

Student Mental Health and Wellness Policy Annual Report 2025

Institution Name: Algonquin College

Reporting Period: January 1 – December 31, 2025

Date of Submission: January 2026

Submitted to: Board of Governors and the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

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Policy Overview

- **Policy Title:** Student Mental Health and Wellness (SA17)
- **Date of Last Review:** 2025-01-02
- **Next Scheduled Review:** 2026-07-02
- [Link to Public Policy Page](#)

Executive Statement

At Algonquin College, the health and well-being of our students are at the heart of everything we do. We understand that academic success and personal well-being go hand in hand, and we are deeply committed to fostering an environment where every learner feels supported, heard, and empowered to thrive.

Over the past year, the College has continued to face complex and evolving challenges that affect the mental health of our student community. Whether it's the lingering impact of the pandemic, the pressures of academic and financial responsibilities, or the ongoing need for belonging and connection, we recognize that the demand for compassionate, accessible, and responsive mental health supports has never been greater.

This report reflects the collective efforts of our faculty, staff, and student leaders to prioritize mental wellness across our campuses. The College community has worked hard to build a more inclusive, proactive, and supportive mental health ecosystem.

While proud of the progress made at Algonquin College, we know this work is ongoing. Mental wellness is not a destination—it is a continuous journey that requires listening, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to care.

As we look ahead, Algonquin College remains focused on creating a campus culture where mental health is openly discussed, stigma is reduced, and every student has access to tools and support to succeed both academically and personally.

The college extends gratitude to the dedicated teams who work every day to make our college a place of empathy, understanding, and growth.

Krista Pearson
Vice President, Student Services

Programs, Services, and Supports

Category	Description	Delivery Method	Target Population	Accessibility Notes
Clinical Supports	1 to 1 Counselling in Counselling Services, Spiritual Centre & Mamidosewin Center	In person & virtual	All students	Wait time for follow up app during peak periods
Peer Support Programs	Peer Support in person on campus and referrals to community-based options in Health & Wellness Zone	Via Mental Health & Wellness Website & Health & Wellness Zone	All Students	No wait times
Wellness Workshops	Therapeutic Groups in Counselling Services	In person & virtual	All students	No wait times
Self-Guided Resources	Resources are available on the Health & Wellness web page	Via Mental Health & Wellness Website	All Students	No wait times
Health Insurance Benefits	We Speak Student App via Students Association	In person & virtual	All Domestic Students	No wait times 24/7, multilingual support
Psychiatric Assessments	90-minute psychiatric assessments, producing care plans, prescriptions and referrals to additional services in the city	Virtual	All Students	In partnership with the Royal Ottawa mental Health Care Group, wait approx. 35 days. Multilingual support
Physician Support in Health Clinic.	Mental health related care in health clinic	In person & virtual	All students	Wait times fluctuate during year, Fall & Winter semesters typically have wait lists at all times
Health Insurance Benefits	Guard Me Insurance	Virtual	International Students	24/7, multilingual support
Mental Health Related Accommodations	Centre for Accessible Learning	In person & virtual	All students	Support for students with mental health accessibility related needs. Wait times at peak periods
Overdose Prevention & Naloxone Distribution	Partnership with Ottawa Public Health	In person	All students	Free Naloxone and resources at college events each semester

Narrative Summary:

- Highlight new or expanded services:
 - The Student Health and Wellness Zone has been reimagined to better serve and support students.
 - The materials utilized by the Umbrella Project (harm reduction and substance use) are being updated by a subject matter expert in a community addictions agency.
- Note any service gaps or challenges:
 - Algonquin College does not have any case management capability; this is needed to support the most complex cases where students access multiple services in both the college and the community each week in a chaotic and crisis driven way.
 - Funding cuts are impacting the capacity in all services, including those that support student mental health and wellness, potentially impacting student retention, academic success and graduation.

