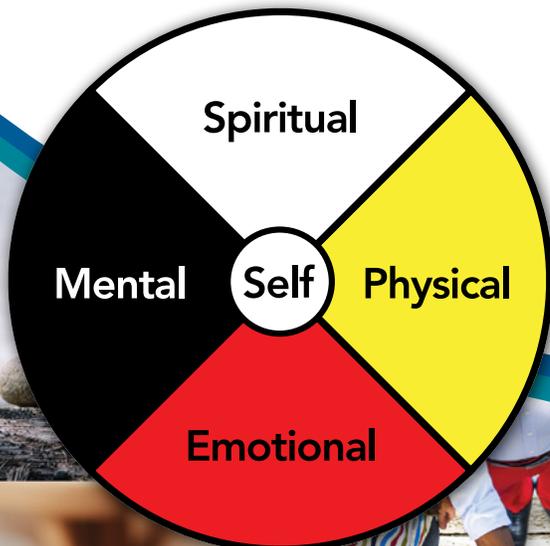




# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Georgian College, we are committed to the mental health and well-being of our entire college community of students and employees, to accelerate success and transform lives.

When students enjoy flourishing mental health and well-being, they're more likely to be successful in their academic pursuits and future careers.

When employees enjoy flourishing mental health and well-being, they're more likely to be engaged in their employment and in activities and relationships outside the workplace.

Georgian's Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan clearly defines our priorities in this important effort - institutional structure, mental health literacy and promoting well-being, self-management and coping skills, supports and services and crisis management.

The plan is the result of more than a year of collaboration and innovation, with 42 points of engagement involving close to 800 students and employees across our campuses.

It's grounded in our conviction that mental health affects all of us and is the responsibility of all of us. We will establish the programs, services, training and communication to ensure we can recognize and respond appropriately to mental health and well-being concerns in others and in ourselves.

Our plan builds on extensive existing college supports and services which are ever growing and evolving. Even as it was being finalized, recommended actions were already implemented. To cite only two examples, our employee assistance program has been extended to non-full-time employees, and the first phase of new training offers student Peer Mentors greater understanding of mental health and well-being concerns.

It's significant that our plan is released while we continue to feel the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a critical time to clearly focus on the mental health and well-being of everyone in our Georgian community, now and in the years to come.

A sincere thank you is extended to everyone who participated in creating this strategic plan. Your shared wisdom and experience will contribute to our goal of flourishing mental health and well-being for all members of our Georgian community.

MaryLynn West-Moynes

President and CEO

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Georgian's commitment to mental health and well-being

Georgian College's comprehensive and holistic Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan will guide our work in coming years to support members of our college community facing mental health challenges and to promote well-being of students and employees at all Georgian campuses.

According to the [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#), while one in five people may experience a mental health problem in any given year, promoting and protecting mental health takes five in five.

It is essential that students and employees are supported in their mental health and well-being. We will ensure adequate resources, support and training opportunities to recognize, respond and refer when others may be facing mental health problems. Our efforts will help to erase the stigma associated with experiencing a mental illness, and ensure help-seeking continues.

Georgian's Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan includes five strategic themes:

- Institutional structure: Organizational planning and policy
- Mental health literacy and promoting well-being
- Self-management and coping skills
- Supports and services
- Crisis management

Each theme includes a commitment and key actions. Our promise is to not only deliver on these obligations, but also to measure them and report on progress. The plan includes outcomes for a mentally healthy college community to continually assess the state of well-being at Georgian College.

# DEFINITIONS

## What is mental health?

**Mental health** is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

## What is well-being?

**Well-being** is defined not merely by the absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

## What is flourishing?

**Flourishing** is defined as a state where people experience positive emotions, positive psychological functioning and positive social functioning, most of the time, and includes multiple components such as growth and resilience.

# MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

A 2019 [American College Health Association survey](#) of Canadian postsecondary students clearly illustrates the need for action on student mental health and well-being. Survey responses showed within the past year:

- 51.6 per cent of respondents had felt so depressed it was difficult to function
- 68.9 per cent experienced overwhelming anxiety
- 16.4 per cent seriously considered suicide
- 2.8 per cent attempted suicide

The [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) (CAMH), tracks the serious toll mental health issues take on employees and business. It reports:

- Half a million Canadians miss work each week due to mental illness.
- In Canada, 30 per cent of disability claims are due to mental illness, accounting for 70 per cent of all disability costs.
- The estimated economic burden of mental illness in Canada is \$51 billion annually.

