



Cultivating
Community
Wellness

Co-Creating a Culture of Mental Health and Well-Being in Developmental Services: Learning together through a Community-led Initiative

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April 19th, 2023



Welcome & Grounding



Photo: <https://youruniversity.group.shef.ac.uk/2021-2022/features/alumni-survey-2020/>



Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will have had the opportunity to:

1. learn about and reflect on the mental health needs of the sector.
2. learn more about a provincial initiative focused on supporting mental health in our sector
3. Connect with peers to share and generate solutions to promoting health and well-being

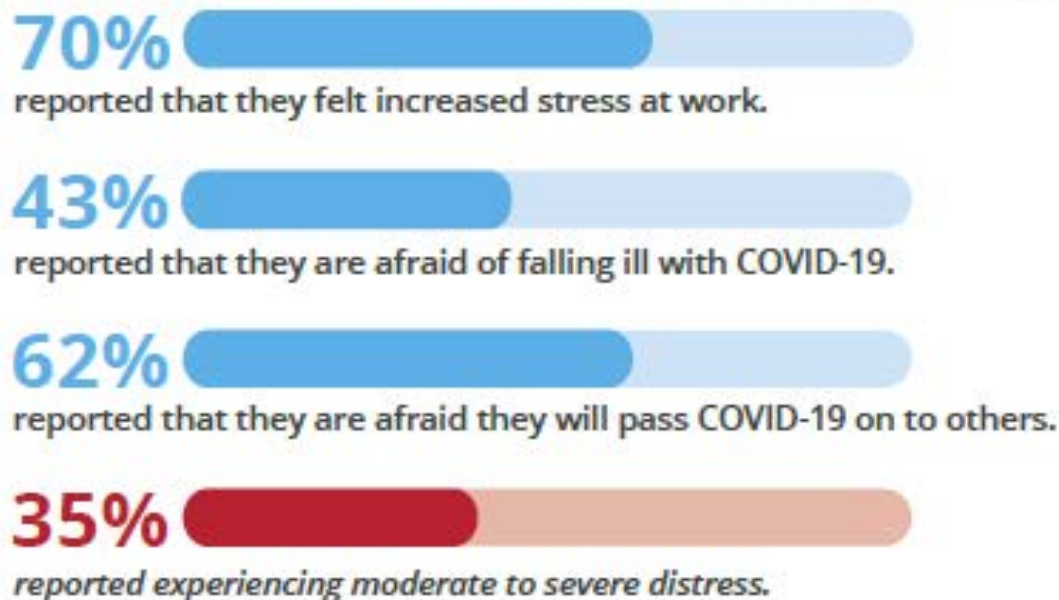
A Community Need

To support the mental health and well-being of the developmental services workforce and address high rates of self-reported psychological distress during the pandemic.



