

STUDENT & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH INITIATIVE



FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (ABRIDGED)

2022-2027

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INLIGHT Student Mental Health Research

WITH FUNDING AND SUPPORT FROM



Institutional Strategic Initiatives

Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land while developing this strategic plan.



Contact Information

To access the full version of the Five-Year Strategic Plan and a complete list of committee memberships, please visit the Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative website or connect with our team directly.

studentmh.research@utoronto.ca
smhr.utoronto.ca

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

This strategic plan is the result of lessons learned, key recommendations, and new strategic priorities identified via three key developments: (a) the **final report** of the **University of Toronto's Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health**, (b) the subsequent **administrative response**, and (c) the new partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

The new partnership includes four integrated priorities: clinical redesign, partnership, education, and research – this strategic plan will address the research priority.

About a year ago I was asked to lead the development of this Strategic Plan for the Student & Youth Mental Health Research Initiative. It has been an honour, and I am excited with what our team has created. **There are four qualities of this plan that make it unlike any other research strategy on this topic in the world.**

- 1** We selected expert faculty and student members via an inclusive recruitment process, ensuring both diversity and representation across the tri-campus and CAMH. Our emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout this plan.
- 2** We had a unique student advisory committee that had equal access and input into the plan. They have provided their own letter supporting this plan and the process undertaken to create it. Students are at the centre of every element of this plan, not just as subjects or the stakeholder of interest, but more importantly, as experts, partners and researchers.
- 3** We developed a mission, guiding principles, and four pillars that consider the full spectrum of research topics and approaches that need to be addressed to have a meaningful impact on student mental health and wellbeing.
- 4** We crafted a vision and plan that are both aspirational, and entirely achievable with the strategy and investments we have recommended.

We have also provided a comprehensive list of short- and long-term objectives in order to realize the outcomes of this strategic plan.

It has been a great privilege to work with this amazing group of faculty experts and student leaders.

KRISTIN CLEVERLEY RN, PHD, CPMHN(C)

Chair, University of Toronto Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative

LETTER FROM THE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

University of Toronto students across campuses and academic divisions have called loud and clear for changes to campus mental health standards and systems. In response to these calls, we have seen progress in service delivery and student consultations (1,2,3,4). Today, we begin to see progress in student mental health research and implementation through the Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative. We, the Student Advisory Committee, would like to express our gratitude in collaborating on this imperative mission to enhance the mental health landscape at the University of Toronto. **This work matters.**



Research that is led in partnership with students and informed by lived experience matters. As the most important stakeholders in this area, consideration of student views enhances the strength of research outputs and contributes to the growth of a sense of community and genuine care within the University environment, a critical component to the student experience. By mobilizing and centering the strengths of our community of over 90,000 students, we can come to truly support student well-being.

Research on student mental health that drives real-world change, matters. While we face our own unique challenges pertaining to student well-being, the University of Toronto is not alone in facing a mental health crisis among its student body. Given our diversity, interdisciplinary excellence, and field-specific research expertise, insights and innovations from our community are well-positioned to positively affect the mental health of students at a global scale. Through continued alignment of local practice with best practice and meaningful student-informed and evidence-driven change, we have the opportunity to grow beyond traditional research generation and dissemination.

Student mental health matters, and it matters deeply. We are grateful to the Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative, CAMH, and University of Toronto leadership for making student wellness a priority. We are excited for the road ahead and look forward to supporting the mission of this Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

**THE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
STUDENT & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

Consultation Process

The 2019 Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health engaged in an extensive tri-campus consultation process, comprising of over 30 in-person focus groups, online feedback surveys, and open listening sessions. Building off this robust campus stakeholder engagement process, the Student & Youth Mental Health Research Initiative continued to engage campus stakeholders to identify student mental health research priorities.

A governance structure of three committees was created to support the Student & Youth Mental Health Research Initiative. EDI principles were at the forefront of the selection processes. All campuses, CAMH and a diverse range of academic disciplines are represented in each group.



Developing this Strategic Plan.

This five-year strategic plan is a result of ongoing collaboration with the Steering, Student Advisory, and Clinical Advisory Committees. This robust committee structure was tasked with developing the overarching vision, ensuring that divisional perspectives and needs are reflected within the strategic plan, co-creating the full strategic plan through an inclusive consultative process, and providing regular updates to the Institutional Strategic Initiatives Working Group.

Vision & Mission



VISION

Enhance student mental health and wellness for all students through world-class research, innovations, and applications, in collaboration with postsecondary students, institutions and community partners.

MISSION

We will improve student mental health and wellness outcomes by investing in high-quality, impactful research and driving scalable research innovations.

Guiding Principles



STUDENTS AS COLLABORATORS.

Meaningful student engagement is critical in every step of the research process and mobilization of knowledge and research-driven solutions.

REDEFINING THE NARRATIVE.

Identify opportunities to reframe the narrative around student mental health and wellness from a deficit to a strengths-based approach.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND SAFETY.