The evidence informs our decision to ensure Georgian's mental health and well-being programs and services support our entire college community – students and employees.

# OUR ROAD MAP

Georgian's Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan was more than a year in the making. The Mental Health and Well-Being Strategic Planning Group led development of the plan, supported by the Mental Health and Well-being Committee, which will lead implementation efforts. \*See Appendix for membership of both committees.

The principles of these committees were essential during the development phase and will continue to guide implementation of the plan. We value:

- a culture of excellence with respect to mental health and well-being
- holistic, comprehensive and strength-based approaches that promote well-being and safety, support community members with mental health problems and improve crisis prevention and response
- the use of evidence-based practices and the collection of data to guide initiatives and evaluate outcomes
- learning from the lived experience of our community members
- co-ordination with Georgian's Indigenization and Internationalization strategies
- inclusive consultation with key stakeholders and college community members
- strategic and creative use of resources
- shared collective responsibility among stakeholders for growing a healthy campus community

With the input of committee members from Georgian's Indigenous Services, the Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Planning Group incorporated teachings from the Action Wheel including vision, relationship, knowledge and action, to guide the process.

The Mental Health and Well-being Committee used the holistic principles of the Medicine Wheel that include the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual elements of self, as the framework for a comprehensive internal environmental scan.

A SOAR analysis of strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results helped to further focus our work.

Our approach reflected current best practices and key recommendations from multiple sources including:

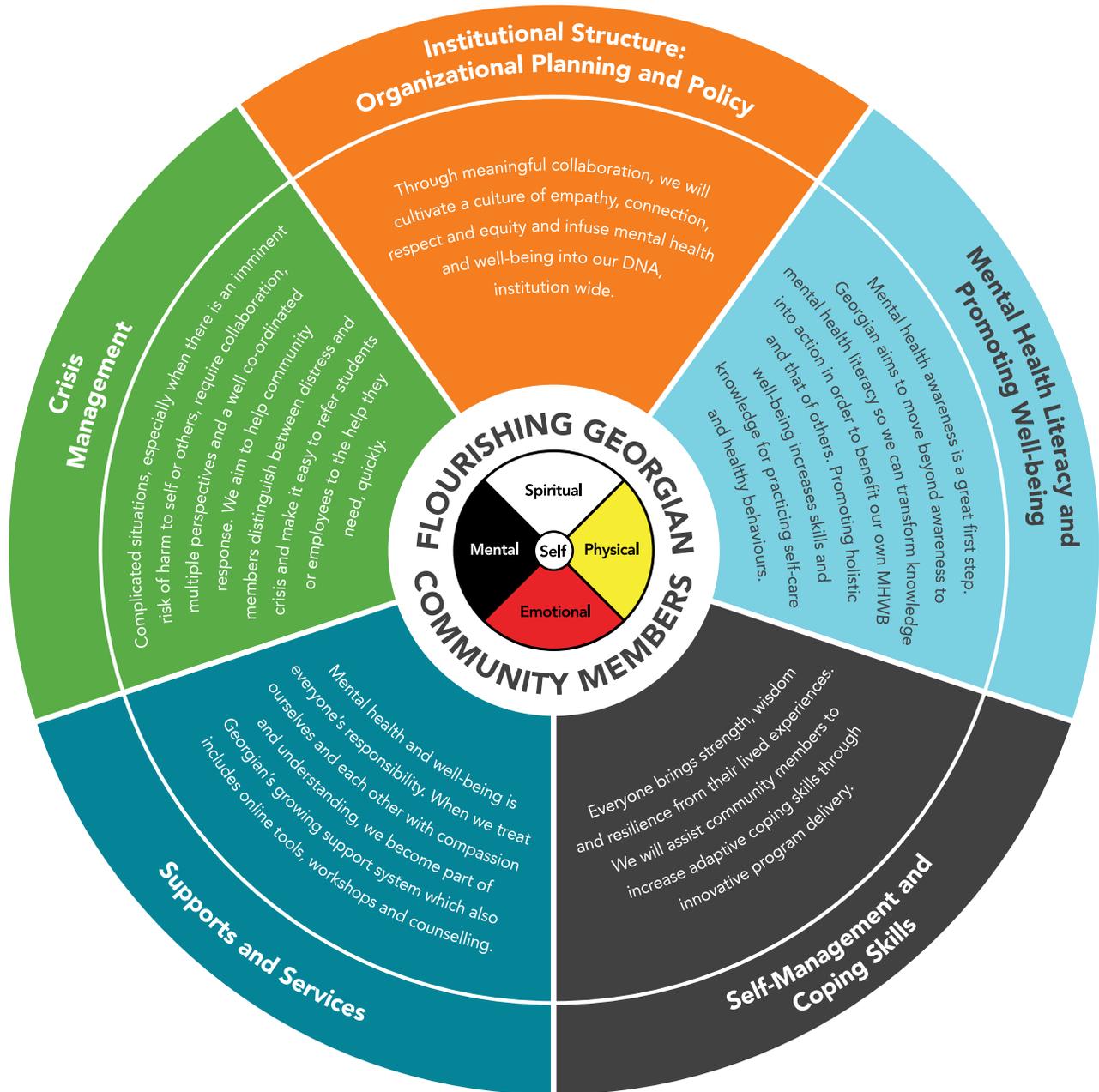
- [Post-Secondary Student Mental Health](#)
- [McLean and Company](#)
- the initial draft of the [Standard on Psychological Health and Safety for Post-Secondary Students](#)

