



Collège LaSalle

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Adopted by the Board of Directors

October 28, 2022

Context

With the [Quebec Action Plan for Student Mental Health in Higher Education 2021-2026](#) (PASME), the Ministry of Higher Education (MES) affirmed its commitment to supporting the system in implementing practices and actions that promote wellness and the development of flourishing mental health among members of the student population.

As part of the aforementioned action plan, this institutional policy serves as a means of implementing Measure 2.1: *Supporting Higher Education Institutions in the Adoption of Institutional Student Mental Health Policies*. This model complements the [Cadre de référence sur la santé mentale étudiante \[Student Mental Health Framework\]](#)¹ published by the MES.

As specified in the PASME, institutional policies should provide broad guidelines for promoting well-being and the development of positive mental health on higher education campuses. They should also outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and identify the continuum of services available to address the needs of the entire student population, including those with special needs, in a timely manner. In addition, they should include:

- the creation of a permanent institutional committee on student mental health with representation from senior administration, faculty, professional, technical and support resources, and members of the student community;
- a process for assessing the impact of institutional policies, programs, practices, and regulations on student mental health;
- a training and awareness plan for staff members and the student population;
- structural actions in the area of mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention, respecting the specificities of the institution and the needs of its student community.

Finally, it should be noted that the PASME stipulates that institutional policies must come into effect no later than September 2023.

¹ The purpose of the Student Mental Health Framework is to support the public college, private subsidized college, and university systems in implementing practices and initiatives that promote well-being and the development of flourishing mental health among members of the student population.

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Preamble

The purpose of this institutional policy is to demonstrate the institution's commitment to ensuring healthy, safe, caring, and supportive living and learning environments for mental health. It acknowledges the importance of community-wide collaboration in student mental health. It thus involves the participation and commitment of all stakeholders through both personal and collective accountability.

General Principles

LaSalle College (hereinafter referred to as "**the College**") recognizes that mental health is an essential component of student retention and success. Students have the right to an educational environment that enables them to cultivate positive mental health. This policy affirms the College's commitment to creating an environment that supports the well-being and mental health of its student members through a structured framework.

The College takes an ecosystem approach to mental health. Consequently, the entire community shares the responsibility of participating in the creation and maintenance of an environment conducive to psychological health and well-being. Thus, members of the management team, managers, various categories of staff, and representatives of student associations and unions are considered pillars of mental health promotion and prevention activities and services. They also play a key role in implementing and supporting various organizational practices that are known to have a positive impact on well-being.

Purpose and Scope

This policy is an institutional policy. It is therefore intended for the entire College community, i.e., the student population as well as the institution's management and staff.

It offers broad guidelines to promote well-being and foster flourishing mental health on the institution's campus(es). To support the mental health of the student community, the College intends to:

- provide an environment that supports student retention and academic success by implementing measures that promote well-being and mental health while respecting the diverse needs of the student population;
- establish conditions that promote the accountability of all institutional stakeholders with respect to mental health;
- participate in improving the well-being and mental health of the student community;
- ensure that the environment on its campus(es) fosters the personal fulfilment of all.

Definitions

Student Community: All persons pursuing a course of study at the College on either a full-time or part-time basis, both in initial and continuing education.

Staff Member: All salaried persons who work at the institution.

Institution Community Member: Any person working or studying at the CEGEP/University.

Special Needs Population: All persons pursuing a course of study at the College on either a full-time or part-time basis, both in initial and continuing education.

Harm Reduction: An approach that primarily consists of reducing the negative consequences associated with drug use rather than in eliminating the use behaviour itself.²

Mental Health: A state of well-being that enables people to recognize their own abilities, achieve self-actualization, cope with the normal stresses of life, engage in productive and successful work, and contribute to their communities.³

Positive Mental Health: “Positive mental health focuses on the positive mental aspects of human beings and their potential for growth, such as their strengths and abilities, happiness, qualities such as responsibility, courage, creativity, and perseverance, and the material and social resources that foster or support them. A person with a high level of positive mental health is said to have flourishing mental health, and one with a low level is said to have languishing mental health.”⁴

Roles and Responsibilities

Because mental health is influenced by a multitude of factors, all institutional stakeholders are collectively committed to contributing to an environment that supports flourishing mental health. Their roles and responsibilities are listed below.

