

CARING COMMUNITIES NETWORK

Program Overview

PROGRAM GOALS

The Caring Communities Network exists to build capacity of students to support and enhance student wellbeing. The program will:

- Provide orientation to promote effective use of student health and wellness services, resources, and promising practices by student leaders in student groups;
- Build connections for sharing best practices across student communities;
- Provide better support for student leaders who are already assuming some or many of these responsibilities in their respective units;
- Facilitate conversations about the proactive practices student communities can employ to enhance the wellbeing of students in their communities

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The MSU and wellness educators from the Student Wellness Lounge (SWELL) identified the need for a local resource person embedded within student communities to support the effective use of the University's programs to support student wellbeing. The exploration of this opportunity indicated that a Wellbeing Liaison within a student community club, or group, or a department could be beneficial in orienting student leaders to existing wellbeing programs and services. In addition, it was identified that a The Caring Communities Network can provide the opportunity for Liaisons to build connections across student communities to facilitate conversations on how to best support leadership team in support student wellbeing. By engaging with student leaders across communities to promote student health and wellbeing, the Wellbeing Liaison program also builds on the call for action outlined in the Okanagan Charter to "embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates."

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

The Caring Communities Network is coordinated by Student Affairs, the Student Wellness Centre (SWC), the Student Wellness Lounge (SWELL), the MSU Student Health Education Centre (SHEC), and the MSU President. All partners seek to collaborate to create engaging and inclusive learning environments in which all students can thrive.

Wellbeing Liaison Role

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Wellbeing Liaison role is designed to enhance the capacity of student leaders in creating a supportive campus environment. Liaisons are responsible for helping to connect students in their communities to initiatives related to student health and wellness such as SHEC, SWELL, SWC, Peer Support Line (PSL), Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN), Suicide Intervention training, Student Assistance Program (SAP), etc. This role also serves as a local resource, providing support for all members in a community who may have questions or need

assistance accessing services and resources, thereby facilitating capacity building within student communities. Student communities may decide to create a new role within their executive structure or decide to adapt an already existing role, i.e. Club Chaplain, VP Social, etc

SPECIFIC DUTIES

- Adapt university messaging, and priorities in a way that accounts for the unique cultural, religious, social needs of their community.
- Ensuring new students and members of their community are oriented on key health and wellness resources, mentalhealthstrategy.mcmaster.ca
- Providing a refresher or updates on student health and wellness services and resources to members of their community.
- Acting as a point person and key resource for members of their community needing assistance identifying, accessing, or effectively utilizing wellness services and resources and providing referral information, emergency protocols for students in crisis.
- Acting as a liaison to McMaster centralized services regarding trends, emerging issues, and unresolved problems related to student health and wellbeing.
- Facilitating opportunities for community members to adopt or engage in activities and best practices that enhance student mental health and wellbeing as a part of student success.

ORIENTATION AND SUPPORT

Orientation will be offered in a three-hour session in September 2017, with additional optional training offered throughout the year (e.g. safeTALK, Peer Support 101) The orientation will provide information on wellness programs and resources at McMaster and use case studies to explore best practices in supporting students' wellbeing while respecting boundaries within one's role. Regular email updates will be sent to Liaisons to provide information on new tools, resources and services for students. Back-up support, including consultation with mental health professionals, will be identified for those assuming the Wellbeing Liaison role to ensure they are adequately resourced. Liaisons are provided with a toolkit of resources that include information on campus resources and procedures. Regular Community of Practice meetings will allow Liaisons to connect with peers across campus and share practices and resources for their role.

TIME COMMITMENT AND LENGTH OF TERM

- Wellbeing Liaison Length of Term: October 1, 2017 - April 6, 2018 2-4 hours per month - this will vary depending on the needs of your club
- Program Orientation: 3-hours mandatory session in September 2017
- Community of Practice Meetings: 3 hours (1.5 hours in Term 1; 1.5 hours in Term 2)
- End of year program review meeting: 1.5 hours at beginning of April 2018
- Additional Training (optional)

Additional trainings are offered throughout the year. Liaisons will be notified as sessions are scheduled.

To register a Wellbeing Liaison for the Caring Communities Network, please visit msumcmaster.ca/ccnform.