



Ontario Shores
Centre for Mental Health Sciences

**Post-Secondary
Recovery College
Toolkit**

"I felt as though my experiences with my own mental health battles were finally being used to help other people in a safe, welcoming environment. After all the workload from school it was nice to be a part of something more personal that I chose to do - it made me feel very empowered and valued."

– OTU, Fall 2021

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Background

It has widely been recognized that young adults aged 18-24 years old are at risk of developing mental health challenges – and this is especially pronounced during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In one study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that 25% of individuals in this age group considered suicide in the previous 30 days in the summer of 2020 (Czeisler et al., 2020). In addition, the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) recently found that compared to 2019, 81% of students in 2020 reported an increase in loneliness and 40% reported an increase in feelings of depression. In response to such, Ontario Shores has established partnerships with various post-secondary institutions to bring Recovery Colleges to their campus communities.

As most Canadian Recovery Colleges are community-based, entering the post-secondary space has offered a new and innovative approach to the Recovery College model that has further contributed to mental health system transformation, as well as provided access to support for students and young adults. This is the first of its kind. This is innovative because it puts students “in the driver’s seat” and allows them to shape the mental health-related programming at their school via the co-design structure of program design. This serves to reduce the power imbalances that often exist between service providers and consumers. Co-authorship ensures that programming is relevant, relatable, and meaningful, as well as influences students to have a sense of ownership of their Recovery College supports.

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores), a specialized mental health teaching hospital, has leveraged its own experience and knowledge of launching and operating an internal Recovery College to establish partnerships with post-secondary schools to facilitate the novel application of the Recovery College model. This new and innovative approach to the Recovery College model has further contributed to mental health system transformation, as well as provided much-needed access to support for students and young adults.



Aim of Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is to be a practical resource for post-secondary institutions who are leading and supporting the implementation of a Recovery College on their campus. Within the toolkit, you will find three main sections:

1. Recovery College Overview and Post-Secondary Application
2. How to Develop a Recovery College at a Post-Secondary Institution
3. How to Sustain and Grow a Recovery College at a Post-Secondary Institution

This toolkit contains a range of tools and resources that may be useful for implementing, sustaining, and growing a post-secondary Recovery College. The information included in this toolkit is drawn from current research on Recovery Colleges in traditional settings, preliminary data on application in the post secondary context, as well as practical experience gained throughout post-secondary Recovery College implementation.

Who is the Toolkit For?

This toolkit is primarily intended to assist post-secondary institutions in the development of a Recovery College on their campus. The toolkit will be of use to post-secondary institution leadership, staff, and post-secondary institution peer facilitators (hereinafter known as “school peers”).



How to Use the Toolkit

This toolkit includes a range of tools and resources that may be helpful for implementing, sustaining, and evaluating a Recovery College at a post-secondary institution. Click on the icons or embedded links throughout the document to access templates, examples, or additional reading, located within the appendix. Once re-directed to the appendix, find the desired document's location using the table of contents or by searching (Ctrl + F) the document's title.

-  Information is available within this document.
-  Information is linked outside of this document.
-  Return to Source
-  Template
-  Assessments, Evaluations or Surveys
-  Additional Reading

Section I:
Recovery College
Overview and
Post-Secondary
Application



Defining a Recovery College

Recovery Colleges are mental health and well-being learning centres driven by peer education and principles of positive psychology. Recovery Colleges offer recovery-oriented courses in a range of topics that support mental health and well-being. Students are empowered to select courses to support their learning objectives and mental health goals; like personal recovery, students' learning objectives are unique and deeply personal.

Recovery Colleges present a low barrier, co-produced, peer led means of mental health education and support. They promote an inclusive and supportive environment that builds on students' strengths to promote growth, self-agency, and overcome the stigma surrounding mental health. Recovery Colleges move beyond attaining symptom remission to a deeper and ultimate goal of amplifying strengths and supporting personal mental health recovery through living a meaningful and flourishing life (Perkins et al., 2012).

Recovery Colleges aim to influence personal recovery which involves connection, hope, identity, meaning, and empowerment (CHIME framework). The CHIME framework underscores the ethos of the Recovery College, as it conceptualizes the principles of personal mental health recovery based on the research of narrative accounts of the characteristics underlying personal recovery processes (Leamy et al., 2011). This framework is widely accepted as representing the recovery construct (Shanks et al., 2013) and numerous established Recovery Colleges use this model to inform program development and outcome measurement (e.g., Meddings, Mcgregor, & Roeg, 2015).

Recovery Colleges originated in the United Kingdom in 2009 but are still relatively new in Canada (Therriault et al., 2020). In 2016, Ontario Shores was one of the first organizations to implement a Recovery College within Canada, and the first to do so within a mental health hospital. Since then, Recovery Colleges have become widespread across Canada, with over 20 established in the community and seven in post-secondary institutions.



Application to the Post-Secondary Space

Mental health challenges in young adults were of epidemic proportions prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic (Rashid & Genova, 2020) with an incredible prominence of anxiety and depression among other challenges (Kessler, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated pre-existing conditions as well as stimulated the onset for others (Landau, 2020).

The way in which post-secondary students engage in their education is so different from what they have experienced or expected prior to the pandemic. They have been asked to make enormous changes in every area of their life practically overnight (Rashid & Genova, 2020). All of this change and uncertainty can leave people experiencing distress and/or discomfort. This has put an incredible pressure on campus mental health services due to a high demand for services and a requirement to pivot many of their services onto an online platform. The importance of impactful, relevant, and accessible programming for post-secondary students is more important now than ever.

