



# Queen's Student Mental Health Policy Annual Report

January 2026



# Report Purpose & Data Sources

This report is produced in response to the Minister's Directive on Student Mental Health (2024), which requires publicly assisted colleges and universities to report annually on the implementation and effectiveness of their student mental health policies. The [Queen's Student Mental Health Policy](#) provides the framework for this report and emphasizes a whole-campus, strengths-based approach grounded in equity, inclusion, culturally relevant practices, and shared responsibility.

Data in this report is primarily drawn from the [2024–25 Student Affairs Annual Report](#) and the [2025 Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey Report](#), with trend data from 2022 included where relevant.

Queen's participated in the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS) in January-February 2025. Results indicate patterns broadly consistent with national findings and show improvements since 2022. At the same time, the data continues to confirm that different students are experiencing health differently – social and identity determinants influence almost all aspects of wellbeing.

## Available Services, Supports, and Resources

### Student Wellness Services

[Student Wellness Services](#) (SWS) serves as a central access point for student health and mental health care.

- **Clinical counselling services:** Mental health professionals provide same day/urgent, short-term and group counselling. In 2024–25, there were 747 mental health intake/triage appointments; 1,986 same-day counselling appointments provided for urgent concerns and 12,152 non-urgent therapy appointments for mental health distress. Counsellors are located within the Côté Sharp Student Wellness Centre, as well as within various faculties/schools, in residence, Athletics & Recreation, and centres that support equity-deserving student communities (Queen's Yellow House Student Centre for Equity and Inclusion, Four Directions Indigenous Students Centre). In addition, psychoeducational and therapy groups addressed anxiety, stress, and related wellness concerns.
- **Clinical medical care:** On-site physicians and nurse practitioners at the Côté Sharp Student Wellness Centre provide integrated physical and mental health care, including medication management and assessments. In 2024–25, 2,747 medical appointments were specific to mental health related concerns. In addition, there were 273 psychiatry appointments.
- **Health promotion and wellness coaching:** The Gregory David and Neil Rossy Health Promotion Hub received a record number of 2,845 drop-in visits and delivered 263 professional wellness coaching appointments focused on nutrition, substance use, lifestyle, and stress. Peer Health Educators and Peer Wellness Coaches contributed 6,873 volunteer hours.
- **Accessibility services:** Queen's Student Accessibility Services supported 6,299 students. Of these, 34% identified a mental health condition as their primary disability.
- **Referral and case management:** SWS facilitated referrals to the university's Care Support Services,

as well as community-based providers, hospitals, and specialized psychiatric services and coordinated follow-up care. Care Support Services, which provides non-clinical support and referral to students navigating challenges and distress, supported 443 students in 2024-25, 29% with wellness and mental health concerns.

In total, Student Wellness Services delivered 40,329 clinical appointments to 8,973 students. These appointments included a total of 17,905 mental health-related appointments provided by a physician, nurse practitioner, mental health intake/triage professional, psychiatrist or counsellor (in a booked appointment or through the same-day urgent care clinic).

A primary focus of Student Wellness Services is outreach and awareness, ensuring that students who require support know where to go for help. Queen's Student Mental Health Policy includes a link to a [centralized webpage](#) that provides students easy access to up-to-date information about on-campus and community-based resources that span the holistic range of approaches from mental health and wellness promotion to crisis response. According to the CCWS, 76% of students know where to access campus-based resources for professional mental health help, up from 67% in 2022.

Student feedback on SWS services is gathered through an online feedback form and targeted service-level feedback processes. The implementation of a new Electronic Medical Record system in late Spring 2025 creates opportunities to expand and standardize feedback mechanisms.

## Services and Supports for Equity-Deserving Students

- **Indigenous students:** Indigenous students may experience mental health and wellbeing within distinct historical, cultural, and social contexts shaped by colonial and systemic factors, underscoring the importance of culturally grounded and Indigenous-led approaches to support. Many students want culturally relevant approaches to their wellness.