More than 800 members of the college community from all campuses participated in the consultation phase between April and October 2019. Students and employees from a wide variety of academic programs, college departments and stakeholder groups provided their experience and insight to the process. Consultations included 27 focus group sessions, five key stakeholder interviews and 10 presentations conducted at events such as town halls and team meetings.

The key subjects emerging from these sessions resulted in the commitments made in our Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan

# STRATEGIC THEMES

Our comprehensive and holistic plan will guide our path toward flourishing mental health and well-being for everyone in our Georgian College community.



# INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE: ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING AND POLICY

Through meaningful collaboration, we will cultivate a culture of empathy, connection, respect and equity and infuse mental health and well-being into our DNA, college-wide.

**Commitment: Georgian college prioritizes mental health and well-being through foundational organizational conditions**

Key Actions	Success Outcomes
Incorporate mental health and well-being into Georgian’s college-wide strategic plan.	Mental health and well-being is a recognized priority at Georgian College
Develop a mental health policy and related procedures that are consistent with diversity and equity guidelines, anti-oppressive, culturally relevant and respectful.	Consistent foundation of mental health policy and procedures to guide all Georgian community members
Sign on to Okanagan Charter, An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.	Georgian meets charter principles on a continuous basis
Embed permanent roles, structures and resources needed to sustain annual strategic priorities and implementation.	Resources, such as permanent staff and dedicated budget in place. All initiatives in this plan actioned.
Enhance physical spaces through a lens of further promoting holistic well-being.	Enhanced well-being spaces at all campuses

# MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY AND PROMOTING WELL-BEING

Mental health awareness is a great first step. Georgian will move beyond awareness to mental health literacy so we can transform knowledge into action in order to benefit our own mental health and well-being and that of others. Promoting holistic well-being increases skills and knowledge for practicing self-care and healthy behaviours.

**Commitment: A holistic approach to promote mental health and well-being through opportunities that enhance mental health literacy for students and employees**

Key Actions	Success Outcomes
Provide a variety of relevant learning opportunities to enhance mental health awareness and promote literacy.	Participants indicate increased understanding of how to recognize, respond to and seek support for mental health concerns
Use innovative, non-traditional communication methods to disseminate mental health and well-being information.	Increased participation, social media and web views and interaction
Enhance partnerships to promote holistic mental health awareness, including physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being, through events, activities and aligned communication each semester at all campuses.	Equitable access to participate in mental health activities college-wide
Partner with Indigenous Resource Centres and the Segal International Centre to provide meaningful, culturally-relevant mental health initiatives and co-ordinated messages.	Increased co-ordination, participation and engagement in activities of all three departments

# SELF-MANAGEMENT AND COPING SKILLS

Everyone brings strength, wisdom and resilience from their lived experiences. We will assist community members to increase adaptive coping skills.

