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| Policy Name: | Student Mental Health & Well-being Policy | | |
| Policy No: | 6.2.2025.U | Approval Authority: | Executive Committee |
| Review Date: | 2028 | Responsible Executive: | AVP Students |
| Last Updated: | New Policy | Responsible Office: | Mental Health & Well-being |
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Policy Statement

Nipissing University recognizes the importance of mental health as a critical dimension of wholistic student wellbeing. This policy outlines Nipissing University’s commitments to student mental health and provides information about support available to students.

Reason for Policy

This policy responds to the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024* which amended the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act* to require Ontario’s publicly assisted colleges and universities to have a student mental health policy.

Policy Applies to

- All units of the university.

Who Should Read this Policy

- All members of the university community.

Contacts

- Director, Student Wellness
- Assistant, Vice-President, Students
- Department of Mental Health and Well-being

The Policy

1. Commitments

- 1.1 Nipissing University is committed to a focus on holistic mental health, resilience and wellbeing through the campus wide alignment of language, policies, services and structures with best practices to improve student thriving. ([Pathways - Our Commitments to Water- Land- and People.pdf](#))
- 1.2 Nipissing University recognizes the importance of a pro-active and preventative approach to campus wellbeing. This approach acknowledges the impact of the larger community on struggling students and the barriers students may face in seeking support. For Outreach and Preventing Programming:
 - 1.2.1 Nipissing University will provide regular outreach and prevention programs focused on promoting student’s mental and emotional well-being through developing knowledge, encouraging wellness skills, decreasing stigma, and increasing awareness of services.
 - 1.2.2 Nipissing University will provide targeted outreach programming to at-risk student groups.

- 1.3 The University recognizes the value of deepening knowledge about mental health concerns and building competent response skills in the creation of a campus culture of wellbeing and support through education and training initiatives. For Education and Training initiatives,
 - 1.3.1 The University will embed information about campus mental health supports in all student orientation programs to increase awareness of campus services and how to access them.
 - 1.3.2 The University will provide regular training and information to faculty and staff on how to support students in distress, available campus services, and how to make a referral.
 - 1.3.2.1 Trained faculty and staff will have the opportunity to participate in the NUIstens program.
 - 1.3.3 The University will offer a variety of mental health training opportunities, including suicide awareness training to the campus community.
 - 1.3.4 The University will ensure that all staff in Student Development & Services receive suicide awareness training appropriate to their role (ie: safeTALK and ASIST.) and Mental Health First Aid.
 - 1.3.5 The University will support ongoing professional development of Mental Health and Wellbeing team staff to ensure best practices in mental health care.
- 1.4 Nipissing University acknowledges that some students will encounter difficulties with their mental wellbeing and is committed to provide support and Nipissing University will provide support and services through the Mental Health & Wellbeing Department provides to help students achieve positive mental and emotional wellness.
 - 1.4.1 Multiple service pathways are offered to provide a variety of treatment options that vary in their level of intensity, autonomy, and treatment perspective -with the aim to provide suitable service for different student needs and desired levels of participation. Services to support student mental and emotional wellbeing may include self-help services, peer support, brief individual counselling, specialized therapeutic groups, BIPOC Student Support, Dibaadan Indigenous wellness support, referral, and case management.
 - 1.4.2 All Mental Health & Wellbeing Department supports and services are described in detail at www.nipissingu.ca/mhwellbeing
- 1.5 Nipissing University acknowledges that students experiencing mental health disability are eligible for academic accommodation to support their learning while at university.
 - 1.5.1 Nipissing University, though the Student Accessibility Services department will support students with permanent and temporary disabilities and strives to provide an accessible, barrier-free learning environment.
 - 1.5.2 Students experiencing mental health disability will be eligible for immediate interim accommodation, based on self-referral only (if documentation is not available).
***Accommodations may be limited or temporary in this circumstance.*
 - 1.5.3 All academic accommodations will be individualized and are based on identified functional limitations.
 - 1.5.4 Detailed information on student accommodation is available: www.nipissingu.ca/sas
- 1.6 Nipissing University will work to maintain current knowledge regarding community resources and effective referral pathways for students experiencing mental health concerns. In the spectrum of wellbeing, some students may experience mental health emergencies, where they are unable to care for themselves, or are a risk to the safety of themselves or others. Nipissing University is committed to maintaining the safety of all students.