Key Features of a Post-Secondary Recovery College: Model Overview

The post-secondary Recovery College initiative operates on a consultative model. The role of the Ontario Shores, as the consultant, is to provide leadership and expertise in the implementation, sustainability, and evaluation of Recovery Colleges. The role of the postsecondary institutions is to operationalize and sustain the Recovery Colleges. There are variations of the model depending on resources available.

Ontario Shores provides intensive support during the initial stages of Recovery College implementation, with the ultimate goal of moving into a coaching, consultative, and mentorship role to allow the post-secondary institution to assume ownership of the program on their campus. Ontario Shores has secured staffing support to provide post-secondary institutions with project management, research, and evaluation capacity to support the development and implementation of the Recovery College on an ongoing basis.



Target Population

Based on survey data from Sept 2020 - Aug 2022

Majority (64%) report that they struggle and/or experience challenges with maintaining positive mental health, are female (78%), and between the ages of 18 and 23 years old (67%).



Types of Courses Offered

a. Meaningful and health connections

Course topic examples: supporting others, interpersonal skills, healthy boundaries, creating and maintaining friendships/relationships, etc.

b. Skill development

Course topic examples: self-care, time management, boundaries, financial literacy, healthy habits, coping skills, wellness tools, etc.

c. Self-discovery and learning about yourself/strengths

Course topic examples: telling your story, pursuing your dreams and aspirations, self-compassion, resilience, self-reflection, etc.

d. Learning about mental health and treatment options

Course topic examples: understanding treatment options, medication and mental health, where to find and how to access resources on and off campus, etc.

e. Work/education-related

Course topic examples: balancing work, school and life, imposter syndrome, interview skills, time management, life after grad, transitioning to post-secondary, etc.

f. Recreational and leisure

Course topic examples: cooking, guitar, yoga, creative arts, reading for pleasure, etc.

g. Co-Design

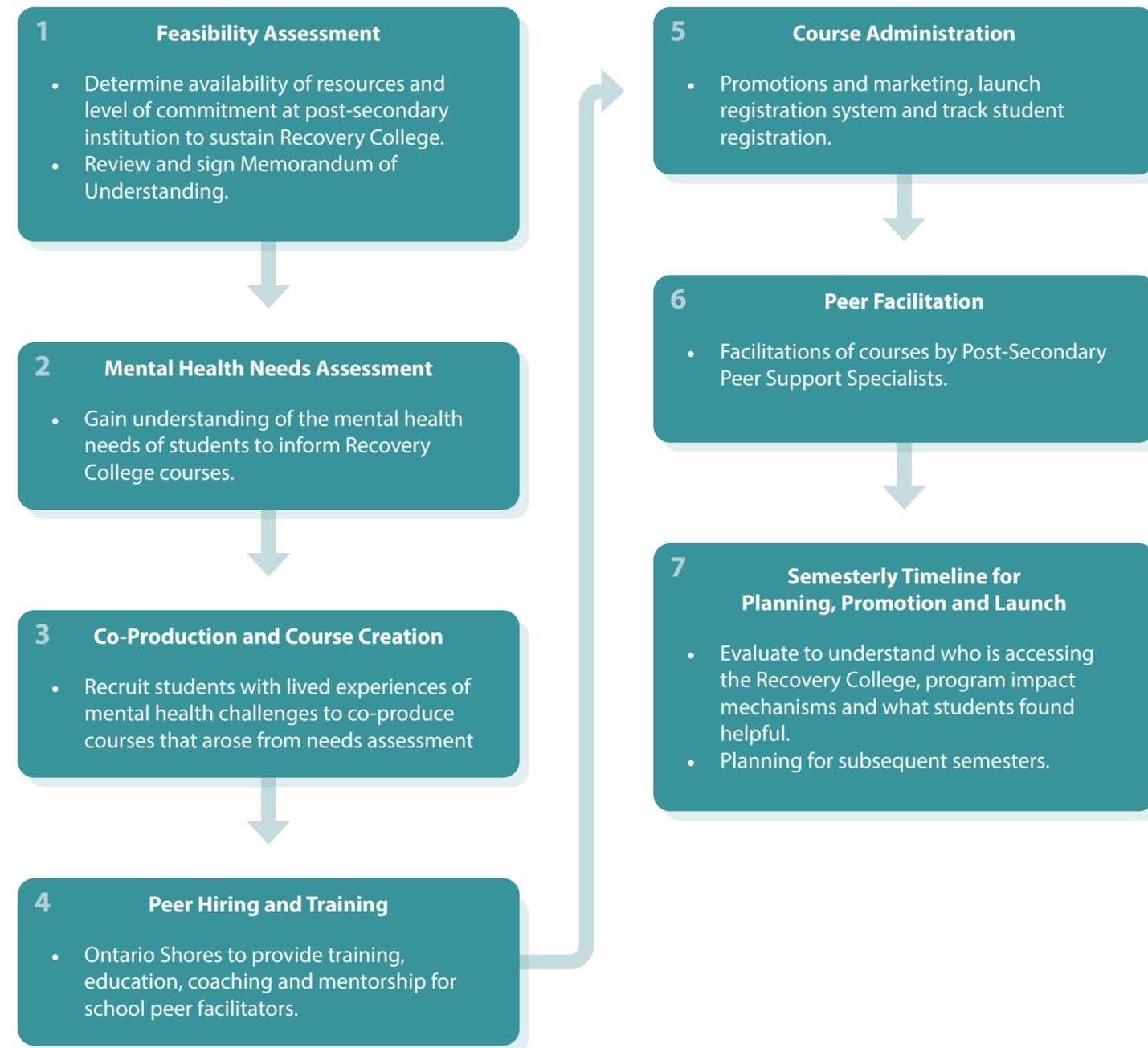


[See appendix for previous course offerings.](#)

