

Nipissing University Mental Health and Well-Being Policy Implementation and Progress Report

January 2025 - December 2025

Background

Nipissing University recognizes the importance of mental health as a critical dimension of holistic student well-being and endeavours to support all students to thrive. These internal institutional values, along with the direction of the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act (2024)*, required the development of a formal mental health policy.

Nipissing University’s *Student Mental Health & Well-Being Policy* was established in January 2025. This annual report represents our commitment to the ongoing implementation of mental health supports for students.

Reporting Period

This report shares information on the implementation of the Student Mental Health & Well-Being Policy for the 2025 calendar year. In future cycles, the reporting period will be aligned to an academic year.

Outreach and Prevention Initiatives

General Outreach Programing



NUlistens is a campus wide outreach and prevention program focused on promoting student’s mental and emotional well-being. This umbrella brand for all Mental Health outreach and prevention programming was developed with the support of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

NUlistens works directly with students through outreach programming and educational campaigns. These events and campaigns are designed to build awareness of mental health concerns, support student resilience, develop skills, and increase knowledge about support services available.

Mental Health Programing for Student Athletes



REAL TALK is an initiative developed by Nipissing University’s MHW in partnership with Lakers athletics. Our Goal is to better integrate mental health and wellness initiatives into the lives of athletes by creating relationships between athletes and mental health support professionals.

Each Nipissing Lakers Varsity team will have a designated athlete as the REAL TALK point person for their team. This point person will be connected to MHW for training and support, they act as a resource person for their teams and encourage teammates who are struggling to connect with available supports. Through

this program, all Lakers athletes receive the safeTALK suicide prevention and awareness training , and all head coaches receive Mental Health First Aid Training.

Several student outreach events were held, including collaborations with men’s and women’s Hockey and Basketball teams.

Programming for Male-Identified Students



MENTal Strength is a specialty mental health awareness campaign developed to challenge myths about male mental well-being, to increase awareness and discussion of men’s mental health, reduce stigma, and support men to have real conversations about how their emotional well-being and seek support with mental health services.

Student Supports Provided



All mental health interventions are provided for students through the Mental Health & Wellbeing (MHW) team, through the Student Development and Services Division. MHW offers multiple *Pathways to Care* so students can receive support that is personalized to students' needs, preferences, and ability to engage. In 2025, the following array of services were available to students:

Self Help:

MHW maintains an Online Library for resources and helplines that students can access independently through the university website. Self-help tools can be useful to students who have mild concerns and would like a high level of autonomy. Self-help tools may be recommended alone or in conjunction with therapy appointments.

Drop-In Therapy:

Same-day appointments were available every weekday for students to use as needed. These appointments allow the MHW to be responsive to emerging student needs, addressing concerns in a timely way, and reassuring students that help will be available if needed.

Counsellor Assisted E-Support:

A flexible option for students to work independently on their mental health concerns through various in-house modules that combine education, reflection, and practice. E-Support is ideal for students wanting to do asynchronous and self-directed therapeutic learning with some additional, virtual or telephone, coaching support. Topics available include grief, perfectionism, loneliness, and building resilience.

Peer Support:

Peer Support is a peer led service where students can connect with students that have their own lived experience with mental health concerns. Peer Support builds authentic relationships, provides encouragement, fosters hope, and supports students with their own personal journey towards wellness

and recovery. The Peer Support Drop-in is a welcoming and non-judgemental space where meaningful connections develop between students.

Brief Individual Therapy:

Offers short-term, individual psychotherapy appointments. This service is designed to provide students with tools and strategies to support them in achieving their counselling goal. Students requesting long term therapy are supported in connecting with external services.

Group Therapy:

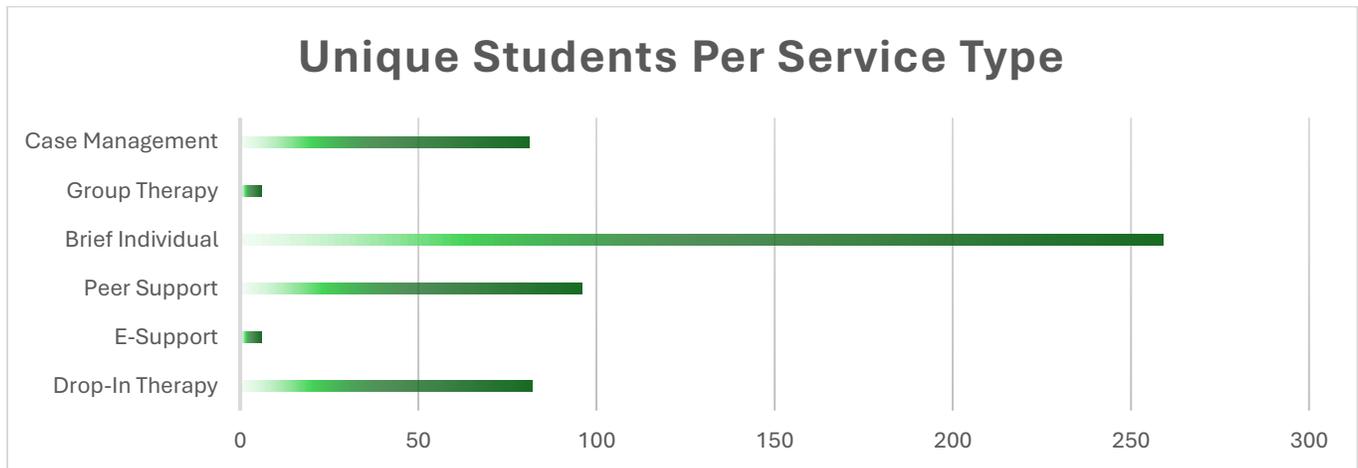
Psychotherapy treatment groups are designed to be practical, informative, and supportive. They allow students the opportunity to learn new skills and strategies that can be implemented in their day to day lives. In 2025, the MHW offered an Anxiety Group.

Case Management:

Case Management Support is provided by the Student Intervention Specialist (the SIS) for students with complex mental health concerns or situational crises. The role of the SIS is to provide a supportive, non-judgmental, goal-oriented relationship with the student to collaboratively develop a plan while focusing on the student’s goals and individualized needs.

Temporarily Suspended Service Offerings:

Dibaadan provides students with specialized outreach, prevention, and intervention from a holistic Indigenous wellness perspective. This service was unavailable for the entire duration of 2025, as we worked to fill the Dibaadan Wellness Coordinator staffing vacancy.



Community Partnerships and Referrals

MHW works with students and community service providers to ensure that students have the appropriate supports to meet their needs. At times this this means supporting service navigation and referrals to external resources. The MHW team maintains up to date knowledge on community service providers, engages regularly with their intake teams, and maintains a list of other specialized private services to best support students in accessing off campus care when needed.

Education and Training Programming

Open Training Opportunities

Nipissing University offers a variety of formal training opportunities to students, staff, and community members regarding mental health. These trainings build participant competencies around mental health concerns. The following workshops were available in 2025:

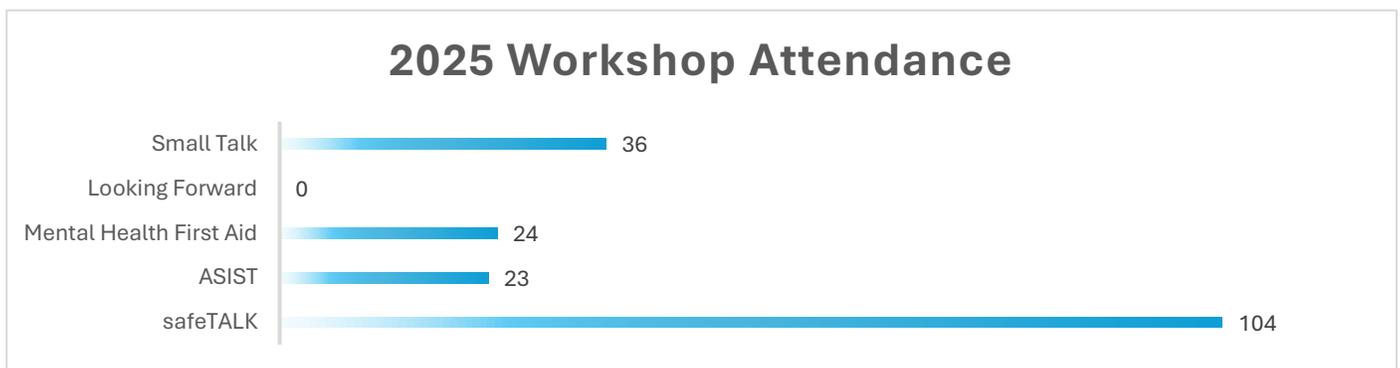
safeTALK: This course was created by an organization called LivingWorks Inc. to teach participants to recognize persons who have thoughts of suicide and refer them to people who are trained to do a Suicide Intervention.

