The Role of Counsellors in Post-Covid-19 Trauma: A Review

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Abstract:
The global epidemic of COVID-19 has caused a slew of cultural changes that will impact our children and youth. Suicide, technology addiction, and school safety are all issues that must be addressed as schools return to normal in the coming months. Organized efforts are required to follow up on student problems. Interventions will also occur during and after the pandemic. As a result, school counsellors must have a good perspective and understanding of the social and emotional impacts caused by COVID-19. The author emphasizes a comprehensive approach to preventing problems that arise after the pandemic as the role of counsellors in providing practical applications. A school's success in assessing mental health requires collaboration from all stakeholders, including teachers, staff, counsellors, and parents. A school counsellor's understanding of the importance of mental health is also a factor. The authors stress the importance of mental health education, school counsellor involvement, and practical applications for preventing social and emotional problems during and after the epidemic.

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is slowly regressing to endemic status (Hsieh et al., 2021). This change demonstrates that we can survive and coexist with a virus that has swept the globe. However, despite the improvement in status, the COVID-19 pandemic left a slew of problems in its wake.

Numerous students' lives are disrupted, and social needs are met during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Students return to face-to-face instruction and require assistance from school counsellors to overcome COVID-19's various disadvantages (Agu, Stewart, McFarlane-Stewart, & Rae, 2021; Karakaya, Adıgüzel, Üçüncü, Çimen, & Yılmaz, 2021). Due to their lack of interaction for an extended period, it is not uncommon for some students to become more aggressive and harass their friends. Forster et al. (2020) established a link between ACE and school-related violence, including the possession or threat of a firearm on campus, bullying, brawls, or vandalism. The findings indicate that people with ACE experience may become obligation or perpetrators of school hardness.

Counsellors play a critical role in evaluating students' necessity and offering treatment to those who believe they may have mental health problems (Cook, Newman, & Simiola, 2019). According to Howell et al. (2019), people with a traumatic history exhibit elevated anxiety levels, poor socialization skills, and poor academic performance. Numerous studies indicate that students who have experienced trauma require mental health services (Goddard, Janicek, & Etcher, 2022; Guo, Li, & Chan, 2022; Kantor, Verginer, Glück, Knefel, & Lueger-Schuster, 2022). Typically, school counsellors can only provide this service during school hours. In addition, the trend toward home study affects the treatment service. Counsellors at schools are responsible for referring people who need treatment to mental health professionals while continuing to provide student encouragement (AlAzzaam, Abuhammad, Abdalrahim, & Hamdan-Mansour, 2021; Karaman, Eşici, Tomar, & Aliyev, 2021; Savitz-Romer, Rowan-Kenyon, Nicola, Alexander, & Carroll, 2021).

1. Trauma's Aftereffects

According to Wan (2020), students who return to school following a prolonged lockdown caused by COVID-19 are more likely to suffer from severe depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide. Wan also stated that 20% of all Americans lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in financial, mental, and family problems. Furthermore, according to Ma & Wang (2021), have a significant impact on parental stress brought on by idleness, monetary problem, and people with emotional matters brought on by household tension.

Professionals are well aware that many students will return to school following a lengthy period of lockdown due to COVID-19, bringing with them the pressure to experience a variety of problems as a result of witnessing specific Unwanted Childhood Experiences (ACE), such as sexual, emotion, or physical harshness (Mensinger et al., 2022; Schauss et al., 2019; Waseem et al., 2021). numerous studies have demonstrated that ACE has a significant effect on the development of adolescent struggles. Counsellors have also witnessed numerous children bring this experience to school, where they are blocked and exhibit aggressive and violent behaviour. Perndorfer et al. (2018) discovered that violence positively impacted the aetiology of adolescent sexual abuse involvement. Ghanem (2021) discovered a link between ACE and school violence, such as gun threats, bullying behaviour, scuffling, or vitiation.
According to research, adolescents with ACE experience are more likely to become victims or even perpetrators of school violence.