Impact of COVID-19 on DSP Mental Health

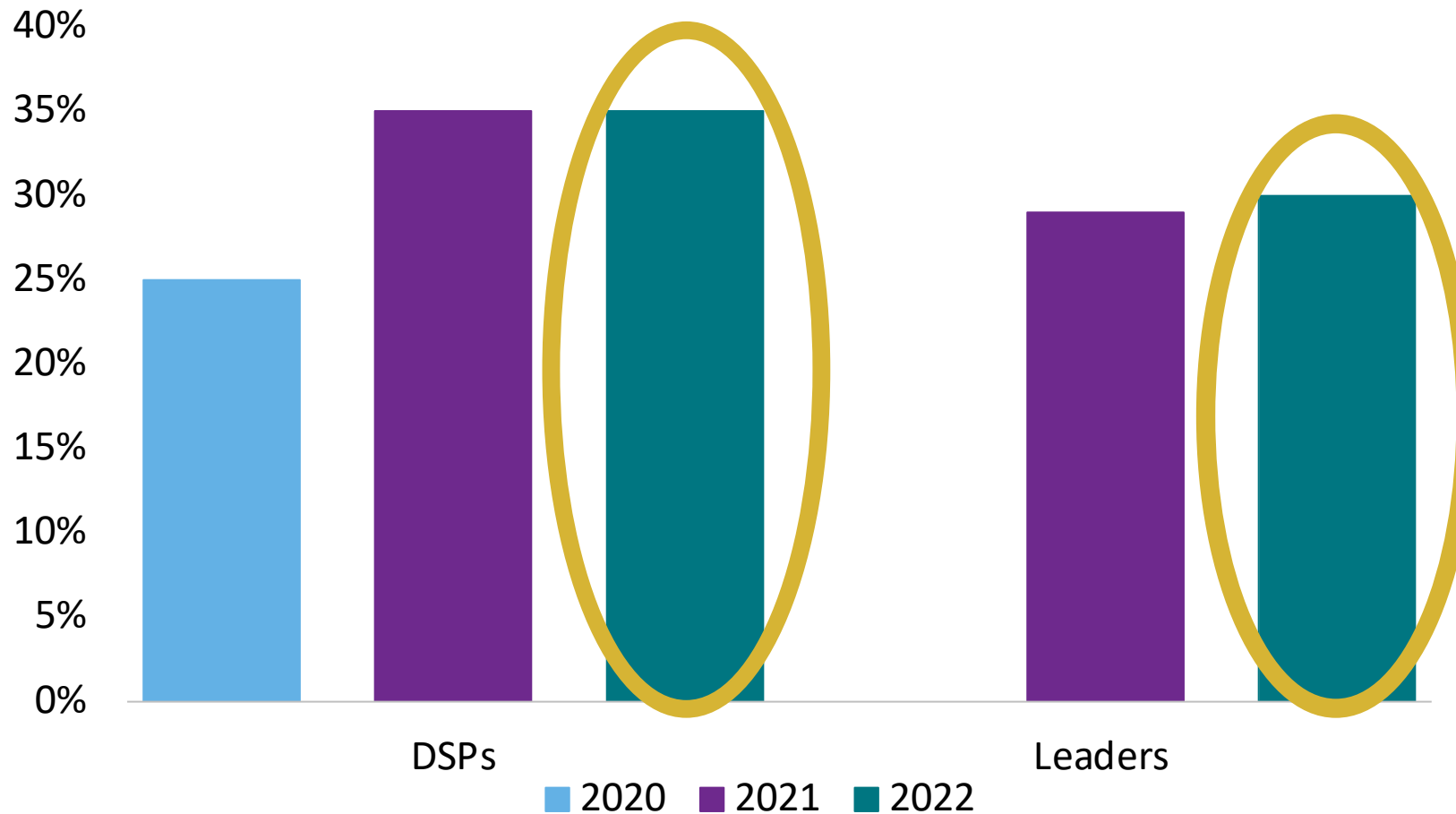
DSP mental health during the pandemic



Rates of DSP distress have increased since 2020 when 25% reported moderate to severe distress.

Psychological Distress Among All Staff

MODERATE AND SEVERE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS



A Community-Driven Intervention: Cultivating Community Wellness



- Weekly emails
- Mindfulness Sessions
- Podcasts
- Mindfulness Videos
- PACT
- Mental Health Leadership Training
- Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training

<https://provincialnetwork.ca/ccwellness>



ECHO AIDD: Adult Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Focus: Mental health challenges that the IDD population faces

Hub: Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Family Physician, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Patient and Family Advisors

Spokes: Healthcare providers and developmental service providers who support adults with IDD and mental health concerns



How do we put this into practice

Strategy “ Not just another thing”

Three areas of practice

- 1. Connecting**
- 2. Learning**
- 3. Tools**



A man with a beard, wearing a white t-shirt, dark jeans, and a backpack, is walking and pulling a silver rolling suitcase. A young child in a yellow dress and a straw hat is sitting on the suitcase, holding the handle. They are in a modern building with large glass windows and doors. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

Strategy

Do one thing for 2
reasons !

