

TAKE CARE MAC.

Your guide to taking care of
yourself and others in university



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University introduces new commitments, your well-being can be one of them!



Welcome to all the incoming McMaster students and welcome back to students returning to studies during the 2020-2021 Academic Year!

We can't know all the circumstances that people are coming to McMaster with this year, but we want to offer a this resource as an opportunity for reflection and an overview of information that might help you in your journey at McMaster.

There are many ways our wellness is influenced by the people, systems, and environment around us, and how we maintain our well-being will look different for each of us at different times. We're sharing a few ideas in this booklet to continue the conversation on these topics both individually and collectively as a McMaster community.

The Importance of Self-Care

Different things work for different people. There's no one-size fits-all kind of self-care. It's about finding what works for you and in what situations.

Meeting our basic needs: A basic mind-body connection is the foundation for everything else. Our mental/cognitive experiences are not isolated from our physical ones; addressing our wellness often requires making sure different needs are considered together. **Ex:** Having enough sleep, eating, taking care of physical health.

Just being: It's useful to spend time 'being' rather than 'doing' -also known as mindfulness or being present. This can include getting to know ourselves and our habits, respect our feelings and to feel okay if we're not producing something. **Ex:** Sitting with ourselves, bathing, focusing on how our body feels.

Cutting down self-cruelty : It may be difficult to practice self care, when we're not feeling good about ourselves. Reflect on what things you do that are self cruel and how you might avoid them. **Ex:** Noticing when we're fixating on what we don't like about ourselves, comparing ourselves to others.

Kind self care: In such a self-critical culture, practicing kindness can be an act of resistance. Kindness can look like accepting that we are worthy of love and care or treating others with compassion. **Ex:** Forgiving ourselves for being unproductive; allowing ourselves to make mistakes

Reflective Selfcare: Everyone's needs are different, what you need in any given situation varies. Taking time to understand our behaviours and consider how they align with our values and our established patterns. **Ex:** Writing about our feelings, going to therapy; thinking about how we best give and receive support

Adapted from:

[Hell Yeah Self Care](#) by Meg-John Barker



“One self-care practice that works well for me has been taking time to care for my pets. Currently, I own three fish tanks and I find myself at zen watching my fish swim across the water column. Although its part of my daily routine to feed them and weekly routine to change the water I’ve taken time to become more observant, to sit down, and just watch the fish. ”

- Jerome

“One self-care practice that works well for me is to spend time cooking and making my meals. Cooking is something I really enjoy, and I love to incorporate it even into busy days to give me that sense of personal time. Cooking for myself gives me an opportunity to take a break out of my day to do something good for myself, and to fuel myself properly for what I have next.”

- Samiha



WHAT SELF CARE WORKS FOR YOU?

Take Time to Reflect

Are there things that you know are helpful to your well being that you have been neglecting or not giving attention?

What adds value and joy to your day?

What can you say no to if there are too many things in your day that you don't have the energy for?

More ways to reflect on self care:

[HellYeahSelfCare](#)

Valuing Community Care

We all exist and depend on other people in our lives, and have people who exist and depend on us. Creating a caring community is about recognizing your strengths and ways you offer support to others, as well as considering the ways you receive and rely on others' support. While we may not always be able to provide all types of support here are some ways we can contribute to a caring community on campus:

Helping others with practical tasks, such as sharing class notes, helping a classmate with homework, offering to pick something up from a store, keeping communal spaces tidy.

Activities that improve well-being, such as inviting people on a walk with you, respecting sleep schedules of those around you, checking in with someone in your community, and making time for conversation.

Recognizing that in relationships individuals must mutually contribute to each other's well being. This doesn't mean that relationships have to be about calculating give-takes; rather that we all rely on each other and the positive environments we create.

Activities that help you think beyond yourself, such as taking time to listen to the challenges that someone is facing, considering others' ideas and points of view, continued learning of social issues and unlearning of biases.



