

OUR TRAIL TO WELLNESS

For the Students and Employees of Lakehead University



Welcome

Occupational wellness isn't just a buzzword; it's a way of living that transforms how we approach our careers, our colleagues, and ourselves. As someone who has spent years navigating the complexities of workplace dynamics, I've come to understand that occupational wellness is about finding purpose, embracing challenges, and nurturing relationships that make work not just tolerable, but meaningful.

Learning is not just about staying relevant—it's about keeping the spark alive, that sense of curiosity and possibility that excites us to show up every day. Growth keeps us curious, adaptable, and energized.

For me, work becomes truly rewarding when it's anchored in connection. Genuine connections with colleagues create a sense of belonging and shared success. These relationships remind us that we're not alone and that collaboration amplifies impact.

I've seen firsthand how purpose can transform an ordinary job into something extraordinary. It's not always about changing the world in grand gestures—sometimes it's about

seeing how our contributions fit into a larger mission, knowing that what we do matters to someone, somewhere. That sense of impact fuels our motivation and reminds us why we chose this path in the first place. And occupational wellness extends beyond our job roles—it includes giving back, whether through volunteerism or mentorship, which connects us to something bigger than ourselves.

This edition of the newsletter dives into **career wellness**, and highlights the **EPID cohort study**, while also sharing details about events like **Thrive Week** and **Lakehead Gathers** as well as resources to help us all thrive.

So, as you read this newsletter on Occupational wellness, I ask you to reflect. What brings you joy in your work? What challenges are you willing to embrace to grow? How can you foster meaningful connections and contribute to a purpose that inspires you? If we each commit to pursuing occupational wellness with intention, I believe we can not only transform our own careers but also create workplaces that thrive. Together, let's make wellness a standard, not a luxury.

Roshni Antony,
Associate Vice-President of **Human Resources**

IN THIS ISSUE: **Occupational Wellness**

Career Wellness from the Perspective of Career Services

The NOWWHS Study Offers Insights for a Thriving Work Life

Wellness Resources

Upcoming Events

Thrive 2025

Dimensions of Wellness

What is Wellness?

Wellness is an active, lifelong process of becoming aware of your choices and making decisions that will help us to live a more balanced and fulfilling life. Everyone's optimal wellness is different with many factors influencing one's own health and well-being.

To this end, the **Lakehead University Wellness Strategy, Our Trail to Wellness (2020-2025)** recognizes and considers **nine (9) main dimensions of wellness** as contributing factors to our overall health and well-being:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Financial
- Environmental
- Social
- Occupational
- Cultural



9 Dimensions of Wellness



lakeheadu.ca/trailtowellness

Wellness Dimension: Occupational Wellness

Occupational Wellness: Pursuing a career that enhances personal satisfaction, supports your goals, fosters professional growth, and provides meaning through work.

Occupational Wellness includes, but is not limited to:

- Education/Training
- Building relationships with peers and colleagues
- Enjoying your field of work or study
- Inspired and challenged
- Balancing work and leisure
- Work well independently and with others
- Sense of value and appreciation
- Provides purpose and meaning
- Volunteerism and social contributions

Occupational Wellness

Wellness is about making choices that support our overall well-being. In our professional lives, this means pursuing a career that enhances our personal satisfaction, supports our goals, and provides meaning through our work. Occupational health and wellbeing recognizes the significance of finding fulfillment and purpose in our roles, whether as students or employee, within the dynamic environment of Lakehead University.

For Students: Occupational wellness is crucial for Lakehead University students, encompassing various aspects, including career exploration, skill development, and work-life balance. By prioritizing occupational wellness, students enhance their academic performance, find meaning in their studies, and prepare for successful careers.

Lakehead University supports students by providing comprehensive career services, co-op programs, experiential learning opportunities, and a range of support services to address their mental health and well-being.

See Page 10 for further Student Resources (Page 10)

For Employees: Occupational wellness is equally important for Lakehead University faculty and staff. It contributes to job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being. By prioritizing occupational wellness, the university creates a positive and supportive work environment, enhances employee engagement, and fosters professional development.