Counsellors in schools and PK-12 settings play a critical role in assessing and meeting the needs of children (A. Cerrito & Joseph Behun, 2021; Eckhoff & Goodman-Scott, 2021; Yuniati & Sitinjak, 2022; Lade, Chib, Karangutkar & Jha, 2021). According to Velikonja et al. (2021), children who have experienced trauma significantly impact their social skills and academic performance. Due to regulations requiring people to remain at home during COVID-19, the system provides a dearth of mental health care. Peruvian school counsellors made a concerted effort to refer them (problem students) to counsellors while continuing to help them in the classroom (Education, Journal, Education, Volume, & Education, 2019).

2. Intervention and prevention screening

School counsellors have the potential to prevent or reduce anxiety and depression symptoms and earlier medication use by combining early intervention and reassurance measures such as the ACE, Generalized Anxiety Disorder-Seven Item Scale (GAD-7), Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral Treatment (SBIRT), and the School Rejection Assessment Scale. A set of questions (ACE) will assist schools in identifying chronic traumatic or even chronic events that may impact a student's academic performance, behaviour, social and emotional coexistence, and academic performance (Bodily, 2021; Geng, Chai, Jong, & Luk, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Lyu, Zhang, Sulem, & Roth, 2021). The instrument can be used to determine whether a child has been exposed to ten distinct types of childhood trauma. It should not be altered during a debate. Comparisons to previous research are necessary.

GAD-7 is a self-administered application constructed to promote detecting and diagnosing possible GAD symptoms. While the GAD-7 is widely used, Karaman et al. (2021) recommend that schools prioritize implementing anxiety assessments that are simple to administer in a school location, like the Beck Anxiety Inventory for Youth, the Self-Report for Childhood Anxiety-Related Emotional Disorders, The Spence Children's Anxiety Scale, the Behavioral Assessment Rule for Children's Second Addition, and The Child Behavior List.

SBIRT is a research-based and discouraging substance abuse assessment tool that schools can use to identify children and adolescents with a proclivity for alcohol use and drug misuses such as narcotics and others (McCall et al., 2022). SBIRT consists of several primary components: (a) screening, (b) brief intervention, and (c) referral to therapy. A professional school counsellor can assist with all three components.

Separation anxiety is another issue with quarantine and constant contact with parents. The scale of school rejection assessment is a collection of ten-minute self-reporting questions for children aged five and up (Koçak, Koçak, & Younis, 2021; Sitinjak, 2015; North, Sorg, Youn, & Chu, 2021). This question device serves four purposes: (a) inciting stimuli that result in decreased efficiency, (b) evading unpleasant social and evaluative situations, (c) attracting attention, and (d) genuine appreciation. As a preventative measure, this screening tool can assist the school in determining all possible reasons for the child's non-attendance. Additionally, parents can complete a questionnaire to ascertain their child's
frequency of experiencing emotions and behaviours associated with school attendance.

When students return to school following the COVID-19 lockdown period, screening tools can provide school leaders, teachers, and parents with a wealth of information about the trauma and emotional, mental, and academic distress that students are likely to experience during the pandemic. As a result, schools must make screening tools available to students and use them. To provide mental health counselling, school counsellors must be skilled at assisting students' social and emotional needs. Identifying problems associated with psychological distress enables school counsellors to provide appropriate and timely interventions, such as referrals to mental health professionals, to help students avoid or alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression, which can result in suicidal thoughts (Perndorfer et al., 2018; Sitinjak, 2016).

3. Suicide

Have a strong relationship between the stress caused by natural disasters and the high rate of suicide (Fitzpatrick, 2021; Hyeonseon & WANG, 2013; Sitinjak & Hurriyati, 2022; Wood et al., 2021). For example, the country's suicide rate increased 41% in the six months following the 2015 earthquake (Aoki et al., 2014). This lays the groundwork for schools to pay extra attention to students and develop suicide prevention strategies for at-risk students following the COVID-19 pandemic.

