



Letter of Information

Study Title:

U-Flourish: Developing and evaluating student mental health support pathways and transitions Well-Being Survey

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Anne Duffy
Division of Student Mental Health
Student Health Services
Department of Psychiatry
Queen's University

Grant Funding: Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Background and purpose of the study

You are invited to participate in a research study to understand **what helps students flourish in regard to their mental health and academic outcomes**. We also want to identify **barriers and gaps students experience if they access mental health care**. This study is funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and has been reviewed for ethical compliance by Queen's University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB PSY739-22).

What will happen in the study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate this will not impact your academic standing in any way. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete the fall electronic survey by clicking on the link below. The survey asks about your background, personal and family history of mental disorders and current emotional experiences, lifestyle, physical and mental health including thoughts of self-harm and eating disorders, and your university experience and knowledge and use of services at Queen's. There may be some questions that are upsetting to you and you can skip these if you wish. At the end of the survey there is a list of campus resources that you might find helpful should you need emotional and/or academic support.

A brief follow-up survey asking about your well-being, mental health, university experience and any use of mental health support at Queen's will be sent by an email link in March. Each survey is expected to take less than 10 minutes to complete – but there is no time limit and you can take as much time as you like.

To understand the association between health, lifestyle, and academic outcomes, your survey responses will be linked via your student email to university administrative (e.g. program of study) and academic data (e.g. course grades) for each year of undergraduate study. As we are funded to collect survey data through the next four years. However, you do not have to agree to complete subsequent surveys if you do not wish.

Your survey responses will also be linked to administrative data from your electronic medical record (EMR) at Queen's Student Wellness Services (QSWs) via your student number. This will allow us to evaluate the transition to mental health care for students in the study who try to access mental health care. Extracted data will be strictly limited to routinely collected health administrative data needed to estimate wait times and pathways to and through mental health related appointments (e.g. time to see family

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doctor, counsellor or mental health consultant). The research team will not extract any personal health data such as diagnoses or treatment.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

We have followed all regulations in terms of safeguarding your data (see Confidentiality and research data section below). While every effort will be made to protect the privacy of your information, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This does not limit the duty of the researchers and others to protect your privacy. Some of the questions that we ask may cause upset or bring up painful memories. If you experience any distress from participating in this study you may stop the survey at any time or skip any upsetting questions. If your distress continues after leaving the survey, we have provided a list of supportive services on campus that can be helpful and that you might consider contacting. There is also a 24-hour Crisis Line available at 613-544-4229.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

We do not expect participants to directly benefit from the study. However, we hope that the findings will help us better understand the mental health needs of university students and what factors are associated with academic success. This information will help us to improve resources and services to support students.

Payment or reimbursement:

Students completing the survey this fall will receive a free exam-sized coffee or tea from Common Ground on campus, to be redeemed every Friday over the month the survey is running by showing proof of survey completion to the cashier. At the completion of both annual surveys (each fall and spring), students will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 5 iPads, valued at \$450.00 CAD.

Confidentiality and use of research data:

Please be assured that your survey answers and linked data are strictly confidential. No individuals will be identified in any report or made available in any way to the extent permitted by applicable laws. In addition, participants confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by the applicable laws. Qualtrics survey responses are SSL encrypted and access to Qualtrics survey accounts by authorized university personnel are SSO/password protected. The survey response records will be linked to administrative academic and health data through student numbers and email addresses. Academic outcome data linked in this study will include course grades, overall grade percentage, rate of failed courses, and any instance of academic probation or suspension.

Reports of this study will use group data and will not discuss individual information. Study data will be de-identified for analysis and assigned a unique identifier so that individuals cannot be identified in any analysis. We may collaborate with other researchers at other institutions to analyze de-identified data. Encrypted password protected data files will be stored on password-protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the research data. However, the HSREB may require access to study records to monitor the ethical conduct of the research. Data will be stored in a secure repository for a minimum of 5 years after study close.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. If you have completed the first survey, you can email or call the investigators and ask to be withdrawn from the study. In addition, you can decline to participate in any aspect of the research without impact on your academic standing. In

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cases of withdrawal, no new data will be collected or linked to other data from that point on. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not affect your academic standing or your access to university supports.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

We share and publish findings from this study regularly on our website and through peer-reviewed publications. Please visit our study website (<https://www.queensu.ca/u-flourish/u-flourish-student-well-being-and-academic-success-survey>). We expect this study will be completed by September 2026. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please write to us by email to request information.

Questions about the study?

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the investigators and their research team through the study email: flourish@queensu.ca. Alternatively, you could contact the lead investigator Dr. Anne Duffy at 613-533-2508 directly. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant please contact - Dr. Dean A. Tripp, Chair of the Queen's University HSREB at 1-844-535-2988 (toll free in North America) or email HSREB@queensu.ca.

We want to thank you for considering taking part in this research and having you say! The responses you and other first year students provide will identify areas where we can improve services and resources to better help students flourish.