Lakehead University supports faculty and staff by offering wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, professional development opportunities, and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment.

See page 11 for further Employee Resources (Page 11)

Lakehead University also offers various avenues for enhancing your occupational well-being:

Students can actively participate in their academic journey by engaging with **career services**, **seeking out co-op opportunities**, and participating in **student organizations**.

Faculty and staff can contribute to a positive work environment by actively participating in one of four **Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC)**.

Additionally, both students and employees can benefit from attending **Health and Safety-related training sessions**, such as fire safety and emergency preparedness. Staying informed through **faculty newsletters** and engaging in **professional development opportunities** can further enhance your knowledge and skills, leading to greater job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Remember, prioritizing your well-being involves a holistic approach. Explore the nine dimensions of wellness, such as physical, intellectual, and social wellness by participating in campus events, utilizing campus resources like the library and fitness centre, and engaging in activities that bring you joy and fulfillment.



LAKEHEAD GATHERS

Your Community, Your Wellbeing

Starting in February 2025, join us for a variety of events, from casual social gatherings to informative workshops emphasizing the importance of connection in driving personal and professional growth, making every member feel valued and inspired.

Lakehead Gathers is all about creating a space where we come together, connect, and build a true sense of belonging. By sharing ideas, values, and even the little things that bring us joy, we strengthen our workplace community and remind each other that we're part of something bigger.

Visit lakeheadu.ca/lakeheadgathers to learn more.



Career Wellness from the Perspective of Career Services



Dr. Jessica Lovett, Director of Career Services & Co-op

November 2024

Imagine yourself, working away in your office cubicle while the sun slowly sets and the lights in the parking lot go on. Around you, colleagues exchange end of day farewells, pack up and head out, except for a very few who stay behind. You stay, working away.

You just graduated, and this is your first “real” job. You’re learning every day, and most of the time you enjoy the work.

Suddenly, one of your usually soft-spoken co-workers jumps into your cubby from the passageway and loudly exclaims **“Go home! Don’t you have a boyfriend?”** You’re shocked and a bit surprised, but mostly amused by him - let’s call him Charles.

Charles is a company veteran. Competent and essential, and significantly more senior, he doesn’t usually engage much with you or with the team you work with. It’s clear that Charles is motivated purely by kindness - as you giggle at him, he seems concerned to see a junior coworker putting in too many hours. He says **“You’ll regret the time spent at the office, when you look back at this experience later in life.”**

You hear him, but you don’t quite get it. Contrary to what Charles thinks, you do have a life outside of work. In fact, you are going to get a lot of mileage out of this story later on when you exchange work stories with friends over drinks. You’ll get mileage out of it again about twenty-(mumble) years later when someone asks you to write an article about workplace wellness.

Charles’ identity will forever remain anonymous, but in this story, **you are me**. Or does it make more sense to say: I am the “you”? Either way, reader, I know you get it.

I’m telling you a story from my early career - and despite Charles’ best efforts, the punchline is this: at that time, nothing Charles could say to me was going to result in my working any less. I was completely satisfied with my work-life rhythms.

As Maura Thomas points out in **“What does work-life balance even mean,” (Forbes, 2022)** no one can give someone else a sense of work-life balance, nor should one person attempt to define this for another person. Maura Thomas’ advice is that rather than striving for some perfect state defined by someone else, we should simply pay attention to ourselves, and avoid working “too much.” This guidance is useful in that it allows for individual interpretation.

She also helpfully debunks the idea that working longer days yields more productivity and rejects the idea that “balance” requires an equal split between working and not working.

I agree with Thomas that there is no “magic” solution or definition that will explain what occupational wellness, or work-life balance should look like for all people. Instead, work-life balance is an equation that must be solved by an individual through a combination of self-reflection and self-awareness. I would add that, over the span of any given career, a person’s sense of what constitutes working “too much” will change.

