

MENTAL HEALTH FRAMEWORK

2019



Student Mental Health and Well-being Vision & Framework for Selkirk College

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Acknowledgement

The Selkirk College *Student Mental Health and Well-being Vision and Framework* could not have been developed without the endorsement and encouragement of Selkirk College Leadership team, the members of the Advisory Committee, and the thoughtful contributions of students and employees throughout our campus community. I am grateful for your time and efforts.

You have played an important role in this worthwhile project!

Rhonda Schmitz
Director of Student Development
Selkirk College
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Land Acknowledgement

Selkirk College operates at campuses and learning centres throughout the West Kootenay and Boundary regions. We acknowledge respect for, and deep gratitude to, the First Nations of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: the Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa, and the Secwepemc (Shuswap) peoples, on whose traditional territories we are honoured to operate.

Preface

“Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet.” – Okanagan Charter, 2015, pg. 2

At Selkirk College we are committed to supporting the health and well-being of our students, our staff, as well as the people and communities in our region. We take very seriously our responsibility as a force for sustainability within our organization and in the wider community. Our work to support all students to flourish whatever their background and ability is an essential part of fulfilling this commitment.

This framework also helps us fulfill our international commitment as a signatory to the *Okanagan Charter*. This health promotion charter resulted from an international conference on health promoting universities held in Kelowna in 2015. Its purpose is to inspire action, generate dialogue and research, and mobilize cross-sector action for the integration of health in all policies and practices. The *Charter* recognizes that higher education plays a unique and central role in all aspects of the development of individuals, communities, societies and cultures – locally and globally. It calls upon higher education institutions to incorporate health promotion values and principles into their mission, vision and strategic plans, and model and test approaches for the wider community and society (Okanagan Charter, 2015, pg. 5).

Mental health and well-being defined

Mental health can be defined as:

“The capacities of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity” (CAUSS & CMHA, 2013, pg. 6).

This does not mean that mental health is the absence of mental illness. As for any other illness, it is possible to be well and flourish with the right supports and care. It is also possible for students without a mental illness to fail to thrive mentally and emotionally. It is important to recognize that everyone benefits from a systemic approach to supporting positive mental health and well-being (CAUSS & CMHA, 2013).

It takes a campus ...

“At Selkirk College we consider the whole person in the learning environment, infusing health into everyday operations from business practices to academic mandates. By doing this we create a web of caring and a culture of compassion, well-being, equality, and social justice which enhances the success of our students.” (Healthy Campus Institutional Report, 2018, pg. 3)

Mental health and well-being are essential resources for students to be able to flourish in the post-secondary environment. The *Healthy Campus Framework* (2018) describes 5 dimensions of well-being which both contribute to and are dependent on mental health (see **Appendix A**). Enhancing mental wellness and overall health, contributes to the success of students, staff and the organization as a

whole. The benefits include increasing positive factors associated with resilience, connection and engagement, and decreasing negative aspects like stress, anxiety, depression and absenteeism (SFU, 2014). (See **Table 1**, below).

For ...	Increases	Decreases
Students	Thriving Learning and persistence Resilience Sense of community Social, physical and mental health Connection	Stress Isolation Anxiety Depression
Faculty	Work life balance Job satisfaction Morale Camaraderie Social, physical and mental health	Burnout Stress Isolation Anxiety Depression
Institution	Retention Productivity Engagement Reputation Supportive organizational culture Bottom line	Absenteeism Presenteeism Attrition Associated costs

Table 1: Individual and institutional benefits of enhanced well-being (Adapted from SFU, 2015, pg. 7)

Supporting the “whole learner” is an important element of the *Student Services Plan* (2014) at Selkirk College. In the revised priorities and goals for 2019-2022 (see **Appendix B**) this starts with a focus on health and wellness, attending to the balance of spiritual, mental, physical and emotional aspects of wellness as fundamental to successful learning and health. ‘Health and wellness’ is also one of five fundamental commitments integrated into delivery of programming, student and employee supports, planning, and operations in the new *Selkirk College Strategic Plan 2019-2024* (Selkirk College, 2019, pg. 4). Selkirk College recognizes that it takes a campus to support a student (see **Figure 1**).

The *Healthy Campus* framework is an essential part of the Selkirk College strategy to create a campus-wide learning environment that helps students to flourish. In the *Institutional Accountability Plan and Report 2017-2018 Reporting Cycle* (June 2018), the Healthy Campus framework is identified as the foundation for building learning environments that support the whole student as part of achieving “Strategic Direction 2” (Institutional Accountability Plan, June 2018, pg. 15).

IT TAKES A CAMPUS TO SUPPORT A STUDENT

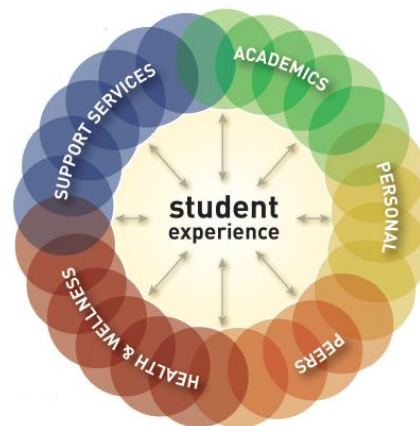


Figure 1: It takes a campus to support a student. (Adapted from University of Alberta, 2015, pg. 13)

Context

Student Profile

The student population at Selkirk College is primarily domestic (82%) with a gender balance of slightly more females (55%) than males (43%). Indigenous students make up 6% of the student population, and international students make up 12% (see **Appendix C** for a summary of student data). Student enrollment is spread across 8 campuses in 5 communities, plus online students.

The rural small-campus environment and low instructor to student ratio contributes to an atmosphere of safety and connection. At the same time, the variety of unique geographic contexts, and the fact that specific types of programs are offered only in certain locations, creates a challenge to providing consistent support and engagement for all students. The student population has also been shifting in recent years with an increase in international registration and a decline in the median age of the student population (from 28 in 2014 to 23 in 2018).

Student Need

Accessing Services

Recent statistics from *Counselling Services* show an increase of contacts in 2017/18 of 5% (see **Appendix D**). The number of individual staff members delivering service has increased from 3 FTEs (full-time equivalents) to 3.4 FTEs in recent years. However, these are not evenly distributed throughout the school year even though demand for personal and career supports remain quite consistent. The department has also identified that some campuses need increased supports due to having more students with complex trauma histories.

Engagement Survey

The 2018 *Selkirk College Student Engagement Survey* received 1,314 responses (51% of eligible), which is comparable to the 2017 response rate. The majority of students who took the survey were full-time students (87%), predominantly domestic (71%), on the Castlegar campus (60%) and between the ages of 22 and 30 (45%).

