PSE Mental Health Policies & Procedures: *Developing A Framework*

Draft Template for Use by Postsecondary Institutions

This draft template is designed to be considered and adapted to suit each institution in the development of the policies and procedures necessary to promote positive mental health within each community. This framework is for consideration only. Each institution will adapt as suitable for the individual needs of the institution.

Students and persons with mental health disabilities or concerns have experienced longstanding discrimination, stigmatization and social exclusion in Canada and across the world. Research estimates that one in five Canadian adults will experience a mental illness or addiction in their lifetime. In recognition of this, it is imperative that PSE institutions are committed to not only protecting the rights and privileges of persons living with mental health disabilities or concerns, but that it works to prevent further discrimination, stigmatization or social exclusion within the post-secondary environment.

The pan-northern consortium of colleges promotes positive mental health for all college communities and its stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, admin, alumni & board members). *Bridging the Distance* college partners would like to emphasize heightened concern within our northern campuses given the additional unique challenges faced in addressing mental health concerns on our campuses for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, and all distance learners, the diverse and vast geographic area served, unique language barriers and limited access to mental health supports and services within our communities.

It is recognized that the academic and non-academic systemic structure, mission, vision, values, policies and procedures of each PSE institution is the vehicle/platform with which to drive forward; providing clear mental health guidelines and operational strategies.

The development and language of specific mental health policies and procedures for each PSE institution will differ, but the "***spirit***" to protect the rights and dignity of persons living with mental health disabilities/mental health concerns in addressing discrimination, stigmatization and social exclusion will be the common focus as the best practice approach for PSE institutions.

Each PSE institution will utilize different language, headings or topics for their own policies and procedures, but included you will find some suggestions or guidelines for developing policies and procedures for PSE Mental Health.

Check out the following websites for excellent resources to get you started on creating your own policy & procedures relating to mental health:
   ✓ http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/policies-human-rights.cfm

✓ http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/resources/public-health-competencies-information-tools/policy-program-planning-implementation-evaluation/

To enhance your PSE institution's existing policies and procedures manual by incorporating a mental health lens:

- Consider adding the following policies from this framework in the "Organizational" section where you might have policies/statements/topics such as: Strategic Corporate Vision, Mission/Values, Code of Conduct,.. etc.

○ Equity and Inclusion	○ Student Rights & Responsibilities
○ Staff/Faculty Rights & Responsibilities	○ Student/Service User Complaints

Key Considerations for Implementing Mental Health Policies & Procedures within your PSE Institution:

Recognizing that each PSE institution will have various levels of administration and policy decision makers, it is imperative that the appropriate contact persons, departments and channels are accessed to initiate, develop, implement and evaluate mental health policies on campus.

This is a collective effort of all PSE/college stakeholders not the sole responsibility of the highest ranking person or group of individuals within your organization. Some PSE institutions will opt to strike an advisory group, committee or working group to initiate, educate and champion this initiative/effort. Others will work with their Quality Improvement or Academic, Administration, Counselling or Student Success Departments. Yet others will incorporate student voices and participation through student councils/student unions. Optimally, a best practice approach would utilize a blend of all PSE stakeholder involvement; garnering a cross-section of viewpoints, perspectives and experiences.

Some key considerations noted below, when planning to develop/implement policies and procedures through a mental health lens, have been highlighted on the BTD website – "Frameworks for Setting Up Campus Supports" http://bridgingthedistance.com/docs/Framework%20for%20Setting%20up%20Campus%20Supports.pdf

As well, review guiding questions below from the "CACUSS Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach "(2013).

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- ➢ "*To what degree does the institution believe that it is responsible for promoting student mental health as a requirement for integrated student development and learning?*"

- ➢ "*How is student mental health supported within an institution's strategic goals and resource allocation?*"

- ➢ "*How is the institution's commitment to promoting student well-being communicated to faculty, staff and students?*

- ➢ *To what degree does the institution engage faculty, staff, and students in defining their role in supporting student mental health?*"

- ➢ "*Are current practices supportive of student mental health?*

- ➢ "*How are students' voices and perspectives represented in institutional structure, planning, policy, practices and processes related to student mental health?*"

- ➢ "*What resources are dedicated to ensure that the voices of students are represented, including those with lived experience of mental health concerns?*"

To ensure a mental health perspective policy approach, you might add/include the following policies/sections:

- Accessibility (AODA) Policy   Accommodations for Students with MH disabilities/ concerns
- Aggressive or Threatening Behaviour Child Abuse Reporting/ Documentation
- Collecting & Storing Student Data   Concerns with Student Capacity/ Consent of Designate
- Consent and Information Sharing   Consent for Service/Student Support
- Dealing with Health Emergencies   Documentation of Disability/MH concern
- Duty to Warn / Report   Harassment and Discrimination
- Privacy, Confidentiality   Referral(s) to Community Services
- Medical Leave/Return to School   Refusing, Limiting or Withdrawing Service
- Release of Information   Suicidal Behaviour and Student Suicide
- Urgent Service Protocols