Connecting



TEAM MEETING
CHECK IN
QUESTIONS



EAP



COMMITTEE



EVENTS AND
APPRECIATION

Learning



New Staff Orientation

Third Party Trainers – Mending the Chasm , Leena Sharma

Echo

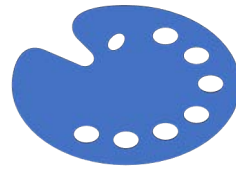
Mental Health First Aid

Queens Mental Health Leadership Certificate

Tools and Resources



Mindfulness Podcasts



Art Based Approaches



Sharing resources and
tools guides with all
co-workers

Cultivating Community Wellness - Vision

To support the mental health needs of Developmental Services staff, leaders, and people and families they support, by building **individual and organizational capacity to promote a culture of mental health and wellness** through high-quality, accessible, tailored mental health resources, tools, and activities that are continuously improved by feedback and data.

Working groups



COMMUNICATIONS

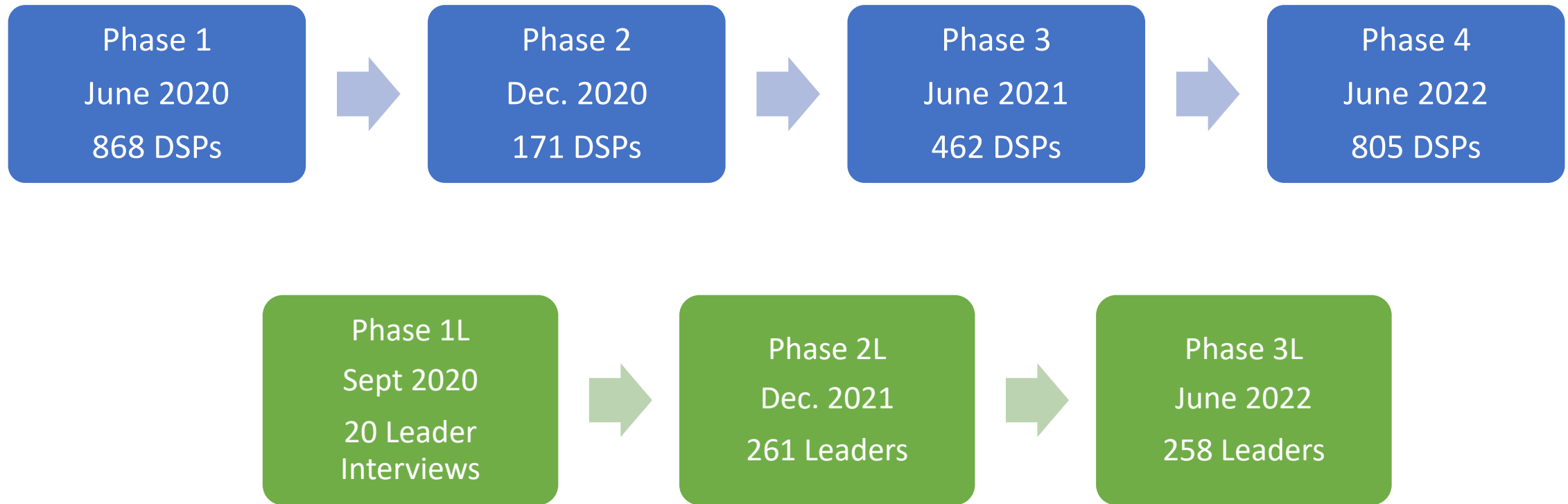


CONTENT



EVALUATION

An Evidence Informed Approach



Available Research Reports



Recognizing the Mental Health
Needs of an Essential Workforce
Being a Direct Support Professional
in the Time of COVID-19

camh | Azrieli Adult
Neurodevelopmental Centre

SUMMARY REPORT

Recognizing the Mental Health Needs of an
Essential Workforce

One Year Later: Being a Direct Support
Professional in the Time of COVID-19

Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre

Nicole Bobbette, Sabrina Campanella, Yoni Hamdani, Kendra Thomson,
Megan Abou-Chacra, Tiziana Volpe, Yona Lunskey

