



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

February 17, 2022
Our Ref. 124307

Re: Supporting students' mental health throughout the year

Dear Colleagues:

Post-secondary students manage many competing priorities and challenges throughout the academic year. Balancing studies and jobs, being away from home and dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic can have an overwhelming effect on students' mental health. That is why it is vital for students to know what mental health supports are available for them.

We are promoting Here2Talk again this winter, to remind students that their mental health is a priority, and they are never alone. We want to ensure all B.C. students are aware that access to free, 24/7, confidential, and immediate mental health counselling and referral services is available.

Here2Talk can be accessed at here2talk.ca, by downloadable app, or by phone. Students can search for the free Here2Talk app in either the Apple App Store or Google Play. Through the app, students can start a chat session with a counsellor, and sessions can be conducted in multiple languages upon availability. Students in B.C. can call toll free: 1-877-857-3397, or direct: (604) 642-5212, while students residing abroad can call: +1-604-642-5212 (international calling charges may apply).

This campaign and its materials are available to supplement your campus services and mental health resources. We would be grateful if you could share the pictures, posters, and social media content provided in the attached Campaign Kit to help increase visibility of Here2Talk on your campuses, offices, and in prominent student spaces. Our campaign ads have also been refreshed to reflect B.C.'s diverse student population as we aim to break down all barriers to student education and care.

Students have continued to use Here2Talk services more than 17,200 times since its development in 2020, and 73% of students say it provided the support and tools they needed. Students between ages 15-24 are more likely to report mental health concerns than any other age group. Therefore, we want to continue supporting students and post-secondary communities with our continual focus on proactive awareness campaigns, information dissemination, and harm reduction education and materials.

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In addition to Here2Talk, other resources remain available to help you support students:

- Students looking for substance use and mental health resources can navigate the health-care system thanks to wellbeing.gov.bc.ca, our guide to finding the right information and services for British Columbians in need.
- The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions has also expanded the Foundry network across B.C. through Foundry centres and the Foundry BC app where youth up to the age of 24 can access care services including counselling, peer support, primary care, and family support.
- Additionally, as part of its COVID-19 response, the Province provided grants to the Canadian Mental Health Association-BC to support suicide prevention initiatives in post-secondary institutions.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training continues to work with BCcampus to develop open-licensed, freely available mental health literacy and training resources for students, faculty and staff. These available resources provide guidance on how we can all support student mental wellness and we encourage your institutions to adopt them, including:

- Starting a Conversation About Mental Health: Foundational Training for Students
- Capacity to Connect: Supporting Students' Mental Health and Wellness, a facilitator's guide for use with faculty and staff; and,
- Let's Talk about Suicide: Raising Awareness and Supporting Students' Mental Health, a facilitator's guide for use with faculty and staff.

Thank you for supporting Here2Talk and for sharing this campaign! Your commitment to providing mental wellness services to students, faculty, and staff is very much appreciated, and we look forward to helping students access the information and resources that will support their wellbeing, academic journey, and life pursuits.

Sincerely,



Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Advanced Education
and Skills Training



Honourable Sheila Malcolmson
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions