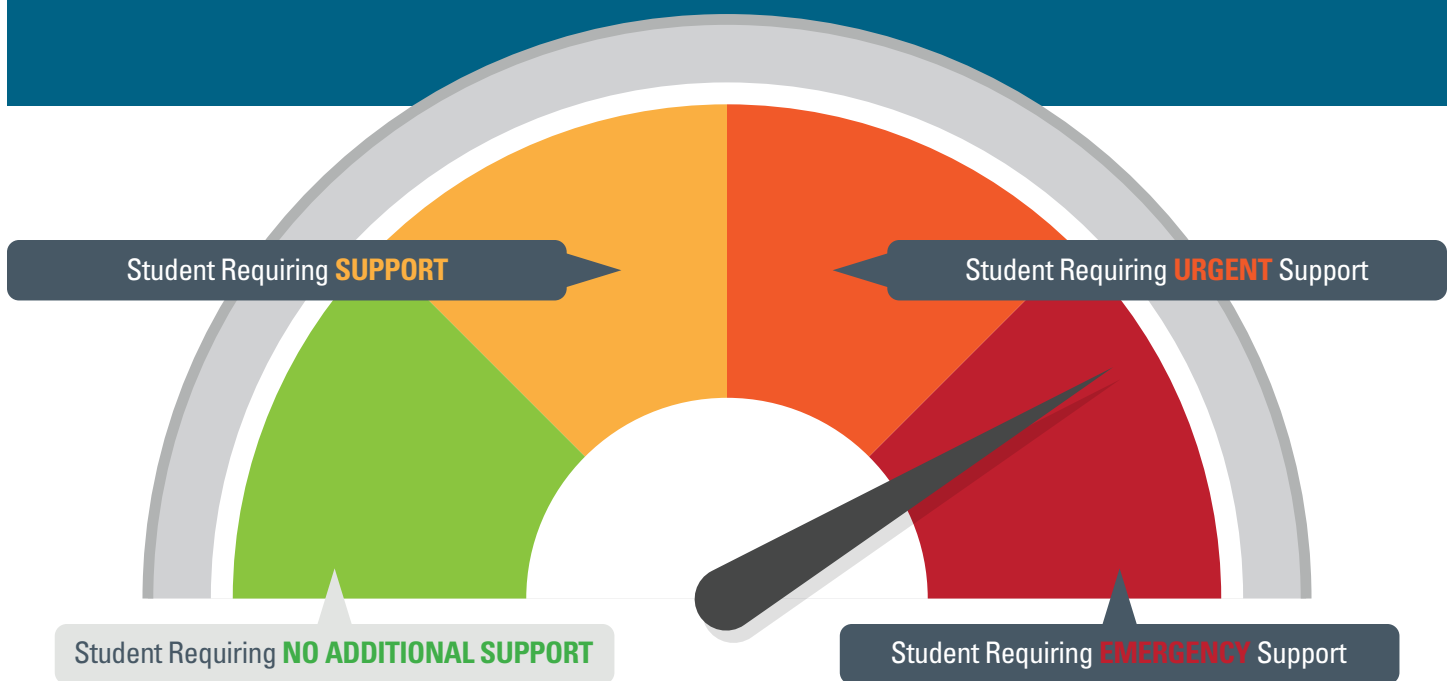


# RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS OR DIFFICULTY

**Definition:** Distress or difficulty are terms to describe emotions or behaviours which interfere with a student's ability to function on a day-to-day basis in the university setting.



## The 6 R's: STEPS IN HELPING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS OR DIFFICULTY

| RECOGNIZE | REACH OUT | RATE | RESPOND | REVIEW | REFLECT |

**Privacy/Confidentiality Guidelines:** McMaster University is committed to the principles of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). It is important to be clear about the limits of your ability to keep information confidential. You can provide assurance that you'll respect a student's privacy to the best of your ability but that there are situations in which you are compelled to inform others, including when you have concerns about the student's safety or capacity to care for themselves and/or concerns about the safety of others, including suspected child maltreatment (knowledge or concern that a minor/child is being abused, neglected, or exposed to domestic violence).