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camh | Azrieli Adult
Neurodevelopmental Centre

SUMMARY REPORT

Recognizing the Mental Health Needs of an
Essential Workforce

Perspective of Agency Leaders in Ontario
Developmental Services during COVID-19

Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre

Nicole Bobbette, Yoni Hamdani, Kendra Thomson, Megan Abou-Chacra,
Tiziana Volpe, Yona Lunskey

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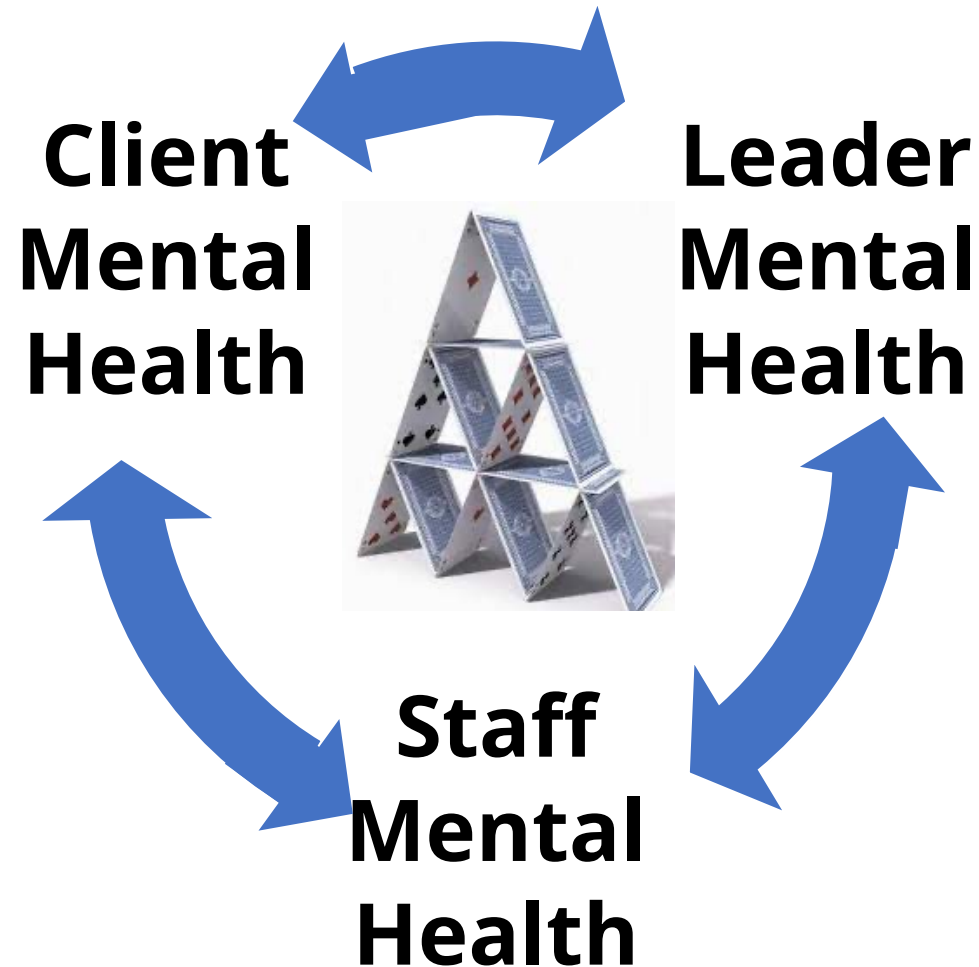
Recognizing the Mental Health Needs
of Direct Support Professionals
An Essential Workforce
2022 Update

