

KPU PEER WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8 | FALL 2024

Welcome back to KPU!

We hope that you had a great summer semester! It was a good time to recharge and recalibrate our game plan to face the Fall semester and finish with flying colors! Now that you're back, we are excited to connect with you and to see some of you in our upcoming events!

For those who haven't heard what the **KPU Peer Wellness Program** is about, let me give you a brief rundown: we host events to share health and wellness resources, encourage social connection, and point students in the right direction when it comes to KPU resources and services. Learn more about our work on page 4!

What you are holding right now is our Fall 2024 newsletter! We write a new edition every semester to share KPU services, resources, and interesting health and wellness topics that can benefit you in the long run. We hope you read through this copy, so you can learn more about our highlighted KPU services and health topics. We have our past newsletters in our website as well with various topics and resources that may be useful for you! Thank you so much for your support, and we're looking forward to seeing you at our events!

-Aubrey Clarito Peer Wellness Leader

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Connect with us!

- Receive real-time and up-to-date information about our events and announcements
- Watch our IG Lives
@KPUPeerWellness
- Message us your questions about health and well-being on campus. We're also happy to chat about general KPU resources and services!



kpu.ca/peerwellness

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SERVICES

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT



What are Indigenous Student Services?

Indigenous Student Services is committed to providing a **welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment for all Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) students**. The department provides Indigenous students with a variety of **resources and opportunities**:

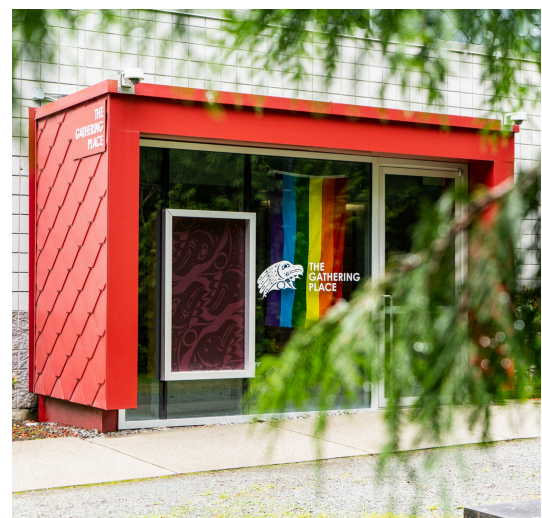
- Indigenous Student Orientation
- Awards and funding assistance
- Cultural activities, events, and student workshops
- Global Indigenous Learning Experience
- Indigenous counsellor
- Referrals to other student support services



Indigenous Student Services is also home to the **Elder In-Residence program**, where Indigenous students can speak with Lekeyten of the Kwantlen First Nation. In this role, Lekeyten encourages Indigenous students throughout their educational journey by sharing **knowledge, traditions, and teachings**. More details on meeting with Elder Lekeyten can be found: kpu.ca/indigenous/contact

What is the Gathering Place?

Here, students will find woven cedar walls and ceilings, books, computers, and ceremonial art installations. The goal of the Gathering Place is to create an **inviting gathering place for Indigenous students**: a space that supports the social and educational activities associated with attending KPU in an environment that recognizes the important contributions of the Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qay'Qayt, Katzie, Musqueam, Kwikwetlem, and all other Indigenous Nations. Come visit Indigenous Services and the Gathering Place, **located at Surrey Main 166** or contact IndigenousServices@kpu.ca!



Kwantlen comes from the name of the Kwantlen First Nation, meaning **“tireless runner.”** Kwantlen Polytechnic University proudly shares this name, reflected in our motto: **“Through tireless effort, knowledge, and understanding.”** Visit kpu.ca/indigenous to learn more!



STUDENT HEALTH PROMOTION

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health (WHO). Health promotion highlights the interconnected relationship between individuals and their environments, and identifies that health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life: where they learn, work, play and love.

Who is Student Health Promotion?



The Student Health Promotion department was founded in 2019 and has been steadily growing with a robust student team made up of staff, student volunteers, and student assistants. The department recognizes that wellness is multi-faceted, and takes an **iterative, holistic, and proactive approach** to creating supportive environments that build resilience and capacity across the campus community. To accomplish this, we look to reduce access and information barriers via education campaigns and programming, look for service gaps, as well as advocate for system-level changes. Ultimately, the department's mission is to maintain a healthy campus culture that supports KPU students.