The [Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre's](#) on-site Cultural Counsellor delivered 213 counselling appointments in 2024-25. An Indigenous Advisor provided 72 one-on-one sessions focused on advocacy, skill development, and resource navigation. Regular social programming provided opportunities for connection and fostered a sense of belonging.

Supports for Indigenous students are grounded in holistic understandings of wellbeing that emphasize relationality, cultural identity, community connection, and balance, alongside access to individual counselling and advocacy support. Indigenous student wellbeing is further supported through Indigenous-led and co-created approaches to programming.

- **BIPOC and QTBIPOC students:** All SWS counsellor staff complete cultural competency and racial trauma trainings, Rainbow Health Ontario training, and Queen's Positive Space program. The staff team includes QTBIPOC-identifying counsellors, including a Black-identifying counsellor, and one counsellor works primarily with the LGBTQ2S+ community, providing booked and same-day appointments and therapy groups for racialized and LGBTQ2S+ students.

The [Yellow House Student Centre for Equity and Inclusion](#) supports students who identify as Queer, and/or Trans, and/or Black/and/or Indigenous, and/or as People of Colour. This centre collaborates with Student Wellness Services to offer therapeutic discussion groups, cultural programming, and wellness activities and is committed to creating comfortable and accountable spaces for students to feel safer, create community, be empowered, celebrate their identity and flourish.

- **International students:** [Queen's University International Centre \(QUIC\)](#) launched a peer-based, culturally informed mental health drop-in program in 2024-25 in which intercultural wellness leaders provided support and referrals. In addition, 1,919 students, faculty, and staff participated in intercultural training through the QUIC that aims to encourage participants to consider the influence of culture on personal perspectives and interactions and to strengthen understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural points of view.

Additionally, the SWS team includes a psychologist whose practice is focused on counselling for racialized and international students.

- **Gender-affirming care:** SWS interprofessional team provides gender-affirming care and supported more than 100 trans and non-binary students through counselling, hormone therapy, and care navigation.
- **Other identity-based supports:** Additional campus supports include services and programming provided by [Faith and Spiritual Life](#), which offers non-clinical, values-informed support focused on meaning, belonging, community connection, and spiritual wellbeing. These supports provide space for reflection, dialogue, and community building across diverse faith, spiritual, and non-faith identities.

Complementary community-based advising and support are also available through the [Ban Righ Centre](#), which provides advocacy, peer connection, and navigation support for women-identified students of all ages, especially those who are returning to university after a time away, as part of a holistic approach to wellbeing.

## Program Highlight: Black at Queen's

The [Yellow House Student Centre for Equity and Inclusion](#) launched [Black at Queen's](#), developed through consultations with Black students to determine their needs and interests. Black at Queen's supports Black student wellbeing through culturally responsive programming, community-building initiatives, and advocacy that addresses both individual needs and the broader institutional conditions shaping Black student experience.

Programming includes The Black Student Business Booklet, featuring Black student entrepreneurs and services on campus, and Black Swims, a collaboration with Athletics & Recreation, which reached 214 Black Queen's students, faculty, staff, and community members and their invited guests in 2024-25. The swims are accessible for all levels of comfort in the water, and three levels of adult swimming lessons support a range of abilities.

## Peer Support and Community Resources

Queen's students access peer-based supports through trained peer leaders, including [Peer Health Educators](#) and Peer Wellness Coaches, residence dons, undergraduate peer mentor programming, the [AMS Peer Support Centre](#) and the SGPS Student Advisors.

Queen's maintains partnerships with local hospitals and community mental health agencies.

## Student Mental Health Indicators

Data source: 2025 Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey

- **Positive wellbeing:** 74% reported average or high positive mental wellbeing, up from 66% in 2022.
- **Overall mental health:** 58% of students rated their mental health as good, very good, or excellent, compared to 50% in 2022.
- **Sense of belonging:** 86% of students feel a sense of belonging at Queen's, up from 83% in 2022.
- **Learning environment:** 89% report the learning environment is supportive and respectful (up from 86% in 2022).
- **Psychological distress:** 29% of students scored in the severe range on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, compared to 35% nationally and at Queen's in 2022.
- **Suicidal ideation:** 10% reported suicidal thoughts in the past year (down from 13% in 2022).
- **Awareness:** 76% reported knowing how to access mental health supports, up from 67% in 2022.