Board of Directors

- Responsible for the adoption of this policy.

Directors, Managers, and Supervisors

- Ensure the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure the application of and compliance with this policy.
- Allocate the human, financial, and material resources required to implement the action plan.
- Promote this policy and ensure that it is accessible to the entire student community, most notably by publishing it on the College’s website.
- Ensure that this policy is consistent with and complementary to other policies, particularly those aimed at preventing and countering sexual violence in higher education as well as discrimination, harassment, and violence. Indeed, these other structural measures also act on protective and risk factors related to mental health.
- Establish welcoming, healthy, safe, caring, and inclusive physical spaces.
- Ensure that mental health support, accompaniment, education, promotion, and prevention services are in place and that information about these services is accessible.
- Encourage interdisciplinary and inter-network collaborations. In terms of mental health, local organizations are essential partners in the community. It is important to reach out to them and integrate them into mental health promotion activities and student services where appropriate. This is also true of stakeholders in the health and social services network.

² Quebec National Institute of Public Health, *L’approche de réduction des méfaits [The Harm Reduction Approach]*, [Online], 2012. <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/espace-itss/-/approche-de-reduction-des-mefaits> (Accessed May 2, 2022).

³ World Health Organization, *Mental Health: Strengthening our Response*, [Online], 2018. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response> (Accessed May 2, 2022).

⁴ Quebec Statistical Institute, *Le concept de santé mentale positive, un aperçu [The Concept of Positive Mental Health, An Overview]*, [Online], 2020. <https://statistique.quebec.ca/fr/produit/publication/concept-de-sante-mentale-positive-apercu> (Accessed May 2, 2022).

- Ensure that the requirements of special needs populations are taken into account.
- Promote accommodation measures, when required, in order to support the well-being of students with special needs.
- Assist the student community in balancing education, work, and family by providing accommodations to combine these different spheres of life.
- Support initiatives that promote student involvement and social participation in their institution or in the surrounding community.
- Encourage the presence of special needs population representatives on decision-making committees.
- Guide the student community to available mental health resources as needed.
- Attend training sessions on mental health issues.
- Contribute to the creation and maintenance of a positive academic climate (inclusive, safe, caring).
- Encourage initiatives that promote student engagement in their institution.
- Serve as a positive role model for students by taking into account their own needs and listening to those of others, communicating emotions, and behaving respectfully.
- Create a supportive and non-judgemental environment for both students and other staff members.

Members of the Institutional Community

- Take note of this policy and the roles and responsibilities that go with it.
- Participate in the creation and maintenance of a culture of respect and caring that supports positive mental health, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Collaborate in creating conditions conducive to the development of flourishing mental health and the personal growth of all.

Teaching Staff

- Attends training sessions on mental health issues.
- Promotes psychosocial services and refers students to appropriate resources as needed.
- Promotes the use of inclusive teaching practices that are known to support positive mental health. Takes training courses in inclusive pedagogy.
- Establishes conditions that are evidence-based and supportive of mental health.
- Promotes accessible services and refrains from usurping the role of other specialists (practitioners, professionals) when students confide that they are experiencing difficulties or issues requiring support.

Student Association Representatives

- Disseminate information on mental health resources available inside and outside the institution and guide the student community toward them.
- Spread the word about mental health awareness, promotion, and prevention activities.
- Promote a positive academic climate, most notably within the associations (inclusive, safe, caring, open, respectful, and free of violence and bullying).
- Ensure that a diversity of student voices is represented, including those of special needs population members.