Ensure that the research and its research outcomes are reflective of the diverse University of Toronto student population and the intersectionality of factors that influence student mental health and wellness.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

Ensure an EDI lens is meaningfully integrated into key research processes, questions and evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

MEETING STAKEHOLDERS WHERE THEY ARE.

Frame research and research-driven solutions that meets the needs and priorities of our stakeholders “where they are”, acknowledging local contexts and needs.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION.

Continuously connect people and community to ideas, results and lessons learned to foster greater understanding, innovation, and support for students and the broader campus community.

STRENGTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS.

Meaningful engagement and reciprocal relationships with student, tri-campus, community, hospital and other postsecondary partners built on trust and shared values.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Seek feedback and evaluate strategic priorities to ensure projects are constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible, and that we are using research to drive continuous improvement.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONTINUUM.

Student mental health reflects a continuum and encompasses the full length of a student’s journey to and through their postsecondary experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. This also reflects how different factors influence mental health, ranging from the individual to the institution and the community.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH.

Expertise from a wide array of disciplines is necessary to find optimal solutions.

Research Pillars

The Student & Youth Mental Health Research Initiative is uniquely positioned to be a global leader in campus mental health research. Our research will improve student mental health and wellness for all students by investing in world-class research, innovations, and applications. This will be supported through strong research collaborations with students, postsecondary institutions, and community and global partners; and will be guided by the following four research pillars.

01

BUILD RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

Develop and foster a robust research infrastructure to accelerate student mental health and wellness research and applications.

02

DRIVE AUTHENTIC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH.

Co-develop a replicable model of authentic student engagement in institutional and investigator-driven research opportunities.

03

GENERATE FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH-DRIVEN INNOVATIONS.

Galvanize foundational research and applications within a framework of continuous improvement and efficacy evaluation.

04

CONNECT PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND RESEARCH.

Foster the implementation of student mental health research ideas and evidence-based solutions. Prioritize continued engagement with stakeholders.

01 BUILD RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

BUILD THE SYMHRI PROJECT TEAM.

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT DATA GOVERNANCE.

ENGAGE PROSPECTIVE DONORS & ENDOWMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

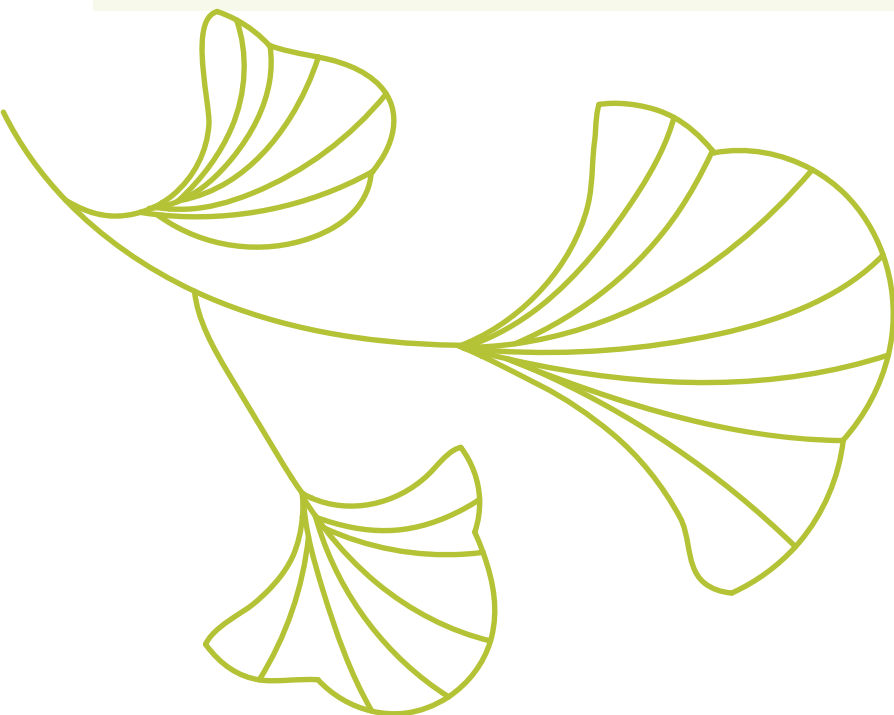


02 DRIVE AUTHENTIC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH.

CO-DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A MODEL FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH.

BUILD STUDENT-DRIVEN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

CO-DEVELOP USER-FRIENDLY RESOURCES TO BUILD STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CAPACITY ACROSS STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES.



03

GENERATE FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH-DRIVEN INNOVATIONS.

IDENTIFY RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND OPPORTUNITIES.

DEVELOP AND LAUNCH EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH ACTION PLAN.

DEVELOP ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

LAUNCH RAPID KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS GRANTS ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS TO ESTABLISH A FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE.

DEVELOP AND LAUNCH CATALYST RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM.



04 CONNECT PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND RESEARCH.

DEVELOP CREATIVE WAYS TO DISSEMINATE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES AND EXPLORE FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS.

DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY.



For further information about the Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative and the Five-Year Strategic Research Plan, please visit smhr.utoronto.ca or email us at studentmh.research@utoronto.ca.



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