

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND WELLNESS LIAISON (SAWLS) MANUAL

INTERNAL DOCUMENT

Background

Student Affairs and Wellness Liaisons (SAWLS) are undergraduate medical students at Dalhousie who have been elected by their classmates at both the DMNS and DMNB campuses. Two SAWLS serve each of the Med1 to Med4 classes at each campus and support peers who are experiencing academic and/or personal challenges. SAWLS interactions with peers are confidential unless critical safety risks are apparent in which case the SAWLS are required to contact Student Affairs urgently. The SAWLS liaise closely with the Student Affairs Office at each campus to review issues raised by students and to direct fellow students to professional resources as necessary. In addition, SAWLS promote medical student wellness through organization and promotion of activities and discussions with a wellness lens.

These positions were created in the 2015/2016 school year under the guidance of students from the Class of 2018 with Sharon Forward and Dr. Michael Teehan, then Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. The SAWLS program was derived from a former program called PIETA (an acronym whose meaning has been lost to the sands of time) which elected two students from each campus to serve as boots on the ground and an intermediary between the staff lead for PIETA and the student's respective classmates. PIETA was created prior to the advent of the Student Affairs Office as an outlet for students in academic or personal difficulty. With the creation of the student affairs office the PIETA program became redundant.

Duties of SAWLS

Liaison - Student Affairs and Wellness Liaisons are intermediaries between students in their respective classes at Dal Med and the Student Affairs Office. This is implicit in the title of the position and the most emphasis should be placed on '*liaison*'. Liaison means communication or cooperation which facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations. At its core SAWLS should operate as a triage and navigation service for fellow students, providing them with resources which allow them to seek more professional support. In almost all scenarios this should involve liaising with the Student Affairs Office at either DMNS or DMNB for guidance and further support for students. To avoid having SAWLS be put in a difficult position, classes should be made aware that SAWLS are 'boots on the ground' to help connect with fellow students who may be struggling with personal and/or academic issues. While SAWLS are always happy to lend an ear, their time must be respected, and it must be noted that they do not have professional training or experience. Students should expect any conversation they have with a SAWL will be kept confidential in terms of their classmates and should also expect the issue may be brought forth to the Student Affairs Office for further discussion and advice as required. This should be likened to seeing a patient on a clinical service and reporting back to staff prior to deciding on a diagnosis and treatment plan. This should be explained as such to peers by the SAWLS and supported by the Terms of Reference.

Med Buddies Program – Facilitated by the Student Affairs Office and overseen by the incoming Med2 SAWLs, the Med Buddies Program is designed to pair a more senior medical student, most often a Med2, with an incoming Med1 student. Ideally the Med2 SAWLs would solicit participation of incoming Med1 and Med2 (or in some cases Med3 if the numbers of Med2 participants are low) by early July of the incoming Med1 year. Previously this has been effectively accomplished using a Google Forms platform. The pairing is usually made based on similarities in personality, life situation and hobbies/interests. The goal of this program is to provide incoming Med1s with a more senior medical student who they can freely ask questions to or can go to if they have an issue throughout their medical training, especially in their first couple of months prior to the election of SAWLs for their class. To ensure that all Med Buddies can meet during the first few weeks of the school year, Med2 SAWLs should attempt to host an event at each campus during Orientation Week or shortly after.

Outside Scope of SAWLs (examples)

Class Dynamics - Each of the classes at Dalhousie medical school is unique with different internal forces at play which constitute the class dynamic. Though SAWLs are charged with providing support for peers, solving more large-scale, class dynamics is not within their defined role. Collegial and professional communication is a responsibility of all students.

Med2 SAWLs are not SAWLs for Med1 Class – Prior to election and onboarding of Med1 SAWLs in late October/early November, Med2 SAWLs should not be the SAWLs for the Med1 class. Med1s who are having difficulties will consistently be encouraged to reach out to the Student Affairs Office or their Med Buddies directly. Med Buddies are encouraged to bring any matter they would like assistance with to the attention of the Student Affairs Office.

Examples of Scenarios

A. What to do if a student approaches you about an issue:

1. Offer to chat about how they are feeling (maintain confidence)
2. Connect them to the Student Affairs Office
3. Offer to keep in touch with them over time if they are comfortable and welcoming
4. Inform them of resources for counselling on and off campus and how Student Affairs can assist.

B. What to do if a student's problems come unexpectedly or overwhelm you:

1. Reflect on boundary setting within your role as the SAWL. Direct them to the Student Affairs Office and offer resources for mental wellness.
2. Keep in touch with them when you are available (within your boundaries)
3. Reach out to Student Affairs for your own support and guidance as a SAWL and a student.

C. What to do when a student approaches asking how to help their peers who are struggling:

1. Ask for permission to approach the struggling student about their problem
2. If your permission is granted, follow point A) above.
3. The option to recommend any student reach out to Student Affairs with concerns regarding a classmate / peer for advice and guidance.

