

Executive Summary

Background

Post Secondary Institutions have been responding to mental health on campus in various ways. Ryerson responded to mental health concerns on campus by striking the RMHC (2012), with a vision to provide a campus wide, institutional response to mental health, reporting to Mohamed Lachemi (then PVPA) and Julia Hanigsberg (then VPAF). With over 20 members and multiple faculties represented, such as Community Services, Arts, and Engineering and Architectural Science. The committee was led and championed by Dr. Su-Ting Teo, then Director of Student Health and Wellness, and is currently chaired by Myra Lefkowitz, Manager, Workplace Wellbeing Services and Denise O'Neil Green, Assistant Vice-President/Vice-Provost Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

At its outset, the RMHC was comprised of a larger committee, and three working groups:

1. Policy & Procedures
2. Awareness, Education & Programs
3. Curriculum & Pedagogy

The RMHC has had several key activities and accomplishments. Some notable highlights:

- *Statement of Commitment to Mental Well-being*, formally endorsed by PVPA and VPAF.
- *Mental Well-being Principles for Ryerson Policies*, currently helping shape senate's academic policy review.
- *Ryerson Mental Health website*, created and populated with resources to support both individual and collective mental health for faculty, staff and students.
- *Mental Health Coordinator*, secured funding for a position that, as a large part of its mandate, provides coordination of initiatives and projects resulting from the RMHC.

Present Scope of Work (Current Status)

- RMHC members are coming together as 'informal clusters' to implement specific key mental health projects and initiatives. Examples include:
 - Mental Health 101 training workshops
 - Creating catalogue of flexible teaching practices used by Ryerson faculty to supplement the senate policy review
 - Increasing instructor capacity to weave well-being into classroom practices.
- In December 2016, this report was completed, capturing the history, present scope of work and recommendations for committee future. One intended use of the report is to act as a vehicle to inform the future iteration of the committee.
 - It is crucial that the RMHC's next iteration be mandated, structured and resourced in a way that continues to create a campus supportive of mental well-being, meeting the needs of faculty, staff and students in the current climate.

Recommendations

- To restructure the RMHC as a working advisory committee: a hybrid group that has oversight over activities and is also engaged in the work.
- That the vision (see Appendix 2, Ryerson Statement of Commitment to Mental Well-being) be updated by the committee based on current trends and unmet needs within the Ryerson community, aiming always for a systemic approach based on principles of social justice.
 - Broaden vision and become more focused and action oriented in core areas.
- Reporting structure options:
 - Continue to report through VPAF and PVPA.
 - Report to senior institutional level decision making body for strategic decision making and resource allocation.
 - Report through existing structures, i.e. APG and AFMG.

Ryerson Mental Health Committee Key Facts

It is crucial to continue to create the conditions for a holistic and cohesive approach to mental health and well-being across our entire Ryerson community.

This will help us create:

- Exceptional learning experiences
- Personal and professional development
- An empathetic and collaborative approach to building resiliency

Student Snapshot

National College Health Assessment 2016 Executive Summary for Ryerson University

49%

felt so depressed that it was difficult to function

67%

felt overwhelming anxiety

15%

seriously considered suicide

3%

attempted suicide

Staff Snapshot

Sun Life Financial Ryerson University Disability Report Card

#1

Mental Health ranked as the top claim type for both sick leave and long term disability at Ryerson University in 2016, with **22% of approved sick leave and 36% of approved LTD claims** being due to mental health.

+

The utilization rate for **Ryerson's Employee Assistance Program** has increased incrementally since its introduction. In 2016, there was a slight increase from the previous year and currently 19% of employees are using this service.

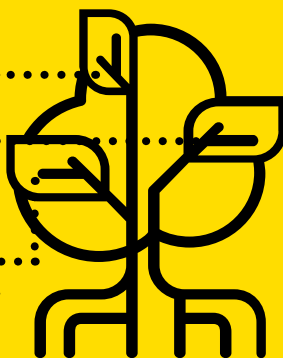
The Vision

Accomplishments

The RMHC was developed with a vision to provide a campus wide, institutional response to mental health concerns.

Areas of work

- Policies and Procedures
- Awareness, Education & Training
- Curriculum and Pedagogy



Areas of Impact

- **Exceptional Learning Experiences** (e.g., Partnering with LTO to reach instructors)
- **Policy Work** (e.g., creating catalogue of flexible and inclusive teaching practices)
- **Capacity Building** (e.g., skill building training to respond to individuals in distress)

- **2013**
 - Ryerson Statement of Commitment to Mental Well-being
 - Ryerson Mental Health Committee Report
 - Mental Well-being Principles for Ryerson Policies⁹
 - Ryerson Mental Health Town Hall
- **2014**
 - Ryerson Mental Health website
 - Mental Health 101
- **2015**
 - Transformational Café
 - Mental Health Coordinator hired
- **2016**
 - Mental Health Projects Assistant hired
 - CACUSS Presentation
 - Faculty Conference presentation