



SSMU Mental Health Policy & Procedures

For Regular & Casual Staff Members

In effect as of July 1st, 2014



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1. Introduction

1.1. Facts about Mental Illness from the Canadian Mental Health Association

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague.
- 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures.
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives.
- About 1% of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder (or “manic depression”).

1.2. Causes of Mental Illness from the Canadian Mental Health Association

- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors that cause mental illnesses.
- Almost one half (49%) of those who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.
- Stigma or discrimination attached to mental illnesses presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment but also to acceptance in the community.
- Mental illnesses can be treated effectively.

2. SSMU Staff Mental Health Policy & Procedure Objective

The SSMU understands that situations can lead employees, Directors and Executive members to develop mental illness caused by the working environment and working conditions. The SSMU also understands that employees, Directors and Executive members can experience mental illness due to personal life factors.



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The SSMU is committed to offering employees, Directors and Executive members a healthy working environment. Therefore, the SSMU Staff Mental Health Policy and Procedures was adopted with the following objectives:

- To promote mental health;
- To prevent mental health from deteriorating;
- To provide a framework for employees, Executive members and superiors to address issues;
- To outline potential accommodations in case of mental illness, and;
- To refer employees and Executive members to professional resources for mental health.

3. Legal Framework

In treatment of all requests, the immediate supervisor and the HR Advisor will keep the information related to mental health issues confidential as per the 'Act Respecting Personal Information in the Private Sector'.

As per the Quebec Human Right Charter, all staff members must refrain from discriminating an employee experiencing mental health issues and reasonable measures will be taken by the immediate supervisor and the HR Advisor to accommodate the employee.

4. Definitions

Mental health is defined as a state of psychological balance enabling an individual to maintain a subjective sense of well-being, and use of his/her cognitive, affective and relational abilities towards the achievement of personal goals¹.

Mental illness is defined as an alteration in a person's health that is measured by medical and non-medical means and relates to an individual's capacity to meet personal, social and occupational demands. The following is a non-exhaustive list of mental illness signs for prevention:

¹ Mental Health in the Workplace, Morneau Shepell, June 2014.



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- **Physical:** Upset stomach, frequent colds, flu, infections, shortness of breath, muscular tension, headaches, rapid loss or gain in weight;
- **Intellectual:** impaired judgment, inability to concentrate, easily distracted, memory loss, excessive worry, difficulty in making decisions/procrastination;
- **Emotional:** anxiety, anger, irritability, depression, hopelessness, feeling of being trapped, out of control, apathy, feeling of incompetence, guilty/self conscious;
- **Personal well-being:** questioning values, loss of purpose/meaning, isolation from friends and family, loneliness, excessive busyness².

5. Application

The SSMU Mental Health policy applies to all SSMU employees, Directors and Executive members.

6. SSMU Staff Mental Health Responsibilities

6.1. Employees & Executive Members

Employees, Directors and Executive members are responsible for:

- Taking measures to safeguard their own mental health;
- Identifying areas of pressure in work causing high and lasting stress and bringing them to the attention of the immediate supervisor;
- Responding respectfully and responsibly to behaviors presenting signs of mental illness and bringing them to the attention of the immediate supervisor;
- Being aware of the confidential Employee Assistance Program provided by the SSMU and the other available resources;
- Cooperate when accommodation measures are implemented, if applicable.

² Mental Health in the Workplace, Morneau Shepell, June 2014.



6.2. Immediate Supervisors

Although immediate supervisors are not responsible for diagnosing an employee, they may need to speak privately to an employee to assess if mental illness is a cause of a performance issue. Immediate supervisors are responsible for:

- Identifying signs of mental illness and providing accommodation, if necessary;
- Encouraging an employee to seek help;
- Including the HR Advisor in the process to identify accommodation measures;
- In case of leave of absence, preparing the employee's return to work by speaking to the employee before the employee, Director or Executive member returns.

6.3. HR Advisor

The HR Advisor is responsible for:

- Promoting mental health in the workplace;
- Receiving requests from employees, Director and Executive members;
- In case of mental illness, supporting employees, Director and Executive members in the process;
- Advising immediate supervisors for accommodation measures.