From an academic success perspective, managing finances continued to be the most significant challenge faced by students, especially for international students. A significant number of both domestic and international students reported managing a heavy course load as an important issue as well (40% and 39% respectively). Both of these issues are directly related to mental health and well-being, as we heard in our student focus groups conducted in March 2019.

The survey also asked about key dimensions of a healthy campus. While the majority of students agreed that they have access to core elements of a healthy campus (safe water, safe from sexualized violence, safe from oppressive and discriminatory attitudes), less than half agreed there are welcoming spaces and programs for LGBTQ students on campus (44%), that spiritual expression and needs are supported by the college (42%), and that they participate in programs that promote good emotional and mental health (38%). Students also identified having access to a program to help manage stress and anxiety as one of the top three programs in which they would participate (31% of respondents).

National Context

For some years we have known there has been increasing frequency, complexity and severity of students experiencing psychological distress. The National College Health Assessment data (American College Health Association, 2013 and 2016), drawn from students’ self-reporting, indicates that stress, anxiety, depression and harmful substance use are very prevalent for post-secondary students. Canadian data were included in the Spring 2013 and Spring 2016 data (see **Table 2**). Many students report that these symptoms and behaviours affect both their physical and mental health, as well as their learning and personal success.

Students reported experiencing the following any time within the last 12 months:	National student population response	
	2013	2016
Felt overwhelmed by all they had to do	89.3%	89.5%
Felt exhausted (not from physical activity)	86.9%	88.2%
Felt very lonely	63.9%	66.6%
Felt very sad	68.5%	73.7%
Felt things were hopeless	53.8%	59.6%
Felt overwhelming anxiety	56.5%	64.5%
Felt overwhelming anger	42.2%	47.3%
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	37.5%	44.4%
Seriously considered suicide	9.5%	13.0%

Table 2: National College Health Assessment, Spring 2013 and Spring 2016

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for this framework are founded on the application of a systemic approach that is:

1. Comprehensive and views the whole campus as the domain to be addressed; where everyone is responsible for enhancing and maintaining the mental health of community members.
2. Focused on creating environmental conditions for the flourishing of all students, based on values of social equity and sustainability.
3. Grounded in principles of informed choice and inclusion of students’ voices in strategy development and decision making; where the voices of students with lived experience of mental health issues are particularly valued.
4. Inclusive of all stakeholders in a collective, shared responsibility for creating campus environmental conditions that support student learning and mental health.

These principles are reinforced by the core Selkirk College values: Community, Access, Respect and Excellence, which support Selkirk College to deliver on our vision to provide “personal experiences that build confident and imaginative learners ready to thrive in their community and in our dynamic world” (Selkirk College Strategic Plan 2019-2024, pg. 3).

These will collectively inform our commitment, approach and direction as we move forward to apply the framework across programs and services for all Selkirk College students.

Framework Development Process

An external grant made it possible to implement a 6-month project (January to June 2019) focused on gathering information to inform the development of an institution-wide mental health framework that will support and foster student mental health and well-being at Selkirk College.

Coordinated by the Director of Student Development, the Advisory Committee supported an external consultant to apply a systemic approach to examine policies, support services, relationships with external organizations, leadership, and the physical and spiritual environments. This included consideration of how facilities/environment, accommodations, food, recreation, and social spaces support students to achieve optimal mental health and well-being.

The Advisory Committee included cross-sector representation from Student Services to guide the process (see **Appendix E** for the list of names and affiliations).

Discovery Phase

The first phase included a review of key research documents, Selkirk College policies and plans from the perspective of mental health and well-being. Programs and services relevant to mental health and well-being were reviewed and mapped, and an environmental scan of key stakeholders in each local community was undertaken. Finally, similar plans by other post-secondary institutions in BC and Canada were reviewed. This phase focused on both opportunities and gaps related to supporting student mental health and well-being.

Engagement Phase

The second phase included a combination of focus groups and interviews with students (44), faculty/staff (17) and community stakeholders (2) (see **Appendix F** for a complete list of contacts and questions). These conversations explored how mental health and well-being is understood, what is already being done well, what things should be done or improved, and where there are opportunities for collaboration in the community to support mental health and well-being of young people.

Framing Phase

The third phase drew on the materials and interviews/conversations to create an action framework for situating current and recommended strategies and activities. This framework was reviewed by the Advisory Committee before being finalized, and was used as the foundation to create the 'Framework at a Glance' document.

Vision & Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to support planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services at Selkirk College so that student mental health and well-being is optimally fostered and supported.

Our **strategic framework** is intended to provide guidance, to structure organizational activities across programs and services, and to be easily understood and communicated. It does not include short-term implementation tasks as are generally found in a fully formed strategic plan. Instead, it identifies current initiatives and recommended approaches as resources to be integrated into existing activities, including planning, program development, instruction design and evaluation. The intended outcome is stronger alignment and integration of mental health promotion and prevention priorities in existing processes for planning, resource allocation and data collection across all programs, departments, and campus communities.

Impact and Outcomes

This framework describes concrete **action areas** for achieving measurable improvements in mental health outcomes. It makes an important contribution to helping us achieve our strategic commitment to 'Health and Wellness' in the new *Strategic Plan* (Selkirk College, 2019), and the five pillars of *Selkirk College Healthy Campus Framework* (see **Appendix A**).

These outcomes align with the national conceptual framework for post-secondary student mental health (CAUSS & CMHA, 2014, pg. 9) and work together to create systemic change.

The key outcomes include:

1. *For all students:*
 - 1.1. an appropriate institutional structure (organization, planning and policy).
 - 1.2. a supportive and inclusive campus climate and environment.
 - 1.3. good awareness by staff and students of all aspects of mental health and wellness.
2. *For students with concerns about coping:*
 - 2.1. sufficient campus community capacity to respond to early indication of student concern.
 - 2.2. strong student competencies and skills for self-management and coping.
3. *For students with mental health concerns:*
 - 3.1. accessible mental health services.
 - 3.2. effective support for crisis management.

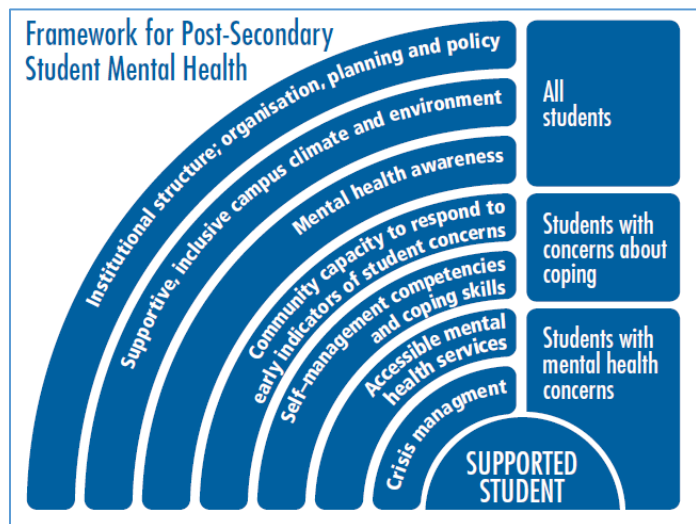


Figure 2: Framework for Post-Secondary Student Mental Health (George Brown College, 2015, pg. 5)

Vision

Selkirk College is a community where we care for each other, learn and talk about mental health and well-being, receive support as needed, and where individually and collectively we realize our potential.

