



## *S.M.A.R.T. Thinking! A Student Wellness Plan*

S.M.A.R.T. Thinking! is a healthy mind and body plan to optimize student wellness in university years. It was developed by The Fountain of Health Initiative, a national nonprofit brain health and resilience strategy to help Canadians jumpstart healthy living behaviors for long term mental and physical health.

### *Invest in yourself and Do it Your Way!*

University years are special: it's a chance to live life on your own terms. Why not give yourself the best start you can with a personal plan to look after your mental and physical health in university.

**S.M.A.R.T. Thinking!** tools can help you design and carry out an individual wellness plan. Start your journey with **3 easy steps** at the beginning of term, or anytime you feel ready...

**STEP 1.** Take the **Health and Resilience Quiz** to see how you feel you are doing in **5 key health areas**:

- **Physical Activity**
- **Social Connection**
- **Brain Challenge**
- **Positive Thinking**
- **Looking after Mental Health**

**STEP 2.** Fill out the **Make It Your Own SMART Thinking health goal sheet** at the beginning of term by **setting one small S.M.A.R.T goal in each of these 5 key health areas**. Small goals in these areas can help you manage stress, optimize your physical and mental health as well as bounce back in the hard times. **S.M.A.R.T. goals are Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Time-limited**. No goal is too small! Small health goals done over time can achieve great benefits for your long term mental and physical health.

**STEP 3.** Check in at the beginning of each month to see how you are doing. Feel free to change up your goals as you go along. **Remember this is a journey, not a race and any step is a good step on the S.M.A.R.T Thinking path!** We also invite you to track your goals with the **Fountain of Health Wellness App**, downloadable through the website: <http://www.fountainofhealth.ca>. The Wellness App gives feedback to encourage you and help you with stick with a health goal each month.



## *Make It Your Own with S.M.A.R.T. Thinking Goals!*

### 1. Physical activity:



Regular physical activity during university years is one of the best things you can do for your health. It can prevent depression, improve memory and help you manage stress more effectively. Create a personal fitness goal using this **Fountain of Health S.M.A.R.T. Thinking Goal Sheet**. It should be something you feel would be really doable. For example, getting your heart rate up for 30 mins 5 days a week is a great target, but keep it small- any exercise is beneficial to brain and cardiovascular health. Great long term benefits can come from small steps!!

#### Physical Activity goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(**Sample ideas:** get out for a walk for 20 minutes 3 times a week or run some stairs getting to class each day, try a spin /aerobic /dance /yoga class or work out individually at the gym-2-3 times a week. Looking for new ideas? Check out physical activity opportunities on campus, including developing a personal fitness plan with Exercise is Medicine, [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca))

### 2. Social Connection:



Even though there are students everywhere on campus, moving to a different place and being with many new people can be lonely and anxiety provoking. Knowing that someone has your back and that you have someone you can turn to if the going gets tough is really important for your wellbeing. You'll be working hard, but balance and developing friendships is key to your wellness. Can you think of one activity/club on campus you would consider joining this term?

#### Social Activity goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(**Sample ideas:** take time to connect at the beginning of term and at mid-term with the people who are here to support you on campus like your res life advisors or peer wellness supporters. Consider joining at least one club/ social or team activity on campus so you get to know new people through an activity you think you'd enjoy. Feel free to change the activity up as well-this is leisure so it should be fun!)

### 3. Brain Challenge:



You'll 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:

#### Brain Challenge goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(**Sample ideas:** learn something new about stress-reduction strategies including mindfulness, yoga and time-management strategies. Check out on campus sessions for self-care including sexual health and healthy eating for body and brain health or try out these self-care links: meditation and mindfulness practice links at [www.fountainofhealth.ca](http://www.fountainofhealth.ca), online yoga at [www.yogawithadriene.com/](http://www.yogawithadriene.com/) and to learn about Healthy Eating for body and brain health visit:<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/healthy-eating.html>)

## 4. Positive Thinking:



Did you know that how you look at life and its challenges can make a big difference to your long term health and happiness? It's definitely not about having rose colored glasses, and ignoring your distress or problems. It is about developing a balanced way of thinking-noticing what's good in life and reminding yourself of your strengths when you hit rough patches. Sometimes it helps to think about how you'd respond to a good friend and work on becoming your own best friend when you talk to yourself. Evidence shows that practicing gratitude and noticing your own strengths are key for long term wellness.

### Positive Thinking goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(Sample ideas: create a gratitude list that you review 3 times a week, learn about positive thinking exercises/ self-care ideas from <https://happify.com> and check out free online self-compassion exercises at <http://self-compassion.org/> with Kristin Neff to build resilient thinking.)

## 5. Looking After Mental Health:



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

### Mental Health goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(Sample ideas: Learn about the early warning signs of depression, anxiety and alcohol and substance problems and how to deal with them at <https://www.teenmentalhealth.com> and <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca>.

For stress management and anxiety check out Jon Kabat Zinn Body Scan Mindfulness Practice for Anxiety Reduction <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4gZgnCy5ew>. For better sleeping strategies, check out <http://sleepwellns.ca>. If you are worried about your mental health and need extra help, speak to your advisors and health providers: your mental health is as important as your physical health!

***Congratulations on jumpstarting your health and wellness!***

And remember to check in on your S.M.A.R.T goals at the beginning of each month to see how you are doing! If you are struggling, remember you are not alone. **If you don't achieve your goals, remember it's totally normal to fall off goal setting!** The trick is just 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!

***BEST WISHES FOR YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS JOURNEY AT UNIVERSITY!***

For more ideas, visit <http://www.fountainofhealth.ca> and make it your own with the FoH Wellness App!