**Commitment: Enhanced coping skills and strengthened support systems to build personal and community resilience**

Key Actions	Success Outcomes
Develop and implement a mental health peer mentor program.	Mental health training, method of delivery and evaluation is established. Increased number of mentors trained and students supported.
Increase positive connection and communication with “constellation of supports” through online resources for family and other supporters.	Increased web page views and positive responses through feedback mechanism
Identify and deliver evidence-based group programs, workshops and facilitated discussions that enhance personal, professional and Georgian community well-being.	Increased participation and positive responses through feedback forms, employee engagement and student satisfaction
Provide opportunities for Georgian community members to understand the benefit of and participate in mindfulness.	Increased opportunities for participation in mindful activities and programs. Evaluation demonstrates evidence of enhanced social-emotional competencies.

# SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Mental health and well-being is everyone’s responsibility. When we treat ourselves and each other with compassion and understanding, we become part of Georgian’s growing support system which also includes online tools, workshops and counselling.

**Commitment: Georgian College community members have access to robust and varied services that support mental health and well-being**

Key Actions	Success Outcomes
Build on Georgian’s Stepped Care Model to provide a co-ordinated service delivery system that best meets the mental health needs of our Georgian community.	Supports and services are offered based on client choice, and at the level and intensity appropriate to the situation
Communicate a pathway of services to ensure Georgian community members know how to access and make referrals to services.	Employees are aware of how to access services and students are directed to the appropriate service in a timely manner; reducing “student run-around”
Determine ways to improve access to services through digital transformation.	Equitable student service delivery for all campuses
Enhance equitable employee access to mental health and well-being support.	EAP benefits extended to non-full-time employees. Fitness centre subsidy extended to non-full-time employees. Improved employee engagement.
Advocate with external partners to enhance student access to collaborative medical and mental health care.	Georgian participation at municipal and provincial forums responsible for medical and mental health service delivery

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Complicated situations, especially when there is an imminent risk of harm to self or others, require collaboration, multiple perspectives and a well co-ordinated response. We will help community members distinguish between distress and crisis and make it easy to refer students and employees to the help they need, quickly.

**Commitment: The Georgian community supports life promotion and responds to urgent mental health situations quickly and appropriately**

Key Actions	Success Outcomes
Increase awareness of protective factors that promote life, and risk factors for suicide.	A suite of evidence-based training in life promotion and suicide prevention delivered annually to employees and students. Positive feedback results.
Enhance the capacity of Georgian community members to recognize and respond to risk factors and crisis situations.	Employees are aware of how to access services and students are directed to the appropriate level of service.
Co-ordinate and communicate existing structures that identify at-risk students and activate an early intervention support plan.	Existing structures assessed and opportunities leveraged to align/co-ordinate services

# NEXT STEPS

While our goals are ambitious, implementation of this strategic plan will recognize day-to-day realities. One of our guiding principles is the strategic and creative use of resources. Both financial and human resources are finite, and much as we wish to, we can't accomplish everything at once.

Initial implementation will last three years. In following years, we will expand on these accomplishments.

We start from a position of strength with significant mental health and well-being supports, services and initiatives already in place at Georgian. Our objective is to purposefully align these into a cohesive system, then build on this foundation to ensure a sustainable future.

## Short-term goals

In the first year of this plan, Georgian will ensure all required structures and processes are in place. We will continue to support the holistic well-being of community members and expand communication and learning opportunities to support increased mental health awareness. In addition, we will focus on the critical issues of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention to align our knowledge and actions to best support at-risk members of our Georgian community.

## Medium-term goals

In the second and third year of the plan we will work to ensure Georgian community members understand their specific role in supporting mental health and well-being and incorporate it into their teaching, service delivery and daily interactions. We will continue to foster broad knowledge and use of well-defined pathways to supports and services. We will leverage technology to more equitably serve students and employees at all campuses. And we will employ baseline measurements collected in year one to continually measure our progress and improve outcomes.

## Long-term goals

This plan will form the foundation for a culture of well-being and positive mental health at Georgian College. Our future goal is sustainability through ongoing cohesion and collaboration. We will continue to foster a strong connection between students, employees, external partners, family members and others who provide a 'constellation of supports'. We will act in our work, our studies and our lives outside of Georgian, on the knowledge that we all play a role in fostering flourishing mental health and well-being in ourselves and others.

Numerous individuals and college departments will share responsibility for acting on our commitments. Much important, collective work lies ahead of us.

Georgian is grateful to the many students and employees who shared their wisdom, time, thoughts and passion during the development of this plan, and to everyone who will now collaborate to make this vision a reality.