We will achieve this vision as we **take action** to:

- create supportive, responsive and inclusive **learning and working environments**;
- increase knowledge and understanding for **personal growth and development** to promote positive mental health and well-being;
- adopt a systems approach to the delivery of timely, accessible, and coordinated **services and supports** for mental health and well-being;
- apply a mental health and well-being lens to **policies, practices and procedures** at Selkirk College;
- strengthen **social connection and community engagement**; and,
- create **physical spaces** that support positive mental health and enhance well-being.

Action Areas

The **action areas** provide the frame for connecting work that is already being done at Selkirk College with information we gathered from students, staff and stakeholders, and with recommended actions drawn from other post-secondary organizations and jurisdictions (see **Figure 3**). Implementation of these action areas will create the conditions required to support the development of student mental health and well-being at Selkirk College.

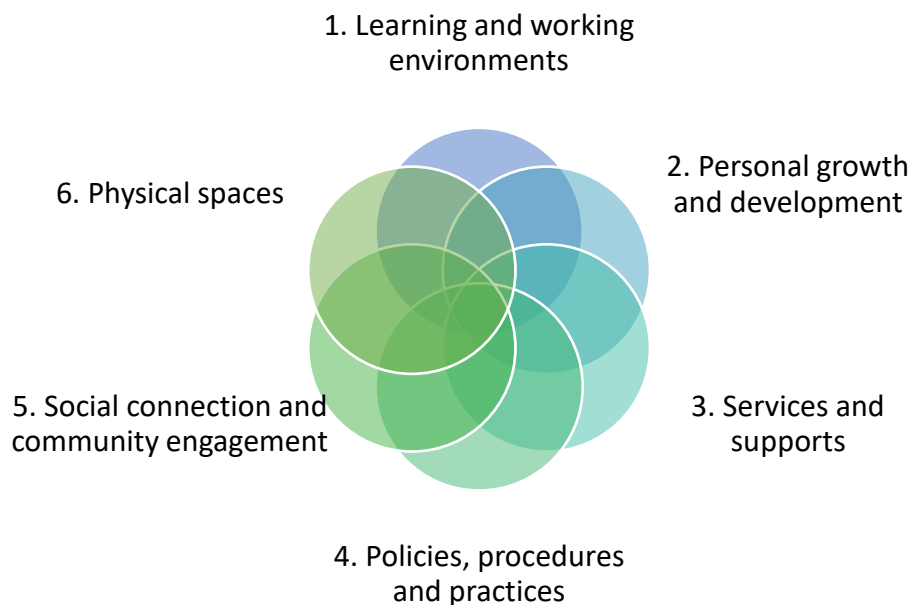


Figure 3: Action areas for supporting student mental health and well-being at Selkirk College

Each **action area** is defined briefly, followed by a summary of **current supporting initiatives** provided by Selkirk College. Efforts were made to list initiatives under a single action area for simplicity. At the same

time, it is important to remember that many initiatives impact in multiple ways and locations simultaneously. As a result, some initiatives can be found listed in more than one action area.

A summary of **what we heard from students** as part of our consultation is also described, along with a few quotes to provide examples using the words of students and staff. This is followed by a summary of **recommendations for action** drawn from our review of evidence and strategies in other post-secondary institutions in BC and across Canada.

Action Area 1: LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

Create supportive, responsive, inclusive environments that enhance engagement, learning, and mental well-being for students and staff.

Current supporting initiatives:

Events, Workshops and Activities:

- Poster campaigns for mental health literacy, to raise awareness, promote well-being and reduce stigma.
- *Sexual Violence Prevention Month* that brings films, workshops, training and other events to campus to promote safe and supportive environments for everyone.
- *Bringing in the Bystander Training* to help staff and students intervene safely in situations where sexual violence might occur or when there are incidents of discriminatory or oppressive actions or language.
- *Dinner Basket Conversations*, bringing together students to talk through tough topics in a supportive and caring environment.

Programs and Services

- *Student Ambassador* program that provides volunteer opportunities for students to support other students on campus.
- *Healthy Campus Advisor* available to connect students to supports and services, and to support staff and faculty with planning, implementation, and evaluation related to integrating mental health and well-being in programs, course curricula and services.
- *Indigenous Services* for prospective and current Indigenous students to help connect with financial aid advice, community support, counselling, cultural activities and more.
- *Learning Skills Centres* (Castlegar, Tenth Street and Silver King campuses) for support to students through tutoring, workshops and peer tutors, and the *Writing Centre* (Castlegar and online).
- *Financial Aid Office* for support to apply for student awards and learn more about financial resources.
- *Food Bank* supports on campuses.

What we heard from students:

Supportive:

- Instructors are caring and flexible, with lots of positive energy.
- Small class sizes support individualized learning and attention.
- The *Writing Centre* and *Food Bank* are really important supports.

“The teachers are great here; they have positive energy. They can be flexible – and this has helped to prevent stressful situations for me around commuting and weather.” Student - Nelson

Opportunities to improve:

- Classroom environments with more opportunities for anonymous feedback in class, more positive recognition when doing well, beginning classes with activities like mindfulness exercises, and increased sensitivity and skill by instructors in recognizing and managing sensitive and triggering topics.
- Course content that ensures assignments focus on helping students learn, course loads that are spread out across the term, and more courses available online to support flexibility.
- Schedules that include shorter days and/or 4 days per week to accommodate work and commuting.
- Resources to support the ability to balance work-home-life priorities such as transportation, childcare, and campus employment (e.g. in tutoring programs).

“There’s a sharp difference between the teachers who understand and value mental health, and the others who say or think you should ‘just deal with it’.” Student - Castlegar

“If I could give anonymous input, I would feel okay to say that my day was hard. But it’s not anonymous, the instructor would know it’s me, so I don’t want to say what’s up for me.” Student - Nelson

Recommendations for action:

- *Community of practice* – create a community of practice around exploring ways that faculty can embed activities in their curriculum and teaching that promote student well-being; include external stakeholders to ensure linkages with other community supports.
- *Peer supports* – encourage the development of student initiatives and peer-based support programs that promote mental health awareness and resiliency, and student well-being.
- *Consultation support* – provide consultation support by Counselling Services and Accessibility Services for Students with Disabilities to program chairs, deans and instructors in support of students experiencing mental health challenges and concerning behaviours.
- *Mental health literacy and a culture of compassion* – provide opportunities for employees and students to acquire information and strategies related to mental health and wellness and foster student well-being and culture of compassion on campus.
- *Learning and well-being* – enhance opportunities for students to learn and develop mental health resiliency strategies while in their various learning environments (e.g. integrate into classroom learning, include in student program orientations).