School counsellors are uniquely qualified to educate students and stakeholders about the risk and warning signs of suicide, to exert influence within the school to care for suicidal students, and to provide referrals to those at high risk of suicide (Chen & Chen, 2021; Kwon, 2021). Suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, so this is a severe problem (Maizel, 2021; Manalu & Sitinjak, 2022). Since 2016 (Morris, Wester, Jones, & Fantahun, 2021), there has been an increase in suicide deaths among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years; in this case, adolescent boys are at a greater risk of suicide than adolescent girls. However, it was later discovered that the suicide rate among adolescent females is increasing at an alarming rate (Mirick et al., 2019). According to the CDC, female suicides more than doubled between 2005 and 2015.

According to a survey conducted by Hetrick et al. (2021), the suicide rate among adolescents increased by 52% between 2015 and 2017. Several studies shed light on the causes of rising suicide rates among adolescents due to the popularity of social media, which has an effect on depressive symptoms and can result in suicidal behaviour in adolescents (Stickl Haugen, Waalkes, & Lambie, 2021). Mental health problems in schools due to pandemics can be severe when combined with social media issues, as social media easily influence adolescent students. Counsellors in schools are critical in reducing suicidal tendencies in students through education and prevention (Becnel, Range, & Remley, Jr., 2021; Levkovitch & Vigdor, 2021).

4. Addiction to social media

Parents relaxed smartphone rules against their children when they first decided to study at home. During the pandemic, they used the internet to access media and video at home. Until mid-April 2020, Birkenkrahe (2022) reported a 45% increase in the use of online games, TikTok. Snapchat, for example, saw a 50% increase in video calls and a 25% increase in usage time (Párraga Chávez & Vite León, 2022)). Because of the prevalence of social media, people are becoming addicted to technology (Barr &

5. School security

Schools are the first stop for children with behavioural and academic issues. Parents, teachers, and administrators are concerned about school safety (Álvarez-Guerrero, López de Aguilera, Racionero-Plaza, & Flores-Moncada, 2021; Eugene, Alpert, Lieberman-Cribbin, & Taioli, 2021; Wakui et al., 2021). COVID-19 issues like masks versus no masks present varying political and regulatory perspectives. Concerns about the coronavirus's impact on education can lead to classroom laxity. ACE-affected students can become violent, necessitating a school safety plan involving school officials, counsellors, community members, and government partners.

A pleasant school environment is defined by mutual trust between school counsellors and students, staff, and management. The trust built leads to excellent communication, which helps reduce school violence. Studies show that students perform better at ease and feel part of their social environment (Hino, Ikeda, Sadahiro, & Inoue, 2021). The essential factors in adolescent success are supportive school environments with responsive counselling services. A school should be able to provide students with safety and peace. Thus, school counsellors aim to improve student mental health by increasing knowledge and empathy, reducing unpleasant school experiences, and fostering a positive school climate.

6. School counsellors are trained in mental health issues

COVID-19-related issues will arise during both the pandemic and the endemic transition. When school resumes, these issues will affect students, staff, and the community. School counsellors must address this pandemic. School counsellors should be trained in systematic and individual crisis management (Craddock et al., 2021; Page, 2021; Techo & Chawengchinnawong, 2021). Following COVID-19, school counsellors should have received training from ASCA, CACREP, and the Accreditation Board of Education Programs to deal with current and future concerns. A school counsellor's training includes human growth and development, multiculturalism, assessment for diagnostics and interventions, group counselling, theory, and techniques (Borders, Wester, Fickling, & Adamson, 2014; Urofsky, 2013). This training is required for school counsellors to address students' academic, career, and social/emotional needs and to positively impact student achievement, attendance, and behaviour (Addy, Agbozo, Runge-Ranzinger, & Greys, 2021).

