

Mental Health Task Force

Final Report | May 2023

Introduction

Canadian university students are experiencing increasing mental health challenges (Abelson et al., 2022, p. 134). The university years are a critical period of growth and transition for young adults. Three out of every four mental health problems have their first onset between the ages of 16 and 24, when many students are in or just out of post-secondary education (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2020). Some students may access mental health services for the first time while attending post-secondary institutions. We recognize that mental health and well-being are essential for student success and learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened many of the mental health struggles that students were already facing and increased the demand for services. The pandemic also shifted the nature of mental health supports. Consequently, Canadian universities have been confronted with the increasing challenge of supporting students with their mental health needs (Lawrence, 2020, p. 2). In turn, universities have been invited to reimagine their mental health response and to leverage new or innovative service models.

In recognition of the growing mental health needs among students, Redeemer University had been developing its mental health services for several years. In addition, the tragic loss of Bekett Noble in November 2022 underscored the urgency and importance of addressing mental health supports at Redeemer. In December 2022, [the Mental Health Task Force was announced and commissioned](#) to review the growing need for mental health services and support among Redeemer's students and to provide broad recommendations for maintaining, enhancing, and/or expanding mental health supports at Redeemer. The recommendations detailed in the remainder of this document are purposely meant to be general in order to facilitate more specific future planning.

To focus the development of these recommendations, the Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) was provided with the following objectives:

1. To review current mental health programming
2. To develop recommendations on service levels
3. To develop recommendations on provision models
4. To develop recommendations on training
5. To develop recommendations on administrative supports
6. To develop recommendations on physical space needs

These objectives provided a guiding structure for the work of the MHTF.

Respectfully submitted by the Mental Health Task Force, May 15, 2023.

Process

Since January 2023, the MHTF pursued these objectives through a variety of means:

- A presentation from the Mental Health Student Advisory Group
- A report and presentation done by students in the CTS 410 senior capstone course regarding a proposed model for the delivery of mental health on the Redeemer campus.
- A presentation from Redeemer University's Learning Services staff
- Dialoguing with consultants and experts from the Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton
- Formal and informal conversations with Redeemer University faculty and staff
- Researching models and best practices employed at other educational institutions
- Attending seminars pertaining to mental health support in higher education
- A thorough review of literature, research and other mental health publications

Guiding Themes

During the work of the MHTF, the following emerged as foundational themes:

- **Theological Foundation:** The Redeemer community must root its understanding of mental health and well-being in a robust Christian worldview. Biblical rootedness is foundational within the Redeemer community. Redeemer's attention to spiritual needs is a strength for promoting holistic health.
- **Academic Mission:** Redeemer's primary responsibility is to serve as an academic institution. Although comprehensive mental health support is not the primary mission of the institution, Redeemer recognizes that promoting mental health and holistic well-being facilitates and enhances Redeemer's academic mission.
- **Prevention and Promotion Strategies:** The Redeemer community is served well by offering services that promote well-being and prevent the onset of mental health challenges. Encouraging the community to proactively pursue well-being and building resiliency among students is vital to the health of the community.
- **Responsiveness:** The Redeemer community must implement a variety of strategies to meet the diverse and changing mental health needs of students. These strategies should cover the continuum from the promotion of well-being to supportive care to crisis intervention.
- **Education:** Ongoing education and training pertaining to mental health issues (e.g., literacy, crisis response, diversity) needs to be provided to Redeemer students, faculty and staff.

Recommendations

The following section details the recommendations of the MHTF. They are intentionally offered as broad recommendations—rather than detailed strategies—to facilitate future conversation and planning.

Overall, the MHTF recommends that Redeemer establish a comprehensive mental health and well-being strategy that is Scripturally-based and student-informed, attending to the diverse needs of Redeemer’s student population along a continuum of care.

This overarching recommendation is subdivided into the following 5 recommendations:

1. **Developing a vision of mental health that is consistent with Redeemer’s mission.**
2. **Ongoing assessment and dialogue regarding mental health needs in order to facilitate student-informed care.**
3. **Creating a service delivery model that includes a continuum of care to meet the broad range of needs**
4. **Enhancing specific services and supports that are informed by a continuum of care.**
5. **Communicating mental health resources, supports and services clearly and strategically with relevant groups and stakeholders.**

Following each recommendation is a rationale for the recommendation. As well, some possible practical suggestions for operationalizing each recommendation are noted. These practical suggestions are not exhaustive, but they are intended to facilitate ideation and discussion.

