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Where to from Here? Contemplating the Impact of COVID-19 on South African Students and Student Counseling Services in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented magnitude and effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have rendered it a highly disruptive and traumatic phenomenon. This paper considers the impact of Covid-19 on South African students and Student Counseling Services in Higher Education. The paper specifically reflects on shifts in student mental health and psycho-social vulnerability as a consequence of the pandemic, and the increased demand for the student counselor advocacy role. The inevitable need for technological shifts to traditional student counseling practice is considered, as well as the transformational dilemma or “double-edged sword” inherent in such change, given the historical, psycho-social, and economic complexities of South African society which impact on student access and participation in Higher Education. The paper lastly considers the adoption of a customized or “blended” student counseling approach that incorporates traditional and technological-based elements, and that can accommodate student personal and mental health needs, preferences as well as contextual peculiarities and challenges.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19 pandemic; student mental health; psycho-social vulnerability; student counselor advocacy; “blended” approach

Introduction

The emergence and escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 has impacted on all areas of human life and activity globally. Academic, social, sporting, recreational, physical, religious/spiritual, and economic spheres have been subject to intense scrutiny and regulation as the world grapples with ways to effectively respond to the challenge. In March 2020, South Africa implemented strict social distancing and other safety regulations as the country entered an official lockdown period (Disaster Management Act 2002, (2020), Government Gazette No. 43107 of 18 March 2020; Disaster Management Act 2002, (2020), Government Gazette No. 43148 of 25 March 2020). The resultant closure of all South African higher education institutions and suspension of the academic calendar prompted institutional shifts to online teaching and learning in an effort to promote recovery and continuity

of the academic program. Such action was met with mixed responses, provoking discussion and debate about the readiness of South African institutions to effectively respond to the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on teaching and learning practices. In particular, concerns have been raised about the extent to which virtual shifts in teaching and learning practices are contextually relevant and student-centered, given that the vast majority of students in Higher Education are¹ Black South Africans, with those racially classified as African being particularly disadvantaged because of their poverty-stricken backgrounds.

Epidemiological projections of the COVID-19 crisis as a protracted life-and-death battle have proved accurate in the past few months both locally and globally. This, in turn, has impacted student academic functioning, mental health and psycho-social well-being, while also compelling Student Counseling Services to revisit issues of service accessibility and the nature of student needs during this time of unprecedented disruption, uncertainty, and stress. While this paper focuses specifically on the impact of the pandemic on South African students in Higher Education and Student Counseling Services responses thereto, the inherent psycho-social and socio-economic disparities characteristic of South African society and African people in particular, inevitably slants the focus toward the plight of vulnerable, disadvantaged Black students whose challenges and needs have become more pronounced. Furthermore, this paper considers the increased demand for Student Counseling continuity as the pandemic takes its toll on student wellbeing and academic success; the implementation of technology-based mental health support as an inevitable reality in South African Higher Education and the transformative implications of COVID-19 for Student Counseling Services in South Africa.

Student Counseling Services in context

South African Student Counseling Services has a dynamic and complex history that has been shaped by the broader socio-political context within which the service and Higher Education as a whole, is embedded. The country's apartheid legacy of racial oppression and discrimination perpetuated a wide range of political, socio-economic, and educational inequalities which continue to affect subsequent generations of Black people, including current students in need of Student Counseling Services (Naidoo, 2016; Naidoo & Cartwright, 2018). These factors all serve to hamper equitable utilization of transformative opportunities offered by Higher Education in a post-apartheid era. Student Counseling Services, in its current form, is meant to intervene in ways that address various forms of inequality, including racism, sexism, classism, and trauma-related consequences (Smith, Baluch, Bernabei, Robohm, & Sheehy, 2003). Student Counseling Services therefore seeks to

reflect and advance a social justice orientation that is cognizant of how broader social inequalities and oppression impact student academic performance, mental health, and career readiness post-graduation

South African students are a racially and ethnically diverse community, classified into the racial categories of “African,” “Colored,” “Indian,” and “White.” The concept of “Black South African” encompasses “Africans,” “Colored,” and “Indian.” In addition, a smaller segment of the student population consists of foreign or international students from neighboring African countries as well as abroad. South African students, in general, present with a range of academic, mental health and psycho-social issues that include mood and anxiety-related disorders; psychotic disorders, substance abuse, and dependence; issues pertaining to identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and discrimination; HIV/Aids, bereavement, relationship, and family challenges; peer pressure; historical and current trauma relating to crime and gender-based violence (Bantjes et al., 2019; 2020; Naidoo, 2016; Naidoo & Cartwright, 2018; Van Breda, 2017).

