ST. CLAIR COLLEGE

Affirming our commitment to student mental health and well-being through an approach based on compassion and informed by human rights.

MENTAL HEALTH

STRATEGY

A CAMPUS COMMUNITY FOCUS

2023–2028

Message from our President

Perhaps no initiative in the past decade or two will prove to be as important to the short- and long-term well-being of St. Clair College, its students and its staff as the preparation of this Mental Health Strategy – and all of the policies, programs and projects that will ultimately spring from it.

The stressors of modern-day life have, it seems, had an inordinately severe effect upon the psyches of teenagers and young adults – which is to say, the demographic of college-aged individuals to whom St. Clair caters. Simply pursuing a post-secondary education is usually more than stressful enough in terms of mental exhaustion. Couple it with youthful depression, anxiety, relationship and sexuality issues, substance abuse, financial distress, bullying and social media conflicts, self-harm and other emotional crises, and it is no wonder that personal counselling now far exceeds academic counselling as the most commonly performed job function of many of our Student Services staffers.

During the past couple of decades, as this adolescent/young adult mental health tsunami has steadily swamped society, St. Clair has tried to be responsive. On our own and in partnership with off-campus resources, we have strived to increase access to counselling, to provide referrals to helpful community agencies, and to serve both students and staff with 24-hour/seven-day-a-week phone hotlines and websites for an array of health services – including mental health emergencies.

The time was right to review the efficacy and efficiency of those efforts, to look at what else we could and should be doing, and to attempt to be more pro-active in our planning and delivery of enhanced and expanded mental health services. That is the purpose of this strategy.

And I assert that it will just be a starting point for both dialogue and action. For the well-being of our students and staff, improving mental health services will be a constant, top-of-mind and evolving topic for the College every year. This report is Step One in that essential and on-going process.
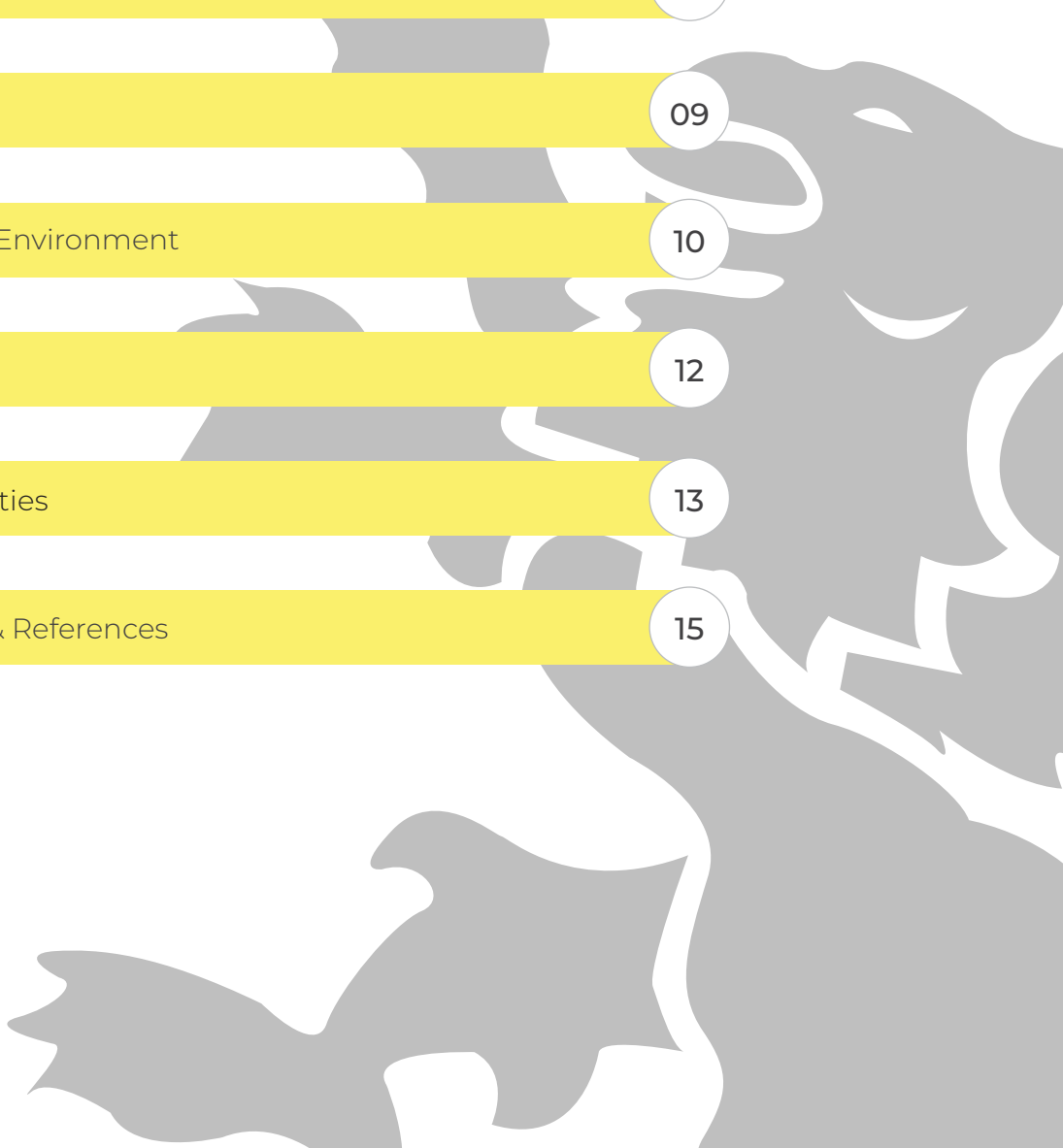
Patti France
M.Ad.Ed., LLD.h.c.
President

