


Helping the Helpers: Supporting Post-Secondary Counsellor Wellness CACUSS 2022

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*From the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory
of the e K^wik^wəłəm (Kwkwetlem), x^wməθkwəyəm
(Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and
Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (TsleilWaututh) Nations*





Let's take a
moment to land
here





Where we are going

- Themes in counsellor wellness
- Ideas on how to support counsellors at your institution



How we got here



BC PSCA

BC Post-Secondary
Counsellors' Association



Open Members Meetings

2022

All PSCA members are invited to join Open Members Meetings to connect and consult with their fellow Post-Secondary Counsellors. Typically run once per month via Zoom.

[READ MORE](#)



Counselling in Post-Secondary: the challenges

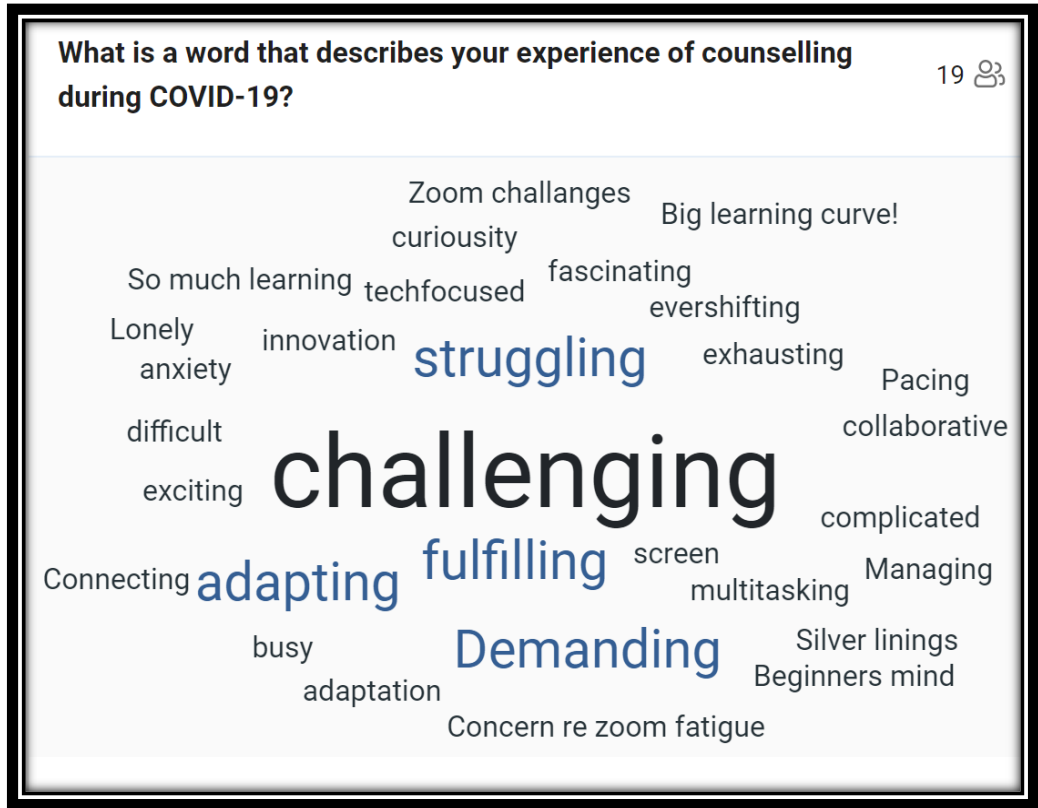
- Prevalence of mental health issues
- Changing role
- Workload