## 1 RECOGNIZE signs of difficulty or distress.

- Signs of difficulty or distress can be observed in face to face or virtual live interactions, in academic work or written communications with students, or observations may be shared with you by others. **If in doubt, reach out**, and check in with the student – especially in virtual/online environments where indicators can be difficult to detect.
- Students may not exhibit any indicators and can still be struggling. If you become aware that they have recently experienced or witnessed a difficult or traumatic event (e.g., discrimination, assault, death of family/friend), consider proceeding to **Step 2**.
- See Appendix 1 for a more detailed list of Indicators. Changes in these indicators are often clues that students are struggling. The better you know the student, the more you will notice changes in them.



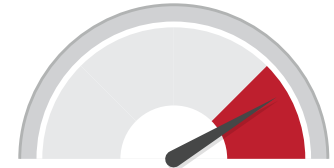
### Possible **SUPPORT** Situation:

- Difficulties/changes in communication, participation, or attendance in virtual or in-person lectures, tutorials, meetings
- Missed, late or incomplete work or change in quality of work
- Changes in demeanour (e.g., teary, irritable)
- Sharing of difficult emotions (e.g., “stressed”, “worried”)
- Sharing of difficult or distressing events (e.g., death, break-up)
- Changes in dress or grooming
- Changes in quantity, type or pattern of substance use (i.e., alcohol, cannabis, others)



### Possible **URGENT** Situation:

- Significant decline in academic performance
- Failure to complete large assignments, exams or events, without warning
- Difficulty in interacting with peers or instructors, or having inappropriate interactions.
- Significant changes in weight or appearance or presence of injuries
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or intense anger
- Peers, parents or others expressing significant concern about the student
- Increased or increasingly risky substance use or consequences of substance use



### Possible **EMERGENCY** Situation:

- Student missing or cannot be reached, without warning
- Marked confusion, illogical or incoherent communication
- Active expressions or threats of suicide or self-harm
- Student making references to their death/dying, suicide
- Altered level of consciousness (drowsiness, agitation)
- Evidence of recent injuries (e.g., cuts, burns, bandages)
- Threats or evidence of violence toward others
- Apparent intoxication, withdrawal or other consequences of substance use, particularly if apparent in academic or workplace settings

## 2 REACH OUT to the student or identify trusted alternate to do so.

Approach to reaching out will vary based on the level of concern. Ideally, find a private and safe location for conversation with phone access with Safety App/emergency numbers on hand. In live virtual or phone conversations, first clarify the student's phone number and current location, particularly if you do not have full contact information available (i.e., student contact and emergency contact information).

### Possible **SUPPORT** Situation:

“How are you doing?”

“You seem stressed. Is there some way I can help you?”

“Just wanted to check in with you to see how you're doing”

Online: “I'm writing to check in with you and see how you're doing, given \_\_\_\_\_” (e.g., recent events, concern)

“Would it be helpful to you to arrange a time to talk?”

### Possible **URGENT** Situation:

“I've noticed a few changes (can specify – academics, physical, emotional, behavioural if helpful) in you lately. Are you doing ok?”

“I'm worried about you. Can we set up a time to talk?”

Online: “I've been worried about you lately. Would you be able to talk by phone/virtual platform later today?”

“Thanks for sharing your thoughts . Can you remain on the platform at the end of class so we can talk a little more?” (or send private chat message)

### Possible **EMERGENCY** Situation:

“I'd like to speak to you privately right now”

In virtual settings, ensure you have the student's full name, phone number and location. If needed, remove other students from the online platform.

If a student appears highly agitated, violent or threatening, do not approach and contact Emergency Services.

**3 RATE or confirm level of distress or difficulty** based on interaction (in Step 2) or other indicators (see Appendix 1).  
(NO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT, SUPPORT, URGENT, EMERGENCY)

**NO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT** indicates that the student is not in distress or difficulty that warrants additional support or intervention.



**SUPPORT**

- Student in **some** distress or difficulty
- Student does **not** appear to be a risk to self or others
- May need help within next week or more



**URGENT**

- Student in **significant** distress or difficulty
- Student does **not** appear to be a risk to self or others
- Needs help in next 1-2 days



**EMERGENCY**

- Students in **serious** distress or difficulty
- Student appears to be a **risk or potential risk** to self or others
- Needs help **now**

**4 RESPOND to the situation and student.**

If situation of **SUPPORT**, recommend resources; if **URGENT** situation, refer or accompany to services; if **EMERGENCY** situation, act immediately.