This variability makes it even harder to define healthy work-life arrangements, and underscores the importance of exploring workload and personal wellness not just in context of different workers and workplaces, but also in specific moments of time. That means we need to reassess our occupational wellness often over the span of our career, even if our role has not changed.



Just like physical and mental health, career-related wellness can fluctuate over the span of one's work-life.

Rather than considering occupational wellness something that is achieved when we find a job that is a "good fit" with a decent employer, it might be more accurate to talk about occupational health as organic, requiring ongoing assessment and adjustment. Ultimately, individuals must thoughtfully and intentionally define their personal needs within their relationship with work in order to stay in touch with their workplace-related wellness.

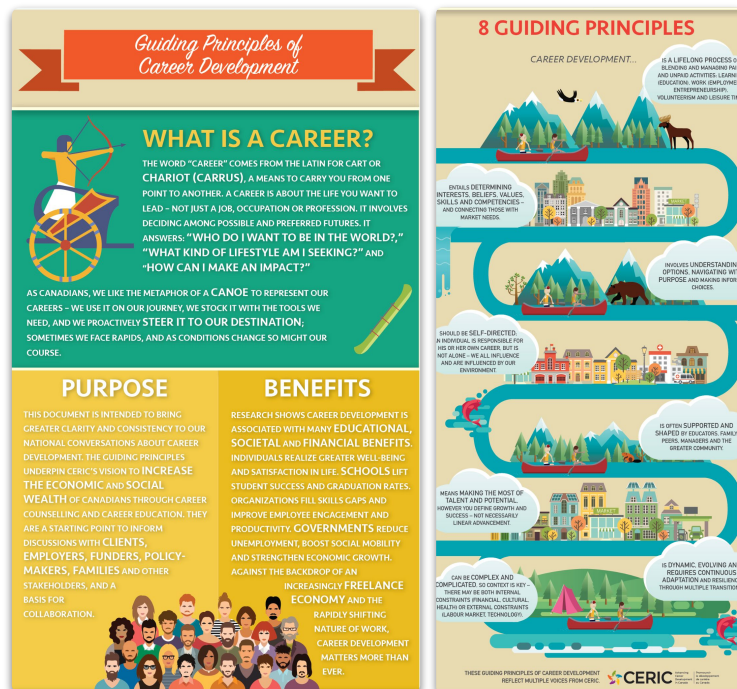
Career Development Practitioners follow several guiding principles when it comes to providing career-related advice to clients - one of which is that career development is a lifelong and self-directed, and another is that the career development process is not something that can or should be scripted - it is a process unique to each individual. You can see a graphic representation of these principles here:

Guiding Principles of Career Development

While there is no one set of instructions within career development theory that will result in the perfect occupational wellness formula, the guidelines are flexible enough that they can be used by humans at any career stage. The first step for anyone interested in applying these principles to assess the wellness of their own career is to begin with *self-reflection*.

At Lakehead, **Career Services & Co-op** works within those same principles. Our work is meant to support student retention via increased career clarity. We also support graduate employment outcomes by working with students and grads to develop skills that allow them to thrive even when their career journeys feel complicated and messy.

Students and alumni who engage with career services receive support to identify their personal values, skills, needs and interests, and are then encouraged to use this self awareness as a lens through which to explore options for meaningful employment. Students and recent graduates are used to thinking about themselves as learners, so for these individuals, engaging in self exploration as a way to begin a job search can be fairly straightforward.



For those of us who are several years past that transition into work, this process is still useful - but it can become more challenging.

Working professionals, especially those in high volume settings such as higher education, quickly lose touch with themselves and their needs while trying to keep up with pressures and demands of their work. Sometimes we might choose to act in ways that prioritize the wellness of our employer over our own wellness. When these choices are thoughtful, deliberate, and temporary, they may in fact be healthy choices. But when deprioritizing our own wellness becomes habitual, or when one begins to resent time spent at work, it may be time to make an adjustment - and self-reflection activities can help.

Recently, career development professionals have been advocating for the creation of an annual, self-directed **"career wellness check up."**

Like an annual medical check up in concept, but different in that it would be self-led, not doctor-led, the career wellness check up would require about one hour of your time.

