

# Building Capacity with the National Standard

Post-Secondary Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

February 27, 2023



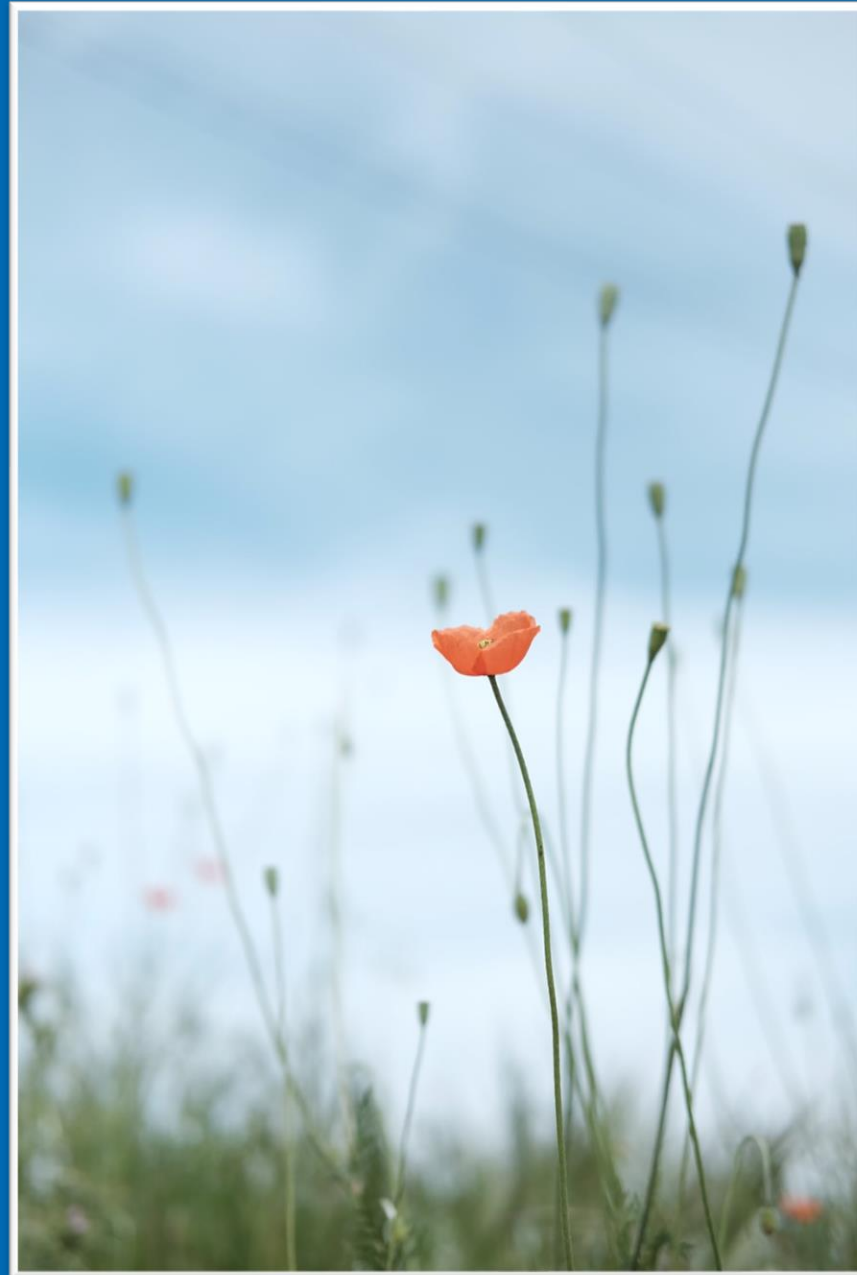
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# Support



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# Today's Overview

- Overview of the Standard
- Connections with the Okanagan Charter
- *Guiding Your Work* resource



# What is the Standard?

An instrument to **ignite further action**, providing **guidance** with an emphasis on **continuous improvement** to address the factors relevant to mental health and well-being of post-secondary students.