> " **For the well-being of our students and staff, improving mental health services will be a constant, top-of-mind and evolving topic for the College**

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About St. Clair College

Land Acknowledgment

St. Clair College would like to recognize and acknowledge that it sits on the three fires confederacy's traditional territory of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations.
We would also like to acknowledge the many other tribes and indigenous nations that call this beautiful land home. We give thanks to the land and surrounding Water for sustaining us.

St. Clair College is a vibrant and inclusive community, with a student body of over 16,000 full-time individuals. We offer an impressive range of educational programs, including advanced diplomas, diplomas, degrees, and graduate certificates in fields such as Health, Technology & Trades, Business & Information Technology, Media Arts, and Social Services. Our international students represent over 60 countries and contribute to the rich diversity on our campuses.

At St. Clair College, we take pride in creating an environment that embraces all people. Our student population ranges in age from 17 to 69 and represents various backgrounds and experiences. This diversity enriches our campus life as students share their unique ethnic heritage, sexual and gender identities, religious beliefs, accessibility needs, and lived experiences.

We are committed to providing quality education and ensuring the success of every student who walks through our doors. Whether you're a local Canadian or someone from halfway across the world, St. Clair College welcomes you into our diverse family.

Campus Snapshot
(Registrars Office, St. Clair College, Fall 2023)

Campus	Students
South Campus, Windsor	8,704
Downtown Campus, Windsor	2,460
Chatham Campus	1,072
Toronto Campuses	3,902

✔ MISSION

Transforming lives and strengthening communities through high-quality and accessible educational experiences that support career readiness, innovation, and life-long learning.

✔ VISION

Excellence in all we do.

✔ VALUES

· Accessibility
· Accountability
· Collaboration
· Diversity
· Inclusivity
· Integrity
· Quality
· Respect
· Sustainability
· Transparency

A Campus-Community Focus

The St. Clair College Mental Health Strategy has been created to affirm our commitment to promote positive student mental health and well-being which requires an approach based on compassion that informed by human rights.
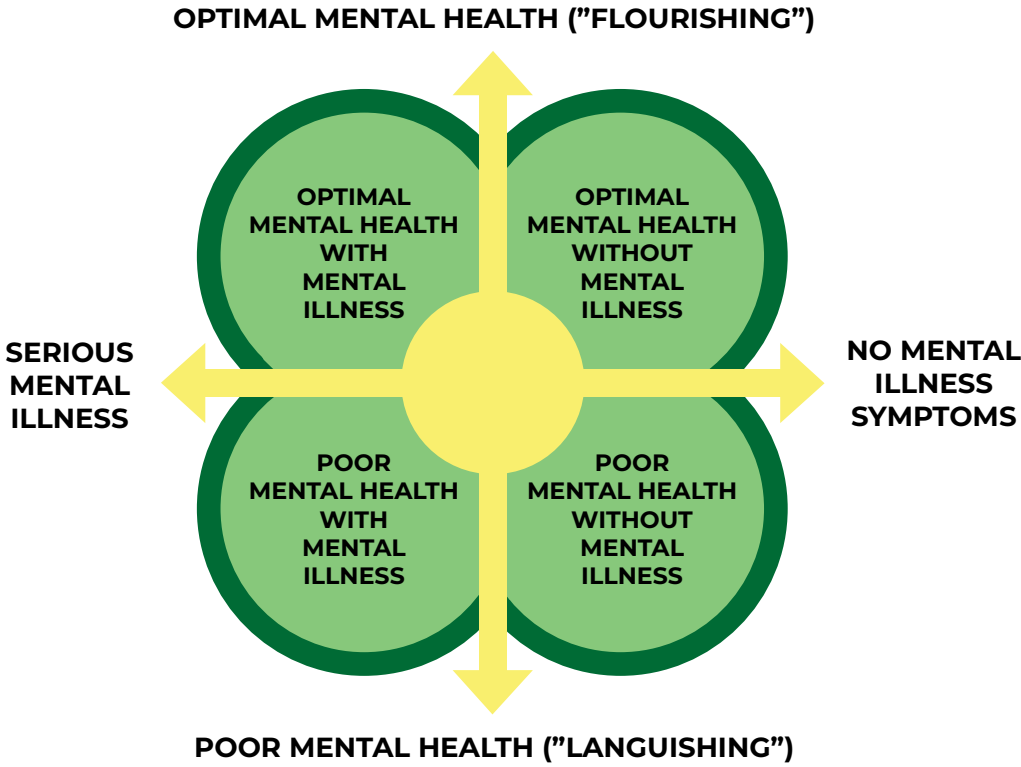
With guidance from The Mental Health Commission – National Standard of Canada (2020), our strategy strives to embed mental health and well-being into learning environments, everyday operations, business practices, policies, and academic mandates.

Student mental health and well-being is a shared responsibility. St. Clair College cannot meet this growing challenge alone. In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), our approach to supporting student mental health and well-being encompasses all students, faculty, and staff within the post-secondary community, in addition to all stakeholders in the broader community.

The fundamental difference between mental health and mental illness is that everyone has some level of mental health all of the time, just like physical health. Where it is not possible to be without mental health, it is possible to be without mental illness (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Dual Continuum Model of Mental Health and Mental Illness

OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH ("FLOURISHING")

OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

OPTIMAL MENTAL HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

NO MENTAL ILLNESS SYMPTOMS

POOR MENTAL HEALTH WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

POOR MENTAL HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

POOR MENTAL HEALTH ("LANGUISHING")

MacKean, 2011. Adapted from: The Health Communication Unit at the Dalla Lan School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario; based on the conceptual work of Corey Keyes

How did we get here?

Strategy Development and Methodology

National Standard of Canada

The Mental Health Commission of Canada released the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students in 2020 to provide guidelines for supporting students across the country. Alongside the National Standard, we have explored best-practice information from the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH) which engages and supports post-secondary schools across Canada in student mental health and well-being. Research informs us that approximately 90% of students indicated they felt overwhelmed at some point, over 60% felt "more than average" or "tremendous" stress (National Standard, 2020), and 70% of post-secondary students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety (CICMH, 2022). With this information, the St. Clair College Mental Health Steering Committee consulted on how to best serve the College community with this 5 year mental health strategy.

Student Centered: Nothing about us without us

We used student feedback from a St. Clair College campus-wide mental health survey. In January of 2022, we asked students and faculty to share their experiences at St. Clair College. The purpose of the survey was to gather data including accessibility and knowledge of current services, safety on campus, and overall mental well-being of both students and faculty. Furthermore, we were sure to include feedback from Student Representative Council (SRC) and Thames Students Initiative (TSI). By using a socio-ecological model (Figure 2), we acknowledge the importance of the student experience at the core of all decisions impacting mental health and well-being.

Figure 2

Socio-ecological Student-Centred Model
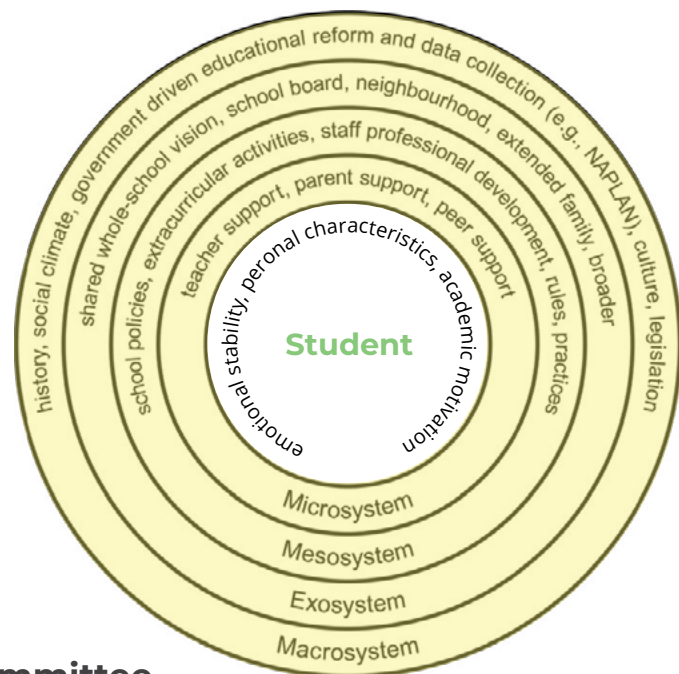
Mental Health Steering Committee

A Mental Health Steering Committee was formed with representation from all constituent groups of the College (students, staff , faculty, administrators, and community partners). Members unveiled areas of strength and development in an effort to create a positive environment for mental health at St. Clair College through a gap analysis as developed by the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (2013). The details of this gap analysis can be found in Appendix A of the strategy and continue to guide the future steps for expanding support for all at St. Clair College.

THE FOUNDATION

A Whole Campus Approach

Using CMHA's Framework for Post-Secondary Student Mental Health (figure 3), we feel it is crucial to understand the various levels of the college experience whereby our St. Clair community can experience a positive mental health experience and overall support. The CICMH (2022) recognizes that to foster a healthy College, we must use a whole-system approach to understand the relationship between the varying levels of the college experience.

Figure 3

CMHA'S Holistic Framework for Post-Secondary Student Mental Health

Institutional structure: organization, planning & policy

Supportive, inclusive campus climate & environment

Mental health awareness

All students

Community capacity to respond to early indicators of student concern

Self-management competencies and coping skills

Students with concerns about coping

Accessible mental health services

Crisis management

Students with mental health concerns

Supported Student

What is Mental Health?

The Mental Health Commission's National Standard of Canada (2020) defines Mental Health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can reasonably cope with the stresses of life, can live, study, and work well, and is able to make a contribution to the community."

How do Saints define mental health?

From an informal poll on Instagram in September of 2022, St. Clair College students largely defined mental health with words such as peace, positivity, and happiness.

Positive
Worry-Free
Mindset   Socialization
Peace
Happiness

Guiding Principles

▶ **STUDENT CENTRED**   ▶ **DIVERSITY**   ▶ **GROWTH MINDSET**

Student Centred

HOW DO STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT CURRENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?

Results from the January 24th, 2022 mental health survey; 3,838 responses were received with a 72% completion rate.