During your appointment with yourself, you can reflect on your personal values, needs, skills, and interests and how they are affected by your work.



Begin by asking yourself a series of questions:

1. **How does your work interact with your values/passions?** What activities, values, issues matter most to you in your life? How does your work support or enable what matters most to you?
2. **In what way does your work allow for personal growth?** What skills do you have that are being well used at work? What skills would you like to develop or use more frequently at work? What recent projects have provided you with a sense of accomplishment?
3. **How is your work supporting your practical needs?** Do your salary, work hours, commute time match what your life is requiring at this time? Is your environment healthy, safe, and supportive of your whole person?
4. **Is your work a source of human connection?** Do you have colleagues inside and outside of your team that provide you with a sense of community? Do you feel meaningfully connected to the people you serve in your work? How are your non-work connections affected by your work at this time in your life?

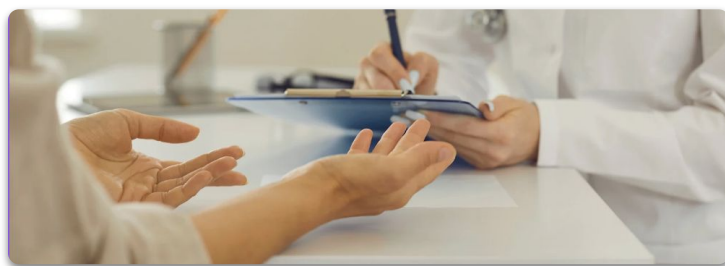
Once you have engaged in a self-reflection process that allows you to make room for your own sense of personal passions, growth, needs, and relationships, you can identify any areas of your life that are not aligned with your work - allowing you to form a sense of yourself in the relationship. From there, you can work with your colleagues and your supervisor to identify any adjustments that might support your ongoing wellness.

You can read more about the benefits of the “annual career checkup” concept in an article written by Linda White called **“Reviewing career direction vital to success”** ([Toronto Sun, Feb 28, 2024, hosted on ceric.ca](#)).

By setting aside an hour each year to review a few personal categories connected to working life, employees are more likely to feel empowered, aware, and aligned with what matters most to them, and choose to engage in workplace wellness interventions that are directly linked to their chosen career trajectory and needs.

If you are still reading, you may realize that I have taken quite a while to come to my point. The first (and only) piece of advice I would offer to anyone interested in improving their occupational wellness is to **adopt this practice and schedule time with yourself to return to it at least once every year...**and then talk about what you’ve learned with your supervisor, colleagues, and friends.

Let’s normalize the annual “career check up” as a part of our occupational health.



Dr. Jessica Lovett, Director of **Career Services & Co-op**, is a seasoned professional with over 15 years of experience in leadership roles within the higher education and performing arts sectors.

With a passion for work-integrated learning and student success, Dr. Lovett brings valuable insights to this article; their expertise in strategic planning, team leadership, and community engagement make them a valuable asset to Lakehead University.

Winter Safety Tips

Our beautiful campuses certainly have a lot going for them when it comes to the regions they are in, however they also occasionally succumb to inclement weather.

As we head into the winter months, supervisors and employees are asked to prepare for various weather-related scenarios, including the unforeseen cancellation of in-person and/or any classes, hazardous travel conditions affecting student/employee attendance, and campus closures (except for required services).

1. Review Campus Closure/Class Cancellation Policy

Please review [Lakehead's Campus Closure/Class Cancellation Policy](#), which outlines details such as how units required to be on campus during a campus closure are entitled to equivalent time off at a later date as identified in their work/union agreements.