2. Mental Health Supports & Services

- 2.1 Nipissing University acknowledges that some students will encounter difficulties with their mental wellbeing and require support to reach their goals and to thrive.
- 2.2 Nipissing University supports for mental health can be located at www.nipissingu.ca/mhwellbeing
- 2.3 Complementary university and community support can be located or Student services page www.nipissingu.ca/support.

3. Crisis Supports & Urgent Care

- 3.1 In the spectrum of wellbeing, some students may experience mental health emergencies, where they are unable to care for themselves, or are a risk to the safety of themselves or others. Nipissing University is committed to maintaining the safety of all students.
- 3.2 The Mental Health & Wellbeing Team will ensure all students in their care are screened for safety concerns and appropriate safety planning and monitoring is provided following any identified risk.
- 3.3 The Mental Health and Wellbeing team will provide safety assessment appointments for students during business hours.
 - 3.3.1 A Safety Assessment is an appointment where a team member will talk with a student about safety, help them to de-escalate intense emotions, and help them to develop a plan to stay safe.
 - 3.3.2 Safety Assessment appointments are subject to availability. When unavailable, students will receive support to access a safety assessment with the North Bay Regional Health Centre or an appropriate helpline.
- 3.4 The Mental Health & Wellbeing team will provide consultation support to any faculty or staff who are concerned about a student and unsure about appropriate next steps. Consultation support is available anonymously if consent is unavailable.
- 3.5 The university will respond to threats to campus security through the Safe Campus Evaluation Assessment Team (SCEAT).
- 3.6 The University will ensure a mental health professional is a representative of the SCEAT team to ensure a mental well-being perspective is included in all SCEAT assessments and responses.
- 3.7 Campus Security Services provides urgent response to students experiencing a mental health emergency, provides appropriate referrals, and supports students to access emergency care if required.
- 3.8 If students require emergency intervention, they will be directed to their nearest hospital location or to contact 911.

4. Community Resources

- 4.1 Nipissing University will work to maintain current knowledge regarding community resources and effective referral pathways for students experiencing mental health concerns. Students can access specialized referral support from the Mental Health & Wellbeing team.
- 4.2 Nipissing University will maintain a list of helplines at www.nipissingu.ca/needhelpnow and North Bay Community resources at www.nipissingu.ca/support

5. Roles & Responsibilities

- 5.1 Students
 - 5.1.1 Students are encouraged to recognize mental health as a core component over their overall well-being and to take steps to prioritize this aspect of their wellbeing.
 - 5.1.2 Students are encouraged to participate in the creation of a campus culture that supports student wellbeing by participating in programming and education opportunities.
 - 5.1.3 Students are encouraged to seek support from available services if they are struggling with their mental health.
 - 5.1.4 Reach out to professional campus staff for information on available services if you are unsure what support is right for you.
 - 5.1.5 Contact 911 in the event of a mental health emergency.
- 5.2 Faculty & Staff
 - 5.2.1 Nipissing University recognizes that all members of the campus community play a role in the development and maintenance of a campus culture that supports positive mental health and student thriving.
 - 5.2.2 Faculty and staff are encouraged to develop competencies in mental health through participation in mental health education and training opportunities.
 - 5.2.3 Faculty and staff are encouraged to promote the elimination of stigma and encourage use of student services.
 - 5.2.4 Faculty and staff are encouraged to maintain an up-to-date awareness of the support