Recommendation #1: Developing a vision of mental health that is consistent with Redeemer’s mission.

A. We recommend that Redeemer articulate a thoughtful, Scripturally-based definition and understanding of mental health and well-being.

Rationale: Although students, faculty, and staff readily recognize that mental health is valued and promoted at Redeemer, there is often confusion about how to define and/or practically apply the concepts of “well-being” and “mental health” in the Redeemer context. Given its theological commitments, Redeemer has a unique opportunity to demonstrate how a Reformed Christian worldview can promote the holistic development and well-being of students physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Creating definitions of mental health that are specific, concrete, holistic and explicitly connected to Redeemer’s mission and vision, will facilitate clear and

consistent communication and implementation of holistic strategies to promote and support well-being.

Possible Ideas: Clarifying language around well-being and its connection to Redeemer's mission. For example, Redeemer is concerned about promoting hospitality, safety and welcoming within the campus community in order to facilitate well-being, but Redeemer's understanding of what is meant by these concepts must be articulated.

- B. We recommend that Redeemer's mental health plan flow out of its Reformed Christian worldview and consequently, its concern for compassion, mutual respect and love. Such an approach involves continuous understanding of the diverse beliefs and lived experiences of Redeemer's community members and encourages ongoing dialogue in ways that embrace complexity and diversity.**

Rationale: Members of the Redeemer community should strive to walk alongside one another in ways that uphold institutional values while respecting personal agency. By doing so, we have an opportunity to live out our belief that each person has inherent value.

Recommendation #2: Ongoing assessment and dialogue regarding mental health needs in order to facilitate student-informed care.

- A. We recommend that Redeemer seek ways to involve students in the ongoing research, development, communication and execution of its mental health plan.**

Rationale: It is important to involve students in the researching of available mental health supports and helpful to gather their feedback and ideas on how to communicate this information.

Possible Ideas: Students can serve as research assistants and/or provide input into the locating of mental health resources appropriate for students on campus, in developing the communication strategy, establishing a mental health student group, etc. Projects could be integrated into coursework and assignments in a variety of disciplines (e.g., social work, psychology, media and communications, theology, etc.).

- B. We recommend that Redeemer continuously and systematically gather input about its mental health plan using various means that will invite students to express their needs anonymously (e.g., through a robust needs assessment) and/or directly (e.g., through dialogue).**

Such continuous learning would ensure understanding and the consideration of students' changing needs that may be diversified due to race, ancestry, ethnicity, citizenship, age, political beliefs, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and so on.

Rationale: The degree to which Redeemer is meeting or not meeting the mental health needs of students is unclear. Much of the available information is anecdotal and self-disclosed on a case-by-case basis. As such, it is difficult to determine the needs of students and the effectiveness of existing supports, or to identify supports that should be modified or added. An initial robust, and then ongoing, needs assessment of current students (and possibly recent graduates) is essential for enhancing Redeemer's mental health plan. This needs assessment will also provide a benchmark upon which to evaluate Redeemer's activities in the future. Other strategies should also be strategically utilized to gather ongoing information about students' needs.

Possible Ideas: Develop an anonymous needs assessment survey that is accessible to students and offers an incentive for completion. Locate existing tools for developing mental health needs assessments in post-secondary settings to develop the survey.¹ As per feedback from students, Student Senate might obtain better feedback (less intimidating, increased comfort for students). To facilitate dialogue, hold regular meetings/conversations (e.g., scheduled a few times per academic year) with students. Include student representatives on a mental health advisory group (see related recommendation). Develop permanent and accessible feedback systems (e.g., an idea/feedback suggestion box/form, etc).

C. We recommend that Redeemer develop a better system for the gathering, tracking, and analysis of existing data that pertains to mental health in order to inform the interventions and strategies used on campus.

Rationale: Some mental health data is already being gathered and recorded such as the data tracked by the Registrar's Office for students who leave Redeemer and the "Early Academic Referral Form" administered by Learning Services. However, it appears that this data is not being systematically managed, analyzed, or reported on. Creating a more intentional data gathering and analysis system would allow Redeemer to better obtain and utilize mental health-related data. Such a system has the additional potential to promote well-being and reduce withdrawals by identifying and responding to mental health struggles proactively with current students.