camh | Azrieli Adult
Neurodevelopmental Centre

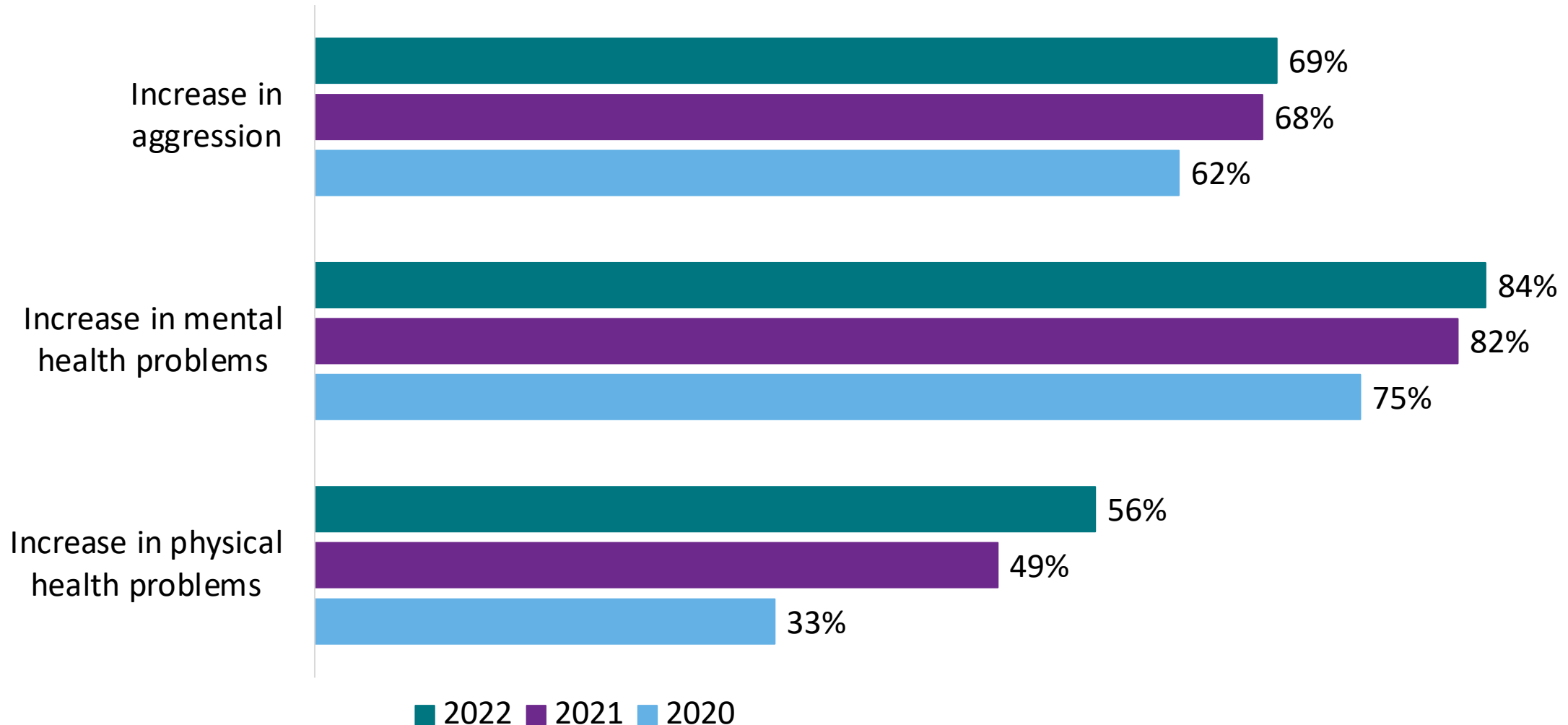
<https://www.camh.ca/en/science-and-research/institutes-and-centres/azrieli-adult-neurodevelopmental-centre/sharing-our-knowledge/recognizing-the-mental-health-needs-of-direct-support-professionals>

Provincial Network on Developmental Services

What are we learning about mental health?