D. What to do if a student approaches you about an issue you deem to be safety-related (i.e. student failed an exam and had been struggling academically and interpersonally, recent argument with partner, and voicing hopelessness and/or intent to self-harm)

1. You have a duty to inform/involve Student Affairs understanding this breaks confidentiality.
2. Offer to chat about how they are feeling and offer support as further plan is developed and implemented.

Onboarding and Debrief – annual sessions

An event at a location selected by the SAWLs, organized by the Med 2 SAWLs to come together as peers to discuss and review their program initiatives. This is an opportunity to connect as a larger group of SAWLs from all 4 years to discuss and support regarding challenges, successes, and to plan for the next year.

The **onboarding** session will be organized and communicated by the Med 2 SAWLs reps at each campus. This session will be organized following the election of the Med 1 SAWLs reps. The purpose of the session is as follows:

- a. To welcome the new reps and provide an overview of their role
- b. To discuss sample scenarios and how they were handled
- c. To plan class specific events based on previous years, timing, and feedback
- d. To respond to questions, concerns, and ideas

The **debrief** session will be organized and communicated by the Med 2 SAWLs reps at each campus. This session will be organized near the end of May (ensuring Med 4 outgoing reps can attend prior to beginning residency).

The purpose of the session is as follows:

- A)** To debrief and collaborate on the overall year for SAWLs, successes, challenges, and feedback.
- B)** To recognize the efforts of all SAWLs and the important role played as well to wish farewell to the outgoing Med 4's as they head to residency.

Funding will be provided for these events from the Student Affairs office or via the Class of 83 wellness endowment in recognition of the contribution towards the wellness programming and the SAWLs contribution to this.

Student Physician Well-Being Resources	
<p>Student Affairs provides advice, support and navigation related to learner health and well-being, personal challenges, academic advising, financial health, career counselling, elective planning, student initiatives/project ideas, as well as mistreatment/learning environment concerns.</p>	
DMNS	DMNB
<p>Dr. Sue Zinck, Assistant Dean Tyler Hall, Director Andrew Steele-Moore, Advisor Renee Hillier, Learner Liaison Officer Jannatul Disha, Learner Engagement Coordinator Anita MacDonald, Records & Information Coordinator Tanya Matheson, Evaluation Specialist Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, Site Rep, Cape Breton Dr. Hughie Fraser, Site Rep, South Shore</p>	<p>Dr. Lisa Sutherland, Assistant Dean Dr. Renea Leskie, Advisor Rebecca Comeau, Coordinator Dr. Roxanne McKnight, Site Rep, Miramichi Dr. Brandon Kelly, Site Rep, Upper River Valley Dr. Katie Doucet, Site Rep, Moncton Dr. Linda Ugrin, Site Rep, Fredericton</p>
<p>Contact information can be found here: https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/student-affairs.html</p>	
Career Advising	
<p>Dr. Joffre Munro Dr. Rachel Shaw *To make an appointment with Drs Munro or Shaw, contact Janna Disha (jannatul.disha@dal.ca)</p>	<p>Dr. Lisa Sutherland Email Dr. Sutherland directly for an appointment (sutherll@dal.ca)</p>
<p>DMAA Micro-mentorship Program: Co-created by the Faculty of Medicine Alumni Office and Student Affairs, the Faculty of Medicine Mentorship Program is a fantastic way for students to connect with MD alumni in a one-on-one conversation.</p> <p>For more information, visit: https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/alumni/alumnimentorship.html</p>	
BIPOC	
<p>Keknu'tmasiek Wel'oltimk "We Learn Healing" - Global Health Office - Dalhousie University – ihim@dal.ca – <i>Support for the academic success and graduation of Indigenous medical learners.</i> https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/global-health/indigenous-health.html</p> <p>Indigenous Student Centre - https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html</p> <p>Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre - 902-420-1576 Their primary roles are to provide Indigenous people living in urban areas with services ranging from social programming to culture and events. <i>Facebook page:</i> https://www.facebook.com/Mikmaw-Native-Friendship-Centre-121366117945828/about/?ref=page_internal</p>	