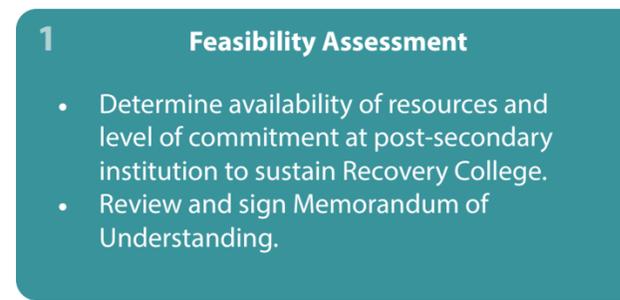
Section 2:
How to Develop
Recovery College at
a Post-Secondary
Institution



The Stages of Implementation



Feasibility Assessment



Prior to proceeding with implementation of a Recovery College at a post-secondary institution, the availability of resources and level of commitment at the post-secondary institution needs to be assessed, to determine the likelihood of successful implementation and long term sustainability. Resources required from both parties to ensure feasibility are outlined below.

Commitment from post-secondary institution

1. Material resources:

- Registration system (i.e., Survey Monkey, Microsoft Forms, internal system, etc.)
- Online platform to run classes (if virtual) or physical space (if in person)

2. Human resources:

- Point person with ability to:
 - Make decisions related to the program on behalf of the organization
 - Be dedicated to the goals and success of the Recovery College (i.e., see it's value, maintain and prioritize fidelity)
 - Participate in regular meetings with Ontario Shores (i.e., bi-weekly, monthly)
- Point person with ability to (can be the same person mentioned above):
 - Co-supervise school peers with the Ontario

Shores Peer Support Specialists (hereafter referred to as "Ontario Shores peers")

- Oversee and coordinate the creation of promotional materials and execution of promotion activities
 - Participate in regular meetings with Ontario Shores (i.e., bi-weekly, monthly)
- c. School peers (ideally two; minimum one) with ability to:
- Commit approximately 12 hours per week total, depending on the number of courses run per semester (i.e., if two school peers, 6 hrs. each) to training, content development, course facilitation, weekly meetings with Ontario Shores peers, attend promo events, create promo content, and administrative duties (i.e., confirmation, reminder, and follow-up emails)
 - Note: School peer role can be filled by an internship, co-op student, work study student, repurposing of existing positions, contract position, or permanent position

3. Financial resources:

- Peer position salary/honorarium
- Optional: co-production honorariums (4-12 participants x \$25/hour x 5 hours x 2/year = \$1,000-\$3,000/year)



Feasibility Assessment Continued

4. Participate in evaluation and research activities (i.e., allowing Ontario Shores to evaluate the program)

Commitment from Ontario Shores

1. Material resources:

- a. Post-secondary Recovery College Implementation Toolkit that includes:
 - i. Templates for work and promo plans
 - ii. Communication strategies and email templates for needs assessment invitations and course confirmation/reminder/follow-up emails
 - iii. School peer hiring resources (i.e., job description and interview questions)
 - iv. Library of previous course materials (i.e., descriptions, content)
- b. Evaluation analysis and materials/reports (i.e., impact data, testimonials, etc.)

2. Human resources:

- a. Permanent resources dedicated to Post-secondary Recovery Colleges that includes an Implementation and Evaluation Coordinator and Post-Secondary Peer Support Specialists to support:
 - i. Development and management of work plans
 - ii. Promotion/marketing consultation
 - iii. Facilitation of needs assessment (i.e., facilitate focus groups and complete data analysis)
 - iv. School peer training that includes access to peer training material, coaching, mentorship, co-supervision, and reflexive practice through Ontario Shores
 - v. Facilitation for the first semester and co-facilitation for the second semester, if needed; can resume co-facilitation for one semester when need school peers are onboarded
 - vi. Support with school peer interviews, if needed

3. Financial resources:

- a. Graphic facilitator to attend the first class of every co-design course
- b. Survey incentive (gift cards)

4. Educational resources:

- a. Access to Community of Learning meetings, materials, and discussion boards
- b. Membership in Research Consortium
- c. Micro-credentialing opportunities for students

If the post-secondary institution is able to commit to the aforementioned resources, a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) is reviewed and signed, if both parties are in agreement to the terms. From there, a [work plan](#) with timelines, respectful of both parties' capacities, is created and managed by Ontario Shores.



[See appendix for MOU template and Work Plan Template.](#)

Mental Health Needs Assessment

2 Mental Health Needs Assessment

- Gain understanding of the mental health needs of students to inform Recovery College courses.

Once resources are secured, the second stage of implementation involves a mental health needs assessment to gain an understanding of the unmet mental health support and education needs of students on each unique campus, to inform the planning and development of the Recovery College. This is a process that is repeated at each post-secondary institution to ensure that the unique needs of each campus' student community are being met.