2. Communication During Weather Events

If an employee is unable to come to the campus for work or will be late due to weather conditions, that employee must contact their immediate supervisor as soon as possible to advise them of their absence or delay. In these cases, and in discussion with their supervisor, an employee would have the option to:

- Work from home in accordance with the current [Alternate Work Arrangement Guidelines](#)
- Make up the lost work time (Flexible hours)
- Lieu time (when applicable)
- Use their vacation leave
- Take leave without pay



3. Staying Informed

Campus closures or the cancellation of the in-person classes without the closure of the University due to inclement weather will be announced through the following means:

- [The Bulletin](#)
- [Lakehead's MobileSafety App](#) - available through the [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#)
- [University website](#)
- [Social media](#)
- News outlets
- A message from your immediate supervisor with specific directives.

4. Winter Safety Tips

We remind you to please use caution during and following winter weather in order to avoid slips and falls. Some winter safety tips include:

- Walk using maintained pathways.
- Wear winter appropriate footwear and clothing.
- Leave with plenty of time and do not rush.
- Take care in parking lots and sidewalks. Fresh snow can cover ice. Use the closest, cleared building entrance when in doubt.

If you spot icy/slippery campus roads/lots/sidewalks/puddles indoors, report them to workorde@lakeheadu.ca (Thunder Bay), [submit a request](#), or contact Security Services.

Winter Storms - Get Prepared



Winter storms are common in Canada, sometimes lasting for days and often making travel difficult. To learn more about how you can prepare for a winter storm [click here](#).

Campus Status

Thunder Bay: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/thunder-bay-campus/weather>

Orillia: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus/our-campus/weather>

Mental Health Matters:

The NOWWHS Study Offers Insights for a Thriving Work Life

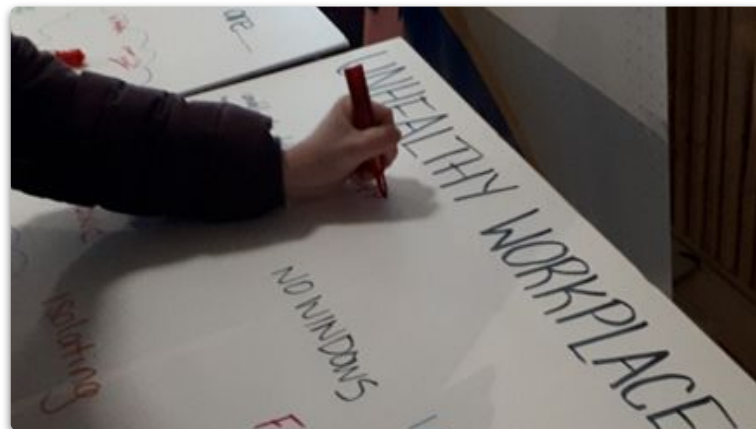
Have you ever wondered how your workplace is impacting your mental health?

Working life has seen tremendous changes over the past few years, with the pandemic ushering in new processes, policies, and environments. But have businesses fully taken the mental and physical well-being of their workers into consideration? What can they do to improve moving forward?

With the Canadian workforce facing a profound workforce crisis, many workers are opting to leave, reduce their work hours, or retire prematurely due to workload and unfavourable working conditions leading to reduced health.

EPID@Work (Enhancing the Prevention of Injury and Disability at Work) Research Institute is currently collecting data to examine workplace factors for mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. The **Northwestern Ontario Workplace & Worker Health Study (NOWWHS)**, which launched in September 2023, is a cohort study that aims to explore the ways in which workplace conditions affect worker health over time.

A year into the study, preliminary data has revealed that there is a high burden of mental health disorders in Northwestern Ontario. Additionally, burnout is a problem across sectors in our region; these issues are associated with workplace factors such as organizational culture and leadership.



For employers and workers in the region, the NOWWHS is poised to be a powerful tool for change. The findings could help workplaces understand the health and wellness of their workers, and identify what workplace factors are having an impact on employees. As the study progresses, EPID's researchers hope to use findings from the study to develop and test cost-effective interventions to improve workplace health and wellness.

So, what does this mean for staff and faculty at Lakehead University?

Anyone working at Lakehead is encouraged to join the study - whether you work full- or part-time, contract or permanent. The NOWWHS will provide valuable insight to help Lakehead improve conditions for its employees and foster a supportive work environment.