Additionally, particular difficulties inherent to historically disadvantaged African students are socio-economic and psycho-social in nature, ranging from a lack of funds to study and reliance on government aid such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), food insecurity and accommodation difficulties, transport challenges, and overall poor living conditions characterized by absent or inadequate basic services and resources as well as high crime rates. Career confusion and dissatisfaction amongst students is also noted, and is often linked to the lack of appropriate career guidance and support at school level, especially amongst schools in Black rural and disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, pressures to attend university amongst first-generation African students tend to be largely driven by poverty-related concerns, with education viewed as the route to economic emancipation and an opportunity to support one’s extended family, as opposed to choosing a career based on intrinsic preferences, interests, and capability.

Socio-economic challenges also increase young Black females’ vulnerability to high-risk, exploitative sexual practices in an effort to support themselves, their families, and their studies. As such, young female students are at an increased risk for human trafficking, sexual exploitation, HIV/Aids infections, as well as GBV, particularly in the context of Covid-19 and its effect on the economy and unemployment. The rise in incidents of gender-based violence across the country, confirmed by the South African government (Seleka, 2020), reinforces the link between economic inequalities and oppression of vulnerable and marginalized groups in South African society.

Impact of COVID-19 on South African students

Current challenges experienced by South African society, including Higher Education institutions, may be seen as existing on a continuum. The pandemic has intensified existing social and economic inequalities amongst vulnerable and marginalized groups while also posing *new* social, academic, and mental health adjustment challenges. Although still subject to ongoing research verification, these require a comprehensive, multi-layered response from Higher Education stakeholders, including Student Counseling Services.

Pressures from teaching and learning transformation

Higher Education's rapid, abrupt shifts to E-learning platforms in South Africa as a consequence of COVID-19, has been a challenging and disruptive process for both students and staff. All parties continue to negotiate various levels of unpreparedness and success through a staggered, trial-and-error process of implementation. Effective participation in E-learning platforms requires a combination of access to technological resources such as laptops, desktops, smartphones, and internet connectivity which many South African students, especially African students from disadvantaged communities, lack. In addition, appropriate training of staff and students in the use of technology platforms is a prerequisite to meaningful academic engagement. While the South African government and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) committed to facilitating a speedy distribution of laptops to needy students when institutions closed in compliance with lockdown regulations, the laptop procurement and distribution process has been a complicated and contentious issue. This has resulted in many students lagging behind in respect of online academic participation which ultimately affects test and exam performance.

While strides have been made in terms of approving zero-rated data charges on E-learning materials and provision of data bundles specifically for teaching, learning, and academic support purposes, delays in allocation and access to such resources continue to disadvantage and compromise the academic progress of needy students. Furthermore, geographical location has been a significant obstacle for students living in rural areas who received data bundles, but experience connectivity problems because of location. Students lacking internet access are also struggling to keep abreast of pertinent government and institutional updates, often relying on fake and misleading information that exacerbates their fears and anxieties.

In light of the above, pandemic-related changes to living and learning have aroused a myriad of negative emotional states and adjustment challenges amongst students, including a sense of being overwhelmed by academic

demands, fear, frustration, anger, disappointment and despair at the lack of adequate technology support and skills capacitation necessary to negotiate the shift to online teaching and learning.

COVID-19 and Student Mental Health

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2019), outbreaks of infectious diseases can be highly stressful for individuals, exacerbating preexisting mental health conditions, while predisposing others to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional changes such as health-related fears and concerns for oneself and loved ones. The emotional and psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly traumatic and distressing given its abrupt onset, novel nature, and potentially fatal consequences, as well as the myriad of personal and material losses engendered by severe socio-economic disruptions. These need to be considered within the broader context of South African student realities, which are elaborated on below.