The needs assessment consists of:

1. Existing document collection (i.e., existing programs, survey data, etc.)

- a. Post-secondary institution to provide Ontario Shores with an exhaustive list of existing programs/services within student mental health/wellness services, accessibility services, etc.
- b. Post-secondary institution to provide Ontario Shores with service utilization reports, if any
- c. Post-secondary institution to provide Ontario Shores with any relevant data collected through surveys administered either on campus or across postsecondary institutions (i.e., campus wide surveys on mental health needs)

2. Focus groups with staff and students

- a. [Staff focus group\(s\)](#) facilitated by Ontario Shores to get a better understanding of student mental health needs from a staff perspective
- b. [Student focus group\(s\)](#) facilitated by Ontario

Shores to get a better understanding of student mental health needs from a student perspective

- c. Ontario Shores to provide post-secondary institutions with [email invite templates](#) for both staff and student focus groups

3. A survey sent out to the greater student body

- a. Ontario Shores to provide post-secondary institutions with a [student needs assessment survey](#) to gather information on awareness and accessibility to services, course topic interest, preferred method/mode of delivery, primary stressors, etc.
- b. Post-secondary institution to facilitate the distribution of the survey, using an [email template](#) provided by Ontario Shores, to students on campus

Ontario Shores compiles and summarizes information from the needs assessment and provides the post-secondary institution with a report highlighting areas where the Recovery College could fulfill unmet needs. Information gathered from the needs assessment is then used to drive the development of proposed Recovery College course ideas to be presented to students through the co-production process.



[See appendix for templates for Focus Group Email Invite Templates, Student Survey Email Template, Student Needs Assessment Survey, Staff Focus Group Guide, and Student Focus Group Guide](#)



Co-Production and Course Creation

3 Co-Production and Course Creation

- Recruit students with lived experiences of mental health challenges to co-produce courses that arose from needs assessment

What is Co-production/Co-design?

Co-production is a process in which end users are involved as equal partners in the design of supports and services that are available to them (Think Local Act Personal, 2015, as cited in Clark, 2015). The process of co-production recognises that people who use mental health services, supports, and programming and their families are experts in their own experience and needs. Service users and their families have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services more impactful, accessible, and relevant for themselves and their community.

Co-production is a powerful tool, especially in mental health service design and delivery. Historically, and often today, mental health services have been fraught with inherent power imbalances between service users and providers. Co-production goes beyond service user “engagement” and positions individuals as experts by experience. When done properly, service users have the same power as those delivering services, resulting in several benefits for service development, delivery and ultimately system transformation.

The Recovery College is an example where the voice of service users is blended with professionals to co-produce curriculum that informs courses that individuals can take to enhance their personal

wellness. Co-production processes and approaches are dynamic and can be tailored and amended to make space for the engagement and participation of various groups and communities.

How is co-production used in post-secondary Recovery Colleges?

In the post-secondary context, the co-production process is a key part of the implementation process and involves the delivery of a Co-Design course. This course brings together students and provides them with the opportunity to inform the development of Recovery College courses on their campus, through co-producing course offerings that arose from the needs assessment. The Co-Design courses are co-facilitated by Ontario Shores’ peers and school peers and typically run for one hour each week over five weeks. The Co-Design courses are repeated twice a year to ensure that the dynamic needs of the students continue to be reflected in the Recovery College programming.

It is encouraged that post-secondary institutions provide Co-Design participants with an honorarium to acknowledge the value of leveraging their lived experience to contribute to mental health and wellbeing programming. It also ensures that no one incurs a cost for participating in the course. It demonstrates that everyone’s time and expertise are equally valued. The recommended honorarium rate is \$25/hr and can be provided in different ways including gift cards, direct deposits, prepaid credit cards, etc. If a post-secondary institution does not have the resources to support honorariums, it is encouraged to find alternate ways to provide participants with recognition such as ensuring the Co-Design course is eligible to add to a Co-Curricular Record.

In order to have the most meaningful and productive conversations, Co-Design courses should contain between four and twelve participants. With any more than twelve participants, it becomes challenging to provide space for all participants to share their thoughts and ideas and with less than four, there is likely not a diverse representation of the student body. The output/deliverable of the Co-Design course is the development of between two and four Recovery College courses, each with their unique curricula and resources.

During the final class of or after the Co-Design course, a post-participation survey is distributed which aims to collect feedback on recent experience participating in the Co-Design course to effectively plan future courses as well as gain a better understanding of the experience of co-production on participants. Thus far, 97% of students (n=29) have either strongly agreed or agreed that the co-production process was meaningful to them. The process was meaningful to them as they felt their voices were heard, it provided a safe space to share experiences, they felt empowered as they had the opportunity to help others, their lived experience was valued, it was an opportunity to learn, and it provided a sense of connection to others.

"I felt as though my experiences with my own mental health battles were finally being used to help other people in a safe, welcoming environment. After all the workload from school it was nice to be a part of something more personal that I chose to do - it made me feel very empowered and valued." – OTU, Fall 2021

"Reminds me that we're not alone in this." – Western, Fall 2022

Graphic Facilitation

Graphic facilitation is the practice of listening and visualizing conversations using visual language. A Graphic Facilitator is trained in facilitation and

listening techniques and uses illustration to synthesize conversations. It refers to the immersive process of using words, symbols and pictures to facilitate and record a conversation or process.

Using graphic facilitation is a popular approach to lead participants through dialogue. It allows people to see their ideas unfold and captured in real time. For the first class of every Co-Design course, a graphic facilitator attends to capture the students’ ideas into one graphic that can be used for promotion. The use of this graphic highlights that the student voice is central to the post-secondary Recovery College initiative (see figures 1 and 2).



See appendix for Co-Design Course Methodology, Co-Design Guide Templates and Co-Design PowerPoint Templates.



Figure 1: Final Graphic GBC



Figure 2: Final Graphic UTSC



Peer Hiring and Training

4 Peer Hiring and Training

- Ontario Shores to provide training, education, coaching and mentorship for school peer facilitators.