Action Area 2: PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
Build mental health literacy among students, staff and faculty by increasing the knowledge and understanding of the determinants, nature, impact, prevention, and management of mental health concerns.

Current supporting initiatives:

Information

- *Practicing Mindfulness in College* information available online.
- *Take Five* stress reduction poster and promotion.
- *Wellness and Mental Health* weblinks to provide information and resources for students to build personal resilience and strengthen self-management.

Workshops and Training

- *Discovery Day* – annual workshop series.
- *Mir Centre for Peace Lecture Series* –drawing on a diverse selection of local and international speakers, the Mir Lecture Series delivers new views on community and global issues.
- *Teaching and Learning Institute* - supports the development of teaching excellence and the creation of relevant and inspiring learning environments and experiences in the West Kootenay/Boundary Region.
- *Reconciliation Speaker Series* - Indigenous Services leads the conversation about Truth and Reconciliation with a speaker series that brings Indigenous wisdom to the forefront.
- *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills and Training (ASIST)* workshop in suicide prevention and safety planning is offered as part of the Selkirk College course catalogue.
- *Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)* course provides participants with improved Mental Health literacy and the skills for early detection in themselves, their students, family, friends or colleagues who may experience a mental health problem.

What we heard from students:

Opportunities to improve:

- Workshops on self-care; stress relief activities mid-day and during exam periods (e.g. dog petting, pool tournament).
- Courses on how to study, manage time, manage money, and understand student loans and bursaries.
- Learning about different courses and how they are applied in the work world, including field trips to businesses and tours to other Selkirk Campuses and programs.

“I don’t know when events are happening ... I don’t know how to find out. [It needs to be] spread by word of mouth. Say: ‘Come to the event!’” – Student - Castlegar

“The first week of school, we had tricycle races and live music! We need things like this more regularly.” Student - Nelson

Recommendations for action:

- *Build supports for distressed students within the Selkirk College community* – provide information and training for employees and students to identify and support distressed students and connect them with college services (e.g. skills for ‘helpful conversation’ practice, basic training on how to recognize and refer, workshops on how to accommodate students in distress) and provide follow-up supports for employees who encounter students in distress.
- *Collaboration with employee-focused mental health initiatives* – co-plan and share information with those planning policy and developing initiatives related to promoting employee well-being in the Selkirk College community (e.g. new employee orientations, engage employees with ‘mental health expertise’ to increase cross-program collaboration).

Action Area 3: SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Ensure the provision of accessible, effective, interconnected campus mental health services and supports that use best practice knowledge and strategies in support of students who are experiencing psychological distress.

Current supporting initiatives:

- *Accessibility Services* for students with disabilities to receive support with connecting to learning and counseling supports, facilitating conversations between instructors and students, designing and implementing 'academic accommodations', and other supports.
- *Selkirk Trauma Assistance Team (STAT)* for organized, timely and supportive approaches in responding to the aftermath of a traumatic incident that could affect the well-being of students and members of the college community.
- *Counselling Services* appointments, drop-in services and referrals to help students with career, academic and personal counselling.
- *Wellness Centre* with *Nurse Practitioner* services on the Castlegar Campus to provide timely access to high-quality cost-effective care.
- *Options for Sexual Health Clinic* providing confidential and free drop-in services by a Registered Nurse and Nursing Program Students, once per week on the Castlegar Campus.
- *Early Alert* online referral system that operates early in each semester to enable instructors to identify students who are facing challenges in their courses or programs.
- *Elders Program*, providing drop-in supports for students to build relationships with Elders on campus and gain a wider sense of community and provide learning opportunities through inter-generational connections.

What we heard from students:

Supportive:

- Counselling services have generally had short wait times and the counsellors are very supportive and caring.
- Having a Nurse Practitioner has made a big difference for being able to access quality care.

"I needed to go looking for counselling. There could be more awareness building about counselling services."
Student - Nelson

Opportunities to improve:

- Communication needs to be strengthened by providing clear information on counselling services during orientation and reinforcing the information later in the term. It would be helpful to have information on Moodle and Facebook as well, as that is where most programs do their communication.
- Students need wrap-around services that integrate care providers and instructors; Students in the classroom need support to talk about the impact of people struggling with mental health issues and/or leaving the program.
- Service capacity needs to be improved by having access to the Nurse Practitioner and the Options Clinic more than once a week, as well as more counsellors during end of term and exams.

"It's hard when people leave the program. It's disconcerting and a bit depressing because you know that we're all here pursuing our dreams ..."
Student - Nelson

Recommendations for actions:

- *Service information and promotion* – expand the description, distribution and posting of information for students on College mental health-related services (e.g. services, referral protocols, appointment types, posted in multiple places/sites).
- *Capacity, effectiveness and responsiveness of services* – ensure adequate training and supports for counselling staff and provide a variety of ways for students to access (e.g. adequate funding and training, create wellness centres, technology support like ‘live chat’, support groups, address seasonal issues, address cultural/ethnic and Indigenous diversity).
- *Support students-at-risk and respond to crises* – develop and maintain effective and responsive processes and action-based supports for individual students at risk and in response to campus-based critical incidents, maintaining the safety of the campus community (e.g. early alert system, develop specific protocols, critical incidence response plan, practice drills in collaboration with the wider community).
- *Connections with provincial and community resources* – ensure development of effective partnership relationships between college mental health-related services and provincial resources/networks (e.g. the proposed BC post-secondary 24-hour mental health counselling, information and referral service), and support co-planning and facilitation between Human Resources, Counselling Services, Interior Health and other service providers (e.g. maintaining a liaison person, establishing referral protocols).

Action Area 4: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Apply a mental health and well-being lens in the creation of new, and review of existing, college policies, practices and procedures to ensure optimal student mental health and well-being at Selkirk College.

Current supporting initiatives:

- Consultation, education and problem-solving support by Counselling Services and Disability Services for faculty working to address individual student needs and accommodate students with mental health challenges and diverse abilities.
- Program intake procedures that consider student academic and personal readiness to enter and progress successfully in an academic program; registration information and questions that assist in identifying support needs for students with diverse abilities.
- Policies related to: Financial Aid, Accessibility Services, Student Code of Conduct, Human Rights/Harassment/Discrimination, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, Equity Diversity and Inclusivity.
- Indigenization Plan (currently under development, June 2019) to ensure a relational and collaborative process that involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education.

What we heard from students:

Supportive:

- Instructors are important advocates in being able to adapt policies and procedures to support individual needs.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Flexibility when interpreting policies is really important for supporting students dealing with mental health issues and stress and who need to

“My teachers advocate for me, which has a big impact on me being able to go part-time” – Student, Castlegar

take some time away. It would be valuable to develop a system to support students to complete missed material when they need to be away.

