

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Year	2024 – 2025
Credential	Ontario College Diploma
Program Delivery	Full Time
Duration	2 Years
Length	4 Semesters
Program Codes	A151 (PC) – Timmins Campus (in-person) A154 (DL) – Distance (remote)

DESCRIPTION

Find your purpose on the front lines of community care.

The Addictions and Mental Health Worker program allows students to analyze intersecting causes and impacts of addiction and mental health issues from a multidimensional framework that integrates an Anti-Oppressive Practice length along with a strengths-based approach to supporting clients. Students learn how to interact with clients on an individual, group and community level all while advocating for appropriate systemic changes. Throughout the program, students can apply theoretical concepts through lab-based activities, simulations, fieldwork placement and experiential learning opportunities.

The interactive lab allows students to work with actors in the field to practice and refine their interviewing and counselling skills. The capstone course encourages students to advocate for social change and promote the field of addictions and mental health overall.

You will challenge the stigma associated with these problems including your own hidden biases to develop holistic healing plans that work and master the self-care strategies that will be critical to your long-term success. Finally, you will put theory into practice during a 580-hour fieldwork placement with social services employers of all kinds including shelters, drop-in centers, recovery homes, correctional facilities, crisis support agencies, and more. These skills have never been more in demand more, and you can make a profound difference in the lives of others by studying here. Graduates from our Addiction and Mental Health Program are eligible to register with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Northern College also offers a pathway allowing students to complete the Social Service Worker program and AMH worker programs in 3 years of full-time study instead of 4. Students wishing to take this route need to apply to the Social Service Worker Program.

This program will prepare you for a rewarding career as an in-demand counsellor, case manager, or outreach worker. In a collaborative lab environment, you will gradually hone your communication, listening and crisis intervention skills – all while gaining an awareness of the complex causes and impacts of mental health issues and addiction. The program ties in various elements of Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice from the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), giving graduates and strong ethical framework to ensure they are meeting the needs of clients throughout the community. As such, the AMH program was granted SSW equivalency status through the OCSWSSW, and graduates are eligible for registration with the regulatory college.

Northern has a partnership with Algoma University. Students who have completed a Social Service Worker diploma through Northern College can enter the Bachelor of Social Work Program with Algoma University. Students are eligible for up to 60 credits to be transferred into the BSW program, which consists of 120 credits overall. Please reach out to Tara Duclos for additional information: duclost@northern.on.ca

Northern College also has a pathway agreement for students who have completed their Social Service Worker Diploma to enter the Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) Bachelor Program. Please reach out to Leah Blanchette, Leah.Blanchette@algomau.ca for more information.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- Addiction and mental health worker
- Employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, shelters, rehabilitation facilities, health care services and correctional facilities.

VOCATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop plans to assist clients in achieving their goals for mental wellness and recovery from addictions.
2. Integrate group work and group facilitation skills across a wide range of community service settings, to support growth and development of individuals, families, and communities affected by addictions and mental health issues.
3. Deliver addiction and mental health services that align with social policy, legislation, and political, social and economic systems.
4. Provide treatment and prevention strategies to individuals and families impacted by addiction and mental health issues.
5. Develop and promote accessible and responsive programs and services to individuals, groups, families, and communities that respect their diverse needs and experiences.
6. Provide assistance and/or referral where necessary, to clients for the successful resolution of crises.
7. Develop and maintain positive interprofessional collaboration and working relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and community partners that adhere to professional, legal and ethical standards.
8. Collaborate with clients to identify and advocate for access to appropriate resources to address addiction and mental health issues.
9. Collaborate with Indigenous peoples and their communities to identify and advocate for access to culturally appropriate resources to address addiction and mental health issues.
10. Engage in critical self-reflection to develop strategies for professional growth and lifelong learning as a practitioner.
11. Develop strategies for addiction and mental health practice that meet an organization's objectives.

PROGRAM COURSES

The following reflects the planned course sequence for full-time offerings of the program. Programs at Northern College are delivered using a variety of instruction modes. Courses may be offered in the classroom or lab, entirely online, or in a hybrid mode which combines classroom sessions with virtual learning activities.

Semester 1		Hours
AM1003	The Role of Biology in Addiction and Mental Health	42
AM1013	Professional Practice Skills	56
AM2013	Screening, Assessment and Case Management	42
AM2023	Addressing Stigma in Addiction and Mental Health Work	42
CM1323	Professional Communications	42
SW1014	Working on Teams and in Groups	56
SW2073	Working with Indigenous Peoples	42
 Semester 2		
AM2003	Social Policy and Legislation in Addiction and Mental Health	42
AM2033	Interviewing and Counselling Skills	42
AM3003	Preparation for Placement in Addiction and Mental Health	42
CM2303	Communications for the Workplace	42
SW1073	Understanding Power, Privilege & Oppression	42
SW2083	Community Health and Development	42
 Semester 3		
AM4002	Fieldwork Seminar	42
AM4003	Fieldwork Placement	580
 Semester 4		
AM3013	Addictions and Mental Health Capstone	42
AM2043	Integrated Approaches to Addiction and Mental Health Work	42
General	Education Elective	42
SW1093	Human Behaviour and the Social Environment	42
SW3113	Working with Diverse Families	42
SW3123	Trauma-Informed Care and Crisis	42
SW3153	Interpersonal Violence	42

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

The following reflects the planned progression for full-time offerings of the program.