Impact of COVID-19 on the health of people with DD



Summary of DSP Concerns 2022

Reduced fear of getting severely ill from COVID-19

Greater access to friends/family and hobbies

IPAC concerns have shifted (IPAC fatigue, mask issues, differences between staff)

Cumulative grief and loss – “moral distress”

BUT

Continued fear of spreading virus to those they support

Continued concerns about client mental health and service gaps

Continued frustration about job (pay, benefits, hours)

Continued burnout exacerbated by being so short-staffed

Comments suggest many opposing viewpoints

What supports would be most helpful to DSPs

Extra staff coverage (68%) – was 50% last summer

Time off (63%)

Financial compensation (63%)

Return to normal responsibilities (50%)

Increased communication and support from management (49%)

Being able to see family and friends (40%) – was 65% last summer

Having team check ins/peer supports (36%)

Access to health supports/therapies (32%)

Having a safe work environment (32%)

What we are hearing from Leaders

74.5% feel more stressed at work

84.6% agree/strongly agree that they feel supported by their agency

Maintaining social connections (85.7%), engaging in preferred/meaningful activities (82.6%) and practicing self-care (70.7%) highest ranked coping strategies.

Critical concerns continue to include staffing crisis, safety, burnout, workload and information fatigue

What supports would be most helpful to Leaders

Additional staff coverage (73.7%)

Time off (73%)

Financial compensation for additional work (58.7%)

Return to normal responsibilities (56.8%)

*Other: Mental health training for leaders

“Training on how to identify and support staff and management so we can start to heal and support in a supportive manner”

Recommendations from evaluation

1. Continue to **recognize the essential nature of the work** staff do in the sector and the stress involved in working within this new normal.
2. Support the mental health of **all people** involved in the sector by:
 - a) Continuing to promote and invest in targeted, accessible mental health and health promotion interventions.
 - b) Building the capacity of organizations to support a culture of well-being and mental health, which is trauma informed.
 - c) Investing in accessible training that includes mental health tools/resources for DSPs and staff in the sector (college programs & ongoing PD)
 - d) Continuing to learn from staff.

Key Lessons Learned

- There are complex issues facing the sector, including a critical staffing crisis, trauma, grief and loss from COVID-19, and navigating the new normal.
- Like other sectors, the problem of poor mental health is not going away. Staff are continuing to face significant and chronic stress in their roles which impacts their mental health and persons supported have been observed to be suffering as well. EVERYONE IS IMPACTED.
- Cultivating Community Wellness has shown promise as a community-led mental health initiative; however, the next phase of the work needs to focus on 1) attending to the needs of the entire community and 2) outreach, communication, and accessibility.

Community Engagement & Harvest

We need you....

1. What assets do you, your team or your organization that you can lean into (access) to support mental health and well-being?
2. What are the current barriers to supporting mental health and well-being?
3. What do you need to support your mental health and well-being initiatives?
4. How do we get the tools, resources and supports into the hands of the people that need them?