# APPENDIX 1

## Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Planning Group

### Leaders and faculty members responsible for developing our strategic plan

David Coward, Vice President Human Resources, Executive Co-Sponsor

Brian Muscat, Dean of Students, Executive Co-Sponsor

Jennifer Lloyd, Manager, Mental Health Strategy, Committee Chair

Roman Calvano, Director, Campus Safety Services

Janet Davis, Executive Director, Planning Analysis and Improvement

Stephanie Dimech, Dean, Human Services and Community Safety

Melanie Doyle, Professor, Health, Wellness and Sciences

Erin Fawcett, HR Administrator, Human Resources and Organizational Development

Kim Garraway, Communications Specialist, Marketing and Communications

Kate Henry, Project Coordinator, Mental Health Strategy

Trista Hill, Professor, Liberal Arts, Faculty Union Representative

Lynn Hynd, Campus Manager, John Di Poce South Georgian Bay Campus

Craig MacKenzie, Academic Program Technologist, Support Staff Union President

Steve McDonald, Professor, Human Services and Community Safety

Greg McGregor, Manager, Indigenous Services and Access Programs

Bradley Norton, President, Barrie Campus GCSA

Madison Roy, President, Owen Sound Campus GCSA

Heather Stefaniuk, Administrative Assistant, Student and Learning Services

Greg Taylor, Counsellor, Student Success

Fred Varkaris, Dean, Owen Sound Campus

Kelly Watson, Business Manager, International Education and Development

# APPENDIX 2

## Mental Health and Well-being Committee

### Champions responsible for implementing our strategic plan

Jennifer Lloyd, Manager, Mental Health Strategy, Committee Co-Chair

Michele McConney, Manager, Athletics and Fitness, Committee Co-Chair

Suzie AddisonToor, Director, Centre for Changemaking and Social Innovation, Committee Co-Chair

Vanessa Doering, Coordinator, Organizational Development, Human Resources and Organizational Development

Melanie Doyle, Professor, Health Wellness and Sciences

Maria Edwards, Fitness Coordinator, Athletics and Fitness Centre

Kim Garraway, Communications Specialist, Marketing and Communications

Tamara Hammond, Research/Statistics Specialist, Institutional Research

Kate Henry, Project Coordinator, Mental Health Strategy

Sarah Hunter, Writing Centre Technologist, Student Leadership and Transition Services

David Laliberte, Manager, Athletics and Recreation, Athletics and Fitness Centre

Jose Jimenez Quintero, VP Fitness and Health, Barrie Campus GCSA

Jessica Lewis, Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Campus Safety Services

Samantha Marriner, SWAC Advisor, School College Partnerships

Kathy Marsden, Indigenous Student Counsellor, Student Success

Andrea Murray, Welcome Centre Assistant, Office of the Registrar

Jennifer Parsons, Counsellor, Student Success

Jenna Peters, Research Analyst, Institutional Research

Heidi Stanley, Professor, Human Services and Community Safety

Carrie Shute, Counsellor, Student Success

Greg Taylor, Counsellor, Student Success

Christopher Varney, Manager, Safety & Emergency Planning, Campus Safety Services

# APPENDIX 3

## Select local mental health resources for students and employees

Dufferin/Caledon crisis line, 905.278.9036, 1.888.811.2222

Grey Bruce crisis line, 1.877.470.5200

Muskoka crisis line, 1.800.461.5424

Simcoe County crisis line, 1.800.893.8333

List of resources by county, [ementalhealth.ca](http://ementalhealth.ca)

Drug/Alcohol Helpline, 1.800.565.8603

[Big White Wall](#), Online mental health and well-being services

## Additional select mental health resources for students

Georgian College counselling

Barrie, 705.722.1523 or visit room B110

Orillia, 705.329.3113 or visit room A200

Owen Sound, 519.376.0840, ext. 2099 or visit room D105

Midland, 705.526.3666

Muskoka, 705.646.7629

Orangeville, 519.940.0331

South Georgian Bay, 705.445.2961

Good2Talk helpline, 1.866.925.5454 Free confidential helpline providing professional counselling and information referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being to postsecondary students in Ontario

An extensive list of Georgian College and external mental health and well-being supports, services and resources is posted on the [student portal](#).

An extensive list of Georgian College and external mental health and well-being supports, services and resources is posted on the [employee portal](#).