Draft Mental Health College Policy Template

Statement from the President

Here is an Example:

[Name of College] values respect for all individuals, civility, diversity, dignity, equality, and freedom. The College is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe learning, living, social, recreational and working environment. We are committed to maintaining a campus free of discrimination, stigma and harassment, and strive to foster an atmosphere of healthy attitudes and behaviours towards mental health & wellness. The College will not tolerate behaviour that contributes to a hostile and inequitable learning and working environment. We take seriously our commitment to supporting those who experience or are living with a mental illness, and we work diligently on campus and with community partners on programs, policies and resources to ensure that our campus remains supportive and respectful for those living with or experiencing symptoms of a mental illness.

This website provides quick access to the information contained in the <u>College's Mental Health Policy</u> [underlined words should be a link to the Policy]. The Policy outlines procedures and resources to support individuals and groups who may be directly or indirectly involved in working with persons who live with or who have experienced symptoms of a mental health problem.

I urge all members of the College community to review the Policy to learn about options and resources available to those who require support or who wish to support others. Please help to ensure that the College remains a safe and positive space where members of the College community feel able to work, learn and express themselves in a safe environment and that we continue to foster an environment that upholds human equality.

[Name]
President

[INSERT COLLEGE'S NAME] MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Type: Administrative

Responsibility: (NAME OF DEPARTMENT/OFFICE RESPONSIBLE)

Effective Date: (INSERT DATE)

Revised:

Review Date: (INSERT DATE)

This Policy applies to: All members of the College community including: executives, governors, administrators, faculty, staff, students, contractors, and suppliers of services, individuals who are directly connected to any College initiatives, volunteers, and visitors.

<u>**Purpose and Intent**</u>

All members of [Insert Name of the College] College community have a right to a work and study in an environment that is free from any form of discrimination or stigma related to one's mental health. This document sets out our policy and response protocol to persons living with or experiencing symptoms of a mental illness by ensuring their rights are respected. The College has a process to support individuals while protecting the rights of individual's personal health information.

Policy Statement

[Insert College's Statement] Here is an example:

We are committed to reducing stigma associated with mental illness and creating a safe space for anyone in our College community who is living with or has experienced symptoms of a mental illness. The College is expected to be a safe and positive space where members of the College community feel able to work, learn and express themselves in an environment free from stigma and discrimination.

All reported disclosures of mental illness will be addressed to the best of the College's ability and in a manner that ensures due process and accountability. No individual should feel uncomfortable about making a disclosure in good faith about their mental health and well-being.

We recognize that mental health concerns can occur at any point in one's life regardless of gender, economic status, age or ethnic background/status as articulated in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. We also recognize that individuals who live with or who have experienced symptoms of a mental illness may experience emotional, academic or other difficulties.

We are committed to:

1.1. assisting those who live with or who have experienced symptoms of a mental illness by providing detailed information and support, including provision of and/or referral to counselling and medical care, and appropriate academic and other accommodation;

1.2. ensuring that those who disclose that they have a mental illness are supported, and that their right to dignity and respect is protected throughout the process of disclosure, reviewing options to access medical care, internal/ external supports and community referrals and institutional response;

1.3. treating individuals who disclose they have a mental illness with compassion recognizing that they are the final decision-makers about their own best interests;

1.4. ensuring appropriate consent, coordination and communication among the various departments who are most likely to be involved in the response and support to student's experiencing symptoms of a mental illness;

1.5. engaging in mental health public education and prevention activities;

1.6. providing information to the College community about campus mental health;

1.7. providing appropriate education and training to the College community about responding to mental health concerns;

1.8. contributing to the creation of a campus atmosphere in which is supportive of positive mental health and wellness, and where stigma and discrimination about mental health is not tolerated;

1.9. monitoring and updating our policies to ensure that they remain effective and are in line with other existing policies and best practices regarding mental health and wellness.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is particularly important to those who live with a mental illness or have experienced mental health symptoms. The confidentiality of all persons involved in supporting an individual's mental health concerns must be strictly observed. However, confidentiality cannot be assured in the following circumstances:

- an individual is at imminent risk of self-harm;

- an individual is at imminent risk of harming another;

- there are reasonable grounds to believe that others in the College or wider community may be at risk of harm and/or

- a person under the age of 16 years is reported to be neglected, mistreated, abandoned or abused in any way.

In such circumstances, information would only be shared with necessary services to prevent harm, and to meet the duty to report legislative requirements.

Cross References to Other Existing Policies

[College to insert]

Other Resources and Supports Available to You

[List mental health resources both on-campus and off-campus; information should include a brief overview of the services provided, contact information and hours of operation.