Fall Intake

- Sem 1: Fall 2024
- Sem 2: Winter 2025

WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students complete an unpaid 580-hour fieldwork placement in their third semester of the program.

ARTICULATION/TRANSFER AGREEMENTS

A number of articulation agreements have been negotiated with universities and other institutions across Canada, North America and internationally. These agreements are assessed, revised and updated on a regular basis. Please contact the program coordinator for specific details if you are interested in pursuing such an option. Additional information can be found at [Articulation Agreements](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Distance Delivery Information (A154)

Our AMHW distance program is synchronous, meaning, classes are scheduled each semester for a class day and time for you to attend online. It is important to note that all classes that have lab components (and some others) have mandatory attendance and participation to be successful in the course. Students who are in the distance program must have a working camera and microphone on their device. This is mandatory for our distance program as it will allow students to participate and engage with classmates and the course material.

Our distance students can do their placements in their city/town of their choice, but placements are done in person. Students studying outside of the Timmins area are responsible for securing their own fieldwork placement which will be approved by the placement coordinator. Both the on campus and distance Social Service Worker Program are vigorous programs. For this reason, the program coordinator can meet with you to discuss part-time pathways.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

N/A

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)
- Grade 12 English (C, U) (Minimum 60% GPA required)
- Or equivalent

Academic prerequisites for this program may be obtained free of charge through Academic Upgrading. Applicants who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent and will have reached the age of 19 years on or before the start of the program must undergo academic testing and may be required to complete Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) process to demonstrate equivalency of admission requirements prior to admission into a program. For more details, please contact the Admissions Office at 705-235-7222 or admissions@northern.on.ca.

Additional Requirements for International Students

In addition to the general admission requirements, international students must have proof of English Proficiency and meet the requirements below.

1. Proof of Senior High School Diploma/Certificate
2. English Proficiency (we will require one of the following):
 - IELTS Academic International English Language Testing System: minimum overall score of 6.0 must be achieved with no individual band score under 6.0; however, we will accept one band at 5.5.
 - TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): Computer-based overall minimum score of 79
 - PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic – Graduate Diploma: 58+
3. CO-OP Work Permit is mandatory for this program to participate in unpaid program placements. All educational documents must be submitted in English and will be dependent on the country of citizenship.

For more information, please contact admissions@northern.on.ca. If your country of citizenship has English as its official language, we may accept alternate proof of English Proficiency. All educational documents must be submitted in English and will be dependent on the country of citizenship.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 11 Program Courses
- 2 Communications Courses
- 1 General Education Course

GRADUATION ELIGIBILITY

To graduate from this program, a student must attain a minimum of 60% or a letter grade of CR (Credit) in each course in each semester unless otherwise stated on the course outline. Students should consult departmental policies and manuals for additional detail and exceptions.

GRADUATION WINDOW

Students unable to adhere to the program duration of two years (as stated above) may take a maximum of four years to complete their credential. After this time, students must be re-admitted into the program, and follow the curriculum in place at the time of re-admission.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about being admitted into the program, please contact Northern College Admissions at admissions@northern.on.ca or by phone at 705-235-3211 ext. 7222. For questions about the content of the program, contact the Program Coordinator.

Lori Vachon, Program Coordinator
Tel: 705-235-3211 ext. 2141
Email: vachonl@northern.on.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester 1

AM1003 The Role of Biology in Addiction and Mental Health

In this course, students will explore current research, focused on genetic and epigenetic factors that may play a role in the development of addiction and mental health of individuals. Students will review the role of medication in supporting those living with addictions and mental health. By the end of this course, students will have an understanding of the many factors: biological, psychological and social factors that influence mental health and addiction.

AM1013 Professional Practice Skills

Students will examine different models of practice as they relate to mental health and addiction. Students will engage in critical self-reflection to build awareness and appreciation of how power differentials, internalized oppression and social location all influence interactions. A focus on mindful communication practices will be emphasized with a specific focus on anti-oppressive and collaborative communication. Students will learn the models of practice, focusing on effective communication, beginning interviewing skills, empathetic listening, paraphrasing, perception-checking, questioning and affirming.

