

*Thrive a verb*

*to prosper or flourish*

Who does not want to Thrive (and help others to Thrive)?

But how can we find time to do it? We gallop from sunup to sundown, and then into the night as we try and squeeze more out of the time we have in each day. Depending on who we are, we may think about physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellness and then wonder when to do it. I know I do. I download apps that remind me to move every few hours and to drink water and to do some physical activity while at my desk and in meetings. I go for “walkie talkies” – what I call the meetings we have as we walk around our campus. At North Island College, regardless of which campus we are at, we can walk through trees and smell fresh air and re-centre ourselves before we head back into our offices. In my mind, this makes the walkie talkies scenic as well as productive. It does raise the question, am I/are we Thriving?

Use of the word Thrive is inviting. The [Okanagan Charter](#) uses the word thrive intentionally and in Calls to Action 1.3 and 1.4 (for those who like to be specific) views thriving as an opportunity and challenge for us personally and collectively. Following the intentional use of the word leads me to the [Thrive campaign](#), which started at UBC over a decade ago. Patty Hambler and Suzanne Jolly initiated a campaign that focused on highlighting how important mental health is to individuals who comprise our communities at higher education institutions. Over the years, the initiative has spread across Canada and has morphed. At North Island College, we provide our community with opportunities to participate in activities that improve wellness and work to create an environment that encourages members of our community to make mindful choices about their wellness; to make it easier for people to move from “I/we should do this” to “how can I/we do this”.

At North Island College, we celebrated [Thrive](#) in October. In that month, members of the college went to yoga and salsa danced, we attended lectures and learned about how to be strategic in our pursuit of mental wellness, we coloured and folded paper, we snacked and chatted, and we read new books.





I did two intentional things during Thrive October 2022. I attended the launch of the “Breaking the Closet” audiobook; this book was created by two Bachelor of Science in Nursing students, Alfie Esperanza and Mercedes Dyssernick, whose goal was to promote inclusion, visibility, and empathy towards queer students on campus. Alfie made these fabulous 2SLGBTQ+ narwals as gift-prizes and this image now adorns my office wall. Every day, my eyes feast on this image and my heart fills with joy. The other thing

I did? I walked through the beautiful tall trees on our campus alone; I made time daily to find a quiet spot and plant my feet on the land. I learned that I could empty my mind, and for 7 minutes I could stand and breathe.

Now I look forward to Thrive in February 2023; I wonder what activities we will offer the campus community. And will I try a climbing wall, or think about going down a zipline? I may try some bhangra dancing even though I am rhythmically challenged. Maybe I will try a new book, something I would not usually pick up.

Until then, I will look at the beautiful narwals on my office wall and walk through the tall trees... I will actively implement the skills I learned, and actively Thrive. I will also again come alongside others on our campuses to help us all Thrive together.

*Mez Jiwaji, with encouragement from Felicity Blaiklock*

*North Island College*