



Ad Hoc Committee on Supporting the Mental Health of Students at De La Salle College

Committee Recommendations, June 2019

Preamble:

Mental Health awareness is an important component to a young person's education. Recent research indicates that an effective mental health strategy in schools should include the following four integrated components: understanding how to optimize and maintain good mental health, understanding mental health disorders and their treatments, decreasing stigma, and increasing health seeking efficacy. In order to adequately address these components, the committee recommends evidence-based programming for students, teachers and parents to better inform the community on how to support and maintain optimal mental health.

The committee recommends the following:

Teachers

The following is recommended for all teachers:

- 1) Participate in mental health literacy training, presented by TeenMentalHealth.org, including "Go To" mental health training
- 2) Complete TeachMentalHealth online course
- 3) Complete Bringing Mental Health to Schools online course
- 4) All new teachers to complete the two above mentioned online courses within the first two years of their employment
- 5) Promote how stress is a positive component of our lives and help students understand how to use stress to develop resiliency and coping skills
- 6) Encourage students to use appropriate language as it relates to Mental Health

Students

The following will be made available to all students:

- 1) An education pathway from grade 7 to grade 10 using the teenmentalhealth.org as the primary curriculum resources for students in grades 7-9. In grade 10, continue educating students

through both science and religion programmes, to review factors that promote positive mental health such as family and religiosity, as well as lessons that inform students the science behind mental health disorders

- 2) A mental health resource section in the student agenda
- 3) A mental health resource bank that is easily accessible
- 4) Personalized exercise/workout programming, including exercise classes, and the ability to use the fitness room daily both in the morning and after school.

Parents

The following will be offered to all parents:

- 1) Mental health literacy presentation by TeenMentalHealth.org (speaker series)
- 2) Information on how to complete the TeachMentalHealth online course
- 3) An annual weekend workshop presented by the Student Services department that addresses various topics that may affect teen mental health.
- 4) A comprehensive annual communication plan that provides parents with resources on a monthly basis using teachmentalhealth.org as the primary source through monthly newsletters.
- 5) A brief presentation by a member of the Administration to all new parents on orientation day, relating to how we can all help support the mental health of our students

General Recommendations

The following additional recommendations:

- 1) Develop relationships with local mental health community support networks
- 2) Communicate to students where mental health resources are available
- 3) Develop a Suicide and Self-Harm protocol for all teachers
- 4) Additional professional development for Student Services with a focus on:
 - a. Ensuring students who are in distress are linked with appropriate resources and services

- b. Ensuring students who have common concerns are adequately supported
- 5) Language boards on each floor, indicating how to use proper terms as it relates to mental health
- 6) Resources for students on how to cope with high expectations
- 7) Invite Alumni back to discuss how the added workload and expectations at De La Salle contributed to their success
- 8) The Administration should continue to pursue professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of teen mental health
- 9) In collaboration with the Parents' Association, continue to pursue speakers that address "hot topics" as it relates to current mental health needs
- 10) Use the tools available through TeenMentalHealth.org to assess the overall programming for students
- 11) Intentional effort to promote healthy behaviours that support mental health such as, but not limited to: Healthy eating, exercise, positive sleep habits etc.
- 12) A review of the cafeteria menu to ensure students are given the opportunity to eat healthy foods at a reasonable price.

Conclusion

The overall goal for the proposed recommendations is to educate students, teachers and parents so that everyone can work together to support the mental health of all students at De La Salle College. It is the hope of this committee that the Administration will begin implementing some of these recommendations immediately, with full implementation taking place by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.