**NO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT** – No need to recommend, refer, accompany or act, unless requested.

**Possible Response to a SUPPORT Situation:**

“I have some resources to suggest that are often helpful.”

**SUPPORT: Recommend**

Recommend Resources or Provide Information:  
Key resources:

- Program, Department or Faculty Office
  - Academic Advisors
- Other resources (see resource list Appendix 2)
- Good2Talk: <https://good2talk.ca>
  - Student Wellness Centre: <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca>. In addition to individual student appointments for counselling and medical care, check out:
    - Resources <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/> for guided self-help options outside clinic hours, including for out-of-province and international students.
    - Wellness Skills Programs <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/programs/> for group programs with drop-in and direct registration options.
  - Community Family Doctor or Counsellor
  - Other Key Resources:
    - Sexual Violence Response Office: University Hall (UH) 10, ext. 20909 <https://svpro.mcmaster.ca/response/getting-support/>
    - See Appendix 2 for key resources.

**Possible Response to an URGENT Situation:**

“I’m going to make a phone call and see how we can connect you to help quickly.”

Online: “Could you provide/confirm your phone number and current location so I can get back to you if we lose this connection?”

**URGENT: Refer or accompany**

Ensure you write down the student’s full name, phone number, e-mail and current location and/or address.

CALL AHEAD ext. **27700** and indicate the situation is urgent, or ACCOMPANY the student to Student Wellness Centre at Peter George Centre for Living and Learning room 210.

Student Wellness Centre hours:  
Monday to Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm,  
Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm  
Drop-in appointments available daily

If closed (late evenings or weekends) call Campus Safety Services at **88** or ext. **24281** for advice.

Please note that SWC is not an emergency service and the student may not be able to be seen on the same day. SWC staff and/or healthcare providers will need to speak directly and confidentially with the student to determine next steps, in accordance with PHIPA (see note below).

Campus Safety Staff have undertaken mental health training.

**Possible Response to an EMERGENCY Situation:**

“We need to get help for you right now. I’m going to make a call.”

Online: “Could you provide/confirm your phone number and current location so I can get back to you if we lose this connection?”

**EMERGENCY: Act**

On main campus, from campus phone contact Campus Safety Services by phone at **88** or ext. **24281** or use panic button. On main campus, from non-campus phone call 905.522.4135 or use SafetyApp: <https://security.mcmaster.ca/safety-app/>

**For emergencies at other locations:**  
Please consult resource list for emergency services outside Hamilton.

McMaster University Medical Centre (HHS):  
Dial ext. **5555**  
St. Joseph’s Hospital: Dial ext. **7777**  
Off-site locations: Dial **911**

If others are witnessing the emergency, advise them to leave or remove them from situation/platform/call, without warning if necessary. Identify 1 person (i.e., TA, co-instructor) to remain/host if necessary.

If student leaves, do not attempt to stop or restrain them. Remain on the scene and wait for emergency services.

In virtual settings, if possible, keep individual online and gather contact information (full name, phone number, current location/address) before ending meeting.

**NOTE:** McMaster University is committed to the principles of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). If Faculty or Staff are concerned about the welfare of a student and contact a university office (e.g., SWC, SCM, Campus Safety Services, Student Affairs, Program/Faculty Office), it is permitted for that office to reach out to or to provide contact information to others regarding that student in “compelling circumstances” (FIPPA Section 42H), or to reach out to a family member in “compassionate circumstances” (FIPPA Section 42I). This applies when there may be no other way to obtain the personal information, or where the delay in obtaining the information would be potentially injurious to someone’s health or safety. The circumstances must be compelling and potentially affect the health and safety of an individual. The student must be informed that this disclosure of information has been made and to whom, sent by mail or email to their most recent known address. For further guidance or advice, please contact the McMaster Privacy Office at [privacy@mcmaster.ca](mailto:privacy@mcmaster.ca).  
See: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/freedom-information-and-protection-privacy-manual>

## 5 REVIEW student needs for further referrals and resources.

If an Emergency (Red category) or unresolved Urgent (Orange category) situation has occurred, you should review the situation with your supervisor, leader or other designate (i.e., Assistant or Associate Dean, Program Manager, Director or Supervisor). They can consider referral to Student Case Management if needed. Contact Student Case Management at [scm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:scm@mcmaster.ca) or call ext. 20220 from 9 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, <https://scm.mcmaster.ca>. The designate can reach out to the Privacy Office as needed at [privacy@mcmaster.ca](mailto:privacy@mcmaster.ca).

