



# National Standard for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post Secondary Students:

## *Assessment Findings & Next Steps at McGill*

Office of the Deputy Provost,  
Student Life & Learning

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# Overview

1. Background and Context
2. Methodology
3. Where We Are Now
4. How Is the National Standard Data Used
5. Future Direction for McGill

# 1. Background & Context

## What is the Standard?

- A set of voluntary and flexible guidelines rooted in knowledge-based best practices
- Developed in collaboration between the Canadian Standards Association Group and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)
- Launched in the Fall of 2020
- Gives Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs) a guiding framework to develop policies, procedures, and practices that support student mental health and provide healthier and safer institutional environments
- Emphasizes **continuous improvement**



# 1. Background & Context *cont'd*

## Why is the Standard Important?

- The Standard offers guidelines to support and continually improve student mental health through awareness, early access, prevention, early intervention, and a community-wide approach.
- It is aligned with the Quebec Student Mental Health Action Plan launched in Fall 2021, including
  - Provincial-wide practices that support all postsecondary students
  - Targeted measures for QC institutions to follow
  - Funding opportunities
  - [Research Observatory on Student Mental Health in Higher Education](#)

# 1. Background & Context *cont'd*

**Benefits of aligning with the Standard include:**



## 2. Methodology: National Standard - Assessment @ McGill

- In the Fall of 2021, McGill was awarded the Bell Let's Talk Kick-Off Grant for the University to conduct an assessment to measure McGill's current state and future directions for further supporting student mental health and wellness against the National Standard.
- This presentation is a summary of the findings of this assessment
- We used a mixed methods 3-pronged approach to do the assessment

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>November to December 2021</b>	<b>December 2021 to May 2022</b>	<b>December 2022 to February 2023</b>
<b>Approach</b>	National Standard Environmental scan/audit tool	McGill University Campus Interviews / Consultations	National Standard Tool: Campus Mental Health Action Tracker (Pilot/Soft Launch version)

These approaches were complemented by student feedback (e.g., COVID-19 student surveys (2020, 2021 & 2022), National College Health Assessment (2022), Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (2023), McGill Student Campus Climate and Experience Survey (2023))

## 2a. National Standard Assessment @ McGill *cont'd*

- Mixed methods using a 3-pronged approach:
  - Environmental scan using the National Standard tools

### 1) Environmental scan/audit tool:

- Timeline: November – December 2021 (pandemic restrictions still in place)
- Interviewed Student Wellness Hub staff and reviewed existing service information

#### **Findings from the environment scan/audit:**

- Audit revealed that McGill had a wide variety of supports in place for students
- Pain points: Communicating service access points during the pandemic and supporting students in crises who were not located in the Montreal area
- Need to conduct campus stakeholder interviews to identify post-pandemic needs and future directions

## 2b. National Standard Assessment @ McGill cont'd

### ○ Environmental scan using the National Standard tools (*Continued*)

#### 2) Campus Mental Health Action Tracker (pilot phase):

- A&E team completed in late 2022 / early 2023 following campus stakeholder interviews
- Tracker helped identify areas for further attention in the following broad categories:

	Top areas for further attention
<b>Institutional Factors</b>	Public policy/protocol
<b>Planning</b>	Changes in Quebec law and implications for privacy and confidentiality Suicide prevention including postvention
<b>Socio-Ecological Framework</b>	Accommodations Communications about accessing services and available supports Corridors of care Equity, diversity and inclusion Indigenous lens Stigma reduction Supporting students in remote spaces
<b>Monitoring Our Progress</b>	Formal evaluation and continuous improvement pathways



## 2c. National Standard Assessment @ McGill *cont'd*

### 3) McGill Campus Consultations

- Between December 2021 and May 2022, **33** consultations/interviews were held with over **120** McGill community members (student leaders, students with lived experience, EDI staff, service providers, faculty, senior administration)
- **Participants were asked the following core questions:**
  1. What are your **impressions/observations** about student mental health and wellness?
  2. What is the **role of your faculty/school/unit** in supporting student mental health and wellness?
  3. Moving forward, **what is needed to embody a holistic approach to support student mental health and wellness** in the next 3 to 5 years (e.g., programming, policy, tools, approaches, education)?

