



Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025

Introduction

The Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH) is a partnership between Colleges Ontario, The Council of Ontario Universities, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, College Student Alliance, and Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division, working together towards our shared vision of “mental health and well-being across Ontario’s campuses.” Our vision is based on extensive engagement and previous work on our theory of change (figure below), that underpins our partnership and guides the work of CICMH.

We believe that:

By engaging and supporting colleges and universities in their commitment to student mental health and well-being

More students will receive the supports they need

A healthier post-secondary campus for all

More resilient students entering the workforce

Direct influence and contribution of CICMH

Indirect influence and contribution of CICMH

CICMH’s mission is to engage and support Ontario’s colleges and universities in their commitment to student mental health and well-being. CICMH creates and disseminates evidence-based, implementation-ready tools and other resources to those who deliver front-line mental health services to post-secondary students. CICMH also provides an essential platform for everyone involved in supporting post-secondary student mental health and well-being – including post-secondary institutions, campus staff and faculty, student and other on-campus groups and community-based mental health service providers – to build relationships and work together.

We’re pleased to present the 2020-25 strategic plan for CICMH. This plan is the direct result of extensive engagement with individuals and organizations across the province, all of whom expressed strong support for CICMH’s work and called on CICMH to do even more to support them in delivering services for student mental health and well-being. Their descriptions of the changing landscape for post-secondary students, the

pressures of student life and the challenges that front-line service providers feel in meeting ever-growing student needs, along with their advice about where CICMH can best support them going forward, helped us to identify current gaps in mental health supports for post-secondary students and informed our decisions about future priorities. We thank everyone who participated in our consultations and provided advice throughout this planning process.

It’s in direct response to the realities of post-secondary student mental health and to what we heard that we – Ontario’s colleges, universities, post-secondary student organizations and community mental health and addictions providers – are launching this strategic plan. Guided by the vision and mission of CICMH, we’re committed to the course this plan sets for CICMH over the next three years and to our collective efforts to improve mental health and mental well-being on Ontario’s post-secondary campuses.



Vision

Mental health and well-being across Ontario's post-secondary campuses.



Mission

To engage and support Ontario colleges and universities in their commitment to student mental health and well-being.

[Strategic Directions for 2020 - 2025]

This plan sets out three overall strategic directions for CICMH in the next three years. Together, these three themes will guide and inform all that CICMH does, alongside our partners, as we work together to implement this plan and achieve our mission.

Enhance long-term sustainability and capacity

With the significant need on campuses for student mental health supports, in addition to limited resources, we heard from across the consultations that long-term sustainability – of mental health services on campus, the people who deliver them, and the system itself – is as important as building immediate capacity to meet current demands. Also noted was the importance of ensuring long-term sustainability of CICMH as an essential provider of knowledge, front-line resources and support for on-campus and campus-community partnerships.



Over the next five years, CICMH will use our expertise in knowledge management, collaboration and partnership to help build, with our partners, more sustainable programs and capacity for student mental health and well-being on post-secondary campuses. The CICMH partners will continue to work together to strengthen the partnership and the long-term sustainability of CICMH and its work.

Advance equity, diversity and inclusion in mental health supports on campus

The increasing diversity of Ontario's population is reflected among the student population on post-secondary campuses. On-campus diversity is further enhanced by the many students attracted to Ontario's post-secondary institutions from diverse countries, cultures and religions. Feeling safe, socially included and being able to access economic resources can impact a student's mental health as can experiences of oppression, marginalization and stigma. Indigenous students face additional barriers due to the lasting effects of colonization. All of these factors are important to consider in planning mental health supports on campus. We heard from stakeholders, including front-line mental health

counsellors, that more can be done to meet the mental health needs of diverse students, especially Indigenous and international students. We also heard that CICMH can play a key role in supporting campuses to address this challenge.



Over the next five years, CICMH will have a clear focus throughout our work on advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in mental health supports on campus. This will include contributing to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through initiatives targeted to improving on-campus mental health support for Indigenous students.

Demonstrate impact through quality improvement and evaluation

Another strong message that came through in our consultations with campuses and other partners was the need to better understand what is working in mental health support on campuses, where the remaining gaps are and what is needed to address them. Campuses want better tools and skills to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of programs and understand the impact on student outcomes and CICMH wants to be better able to demonstrate the impact of our work.



Over the next five years, CICMH will build continuous needs assessment, quality improvement and evaluation into our work to help build both on-campus capacity and our own ability to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of CICMH's work.

[PRIORITY 1:]

Knowledge management

**Goal statement:**

Knowledge management is a top area of strength and focus for CICMH. We'll be a collaborative leader in the identification, analysis, translation and dissemination of evidence-based information and knowledge about how to engage and support mental health and mental well-being on post-secondary campuses.