Possible Ideas: Find ways to better utilize existing systems and to modify or create new early intervention forms/systems. Clearly communicate data gathering processes among faculty and staff (who may be responsible for helping to gather information). Designate a specific person or department who is responsible for administering, maintaining, and analyzing mental health data on an ongoing basis. Continue to track data pertaining to mental health such as data from the on-campus Student Health Clinic, and demographic information about students who access counselling services. Explore how other similarly sized universities are gathering and tracking mental health data.

¹ Canadian Standards Association & Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2020, July). *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*. <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/studentstandard/>. (See needs assessment tools).

- D. We recommend that Redeemer develop strategic committees and workgroups that assess mental health programs and concerns. These groups should include individuals from all levels of the university, including students, staff, faculty, and administration.

Rationale: It is important to be frequently assessing the needs of students, and reviewing, evaluating and improving upon the mental health plan at Redeemer. These committees and workgroups can help achieve these purposes.

Possible Ideas: Some examples of suggested groups would include: 1) a general mental health committee and 2) a committee to address specific crises or situations where students are at risk. These groups should be considered for an appropriate weighting for faculty service requirements. Meeting twice a term at minimum would be a reasonable goal for these groups, though some committees may need to meet more frequently due the nature of their work.

Recommendation #3: Creating a service delivery model that includes a continuum of care to meet the broad range of needs (i.e., the “Stepped-Care Model”²).

- A. We recommend *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*³ (developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada) serve as a primary resource for Redeemer’s own mental health and well-being service delivery model.

Rationale: The *National Standard* is evidence-based, voluntary, and will help ensure full campus engagement with mental health strategies, including all stakeholders. The *National Standard* is based on a commitment to continuous improvement. This resource will assist Redeemer in strategically determining priorities for the delivery of mental health supports. Although Redeemer does not receive public tuition funding, it is within Redeemer’s best interests to demonstrate a commitment to engage with the standards that are being encouraged at Canadian universities.

Possible Ideas: The *National Standard* can be used to generate data collection, form recommendations specific to the Redeemer campus, guide communication strategies and inform the evaluation of mental health care strategies.

² Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health. (2019). *Stepped care for post-secondary campuses*. <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/stepped-care/>

³ Canadian Standards Association & Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2020, July). *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*. <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/studentstandard/>

B. We recommend exploring a sustainable financial model for counselling services.

Rationale: There are costs involved in providing mental health support. Redeemer does not receive public money for these purposes. As such, these services need to be funded. The funding model should allow for the services to be sustainable and minimize reliance on external sources of funding.

Possible ideas: Various fee models could be considered. Examples include:

- A well-being or related fee included in the student fee structure. A version of this fee already exists but this fee will likely need to be increased due to the growing need and use of these services.
- A student health insurance plan model⁴
- A fee-for-service model
- Consider arrangements with counselling partners who may be willing to offer sessions for reduced fees or Redeemer can consider memberships with services that offer virtual counselling services

C. We recommend that Redeemer develop a service delivery model that provides a continuum of mental health support to reflect the continuum of student needs. This service model would range from the promotion of mental well-being and resiliency among students to supporting students who are struggling or in crisis. This model should be informed by the “Stepped Care Model”.⁵

Rationale: We recognize that mental health exists along a continuum (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2018),⁶ that incorporates thriving and mental well-being, surviving, struggling, and crisis. Students require different resources depending on their needs and their placement on the continuum of mental health. The Stepped Care Model acknowledges the mental health continuum by prioritizing the distribution of mental health resources, supports and services in a way that maximizes effectiveness and best suits the needs of all students (Centre For Innovation In Campus Mental Health, 2019).⁷

Possible Ideas: There are many existing models for mental health and well-being in the post-secondary setting based on the Stepped Care Model. Redeemer could adapt one of these models to suit our specific needs and resources. A variety of approaches, such as self-directed, peer-to-peer,⁸ group support, or counsellor-led therapy are all encouraged in the Stepped Care Model. Approaches should also include Christian and

⁴ For an example of such a plan see: My Student Plan. (2022, September 1). *Tyndale University Student Extended Healthcare Benefits & Dental Plan*. <https://www.mystudentplan.ca/tyndale/en/home>.

⁵ Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health. (2019). *Stepped care for post-secondary campuses*. <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/stepped-care/>

⁶ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2018). *Continuum self check*. <https://theworkingmind.ca/continuum-self-check>

⁷ Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health. (2019). *Stepped care for post-secondary campuses*. <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/stepped-care/>

⁸ CTS 410: Core Capstone Student Group. (2023, April 13). *Redeemer U Health Clinic: Delivery model proposal for mental health supports on campus*.

non-Christian supports so that available resources meet the diverse needs of students. The mental health resources on Redeemer's internal communication portal are currently organized in a way that is consistent with the continuum framework and Stepped Care Model so this service delivery model could be further developed.