The goal at the REVIEW stage is to ensure that any additional or ongoing resources required are arranged in order to support the student and prevent potential future crises.

Only the necessary minimal personal information required to ensure the student's safety and to obtain necessary support is required to be disclosed to others at the Review stage. Please ensure that notes or documents related to these situations are retained, disclosed and disposed of in a secure and confidential manner. For further advice or guidance, please contact the Privacy Office at [privacy@mcmaster.ca](mailto:privacy@mcmaster.ca).

**Note on Confidentiality:** The student is not compelled to answer questions or to disclose personal information to faculty or staff whether or not they have sought or received help, or the nature of the help they have received, though they may choose to share varying amounts of information. You should NOT expect to receive information or feedback from any health services about the student status or disposition, given the confidentiality legislation under PHIPA (Personal Health Information Protection Act), unless it is an emergency and your assistance is required, or if the student has specifically consented to this disclosure. For further guidance or advice, please contact the McMaster Privacy Office at [privacy@mcmaster.ca](mailto:privacy@mcmaster.ca).

## 6 REFLECT on your own needs for further information, education and/or support.

Responding to students in difficulty or distress can be stressful. You may wish to discuss situations with designates, supervisors, colleagues, or personal supports or to seek out professional support. You will want to do so without disclosing identifying student information, unless you are doing so as part of the REVIEW stage (to address student needs).

For additional McMaster-specific information and education about supporting students in distress or difficulty, check out the Professor Hippo-on-Campus Student Mental Health Education Program for Educators and Navigators online training, resources and workshops.

<https://mentalhealth.mcmaster.ca/professor-hippo/>

- For additional information and support for yourself or your colleagues, consider the following resources through Human Resources at McMaster: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/>
- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) – Telus Health at 1.833.366.4544 (Telus Health offers “24/7” support), or download the Lifeworks Mobile App, or [hr.mcmaster.ca/efap](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/efap) for confidential support
- Employee Health and Well-being: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/about-us/our-services/employee-health-services/>
- Contacts for Crisis Supports (Employees): [https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health\\_safety\\_well-being/my-health/mental-health-resources-and-training/contacts-for-crisis-support/](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health_safety_well-being/my-health/mental-health-resources-and-training/contacts-for-crisis-support/)

## APPENDIX 1: Indicators of Students in Distress or Difficulty

- If a student is highly agitated, suicidal, angry or violent, call for help immediately. Do not put your safety or other students' safety at risk in an attempt to help the distressed student.
- If you notice a change in performance or behaviour (including in conduct or professionalism), it is best to check in with the student. The context and contributors are very important to understanding the situation and the student (e.g., if someone is in danger, high anxiety/agitation is an expected response). Be curious, not judgmental. Try not to make assumptions, and consider possible biases.
- If a fellow student, TA or other staff informs you of a concern, ensure you and/or a trusted designate reach out to the student.
- Never assume that substance use is the explanation for behaviour. Individuals can *appear* to be under the influence or in withdrawal but may not have *actually* used substances or substance use may not fully explain behaviour. Examples include: high/low blood sugar, hypoxia, heat stroke, psychosis.
- In virtual and remote environments and in large classes, or with new students or those not well known to you, indicators or changes may be more difficult to spot. Sometimes academic indicators are the only indicators. **IF IN DOUBT, REACH OUT.** You can reach out by e-mail/other messaging platform/video-conference or meeting in-person, as appropriate to the situation.