- Training and skill development for instructors would help ensure teaching is sensitive to mental health issues (e.g. trauma-informed) and that grading packages and templates are consistent across programs.
- Implementation of tuition fees and housing expenses needs to be flexible and consider the impact on all students, including international students.
- Mechanisms need to be built in to collect student feedback and have a clear procedure for responding to feedback and implementing good ideas.

“When students write a note and say ‘I’m very sorry’ ... they truly are and are struggling with something and just want to come back to school. The stress is often not at school.” - Instructor

Recommendations for action:

- *Communication and information* – ensure appropriate messaging exists with respect to the value of student mental well-being in college communications and information provided to the public.
- *Policy review and development* – review and update current policies, including the identification of gaps, related to student mental health, access and support for students with diverse abilities, student conduct, involuntary withdrawal (including entry, exit and re-entry practices) and public safety in order to ensure inclusive, supportive opportunities for optimal student well-being.
- *Curriculum, instruction and evaluation* – embed language that emphasizes the importance of student mental health and well-being in the design, writing and delivery of educational curriculum, including evaluation procedures, to ensure they reflect fair processes for students with mental health challenges, diverse abilities and need for support and accommodation.

Action Area 5: SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strengthen intrapersonal development, interpersonal competence, resourcefulness, resilience and cultural safety.

Current supporting initiatives:

- Student facilitated activities, clubs, orientation week.
- *Dinner Basket Conversations*, bringing together students to talk through tough topics in a supportive and caring environment.
- *Elders Program*, providing drop-in supports for students to build relationships with Elders on campus and gain a wider sense of community and provide learning opportunities through inter-generational connections.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) volunteer tutoring programs.

What we heard from students:

Supportive:

- Random events put on by the Student Union have been positive; Being able to bring a friend from outside the College to a movie event was very supportive.

“I can’t explain how important the *Gathering Place* is – students come here during hard times.” Student - Castlegar

- The *Gathering Place* and being able to connect with an Elder is wonderful; participating in ceremony as a non-Indigenous person is really valuable.

Opportunities to improve:

- Technology and use of social media need to be addressed as they are contributing to social interaction problems and anxiety.
- Bridging across departments and programs would create a larger sense of community and decrease the feelings of social isolation, including multicultural events and music performance nights at local pubs.
- Connecting with the local community would support student mental health (e.g. by offering events in the wider community, or by linking students with elderly people who have shared housing available).
- Programs that facilitate peer support like ‘buddy programs’ and homework clubs would create connection and positive mental health.
- Use word-of-mouth strategies to promote activities and events as they are more engaging and effective than posters and newsletters.

“So many programs have showcases for the public. Why not have a showcase for other students?” Student - Nelson

“How can we help those who are struggling? If we knew each other better ... but classes get straight to work ... there’s no [social] interaction.” Student – Grand Forks

Recommendations for action:

- *Student organized engagement* – provide additional support to clubs, groups and sponsored activities.
- *College organized engagement* - include students in college planning processes; sponsor holistic, informal supports for students where they feel connected, welcomed and involved (e.g. learning buddy, Conversation Day, instructor/student gatherings).
- *Access to learning and community activities* – ensure full access to all learning and community activities for students with mental health challenges and diverse abilities.
- *Communication and information* – ensure students are aware of the online Selkirk College events calendar and Facebook pages related to specific programs of study.

Action Area 6: PHYSICAL SPACES

Create inclusive spaces that are conducive to student engagement and connections, safe and nurturing, that will decrease stress, enhance well-being, and support positive mental health.

Current supporting initiatives:

- Gender Neutral Washroom signage.
- *The Mural Project* to create an art installation on Castlegar campus that puts a focus on healthy lifestyles and what that means to learners.
- *The Gathering Place* on the Castlegar campus is devoted to enhancing services and providing a welcoming and supportive environment to Indigenous learners.
- *The Mir Centre for Peace* builds and understands cultures of peace through learning and dialogue.
- Residence facilities in Nelson and Castlegar.
- Campus common areas and food preparation areas.
- Cafeteria and healthy food options on the Castlegar campus.

- Gym facilities.
- Dedicated prayer and meditation spaces (depending on which campus).
- Parking and transportation support.
- Recreation trails, outdoor events.

What we heard from students:

Supportive:

- The free gym provides good access to exercise and equipment.
- Having a kitchen available is supportive for taking care of personal health and wellness.

Opportunities to improve:

- Increase residence space, especially for international students in Castlegar and Nelson.
- Indoor space throughout the college would benefit from having more art and music created by students, lights that are healthy and can be personalized where appropriate, and temperature controls that keep a reasonable temperature without too much noise.
- Sensory items like stress balls and alternative seating arrangements (e.g. sofas, exercise balls) would be helpful in classrooms.
- Improved access to meditation and quiet spaces.
- Outdoor space that is conducive to discussion and learning, and policies that support instructors to take classes outside.
- Address transit and transportation service issues by supporting transportation on Sundays to/from the Castlegar campus and providing incentives like gas cards or shuttle services for rural areas.

“The physical space here feels like a hospital. This campus has creative programs and the physical space is not aesthetically pleasing. We need art on the walls and an inclusive music jamming space. The physical environment could help inspire our creativity.” Student - Nelson

“There is an issue with students paying extra to stay in residence over the winter break. International students already pay a lot and have nowhere to go. We shouldn’t have to pay [more].” Student - Nelson

Recommendations for action:

- *Space design and a climate of well-being* - Discussion of ‘universal design’ philosophy in the planning of spaces, programs and services to create inclusive activity-flexible spaces that are conducive to successful learning and optimal student well-being (e.g. confidential areas while waiting for services, more ‘open air’ learning spaces, prayer/meditation spaces, gender neutral washrooms).
- *Student connection and engagement* – include students in space-planning processes.

Implementation

Next Steps

There are a number of short-term projects that could make a significant contribution to moving forward on some of the opportunities and recommendations noted above:

- **Establish a ‘Mental Health and Well-being Standing Committee’** – to advance the vision and implement the framework;
- **Develop an evaluation framework** – work with the *Institutional Research* department to identify appropriate indicators for each outcome and develop a monitoring strategy for reporting back to the wider campus community;
- **Conduct a ‘gap analysis’ for each action area** – including the work of stratifying student population data and applying an equity lens;
- **Create a tool kit** – by identifying and collecting tools and best-practices associated with each action area; and,
- **Identify ‘easy wins’** – and take action to make small and achievable changes in the short term that may result in bigger changes in the long-term.

And it is important to know we are not alone in this work!

The *Mental Health Commission of Canada* (MHCC) is in the process of developing the first standard for psychological health and safety for post-secondary students. It is set to be released in 2020; more information is available on their website: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/catalyst-september-2018-setting-standard-post-secondary-student-mental-health>.