D. We recommend the following staffing/personnel considerations:

- a. **We recommend that Redeemer invest in developing a new staff Campus Case Management role on campus to support and facilitate student mental health and well-being.**

This role would work closely with Student Life, the Student Health & Wellness providers on campus (Student Health Clinic and counsellors) and other relevant university employees to accomplish the following: act as the first point of contact for students looking for mental health supports, triage students to the most appropriate resource for their needs, facilitate education / training opportunities for students and staff / faculty, and facilitate or lead support groups or sessions relating to mental health and well-being.

Rationale: It is important to triage our resources efficiently, including triaging counselling services to provide availability for time-sensitive / urgent needs. Proper triage of services will support the Stepped Care Model and help ensure its success. It also creates a clear point of contact for those who are seeking supports.

Possible Ideas: Hiring a social worker or registered psychotherapist would ensure the professional in this new role is equipped for supporting individual students or groups. This role would be competent to respond to a variety of mental health needs ranging from facilitating well-being and resiliency, to providing support during immediate mental health difficulties (including semi-urgent and urgent situations), to referring students to ongoing supports and resources.

- b. **We recommend exploring a counselling model that utilizes an “intern placement” strategy (e.g., student intern counsellors from graduate programs in social work, psychology, and/or counselling). The exploration of this model would, at minimum, involve reviewing research on the efficacy of this approach at small Christian institutions, and the current/best practices of other institutions.**

Rationale: Universities typically have a student counselling centre where practicum placements allow graduate-level interns to provide free counselling to undergraduate students in exchange for supervision and training from a licensed professional. Although Redeemer does not have its own graduate-level counselling program, local graduate programs are often seeking practicum

opportunities in the community. Such collaborative partnerships would benefit Redeemer, prospective interns, and neighbouring programs.

Possible Ideas: Collaborations could be explored with Tyndale University, McMaster Divinity College, the Association of Biblical Counselors, and Westminster Theological Seminary, as well as local secular universities.

Recommendation #4: Enhancing specific services and supports that are informed by a continuum of care.

A. We recommend that Redeemer utilize a variety of modalities to offer their mental health and well-being supports.

The modalities should include both self directed or professionally-led support, via in-person, online (app, virtual, or web based), or via telephone. Students should also be offered the opportunity of individual, peer-to-peer, or group formats when accessing these services.

Rationale: The service needs of Redeemer students are diverse and it is important to be responsive to these needs by offering a range of resources and supports in varying modalities. Additionally, there is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates that self- and professionally-directed mental health services that use the internet (e.g., online counselling, mental health apps) and other technological mediums (e.g., phone) are effective and economical, provide rapid and accessible access, and are tailored to specific populations of people.

Possible Ideas: Explore services available through social media, apps, and other technology such as crisis hotlines, messaging systems, and any internet-based, self- and professionally-directed technology. Explore platforms that are freely accessible to Redeemer students (e.g., MindYourMind, BeSafe. Good2Talk, and Get-A-Head), as well as platforms that provide subscription-based models (e.g., TalkCampus, EmpowerMe, and Mood Gym). Explore the best practices of other institutions.

B. We recommend a strategic use of groups for mental health education and treatment.

Rationale: Not all students require or desire individual counselling. The addition of group-based therapies or seminars would help to better meet the diverse needs of students and facilitate a greater continuum of support, particularly at the levels of prevention, early intervention, and thriving. This approach would also address the need to reduce stigma and create a culture of mental health and well-being on campus that is directed by both the students (bottom-up) and the institution (top-down).

Possible Ideas: Educational workshops or seminars available to all students (primary prevention) could run on a regular (e.g., monthly) basis on common topics/issues that students face, such as stress, anxiety, depression, conflict resolution, emotion

regulation and coping, mindfulness, etc. Students have suggested that seminars be led by peers or community partners (e.g., a mental health professional, pastor, or other community leader), rather than by Redeemer staff or faculty. Contacts at the Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton may be willing to provide resources. Redeemer should also explore the appropriateness of offering peer support groups or professional-led group therapy programs.

C. We recommend that Redeemer review its current crisis management practices and develop policies and practices that will enhance urgent or crisis response and follow-up.