All workers and employers in Northwestern Ontario are invited to participate. For workplaces where over twenty workers participate, EPID can provide specialized reports that include aggregate data highlighting key findings specific to the workplace. Surveys are completely confidential, and no identifying information will ever be shared with employers.



To thank participants, we do a random draw every two months for \$1000, as well as other regular incentives such as monthly Bingo from now until March.

To learn more, view preliminary findings, and participate in the study, please visit www.workinghealth.ca.





Thrive is an initiative that began at UBC as a conversation between colleagues about the importance of reducing the stigma associated with mental health.

It has since grown into a movement celebrated at campuses across Canada, providing opportunities for important conversations about mental health to take place.

For more information, visit: lakeheadu.ca/thrive

The City of Thunder Bay Events

The City of Thunder Bay hosts many great events throughout the year. You can also explore our [Online Community Events Calendar](#) to see what's coming up.

We invite you to [subscribe](#) to the events calendar, to be notified when there are events that interest you.

The City of Orillia Events

The City of Orillia offers a variety of events that promote community connection and well-being. From the [Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival](#) to the [BBBSOD Winter Classic](#), these events provide opportunities to relax, recharge, and connect with others. Explore the [Calendar of Events](#) to discover upcoming opportunities to enhance your well-being.

Lakehead University's Event Calendar

View the Lakehead University master calendar of events to see what's happening on campus monthly. Details can be broken down by campus and by category.

Make sure to also check out:

lakeheadu.ca/shw-events

lakeheadu.ca/hr-events

Lakehead University Social Committee



Upcoming activities for faculty and staff will be promoted through the [Bulletin](#) and [Campus Connection](#). Stay tuned for the next fun-filled gathering with colleagues, peers, and friends. For future activity suggestions, feedback, volunteer opportunities, or questions, please reach out to [Jonathon Racine](#) at wellnesscoordinator@lakeheadu.ca.

Available STUDENT Resources: To Enhance Our Occupational Wellness

Student Central

The Student Central team provides students with a convenient and friendly way to conduct your university related business and access support. We're your go-to resource for questions about your undergraduate application, registration, course planning, academic advising, student awards and financial aid, and your student record. Our friendly and supportive team is here to help you from start to finish with a focus on you.

Career Services and Co-op

Career Services and Co-op provides:

- Skill-building workshops.
- Career fairs and networking events
- Career exploration appointments.
- Access to job boards for Lakehead students.
- Support for your co-op, part-time, or graduate job search.
- Online resources.

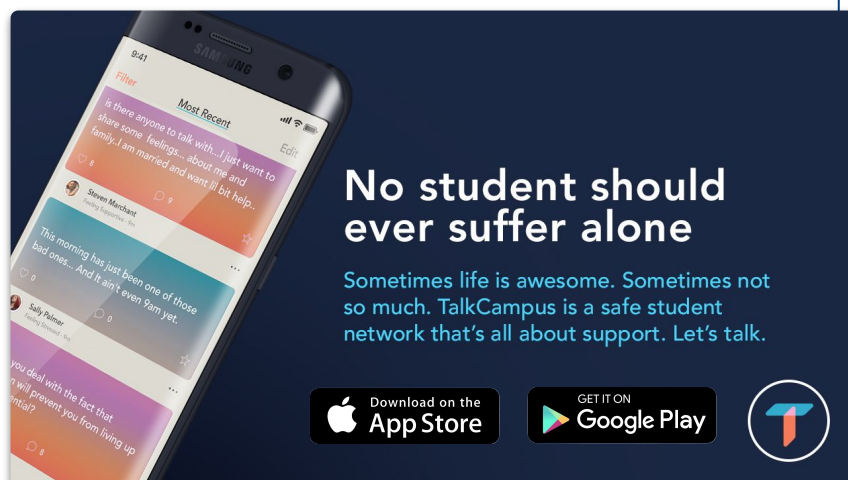
mySuccess Online Portal

mySuccess is an online portal that students can access using their Lakehead credentials. The portal allows you to:

- View upcoming events, workshops, seminars and volunteer opportunities.
- Search for available on and off campus jobs, upload your resume directly online, save interesting job postings, and track jobs you've applied for.
- Book Appointments with the Student Success Centre, Career Zone, and Academic Support Zone.
- Access your Co-Curricular Record (CCR).