- services available to students and how to provide an effective referral to a student.
- 5.2.5 Faculty and staff must recognize professional boundaries and the scope of your role in providing support to students. Faculty and staff are not expected to disclose their personal experiences to students. Faculty and staff are not expected to provide mental health services that are outside of the scope of their duties.
 - 5.2.6 Faculty and staff are encouraged to consider the impact on mental health and accessibility in course designs and content, where appropriate.
 - 5.2.7 Faculty and staff provide the best assistance to students when they role model caring for one's own mental health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 Director Student Wellness
- 5.3.1 The Director provides overall leadership, management and administration for all Nipissing University wellness and mental health programs and services.
 - 5.3.2 The Director develops, revises, and supports the creation of university best practices, guidelines, and policies regarding student mental health.
 - 5.3.3 The Director provides leadership to university-wide committees and action groups addressing mental health and disability related accommodations, or otherwise at-risk students.
- 5.4 Mental Health & Wellbeing Department
- 5.4.1 The Mental Health & Wellbeing department is an interdisciplinary team responsible for the provision of support for students' mental and emotional health.
 - 5.4.2 A variety of supports will be available from upstream prevention to interventions for students who are struggling. All supports are detailed at www.nipissingu.ca/mhwellbeing
- 5.5 Campus Student Mental Health Committee (CSMHC)
- 5.5.1 The CSMHC is a standing institutional committee to promote mental health and wellbeing 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, such as the [*National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-being for Postsecondary Students*](#).
 - 5.5.2 Following the release of this Policy, the CSMHC will:
 - 5.5.2.1 Make recommendations for key priorities for promoting student mental health & wellbeing to the AVP Students and the Provost.
 - 5.5.2.2 Establish clear milestones for completion in relation to identified areas of priority.
 - 5.5.2.3 Make recommendations for institutional data collection and reporting in relation to student mental health and wellbeing.
 - 5.5.2.4 Making recommendations on policies and procedures to ensure that they are viewed from a mental health lens.
 - 5.5.2.5 Will provide consultation and recommendations on this Policy every 5 years as part of the review process.
 - 5.5.3 Additional information on the CSMHC will be available at www.nipissing.ca/CSMHC

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. Confidentiality is a core component of all Mental Health services. All employees involved in the delivery or administrative operations of these services shall complete a *Promise of Confidentiality Statement* and agree to its inclusion in their personnel file held by Human Resources of the University. In addition, all employees will participate in office practices that increase the security of student information.
- 6.2. All services provided by the Mental Health & Wellbeing team are bound by applicable laws, which include Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy Act (FIPPA), and Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). As well as professional standards and ethics to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of each student's personal information.
 - 6.2.1. Each student will be provided a detailed explanation of their privacy when initiating services and annually thereafter.

6.3 The University's privacy policies can be located at:
<https://www.nipissingu.ca/departments/vpfa/information-and-privacy>

7. Policy Access & Reporting

- 7.1 A copy of this policy will be available on the Nipissing University website and will be provided upon request.
- 7.2 An annual report will be provided to the Board of Governors by December 31st each year and submitted to the Ministry. The report will provide information regarding:
 - 7.2.1 Outreach and Prevention Initiatives
 - 7.2.2 Education and Training Programing
 - 7.2.3 Student Supports Provided
 - 7.2.4 Community Partnerships and referrals
 - 7.2.5 Activities of the Campus Student Mental Health Committee
- 7.3 A copy of the annual will be made available on the Nipissing University website.

8. Policy Review & Approval Process

- 8.1 As part of our commitment to ongoing improvement, Nipissing University will review this policy every 5 years. In the review process, consultation will be sought from students, service providers, and the Campus Student Mental Health Committee.
- 8.2 Amendments to the policy will be proposed by the Director of Student Wellness.
- 8.3 This Policy is approved by the Nipissing University Executive Committee.

Mental Health and Well-being Policy

INSERT LINK TO POLICY HERE