One of the pivotal roles within a Recovery College is the role of peers. Peer support has been defined as “a supportive relationship between people who have lived experience in common”. Peers can offer understanding, emotional support, and inspire hope and the possibility of recovery (Sunderland & Mishkin, 2013).

It is encouraged that each post-secondary institution hires two school peers to support with facilitation, content development, and administrative responsibilities. The school peer positions can be filled by an internship, co-op student, work study student, repurposing of existing positions, contract position, or permanent position. Ontario Shores is able to provide consultation on hiring of school peers to support each established Recovery College by providing [job description](#), an [interview questions template](#), and [mock presentation slides](#) (for candidate to present in interview), as well as, reviewing interview questions, and sitting on interview panels, as needed.

As school peers are hired, in addition to any institution specific training, Ontario Shores provides training that consists of two components: 1) structured and 2) on the job. The overarching goal of the training is to empower school peers to leverage their authentic selves and lived experience to connect with Recovery College students through program development and implementation.

The structured component is a combination of synchronous and asynchronous delivery, and consists of a 1.5 day workshop broken into [four sessions](#). Each session includes 1-1.5 hours of synchronous learning with peers from other post-secondary institutions and 1-2 hours of asynchronous/self-guided learning for sessions one through three.

Session 1: Focuses on the recovery philosophy, Recovery Colleges and their application in the post-secondary space, and peer support.

Session 2: Covers topics pertaining to the role of a peer including but not limited to, authenticity, mutuality, boundaries, confidentiality, accessibility, and cultural competence.

Session 3: Provides an overview of the co-design process, curriculum development, facilitation skills, and managing expectations and dealing with nerves.

Session 4: Focuses primarily on reflexive and reflective practice, and the roles and responsibilities of a school peer. This class also includes a mock class where school peers are given the opportunity to present or facilitate a Recovery College course with others in the training.

The on the job component includes ongoing coaching, mentorship, and co-supervision with Ontario Shores peers. This includes support with

facilitation, content development/review, and regular touch base meetings. Regular touch base meetings consist of a wellness check-in, [reflective](#) and [reflexive](#) practice of the peer support experience, and creating an agenda of tasks to be completed for the upcoming week.

Each post-secondary institution should have a point of contact for co-supervision of the school peers who is responsible for touching base regularly with and supporting the school peers when needed, administrative duties (i.e., managing hours, pay, etc.), and leading the interview process.



[See appendix for a Post-secondary Peer Facilitator Job Description, Post-Secondary Peer Facilitator Interview Questions, Interview Mock Presentation Slides, and a Structured Peer Training Overview.](#)





Course Administration

5 Course Administration

- Promotions and marketing, launch registration system and track student registration.

Content Development

By the end of the Co-Design course, each course should have a clear outline including a title, weekly topics and subtopics, ideas for icebreakers, activities, potential guest/professional speakers, resources to pull content from and resources to point students to. At this point, Ontario Shores peers and school peers work together to develop a brief course description and objectives to be used for marketing and promotional purposes. Following this, all peers work together to develop PowerPoint presentations for each weekly topic using the information gathered in the Co-Design course. Once the course content has been created, reflect back to the co-design process and determine how to best present the content. Select and develop teaching methods and tools that are: 1) appropriate for the class, and 2) consistent with the course goals. For example, do students want to learn by lecture style, independent activities, group activities, videos, guest speakers, etc.

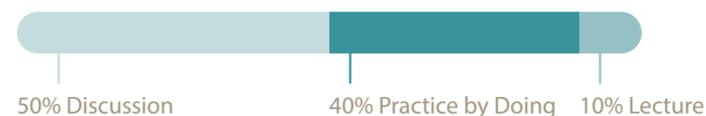
Within each **PowerPoint presentation**, there are key components that should be included such as:

- Title slide
- Comfort agreement which outlines:
 - Recovery College etiquette
 - Mutual obligations
 - Students have the right to not actively participate
 - All medical emergencies must be brought to clinician

- Respect the privacy of all members
- Disclaimer that the Recovery College is not treatment or a place to access if you are in distress or crisis
- Crisis supports
- **Ice breaker/warm up**
- Learning objectives
- Land acknowledgement for the land the post-secondary institution and Ontario Shores (if co-facilitating) resides
- Main takeaway slide to provide a brief summary of the topic
- Resource/supports which can include:
 - Campus resources
 - External resources
 - Crisis support contact information
 - Self-guided learning
 - Self-management resources (apps, books, videos, podcasts)
- Introduction slide to following week
- Feedback

See below for tips to keep in mind when building the course curriculum:

- Develop a blend of psychoeducational content and open discussion to foster connection, hope, identity, and empowerment
- Research and gather information from credible sources while also leveraging your lived experience to provide relatable and recovery focused teachings
- Create space for open discussion and allow students to react to discussion prompts
 - Structure of courses should be 50% discussion, 40% practice by doing, and 10% lecture



- **Develop activities to provide application of learning**
- Research topics that must be covered to help students understand the theory and implementation of the skills related to the learning goals and objectives
- Provide examples from your own experience that would demonstrate how to effectively use skills in everyday situations
- Pull information from evidence based sources and sources written by people with lived experience (i.e., MHCC, lived-experience authors, scholarly journals, etc.) and make sure to cite these sources!
- Be intentional with disclosure of lived experience (i.e., purpose, timing, etc.)
- Use lots of images and try to minimize the amount of text
- Include as many discussions and activities as possible
 - Leverage Mentimeter, Kahoot, and Google Jamboard for interactive activities

[Click here for additional resources on how to develop a Recovery College course.](#)



[See appendix for a General Course PowerPoint Template, Sample Icebreakers, and steps on How to Develop a Recovery College Course.](#)

Marketing and Promotion

Once course descriptions have been developed and course dates/times/locations have been set, it is time to promote the Recovery College! Ontario Shores is committed to providing post-secondary institutions with marketing and promotion consultation along with templates and examples of previously used content. Ontario Shores and the post-secondary institution will work together to develop a robust **marketing and promotion plan** that will be reviewed at the regular touch base meetings. While Ontario

Shores can assist in developing the copy and providing examples, the post-secondary institution is responsible for creating promotional content and executing the promotional plan (i.e., promoting on social media, posting on website, etc.).