## APPENDIX 1: Indicators of Students in Distress or Difficulty (Cont'd)

### ACADEMIC INDICATORS



- Change in participation or attendance
- Decline or failure in academic work or grades
- Failure to submit assignments, write tests or exams (especially unexpectedly)
- Missed or inadequate preparation for important meetings/presentations
- Failure to request academic accommodations, when registered
- Requesting multiple extensions; missed, late or incomplete work
- Difficulty working with others on group assignments
- Change in conduct or professionalism in learning environments
- Concerning, illogical, disorganized or incoherent content in written work or communications

### PHYSICAL INDICATORS



- Change or deterioration in grooming and/or hygiene
- Significant change in weight (loss or gain) or appearance
- Inappropriate clothing choices for weather or context
- Change in speech/language – clarity, speed, volume, tone
- Lack of coordination in physical tasks (clumsy, shaking, tremor)
- Evidence of injuries (especially unexplained injuries, lacerations, scars)
- Altered level of consciousness (i.e., drowsy, sedated, agitated, fluctuating)
- Appears impaired with substances (especially in classroom/placement) – do not assume student is impaired as medical conditions can mimic this

### BEHAVIOURAL AND COGNITIVE INDICATORS



- Changes in ability to focus, remember, listen or learn
- Changes in communication, conduct and professional behaviour
- Social withdrawal including sudden withdrawal from social media
- Altered energy level or level of alertness/sleepiness
- Difficulty working effectively or cooperatively with others
- Increasing suspiciousness and mistrust of others
- Verbal or physical outbursts (especially in public)
- Confused, agitated or illogical behaviour
- Increased substance use (especially in classroom/placement)
- Missing or cannot be reached (unexpectedly)

### EMOTIONAL INDICATORS



- Change in typical emotions or more difficulty managing emotions
- Increased expression of emotion (e.g., sadness, anger, irritability, anxiety)
- Reduced expression of emotion (e.g., flat, unreactive, distant, guarded)
- Moodiness or erratic or unpredictable mood
- Episodes of intense anxiety, distress, anger (including panic attacks)
- Evidence of changes in mood (e.g., tearfulness, sadness, elevated mood)
- Expressions of desperation, hopelessness, worthlessness
- Talking about or focused on death, dying, self-harm or suicide (without context)
- Active expression of intent or threats to harm self or end life (including jokes)

Never assume that substance use is the explanation for behaviour. Individuals can *appear* to be under the influence or in withdrawal but may not have *actually* used substances or substance use may not fully explain behaviour. Examples include: high/low blood sugar, hypoxia, heat stroke, psychosis.

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE



- Frequent alcohol or drug use (e.g. binge drinking)
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs or experiencing withdrawal during academic-related time (e.g. in class)
- Carrying alcohol and/or drugs or paraphernalia
- Giving up or avoiding typical activities to use drugs or alcohol instead
- Inability to maintain social relationships due to substance use
- Marked deterioration or change in hygiene or grooming
- An acute and persistent change in performance (e.g. decreased participation, lateness, absenteeism)
- Significant change in preferred peer group
- Stealing or engaging in other criminal behaviour to support use

## Urgent and Emergency Resources

	HAMILTON	NIAGARA	WATERLOO	BURLINGTON
<b>EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS</b>	<b>Hamilton General Hospital</b> 237 Barton Street East	<b>St. Catharines Site</b> 1200 Fourth Avenue St. Catharines	<b>Grand River Hospital</b> 835 King Street West Kitchener	<b>Joseph Brant Hospital</b> 1245 Lakeshore Road Burlington
	<b>St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton</b> Charlton Campus 50 Charlton Avenue East	<b>Greater Niagara General Site</b> 5546 Portage Road Niagara Falls	<b>St. Mary's General Hospital</b> 911 Queen's Blvd. Kitchener	
	<b>Juravinski Hospital &amp; Cancer Centre</b> 711 Concession Street	<b>Welland Site</b> 65 Third Street Welland	<b>Cambridge Memorial Hospital</b> 700 Coronation Blvd. Cambridge	
<b>URGENT CARE CENTERS</b>	<b>Main Street West Urgent Care</b> 690 Main Street West	<b>Douglas Memorial Site</b> 230 Bertie Street Fort Erie	<b>K-W Urgent Care Clinic</b> 385 Fairway Road South Kitchener	
	<b>Urgent Care – King Campus (St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton)</b> 2757 King Street East	<b>Port Colborne Site</b> 260 Sugarloaf Street Port Colborne	<b>K-W Urgent Care Clinic</b> 751 Victoria Street South Kitchener	
<b>MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS</b>	<b>COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support)</b> 905.972.8338	<b>COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support)</b> 1.866.550.5205	<b>CMHA Distress Line</b> 519.745.1166	<b>COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support)</b> 844.646.1700
	<b>Suicide Crisis Line</b> 905.522.1477	<b>Distress Centre Niagara</b> 905.688.3711	<b>CMHA Crisis Team</b> 1.844.437.3247	<b>Suicide Crisis Line</b> 877.825.9011