LakeheadConnect

The LakeheadConnect is an online networking program powered by the Ten Thousand Coffees platform, matching alumni with students and recent grads, based on your career-specific interests and goals for inspiring conversation. You can schedule and set up a coffee chat in-person or online! Take an hour every 1-3 months to meet someone new from Lakehead, create an opportunity to learn, share and answer questions.



Student Health and Wellness

lakeheadu.ca/shw

Student Health and Wellness provides a range of health services, counselling options, and wellness programs so that you can get the most out of your Lakehead Experience.



Have you checked in lately?

lakeheadu.ca/wellkey

Available EMPLOYEE Resources: To Enhance Our Occupational Wellness

Human Resources

The Human Resources team is dedicated to fostering a positive and inclusive workplace where every employee can thrive. We are here to support you through every stage of your journey with us. Get to know the people behind the team who are passionate about making your experience the best it can be! Our main Human Resources office is located on the **Thunder Bay campus** (UC 0003). We also have team members located on the **Orillia campus** (OA 2012).

Lakehead University Employment Opportunities

Explore Lakehead Thunder Bay and Lakehead Orillia employment opportunities that are currently available. Opportunities include Faculty/Teaching positions, Administrative/Staff Positions, and Research Positions.

Tuition Benefit

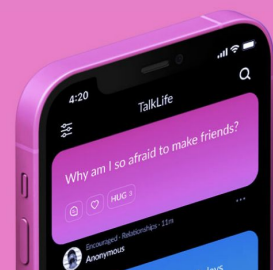
This program is intended to provide eligible employees and their family members with the opportunity of furthering their educational/career development by making Lakehead University undergraduate and graduate courses available to them at reduced cost. Please refer to your **Employee Groups Benefit Package** for eligibility.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. You can use LinkedIn to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career.

Don't struggle alone

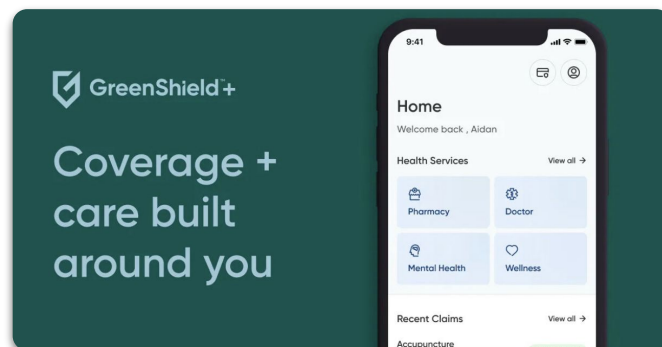
TalkLife Workplace offers instant, anonymous, 24/7 peer-to-peer support



Employee Assistance Program

844-671-3327

Whether you have questions about handling stress at work and home, managing money, parenting and child care, or health issues, your **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** provides free, confidential, short-term counselling and referrals for employees and their dependants.



With the **GreenShield+ app** you'll be able to:

- View and print your digital card & benefit booklet
- Check coverage for claim eligibility before visiting a health care provider
- Submit your claims online
- View your claims history
- And much more!





Future Newsletters

If you are passionate about wellness and have insights to share, we invite you to contribute to our future newsletters!

Upcoming topics include:

Social Wellness Physical Wellness

Spiritual Wellness

JANUARY 20-24, 2025

Thrive

**EXPLORE YOUR PATH
TO MENTAL HEALTH**



Subscribe to our Newsletter

To subscribe to the **Our Trail to Wellness** newsletter, please [sign up here](#) or scan the QR code.



For inquiries or submissions, contact:

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**"The future belongs to those who
believe in the beauty of their dreams."**

-- Eleanor Roosevelt