Utilization and Impact Metrics

Metric	Value	Notes
Student Focused Activities		
Number of unique students accessing mental health services receiving one to one support	Counselling Services = 1749 Health Services = 6613 CAL = 2671 Residence = 108	Health Services and CAL estimate students seeking mental health support make up 30-40% of all presentations.
Number of one-to-one appointments completed	Counselling Services = 3901 Health Services = 29,262 CAL = 6674 Residence = 108 Mamidosewin Centre = 159	Health Services and CAL estimate students seeking mental health support make up 30-40% of all presentations.
Workshop / group attendance	Counselling Services = 2533 CAL = 536 Residence = 287 Mamidosewin Centre = 352	Groups and events can be educational, clinical, employee or peer led
Peer support engagement	67 sessions, 869 attendees	Offered through the Health & Wellness Zone
Web site visits	Health & Wellness = 30,499 & 12,268 impressions on Instagram, X and Facebook Counselling Services = 74,410 Health Services = 171,311 CAL = 180,119 Mamidosewin Centre = 18,477	Feature internal and external service providers

Psychiatry Clinics (in partnership with the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Care Group)	128 Assessments	90-minute assessments
Satisfaction rating (if available)	Counselling Services = 61 CAL = 45 Health Services = 72	Services use NPS surveys each week to solicit feedback from students on their experience and request suggestions for improving services
Employee Focused Activities		
Ethics Training (employees)	1 session, 33 clinicians trained	Annual training
Mental health Academy subscriptions (employees)	75 twelve-month subscriptions	Offered to all staff supporting student mental health
Supporting Student Mental Health	1 session, 18 attendees	
Hope in Challenging Times workshops (employees)	2 sessions, 135 attendees	Offered to all Student Support Services employees
Stepped Care 2.0 training	38 employees completed a Brief Overview of Stepped Care 2.0 36 employees completed Navigating in the Stepped Care 2.0 Environment	Offered to all clinical employees
Specialist Trans care training	3 sessions, 9 attendees	and clinical teams
Mental Health First Aid Training	3 courses, 47 attendees	Offered to the college community
Applied Suicide Intervention Training	1 course, 14 attendees	Offered to the college community
Positive Space	1 session, 6 attendees	Offered to the college community
Mental Health Speaker Series (in partnership with the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Care Group), on stress, anxiety, dual diagnosis, ADHD and trauma	5 sessions, 150 attendees	Offered to all Student Support Services employees
Clinical Supervision for Clinicians	19 sessions, 266 attendees	Offered to clinicians in Counselling Services
Training in eating disorders, mental health in primary care, ADHD & perinatal health care	3 sessions, 12 attendees	Offered to Nurses, physicians in Health Services

Narrative Summary

- Counselling Services workshops include Thriving in Action, Love & Learn, How to Human (neurodivergent edition), Stress Management, Perfectionism - Training your Inner Critic, Snack Chats (peer to peer).
- Residence workshops include Journalling, Positive Moments Jars, Heart Felt Treats, Yoga Together, Self Care Bingo, Emotional Cup, Wellness in Colors, Success Jar Making and in Crust we Trust.

Policy Implementation and Effectiveness

The Algonquin College Mental Health Steering Committee (MHSC) correlates the work of multiple teams and departments across Algonquin College that contribute to student mental health and wellness. The committee is responsible for ensuring the College is aligned with the National Standard on Mental Health and Wellness for Post Secondary Students, informed by an audit of the college's mental health support and services alignment with the National Standard that was completed in 2022.

The MHSC members were key contributors to the creation of the new Student Mental Health and Wellness policy as per Ministry requirements. Algonquin Colleges Student Mental Health & Wellness Policy (SA17) was first presented to the Algonquin College Executive Team (ACET) on December 18, 2024, and it was approved by ACET on January 2, 2025. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee was informed of the (then) new policy via a detailed transmittal, prior to approval, at the committee meeting of January 21, 2025.

As per AD01, Administration of College Policies there will be an 18-month review period, as is the standard for new policies. This creates an opportunity for adjustment and a more thorough consultation process. This review will commence in January 2026 and be completed by the deadline of July 2, 2026.