Multiple stressors: trauma & loss

South African students, in general, encounter multiple stressors on a daily basis, which are both historical and contemporary in nature; these have the capacity to emotionally drain student coping resources and compromise resilience on both an academic and personal level. Given South Africa's history of politically motivated violence and trauma during apartheid, coupled with reports of escalating crime, violence and loss of life in a democratic era, it is reasonable to assume that trauma has become an entrenched part of South African daily life. As Kaminer and Eagle (2001) point out, "... very few South Africans live lives completely untouched by trauma and, for many, exposure to potentially traumatic experiences is an inescapable part of daily life" (p. 8–9). In addition, pandemic-related job losses compound the risk of financial hardship, giving rise to food insecurity, economic and violent crimes, as well as escalations in domestic violence. The devastating, multiple repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic therefore represent additional traumatic stressors which South African communities – students included, have to cope with on an ongoing basis.

Given the protracted and indefinite nature of COVID-19, Student Counseling practitioners therefore need to be cognizant of historical and current trauma-related effects on student well-being and a possible exacerbation of pre-morbid conditions such as depression, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, self-injurious behaviors, regressive coping styles, psychotic states, and substance abuse. Elevated levels of anxiety and anxiety-related disorders have been noted across the globe and are also impacting preexisting mental health issues amongst the South African student population. Student

Counseling practitioners also have to be mindful of an exacerbation of OCD symptoms, given the health and safety risks of transmission associated with COVID-19 and related hygiene practices (Banerjee, 2020).

There are, of course, South African students who have been more directly affected by COVID either through infection or the loss of a loved one and corresponding bereavement complications. Students are increasingly seeking support from Student Counseling practitioners for trauma, loss and bereavement, disrupted social support systems, financial stress, food insecurity, and related stressors. Disruptions to academic activity as a result of personal or family-related illness and death have also been noted, leading to an increase in referrals for counseling and psychotherapeutic interventions, as well as student counselor advocacy and support for academic concessions.

Impact on student independence and personal aspirations

Residing in student accommodation during the semester brings with it a measure of autonomy and independence which, for many students, is a rite of passage signifying their transition into adulthood. The abrupt shut-down of higher education institutions and confinement of students to their homes under national lockdown regulations, represented a profound loss of freedom and autonomy for South African students. Domestic confinement has been particularly challenging for students living in impoverished families and communities, with homes characterized by poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and severe spatial constraints where privacy and opportunities for studying and relaxation are limited. Domestic confinement left many students feeling resentful, frustrated, and overwhelmed as they struggled to juggle online academic demands and domestic chores with the roles of “parent”/“caretaker” to their younger siblings and elderly family members.

The nationwide cancellation of university graduation ceremonies and its replacement with virtual graduation ceremonies and digital certificates, is an unprecedented reality for Higher Education and students at large. African identity and interpersonal relationships are deeply rooted in what I have referred to elsewhere (Naidoo, 2016) as the “relational self,” where one’s existence is indelibly connected to one’s family and extended social networks and systems. This is exemplified in the African cultural concepts and principles of ubuntu and *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Mkhize, 2013, p. 76). For first-generation African students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, the graduation ceremony signifies the triumph of the disadvantaged over historical oppression and generational adversity, while also offering economic and social emancipation for the individual and extended support system. The cancellation of traditional ceremonies has therefore been met with profound disappointment and sense of loss for many students, their families, and communities at large.

Challenges to self-management and self-regulation

Literature highlights the significant link between effective time management, self-regulation, and academic success (Hensley, Wolters, Won & Brady, 2018; Thibodeaux, Deutsch, Kitsantas & Winsler, 2016; Zhou & Wang, 2019). Daily social and academic routines provide students with a sense of structure, predictability, and safety. Structure and routine also guide planning, goal-setting and decision-making, motivation, and productivity levels. Given the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on students' daily routines, the emergence and intensification of difficulties with time management, goal-setting and self-regulation amongst students, has been noted. Student Counseling practitioners therefore need to capacitate and enhance student skills in such areas for those studying online as well as students negotiating the transition back to campus.