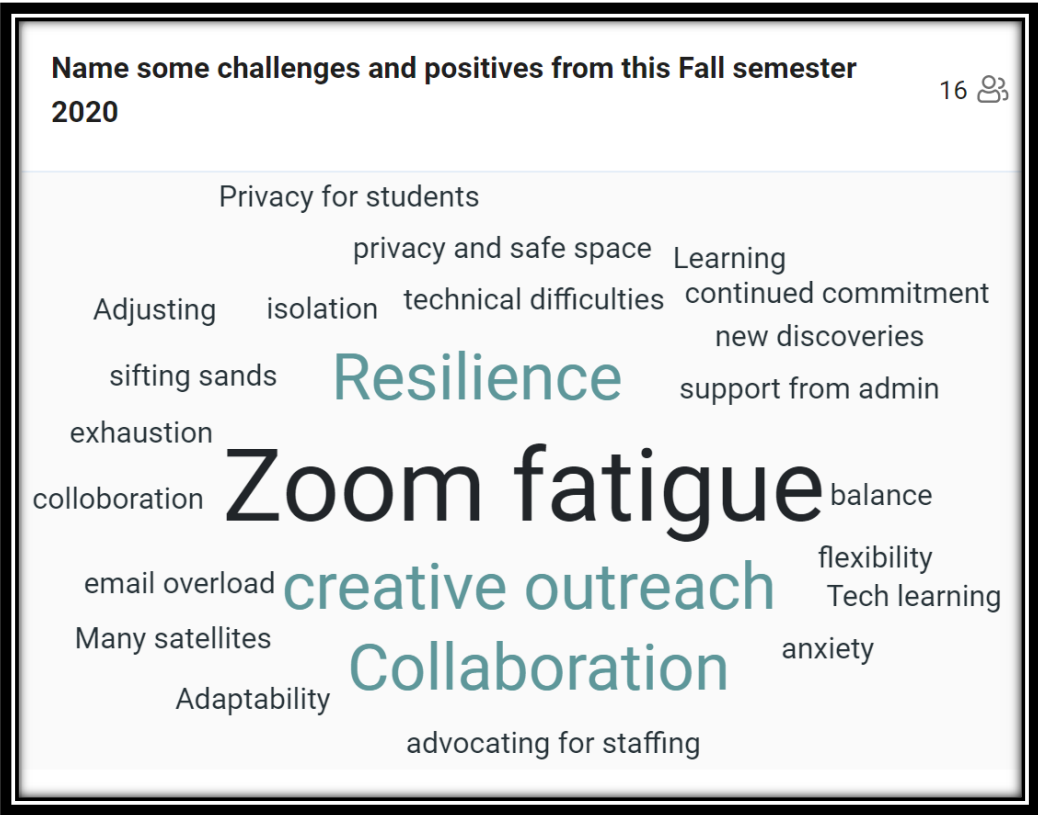
Counselling in Post-Secondary: the good

- Intrinsic positive aspects
- Extrinsic rewards

(Kadambi et. al, 2010)



September 2020



November 2020



Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

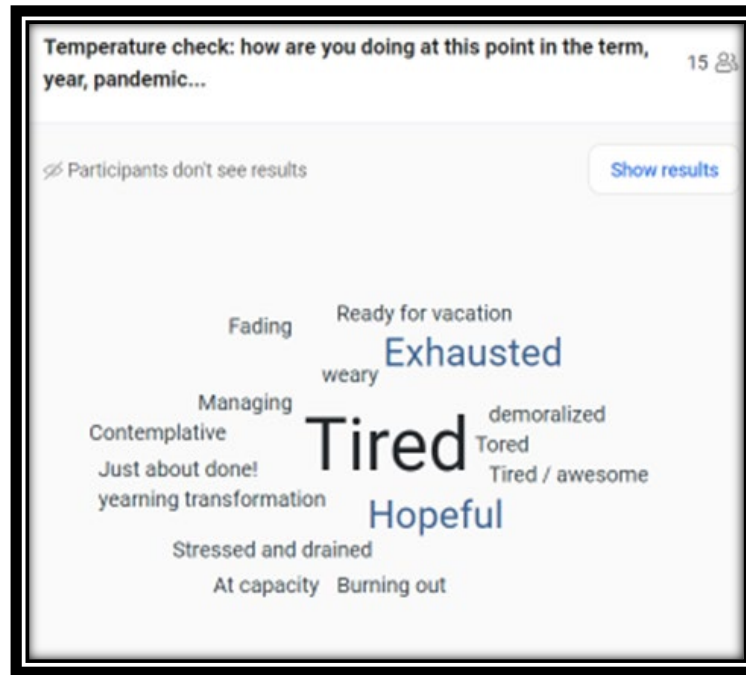
Counsellors are shouldering increasing need for mental health support while they too are managing the stressors of the pandemic.