And the *Best Practices in Canadian Higher Education Network* is in the process of reviewing post-secondary mental health strategies. The report is due to be released in 2019; more information is available on their website: <https://bp-net.ca/program/post-secondary-mental-health-strategies/>.

A Call to Action!

“A journey of a thousand li [a Chinese mile] starts beneath one’s feet”

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching (4th-6th Century, BCE)

As always, the challenge is to start the journey. The **six action areas** make the first step possible by providing a variety of places where those with passion and commitment for supporting positive mental health and flourishing for students can find a place to begin.

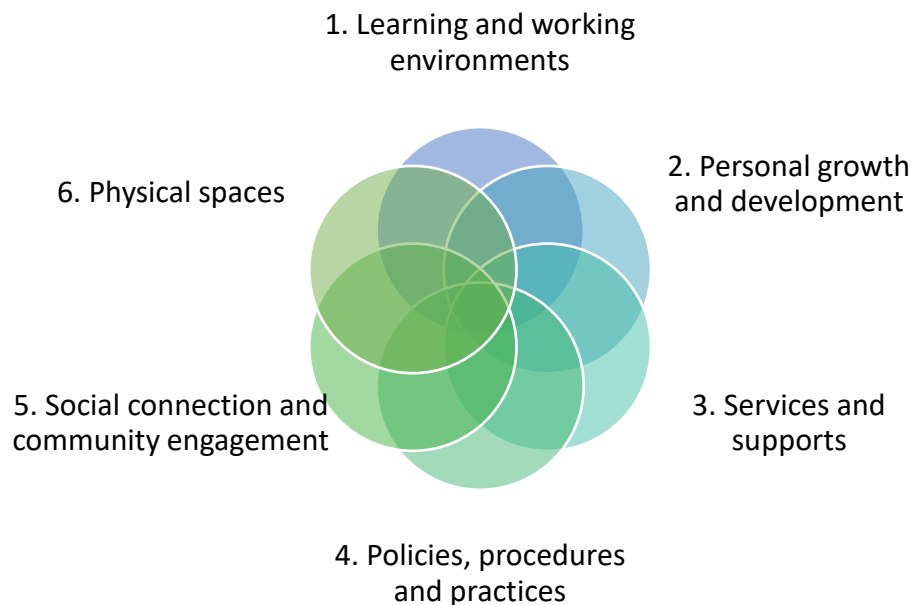


Figure 4: Action areas for supporting student mental health and well-being at Selkirk College

The participation of every member of our college community is needed in order to create and sustain a community that values the mental health and well-being of all of our members. This framework is a call to action for faculty, staff and students to:

- View mental health and well-being as **everyone’s responsibility**;
- Promote and adopt the **vision and action areas** of this framework;
- Look for ways to participate and advance mental health and well-being across all campuses through **supporting change** at all levels (institutional, departmental, and individual);
- **Provide expertise** where needed;
- **Advocate** for mental health in the workplace and the learning environment by identifying and addressing barriers to well-being; and,
- **Know the resources and where to refer** all members of the campus community who are struggling with mental health issues.

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SELKIRK COLLEGE

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Selkirk College (2014). Focus on the Learner: Student Services Plan 2014-2018

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Policies

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Policy-3300-Accessibility-Services-for-Students-with-Specific-Disabilities

Policy-3400-Student-Code-of-Conduct--Rights-and-Responsibilities (Being revised, along with procedures)

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Policy-6030-Sexual-Violence-Prevention-and-Response-2017.12.13

Policy-6040-Equity-, Diversity-and-Inclusivity-2018.09.01

Appendix A

The 5 Pillars of the Selkirk College Healthy Campus Framework

1. *Career Well-being* - In the context of Selkirk College and the student experience, career well-being can be seen as the student's experience of their education or the "work of learning".
2. *Social and Emotional Well-being* - Social and emotional health can be seen as the quality of your relationships with friends, family, teachers, and others you are in contact with along with a well-developed support system and an ability to deal with conflict appropriately. Student's ability to have quality relationships are contingent on many factors, including previous life experience, and existing emotional regulation and social skills.
3. *Financial Well-being* - Providing support both financially and socially/emotionally can help offset the impact of poverty on college students. Food banks, financial aid, bursaries, scholarships and counselling all support the well-being and potential success of students in poverty.
4. *Physical Well-being* - Understanding the relationship between physical health and mental health and the ability to learn is crucial for college students. Exercise, healthy food choices, adequate sleep and safe sex and hygiene are all important factors in maintaining a state of well-being and an optimum learning environment.
5. *Community Well-being* - Feedback from students in both formal and informal discussions highlight the importance of community. Students want to connect with one another and with staff and faculty on their campus. Community imparts a common sense of purpose and can provide individuals with a sense of meaning and continuity, of acceptance, belonging and safety, of affirmation, and of mattering.

Adapted from the *Healthy Campus Institutional Report*, March 2018

Appendix B

Selkirk College Student Services Plan 2019-2022 Strategic Priority Areas and Goals

Draft, December 2018

Health and Wellness

Focus on the importance of balance between the four aspects of wellness - spiritual, mental, physical and emotional - as fundamental to successful learning and health.

- Help to create an environment where students are ready and open to learning
- Work as an integrated team to meet learner's educational goals
- Know learners as people
- Be responsive; recognizing the dynamic and shifting nature of balancing the four aspects of self

Academic Support and Skill Development

Using a relational approach, provide consistent, integrated services to facilitate academic success.

- Provide seamless service and working as an integrated team to meet learner's educational goals
- Empower the whole learner to grow personally, academically and professionally through individualized services and opportunities
- Strive to streamline processes to reduce barriers for accessing support

Transition Support

Safe, effective and responsive services and processes are in place for learners entering, attending and exiting the college.

- Provide guidance, services and processes for diverse learners
- Develop engaging extra and co-curricular opportunities to facilitate learners' pathway of entrance, attendance and future plans

Student Engagement

Multiple opportunities exist to inspire participation and leadership, facilitating a greater sense of connection and belonging within the college community.

- Provide seamless service and working as an integrated team to meet learners' educational goals
- Establish comfortable, safe and inviting environments throughout the college community
- Build relationships to foster a sense of belonging, participation and leadership

Appendix C

Student Head Count - Academic Year 2017-18

Data based on “head count totals” available from the *BC Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse*: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/data-research/post-secondary-central-data-warehouse>. Head count totals are not comparable to unique enrollment numbers and should be interpreted with caution.