AM2023 Addressing Stigma in Addiction and Mental Health Work

Challenging the stigma associated with addiction and mental health takes understanding, education and examines personal attitudes towards health. This course provides students with an in-depth exploration and analysis of the social construction of stigma relating to people with addiction and mental health issues. Students will focus on the causes, consequences and impacts of stigma at the micro, meso and macro levels, as well as multiple solutions to combat stigma. Students will have the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills by creating an anti-stigma initiative using the (AOP) lens, community outreach and engagement approaches.

AM2013 Screening, Assessment and Case Management

Based on the cultural beliefs, values and needs of a client/support system, and in collaboration with all service providers, screening, assessment, and case management enables clients with support systems to be linked with appropriate providers of care and resources throughout the realm of health and community services and across various care settings. They do so while ensuring that the care provided is safe, effective, client-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. This course will identify the range of diverse service settings in which people with addictions and mental health concerns present and will examine reasons why the majority of people with addiction and mental health questions do not seek specialized treatment, drop out prematurely or “fall through the cracks” attempting to navigate multiple service systems. Based on a foundation model of trauma informed care, students will use care-based applications for screening and assessment tools for addiction and mental health matters and will critically reflect on the shortcomings of these tools among specific populations, including Indigenous Peoples and culturally specific groups.

CM1323 Professional Communications

In this course, students will learn essential skills for success in college and the workplace. This course focuses on developing and strengthening oral and written communication skills, and critical thinking ability. During this course, students will engage in a variety of forms of communication with a focus on upholding the principles of academic integrity. Students will develop the skills necessary to create discipline-specific documents, practice business etiquette and professionalism, and apply critical thinking strategies to practical scenarios. Upon

successful completion of this course, students will be able to plan and draft concise, coherent and well-organized writing assignments that are tailored to specific audiences and purposes.

SW1014 Working on Teams and in Groups

This course will provide an interactive environment to enable students to develop group leadership and collaborative group work skills and to critically reflect on interprofessional teamwork. Students in this course will work with and in groups to explore theories relevant to group dynamics and group facilitation. Students will apply theories learned in a lab setting which will examine group dynamics, leadership styles, group conflict management as well as forming and facilitating groups.

SW2073 Working with Indigenous Peoples

This course is intended to assist the student to develop the capacity to work with Indigenous individuals, families, groups and communities. Students will examine the impacts of trauma and colonization for Indigenous peoples and communities by gaining an in-depth understanding of the residential school system, the 60s's scoop and intergenerational trauma. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to identify culturally safe practice considerations and assist in the development of holistic healing plans that incorporate appropriate cultural resources. Students will connect the concepts learned in two other courses: Trauma-Informed Care and Crisis; and Understanding Power, Privilege and Oppression in Social Service Work to this course in order to be able to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous individuals, family and communities while recognizing the impact of their own privilege on these relationships.

Semester 2

AM2003 Social Policy and Legislation in Addiction and Mental Health

Students will discuss social policies relating to addiction and mental health from a structural perspective. Students will explore the concept of personal troubles versus public issues. These analyses will assist the student to be able to access appropriate services for clients, as well as develop and implement services to address gaps.

AM2033 Interviewing and Counselling Skills

Students began to learn about intervention skills in the first semester in Professional Practice Skills. This course provides the opportunity to practice these skills while continuing to enhance the understanding of work at the micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice, with individuals, families, groups and community. Students will enrich their ability to screen, assess and case manage through in-class simulations and case studies. Students will learn to manage risk, determine needs and intervene during crisis. Self-care strategies will be emphasized throughout the learning.

AM3003 Preparation for Placement in Addiction and Mental Health

The aim of this course is to prepare students for success as a professional Addiction and Mental Health Worker. This course will be interactive in providing students with opportunities to explore resources currently available in our community to support their success as a Mental Health and Addiction Worker. Students will define their learning styles and develop their own student success plan which will include self-care strategies, and approaches to prevent compassion fatigue and burn out. Students will explore the policies and practice procedures that will help prepare them for Field Placement. Students will learn about professional competencies required for Field Placement and required for employment as an Addiction and Mental Health Worker. Important themes that will be addressed will be workplace safety, de-escalation, suicide prevention and positive client engagement and collaboration.

CM2303 Communications for the Workplace

In this course, students will develop professional communication skills required for success in the workplace. Students will continue to develop and strengthen their oral and written communication skills and critical thinking abilities. During this course, students will use various modes of communication to complete assignments designed to meet program and professional expectations. Students will utilize a variety of technologies for the purpose of creating a professional presence in a digital environment. Students will develop the necessary skills to create polished workplace documents such as letters, resumes, cover letters and reports tailored to specific audiences. Students will learn to conduct themselves with professionalism in both workplace interviews and job searches. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to create clear, concise and coherent workplace and employment documents that are error-free and designed for specific audiences and purposes.