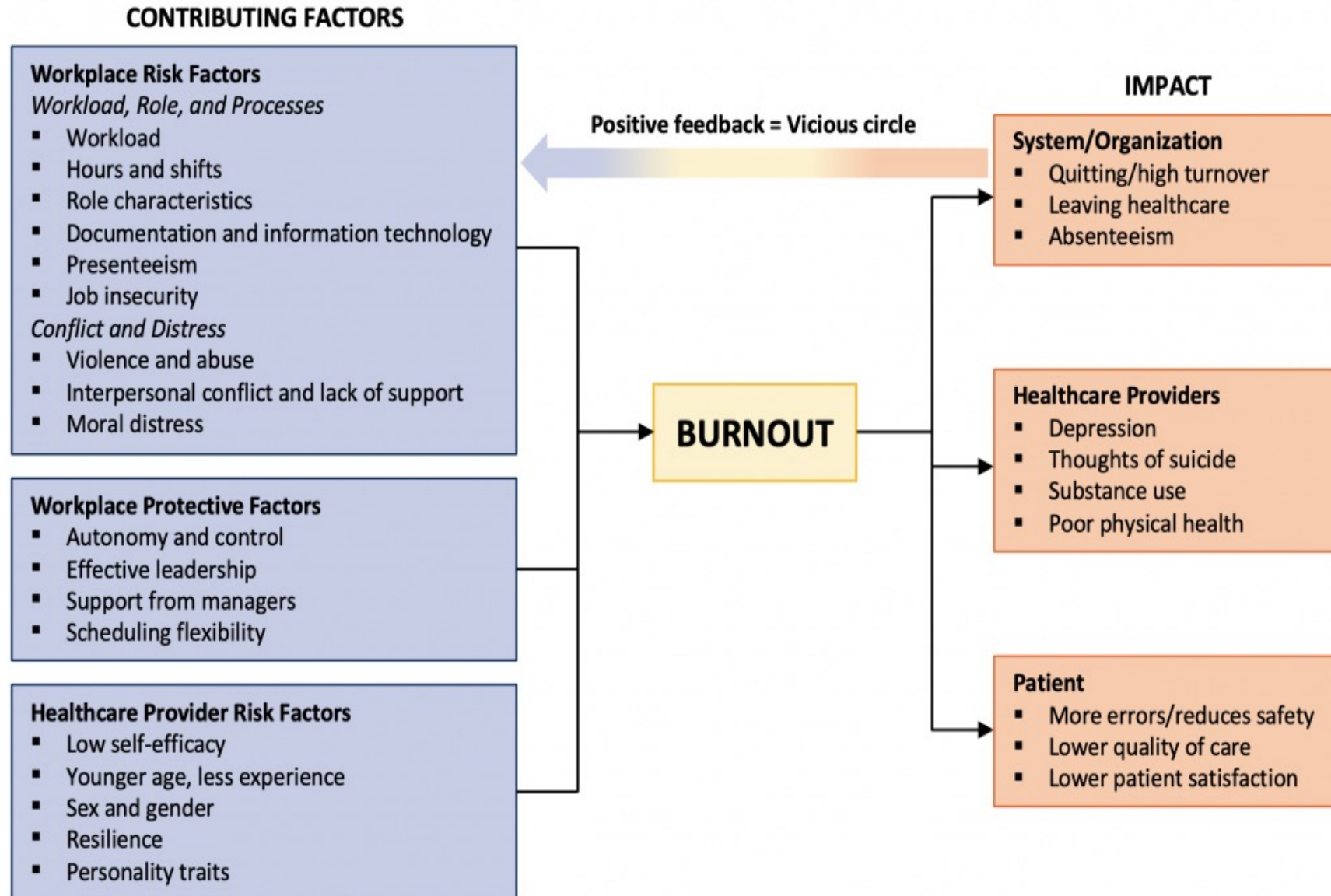


Closing

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Resources: Risk Factors for Burnout



Resources

Papers on mental health in developmental sector during COVID-19

- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jppi.12412> (lit review)
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jar.12892> (Staff study)

Paper on evolving opportunities and challenges in the sector

- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jppi.12414>

Commentary on families and agencies working together

- Families & staff: how to move from competing to complementary perspectives https://www.vitacils.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/volume_4_2.pdf

Provincial reports

- <https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/azrielireport-dsp-covid19-pdf.pdf>
- <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/burnout-in-hospital-based-healthcare-workers-during-covid-19/>
- www.hcarddcovid.com/info and <https://www.ccwellness.ca/>
- @hcardd @yonalunsky, email: hcardd@camh.ca