<p>PLANS - Global Health Office - Dalhousie University – plans@dal.ca https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/global-health/plans.html Supports African Nova Scotian/Black Learners in their journey to become health professionals through a variety of programs and resources.</p> <p>Black Student Advising Centre - https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html</p>	
<p>BIPOC Led and Anti-Racism Organizations in the Maritimes (not NS or NB specific)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black Lives Matter Solidarity Fund NS ● Community Aid Fund for our 2SLGBTQ, Racialized and Otherwise Marginalized Neighbours ● Nobody is Illegal - Halifax & Fredericton ● The Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute ● African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition-DPAD ● PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (PEIANC) ● Under One Sky Friendship Centre – www.ofsc.ca 	
<p>LGBTQIA2S+</p>	
<p>Dal 2SLGBTQ+ Advisor The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisor (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and any non-normative identities) supports students through 1-1 advising, group programming, and campus-wide educational events to create a student experience that is meaningful and facilitates a sense of belonging. https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/2slgbtq.html</p>	
<p>Trans* Safe Spaces in the HRM List of trans safe facilities including barbers, hairdressers, airlines, grocery stores etc. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ffDGtsxdxubztd6ozDrAMdiGYwuSSfup5-kxlc_X_r0/edit#gid=0</p>	<p>True Colours, UNB Saint John True Colours it's about making a more inclusive space on the Saint John campus for everyone. We hope to start organizing events very soon! Additionally, we advocate for students so they can be comfortable being themselves at university. Facebook page: @truecoloursunbsj Instagram page: @truecolours.unbsj19</p>
<p>South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre 902.494.2432 South house provides resources, referrals and anti-oppressive education on issues of gender and sexual justice. Located on 1443 Seymour Street around the side entrance, accessible by ramp, underneath the Dalhousie Faculty Association.</p>	
<p>The Youth Project https://youthproject.ns.ca/ Drop-in and online groups up to age 25. Their mission is to make Nova Scotia a safer, healthier, and happier place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth through support, education, resource expansion and community development.</p>	

Mental Health & Counselling Services	
Dalhousie Student Health Centre 902.494.2171 https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html	UNB Saint John Student Health Centre 506.648.5656 https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/studentservices/health/
Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/my-health/mental-health.html	UNB Saint John Counselling Services https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/studentservices/health/
Mental Health & Addictions 1.855.922.1122 https://mha.nshealth.ca/en	New Brunswick Medical Society Meaghan Sibbett, Manager of Physician Wellness 506.875.6749 msibbett@nbms.nb.ca
Provincial Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Line 1.888.429.8167	Family Plus/Life Solutions 506.634.8295 https://www.familyplus.ca
Avalon Sexual Assault Clinic - 902-422-4240 to book an appointment with a sexual health professional.	Sexual Violence New Brunswick https://svnb.ca/en/
<p>Crisis Lines - If you are in a crisis, call one of these help lines: <i>*CHIMO Help Line Inc. (Crisis Line 1-800-667-5005)</i> <i>*Mobile Mental Health Crisis Services (1-888-811-3664)</i> Or text the Crisis Text Line from Service Canada: Text HOME to 686868 https://www.crisistextline.ca/?fbclid=IwAR2Btjk_RQOsto0_8Dh6vZe4zZlig_Hy6kSsMkVjyAOmBM76em_FsYPJcT8E</p>	
<p>Canadian Medical Association: Province-specific Support Program - Sponsored in-part by the CMA, this program, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, provides physicians with another route to reach out for support. Click 'select a province or territory' on this landing page cma.ca/support_line for more information</p>	
<p>Private Health Insurance: Many insurance plans (including the Blue Cross plan offered through Dal and UNB) offer some coverage for private counseling/psychology services. Reach out to your health insurance provider to see what is available based on your personal health plan.</p>	
<p>Physician Wellness Hub, CMA - provides reliable wellness tools and resources to empower physicians, medical learners, leaders and educators to create change in the culture of medicine. https://www.cma.ca/physician-wellness-hub</p>	
<p>Togetherall – 24/7 Online peer-to-peer mental health platform for ages 16-29 https://account.v2.togetherall.com/register/area</p>	
<p>Anxiety Canada: free MindShift C.B.T. groups https://www.anxietycanada.com/mindshift-groups/</p>	
<p>Kids Help Phone – 1.800.668.6868 *24/7 service where you can refer younger family members</p>	
<p>Good 2 Talk - a free/confidential helpline for post-secondary students in Canada that is available 24/7. They offer confidential counseling services via phone/text and can provide information about mental health resources in the area. Call: 1-833-292-3698 or text GOOD2TALKNS to 686868.</p>	
<p>The Wellbeing Lab PERMAH survey which links to their toolbox and well-being dashboard: https://permahsurvey.com/login/</p>	
<p>Breathing Space, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-inspired evidence based modules, broken into small pieces: https://app.breathingroom.me/topics</p>	

Accessibility Services	
<p>Student Accessibility Centre 902.494.2836 https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html One-on-one advising to facilitate access to academic courses and programs, facilities, services, funding and activities.</p>	
<p>Accessible Areas around HRM https://www.halifax.ca/home/terms/accessibility?fbclid=IwAR1-WXcNj_1Vy3LehD-T9CYdcS-yaB_TcEaEZ6ObkxRw0SgRG71trICKsRw</p>	
Advocacy	
<p>Dalhousie Ombudsperson Office - available to all Dalhousie students for free, confidential, impartial, and independent support to help resolve any university-related concerns. The office works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure just, fair, and equitable treatment of every student, and to support the reasonable resolution of complaints rather than assign blame to one party. https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html</p>	
Spiritual Wellness	
<p>Dalhousie Spiritual Support Team https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/multifaith-services/list-of-chaplains.html</p>	<p>UNBSJ Campus Ministry - Email: unbsj.multifaith@unb.ca</p>

Last updated: November 09, 2022