Small Talk: Small Talk is an interactive half-day workshop which examines warning signs in a child and explores intervention strategies through stories and case studies. This workshop is a Centre for Suicide Prevention Course for those working with children under the age of 12 and who may have thoughts of suicide, with a focus on childhood development.

Looking Forward: Looking Forward is an interactive half-day workshop created for individuals working with youth aged 12 to 24. This workshop, a Centre for Suicide Prevention Course it discusses strategies to encompass the developmental, cognitive, and emotional differences found within this age group.

Mental Health First Aid – Adults Who Interact with Youth: This workshop, an Opening Minds course, was developed to train people to provide initial support to youth who may be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Topics include Mental Health problems and Stigma, Substance related disorders, Mood disorders, Anxiety, Trauma related disorders, eating disorders and Psychotic disorders.

ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: This course is a two-day interactive workshop on suicide first aid also created by LivingWorks Inc. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety.



Faculty & Staff Training

NUlistens also works with faculty and staff to foster a supportive campus culture through educational programming and providing access to vetted resources, including the supporting student’s folder. Faculty and staff who have participated in a training session may display

a NUIstens logo in their workspace to indicate to students that they are trained to provide supportive, non-judgmental responses and referrals.

Activities of the Campus Student Mental Health Committee

The Campus Student Mental Health Committee (CSMHC) is a standing institutional committee to promote mental health and well-being for Nipissing University students. This committee includes representation from Nipissing students, faculty, administration and support areas. This committee is working to ensure Nipissing University adopts best practices for post-secondary mental health.

In 2025, the CSMHC had the following two areas of focus:

APOP Action #29: Mental Health Framework Recommendation

The CSMHC provided a response to Nipissing University's Academic and Operational Plan Action #29, which was to identify, evaluate, and recommend a mental health framework that meets the needs of Nipissing University. After evaluating the needs of Nipissing University, reviewing the post-secondary landscape, and evaluating multiple frameworks, the CSMHC submitted a report to the Provost, Vice President Academic with the recommendation to create a custom framework for our campus community.

Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS)

The CSMHC mobilized to respond to the Ministry's recent requirement for all publicly funded post-secondary institutions to complete the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS) in Winter 2026. The CCWS is a national survey developed by the University of British Columbia to assess student health and wellbeing across Canadian post-secondary institutions. Results from the survey help guide evidence-informed decisions, strengthen health-promoting initiatives, and ensure we are responding to the realities students face. The committee worked alongside the project team to ensure all preparation steps, including research ethics approval, were completed to ensure Ministry timelines would be met in 2026.

Special Projects

Enhanced Student Care Network Project

Nipissing University, in partnership with Canadore College, successfully secured funding for the *Enhanced Student Care Network Project* for 2024-2026. This project is creating an integrated care experience for students through the objectives below:

1. **Seamless Care for High-Risk Students:** High-risk students often access emergency mental health care through the North Bay Regional Health Centre Crisis Intervention or Emergency Department Teams. These students require intensive support to return to wellness and avoid future hospitalization. This project has provided a dedicated intensive case manager for all students accessing emergency mental health care. The intensive case manager liaises with hospital staff to develop care plans for high-risk students, connects students to resources on their campus, and provides ongoing support to students following their release from hospital. These specialized support services were provided for the entire 2025 year.

2. **Launch Post Secondary Addiction Response:** In 2025, the project provided a series of addiction themed events for students to destigmatize addiction challenges and promote early intervention. These included events such as harm reduction information booths and a mocktail mingle event, among others. An Addictions Needs Assessment was also completed with students at both Canadore College and Nipissing University. This data was analyzed and allowed the team to better understand student needs. This work will continue in 2026 with the goal of launching a customized harm reduction campaign.
3. **Enhanced Peer Support Outreach:** Nipissing University's Peer support program has provided support and mentorship to Canadore College as a model and resource for independent development of a Canadore peer support program. Coordinated outreach programming has been led by the peer supporters throughout 2025.

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