CCWS findings further indicate student health and wellbeing are not experienced uniformly across the student population. Students experiencing financial stress, neurodivergence, or disability, as well as students across various identity groups, consistently report lower wellbeing and higher distress. Differences are also observed across undergraduate and graduate populations and among international students. For Indigenous students and other equity-deserving groups, mental health and wellbeing may also be influenced by broader academic, social, and institutional conditions. The data are used to inform services for equity-deserving students, and students with diverse backgrounds, including resources and interventions that support intersectional identities.

Queen's Student Mental Health Policy reflects the university's sustained, whole-campus commitment to promoting, supporting, and improving student wellbeing, with academic units, administrative leaders, faculty, staff, and students collectively sharing responsibility for creating campus environments that support wellbeing, equity, and belonging. Policy implementation through this holistic approach, will continue to demonstrate this commitment in action across the campus community.

# Awareness, Education and Proactive Support

Queen's emphasizes health promotion, education, and early intervention as core components of its student mental health approach. These efforts focus on building skills, strengthening resilience, reducing stigma, and addressing risks. In 2024–25, Queen's advanced a preventative and proactive, whole campus approach to student mental health through the following areas of focus:

- **Mental health promotion and awareness:** Queen's delivers campus-wide mental health promotion initiatives, anti-stigma campaigns, and resource promotion. CCWS results indicate that 59% of students reported awareness of mental health outreach initiatives, a slight increase from the previous survey cycle. An example of this approach is the annual early fall distribution of Classroom Wellness and Safety Resource Slides for use by instructors before class or during breaks. These slides, and additional [student wellness resources for faculty and staff](#) are available online. This is one example of training and resources provided to faculty and staff to support student wellbeing within academic environments.
- **Peer education and skills-based programming:** Peer Health Educators and related peer leaders deliver workshops and activities focused on mental health literacy, stress management, healthy coping strategies, nutrition, substance harm reduction, and physical activity. In 2024–25, 61 health and wellness presentations and trainings were delivered, reaching 3,905 students, staff, and faculty. These initiatives support skill development and preventative engagement.
- **Embedded health promotion and awareness:** Supported by external donor funding, Health Promotion piloted an Integrated Wellness Project in Smith School of Business (SSB). This program involves a dedicated staff member and SSB students delivering wellness coaching and programs, classroom visits, and workshops for course instructors.
- **Targeted early interventions:** SWS offers proactive programming during key transition periods, including orientation. First-year wellness programming and graduate student-specific sessions focused on stress management, resource awareness, and adjustment to academic demands.
- **Suicide prevention training:** Queen's expanded suicide prevention training for students, and faculty and staff who are in frequent contact with students, through programs such as ASIST and safeTALK. This approach strengthens institutional capacity for early identification and response.
- **Integrated wellbeing initiatives:** Preventative programming links mental health with broader wellbeing factors, such as exercise-based interventions for students experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns, as well as resilience and skill-building workshops to help students cope with academic and personal challenges.
- **Culturally proactive engagement:** Culturally informed programming supports equity-deserving students through community-building, peer connection, and mental health topic discussions to reduce isolation and barriers to help-seeking.