Uncertainty stress

The disruption, anxiety and uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the absence of a vaccine or cure at present, resonates with the notion of “uncertainty stress” explored by researchers such as Wu et al. (2020). Wu et al. (2020) cite Scholz’s (1983) definition of uncertainty as “incomplete information or knowledge about a situation, or the possible alternatives or the probability of their occurrence, their outcomes are not known by the subjects” (p. 243). South African students are fearful and apprehensive about the potentially disruptive short-term and long-term effect of the pandemic on their course completion, graduation and future employment prospects.

These concerns are especially pronounced amongst South African students from impoverished backgrounds, whose academic and career aspirations are informed by broader psycho-social pressures to find employment and alleviate the burdens of poverty and material hardship endured by their families and broader social support system. As a consequence, career confusion, uncertainty, and ambivalence about academic and career choices made, are additional dilemmas which South African students are currently grappling with. This is compounded by a generalized apprehension about “the unknown” – in essence, subjective uncertainties commensurate with that of “uncertainty stress.”

Implications for Student Counseling Practice

Extending the virtual reach

Aside from universities offering remote teaching, learning and student support options, traditional, face-to-face interaction has been the norm for tertiary institutions thus far. As institutions of higher learning evince a greater reliance on virtual teaching and learning platforms in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for fundamental shifts in how Student Counseling

Services is conceptualized and delivered, has become increasingly apparent. The increased need for virtual shifts in Student Counseling practice furthermore resonates with global² technology-based changes to mental health services, otherwise known as Telemental Health, which have accelerated since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Telemental Health has been widely used across populations, clinical populations and with a range of mental health conditions (Whaibeh, Mahmoud, & Naal, 2020). Online activities vary in form and purpose, and include online counseling and psychotherapy, the use of psychoeducational websites, online support groups, self-help interventions and career assessment and guidance services (Barak & Grohol, 2011; Rummell & Joyce, 2010; Tirel, Rozgonjuk, Purre, & Elhai, 2019).

Practical, social and therapeutic benefits of using technology-based mental health are widely documented (e.g. Barrable, Papadatou-Pastou, & Tzotzoli, 2018; Chester & Glass, 2006; Harris & Birnbaum, 2014; Higher Education Mental Health Alliance (HEMHA), 2019; Langarizadeh et al., 2017; Lau, Jaladin, & Abdullah, 2013; Nobleza et al., 2019; Richards & Vigarno, 2013). These include increased access, convenience, and removal of barriers associated with face-to-face, physical interaction (HEMHA, 2019; Langarizadeh et al., 2017; Lau et al., 2013; Richards, 2009). Such benefits are deemed particularly useful for under-represented and marginalized groups such as individuals with disabilities (e.g. deaf students) (Crowe, 2017), individuals living in remote areas, and individuals with trauma and anxiety-related conditions such as social anxiety and agoraphobia (HEMHA, 2019; Shealy, Davidson, Jones, Lopez, & de Arellano, 2015).

Virtual Student Counseling Services: A double-edged sword in the South African context

Yuen (2010) asserts that “ICT implementation in higher education is not a simple technological adoption, but involves the consideration of a number of issues, such as infrastructure, pedagogical practices, obstacles, student learning, organizational culture, organizational structures, operational strategies, and appropriate policies” (p.624). The same cautionary sentiment can apply to online shifts to student counseling practice in South Africa. Although the implementation of online Student Counseling services in the context of COVID-19 might, on the surface, appear to be a more accessible and suitable alternative to face-to-face interaction, the extent to which South African Student Counseling units are able to operate virtually, varies from institution to institution.

What the Covid-19 pandemic appears to have exposed are lingering inequalities between Historically White institutions that continue to be well funded and resourced, and Historically Black institutions, whose legacy of marginalization and neglect continue to manifest in fiscal, resource and

infrastructure constraints. As a result, the challenges of being a Student Counseling service provider in a Historically Black, disadvantaged institution have become more pronounced in the context of the pandemic, where swift contingency responses are reliant on secure and sound institutional funding and support. Institutional and student readiness to embrace online Student Counseling approaches is therefore debatable, given the range of professional, resource, training, and interpersonal implications that can pose challenges to implementation and sustainability in the South African student counseling context.