Caring for others' crises while we endure a "shared trauma"

- Rapid Shift to Online
- Increased workload
- Increased self-care opportunities

Counsellor Burnout

" We care deeply for students' well-being and at the same we can only do so much"



April 2021



January 2022

Counsellor Resilience

- Many still believe they can make a difference and are happy chose to do this work. Rates of job satisfaction are high (Hill, 2022).
- Therapists were more likely than the general population to report very good/excellent mental health (Battams & Hilbrecht, 2021)



January 2021



Take Aways for Institutions and Administrators

- Understand and appreciate our role and expertise.

"Doing a lot of work that is not recognized feels draining"

"Feeling unseen with the heaviness of the work we are doing with students"

- Create a culture of self-care in the workplace and provide "open door" policies for guidance.

- Adequate staffing, and diversified caseloads

"Help communicate and manage expectations. We aren't crisis centers"

- Counsellors can't fix structural problems in individual sessions



Take Aways for Institutions and Administrators

Best practices to avoid burnout

- Paid professional supervision where counsellors can freely consult on their clinical experiences and the feelings brought up by them.
- Time for regular case conferencing and counsellors to meet as a group.
- Counsellors themselves are the "tool" of therapy so their well-being MUST be a focus
- Importance of time away – flexible schedules, work from home, adequate time for vacation and professional development

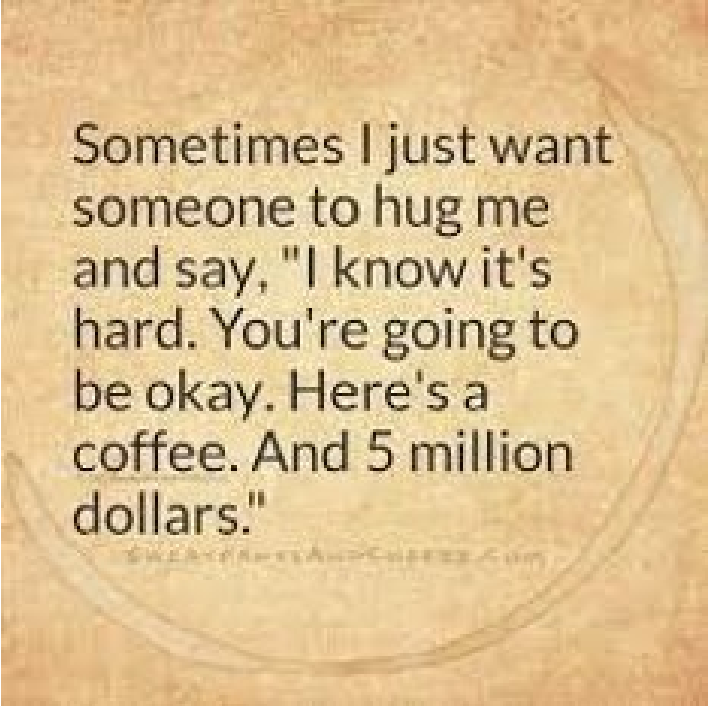


"They felt supported when given autonomy, by being part of a cohesive counselling team, having strong networking relationships with other student services, being valued by clients and being involved in activities to improve the wider system."
(Harrison,2021)



Counsellor Appreciation

- Action item – contact a counsellor or counselling department at your institution and express appreciation for their work and ask how THEY are doing



Sometimes I just want someone to hug me and say, "I know it's hard. You're going to be okay. Here's a coffee. And 5 million dollars."

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