Rationale: Students, faculty, and staff are often unaware of procedures and resources for individuals needing urgent or crisis support. Crisis management policies and procedures should be reviewed, clarified and continuously improved. Clear plans and policies are especially important for those who work with students “after hours” when fewer resources are typically available. As well, after an acute crisis has initially stabilized, policies and procedures that direct short-term follow-up for students in crisis and others involved (e.g., dormmates) are important for ensuring that those involved in the crisis situation are recognized and appropriately supported. The proposed Campus Case Manager position could play significantly into this recommendation (see Recommendation 3.D.a.).

Possible Ideas: Create and communicate procedures for triage and crisis management. For example, this could consist of a single-page handout/poster that serves as a “roadmap” of step-by-step procedures and available resources placed in highly visible and accessible locations, such as faculty or staff offices. Establish and communicate follow-up procedures.

D. We recommend the following regarding physical space on campus for mental health support:

a. We recommend that Redeemer continue to devote physical space on campus for mental health services and invest further in the development of that space by combining the student health clinic and counselling services together.

Rationale: A physical space on campus for promoting both medical and psychological well-being is a common thread in the literature, presentations from the two student groups, and from conversations with campus staff. Physical health and mental health are intricately woven together, and this is best addressed by a holistic approach. Combining the Student Health Clinic and counselling services together in one physical space enhances communication and an interdisciplinary approach to health. It also demonstrates to the student body that physical health and mental health are interdependent, and helps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health struggles. An enhanced physical space would allow for the proposed Campus Case Manager position to

be situated within the wellness centre, and would also create the opportunity to expand our services over time by having other health professionals join.

Possible Ideas: When considering Redeemer's current facilities, these proposals emerged:

1. There is strong consensus among staff who regularly attend to the mental health needs of students that the President's House be considered as an ideal location for integrating mental health, the student health clinic and related services promoting well-being services. This space is both central and private. It is in a serene setting which could, itself, facilitate health and wellness. This physical space is the only one on campus large enough to house student health services, counselling services, a common waiting area, a large area for group sessions or peer support and room for well-being supports. We could also consider including physio services in this space. There is also space in the basement, and the current rented space in the former garage could be used for future development in health services, if required. As well, the President's House would require few physical renovations for these purposes.
2. A secondary option is to move counselling services directly across the hall from the current student health clinic (which is located in the Luther Court complex). The benefit would be proximity of services.
3. Another suggestion is to use a four-bedroom unit on the first floor of the Charis Centre and renovate it into a useful space for counselling services and the student health clinic. A possible limitation is that this location is not as private as other spaces on campus (e.g., the President's House).

b. We recommend that a 'wellness room' be established on campus.

Rationale: Providing both a place of respite for students and a dedicated space for peer and group support can promote preventative measures that facilitate well-being. Staffing the wellness room could be strategic and worth consideration.

Possible Ideas: This space could be located in an enhanced wellness space and could include activities and equipment to facilitate wellness such as massage chairs, quiet games, and mental wellness information. There should be enough physical space for peer and group support. The wellness room could be staffed by trained senior Redeemer students in relevant programs (e.g., psychology, social work), the proposed Campus Case Manager (see Recommendation 3.D.a) and/or various community volunteers including local pastoral staff. This would also provide an attractive volunteer opportunity for students who plan to apply to graduate programs in mental health and who often find it difficult to obtain clinically-relevant volunteer experience.

E. We recommend the following educational and training considerations:

- a. We recommend that Redeemer develop a plan to educate and train staff and faculty on mental health and well-being, signs of mental health distress, and crisis prevention. All training should be tailored to the staff and faculty's level of engagement with students.**

Rationale: It is often faculty and staff who first become aware of mental health related issues in their engagement with a student. Training can empower staff and faculty to assist students in a helpful and timely manner and to direct them to further support.

Possible Ideas: Provide general education and training for all staff and faculty (e.g., basic mental health awareness), and intensive training for employees who tend to engage more with students experiencing acute crises (e.g., mental health first aid, harm reduction, suicide prevention offered by ASIST, anti-stigma, crisis management, etc.).

- b. We recommend that Redeemer develop general mental health training/education for all students.**

This training should include mental health literacy, general mental health education, increased awareness of available resources, and opportunities for further training / education. This training should be emphasized in year 1 as students enter Redeemer, but also be available for all students across years. Additionally, all student leaders should undergo advanced mental health training.

Rationale: Such education would introduce students to Redeemer's culture of care relative to mental health and well-being. It would also provide information about mental health so that students are better equipped to care for themselves and their peers. It would make students aware of available resources. It would better prepare student leaders to respond to mental health crises.