## The Standard supports the following **key outcomes**:

1. Raise awareness about mental health and decrease mental illness stigma
2. Provide healthier and safer institutional environments
3. Improve opportunities for student success and flourishing
4. Promote life and resiliency skills that students can use at school, at work, and in daily life

## The Standard was developed with these **guiding principles**:

- Student-centred
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Knowledge-informed
- Health promotion and reducing harm
- Thriving community and culture of well-being
- Continuous improvement



# Standard Starter Kit

## Quick-reference Summary

### National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students

*A concise overview of the Standard, why it's important and what's in it.*

The *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students* is the world's first standard to help post-secondary institutions support positive mental health and well-being for students. Its voluntary guidelines were developed by an expert technical committee and informed by dialogue with students, administrators, service providers, health agencies, governments, and individuals with lived and living experience of mental illness from across the country.

#### Why this Standard

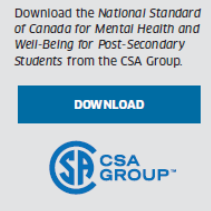
Three out of every four mental health problems have been first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 24, when many are in or just out of post-secondary education. More than half of all students surveyed in the 2019 National College Health Assessment said they had experienced feeling depressed to the point of finding it hard to function. Nearly 70% had felt overwhelmed by anxiety – and almost 90% said they had felt overwhelmed by everything they were expected to do.

Post-secondary institutions in Canada have done a lot of work to implement student mental health strategies and initiatives: now with a voluntary systematic pan-Canadian framework for sharing knowledge-based best practices, there's a chance to work toward even more positive outcomes for more people.

#### Benefits of Implementing the Standard

The Standard is expected to help institutions:

- Raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental illness
- Improve connection and belonging within their learning communities
- Increase on- and off-campus access to student supports
- Promote life and resilience skills for school, work and daily life
- Provide healthier and safer learning environments
- Improve opportunities for student success



## What's in the Standard?

The Standard is adaptable for any post-secondary institution: each can decide what is achievable given its specific situation, resources and local or community context, and each can set its own priorities. Using a knowledge-informed framework, the Standard creates a platform for key messages while helping an institution focus its energy and resources on assessing capacity and priorities. Here's a quick overview of the actionable areas:

### FIRST

#### Leadership

Recommended actions:

- Demonstrate ongoing and visible commitment to the Standard
- Dedicate resources to implementation
- Oversee and promote implementation
- Set measurable objectives and evaluate progress against them

#### Policy and Practice

Recommended actions:

- Review existing policies with a mental health and well-being lens
- Make it a requirement to consider mental health in all future policies and decisions
- Include student mental health in strategic goals, planning, resource allocation decisions and community relationships

### NEXT

#### Stakeholder Engagement

Recommended actions:

- Keep in contact with all stakeholders, including students
- Work with student unions, associations and groups (including equity-seeking groups)
- Involve students in all evaluation processes
- Share results with students
- Get meaningful input from diverse groups of students

#### Planning

Recommended actions:

- Gather data on psychosocial, institutional and other factors; student needs; and the current state of policies, services, resources, programs and student outcomes
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Set priorities, goals, objectives and targets, as well as applicable actions
- Report on progress

### Strategy Development

Recommended actions:

- Create a supportive, safe and inclusive environment
- Increase literacy and reduce stigma through training, campaigns and culturally inclusive mental health awareness activities
- Set clear and consistent policies to ensure accessibility and accommodations
- Promote early recognition of distress and intervention
- Offer a range of mental health supports
- Coordinate services across all service areas

### ONGOING

#### Privacy and Confidentiality

Recommended actions:

- Ensure all interactions with students respect privacy and confidentiality principles and laws
- Share no private and personal health information without informed consent, except as required by law

#### Tracking your Progress

Recommended actions:

- Create an evaluation plan with clear structure, process and outcome indicators
- Ensure the plan includes a process for reporting and sharing the results

#### Improvement

Recommended actions:

- Evaluate continuously
- Review results and make improvements
- Share contextualized results and knowledge with your internal community.
- Share knowledge and best practices to support the continuous improvement of the broader post-secondary community

For the full details, download the *National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*.