It is important to give students time to get settled on campus and into a routine before heavily promoting, as they are less likely to have the time or energy to consider registering for an additional program. Therefore, typically, promotion begins between 1-1.5 months prior to the start of the Recovery College semester. Promotion continues throughout the semester as there is rolling registration for the Recovery College courses. Strategies that have been used to promote the Recovery College on campus include:

- Email/ListServ
- **Promo Card (with QR code)**
- In-person events/tabling
- Website
- **Email current or previous students**
- Post on Campus Events Calendar
- Newsletter
- **Posters**
- **Connect with campus partners**
- **Social Media**

School peers can participate in creating promotional material, such as creating reels, posts, or stories for social media. Tips for social media content development and recording for peers [can be found here](#).



[See appendix for a Promo Plan Template, Promo Card Example, Poster Examples, Social Media Post Examples, Campus Partner Promotion Email Template, Previously Registered Student Promotion Email Template, and Tips for Social Media Content Development and Recording for Peers.](#)



Course Administration Continued

Registration and Administration

Registration can be managed through internal systems used at the postsecondary institution (i.e., Qualtrics), [Survey Monkey](#), [Microsoft Forms](#), [Google Forms/Survey](#), to name a few. Information typically collected on a [registration form](#) includes:

- First and last name
- Student number (optional)
- Preferred email
- Phone number (optional)
- Consent for receiving reminders for the sessions
 - Phone (no voicemail)
 - Phone (with voicemail)
 - Text
 - Other (please specify)
- Address
 - Collected from which the student will be accessing the course (if virtual)
 - Only used for safety purposes if it is disclosed there is a risk of harm
- Course selection
- Accessibility requirements

When a notification is received that a student has registered for a course, add the student name to the [registration and attendance tracking sheet](#) to the appropriate course tab (name, preferred email, phone number, address, reminder preferences). If the student has registered more than one week prior to the start of the course, wait to send the [welcome email](#) and calendar invite. One week prior to the course beginning, send a mass welcome email and calendar invite to all students who registered for the course thus far. Any student that registers within the week prior to the course start date can receive the welcome email and calendar invite right away. For Co-Design courses, if a student registers and all spots have been filled, send the [Co-design waitlist email](#).

[Reminder emails](#) are sent on the day of each class. If a student registers for the course on the day of the class, send a reminder email in addition to the welcome email and calendar invite. If a student has consented to receive phone or text reminders, a service called [phoner](#) can be used that allows you to send text and call reminders to students. Phoner is a subscription service and application that maintains privacy and security by providing a second phone number to call and text from.

If a student misses two consecutive sessions, check-in either through [email, phone, and/or text](#), to see if they are experiencing any barriers related to participation that the peer can support with. For Co-design, determine if they are still interested in participating or if their spot should be offered to the next person on the waitlist.

After each session, remember to track attendance using the registration and attendance tracking sheet. Within one day after the class, send a [follow-up email](#) that includes course content in an [accessible format](#) (i.e., plain text format, alt text format). Lastly, once the course has finished, send a [final email](#) to thank students for their participation and send any additional resources.



[See appendix for a Registration Form Template, Registration/Attendance Tracking Sheet, Welcome Email, Co-Design Waitlist Email, Reminder Email, Phone Call and Text Script, Two Missed Sessions Check-In Email, Follow-Up Email, Last Session Email, and Steps for Creating Plain and Alt Text Documents.](#)

Registration and Email Process Overview





Peer Facilitation

6

Peer Facilitation

- Facilitations of courses by Post-Secondary Peer Support Specialists.

People with lived experience (peers and students) are brought together with professional/subject experts to not just co-produce but also co-deliver all aspects of the Recovery College. Peer led facilitation offers students the comfort of recognizing that they are not alone, and eliminates power imbalances as they are learning from their peers rather than someone of authority. In the post-secondary space, Ontario Shores peers and school peers work alongside one another to co-facilitate the courses, with guest speakers being brought in for specific classes to provide subject matter expertise.

The first day of class always creates some nervousness, even for veteran instructors. Nerves are okay, as they indicate that it is something important to you. Using icebreakers and/or warm-ups is helpful! They allow participants to get to know one another, build rapport with peers and each other, get them involved, and can be used to review points taught in previous classes. Some [tips for dealing with nerves](#) include:

- Being yourself is enough; authenticity is key!
- Practice ahead of time (i.e., review slides, write speakers notes, what pieces of your lived experience will you share and when you will share)
- [Prepare strategies for managing silence](#)
- Be honest about your nerves to the group as just stating that you're nervous can help relieve tension or pressure
- Use humour as an icebreaker

It is important to manage expectations regarding student engagement/participation when facilitating a Recovery College course. Low attendance doesn't mean that the course content or facilitation is ineffective. Meaningful engagement can look different for everyone. For example, meaningful engagement for one student could look like just showing up to the class, without actively participating. Additionally, another student may never show up to the classes but finds meaning in reviewing the materials sent out afterwards. Thus far, the average attendance rate for post-secondary Recovery Colleges is 33%.