“ I feel that we as students, should look out for one another and take care of one another. We never know what other people might have been going through in their lives even though they would appear to be fine from outside...students should become each other’s support system in order to get through difficult times.”

- Joyeeta



WAYS TO TAKE CARE.

Take Time to Reflect

What is an example of someone caring for you? What aspect did you like about that?

What are my boundaries and what are their boundaries?

What does the person you are caring for want? Does that person like spontaneous or planned efforts?

More ways to reflect on community care:

[TEDx Talk – Self Care to Communities of Care](#)

[Why Community Care is the Perfect Companion to Your Self-Care Practice](#)

Reaching out For Support

Sometimes the thoughts, feelings and barriers we face are too much to deal with on our own. Reaching out to someone that is caring and supportive to share what's going on in our lives can be a helpful way of feeling less alone and offers support when navigating these challenges. Here are some ways to find the right support you need:

There is no single right time to talk about some of the struggles you're dealing with, but if you are thinking about it, then you are probably getting ready to.

Think about who to talk to first and where/when you want to do it.

Consider what you want to share in the initial conversation.

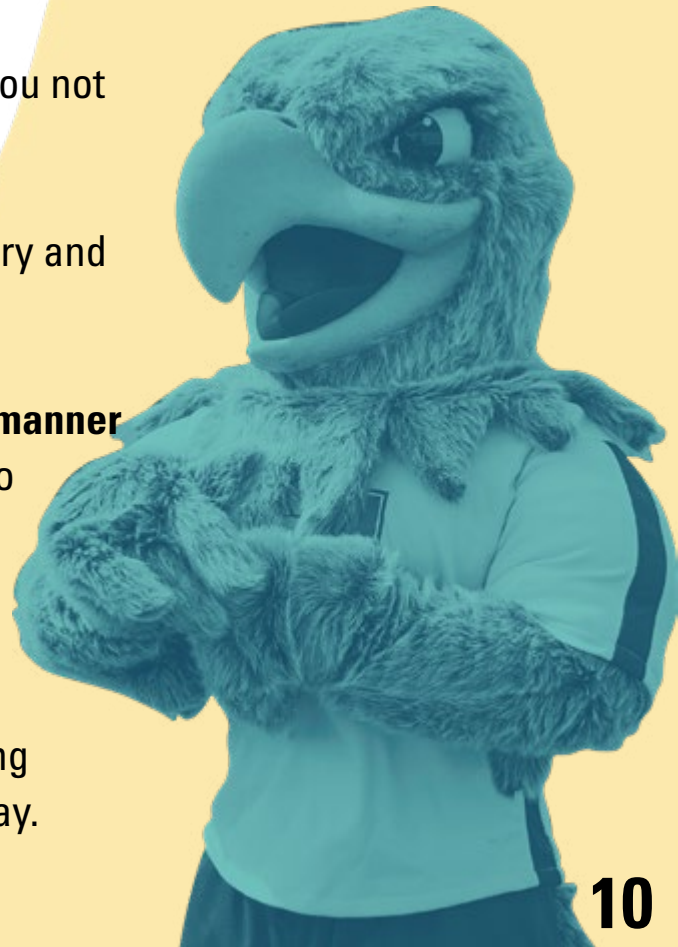
Recognize that you are in control of what you share and that there is no right way or time to begin a conversation. You are allowed to back out of asking for support.

Think about how you can support yourself should you not receive the reaction you hoped for.

Celebrate your courage. Asking for help can be scary and you deserve to reward yourself for being brave!

Keep in mind not all people will react in the same manner to this conversation. Should the conversation not go as hoped, it's better to focus on qualities of the relationship that feel productive and supportive.

Consider asking the person whether they can provide support or listen. Someone could be working through their own challenges or having a difficult day.



“...I know my friends would absolutely love to hear from me, hear my honest thoughts and emotions so they can support me. It is important to challenge the idea that you should put on a brave face for others.” -Rija



**WHY
REACH
OUT?**

Take Time to Reflect

Why do I think the person I'm going to talk to is a good choice?