Learn more at:



kpu.ca/student-health-promotion

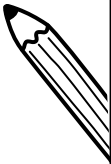
What They Do: Events

To support student wellness, the Student Health Promotion Department hosts several **large events** every year. The biggest events are the Student Mental Health Fair, Nutrition Month, National Health & Fitness Day, and Thrive Month.

The busiest month for the team is **October: Thrive Month!** Every year, the team celebrates Thrive Month: a series of events, workshops and activities that focus on supporting positive health and wellbeing for KPU students, staff, and faculty. It is crucial for us to make our health and wellbeing a priority, and what better way than by participating in fun activities that will provide tools to be **resilient**, make **connections** with other students at KPU, and support overall **health and wellbeing**.

Last year, (during the 8th Thrive Month at KPU!) the Student Health Promotion supported 26 events over 20 days. This year, Thrive Month will have even more events—we encourage you to pop into as many events as you can & **scan the QR code** to see the event schedule!





What They Do: Programming

Student Health Promotion’s programming efforts are currently focused on 2 programs:

The KPU **Peer Wellness Team** is comprised of KPU students just like you! We mainly offer social support and opportunities for social connection; provide students with a one-stop shop to navigate health and wellness resources on campus; and advocate for enhanced student health and wellbeing on campus. We run social events, info booths, online content, and other campus-wide health events under the department. The team works incredibly hard, creating a welcoming atmosphere and a safer space for KPU students to improve their wellbeing.



Fall 2024 Schedule
Monday: Camille (He/Him)
Tuesday: Chris (He/They)
Wednesday: Cal (They/Them)
Thursday: Heather (She/Her)
Friday: Destiny (They/Them)

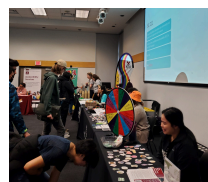
The **Pride Peer Leaders** is a peer-to-peer program that focuses on **social support, resource navigation, and advocacy** to support 2SLGBTQIA+ students at KPU. The program positions a Pride Peer Leader—a KPU student who identifies as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community—in the **Pride Centre (Birch 240) Monday-Friday, from 11AM-5PM**. The space offers a venue for students to chat & hang out with other 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and to grab supplies like educational pamphlets, safer sex supplies, and menstrual products. Pride Peers also host events, like cookie

decorating, movie days, PowerPoint days, and crafting sessions at the Pride Centre. All 2SLGBTQIA+ KPU students are encouraged to visit the Pride Centre!

What They Do: Resource Development & Advocacy Work

On top of coordinating programming and events, the team does a significant amount of **resource development**—as health education is a key component of health promotion. **The more students are informed about their choices and different opportunities, the better they're positioned to increase control over, and improve their health.** Thus, the team has created health education pieces on sexual health, substance use, etc., and has also invited external organizations to KPU for presentations and workshops.

The Student Health Promotion team also advocates for **services & enhanced efforts** throughout KPU to promote health, as changes at a university-level are vital. KPU-wide policies affect all KPU students, meaning there’s a lower barrier to receiving the intervention benefits.



EXPLORING DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

HEALTH & WELLNESS ARTICLE

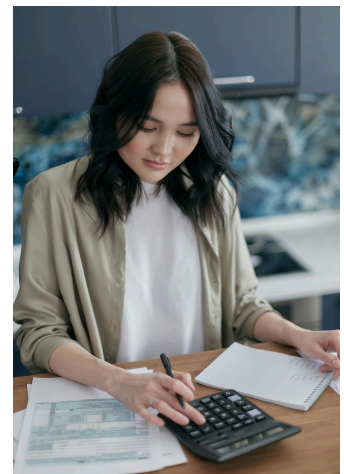
With employment responsibilities, social obligations, and academic requirements, some of us can struggle to find study-work-life balance—with our health ultimately paying the price. Burnout, pervasive stress, and worry can seriously impact our quality of life as students. Keeping in mind the six dimensions of wellness is a great way to support our wellbeing, providing us with a clear focus on our goals and journey ahead!

Emotional Wellness

This dimension of wellness frequently gets neglected but is just as important as the other dimensions. Nurturing emotional wellness lays the foundation for positive health outcomes. In fact, emotional distress, such as stress, anxiety, or depression, increases susceptibility to physical illness (Salleh, 2008). The key to emotional wellness is adopting an **optimistic outlook on life**, which entails being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, whether positive or negative. **Tips:** If you're feeling burned out, try some positive coping strategies like mindfulness or talking to a friend/professional. Embrace self-care techniques that work for you such as setting aside time for your favorite hobby, and recording all your emotions (whether positive or negative) to allow yourself to look back and reflect.