The procurement and maintenance of technology devices and software, as well as staff training and support in technology application, has financial implications which may be an obstacle for Student Counseling centers with limited departmental and institutional budgets (Nobleza et al., 2019). Access to online student counseling interventions such as video conferencing, e-mail, text messages, chat tools, and telephonic counseling also pose a challenge to financially needy students who depend on airtime and internet connectivity. Affordability and cost-effectiveness of different technology options therefore need to be carefully considered so as to avoid excluding and reinforcing the socio-economic inequalities of disadvantaged students who need Student Counseling services. In addition, use of online platforms continues to be a challenge for student counselors where airtime and internet connectivity costs have not been factored into institutional and departmental budgets, and consequently have to be borne from counselors' personal finances.

Students inexperienced in the use of online mental health interventions may be skeptical and reluctant to participate in virtual counseling platforms. Lack of student consultation on technology-based shifts to student counseling can further hamper student "buy-in," especially if changes implemented are construed by students as incompatible with their socio-economic and personal situations. As such, student attitudes, perceptions, and conversancy with online Student Counseling interventions, as well as preferences regarding traditional face-to-face practices versus online platforms, need to be empirically investigated by means of student opinion surveys and qualitative, exploratory interviews. In addition, one needs to take cognizance of how student counselors have viewed the need for change to their existing student counseling approaches, and how they have responded to this demand, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is currently a dearth of research focusing on the impact of Covid-19 on South African student counselors' experiences of working online. It is therefore imperative that student counseling staff be continuously engaged on the issue from both a research and best practices perspective.

Ethical, legal, practical, and therapeutic risks associated with technology-based interventions include possible breach of privacy and confidentiality through data interception (HEMHA, 2019). Furthermore, client

preoccupation with possible third party interception during online counseling can hamper authentic and meaningful engagement in the process. As such, strict adherence to cyber security standards is necessary (HEMHA, 2019), as well as ongoing monitoring and timeous upgrading of measures. Adequate staff and student training on the practicalities of online counseling as well as the ethical and legal risks associated with online student counseling interventions, and strategies to minimize these risks, is essential. Furthermore, students who evince particular concerns and anxiety around confidentiality breaches may be more open to using alternative methods such as e-mail and text, telephonic and face-to-face counseling, as well as online self-help resources. In light of these issues, the adoption of a blended approach to student counseling practice that combines traditional, face-to-face interaction with technology-based interventions, is an important consideration.

A blended approach to South African Student Counseling Services

The introduction of a phased approach to institutional re-opening, announced by the Minister of Higher Education on 23 May 2020, permitted postgraduate students, final-year students and those requiring practical resources and training, to return to their institutions (Nzimande, 2020). As remaining student cohorts are gradually permitted back onto campuses, Student Counseling Services needs to diversify its approach in order to accommodate the needs of students who continue to study online as well as those studying on campus. The necessity for an eclectic or blended approach comprising face-to-face and online student counseling interaction, is inevitable. The former approach introduces novel personal, safety and practical requirements for both students and student counselors, including the need for strict adherence to social distancing regulations, sanitization practices and the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) during counseling, therapeutic and group work physical encounters.

Counseling and therapeutic decision-making needs to be guided by the student (s) unique mental health profile, needs, and preferences, as well student and student counselor health status and underlying co-morbidities. Practical considerations that one also needs to be cognizant of include the degree of comfort when wearing PPE's for an extended period of time in an enclosed, private setting; ease of communication and detection of important physical and non-verbal cues from the client while wearing PPE's, as well as the presence of noise and other distractions arising from open windows necessary for adequate ventilation. Student counselor attitudes and concerns about face-to-face and online counseling are also important considerations as these can potentially affect student counselor therapeutic engagement, productivity, work satisfaction, and overall wellness.

The implementation of online student counseling workshops via Zoom Chat sessions and MS Teams meeting platforms, increases student access to relevant material, but may compromise the authenticity of the group process and outcomes. Student counselors can also expand students' access to generic mental health self-help materials via YouTube videos, webinars, and podcasts. SMS call-back options and toll-free Student Counseling hotlines also need to be explored for all students who, due to financial challenges, are unable to call Student Counseling Services for support. Transmission of online self-help student counseling resources via zero-rated data E-learning platforms, i.e., Blackboard and Moodle, further ensures that Student Counseling support remains available to students irrespective of physical and financial circumstances.

