

CHECKING IN ON YOUR STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

In the wake of another stay-at-home order and enhanced safety precautions, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are **reporting increased anxiety, emotional fatigue, distress, and burn-out**. Indeed, the past year has been extremely challenging for all and our trainees face having to work on site daily, academic and research demands, uncertainty and reduced productivity, health and family issues.

As the pandemic drags on as do the measures to mitigate its impact, our trainees continue to work under stressful conditions and the veil of uncertainty. It remains critical that you try to connect with your trainees and foster a research environment that supports their wellbeing as well as their academic success.

Some of your students may experience distress. You can help by providing a safe environment, by supporting your trainee and by connecting them to resources available at the Faculty and in the broader community. The best way to do this is to apply Psychological First Aid, whose core principles explained below, can help you best communicate with your trainees about their wellbeing.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID (MORE FEET ON THE GROUND)



RECOGNIZE UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR

Do you see any behaviour that is out of character? E.g. unkempt appearance, missed appointments, deterioration in the quality or quantity of work (within reasonable limits given the pandemic), direct statements indicating distress or loss, difficulty controlling emotions, evidence of hopelessness or withdrawal?



RESPOND WITH EMPATHY AND CONCERN

Reach out to your trainees for a check-in. Open the conversation by asking how they are doing. Make sure you have time to listen. Respond with non-judgmental and supportive language. Share your concerns:

"I am concerned about...I wonder if we could talk about..."

Ask open-ended questions and listen. Express your concern.

"I have noticed..."

"I hear what you are saying..."

And most importantly: *"How can I help you to..."*



REFER THE TRAINEE TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The trainees may require the counselling services of the Faculty Wellness Office, or perhaps require academic support. Many resources are available to help.

Non-judgmental and supportive language includes:

"What do you need in order to..."

"Can I suggest..."

"The Faculty's Wellness Office and our website have lots of resources. Can we look at it together?"

HELPING YOUR STUDENTS CONNECT TO THE RIGHT SERVICES

Examples of Situations	Who to Contact?	Description of Services
A student in distress: wants to hurt himself or hurt others.	Protection Services 141 Louis Pasteur Phone : 613-562-5411 protection@uottawa.ca OR 911 if off campus.	Protection Services officers have a mobile team that has the necessary training to intervene in crisis and mental health situations.
A student has difficulties meeting the academic demands of their program, or experiences mental health challenges.	Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Alain Stintzi Phone: 613-562-5800 ext. 8216 astintzi@uottawa.ca	The Vice-Dean, Graduate Studies is always the first point of contact and should be aware of all of these types of situations.
A student who is not in immediate distress, but is seeking help (mental health, counselling, support, etc.) and does not know where to go.	Faculty Wellness Program Roger Guindon Hall, Room 3028G Tel.: 613-562-5800 ext. 8507 wellness@uOttawa.ca	The Faculty Wellness Program can provide counselling services and will refer the student to additional appropriate services if required.
A student claims to be the victim of harassment or discrimination by a professor or another student, or who is a witness of such situations.	Human Rights Office 1 Stewart, room 121 Phone : 613-562-5222 respect@uottawa.ca Faculty Professionalism Reporting Service https://app.med.uottawa.ca/professionalism/	The Human Rights Office handles complaints of discrimination, harassment and sexual violence and provides impartial service to all. Its services are confidential. The Faculty of Medicine also has a professionalism policy and an online reporting tool that can also be used.
A student requires assistance with conflict resolution	Program Director and/or Vice Dean of Graduate Studies Contact information can be obtained here: https://med.uottawa.ca/graduate-postdoctoral/about/our-team University of Ottawa Ombudsperson https://www.uottawa.ca/ombudsperson/	Program director and/or Vice Dean of Graduate Studies provide support in managing conflict arising between students and between supervisors and students. The Ombudsperson is an independent service. Provide information, coaching and intervention support including mediation to resolve conflicts.
A student is in need of accommodation to enable them to be more successful in their studies. Ex. A student who must use special software to write an exam or do their work due to a disability.	SASS - Academic Accommodations Service (Access) Desmarais Hall, room 3172 55, Laurier Avenue East Phone : 613-562-5976 adapt@uottawa.ca	The Access Service is responsible for assessing, establishing, and implementing appropriate academic accommodations for students who have a temporary or permanent disability, with respect and reliability, within the framework of the various regulations and laws.
If a student is having financial challenges.	Financial Aid and Awards Service (FAAS) Desmarais Hall, room 3156 55, Laurier Avenue East Phone : 613-562-5734 loansandawards@uottawa.ca	Offers an array of financial resources (scholarships, government assistance, etc.)
Difficulty in writing assignments or weakness in writing.	Academic Writing Help Centre (AWHC) 110, University Phone : 613-562-5601 asupp@uottawa.ca	Develop writing skills.