During this reporting period the committee wrapped up its work for the 2024-25 fiscal year, where it had been focused on the following:

- Providing training in the Stepped care 2.0 service delivery model to all clinician teams.
- Implementing the recommendations of the comprehensive review of Counselling Services.
- A suicide prevention knowledge exchange.
- Proactively utilizing year 1 of a Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security mental health grant to provide training, clinical supervision, a speaker series for clinicians and a psychiatry clinic for students.
- Introducing online booking capabilities for students in multiple services.
- Providing specialist training for the Colleges physicians and nurses around trans care and gender affirming care.
- Marking Mental Health week, Mental Illness week, Bell Let's Talk Day and Suicide Prevention Day annually with student focused events.
- Establishing the Health and Wellness Zone, a health promoting service augmented by peer support placement students, focused on:

- General Health Promotion.
- Umbrella Project - Substance use prevention and support.
- Project Lighthouse – healthy relationships, consent, sexual violence prevention and support.

In the 2025-26 fiscal year, the MHSC is focused on the following.

- Responding to the ongoing financial crisis in the provinces post-secondary, and reorganizing services impacted by personnel changes.
- Proactively utilizing year 2 of a Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security mental health grant to provide training, clinical supervision, a speaker series for clinicians and a psychiatry clinic for students.
- Preparing to administer the Canadian Campus Well Being Survey, in conjuncture with the other colleges in Ontario.
- Marketing and promoting the Colleges Health and Wellness web site to all students.
- Marking Mental Health week, Mental Illness week, Bell Let's Talk day and Suicide Prevention Day annually with student focused events.

Challenges and Opportunities

The challenging fiscal reality in the national and provincial post-secondary sector is significantly impacting colleges, and Algonquin is not exempt from these financial pressures. During the reporting period, key staff from all teams have left the College, impacting this work. Despite these ongoing challenges, Algonquin is committed to continue to actively lead in this arena through innovation, service, continuous improvements, fundraising, and robust community partnerships.

Algonquin College has applied for additional grant funding to support the continuation of the partnership with the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Care group that provides employee training, a speaker series, clinical supervision for employees, psychiatry support to students with the most severe mental health challenges and to introduce case management services for students.

Applications submitted in this reporting period include, Health Canada Youth Mental Health Fund (\$688,672), MCU Mental Health & Substance Use Fund (\$386,823), BMO Foundation (\$540,725), Molson Foundation (\$60,000) & Trottier Foundation (\$86,084).

Future Plans

In February 2026, the MHSC will meet to review progress to the 2025-26 goals and to generate new goals for the fiscal year 2026-27. All goals will be informed by the 2022 audit of services alignment with the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Wellness for Post Secondary Students and are designed to remove obstacles to full alignment with the National Standard.

In conjuncture with many of the provinces Colleges, Algonquin will be administering the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey in the Winter 2026 semester. All full-time students will be invited to participate, and the results will be used to inform and drive adjustments in programming and services delivery methods. Having access to provincial and national data will provide unique insights and

provide learning regarding areas of strength and weakness and identify institutions that may be able to provide insights into successful programming strategies that Algonquin College could adopt.

Conclusion

Algonquin College is committed to supporting students' mental health and wellness and continues to make steady progress in this area as it seeks to align itself with the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Wellbeing for Post Secondary Students. The College has a thoughtful and comprehensive policy, a robust Mental Health Steering Committee with executive leadership and support and an array of highly trained and proactive teams delivering services in line with the Stepped Care 2.0 model of treatment provision, providing engaging programming, and educational events for students and robust referral options into the wider community.

Declaration

I confirm that this report complies with the requirements outlined in the Minister's Directive on Student Mental Health and reflects the institution's commitment to supporting student well-being.

Signature:

Name & Title: Ben Bridgstock, Director, Student Support Services

Date: January 2026

Appendix

Campus Living Centers Mental Health Resource

Mamidosewin Centre

Office of the Ombudsmen

Student Mental Health and Wellness Policy

Students Association Health Plan

Students Handbook (pg. 33, 38, 44, 58, 82)

Student Support Services Health and Wellness Web Site