Possible Ideas: Basic training could focus on mental health literacy, coping strategies, resilience, and how to navigate resources. More advanced training could include mental health first aid, crisis response, and suicide prevention (e.g., ASIST training)

- c. We recommend that in developing its mental health plan, Redeemer consider developing initiatives and/or training for employees and students designed to attend to issues of diversity.**

Rationale: Issues of diversity are directly connected to mental health. For instance, limited knowledge of cultural needs, experiences of loneliness or isolation, or insensitive conversations in the classroom can negatively impact

well-being. As such, Redeemer should consider offering initiatives or training that will increase knowledge about how to attend to issues of diversity as it relates to mental health.

Possible Ideas: Provide members of the Redeemer community with training on how to positively engage in conversations with persons from diverse backgrounds. Provide education pertaining to diversity.

Recommendation #5: Communicating mental health resources, supports and services more clearly and strategically with relevant groups and stakeholders.

A. We recommend that Redeemer communicate more clearly with prospective students about mental health supports and services offered on campus.

Rationale: Students enter Redeemer with varying backgrounds and expectations about the mental health supports that are available at the university. It is important to carefully and appropriately help students (and their parents or guardians) comprehend what they can and cannot anticipate relative to mental health support during their time at Redeemer.

Possible Ideas: Develop a communications strategy focused on the recruitment process (sessions, messages from admissions staff at different points in the recruitment process, parent information sessions, pamphlets, etc.). Use Redeemer technology to communicate available services (e.g., application portal, websites, App pages, Discovery, etc). Develop a Q&A document. Discuss available mental health services as a topic during student leadership training.

B. We recommend that Redeemer communicate and promote mental health and well-being plans and resources more clearly and consistently to current students.

Rationale: It is important to offer clear and consistent messaging that promotes mental health throughout the year. This communication includes available supports that are easy to find and utilize. Mental health information should be easy to locate and related discussions should be specific and beneficial to those participating.

Possible Ideas: Post health and well-being information in a single location and/or in places that are visible to students (e.g., social media and/or Discovery). Create a wellness room (physical space; see Recommendation 4.D.b.) that could serve as a place to communicate mental health resources (e.g., visibly post them for students). Communicate available holistic and/or nontraditional supports (e.g., highlighting the mental health benefits of exercise and sports). Have a contact person to direct students to mental health resources (e.g., a Campus Case Manager; see Recommendation 3.D.a).

C. We recommend that a communication strategy be developed to help employees know where to direct students for mental health resources and support.

Rationale: Employees desire to help and support students. Employees often develop significant connections with students. As such, the mental health needs of students will often come up in these relationships. Employees are key individuals who can help point students toward mental health resources and support.

Possible Ideas: Develop a poster that provides a visual summary of available mental health resources and supports at various levels of student need. Provide employees with basic training that prepares them to confidently and effectively respond to student mental health concerns.

Concluding Remarks

How does this report connect to the context of Redeemer University as a private, Reformed Christian university with a distinct mission of Christian academic programming and formation?

As a Christian institution, Redeemer offers Scripturally-directed academic programming wrapped in a spiritually vibrant campus community. Redeemer's mission is to be an academic community in which faculty, staff, and students can develop intellectually, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.

Redeemer's understanding of mental health and well-being is rooted in a theological understanding that all aspects of life, including mental health and well-being, are under the sovereign care of Jesus Christ. Redeemer additionally contends that Christ can and does contribute to health and healing.

Redeemer's theological position as well as the characteristics of its student population necessitates attending to spiritual needs as a component of mental health care. Furthermore, spiritual care is regarded as not only necessary but also immensely beneficial to its students and institutional community. A growing body of social sciences and health research, with which Redeemer agrees, highlights the importance of integrating spirituality into mental health care in order to competently meet the needs of religiously-identifying students.

Consequently, Redeemer offers a variety of supports and services that engage students as whole persons including their spiritual needs. These supports and services range from personal activities that facilitate discipleship (spiritual growth) such as reading Scripture, communicating with Christ through prayer, and participating in corporate worship, to formal services such as professionally-led counselling offered by faith-informed, licensed service providers.

In addition, recognizing the diverse needs of its students and the value of community-based resources, Redeemer also collaborates with and provides referrals to mental health service providers and agencies that are not explicitly Christian.

Redeemer's theological perspective and person-centred approach relative to mental health care position the institution to expertly explore how to best review, enhance and extend its mental health supports and services.

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