WELLNESS SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

Emergency Services (distress, crisis situation)

Mental Health and Substance Use			
<p>Protection Services Must be the first service to consider on campus in case of an emergency. 613-562-5411</p>	<p><u>Good2talk</u> (24/7 Bilingual Student Helpline) Helpline run by professional counsellors who listens to students. Free and confidential support services. 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868. (For French, text ALLOJECOUTEON to the same number).</p>	<p><u>Crisis Text Line (24/7)</u> Text HOME to 686868 from anywhere in Canada - no need for a data plan or internet connection (For French, text PARLER to the same number)</p>	<p><u>Mental Health Crisis Line - 24/7</u> (bilingual) Within Ottawa : 613-722-6914 Outside Ottawa : 1-866-996-0991</p>
<p><u>ConnexOntario</u> Helpline that provides treatment service information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness or gambling. Helpful, supportive System Navigation Specialists answer all calls, emails or webchat requests 24/7 (bilingual). Service is free and confidential. 1-866-531-2600</p>	<p><u>Distress Centre Ottawa and Region</u> (English only) 613-238-3311</p>	<p>Montfort Renaissance Inc: 24/7: 613-241-4525</p>	<p>Ottawa Public Health: 1-866-426-8885</p>
<p>Canada Suicide Prevention Service: 1-833-456-4566 [24/7], www.crisisservicescanada.ca</p>	<p>Hope for Wellness Help Line (for indigenous peoples): 1-855-242-3310, Online chat: www.hopeforwellness.ca</p>	<p>Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366</p>	

Violence			
<p>Domestic Violence 24/7 Crisis Line: 613-234-5181</p>	<p>Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, 24/7: 613-562-2333</p>	<p>CALACS Francophone d'Ottawa: 613-789-8096</p>	<p>Oshki Kizis Lodge (Indigenous Women): 613-789-1141</p>
<p>Fem'Aide Ottawa: 1-877-336-2433</p>			

Other support and Services (non-crisis)

Housing

Action Housing/Action Logement: 613-562-8219	The City of Ottawa: 311	The YMCA Family Shelter: 613-788-5063	
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LGBTQIA* Resources

PLFAG Canada: 1-888-530-6777	Kind Space: 613-563-4818	The Trevor Project 24/7 Support Line: 1-866-488-7386	Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366
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Counselling Services

<p>The Faculty Wellness Program can provide counselling services to all members of the faculty (undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty members). Waiting period: a reply within 48 hours, meeting with a counsellor within 2 weeks To make an appointment, contact the Faculty Wellness Program by email at wellness@uottawa.ca</p>	<p>TAO - Therapy Assistance Online Free by using your @uottawa.ca email address and is available 24/7 Therapy Assistance Online is a platform of educational tools and modules that can help you understand your many stressors and identify ways to manage them. TAO offers therapy tailored to your schedule and lifestyle. TAO's educational modules can be completed at your own pace, when you want, wherever you are.</p>	<p>GSAÉD - Student Support Program - SSP (Morneau Shepell): Complementary and confidential service to graduate students 24/7 (bilingual) 1-855-649-8641 https://gsaed.ca/en/services/ http://mystudentsupport.ca/softLogin.html</p>	<p>Support groups for international students offered by the University of Ottawa's Counseling Services.</p>
<p>Counselling Connect provides quick access to a free phone or video counselling session to residents in the Ottawa region.</p>			

Online Resources

<p>eMentalHealth.ca A website that provides anonymous, confidential and trustworthy information. The site allows searches by location and service, 24/7 (bilingual).</p>	<p>Information resources about mental health and wellness</p>	<p>Campus Activities offered by a variety of clubs, groups and communities at the University of Ottawa. Select the tags "Wellness" or "Mental health" to find activities.</p>	<p>Ontario Community information and services 24/7 (bilingual): 211</p>
<p>Québec InfoSanté Helpline 24/7 (bilingual): 811</p>			

HELPING SOMEONE IN DISTRESS

HIGH RISK OF HARM

Behaviour that is violent, destructive, harmful, aggressive or threatening to self or others.

This is an emergency.

uOttawa Protection Services (on campus)
24/7

613-562-5411

Off campus Emergency Services, 24/7:
911

MODERATE RISK OF HARM

Changes in personal appearance and hygiene, low mood, avoidance of people, substance abuse concerns, disorganized thinking, expressions of hopelessness or reference to suicide.

Faculty Wellness Office

Roger Guindon Hall, Room 3028G
Tel.: 613-562-5800 ext. 8507
wellness@uOttawa.ca

LOW RISK OF HARM

Difficulty with studies, family or relationship problems, chronic health conditions, difficulty concentrating, issues with sleep, increased interpersonal conflict, grief and loss.