Related Policies, Procedures and Protocols

[List related documents such as a Code of Conduct; Respectful Colleges Policy]

SAMPLE:

Policy Name and Number:	1.1 Equity & Inclusion
Date last reviewed:	
Approval or last revision:	
Approved by:	

PSE's name re-affirms its commitment to building a college community which is equitable and inclusive. This means that in all aspects of its operations and at all levels of the organization, PSE's name works to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of, but not limited to, ethnicity, language, race, age, ability, sex, sexual or gender identity, sexual orientation, family status, income, immigrant or refugee status (1), nationality, place of birth, generational status (2), political or religious affiliation.
- (1) PSE's name recognizes that barriers to employment and services may exist due to immigration or refugee status based on legislation and/or contractual funding obligations
- (2) Generational status is intended to protect individuals with Canadian citizenship who are first, second or third generation immigrants from discrimination.

PSE's name further recognizes that the increasing diversity among students at PSE'S NAME has added cultural, social and economic benefits to our college community. It is also sensitive to the fact that oppressed groups

experience marginalization &encounter barriers to full access & participation in the college community. ==PSE's name== seeks to increase access & participation, especially for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged or oppressed.

==Organization's name== encourages individuals to participate fully and to have complete access to its academic and non-academic services, committees or groups. It shall make every effort to see that its structure, policies and systems reflect all aspects of the total college community and to promote equal access to all. To this end, ==PSE's name== strives to ensure that:
- Discriminatory or oppressive behaviours are not tolerated
- Individuals who engage with ==PSE's name== for service are valued partners, who have opportunities to shape & evaluate our programs, as well as work towards achieving their academic, personal and career goals
- College community programs and services are developed and delivered to give priority to individual mental health needs and are sensitive to the needs of diverse groups
- Programs & services are delivered in such a way that systemic barriers to full participation and access are eliminated & so that positive relations and attitudinal change towards marginalized groups are promoted
- Services are provided with sensitivity to the influence of power and privilege in all relationships, including service relationships, and are delivered in keeping with anti-oppression principles
- Communication materials present a positive & balanced portrayal of people's diverse experiences.

This policy is intended to act as a positive force for equity and the elimination of oppression & discrimination.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all ==PSE's name== students, employees, members of BOD and alumni members.

PROCEDURES

1. ==PSE's name== has & will continue to work to embed the principles detailed in this policy within all relevant ==PSE's name== policies and procedures to ensure that equity and inclusion guides ==PSE's name== in all of its endeavours.

2. Individuals who believe that they have experienced harassment or discrimination in an ==PSE's name== context are encouraged to use the following policies and procedures to have their concerns or complaints addressed:
- Students may refer to the *Student/ Service User Complaints* policy
- Employees, may refer to the *Harassment and Discrimination* policy
- Unionized employees can also use the *Harassment/Discrimination* provisions of the *Collective Agreement*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sections of this framework have been adopted from the "Policy & Procedures Toolkit of Family Services of Toronto" (FST) which was last updated in 2009

Other resources and references that support the development of this framework include:

- **Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach: Supporting the Creation of a Campus Community that is Deeply Conducive to Transformative Learning and Mental Health, 2013** http://www.cacuss.ca/_Library/documents/CACUSS_Handbook.pdf

- **Draft Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence Policy and Protocol Template, January 2015**

- **Policy on Preventing Discrimination based on Mental Health Disabilities and Addictions, OHRC Jan.2014** http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-disabilities-and-addictions

- **Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada** http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/pdf/strategy-text-en.pdf

- **Canadian Human Rights Commission: P&P on the Accommodation of Mental Illness 2008** http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/sites/default/files/policy_mental_illness_en_1.pdf

- **Mental Health Commission of Canada National Standard** http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/workplace/national-standard

- **CSA Group Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace** http://shop.csa.ca/en/canada/occupational-health-and-safety-management/cancsa-z1003-13bnq-9700-8032013/invt/z10032013?utm_source=redirect&utm_medium=vanity&utm_content=folder&utm_campaign=z1003

- **Centre for Innovation: Campus Mental Health** http://campusmentalhealth.ca/

- **Accessible Campus** http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/mental-health/current-initiatives/cicmh/

- **CMHA: Healthy Minds/Healthy Campuses Initiative** http://healthycampuses.ca/

- **Improving Mental Health Support for Students with Mental Illness** http://www.supportcampusmentalhealth.ca/

- **Collection of scholarly articles regarding campus mental health** http://scholar.google.ca/scholar?q=campus+mental+health&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholart&sa=X&ei=uwm4VL3cH9H2yQTZzILYAQ&sqi=2&ved=0CBoQgQMwAA

- **Policy Approaches to Post-Secondary Student Mental Health – a Scan of Current Practice 2014** http://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Policy-Approaches-to-PS-student-MH.FINAL_April15-2014.pdf