



Mental Health Committee Report

Submitted for: February 25th, 2021

The SSMU's mental health team this year is composed of Mental Health Commissioner Julia Caddy, Advocacy Coordinator Mo Rajji Courtney and Outreach Coordinator Ella Goodman-Vincent.

Note: the Mental Health Fee, which funds the work of these staff, the committees, and constituent initiatives, is up for renewal in the Winter 2021 referendum. The continuation of this important work relies on your support.

1. Outreach Committee

- a. Mental Health Action Week occurred the last week of January. The Outreach Committee did a series of daily #ThrivelnFive educational posts, and actively promoted the events hosted by members of the Mental Health Roundtable.
 - i. On the Monday, the Outreach Committee led a takeover of the @McGillU Instagram account – be sure to check out the story highlights! There were 165,545 views of the story, and the post had 2068 likes.
- b. The Outreach Committee continues posting a “Did you know?” series featuring information on services, wellness, access to insurance, etc.
- c. Various groups and services are being featured in Q&A sessions on Instagram Live.
- d. Make sure you are following SSMU Mental Health on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

2. Advocacy Committee

- a. Feedback continues to be received through the Survey for [Remote Learning and Mental Health](#) and the [Wellness Hub Satisfaction](#) Survey. The Advocacy Coordinator completed a [preliminary report](#) on the Fall 2020 findings from the Survey for Remote Learning and Mental Health.
- b. A new survey, “[Learning from Fall 2020](#)”, has been launched to examine which elements of remote learning should be transferred to future years.
- c. The Advocacy Committee is following up with survey respondents who provided their contact information, as well as a diversity of individuals and groups on campus, in order to develop a report on the needs and barriers that remain – especially in regards to marginalized populations.

3. Mental Health Roundtable

- a. This group continues to meet every three weeks on Thursday evenings. These meetings are led by the MH Commissioner with support from the two Coordinators, and bring together all student mental health groups on campus to discuss collaborations, campus-wide updates, and cross-promotion.



- b. Focuses so far this semester have included Mental Health Action Week and reviewing the Academic Wellness Proposal.

4. WellnessWorld

- a. In accordance to the Mental Health 3-Year Plan, the MH Commissioner is working to implement WellnessWorld, an online wellness portal that would bridge academic and wellness dimensions of student life, centralize resources, and clarify pathways of accessing support—especially equity-seeking populations and those with unique needs and wants. This will be a significant step towards the Mental Health Policy's commitment to Resource Promotion and Increased Accessibility.
- b. Collaboration with Students Services and PGSS will allow for this project to be sustainably maintained and funded. However, the processes involved have caused delays, and the expected launch of WellnessWorld is currently late March/early April 2021. The pilot year will be funded by Student Services.

5. Academic Wellness Proposal

- a. The MH Commissioner, Advocacy Coordinator, and members of the Mental Health Roundtable have developed the Academic Wellness Proposal in order to advise an upstream approach to campus mental health. Legislative Council approved this Proposal and the accompanying Guiding Principles in January.
- b. Current efforts are focused on the implementation of easier proposals, and on garnering support from McGill staff and administration in order to move this Proposal forward as a plan to be approved by the Senate.

6. keep.meSAFE

- a. In Fall 2020, SSMU students had 705 clinical sessions, with 352 unique users. 53% of these sessions were after-hours (between 5pm-9am EST). 55% of users are in their first year of study.
- b. The MH Commissioner has launched a [feedback survey](#) to gain insight on students' experiences and any concerns they may have with the service.
- c. We have launched the Campus Ambassador Program, with 3 undergraduate students and 3 graduate students committed to regular promotion of the service through social media, events, and initiatives.
- d. For students concerned with wait times, it is important to note that keep.meSAFE has now increased their staffing. This is after a 70% increase in usage during the pandemic caused demand to exceed capacity. If students are still struggling with wait times, please advise them to reach out to mentalhealth@ssmu.ca.

7. Student Insurance

- a. The MH Commissioner is currently investigating both the StudentCare and Blue Cross insurance plans to resolve current gaps related to self-inflicted injury and suicide. Furthermore, it will be investigated whether students would be eligible for tuition reimbursements if they have to withdraw from courses due to mental health concerns.



8. SSMU Mental Health webpage

- a. The MH Commissioner, with support from the two coordinators, is drafting updated content for the Mental Health page, which would include more information on current projects, documents, insurance, etc.

9. Student Wellness Hub

- a. Highlights from the Student Wellness Hub Advisory Board include sharing of usage data and improvement/feedback pathways. Moving forward, the MH Commissioner is focused on creating a webpage to communicate to students what has been done based on feedback. An example of this is the extensive training that has been taking place this year regarding best serving transgender & non-binary students.
- b. During December and January, the MH Commissioner as well as the PGSS Health Commissioner have been involved with the hiring of the Peer Support Manager and a new LWA for the Student Wellness Hub.
 - i. In response to students' ongoing calls for increased funding for more staff, it should be noted that the Student Wellness Hub is currently having trouble filling positions that are open due to the high demand for counselling professionals in the public sector during the pandemic.
- c. A Website Working Group is currently meeting bi-weekly in order to improve the Student Wellness Hub website. This will be an ongoing project, but promises easier navigation and more useful content.

Moving forward, the above projects will be continued/completed as appropriate. A report on the progress on the SSMU Mental Health Plan will be completed and added to the SSMU Mental Health Policy & Plan by the end of the Winter 2021 term. In the meantime, we encourage any individuals or groups with possible initiatives to apply for the SSMU Mental Health Fund, as we have seen fewer applications due to the COVID-19 remote learning context.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the MH Commissioner at mentalhealth@ssmu.ca if you have any questions related to this report, or if you are partaking in any projects related to mental health.