Am I looking for someone who can listen to what I'm going through or is there something I can ask for help with?

How have the issues I want to talk about affected me?

If you're not sure who to turn to for support, there are several resources on campus that could be helpful in providing support. Refer to the Support Resources section.

Giving Support

Giving support to others whether it's a close friend, family member, classmate or stranger, is something many students want to be able to do. Often if we take time to reflect on our own experiences, we can begin to identify some helpful and unhelpful approaches to providing support.

What's Helpful?

Listen and encourage without judgement. Allow them to talk about what's troubling them.

Validating emotions. Let them know that it's okay to feel the way they do.

Asking what type of support the person is looking for. Someone may be looking for someone to listen, practical support, or ideas on how to address the situation.

Sharing space and time with someone can be a helpful form of support.

"I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."

"You are not alone in this. I'm here for you."

"Talk to me. I'm listening."

"I am here for you. We will get through this together."

What's NOT Helpful?

Giving unsolicited advice or jumping to solutions. We can offer suggestions but it's often more helpful to ask how we can help.

Assuming you understand their situation. It can be helpful to share your own experiences if you're willing, but that does not suggest that you understand what they're going through.

Invalidating their situation(s) and dismissing feelings. Although we want to let them know they aren't alone in what they are going through, to generalize that 'everybody goes through this' is invalidating.

"It's all in your head."

"We ALL go through times like this."

"You'll be fine. Stop worrying."

"Here's my advice."

"Shouldn't you be better by now?"

“...Offer a listening ear to someone in need while being non-judgemental. It takes a lot of strength to talk to someone about the challenges you are facing so having them come out and judge your thoughts would be extremely disheartening...” -Sanya

HOW TO OFFER SUPPORT.



Take Time to Reflect

How can I provide support when someone doesn't want to share details of what they're dealing with?

What kind of support is the person looking for?

What are my personal boundaries or limitations when I'm providing support?

More ways to reflect on giving support:

[More Feet on the Ground](#)

[Be There](#)

How to look for resources

Looking for professional or peer support services can seem overwhelming. Here are a few things to consider when you're looking for services to help you get started:

- Hours of operation, appointment availability, location (physical or online), eligibility for services
- What type of support you are looking for (peer support, mental health professional, spiritual/religious support, medical/psychiatry)
- How does the organization operate (what policies exist, who is affiliated with the service)
- Cost (all the ones listed below are available at no cost to students)

Resources Disclaimer

We realize that barriers of accessibility and health equity may be interlaced with the use of these resources. Learn more about the services to determine what services are the best fit for you.

Some of the listed resources operate in conjunction with services external to McMaster. When accessing any resource for either yourself or another person, there is the potential for external services to be involved. These external services could include police, security or other emergency services in situations where there is imminent risk of harm to self or others.



Support Resources

McMaster, McMaster Student Union & Student Support Services

For more information about the services listed and how they are available to you, visit the corresponding website.

Chaplaincy Centre

Pastoral support with personal counselling and bereavement support.

groups.mcmaster.ca/chaplain

chaplain@mcmaster.ca or crowella@mcmaster.ca

905-515-9140 x24207

Equity and Inclusion Office

Information, guidance and education on accessibility, equity and human rights related issues.

equity.mcmaster.ca

equity@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x27581

Food Collective Centre (FCC)

On-campus food bank and food security resource.

msumcmaster.ca/services-directory

fcc@msu.mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x23139

Indigenous Student Services

Support for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students.

indigservices.mcmaster.ca

indigsc@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x27426

International Student Services

Services for international students and internationally-minded Canadian students.

studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca

iss@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x24254

Office of Student Financial Aid

Information about OSAP, scholarships, bursaries, work programs, and more.

registrar.mcmaster.ca/financial-aid

sfas@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x24319

Ombuds Office

Independent, impartial, and confidential dispute-resolution advice and assistance on University-related issues.