82% who accessed mental health services had a positive experience

78% Feel that St. Clair College is inclusive, safe and welcoming.

Most prevalent barriers to accessing mental health

60% Stigma of accessing services

61% Not knowing where to go for help

Diversity Is Our Strength

Supporting a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, genders, and sexual orientations.

✔ Indigenous Services offers physical spaces to access culturally-based supports such as visiting Elders and Traditional Medicines.

✔ Counselling services are available to assist current and prospective students in the areas of individual, academic, personal counselling and social support.

✔ International students comprise approximately 40% of the St. Clair College student population.

✔ Support and services to all students with disabilities, both temporary and permanent. This may include accommodation plans, and reduced course load, among other supports through our Student Services team.

✔ The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee works to ensure that the dignity and uniqueness of each individual is recognized and to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the College community.

In 2022, we onboarded the **International Student Medical & Wellness Plan** to support students studying away from their home countries. International students have access to medical coverage including doctor visits, emergency hospital visits, x-rays, lab testing, practitioner coverage, prescription drug coverage, travel coverage and more. Regarding mental wellness, students have access to counselling via telephone or live chat with a counsellor 24 hours per day through our **I.M. Well app.**

I.M. Well

Growth Mindset

While we want to acknowledge the efforts we have made in terms of supporting and promoting mental wellness, we know that much like our student population has grown, we too will grow with the varying supports required for our students to thrive at St. Clair College. We will support the promotion of health and the reduction of harm by meeting students where they are on their personal journeys and taking opportunities to share information via workshops, presentations, public speakers, and training (e.g., SafeTalk, ASIST). We are working to create a thriving community and overall culture of well-being while committing to continuous improvement and accountability to our College community.

As of Winter 2023, the following number of SCC community

275 safeTALK suicide alertness for everyone

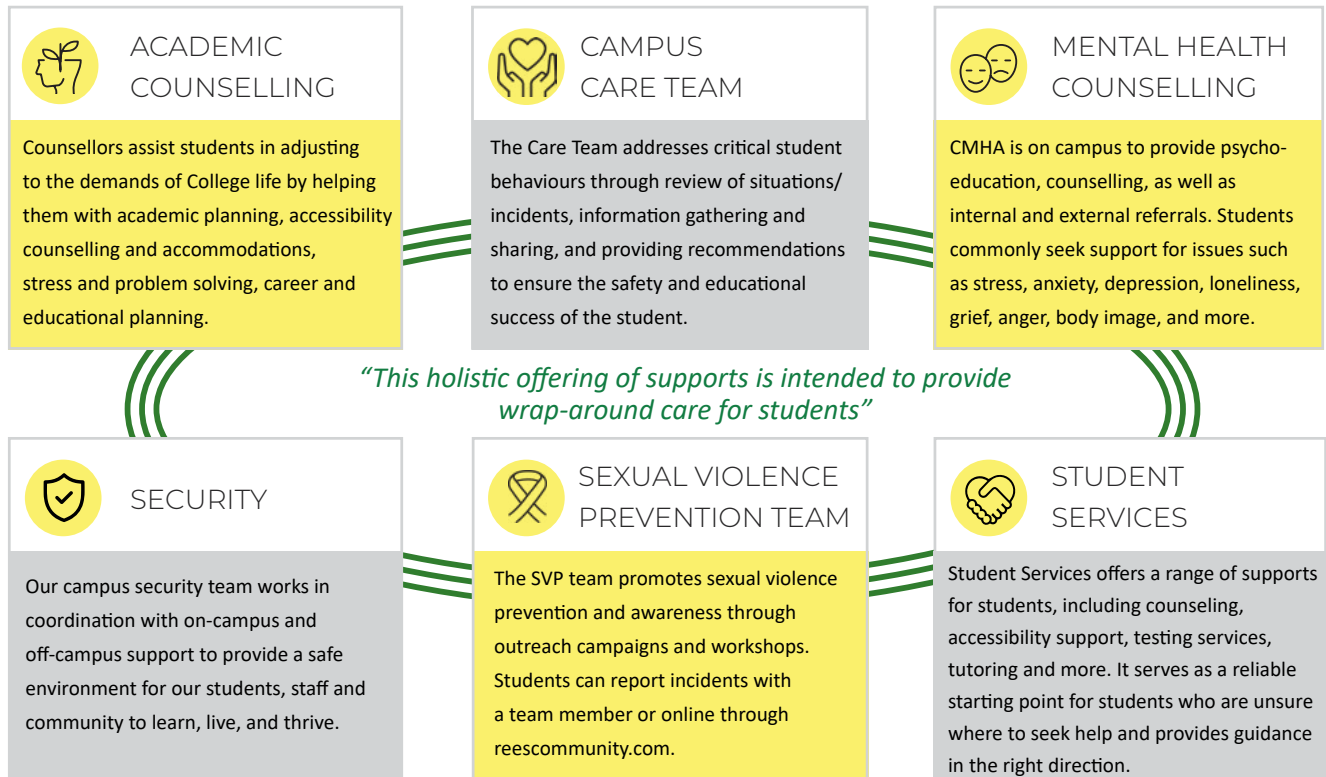**120** ASIST Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Campus Supports

To facilitate a positive College experience, we provide a variety of campus supports for all students to utilize. These services broadly include academic counselling, mental health counselling provided through a unique partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Accociation (CMHA), campus care team, security department, sexual violence prevention education and reporting, as well as other student services. We know that oftentimes circumstances and experiences are not isolated and may impact several areas of our lives. With the student identifying their needs, our teams work together to support them in every way we can. This holistic approach is intended to provide wrap-around care for students who many need support in a number of categories.

ACADEMIC COUNSELLING

Counsellors assist students in adjusting to the demands of College life by helping them with academic planning, accessibility counselling and accommodations, stress and problem solving, career and educational planning.

CAMPUS CARE TEAM

The Care Team addresses critical student behaviours through review of situations/incidents, information gathering and sharing, and providing recommendations to ensure the safety and educational success of the student.

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING

CMHA is on campus to provide psycho-education, counselling, as well as internal and external referrals. Students commonly seek support for issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, grief, anger, body image, and more.

"This holistic offering of supports is intended to provide wrap-around care for students"

SECURITY

Our campus security team works in coordination with on-campus and off-campus support to provide a safe environment for our students, staff and community to learn, live, and thrive.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION TEAM

The SVP team promotes sexual violence prevention and awareness through outreach campaigns and workshops. Students can report incidents with a team member or online through reescommunity.com.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services offers a range of supports for students, including counseling, accessibility support, testing services, tutoring and more. It serves as a reliable starting point for students who are unsure where to seek help and provides guidance in the right direction.

Campus Environment

Not only is it important for students to feel supported by the various departments at St. Clair College, but we know it is imperative to have physical spaces where you can feel comfortable, safe, and able to focus on your studies and interests.

