Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on Social Work Students at Concordia University

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INTRODUCTION

• According the American College Health Association (ACHA) (2021), half of all college students are struggling with moderate to serious psychological stress and loneliness. Additionally, 82% of students reported feeling moderate to high levels of stress (ACHA, 2021).

• Son et al. (2020) indicated that 71% of their respondents felt increased rates of anxiety and stress due to the following: worry about becoming ill, worry about a loved one becoming ill, difficulty concentrating, decrease social interaction, and an increase concern about ability to perform academically.
RESEARCH QUESTION

• How has the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted the social work students at CUWAA?

METHODS

• IRB Approval Received [1650491-1]
• In fall 2020, 63 social work students participated in a one-time anonymous Qualtrics survey.
• Call for participation for the survey was sent using Blackboard CUWAA BSW and MSW students.
• The survey consisted of 35 questions.
• This was completed at a small, midwestern Christian University.
RESULTS

**Gender**

- Male: 10%
- Female: 90%

**Religious Affiliation**

- Lutheran: 35%
- Catholic: 22%
- Other: 43%

**How has the pandemic impacted you emotionally? BSW Traditional Students**

- Stress/Awerty/Depression/Fear: 42.90%
- Loneliness/Sad: 26.50%
- Yes/A little: 18.40%
- Good/No Impact: 6.10%

**How has the pandemic impacted you emotionally? MSW Students**

- Stress/Awerty/Depression/Fear: 44.40%
- Loneliness/Sad: 22.20%
- Yes/A little: 22.20%
Has your frequency in attending religious services changed since the start of the pandemic?

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO MEET YOUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

How were you able to meet your spiritual needs during the Covid-19 pandemic?
Results – SPIRITUAL IMPACT

• How has your faith been challenged
  • My faith has not been challenged-21
  • My faith has been challenged-21
    • Why would God do this to us?
    • I can't go to church

• How has faith assisted you?
  • It has
    • Prayer
    • Provided hope
    • Trust in God
    • Comfort in God
Results – COPING

• How have you coped?
  • Avoidant
    • Day by day
    • Don't think about it
  • Prosocial
    • Meditation
    • Journal
    • Exercise
    • Prayer
    • Time with family and friends
Results – PHYSICAL IMPACT

How have you been impacted physically?

- Yes: 38%
- No: 62%
Results – FACULTY SUPPORT

• How can the SW Dept support you?
  • Faculty
    • Flexible
    • Available
    • Understanding
    • Communicative
    • Check-ins
DISCUSSION

Quotes

• "Lack of socializing has made life lonely, pandemic has affected my mood and mental health negatively"
• "Lots of mental breakdowns"
• "It has triggered some fear and apprehension. Has definitely added to stress and anxiety levels."
• "I have more mental health issues with stress and not having physical social interaction"
• "I felt extremely alone and depressed."
• "I have noticed a spike in my depression and anxiety"
• "Caused anxiety, stress, loneliness"
Quotes – Coping

"Be in prayer. Talk about it with family and friends."

"Breathing, reaching out to friends, Bible"

"Prayer, relaxation and talking"

"I've turned to God in prayer"
Quotes – How we can help?

“Offering prayer, encouragement, support and understanding”

“Check in on us to make sure we are okay.”

“Simply being available”

“the check in’s have been very helpful”

“Understand that being there for others is a necessity.”

“Try to create social gatherings that might allow unto connect with the other people in our program since it is difficult to connect with other people.”

“Offer healthy coping mechanisms and ways to de-stress”
LIMITATIONS

• Small sample size
• Sample is not generalizable to all social work students
• Reliability and validity of the survey

IMPLICATIONS

• The impact is unknown, it will be necessary to have ongoing conversations/check-ins
• Instructors remain communicative, understanding, flexible and available
Concordia Intramural Research Grant (CIRG)

Christian Faith, Service, & Social Justice
www.cuw.edu/socialwork

MINDful Mondays in March

The Social Work Faculty invite you to participate in MINDful Mondays during the month of March. It’s our hope that we will build community, offer a space for intentional reflection, examine Bible passages and encourage the practice of self-care. We have reserved an hour of time for each Monday but do not anticipate it will take an hour...come for 15 minutes or stay for the duration!

Mondays in March—1, 8, 15, 22, & 29
12:00pm—1:00pm via Zoom
https://cuwas.zoom.us/j/2622432191

Sponsored by the Department of Social Work
• American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment III: Undergraduate Student Reference Group Executive Summary Fall 2020. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association; 2021.