School counsellors must help students deal with issues such as substance abuse, mental health, and peer and family violence. In addition, teenage pregnancy, suicide, divorce, and the economy are all issues that school counsellors must consider. Students also raised issues of sex (lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) and bullying. When students return to school, school counsellors must be ready to address
any issues that may arise due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role of school counsellors, even though they do not have the authority to make educational decisions, is critical in preparing children for academic, social/emotional, and career success. Student's social and emotional needs are also addressed by school counsellors, who are responsible for ensuring that student's mental health is maintained at school.

7. The Role of the School Counselor

School counsellors provide mental health services and help students with social and emotional issues (Springer, Paone, Colucci, & Moss, 2020). School counsellors are frequently the only mental health providers students can see to identify, manage, and intervene. In addition, school counsellors have acted as mediators between schools, teachers, and parents (Addy et al., 2021; Borders et al., 2014; Springer et al., 2020; Urofsky, 2013). Before the pandemic, school counsellors focused on students' mental health issues (Steele et al., 2022).

Following months of learning from home, school administrators and counsellors must now develop student support to overcome mental and physical health issues and low academic retention rates. In addition to school counselling activities, counsellors must be trained to address students' mental health and socio-emotional needs (Havlik, Malott, Yee, DeRosato, & Crawford, 2019). Lade et al. (2021) claim that many school counsellors cannot effectively serve students due to non-counselling tasks.

Work assignments and coordination can prevent school counsellors from providing crisis intervention and advocacy for students. School counsellors must be prepared to assist students needing mental health services after returning to school. School counsellors can help improve the school climate by encouraging students and providing school counselling services.

School counsellors can help children learn to manage their emotions in stressful situations. Counsellor-led group work with students can reduce bullying and boost self-esteem in students with alcohol use issues. Anxiety can be reduced while academic performance improves in kids (Agran & Hughes, 2008; Brown, 2018). School counsellors are trained to foster self-confidence and actively unite children to reduce the number of mental health crises caused by pandemics.

8. Direct Student Services and Applications

School counsellors use various tools to reduce learning crises (Fung, 2011; Garrick & Williams, 2014). School counsellors can collaborate with all stakeholders to develop crisis prevention and intervention plans. School counsellors are not expected to provide long-term therapy in schools but rather empirical therapy through individual and group counselling to help those who have been through difficult situations and teach them how to cope.

School counsellors can help with mental health issues by developing MTSS (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015). MTSS includes teaching, assessment, counselling, and advice. Assessment and advising are vital in helping students achieve their academic and postsecondary goals. However, classroom instruction and counselling will be critical in dealing with social and emotional needs arising from the COVID-19 incident.
Individuals rather than problems can be the focus of counselling. This method is suitable for primary and secondary students. Relapse therapy can help children learn self-control and can be used with middle and high school students (Oberman & Studer, 2020). Direct copying and strategy statements can be used in CBT to promote positive thinking and behaviour while reducing irrational thinking and, thus, unhealthy outcomes. This program treats anxiety disorders in children and adolescents (Soares & Woods, 2021; Yeo, Goh, & Liem, 2016). This strategy can be used for individual and small-group counselling and classroom teaching.

Comprehensive school counselling programs and good school principals can help students' social, academic, and behavioural performance (Goodman-Scott & Grothaus, 2018). This program can also help create a safer school environment for students (Gettings et al., 2021; González et al., 2022; Varma, 2021), improve school climate, and address general mental health concerns (Lelubre et al., 2016).

9. Conclusion

This pandemic left many children and adolescents traumatized by social isolation and negative home experiences, leading to increased mental health issues. Inaction may lead to increased stress, suicide, social media addiction, and security cases. As a result of this issue, schools are preparing various ways to deal with the COVID-19 epidemic. Schools must devise and implement effective emotional and social development programs. School counsellors should be trained in human development, group counselling, and counselling theory and procedures to help children in need.

School counsellors are also taught to be servant leaders by advocating for and promoting change. As a result, school counsellors must create a plan to help children get back on track academically and recognize that the school counsellor is the primary key to students' academic success.

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