LOUNGE AREAS

FOOD OPTIONS

STUDY SPACES
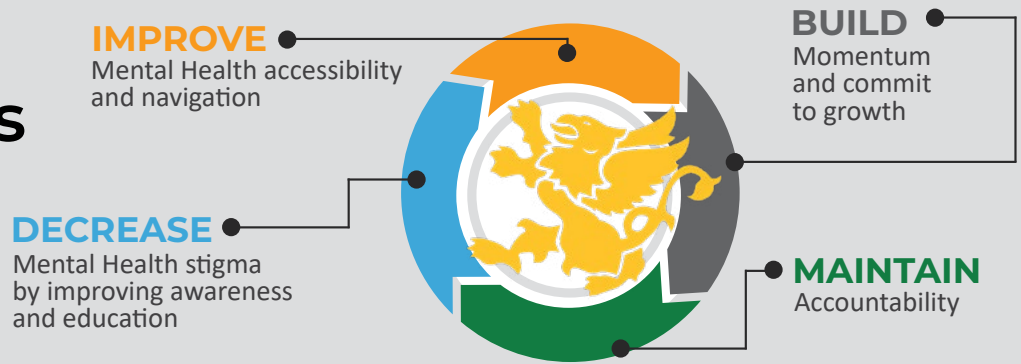
QUIET/PERSONAL SPACE

INDIGENOUS STUDENT CENTRE

STUDENT LIFE CENTRE

EXERCISE FACILITIES

E-SPORTS NEXUS

Goals and Objectives

IMPROVE
Mental Health accessibility and navigation

BUILD
Momentum and commit to growth

DECREASE
Mental Health stigma by improving awareness and education

MAINTAIN
Accountability

RECOMMENDATIONS	OBJECTIVES			
	IMPROVE mental health accessibility & navigation	**BUILD** momentum and commit to growth	**DECREASE** stigma by improving awareness & education	**MAINTAIN** accountability
Collaboration between students, staff, and student leadership groups.		✓	✓	Mental Health Committee with staff, faculty, students, and student-life groups.
Collaborate with community partners to bridge the gap between community support and on-campus support.	✓		✓	Attend Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH) meetings and community-based mental health committees. Invite community partners to host promotional booths and/or workshops.
Collect annual student survey feedback.		✓		Canadian Campus Well-being Survey.
Develop centralized calendar with all events, workshops, training.	✓		✓	Partner with other working groups on campus to ensure all mental health information is shared.
Develop peer mental health network.	✓	✓	✓	Framework and timeframe to be established by Mental Health Committee.
Optimize processes and procedures through development of mental health policy.		✓		Framework and timeframe to be established by Mental Health Committee.
On-board program(s) for students to access therapeutic supports online.	✓		✓	I.M. Well & TAO will be available for students to access at their convenience.
Internal audits and reviews of policies and procedures to include mental health lens through best practice measures.	✓	✓	✓	Framework and timeframe to be established by Mental Health Committee.
Offer educational workshops and training to increase mental health literacy.	✓	✓	✓	SafeTalk suicide alertness training will be offered twice per semester for students, faculty, and staff to attend. CICMH workshops and podcasts will be promoted and available on-demand.
Promote and update services on SIS, social media, and website.	✓	✓	✓	Promotional information will be updated in real-time to best reflect the current state of mental health supports and services available.
Self-serve online booking and forms completion (e.g., appointments, groups, workshops).	✓	✓		Online booking forms to be available through student tiles on my.stclaircollege.ca with target launch of September 2024.

Mental Health Priorities

One of the key suggestions of this strategy is to form a Mental Health Committee that will provide recommendations to appropriate managers from a Mental Health lens. This will be a working Committee that supports other College committees and the Senior Operating Group (SOG) as required.

Building a Positive Mental Health Culture

The St. Clair College Mental Health Survey results indicated that the main barrier preventing students from seeking personal support was stigma (35.1%), followed by lack of awareness (18.5%), and anxiety (14.4%). This brought to light the importance of aligning our institution's policies, procedures, and processes to support mental health through a holistic campus approach.

Space

Survey results indicated that dedicated spaces are very important to students. They indicated the need for a quiet space (87%), space for mental health and wellness (85%), and space for faith and spiritual purposes (69%). It has been St. Clair College's priority to designate bright and welcoming spaces to both foster positive mental well-being and focus on academic priorities.

Education & Awareness

When asked which activities should be prioritized as they relate to mental health services, your answers included: sharing of open access resources (21%), promoting best practices (18%), and stronger connections with community partners (23%). Results also showed that the following were important topics of discussion as they pertain to mental health and well-being: understanding mental illness and how to support someone, burnout, EDI in mental health and addictions, substance use/misuse/harm reduction, compassion fatigue/empathic strain, grief and loss, community services/supports. With this in mind, we will offer ongoing education sessions and workshops to provide opportunities to learn more about mental wellness.