## 2c. National Standard Assessment @ McGill *cont'd*

### What We Heard from the McGill Campus Consultations

#### Most Pressing Issues:

1. Raise mental health awareness and decrease stigma to support the diverse McGill student body (both in and out of the classroom)
2. Increase access to student supports, both on and off-campus
3. Enhance crisis management
4. Clarify privacy & confidentiality practices

*“Empathy and kindness can co-exist with academic rigor” – Faculty member*

## 2c. National Standard Assessment @ McGill cont'd

*What an inclusive holistic approach to student mental health and wellness looks like at McGill in the next 3-5 years*

**Summary from 33 consultations held with over 120 McGill community members:**

- McGill continues to take **proactive** and **preventive** approaches in holistic student mental health and wellness.
- The McGill community is **equipped** with **appropriate** training and tools, that is aligned with their roles and responsibilities.
- Adopts **flexible policies and practices**, in service options, accommodations, teaching and academic assessment.
- **Systematic collaboration with students** to develop solutions and continuously improve.
- **Increase student community-building** to deepen the University's commitment in building a safe and meaningful environment for the diverse McGill student body with special attention to traditionally underrepresented groups.

## 2d. National Standard Assessment @ McGill *cont'd*

<b>Summary of Top Strengths and Areas that Need Attention</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of student supports designed to support holistic wellness</li><li>• Awareness, prevention, and early intervention model</li><li>• Attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion</li><li>• Positive Student Wellness Hub user experience with professionals</li><li>• Local Wellness Advisors</li></ul>
<b>Areas that need attention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student communications about accessing services and available supports</li><li>• Stigma reduction</li><li>• Increase access both on and off-campus (especially for medical and psychiatric appointments)</li><li>• Crisis management</li><li>• Corridors of care</li></ul>

## 3. Where We Are Now



### Student Supports Designed to Promote Holistic Wellness:

- McGill's offers a wide variety of supports that promote student success and wellness using prevention approaches
- Supports for students range from:
  - 1-on-1 appointments (in-person and online)
  - Hub & spoke model of service delivery
  - [Keep.meSAFE](#) (24/7 service available in multiple languages)
  - Case management services
  - Workshops, webinars including resilience and how to navigate insurance eligibility
  - Peer programs
  - Outreach / social media / McGill Moves
  - Support for navigating resources both at McGill and off-campus supports
  - Increasing supports for BIPOC students and Muslim & Jewish students
- Workshop for faculty and staff on *Recognizing and Responding to Students in Distress*
- Increasing representation of traditionally underrepresented populations at McGill

## 3. Where We Are Now *cont'd*



### Community:

- Promoting a safe learning environment is key to positive student mental health and wellness where students feel a sense of community. The following is an excerpt from Acting Co-Provosts Angela Campbell and Fabrice Labeau letter to the McGill Community which illustrates McGill's progress to date:

*McGill has “redoubled its efforts in domains such as: promoting [equity, diversity, and inclusion \(EDI\)](#), advancing [Indigenous reconciliation](#), challenging [anti-Black racism](#), [addressing Islamophobia and Antisemitism](#), establishing [mandatory consent education](#), enhancing [support for survivors of sexual violence](#), and responding to [harassment and discrimination](#). We have also deepened supports for members of our community in these realms” (September 15, 2022)*



### Flexible Practices Related to Assessment:

- In May 2022 McGill's Senate passed the new [Policy on Assessment of Student Learning \(pp. 3-11\)](#)

## 4. How Is The National Standard Data Used



### Access to Services:

- McGill is working with community partners to align with the [Quebec Action Plan](#) to improve student access to specialized services.



### Implementation of Student Suicide Postvention Plan:

- As part of the Student Suicide Prevention Framework (currently under development), the implementation of a student suicide postvention plan that reduces risk and promotes healing after a death by suicide.



### Flexible Practices: Accommodation & Support

- The Office of the Dean of Students has formed a working group through the Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee to review accommodations for students

## 4. How Is The National Standard Data Used *cont'd*



### Student Mental Health and Wellness Protocol:

- Based on Quebec Ministry of Higher Education recommendation, a student mental health protocol is being developed during 2023-24 academic year



### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- Hiring of Counsellor Supporting Black students following community needs assessments
- Initiative Against Islamophobia and Antisemitism (IAIAS) includes Jewish and Muslim Student Liaisons
- Student Campus Climate and Experience Survey



## 5. Future Direction for McGill

The findings from the National Standard assessment will continue to serve as a guideline towards future projects and programming aimed at further supporting student mental health and wellness.

McGill recognizes student mental health and wellness as essential to students' academic and personal success. The Standard will continue to inform the University's commitment to improving the student experience while considering the needs of our diverse student body in the following **four key areas**:

1. Strengthen Student Wellness Hub model for flexibility in supporting students and longer-term sustainability
2. Expand access to care (on and off-campus)
3. Increase holistic approach to student mental health and wellness across Student Life and Learning
4. Building a healthier McGill



**Thank you!**