7. Accommodation Request

Employees, Directors and Executives may request accommodation for mental health. The Accommodation Request Form shall be completed and presented as following:

- Employees and Directors may present the request to their immediate supervisor or to the HR Advisor.
- The General Manager may present the request to the President or to the HR Advisor.
- Executive members may present the request to a member of the HR Committee which includes the President, the General Manager and the HR Advisor.
- The HR Advisor may present the request to the General Manager or to the President.



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8. Process for Accommodation Request

After receiving the request for accommodation, the immediate supervisor or the member of the HR Committee will ask the employee, Director or Executive member to communicate potential solutions as part of the discussion.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of accommodations that can be available to a staff member dealing with mental health issues:

- Change in job duties;
- A change in the work schedule or working hours;
- Work from home;
- Change in training or in supervision.

The HR Advisor will be advised by the immediate supervisor or the member of the HR Committee of mental health issues and will be asked to participate in finding accommodation measures.

With the help of the HR Advisor, the immediate supervisor will communicate promptly, within two business days following the date of the initial meeting, a decision on the accommodation to be provided to the employee, Director or Executive member.

9. Resource for Employees, Directors and Executive Members

9.1. Resources for Regular Employees & Directors

The SSMU regular staff members have access to the Employee Assistance Program through Morneau Shepell, an independent provider. The SSMU will not receive any information from Morneau Shepell on the staff member's file. Morneau Shepell offers a confidential free service and can be reached anytime by phone at 1-800-387-4765. Regular staff members can also consult Morneau Shepell's website at workhealthlife.com.



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9.2. Resources for McGill Students

9.2.1. McGill Mental Health Services Clinic

McGill students that have paid the Student Services Fees have access to the Mental Health Services Clinic. Students can find more information on the McGill website at <http://www.mcgill.ca/mentalhealth>.

The Mental Health Services Clinic is located in the Brown Student Services Building (3600 McTavish, Suite 5500 Montreal, Quebec, H3A 0G3). To contact the Clinic by phone, the number is 514-398-6019.

The hours of operation are from Monday to Friday: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

9.2.2. Extra Resources for McGill Students

- McGill Nightline: <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/nightline/>
- Peer Support Network: <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/studentsinmind/psn.html>
- Healthy McGill: <http://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/>
- Peer support groups at McGill: <http://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/need-support/peer-support>

10. Helpful References

- Public Health Agency of Canada: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://www.cmha.ca/>
- Diversity Works: Accommodations in the workplace for persons with mental illness: http://calgary.cmha.ca/mental_health/diversity-works-accommodations-in-the-workplace-for-people-with-mental-illness/#.U6B56vldUnN
- Canadian Mental Health Association Montreal: <http://acsmmontreal.gc.ca/>



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- Santé et services sociaux du Québec :
http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob_sante/sante_mentale/index.php?sante_mentale_au_travail_en
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: <http://www.ccohs.ca/>
- National Institute for Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
- Emedecine: www.emedicine.com

11. SSMU Mental Health Policy & Procedures Contact Person

For questions related to the SSMU Staff Mental Health Policy and Procedures, please contact:

Marie-Elaine Reid, CHRP
Human Resources Advisor
514-398-8036
hr@ssmu.mcgill.ca



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12. Receipt - SSMU Staff Mental Health Policy & Procedure

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Position: _____

I (please print) _____, hereby declare that I have received, read and understood, the SSMU Staff Mental Health Policy & Procedure.

Employee's/Executive's Signature: _____

Date: _____



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13. Accommodation Request Form

Employee Name:	
Position Title:	
Date of Request:	
Nature of Issues Encountered:	
Solutions Proposed:	
Request Presented to (Name/Position):	
Employee Signature:	

For Completion of Receiver for Response within 2 Business Days:

Accommodation Provided	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Reason: _____ If yes, what is the nature of the accommodation provided:		
Signature of Receiver:		Date:	
Signature of HR Advisor:		Date:	