









The THRIVE © Approach for Students

The Fountain of Health is a national non-profit educational initiative on the science of brain health and wellbeing. The **THRIVE © Approach for Students** is based on the Fountain of Health’s “THRIVE © Approach to Wellbeing” to optimize students’ wellbeing.

Make Your Own Student Wellness Plan

University years are an exciting chance to live life on your own terms. Give yourself the best start with a personal plan to look after your wellbeing. **Invest in yourself your own way and THRIVE at University! The THRIVE © Approach for Students** helps you to design and carry out your own personal wellness plan. Start your journey with **3 easy steps**:

Step 1. Take the THRIVE Questionnaire (www.fountainofhealth.ca/webform/optimal-aging-fountain-health-quiz) see how you are doing in the THRIVE domains. The THRIVE domains are six high impact areas known to promote wellbeing that are based on research findings on brain neuroplasticity, resilience, preventative medicine, and behaviour change:

-  **Thoughts-** Positive Thinking
-  **Health Habits-** Physical Activity and Healthy Eating
-  **Relationships-** Social Activity
-  **Interests-** Brain Challenge
-  **Valued Goals-** SMART Goal-setting
-  **Emotions-** Taking Care of Mental Health

Step 2. Fill out the *Make It Your Own: Valued SMART Goals Worksheet* (pages 2-5 of this document). Set one “SMART” goal in one (or more) of the THRIVE domains. Goals in these areas can help you manage stress, optimize your physical and mental health and bounce back in hard times. Choosing goals that you value are more likely to be achieved.

“**SMART**” goals are: **S**pecific, **M**easurable and **M**eaningful, **A**ction oriented, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-Limited. When setting your goal(s), remember no goal is too small. Small goals done over time can achieve great benefits for your long-term wellbeing.

Step 3. Track your progress. Check in at the beginning of each month to see how you are doing. Use the [Fountain of Health’s Wellness App](http://www.wellnessapp.ca/app/login) downloadable through the website: www.wellnessapp.ca/app/login to help track your goal. The Wellness App provides you with feedback to encourage and help you stick with your health goals. Remember this is a journey, not a race and any step is a good step on a SMART path to help you THRIVE!



Make It Your Own: Valued SMART Goals!



Thoughts: Positive Thinking

How you see yourself and your life's challenges can make a big difference to your long-term health and happiness. It is not about having “rose-colored glasses” or ignoring your distress or problems. It is about developing a balanced way of thinking. Learning to be your own best friend and noticing your own strengths are key for long-term wellness. Pay attention to what is good in your life, and remind yourself of your strengths. When you hit a rough patch, think about how you would respond to a good friend needing your support. Learning to speak to yourself as a good friend can help you tame your inner “critic”.

Thoughts goal: _____

Sample ideas: Create a gratitude list that you review 3 times a week; learn about positive thinking exercises or self-care ideas from www.happify.com; check out free online self-compassion exercises at www.self-compassion.org/ or build resilient thinking.



Health Habits: Physical Activity

Regular physical activity during university years is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. It can prevent depression, improve memory and help you manage stress more effectively. Any exercise is beneficial to brain and cardiovascular health. Pick something that you enjoy doing. Any activity that you can enjoy is more likely to be repeated. Remember, long-term benefits can come from small steps, so make sure it is doable for you!

Physical Activity goal: _____

Sample ideas: Go out for a walk for 20 minutes, 3 times a week; take the stairs getting to class each day; try a spin/aerobic/dance/yoga class; work out at the gym-2-3 times a week. Check out physical activity opportunities on campus or develop a personal fitness plan with the [Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](http://www.physio-pedia.com/Canadian_Physical_Activity_and_Sedentary_Behaviour_Guidelines) ([www.physio-pedia.com/Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](http://www.physio-pedia.com/Canadian_Physical_Activity_and_Sedentary_Behaviour_Guidelines)).



Health Habits: Healthy Eating

Healthy eating promotes wellness, and prevents disease. Eat minimally processed and plant-based foods: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Healthy eating is not only about the foods you eat. It is also how you relate to your food. Being mindful of how, why, when and where you eat can improve how you relate to your food. Balancing your food intake with your activity level is a simple way to improve healthy eating. Eat regular meals that balance calories in with calories out.

Healthy Eating goal: _____

Sample ideas: Add one more fruit or vegetable a day to your diet; keep a drinking bottle near to sip water through the day; eat slowly, without any distractions; create a meal plan for a day or a week.



Relationships: Social Activity

Even though you are surrounded by many people on campus, living in a new place with new people can be lonely and anxiety-provoking. You will be working hard at school, but developing friendships and having balance is key to your wellness. Can you think of one activity or club on campus you would consider joining this term? Finding people who share your interests is a great way to deepen connections. Knowing you have someone to turn to when the going gets tough is very important for your wellbeing.

Relationships goal: _____

Sample ideas: Take time to connect with the people who are here to support you on campus such as your resident life advisors or peer wellness supporters. Consider joining at least one club, social or team activity so you get to know new people through an activity you enjoy.



Interests: Brain Challenge

You will be learning a lot at university and not just about academics! Learning new things is great for your brain health, and learning how to take care of your brain health is a fantastic life skill. Do you know how to manage stress and look after yourself effectively? Consider learning something new about your own self-care while on campus.

Interests goal: _____

Sample ideas: Learn something new about stress-reduction strategies such as mindfulness, yoga or time-management. Check out campus sessions for self-care (e.g. sexual health, healthy eating). Visit these self-care links for more ideas: www.fountainofhealth.ca, www.yogawithadriene.com/, www.canada.ca/en/services/health/healthy-eating.html



Valued Goals: SMART Goal-setting

Values are what you believe to be important in the way you live. When your actions match your values, your wellbeing grows! Choosing a goal that you value will help you to keep going, even when you face setbacks.

My Values include: _____

Sample ideas: Gratitude, kindness, personal growth, efficiency, health, adventure etc. For more information on value-based goals visit www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/the-blame-game/201204/the-value-goals



Emotions: Taking Care of Mental Health

University can be stressful in many ways. Do you wonder if what you feel is normal or not? It is good to talk about it. Do you know who to ask if you are concerned about how you feel? Are you aware of how to reduce harm to your brain from excess alcohol or substances (e.g. cannabis)? Learn how to protect your mental health with resources available on campus. Learn the warning signs of depression, anxiety or substance problems. Your residence advisors or peer wellness supporters are there to listen and help if you need referral to other mental health supports.



Emotions goal: _____

Sample ideas: Learn about the early warning signs of depression, anxiety and alcohol and substance problems and how to deal with them at www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca. For stress management and anxiety check out Jon Kabat Zinn Body Scan Mindfulness Practice for Anxiety Reduction www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4gZgnCy5ew. To learn how to get better sleep, check out www.mysleepwell.ca. If you are worried about your mental health and need extra help, speak to your advisors and health providers. Remember, your mental health is as important as your physical health!

Congratulations on jumpstarting your health and wellness using the THRIVE © Approach for Students!

Remember to check on your Valued SMART goals at the beginning of each month to see how you are doing! If you are struggling, remember you are not alone.

If you face a setback, remember this is normal. The trick is to refocus and allow yourself to get back on track without getting stuck on guilt or shame. Learning to take good care of ourselves is a lifelong process!

Give Yourself the Best Chance to THRIVE at University!

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