By identity/origin	Number	%
Domestic – non-Indigenous	8895	82
Domestic – Indigenous*	645	6
International	1350	12
Total	10,890	100
By age	Number	%
17 and under	750	7
18-21	1720	16
22-24	1070	10
25-29	1310	12
30-39	2125	20
40-49	1325	12
50-64	1535	14
65 and older	935	9
unknown	110	1
Total	10,890	100
Median age in 2018 was 23, down from 28 in 2014 (Based on students enrolled as of September 30 each year)		
By gender	Number	%
Female	6035	55
Male	4725	43
Unknown	130	1
Total	10,890	100

Appendix D

Selkirk College Counselling Services Statistics

	2013/14 (3 FTE)	2014/15 (3 FTE)	2015/16 (3.2 FTE)	2016/17 (3.4 FTE)	2017/18 (3.4 FTE)
Number of contacts	2842	3132	3635	3766	3966
Average visit per FTE	947	1044	1136	1108	1166
Type*					
Educational	1625	1597	617	1901	2156
Personal	718	989	1272	1067	1403
Career	435	450	1646	693	390
Crisis	57	72	66	54	93
Other	7	24	34	68	17
Total visits	2,842	3,132	3,635	3,766	3,966

*Educational visits average 30 minutes; Personal, Career and Crisis visits average 60 minutes plus follow up

Appendix E

Advisory Committee Members

1. Rhonda Schmitz, Director Student Development (Project Sponsor)
2. Tammy McLean, Instructor, BSc in Nursing
3. Leslie Comrie, Healthy Campus Advisor
4. Myriam Spencer, Accessibility Coordinator
5. Tamara Childs, Faculty Assistant/Co-op Education and Employment Services
6. Leah Lychowyd, Indigenous Services Counsellor

Appendix F – Focus Groups & Interviews

The purpose of the focus groups and interviews with students, staff and faculty was to capture personal reflections on mental health and well-being in the college context in order to inform the development of the framework. The interviews conducted with community stakeholders were intended to inform the aspects of the framework that connect with community supports and services.

The questions were broad to solicit top-of mind responses, with more detailed probing questions to draw out feedback related to the 6 action areas as appropriate. The interviews were recorded, and notes were taken. The student focus groups also included the use of “doodle sheets” to help capture reflections on how mental health is understood and what activities could be included in each of the action areas. The themes that emerged were used to inform the content of each aspect of the framework.

Internal Groups/Interviews

The focus groups and interviews were conducted March-April 2019

Date / Time	Group / Location	Number
March 20 12:00-1:00	Students 10 th Street Campus	2 students (1 from music, 1 from digital arts)
March 20 3:30-4:30	Staff/Faculty Silver King Campus	3 Instructors 1 Counsellor 1 AC member*
March 22 12:00-1:00	Students – Social Work Castlegar Campus	9 students
March 25 4:30-6:00	Students 10 th St. Residence	10 students 1 Staff
March 26 12:00-1:00	Staff & Students – Indigenous Program Gathering Place, Castlegar	1 student 1 elder 2 staff (1 AC member*)
March 26 2:00-3:00	Staff and Faculty Castlegar	5 staff 2 instructors
March 26 5:00-6:30	Students Residence - Castlegar	14 students
March 28 1:00-2:00	Students Grand Forks Campus	7 students
April 2 10:30-11:30	Students – Distance Education Online (BlueJeans)	1 student
April 23 9:00-10:30	Counselling Team Video Conference (BlueJeans)	5 staff (including 2 AC members*)
	Total	Students = 44 Staff = 12 (includes Elder) Instructors = 5 AC members* = 2 (not included in staff)

*AC = Advisory Committee

QUESTIONS

1. For Students

Welcome and Setting the Stage (10 minutes)

- Set the stage with the purpose of the mental health framework project
- Remind them that we want to hear what is most important for them around how to support mental well-being so that everyone can learn and flourish

Introduce “mental health means ...” doodle:

- What does mental health and wellness mean to you? (Group share)
- How do you know when you are well? What keeps you well? (Reflect, pair and share)
- How do you know when you are not coping well? What do you do? (Reflect, pair and share)
- What do you do for others to keep them well? To help when they are not coping? (Group share)

Introduce the “action areas ...” doodle

Part 2 – Conversation (40 minutes)

We want to hear about the main stressors and coping challenges, supports for mental health issues, and what should be done to promote mental health

- What do you think are the most important things that Selkirk College should be doing to support positive mental health and flourishing?
- What is the College already doing well?
- Where are their opportunities for improvement?

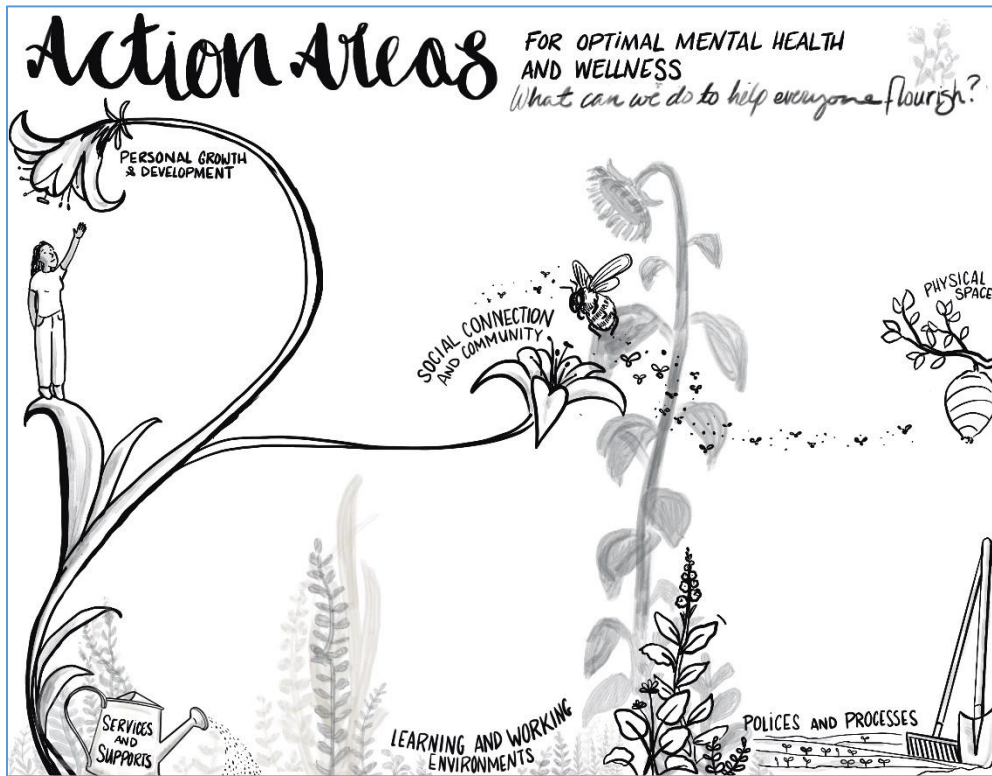
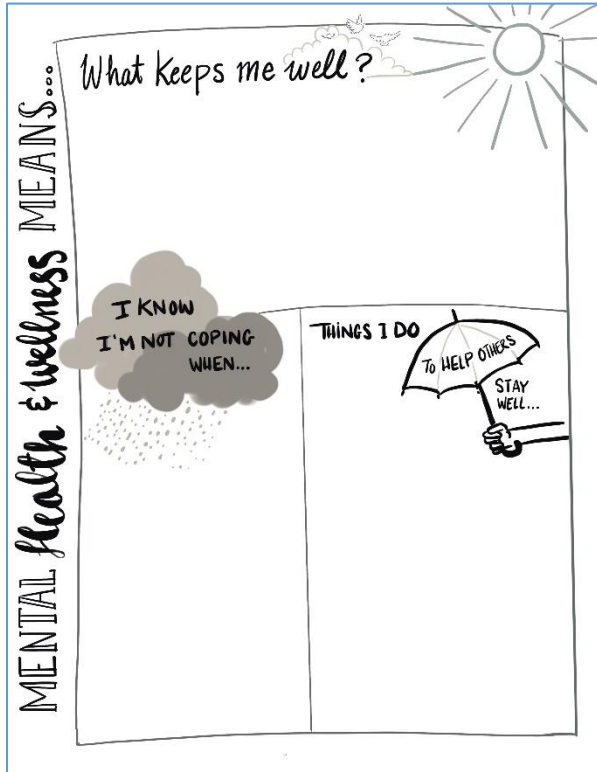
Probing questions will explore action areas:

1. Personal growth and development
2. Social connection and community
3. Learning and working environment
4. Services and supports
5. Physical space
6. Policies and processes

Closing – Round table (10 minutes)

- What is your main hope for what comes next?

Doodle Sheets



2. For Staff and Faculty

Welcome and Setting the Stage (10 minutes)

- Set the stage with the purpose of the mental health framework project
- Remind them that we want to hear what they feel is most important for their students around how to be supported, so that everyone can learn and flourish

Explore what mental health and wellness means to them and their students:

- What does mental health and wellness mean to you?
- How do you know when **your students** are well? What keeps them well?
- How do you know when **your students** are not coping well? What do you do?
- What do you do for **your students** to keep them well? To help when they are not coping?

Introduce the “action areas ...” doodle

Part 2 – Conversation (40 minutes)

We want to hear about the main stressors and coping challenges for students, supports for mental health issues, and what should be done to promote mental health

- What do you think are the most important things that Selkirk College should be doing to support positive mental health and flourishing **for students**?
- What is the College already doing well?
- Where are their opportunities for improvement?

Probing questions will explore action areas:

1. Personal growth and development
2. Social connection and community
3. Learning and working environment
4. Services and supports
5. Physical space
6. Policies and processes

Closing – Round table (10 minutes)

- What is your main hope for what comes next?
- Do you have any questions?

Community Stakeholder Interviews

The following community stakeholders were prioritized for interviews:

Interior Health Authority	Tina Coletti, Manager - Castlegar/Nelson/Nakusp - Mental Health and Substance Use Integration and Strategic Services Tina.Coletti@interiorhealth.ca
Primary Health Care Providers	Dr. Todd Kettner, Psychologist, Divisions of Family Practice, tkettner@divisionsbc.ca , tkettner@selkirk.ca Dr. Joel Kailia, RISE clinic https://risebc.com/
Social Service Providers	Rona Park, ED, Nelson Community Resources rpark@servicesfyi.ca Kristein Johnson, ED, Castlegar & District Community Services Society kristein.johnson@cdcsc.ca
School District #8	Ben Eaton, Director Independent Learning http://ilearning.sd8.bc.ca/ beaton@sd8.bc.ca

Only **two interviews** were conducted, one with **Rona Park** and one with **Dr. Todd Kettner**. Tina Coletti participated in a brief conversation, but she didn't see that Mental Health and Substance Use Services would have much to contribute to a largely promotion/prevention plan. The Interior Health focus is on treatment for serious addiction and mental illness services. Ben Eaton and Kristein Johnson did not respond to several contacts by e-mail. Dr. Joel Kailia was not contacted.

The primary interview questions included:

1. Adopting a systems-approach to timely, accessible and coordinated service delivery for students with concerns about coping, as well as students with specific mental health concerns, is a priority action area for the framework.
 - a. What are the most important things Selkirk College should be doing in relation to service delivery? What specifically to strengthen a systems approach?
 - b. What do you see as strengths in current approaches?
 - c. Where are the opportunities to improve on the current approach/current system?
 - d. Would you identify any gaps? Other thoughts?
2. Engaging with external organizations to support the framework will be important.
 - a. What do you see is the role for you/your organization (if any) in supporting mental health and well-being for students attending Selkirk College?
 - b. How do these roles relate to supporting other young people in the community?
 - c. Are there any specific populations that you feel should be the focus for improving services and supports on campus? (e.g. Indigenous, LGBTQ, international students)
3. In addition to the "Services and Supports" action area, there are 5 others (Learning and working environments; Personal growth and development / Promotion and prevention; Policies & processes / Integrated policy & planning; Social connection & community engagement; and Physical spaces)
 - a. Do you have any feedback related to any of the other 5 action areas?
 - b. Do you have any specific examples of effective practices/interventions and/or research that you think would be helpful to us?
 - c. Do you have any recommendations or advice for next steps?

Examples taken from student focus groups, March 2019

Action Areas

FOR OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
What can we do to help everyone flourish?

LOVE THE ELDERS HERE

Be respectful of our differences.

More connection between students + communities

More of a relationship between instructors + students with diagnosis

Self-care procedures

More online courses + exercise, outdoor classes

PERSONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Gathering Place is AWESOME

SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

PHYSICAL SPACE

LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

POLICES AND PROCESSES

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Action Areas

FOR OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
What can we do to help everyone flourish?

EXPAND CULTURAL AWARENESS

setting intentions for the class before the class

- if a teacher is going to speak about indigenous issues, they are thoroughly trained + educated as not committed verbal blunders + end up inadvertently spreading misinformation

PHYSICAL SPACE

SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

POLICES AND PROCESSES

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Action Areas

FOR OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
What can we do to help everyone flourish?

EVENTS

PEER TO PEER WORK AND WORKSHOPS

BETTER SEATING

LESS DISRUPTION

STUDY AND RELAXATION SPACES

LISTENING LINES OF COMMUNICATION CLINICS

PERSONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDIES

INTRAMURALS

CLASS FIELD TRIPS

SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

PHYSICAL SPACE

LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

POLICES AND PROCESSES

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Action Areas

FOR OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
What can we do to help everyone flourish?

Meditation classes

Multi's class

Alcohol class

celebrate the interconnectivity

Highly respectful Self Care

Mental Health First Aid Programs

PERSONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- Meditation

- Music

SOCIAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

PHYSICAL SPACE

LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

POLICES AND PROCESSES

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