Moreover, respondents were unaware of mental health supports to College students (17%) and 36-49% were unaware of various on-campus supports including mental health counselling, academic counselling and primary care health centre. Mental health awareness campaigns will be promoted on an ongoing basis to develop a consistent understanding regarding the importance of mental wellness at St. Clair College. Through our website, social media accounts, print-materials, promotional booths, and campus-wide events, we will increase our outreach efforts to ensure all students are aware of the supports available to them. Additionally, we will onboard a new program called Therapy Assistance Online (TAO) to optimize mental health support for more students. TAO offers private, customizable, self-guided programs that includes engaging, interactive educational modules and practice tools to help you understand and manage how you feel, think, and act. Available modules address things like stress management, mindfulness skills, problem solving, relationship skills, and strategies for bouncing back from life's disappointments and frustrations. TAO modules will be accessible online 24/7 at your own pace.

Accountability

The Mental Health Committee is an evolution from an interim committee to a College committee with recommendation responsibilities to appropriate managers from a mental health lens. The Committee will use standardized measurement tools such as the Canadian Campus Well-being Survey (CCWS) to monitor and better support whole campus health and well-being.

Mental Health Priorities

Accessibility

The National Standard of Canada (2020) indicates that transition points are most stressful for students (e.g., entering post-secondary, transitioning between programs, and exiting post-secondary). Your feedback provided insight about ways in which you could find more accessible supports. These new initiatives will be in addition to changes that have already been implemented based on survey feedback which include: walk-in hours, flexible hours, accessing via online/telephone.

Over the course of this five year strategy, we will move to online booking for students seeking counselling and explore the development of a peer support program to allow students a way to connect with each other while navigating their health and well-being. Presently, the Campus Care Team has implemented a "How To Help" guide and flowchart to support members of our St. Clair community who are trying to support a student in need.

Download the "How To Help" Guide.

Policies

The strategy will include the development of a Mental Health Policy to encompass suicide awareness, crisis intervention, and postvention. The Mental Health Committee will also review appropriate St. Clair College policies from a mental health lens for recommendations if applicable.

Committees

The Mental Health Committee will be available as a resource to help any College committee to provide recommendations from a mental health perspective.

Acknowledgments

The development of this Strategy involved a thorough and collaborative process, which included input from various stakeholders such as an ad-hoc Mental Health committee comprising members from different areas of the campus, as well as representatives from the Canadian Mental Health Association. Our students also played a crucial role in shaping this strategy. St. Clair College would like to extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to the individuals who dedicated their time, energy, knowledge, and passion to the creation of this project.

Name	Role
Art Barron	Director of Student Services
Alexandra Wiseman	Student Safety & Wellness Administrator
Daniel Chauvin	Manager of Student Services - Chatham
Christina Gatto	Director, College Recreational Services
Kylie Hamilton	Main Campus Counsellor
Lynnai Bruggeman	TSI President
Dylan Menard	Student
Dina Naser	Downtown Campus Counsellor
Beth Pirouet	Human Resources Services Manager & College Resolution Officer
Nathaniel Veltkamp	Director, International Recruitment
Mellissa Forget	Library Technician
Raffaele Nicoletti	Executive Director, President's Office, Corporate Secretary and Ministry Compliancy
Lisa Chauvin	CMHA Counsellor - Chatham
Tara-Ann Sweezey	CMHA Counsellor - Windsor
Emilie Paul	Counsellor - Chatham
Panayota Papadeas	Director, Academic Operations
Marnie Kursiss-Morrow	Library Technician
Rebecca Demchuk	Associate Vice President, Safety, Security & Facilities Management
Sierra Blake	Student
Nancy Hempel	Counsellor - Windsor
Ryan Peebles	Executive Director, SRC
Muriel Sampson	Indigenous Counsellor
Cristina Angileri	Coordinator, Autism and Behavioural Sciences

St. Clair College would also like to express its gratitude to Kim Willis and Jenny Lee Almeida from the Canadian Mental Health Association Windsor-Essex County for their invaluable assistance and support in the development of our Mental Health Strategy. Their guidance has been instrumental in ensuring that we have a well-structured plan to address the mental health needs of our students and promote a positive campus environment.

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ST.CLAIR
COLLEGE
MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2023-2028

Full document available at **stclaircollege.ca**