Student counselor innovation and partnerships are also recommended in cases where students may have access to data bundles or Wi-Fi, but reside in remote geographical locations or university residences where internet connectivity and signal is poor. This necessitates partnership-building and collaboration between Student Counseling Services, government departments such as the Department of Health (Psychology and Psychiatry clinics), Department of Social Development, and community-based organizations. Paper-based delivery of student counseling resource packs to students via postal and courier services, also help bridge the gap between students in remote areas, and Student Counseling Services. Such packs could comprise a range of self-help materials, as well as information on community-based service providers in the student's area, whom they could contact for emergencies and continuity of care. Follow-up communications between Student Counseling and community-based service providers listed in the resource pack, can then be facilitated via online, multi-disciplinary "communities of practice" using videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom, Skype or MS Teams options.

Reappraisal of Student Counselor roles and relationships in Higher Education

The far-reaching effects of Covid-19 on South African students draw attention to the importance of holistic student support in managing both current, short-term adjustment issues as well as long-term implications posed by the pandemic. Student counselors' contextual appreciation of South African student realities and their unique relationship with the student community, ideally position them to assume a broader student advocacy and institutional advisory role in Higher Education that goes beyond traditional counseling and psychotherapy. South African Student Counselors can be instrumental in highlighting systemic barriers to student adjustment and success which require institutional sensitivity and decisive action in the form of policy development and reprioritization of funding in areas such as psychosocial support,

technology and connectivity resources, student housing, food security, health, and safety. This necessitates Student Counseling partnerships with various institutional and external stakeholders.

The exacerbation of food insecurity amongst vulnerable South African students as a consequence of delayed meal allowance payments and increased unemployment amongst student support systems, necessitates Student Counseling engagement with institutional management, student leadership structures and departments such as Student Funding, Marketing and Communications/Public Relations, Social Work and Agriculture, to explore responsive and proactive options to this psycho-social crisis. Priority areas for consideration need to include the formalization of institutional food insecurity assessment procedures, response protocol and distribution logistics such as food vouchers, food parcels, and donations from external sponsors. Developing Memorandums of Understanding (MoU's) with external stakeholders in the public and private sector, are also worthy avenues for exploration.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the surge in GBV-related incidents across South African represents a national crisis. Given that student experiences are indelibly connected to broader social systems, the GBV scourge highlights the important social justice role that South African student counselors can assume to support and empower the student community. Multi-disciplinary partnerships between Student Counseling, student leadership, external law enforcement and the justice system, is essential. Priority areas need to include GBV awareness on campus and in residences, improving institutional reporting protocol and response mechanisms such as a user-friendly SMS callback option and GBV reporting app that is directly linked to campus security and can be downloaded onto students' cellphones (e.g. Campus Communications, University of Cape Town, 2019).

Conclusion

This article offers a reflective account of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on South African students and Student Counseling Services in Higher Education, with a focus on the transformative potential of the pandemic to impact student mental health profiles, student counselor roles, approaches, and practices. The paper draws attention to the mounting need to make teaching, learning and student counseling services accessible to South African students in a manner that promotes academic recovery and continuity, as well as holistic student adjustment and well-being.

This paper has explored how past and current inequalities impact the South African student population in particular ways. Secondly, we have considered the impact that this has for South African Student Counseling Services, and recommend a reflexive response that calls for diversification and expansion of

student counseling roles, functions and approaches. Such a shift necessitates greater student advocacy, systemic engagement and multi-disciplinary collaboration in response to systemic pressures and constraints on students. At the core of such change is the provision of an enabling support environment that allows students to participate meaningfully in transformative student counseling opportunities.

Notes

1. “Black South African” encompasses African, Colored and Indian people
2. Different terms and descriptions are used in the literature when referring to technology-based mental health interventions. These include Telemental Health (TMH), internet counseling, E-therapy and teletherapy (HEMHA, 2019).

Disclosure statement

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