

SSMU Mental Health Committee Report

Winter 2023



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Students' Society of McGill University

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Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

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SSMU Mental Health Structure

Because mental health is a broad-sweeping topic that touches upon nearly every other aspect of student academics and life, several committees exist and work to serve different needs on campus.

These include:

- Central committee: composed of the Commissioner, Advocacy and Outreach Coordinators, and Vice President Student Life.
- Advocacy Committee: composed of the Advocacy Coordinator, a senator, and 5 volunteer members of the student body.
- Outreach Committee: composed of the Outreach Coordinator, a senator (currently vacant), and 5 volunteer members of the student body.

All committees meet weekly and work together to form a comprehensive plan to tackle mental health policy, advocacy, and outreach on campus. Several other members of SSMU are actively involved in various projects mentioned above including the Antiviolence Coordinator, Vice President Finance, and Vice President University Affairs.

Central Committee

This committee meets to discuss broadsweeping mental health topics and initiatives on campus and provide active communication between what each other committee is working on.

I. Mental Health Policy & Plan 2020-2023

All action items within the past mental health policy and plan have been completed with the exception of increasing the mental health fee levee as well as changing it to non-optoutable. The full progress report from the fall can be found [here](#). The next plan is currently being written with the help of community and SSMU members and is expected to go to legislative council for approval in April.

II. MyWellness Co-design

Working with the Wellness Hub to launch an online navigation tool. During co-design it became clear the tool was not functional for students, and from our feedback has been made unavailable to students until it is improved.



III. Academic Subcommittee of ESAAC

After biweekly meetings, the proposal for an academic accommodation form that acts as a 72 hour medical note once per semester permitting all course assessments less than 30% has been approved and is headed to final vote in March. Feedback so far has been positive, and it is expected that this form will be available to students come fall 2023.

IV. Suicide Prevention Framework

The suicide prevention framework, written by suicide specialist Melissa Lutchman under the guidance of an ad hoc committee has officiall completed the postvention sections, completed the majority of the prevention sections, and large aspects of the intervention. It was [publicly announced](#) during Quebec Suicide Action week and community consultations will begin shortly.

V. Committee and Co-design positions

In addition to the above work, members of this committee also act as sitting members of the Healthy Living Annex co-design, Keep.meSAFE Advisory Panel, the Student Wellness Hub Advisory Board, the SSMU Health and Dental Committee, the Health Insurance Working Group, the SSMU EDI Working Group, and more.

Advocacy Committee

This committee meets to implement projects that advocate for mental health policy change as well as discuss with campus stakeholders

I. Strategic Plan for Academic Wellness

The aim of this proposal is to address the deficiency of wellness support in our teaching and learning environments at McGill by ensuring administration, teaching staff, and students alike are prepared to foster an environment of learning, engagement, and mental wellbeing for themselves and for each other. After several meetings with administration, a dashboard of action items has been created, and a task force is being formed to implement each item.



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II. Mental Health Teaching Award

The [mental health teaching award](#) has successfully been approved by the Rossby Foundation for funding and is in the process of being implemented for fall 2023.

III. Eco Week

In collaboration with the sustainability commissioners and the environment committee, an eco-week is being planned in March. The first half of the week will involve education and discussion focussed on environment hosted by the sustainability commissioners, and the second half of the week will focus on health and wellbeing around climate change and sustainability.

Outreach Committee

This committee acts as a resource for education and connection with the McGill general student body and student clubs and services. The outreach committee has had a busy start to the Winter 2023 semester and has been building on initiatives from last semester as well as setting new directions in Mental Health for SSMU.

I. Orientation Outreach and Activities Night

The committee has done tabling events, giving out care packages to the community while collaborating with the McLennan library to secure a green space for students to study or relax amidst their busy schedules. Additionally, we are designing social media campaigns on various topics relating to mental health; each committee member is taking responsibility for a single portfolio or topic. Examples include eco-anxiety, burnout, sexual health, nutrition psychoeducation, how to foster healthy relationships, and much more.

The outreach committee is also planning to collaborate with the musicians collective to host a mental health and music-themed open mic/anticafe to draw a crowd from students who may not otherwise attend a mental health event. We also plan on working with the Black Students Network BSN to run an event for Black History Month, supporting their initiatives and creating new events. The outreach team is also working in conjunction with non-student-led resources such as Keepmesafe to promote their service to students, pertinently their new mycommunity function that serves as a moderated space for students to discuss mental health!



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II. Mental Illness Awareness Week

During national mental illness awareness week, the outreach committee hosted over 5 different workshops and collaborated with services such as Safely Connected as well as the Wellness Hub to offer educational material on mental illness.

III. Mental Health Action Week / Well Week

During Well Week and accessibility week, the committee collaborated with the Hub and VP External to create workshops and interactive activities that students could connect with, as well as planning a Mental Health social.

IV. Mental Health Roundtable

With 4 meetings so far and 4 to go, the monthly mental health roundtable meetings which provide a space for student groups to speak candidly, learn information, and collaborate have been successful. With over 40 unique student groups attending in total, attendance varying from 12-30 individuals per meeting