary administrators, service providers, health agencies, governments, and persons with lived and living experience of mental illness.

- 4. Many post-secondary institutions have been diligent in implementing student mental health and well-being strategies and initiatives to support students.**

Several post-secondary institutions have mental health policies, administration- and student-led initiatives, and targeted strategies with established key performance indicators. The Student Standard provides them with a way to build on those efforts by using a voluntary framework that can be customized to their distinct realities and communities. Sharing knowledge-based best practices through a systematic pan-Canadian framework can lead to further benefits.

- 5. The Student Standard provides an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to reaffirm their commitment to student mental health and well-being.**

By incorporating the Student Standard into their mental health strategies, post-secondary institutions can reaffirm their commitment to student mental health and well-being while benefiting from expert knowledge and insights grounded in a set of core principles: to be student centred, inclusive, knowledge informed, harm reducing, health promoting, community building, and focused on continuous improvement.

3. Q&As

Institutions and other stakeholders can use the following Q&As to respond to questions they receive about the Student Standard.

Q. What is the Student Standard?

- The Student Standard is a set of flexible, voluntary guidelines to help post-secondary institutions support the mental health and well-being of their students. It's the first of its kind in the world.
- It's adaptable for use by any post-secondary institution. Each can decide what is achievable given its specific situation, resources, and local context. Each can determine priorities based on its most pressing opportunities or challenges.
- The Student Standard is underpinned by a commitment to continuous improvement. Regardless of where an institution starts, improvements can be made to student mental health and well-being over time.

Q. Why is the Student Standard needed?

- Post-secondary education can be exciting and transformative, but it can also be challenging, as students juggle academic, financial, and personal demands.
- Three out of four mental health problems are first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many are in or just out of post-secondary education.¹
- The global pandemic has created even more uncertainty for students, while heightening their feelings of stress and anxiety over concerns about health and safety, isolation, finances, and the future, just to name a few.
- The Student Standard is a set of voluntary guidelines designed to help post-secondary institutions enhance existing strategies as they work to foster positive student mental health.

Q. What are the guidelines?

- The Student Standard provides a foundation for a socio-ecological framework to develop, implement, and continuously improve policies, programs, environments, and initiatives, including
 - the promotion of student well-being through the enhancement or creation of sustainable environments that reduce modifiable stressors or risk factors
 - recommendations for a systemic or holistic approach, which include
 - addressing institutional-level activities (e.g., leadership, commitment, confidentiality, and stakeholder participation and engagement)
 - psychosocial factors linked to mental health and well-being
 - post-secondary environments
 - literacy, education, and stigma reduction
 - accessibility
 - early intervention, mental health supports, and suicide prevention
 - crisis management and postvention
 - the articulation of roles and responsibilities

¹ Kessler, R. C., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K. R., & Walters, E. E. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593-602. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593>

- protective factors to consider
- indicators to measure success.
- By embedding mental health and well-being into their learning environments, everyday operations, business practices, policies, and academic mandates, post-secondary institutions can inspire lifelong learning and foster more creative and innovative communities.

Q. Aren't post-secondary institutions already doing enough to support student mental health?

- Many post-secondary institutions have been diligent in implementing student mental health and well-being strategies.
- The Student Standard provides an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to support positive mental health and well-being for students.
- Sharing knowledge-based best practices through a systematic pan-Canadian framework can bring further benefits.
- Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility. Post-secondary institutions cannot meet this growing challenge alone.
- It's vital to support student mental health and well-being through an approach that encompasses all students, faculty, and staff in the post-secondary community and all stakeholders in the broader community.

Q. How should a post-secondary institution implement the Student Standard?

- The Student Standard is adaptable for use by any post-secondary institution: each can decide what is achievable based on its specific situation, resources, and community context, and each can determine priorities based on its most pressing opportunities or challenges.
- It is not meant to provide a checklist of actions that all institutions must immediately implement.
- The guidelines are flexible and can be adapted and expanded over time.
- Using a knowledge-informed framework, the Student Standard creates a platform for setting priorities while helping institutions focus energy and resources on assessing capacity and areas to focus on.
- The MHCC has developed a Starter Kit to help post-secondary institutions align their efforts with the Student Standard.

4. Social media posts

Institutions and other stakeholders can use the following messaging to help spread the word about the Student Standard on their social media channels.

Twitter

- 1) The Student Standard is now available! Post-secondary institutions can use its adaptable framework & guiding principles to support the development of policies, procedures, & practices that promote student mental health + well-being. Download it today:
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> #StudentSuccess [Social Card #1]
- 2) The Student Standard gives post-secondary institutions the chance to reaffirm their commitment to student mental health & well-being using a flexible framework. Join the community today and play a role in supporting #StudentSuccess
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #2]
- 3) No matter what your size, location, or student mix is like, the Student Standard is adaptable to the unique realities of each institution and community. Mental health is vital to #StudentSuccess
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #1]
- 4) Think the new Student Standard might be overwhelming? That's why the Mental Health Commission of Canada [please tag] developed a Starter Kit to ... get you started. (See what they did there?) Find the kit and other #StudentSuccess resources on @mhcc_'s website:
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #5]

Facebook

- 1) The Student Standard can guide institutions' ongoing efforts to prioritize student mental health and support #StudentSuccess, whether they're just starting or have been doing so for years. Download it today: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #1]
- 2) To get you started with the Student Standard, the process has been divided into 3 steps: First, Next, and Ongoing. @themhcc's Starter Kit will help you begin your journey to align with this flexible framework and support #StudentSuccess.
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #5]
- 3) Curious about how the Student Standard was developed? Read about the extensive outreach that went into its creation on @theMHCC's website and join a community to access supportive resources: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard>

LinkedIn

- 1) The Student Standard was developed to help post-secondary institutions create environments that foster student mental health and well-being. Whether you already have mental health policies in place or are starting from scratch, this flexible and adaptable framework is the support you need for #StudentSuccess: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #1]
- 2) Implementing a framework like the new Student Standard can be overwhelming. That's why the Mental Health Commission of Canada [please tag] developed a Starter Kit to ... get you started. (See what they did there?) Find it on their website and support #StudentSuccess today:
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #5]

- 3) The Student Standard gives post-secondary institutions an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to student mental health and well-being. And you don't have to do it alone. Join the community at the Centre for Resources, Outreach, and Engagement (CORE), whose like-minded folks can let you know how the Student Standard is helping them support #StudentSuccess: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard> [Social Card #2]

5. Graphics

Share these graphics with the social media posts listed above.

- [Download from OneDrive](#)

6. A two-minute animated video

This video explains what the Student Standard is and why it's more important than ever. It's been uploaded to YouTube to embed in your website or share as you see fit.

- [Link to English video](#)
- [Link to French video](#)

7. An infographic poster

This visually appealing PDF (designed for electronic sharing) highlights the extensive outreach that went into the development of the Student Standard.

- [Download from OneDrive](#)

8. A project spotlight

Use this high-level background to develop a deeper understanding of the Student Standard.

- [Download from OneDrive](#)

9. Calls to action

What we'd like our key audiences to do:

- [Access your copy of the Student Standard](#). Add it to your cart and create a CSA Store account to download it.
- [Download the Starter Kit *](#) from the MHCC website. *Available Oct 7, 2020
- [Join the community to access supportive resources](#). Create a separate account to access the CSA community, where related resources are available in the Centre for Outreach, Resources, and Engagement (CORE).