## Mental Health Services Available 24/7

- **Campus Safety Services:** Assists in achieving a safe and secure environment developed through prevention programming, providing mental health support and law enforcement within the McMaster community. E.T. Clarke Center 201 | ext. 24281 or dial 88 on any University phone <https://security.mcmaster.ca/>
- **McMaster University Medical Centre (a Hamilton Health Sciences site):** Campus Safety Services dial ext. 5555
- **911:** In Canada if you call 911, you will be connected to the police, fire department or ambulance in the region based on the information you give the operator.
- **Barrett Centre for Crisis Support:** Provides a safe environment for individuals in the community who experience a mental health crisis and do not require a hospital stay. Services include: telephone crisis counselling, in-person crisis counselling, short-term crisis bed stay; group treatment. Phone: 905.529.7878 | <https://goodshepherdcentres.ca/services/barrett-centre-for-crisis-support/>
- **Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST):** is a program of St. Joseph's Healthcare and serves the residents of the City of Hamilton who have serious mental health issues or who are in crisis. A mental health worker will respond to a call on the COAST Crisis Line and they will determine whether to respond with phone support or a mobile team visit. Phone: 905.972.8338 | [coasthamilton.ca](http://coasthamilton.ca)
- **Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres:** There are 37 treatment centres across Ontario dedicated to providing comprehensive, trauma-specific care and treatment to victims/survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Find a center near you [www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca/find-a-centre](http://www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca/find-a-centre)
  - **Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence Care Centre:** If you have experienced sexual assault or domestic violence in Hamilton and require medical care immediately, visit the Emergency Departments at the Hamilton General Hospital or Juravinski Hospital and ask for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE): [www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/areas-of-care/emergency-care/sexual-assault-domestic-violence](http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/areas-of-care/emergency-care/sexual-assault-domestic-violence)



- **WeConnect Student Assistance Program (Undergraduate Students):** Funded by the MSU Insurance Plan, this offers free short-term counselling 24/7. Access is available by phone, email, chat, SMS, Snapclarity App for McMaster students located worldwide. Call/text 1.888.377.0002 | <https://wespeakstudent.com/home/8-mcmaster-university>  
Select the "WeConnect SAP" Tile from the homepage and sign up using your email and institution code (Code: mcmaster) and create a unique username and password.
- **Conversation (Dialogue):** An online platform offering free, virtual, professional counselling/psychotherapy and coaching funded by the GSA health plan. [https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/McMasterUniversity\\_Conversation\\_Dialogue](https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/McMasterUniversity_Conversation_Dialogue)
- **Good2Talk:** is a free, confidential post-secondary student helpline open 24/7 that provides professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being. 1.866.925.5454 | [good2talk.ca](http://good2talk.ca)
- **Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton and Area (SACHA):** provides free, non-judgmental services based on the belief that survivors are the experts of their own experiences. They have a 24 hour support line, counselling and advocacy services, outreach, and public education programs. 905.525.4162 | [sacha.ca](http://sacha.ca)
- **The LifeLine:** is a registered non-profit, committed to positive mental health and suicide prevention across Canada and Worldwide. [thelifelinecanada.ca/suicide-prevention-crisis-centre-contact-information/crisis-centres](http://thelifelinecanada.ca/suicide-prevention-crisis-centre-contact-information/crisis-centres)
- **Connex:** provides free & confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol & drugs, mental illness or gambling. 1.866.531.2600 | [www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca)

## McMaster Student Affairs Programs (Selected Divisions)

---

Student Affairs oversees student service delivery and staff who support the overall health and welfare of students at McMaster.