The key to successful facilitation is communication. The more your participants know ahead of time, the more successful they will be in retaining the information that you present to them. To do so, send slides in multiple formats (i.e., Word Document, PDF, PowerPoint), include a learning objective slide for the whole course in the first class, and include agenda and learning objective slides for each class.

The use of [inclusive facilitation strategies](#) are essential in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in the Recovery College. Peers will learn more in depth on each of these four principles in the peer training provided by Ontario Shores.

Principle 1: Establish and support a class climate that fosters belonging for all students. To do so, the facilitator should consider:

- Building facilitator-student rapport (i.e., learn names, interests, etc.);
- Building student-student rapport by providing students with opportunities to get to know each other (i.e., ice breakers);
- Treating each student as an individual (i.e., don't expect individuals to speak for the experience of an entire group, pronounce names correctly, use proper pronouns, etc.);

- Avoiding making assumptions about abilities based on stereotypes;
- Conveying the same level of confidence in the abilities of all students; and
- Addressing challenging behaviours and attitudes by making them teachable moments by having students self-reflect on their assumptions and positions, without attributing motives

Principle 2: Select course content that recognizes diversity and acknowledges barriers to inclusion.

- Choose content by authors of diverse backgrounds
- Use multiple and diverse examples that do not marginalize students (i.e., examples that speak across gender, cultures, socioeconomic status, ages, religions)

Principle 3: Design all course elements for accessibility.

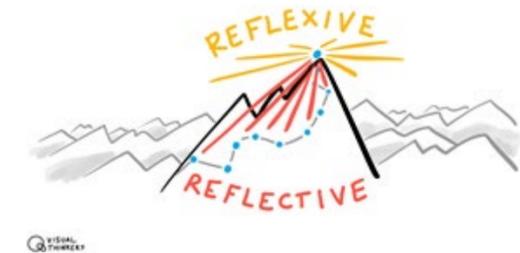
- Provide multiple means of representation and supporting materials (i.e., provide information in multiple modalities, consider how the information may present barriers to learners)
- Provide multiple means of engagement (i.e., video on/off, using chat function, attending when able, reviewing course materials afterwards, etc.)

Principle 4: Reflect on your beliefs about facilitation to maximize self-awareness and commitment to inclusion.

- Reflect on own identities and how students/others may perceive you
- Reflect on implicit or explicit biases
- Reflect on how you handle challenges
- Reflect on how classroom spaces can be set up and activities can be run that foster inclusion (i.e., room setup, where do you stand, do activities vary each week or are they always repeated)

As a peer, [reflexive practice](#), which is when a person reflects on what they have learned and considers the implications of their learnings and how they impact the context they work in, should be done intentionally after both group and one-on-one interaction with students. It involves contemplating peer support interactions and is especially helpful when a peer feels as though progress is not being made with students. You will ensure you are not drifting from your role. Additionally, reflexive practice helps to identify potential areas of improvement, and ensures peers are continuously improving their roles.

Lastly, [reflective practice](#), which is the ability to reflect on one's actions, what one has learned, and how they can apply it or learn from it, should be done on a monthly basis. This provides school peers with the opportunity to look at what went well and what didn't go well, as well as identify areas where Ontario Shores peers could provide more support.



[See appendix for Affirmations and Strategies to Manage Nerves, Prompts and Strategies for Managing Silence, Reflexive Practice Questions, and Monthly Self-Reflection Questions.](#)



Semesterly Timeline for Planning, Promotion and Launch

7

Semesterly Timeline for Planning, Promotion and Launch

- Evaluate to understand who is accessing the Recovery College, program impact mechanisms and what students found helpful.
- Planning for subsequent semesters.

3 Months Prior to Semester Launch

- Begin planning for upcoming semester (update promo document)
- Review promo document at touch base meetings and follow deadlines within
- Begin peer recruitment (if needed)

2 Months Prior to Semester Launch

- Course descriptions finalized
- Finalize course dates, times and location (book room if needed)
- Once courses end, begin content development for next semester

1 to 1.5 Months Prior to Semester Launch

- Begin promotion (most takes place 1 month prior to courses beginning)
- Registration opens
- Send confirmation emails
- Continue content development
- Create video links for virtual courses

2 Weeks Prior to Semester Launch

- Continue promotion
- Begin peer training (once school peers start roles)
- Finalize course content

Semester Launch (Onward)

- Continue promotion
- Continue registration confirmation emails (rolling registration)
- Phone and email reminders (weekly, day of class)
- Track attendance (weekly)
- Send follow-up email with PDF and plain text version (weekly, day of class)
- Post-participation survey end of semester
- Weekly peer touch bases
- Bi-weekly (or less) group meetings

Microcredentials

A microcredential is digitally recorded recognition of a small, specific skill. Microcredentials are a unique and innovative way to learn skills in a short period of time that allow for finding learning experiences that align with professional goals and interests that can be used right away. All microcredentials are validated by industry or community partners. All post-secondary institutions are able to offer this program as an option for their students.

Through the Recovery College, there is the option to be recognized for the skills that individuals feel have been enhanced through engagement with the program. The individual self selects the skills from 20 options, provides a short reflection on how engagement has influenced these skills and, within 7-days, will receive a badge that is recognized by employers that can be added to a resume. Additionally, individuals have the opportunity to **combine certain microcredentials** to build them into higher order sets of skills that are more relevant to employers.