DOWNLOAD





The Standard is **aspirational**  
and meant to be understood  
as a **journey**



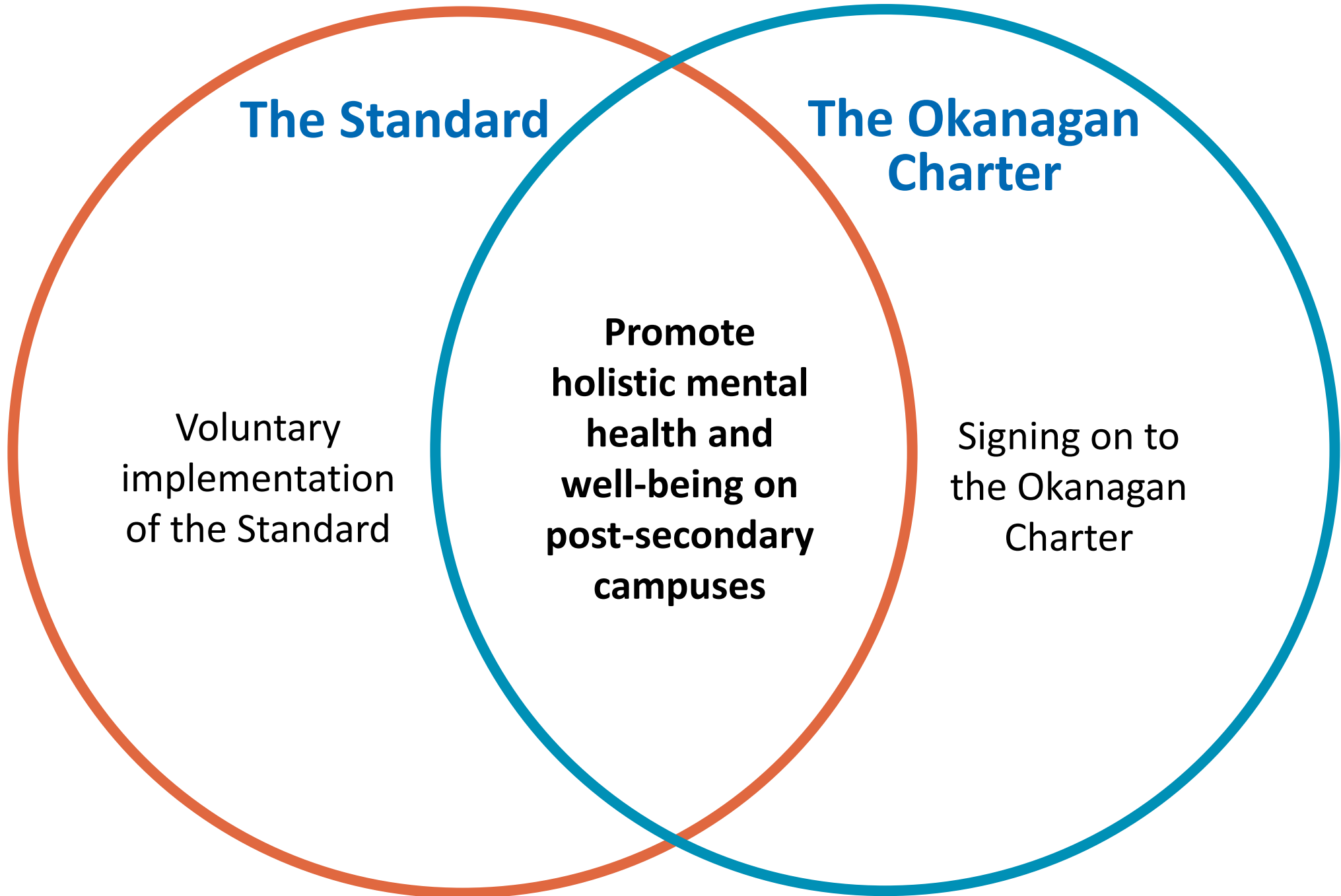
## The Standard is a shared responsibility