GH 207 | ext. 27455 | [student-affairs@mcmaster.ca](mailto:student-affairs@mcmaster.ca)

Selected divisions frequently serving students in distress include:

- **Student Accessibility Services (SAS):** provides individualized accessibility services for students with disabilities at McMaster. This includes academic accommodations, programming and additional support services. MUSC B101 | ext. 28652 | [sas.mcmaster.ca](http://sas.mcmaster.ca)
- **Student Case Management (SCM):** has two primary, often intersecting areas of focus: providing support to students through case management services at the request of academic or student affairs leadership; and administering the Code of Student Rights. (905) 525-9140, ext. 20220 | [scm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:scm@mcmaster.ca) | [scm.mcmaster.ca](http://scm.mcmaster.ca)
- **Student Success Centre (SSC):** engages students and alumni in diverse learning opportunities to support their academic, personal and professional growth. GH 110, MUSC B118, MUSC 212, Mills L215 | ext. 20960 | [studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca](mailto:studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca) | [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca)
  - **First-Year Experience Office:** The First-Year Experience provides support, social connection and mentorship opportunities for first-year students. <https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/first-year-experience/>
- **Student Wellness Centre (SWC):** provides health care, counselling and health promotion to enhance the emotional, physical, and personal well-being of McMaster students to support academic and personal success. PGCLL 210/201 | ext. 27700 | [wellness.mcmaster.ca](http://wellness.mcmaster.ca)

## McMaster Academic Supports

---

Students often become distressed when they are having academic difficulty, thus we have included relevant university-wide and faculty-specific academic and other supports.

- **Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (IHLL):** provides services and supports for the academic success and well-being of all First Nations, Inuit and Métis students in the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster. The IHLL also engages with broader Indigenous communities and knowledge shares with non-Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and departments interested in Indigenous health. MDCL 3510 | [ihll@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ihll@mcmaster.ca) | [ihll.mcmaster.ca](http://ihll.mcmaster.ca)
- **Indigenous Student Services:** provides support to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students attending McMaster. At Indigenous Student Services, we normalize the difficulties that university life can bring and encourage students to put their well-being first. L.R Wilson Hall Room 1811 | [indigssa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:indigssa@mcmaster.ca) | [indigservices.mcmaster.ca](http://indigservices.mcmaster.ca)
- **International and Exchange Student Experience Office:** provides support to international and exchange students including: cultural transition support, immigration advising, new student orientation, mentorship and community building. MUSC B118 | ext. 20960 | [iss@mcmaster.ca](mailto:iss@mcmaster.ca) | [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students)
- **Student Success Centre (SSC):** engages students and alumni in diverse learning opportunities to support their academic, personal and professional growth. GH 110, MUSC B118, MUSC 212, Mills L215 | ext. 20960 | [studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca](mailto:studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca) | [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca)
- **Black Student Success Centre:** is dedicated to supporting and championing the holistic (academic, personal, and professional) success and overall well-being of Black/African descent students and fostering a positive Black student and athlete experience. PGCLL M07 | ext. 21786 | [bss@mcmaster.ca](mailto:bss@mcmaster.ca) | [blackstudentsuccess.mcmaster.ca](http://blackstudentsuccess.mcmaster.ca)

## Graduate Students

Graduate Students have access to all Central Students Affairs resources, including SWC, SAS, SSC and SCM. The only exception to this is for MBA students who have their own service. [mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/resources/wellness](https://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/resources/wellness)

- **Conversation (Dialogue):** An online platform offering free, virtual, professional counselling/psychotherapy and coaching funded by the GSA health plan. [https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/McMasterUniversity\\_Conversation\\_Dialogue](https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/McMasterUniversity_Conversation_Dialogue)
- **Graduate Studies Office:** Supports students in navigating their studies, including admissions, funding and awards, regulations, skills and opportunities. GH110 | email [askgrad@mcmaster.ca](mailto:askgrad@mcmaster.ca) | [gs.mcmaster.ca](https://gs.mcmaster.ca)
- **Graduate Student Resource Hub:** Online hub where you will find step-by-step information, as well as links to resources, supports, events, and sessions to help students navigate their graduate journey. <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/>
- **Graduate Students Association (GSA):** organizes events, workshops and learning opportunities for graduate students at McMaster University. Refectory Rathskeller Bldg., East Tower, 2nd Flr. | ext. 22043 | [macgsa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:macgsa@mcmaster.ca) | [gsa.mcmaster.ca](https://gsa.mcmaster.ca)