Student Population

- Remains informed, seeks services as needed and, if necessary, communicates relevant information to professional resources in order to receive necessary support. Although students are free to decide whether or not to disclose personal information, mentioning the presence of a diagnosis, follow-ups, or other services allows these resources to better analyze needs and offer the most appropriate response.
- When desired, provide all relevant documents to the persons concerned and sign the consent form allowing for the exchange of information between the various parties involved.

Institutional Committee

The College is committed to establishing a permanent institutional committee on student mental health. This committee will include representatives of senior management, teaching staff and faculty, professional, technical and support resource persons working for the institution, and members of the student community selected by one or more student associations.

In terms of its mandate, it will:

- plan actions to foster student mental health, including the promotion of positive mental health, and contribute to their implementation;
- make recommendations to senior management to improve support offered to the student population;
- propose promotion, prevention, awareness, and training activities in mental health;
- conduct an annual assessment of the actions carried out by the committee;
- evaluate the implementation of this policy.

Continuum of Services

The College refers to the [Cadre de référence sur la santé mentale étudiante \[Student Mental Health Framework\]](#), available on Quebec.ca, for the implementation of a continuum de services.

Furthermore, the College must ensure that a variety of services and activities are in place to promote positive mental health in its community. The Psychosocial Support Team, Student Affairs, and the Health Care Team are responsible for proposing and implementing mental health measures and activities that meet this imperative and are sustainable over time.

Awareness, Promotion, and Prevention Measures

The College ensures the implementation of structured actions in the areas of mental health awareness, promotion, and prevention, in keeping with the needs of the student community. Such actions may focus on mental health, harm reduction, healthy lifestyle habits, or any other relevant theme related to various mental health determinants.⁵ Programs focusing on the development of socio-emotional skills and stress management have also been put in place.

⁵ To find out more, we invite readers to refer to the following documents:

Training Measures

Mental health training is offered to managers, teachers, paid staff, and the student community. Topics include positive mental health, inclusion and mental health of special needs student populations, healthy lifestyles, mental disorders, and psychological first aid. The training schedule is disseminated to the institution's community (emails, portal, etc.).

Services and Intervention

The College implements a system for receiving and processing requests and ensures that the institution's entire community is made aware of it. Furthermore, in order to provide individuals with appropriate support, it implements a service to assess or evaluate their needs and direct them to appropriate resources.

Peer support programs and self-care tools are also offered.

Impact Assessment

The College assesses how implemented institutional policies, programs, practices, and internal regulations impact the student community's mental health. This assessment may include whether the following elements are in place, their degree of implementation, and their effects on the student community:

- Student involvement in decisions that affect them;
- Inclusion of the student community in institutional activities in a manner that reflects the composition and diversity of the student body;
- The evaluation of various psychosocial factors;
- Consideration of documents (reports, studies, etc.) provided by student associations and federations and other studies that relate to mental health in higher education;
- The proportion of the student community that responds to various mental health and wellness surveys;
- Adherence to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in institutional policies and programs;
- Collaboration between the various professional resources and the complementarity of the institution's services;
- Collaboration with external partners (health and social services network, community organizations).

The data collected make it possible to assess the policy's implementation, analyze the obstacles encountered, and make necessary changes. The results obtained are transmitted to all members of the community.

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- Quebec. Minister of Health and Social Services, *Programme national de santé publique 2015-2025: pour améliorer la santé de la population du Québec [National Public Health Program 2015-2025: Improving the Health of Quebec's Population]*, Quebec, Government of Quebec, 2015, 85 pp. Also available online: <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2015/15-216-01W.pdf>.
 - Isabelle Doré and Jean Caron, "Mental Health: Concepts, Measures, Determinants", *Santé mentale au Québec*, vol. 42, no. 1, Spring 2017, pp. 125-145. Also available online: <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/smq/2017-v42-n1-smq03101/1040247ar/>.

Policy Dissemination

The College shall disseminate the policy and make it accessible to the entire institutional community.

Entry into Force

This institutional mental health policy comes into effect on September 1, 2023.

Policy Review and Revision Mechanism

This policy will go through an evaluation process, as needed. The institutional committee will be responsible for reviewing the policy in light of changing practices.