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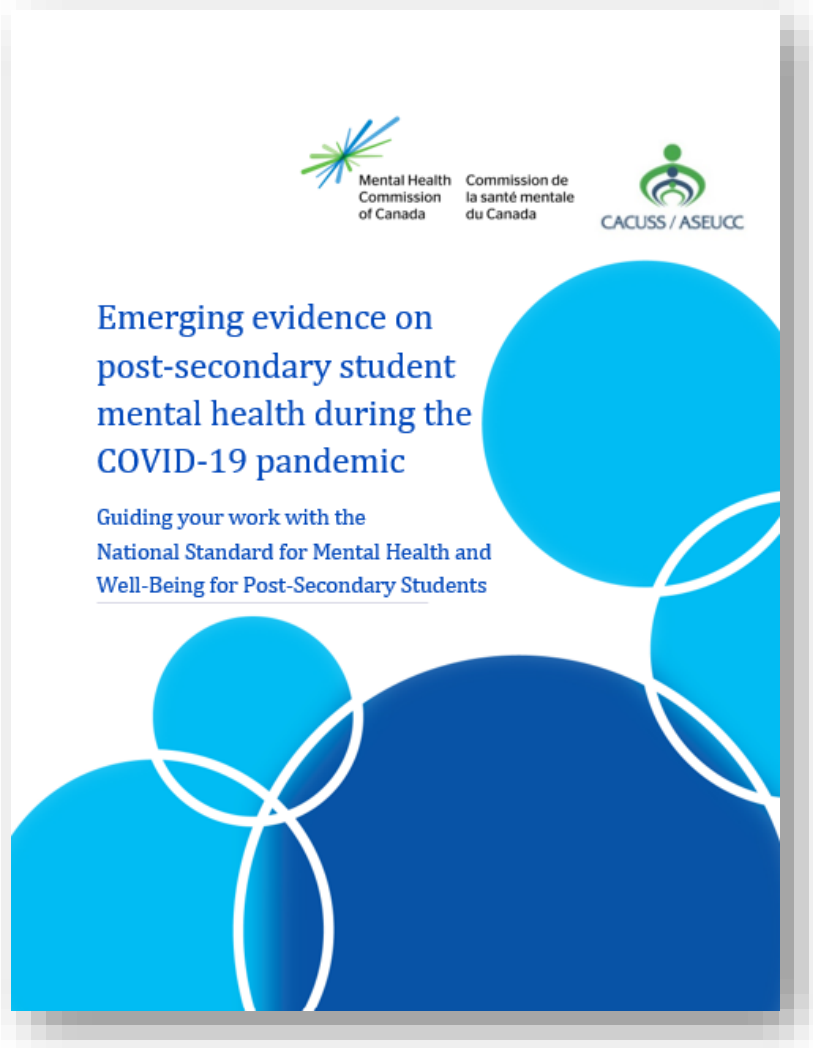
Post-secondary institutions cannot meet this growing challenge alone. An approach to supporting student mental health and well-being that encompasses all **students, faculty, and staff** within the post-secondary community, in addition to all stakeholders in the broader community, is vital.

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# Guiding Your Work with The National Standard



- Learning Environments
- Mental Health Supports
- Individual and Interpersonal Factors
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

# Learning Environments

## Top academic concerns for students:

- lack of in-person social connections with peers
- online learning fatigue
- motivation and concentration issues
- increased academic workload due



# Daniel Major on Learning Environments



# Learning Environments

## Recommendations from CACUSS report and Standard:

- Direct efforts at key transition times for students (e.g. admission, orientation, transfers, graduation)
- Consider factors that influence overall wellbeing in learning environments
- Incorporate mental health lens to whole post-secondary environment



# Individual & Interpersonal Factors

- Students acquired both adaptive and maladaptive COVID-19 coping mechanisms

## **Related comments from student affairs professionals:**

“In summary, while students acquired new adaptive skills such as accessing virtual mental health support, seeking support from family, and connecting with peers online, when it comes to maladaptive strategies, the “usual suspects” – the procrastination, internet, and substance addiction – become worse.”