## Support for Faculty, Staff and Student Employees (Employee and Family Assistance Program – EFAP)

Some students are also employees at McMaster who can access EFAP. Individuals who are involved in challenging situations with students may wish to seek out their own support through EFAP.

- **Telus Health** is McMaster's EFAP provider and offers a range of services including counselling, therapy, consultation with qualified professionals and much more. Employees can discuss personal and work-related issues in a safe and supportive environment.
  - Individuals can contact **Telus Health (24/7/365)** through:
    - The online virtual platform via their website or app. [login.lifeworks.com](https://login.lifeworks.com) | By phone toll-free: 1.833.366.4544.
    - Staff and Faculty can log into the Virtual Platform using your McMaster email and password.
- Some employees will also have benefits which can be applied to counselling. | [hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/total-rewards](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/total-rewards)

## Spiritual Supports and Supports for Specific Student Groups

- **Black Youth Help Line:** provides primary prevention of social, psychological breakdown in communities through a focus on education, health, and community development. | 416.285.9944 | <https://blackyouth.ca/>
- **LGBT Youth Line:** provides confidential, non-judgemental, and informed 2SLGBTQ+ peer support through telephone, text, and chat services. | 416.962.2232 | <https://www.youthline.ca/>
- **Spiritual Care and Learning Centre (SCLC):** is a multicultural network of community leaders and groups working in collaboration to provide spiritual care services. MUSC 212 | [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/spiritual-care](https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/spiritual-care)
- **Open Circle:** A diverse and consensus-based community for McMaster students where we value, respect, and learn from each other. Togo Salmon Hall B110 | [www.facebook.com/groups/108993179158750](https://www.facebook.com/groups/108993179158750) | [opencircle.mcmaster.ca](https://opencircle.mcmaster.ca)
- **Chaplaincy Centre:** offers spiritual guidance from three Christian Orientations: Ecumenical, Christian Reformed, and Catholic. However, they are also available to anyone whether part of a religious community or not. MUSC 231 | ext. 24207 | [www.mcmasterchaplaincy.org](https://www.mcmasterchaplaincy.org)

## Peer-Led Student Services (Undergraduate)

- Services run by the McMaster Student Union (MSU) include: Student Health Education Centre (SHEC), Food Collective Centre (FCC), Maccess, McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA), Pride Community Centre (PCC), Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN), Spark, MSU Diversity + Equity Network | [msumcmaster.ca/service/](https://msumcmaster.ca/service/)

## Selected Off-Campus Professional Services (accessible without physician referral)

- **Alcohol, Drug & Gambling Services (ADGS):** provides information, counselling and programs. 21 Hunter Street East (3rd floor) | 905.546.3606 <https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/public-health/alcohol-drugs-gambling/alcohol-drug-gambling-services>
- **Alternatives for Youth (AY):** provides substance use counselling services for children and youth ages 12 - 22 years, and those who care about them. Their services include substance education, assessment, individual, group, and family counselling. 38 James Street South, 2nd floor | 905.527.4469 | [ay.on.ca](https://ay.on.ca)
- **St. Joseph's Healthcare Youth Wellness Centre:** This is a service available for young people age 17 to 25 to receive expert mental health and substance use care by self or professional referral. <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/youth-wellness-centre>



McMaster Okanagan offers the Professor Hippo-on-Campus Mental Health Education Program which teaches more about this protocol and how to apply it. <https://mentalhealth.mcmaster.ca/professor-hippo/> Okanagan has compiled more comprehensive lists of mental health resources for students, staff and faculty that can be found on [mentalhealth.mcmaster.ca](https://mentalhealth.mcmaster.ca)

*McMaster Okanagan Office of Health and Well-being: Prioritizing Optimal Health & Well-being at McMaster*