Strategies:

- 1.1** Enable critical thinking and creative problem solving amongst campus and community partners to address the challenges of post-secondary student mental health and well-being.
- 1.2** Identify and curate available resources to provide our partners and campuses with evidence-based tools and advice to support their efforts.
- 1.3** Develop and disseminate new open access resources – including toolkits and other practical resources – for front-line mental health care providers on campus.
- 1.4** Continue to create a range of learning opportunities and modalities to build the capacity of post-secondary campuses to support the mental health and well-being of their students.

Possible tactics include:

- Annual provincial campus mental health conference to highlight best and emerging practices to 300 front-line staff and managers.
- Emerging and best practice webinar series, such as thinking through a clinical triage model.
- Annual needs assessment distributed to campus and community partners.
- Online resource library of white and grey papers, policies, etc.
- Mental Health Works training sessions for staff on subjects such as compassion fatigue and depression and anxiety.
- More Feet on the Ground online and live training sessions to increase capacity of non-clinical staff to recognize, respond and refer students to services.
- Faculty toolkit to provide a framework for faculty to support students in class.

[PRIORITY 2:]

Engagement and collaboration

**Goal statement:**

The challenges of post-secondary student mental health and mental well-being are complex and growing. They cannot be met by single institutions or groups. We'll be a catalyst and enabler of partnerships, through constant engagement and collaboration – within a campus, between post-secondary institutions, and between post-secondary institutions and community mental health care providers – to address the mental health challenges of post-secondary students.

Strategies:

- 2.1** Lead a series of engagement activities to facilitate stronger and diverse connections and collaborations.
- 2.2** Engage diverse partners in creating learning opportunities and resources.
- 2.3** Identify, co-ordinate and support an increased number of effective partnerships among campus and community partners.
- 2.4** Grow our active database of campus and local community mental health partners to support collaboration and relationship-building efforts.
- 2.5** Continue to collaborate and partner with other organizations and bring CICMH's expertise and relationships to help achieve our shared goals.

Possible tactics include:

- Regular engagement with provincial groups such as the Ontario Counselling Centre Directors, the Ontario College Counsellors, the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs, and the Coordinating Committee of VP Students.
- Continuation and growth of the partnership project, ensuring the maintenance of the new partnerships between campuses and community-based mental health agencies. For example, relationships between a local Canadian Mental Health Association and a post-secondary institution.
- Actively seek and implement new collaborators for CICMH's ongoing and new projects, such as Jack.org and Good2Talk.
- Ensuring a collaborative creation and review process of new toolkits and other CICMH resources such as our webinars and trainings.
- Continue the growth and complexity of the client relationship management database and ensure it's widely promoted and used as a relationship tool for new partnerships. For example, connecting individuals who are working on the development of peer support programs to each other.

[PRIORITY 3:]

Advancing the system of support for post-secondary student mental health and mental well-being



Goal statement:

We'll play a leadership role, alongside our partners, in building a system of high-quality, evidence-based mental health and mental wellness supports for post-secondary students in Ontario.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Enable capacity building on campuses in the areas of program evaluation and quality improvement.
- 3.2 Support campuses to improve navigation of mental health services on campus and between campuses and communities.
- 3.3 Provide sector-specific change management resources and tools so campuses can better manage in the changing and complex environment of post-secondary student life and mental well-being.
- 3.4 Advance understanding of the multi-factorial nature of mental health and mental well-being – such as the direct connection between marginalization and oppression and one's mental health – and ensure an intersectional approach to campus mental health.
- 3.5 Contribute to initiatives that advance the development of standards and best practices in post-secondary student mental health and mental well-being.
- 3.6 Continue to build relationships and connections with other provincial and national organizations.

Possible tactics include:

- Improving & Driving Excellence Across Sectors (IDEAS) training for campuses.
- Highlight emerging and best practices in service navigation.
- Evaluation champion project to link leaders in evaluation to campuses seeking support to evaluate mental health programs and policies.
- Meet with K-12 mental health organizations to explore ways of improving student transitions.
- Change management toolkit.
- Equity, diversity, inclusivity webinar series to increase understanding around health equity and mental health.
- Continued participation in monthly meetings with other provincial post-secondary mental health centres.

[PRIORITY 4:]

Organizational capacity



Goal statement:

We'll make focused efforts to strengthen the internal capacity, efficiency and long-term sustainability of CICMH to achieve our mission.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Update CICMH's governance and decision-making to reflect the priorities in this strategic plan.
- 4.2 Establish and implement a plan for long-term sustainable funding of CICMH, including non-government revenue sources.
- 4.3 Ensure practices are in place for managing the succession and long-term sustainability of CICMH's programs and non-financial resources.
- 4.4 Continue to support the wellness and success of CICMH staff.
- 4.5 Implement quality improvement and impact evaluation processes in all of CICMH's work.

Possible tactics include:

- Succession planning for CICMH.
- Annual review of the executive committee terms of reference.
- Ensure effective onboarding of new staff and executive committee members.
- Create a staff professional development plan.
- Research and explore diverse funding opportunities, including grants.
- Disseminate the new strategic plan widely to ensure continued engagement with partners and expand awareness of our work with new audiences.