General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.

SW1073 Understanding Power, Privilege & Oppression

Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) and Structural Social Work (STSW) are the philosophical basis for Northern College's Social Service Worker Program. In this course, students will begin to understand their own social location, the concepts of Privilege and Oppression and the impact of these on marginalized people with whom Social Service Workers work. The concept of "Private Troubles versus Public Problems" will assist students to understand their role in working to change systems that oppress people.

SW2083 Community Health and Development

The importance of Social Service Workers being able to navigate and work within communities at a macro level is imperative to the human services field. This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental concepts and theories used within community organization and development. Community service learning is incorporated where students will do an analysis of the health of their community (using the social determinants of health as a guide). Based on the results students will develop a plan to address their findings, using a structural and anti-oppressive lens to inform their work.

Semester 3

AM4002 Fieldwork Seminar

This course is a co-requisite of Fieldwork Placement. While on placement, students will attend four Seminar days. This in-class experience provides the opportunity to critically analyze the experiences that are occurring in the field. Students begin to understand the delicate balance between what they have learned in the classroom (theory, skills), the needs of clients and the requirements of agencies. Self-care will be emphasized as students transition from the role of student to that of entry-level professional.

AM4003 Fieldwork Placement

This is a cooperative endeavor between the College Addiction and Mental Health Worker Program and various community agencies. Students are placed in agencies under supervision for a 580-hour duration. The objective is to provide students with a practical opportunity as a professional in training to integrate and apply entry-level knowledge, values, and skills, while actively participating in the activities of the agency with staff and clients.

Semester 4

AM2043 Integrated Approaches to Addiction and Mental Health Work

There is a tendency for addiction and mental health to be viewed separately from other areas such as trauma/violence as though they have unique causes and outcomes. Taking an integrated perspective not only improves the student's understanding of addiction but also invites them to understand collaboration across disciplines rather than in silos. In this course, students will begin to link theory with practice in addiction and mental health work, demonstrating that how one understands addictions will determine the response to it. Students will reflect on their own "theories" of addiction and mental health and will use this self-reflection as a starting point for discussion of key theoretical frameworks in the addiction and mental health field. Students will describe and examine their theories using the anti-oppressive approach. Students will apply their self-reflection and learning to include a multidimensional theory of addiction and mental health that takes into account biological, psychological, social and structural factors. Students will be able to apply addiction and mental health within a number of intersecting causes and influences with a range of individual, social and social-structural interventions and possible responses.

AM3013 Addictions and Mental Health Capstone

Students will explore specific populations and key issues in the field of addictions and mental health. Students will work in small groups to explore special populations and share the information with their peers. These populations include women (including pregnant women); older adults; youth; Indigenous people; LGBTTTIQ/Q communities; racialized communities; new Canadians; differently-abled individuals; those who are homeless; people with concurrent disorders, dual diagnosis, PTSD and survivors of interpersonal trauma/violence. This capstone course will be the vehicle for students to pull together all of the learning in the program, including theory, practice, group work skills and community engagement strategies to develop and present their project.

General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.

SW1093 Human Behaviour and the Social Environment

This course explores human development across the life span in the context of bio-psycho-social influences, including theories and knowledge about the range of social systems in which individuals live and diversity of human behaviour throughout the life cycle. Students will develop an understanding of the interactions between and among biophysical, social, psychological, and cultural systems as they affect human development and shape individual values, beliefs, worldviews and identities.

SW3113 Working with Diverse Families

This course will examine how to work with and support Canadian families in contemporary society. Using an anti-oppressive and structural lens: students will examine challenges that Canadian families are facing and develop an awareness of the principles and values that guide human service practice with families. The many layers affecting families will be discussed, including (but not limited to); coupling, marriage, parenting, divorce and blended families. Students will be encouraged to examine their own family systems in light of the contemporary theories of family.

SW3123 Trauma-Informed Care and Crisis

This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of concepts related to trauma, trauma informed practice, crisis, and crisis intervention. Students will adopt a trauma informed perspective as part of their Social Service Worker practice. Through case studies and role plays, students will learn how to employ crisis intervention skills in a culturally appropriate manner. This course will build on the micro skills that students have acquired in SSW Practice I, SSW Practice II and SSW Practice II Lab. Students will have the unique opportunity to apply their skills in different mock crisis situations.

SW3153 Interpersonal Violence

This course focuses on the historical, social and cultural contexts of interpersonal violence in Canada. Students will acquire a broad understanding of child abuse and neglect, violence against women and members of the LGBTQ+ community, and intimate partner violence. This knowledge will then be applied to social service work interventions. In this course, students will also explore the social challenges of reducing and ultimately preventing interpersonal violence in the future.