# Individual & Interpersonal Factors

## Recommendations from CACUSS report and Standard:

- Taking a socio-ecological approach to assess factors that impact students
- Provide psychoeducation on campus to support healthy coping strategies



# Mental Health Supports

## Top clinical challenges:

- Jurisdictional issues (57%)
- Adapting to an online environment (47%)
- Crisis management (46%)

## Top take-aways campuses planned to continue in the 2021-22 academic year:

- Improved flexibility of service delivery (63%)
- Improved service delivery (53%)



# Mental Health Supports

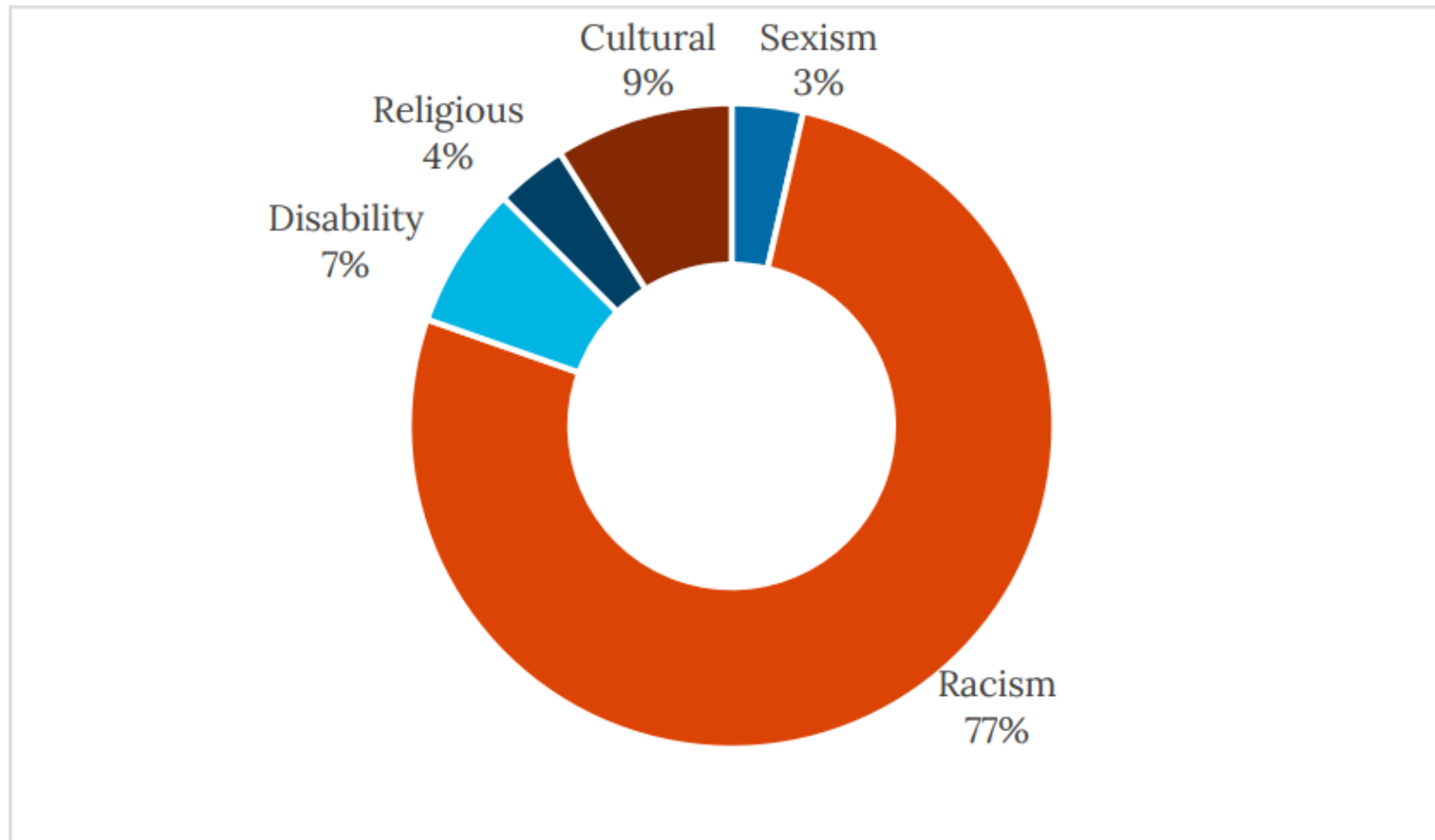
## Recommendations from CACUSS report and Standard:

- Ensure services are timely, coordinated, and accessible
- Community collaboration (e.g. local hospitals and mental health services, spiritual leaders, Elders)
- Develop strategies for crisis management and suicide postvention



# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

## Most pressing concerns related to discrimination



# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

## Recommendations from CACUSS report and Standard:

- Student centered design, including students with lived experience from equity-deserving groups
- Culturally contextualized services
- Flexible application of policies and processes to support marginalized students



# Campus Mental Health Action Tracker



Campus **Mental Health**  
Action Tracker

[About This Tool](#)

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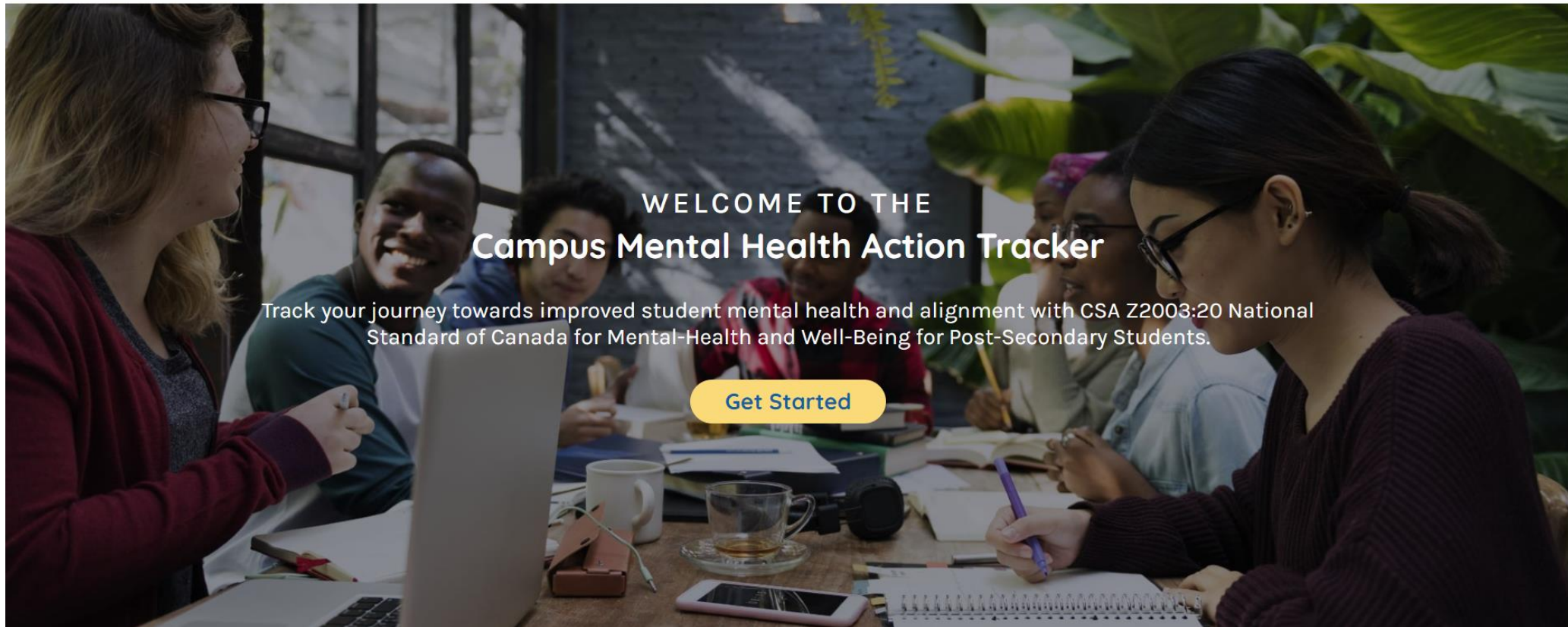
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## WELCOME TO THE Campus Mental Health Action Tracker

Track your journey towards improved student mental health and alignment with CSA Z2003:20 National Standard of Canada for Mental-Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students.

[Get Started](#)



# Thank you!

## Any questions?

StudentStandard@MentalHealthCommission.ca



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# Golnaz Shirzadi on Mental Health Supports