[Catalogue of microcredentials available through Recovery College participation.](#)

[Click here for more information on how to enrol in a microcredential. Enrolment is free and completing the microcredential is self-paced.](#)



[See appendix for Microcredential Pathway Options and steps on Enrolling in a Microcredential.](#)



TALENT



**"Reminds me that we're
not alone in this."**

– Western, Fall 2022

Section 3:
How to Sustain and
Grow a Recovery College
at a Post-Secondary
Institution



Research and Evaluation Continued

Involvement in Research Opportunities and Communities

Research consortium

The post-secondary Recovery College research consortium is a collaboration connecting individuals and organizations that have a shared interest in the post-secondary Recovery College initiative, from a research perspective. It fosters collaboration among researchers, service providers, people with lived experience, academics, and students, across post-secondary institutions across Canada. The aim is to further develop and disseminate best-practice research to improve the quality of Recovery College service delivery to students. All post-secondary institution partners or those interested in exploring recovery college implementation, are welcome to become members of the Research Consortium.

Student opportunities

As the post-secondary Recovery College movement has grown, it has become of interest to both faculty and students at post-secondary institutions as a phenomenon to study. Students at several post-secondary institutions with operational Recovery Colleges have selected the implementation of Recovery Colleges in the post-secondary setting as a topic of focus for various upper year research courses.

Community of Learning (CoL)

Communities of practice are groups of people who share either a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). A post-secondary Recovery College community of practice was established in August 2021 and was renamed by its members, Community of Learning (CoL).

The post-secondary Recovery College CoL serves as a channel for knowledge exchange, networking opportunity, and collaboration to continue to strengthen and grow the post-secondary Recovery College community. The CoL meets every three months and includes students, peers, researchers, academics, service providers, and management from Ontario Shores and post-secondary institutions with an operational recovery college or those who are of interest. Each meeting has a topic or theme, often with guest speakers, and have discussed topics such as equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), reflexive practice, self-care, and risk mitigation. Additionally, meetings provide an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to share about the current status of their Recovery College as well as any successes or challenges they may be having. All post-secondary institution partners, those exploring post-secondary recovery college implementation, or are just interested in the initiative, have access to the CoL meetings, materials, and discussion boards.

Conclusion

This toolkit will help to standardize and ease the implementation of Recovery Colleges in the post-secondary setting, providing the opportunity for the initiative to expand nationally. Evaluation data has demonstrated thus far the positive impact that participation in the Recovery College has on mental and emotional health but will continue to explore the mid and long term impact at the individual, interpersonal, and system level. Future editions of this toolkit will include any future research and evaluation findings to strengthen the implementation framework.





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Appendix

Section 1:

- [Previous Course Offerings](#)

Section 2:

Feasibility assessment:

- [Work Plan Template](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding Template](#)

Needs assessment:

- [Focus Group Email Invite Templates](#)
- [Student Survey Email Template](#)
- [Student Needs Assessment Survey](#)
- [Staff Focus Group Guide](#)
- [Student Focus Group Guide](#)

Co-Production and Co-Design:

- [Co-Design Guide Template #1](#)
- [Co-Design Week 1 PowerPoint Template \(From Needs Assessment\)](#)
- [Co-Design Weeks 2-5 PowerPoint Template \(From Needs Assessment\)](#)
- [Co-Design Guide Template #2](#)
- [Co-Design Week 1 PowerPoint Template \(With Existing Courses\)](#)
- [Co-Design Weeks 2-5 PowerPoint Template \(With Existing Courses\)](#)

Peer Recruitment, Training, and Oversight:

- [Post-secondary Peer Facilitator Job Description](#)
- [Post-secondary Peer Facilitator Interview Questions](#)
- [Interview Mock Presentation Slides](#)
- [Structured Peer Training Overview](#)

Content development:

- [General Course PowerPoint Template](#)
- [Sample Icebreakers](#)
- [How to Develop a Recovery College Course](#)

Marketing and Promotion:

- [Promo Plan Template](#)
- [Promo Card Example](#)
- [Poster Examples](#)
- [Social Media Post Examples](#)
- [Campus Partner Promotion Email Template](#)

- [Previously Registered Student Promotion Email Template](#)
- [Tips for Social Media Content Development and Recording for Peers](#)

Registration and Administration:

- [Registration Form Template](#)
- [Registration/Attendance Tracking Sheet](#)
- [Welcome Email Template](#)
- [Co-Design Waitlist Email Template](#)
- [Phone Call and Text Script](#)
- [Two Missed Sessions Check-In Email Template](#)
- [Follow-Up Email Template](#)
- [Last Session Email Template](#)
- [Steps for Creating Plain and Alt Text Documents](#)
- [Reminder Email Template](#)

Facilitation:

- [Affirmations and Strategies for Managing Nerves](#)
- [Prompts and Strategies for Managing Silence](#)
- [Reflexive Practice Questions](#)
- [Monthly Self-Reflection Questions](#)

Microcredentials:

- [Microcredential Pathway Options](#)
- [Enrolling in a Microcredential](#)

Additional Resources for Students:

- [My Journey Worksheet](#)
- [Universal Crisis Supports for Students](#)

Section 3:

Continued Funding and Organizational Commitment

- [Facilitators to Implementation of Post-Secondary Recovery Colleges](#)
- [RECOLLECT Checklist for Post-Secondary Recovery Colleges](#)

Research and Evaluation:

- [Post-Secondary Recovery College Post-Participation Survey Initial Email Template](#)
- [Post-Secondary Recovery College Post-Participation Survey Reminder Email Template](#)
- [Post-Secondary Recovery College Post-Participation Survey Template](#)
- [Post-Secondary Recovery College Co-Design Post-Participation Survey Template](#)

Post-Secondary Recovery College Toolkit

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