mcmaster.ca/ombuds

obmuds@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x24151

Open Circle

Personal and spiritual reflection, community service, and leadership development.

opencircle.mcmaster.ca

info@studentopencircles.com

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office

Support, disclosures, academic accommodations and education on sexual violence prevention and response.

svpro.mcmaster.ca

svpro@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x 20909

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Disability services, assistive technology support.

sas.mcmaster.ca

sas@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x28652

Student Wellness Centre (SWC)

Medical services, counselling, health promotion programming.

wellness.mcmaster.ca

wellness@mcmaster.ca

905-525-9140 x27700

Peer Support Services

Peer support is emotional and practical support between two people who have lived through common experiences, such as a mental health concern.

LGBT Youth Line

Youth Line provides service for youth, by youth that affirms the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, 2-spirited, queer and questioning youth in Ontario.

youthline.ca

Phone line: 1-800-268-9688

Text line: 647-694-4275

Maccess

Maccess is a peer support, advocacy, and community centre for students who experience disability, chronic illness, mental health concerns, or inaccessibility. Maccess offers one-on-one peer support, weekly peer support groups, and a digital drop-in community space.

msumcmaster.ca/maccess

maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca

Pride Community Centre (PCC)

A peer support service run by 2STLGBQIA+ students which advocates for queer, trans and two-spirit students on campus by offering educational programming, events and social awareness campaigns. The PCC provides peer support, check-ins, weekly community groups and resources of interest to the community.

msumcmaster.ca/pcc

pride@msu.mcmaster.ca

Student Health Education Centre (SHEC)

Student engagement about health-related issues through peer support, events, and campaigns.

msumcmaster.ca/shec

shec@msu.mcmaster.ca

Trans Lifeline

A peer support service run by trans people, for trans and questioning callers.

translifeline.org/hotline

877-330-6366

Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN)

A peer-support driven service that offers a safe(r) space for womxn, anyone who identifies as trans, folks who identify outside the gender binary, and all survivors of sexual violence. We offer regular drop-in peer support and support groups, free resources such as gender-affirming gear, and educational and social events.

msumcmaster.ca/wgen

wgen@msu.mcmaster.ca

Big White Wall

Online mental health and wellbeing service to anyone 16+ in Ontario.

Bigwhitewall.ca

24/7 Support Lines

Free, confidential, anonymous, nonjudgmental support available 24/7

Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)

A partnership between Hamilton Regional Police and St. Joseph's Healthcare. Mobile team, consisting of mental health worker and police officer will respond to crisis calls between the hours of 8 a.m. and 1 a.m. daily.

coasthamilton.ca

905-972-8338

Barrett Centre for Crisis Support

Support for anyone 16+ who is experiencing a mental health crisis and does not require a hospital stay.

goodshepherdcentres.ca/services/

905-972-8338

Toll-free: 1-844-777-3571

Good2Talk

Professional counselling and information, and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario.

good2talk.ca

1-866-925-5454

Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton and Area (SACHA)

Support for anyone 16+ who has experienced sexual violence at any point in their lives.

sacha.ca

24-hour line: 905-525-4162

Office line: 905-525-4573

Student Assistance Program

Real Campus (Undergraduate Students)

Psychological counselling services and legal, financial, nutrition, and career development consultation for McMaster students, roommates, and parents.

realcampus.ca/mcmaster

1-877-390-7325

Empower Me (Graduate Students)

24/7 accessible counselling services to empower you to thrive, crisis support, mental health and well-being services.

gsa.mcmaster.ca/services/empower-me/

1-844-741-6389

There are many more resource available to students that we couldn't fit in this book alone. We've listed some additional supports on our website including self help apps & websites, peer support, student support services, phone lines, out-of-province & international.

We would like to acknowledge the thoughtful contributions from Women and Gender Equity Network, Pride Community Centre, Student Health Education Centre, Maccess and The Equity and Inclusion Office which all helped in drafting this resource guide.

For more information visit our website: wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/