# Crisis Intervention Protocols and Response

Crisis intervention and response are important components of Queen's student mental health approach. Clear protocols support students experiencing acute distress or mental health emergencies, with an emphasis on timely access, coordination across services, student safety, and privacy. In 2024–25, Queen's crisis response framework included the following elements:

- **Same-day crisis counselling:** SWS provides same-day counselling for students experiencing urgent mental health concerns, including panic, suicidal ideation, psychosis or acute distress.
- **Mental health triage and navigation:** SWS' team includes Mental Health Intake/Triage clinicians who meet with students who are initiating mental health care at Queen's or need support navigating services, including those with urgent and/or complex needs. These professionals provide counselling strategies and connect students with care within the clinic, on campus, and/or in the local community.
- **After-hours response and crisis supports:** Students have access to 24/7 supports, including Good2Talk, Empower Me, and crisis text services. Emergency contact information is centralized through the university's "Get Help Now" webpage, which is promoted year-round. Campus Security and Emergency Services (CSES) operate 24/7; staff are trained to respond to mental health emergencies, conduct wellness checks, and facilitate emergency medical transport when needed.
- **The Assessment and Care Team (ACT):** The university maintains institution-wide protocols for responding to students in distress or at risk, covering scenarios such as suicidal risk or behaviours, and other significant mental health issues, and acute behavioural concerns.

Referrals to ACT trigger comprehensive review using an interdisciplinary approach, and involve Student Conduct & Care, SWS, CSES, academic and other campus partners. The team conducts risk assessments and develops integrated support plans, which may include counselling, academic accommodations, enhanced monitoring, or other interventions.

Queen's also maintains a multi-disciplinary Threat Assessment Team (TAT) to address elevated or urgent concerns, working collaboratively with ACT. The TAT convenes, as needed, to assess critical situations that may require more immediate and intensive intervention. The TAT Policy and associated procedures were reviewed and updated in 2025.

- **Emergency medical services and hospital coordination:** Queen's maintains established pathways with local hospitals to support emergency psychiatric assessment and follow-up care, with coordination between hospital services and campus supports, when students return to campus.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

Student privacy and confidentiality are maintained in accordance with applicable legislation and institutional policies. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis to support safety and care coordination.

# Governance and Oversight

Queen's governance and oversight mechanisms support the effective and coordinated implementation of student mental health initiatives. These structures align with institutional policy and provincial requirements and support accountability, privacy protection, and continuous improvement.

- **Policy framework:** Governance is anchored in the Queen's Student Mental Health Policy (2024), which outlines available programs and supports and is guided by principles of equity, inclusion, collaboration, and accountability. The Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) is the responsible officer, providing senior-level oversight.
- **Administrative oversight:** Operational responsibility for student mental health services rests with Student Affairs under the Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs. SWS reports regularly on utilization, capacity, and emerging issues to senior leadership, with coordination across relevant administrative units. Ongoing engagement with Indigenous partners, key staff across campus, and student groups informs the implementation and evaluation of mental health supports that respond to diverse student needs.
- **Student engagement:** Students are engaged through multiple channels, including student government representation, participation on advisory and governance committees, and employment in student staff roles across Student Affairs, including SWS' Health Promotion unit. Student perspectives are also gathered through surveys, including the [Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey](#) and the [Queen's Shift Survey](#). Service unit-based feedback mechanisms inform service design, policy refinement, and priority-setting.
- **Review and improvement:** The policy is subject to a formal review cycle. Reporting, service data, student feedback, and evaluation findings support monitoring and continuous improvement and inform future policy considerations.



## Looking Forward: Areas of Focus

The 2024–25 academic year reflected a continued institutional focus on student mental health. Queen's remains committed to an evidence-informed, equitable, and continuously improving approach aligned with provincial expectations and responsive to student needs.

Specific priority areas include:

- Continuing to expand and advance equitable and culturally responsive mental health supports for underserved and equity-deserving student populations.
- Enhancing access to mental health supports, particularly during periods of peak demand through a centralized triage and internal referral process to streamline the path to care.
- Advancing early identification, prevention, and crisis response capacity across the campus community through education, trainings, direct supports, and health promotion programming that address social determinants of mental health, such as food and housing insecurity.
- Strengthening evaluation and outcome measurement to better assess effectiveness and inform decision-making.
- Supporting sustainable resourcing and the integration of effective initiatives that promote student mental health.

Queen's will continue to center students in this work, listen to their voices, and affirm that supporting student wellbeing is a shared responsibility across the entire university community.



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