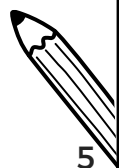
Financial Wellness

Finances play a key role in our lives, impacting our health and academic performance. Although everyone has varying financial needs and circumstances, financial wellness is all about making **informed financial decisions** and **managing your resources**. It includes balancing your income and expenses, staying out of debt, and planning for future short-term and long-term financial goals. **Tips:** University students frequently report financial stress as a cause of worry and fear. (Norvilitis & Linn, 2021). It's a good idea to check out available resources such as student food banks, employment opportunities, awards and financial assistance including scholarships, bursaries, and emergency funding.



Mental Wellness

University life can be stressful due to balancing academic deadlines and personal challenges simultaneously. Mental wellness is a health concern for post-secondary students, who are at a higher risk of developing mental disorders. Achieving mental wellness is coping with these regular stresses of life and **living productively**. According to the World Health Organization (2023), there can be “no health without mental health.” They note the multi-faceted relationship between mental health and overall well-being, highlighting the importance of mental health. **Tips:** It's key to understand when to seek support from friends, family, or university services. As such, there are many mental health resources available on campus such as counseling services, KSA peer support, and CampusWell.



Physical Wellness

This dimension is about taking care of your body for **optimal energy, proper functioning, and preventing illnesses** (Waterloo, Physical). This typically includes exercising regularly, eating balanced meals, and getting enough quality sleep. **Tips:** Exercising looks different to everyone, from short walks to powerlifting—do what feels right to you! Prioritize consistent exercise rather than intense & long workouts, while fueling your body with nutritious meals and plenty of water. Visit the KPU Sport & Recreation fitness centers to find out more about fitness courses/workshops, and what fitness at home can look like!

Social Wellness

Building **positive relationships and engaging with your community** are great ways to support this dimension. Communicating with others allows you to share your feelings and learn about other's experiences to help in your own life. Relationships can provide social support, so that you don't feel alone and have someone to celebrate your achievements with. Being active in the community can help you become involved in something greater, contributing to the prosperity of your community. **Tips:** There are various ways to form positive relationships and become a part of the community: spending time with friends/family, volunteering, and getting involved on campus encourage socialization. Volunteering is an excellent way to serve the community and build your portfolio.

Spiritual Wellness



Finding **balance** within and **purpose** in life are essential parts of spiritual wellness. Appreciating **nature** and its harmony helps us to embrace a similar balance in ourselves (Waterloo, Spiritual). Having **clarity** results in more manageable goals and recognizing opportunities, which can support academic, career, and personal life aspects. **Tips:** It's important to pause and recognize how we're feeling so that we can reach out for help. Meditation is a useful way to clear our minds before important decisions, have a restful sleep, etc. The Multi-Faith Center (Cedar 1035), the Gathering Place, and the Prayer & Meditation spaces are available at KPU to support this dimension.

Wellness is an **active process**, where we **balance** the dimensions of wellness in ways that resonate with us and help us thrive. Understanding these wellness dimensions can help us make informed decisions that prioritize our wellbeing. Losing sight of one dimension can have a **domino-effect** on other dimensions, ultimately having a harmful impact. Take some time to reflect on your life, noting if there are any specific dimensions of wellness that need more attention. From there, you can explore **healthy practices & coping strategies** to alleviate your concerns and help restore balance. It's never too late!

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✧ ✧ FOLDABLE WELLNESS CUBE ACTIVITY ✧ ✧

Instructions: Cut out the cube template, and fold along the inside lines. Then glue the sides together along the tabs. Roll the cube and review the tips for each Wellness Dimension!

Social Wellness	Physical Wellness	Emotional Wellness	Financial Wellness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to a loved one that you haven't spoken to in a while Say "hello!" to at least 5 people today Get involved in a new hobby or sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk around your neighbourhood or go for a nature walk Take a 5 or 10-minute stretch break Include a fruit or vegetable in your next meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do a mindfulness meditation session Try journaling! It can be in any medium you like—written, drawing, voice recording Watch your favourite comfort movie or show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Wellness Learn the definition of at least 3 words that are related to finances Update your monthly budget Exercise "mindful spending"

Spiritual Wellness	Mental Wellness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down a favorite line that gets you through hard times. Read it aloud every morning Reflect about your spiritual core to know more about yourself: Who am I? What is my purpose? What do I value the most in life? Speak to a KPU chaplain or someone you trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do at least a 30-minute cardio or strength exercise Put your phone aside for 15 minutes and just be present in the moment Practice stress relievers (e.g. yoga, journaling, breathing exercises, etc.)

