

12 Internationalizing Trauma-Informed Perspectives to Address Student Trauma in Post-Pandemic Higher Education

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a time saturated with economic, health, and natural crises, resulting in immeasurable human suffering. Civil-political movements have erupted in the United States that exposed the world to a disheartening view of western injustice, violence, and death as human rights violations increased, seemingly unabated. US students also witnessed a world riddled with global crises. The impact of such potentially traumatic exposures on the future of college students' mental health and academic wellness clearly points to a need for college and university systems to reimagine more trauma-informed organizational structures. A trauma-informed human rights perspective could make significant contributions to post-secondary education systems to maximize mental health and academic benefits for present and future college students—a generation of student pandemic survivors predicted to experience pandemic-era psychosocial repercussions impacting their education for years to come.

Keywords

COVID-19, educational leadership, higher education, human rights, student mental health, trauma, trauma-informed

Introduction

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 brought tremendous distress to the global community. Medical research knew little about COVID-19, a new strain of Coronavirus, before the WHO (World Health Organization, 2020a) declared it a global pandemic in March 2020. Countries across the world were forced to take strategic actions to prevent the spread of the dangerous virus which, when transmitted through close human contact, can cause

lethal respiratory complications. For instance, country leaders and governing bodies worldwide issued stay-at-home orders, encouraged individuals to wear protective masks, promoted physical distancing in public spaces, and implemented other regulations to help slow the rise in COVID-19 infections (Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 2020; Griffin, 2020; Gruber et al., 2020; Horesh & Brown, 2020). Other measures to combat the virus involved economic shutdowns and school system closures.

In the United States, the COVID-19 public health crisis had a tremendous impact on local and state economies as the nation experienced mass economic shutdowns. Countless frontline and essential workers in healthcare, law enforcement, food supply and delivery, public transportation, and other public service fields were deemed vital in maintaining the health, order, and well-being of the general public. In many cases, these workers were also placed at highest risk for bringing contagion to their personal living spaces; they often experienced feelings of overwhelming concern and fear for their safety (Greene, 2020). Millions of other workers filed for unemployment after being furloughed or let go from their day jobs. The Pew Research Center recorded a three times higher unemployment rate in the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic than during the two years of the 2008 Great Recession (Kochhar, 2020). Not only did the growing threat of an invisible enemy contribute to an exploding unemployment rate and burgeoning economic stressors for everyday citizens, it also impacted systems of education.

As COVID-19 outbreaks began to spread uncontrollably throughout the world, national governments called for system-wide school closures at all educational levels (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Within the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1.5 billion students in 190 countries were not able to attend school in person (Bhagat & Kim, 2020; UNICEF, 2020). In the United States, these closures caused tremendous stress on students, teachers, and all other stakeholders as they tried to adjust to unfamiliar ways of delivering education through virtual means. Some educational barriers were insurmountable for many young and adult students; researchers found existing inequalities such as access to technology, reliable internet, childcare, and food insecurity to be amongst the most prevalent factors that disrupted student learning, growth, and development during the COVID-19 pandemic (The Education Trust, 2020; García & Weiss, 2020; Gundersen et al., 2020). Consequently, many students and families from lower socioeconomic and other marginalized backgrounds were disproportionately impacted as many who relied on gainful employment, human service programs, and campus support systems prior to the pandemic became further disenfranchised as school systems and the country weathered a storm of unfamiliar health and social conditions (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). As a result of the dramatic shift from in-person instruction to distance learning, higher education systems saw decreases in student attendance (INSA, 2020) and shifts in attitudes toward college enrollment as students and families prioritized

other pressing hardships which challenged their very survival (Burke, 2020; Whitmire, 2020). Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic took a tremendous toll across every human service system in the United States and across the global map, including higher education systems. However, before discussing the connection between the deleterious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mental health and conceptualizing the role of higher education in a COVID-19-afflicted global society, it is important to take a closer look at other potentially traumatic events taking place simultaneously throughout the world which could potentially have lasting effects on student mental health.

World Exposure to Civil Uprisings and Traumatizing Events

Amidst the increasingly concerning public health threat of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States, civilians took to the streets in outrage over the country's legacy of civil and racial injustices. Supporters of civil rights activist groups like the Black Lives Matter movement mobilized to commemorate and protest the untimely deaths of innocent Black victims whose names were added to the list of countless others who died while in police custody. The country drew global attention and scrutiny as mass protests and civil uprisings erupted in every state and countless cities across the nation. Global news outlets reported a nation estranged as people across the world witnessed the United States' ongoing civil rights and race battles. In fact, 2020 was a year of intercontinental civil unrest as some groups in other countries around the world protested in solidarity with US social justice movements and other domestic injustices taking place (Pleyers, 2020).

People of the United States were not only forced to endure the compounding threats of economic distress and civil unrest during a global health crisis but also the nation's inadequate means of minimizing the number of COVID-19 outbreaks (Lipton et al., 2020; Wise & Chappell, 2020). Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (JHUCSSE) reported on August 8, 2020 the United States was leading the world with the highest numbers of COVID-19 infections (4,986,345) and untimely deaths (162,244). By October 16, 2020, in just nine short weeks, the US COVID-19 infections almost doubled (8,027,412) whereas the number of COVID-19 deaths increased by over 34% (218,266). As the country pushed through the wintry months, the country had reached a staggering 16,079,922, reported infections, a 100.3% increase, and 297,886 deaths from COVID-19 by December 2020 (JHUCSSE, 2020/2021).

The country's mismanaged efforts to control the COVID-19 outbreaks not only lead to an uncontrollable rise in the number of infections and deaths for the general US population, but also contributed to unsettling disproportionalities in the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths amongst communities of color and other vulnerable populations (Chappell, 2020; Miller, 2020; Rodriguez-Diaz et al., 2020; Thebault & Fowers, 2020; Thebault et al., 2020). By mid-October, Coronavirus (COVID-19) was the cause of death for

over 43,953 Latina/o/x Americans, 43,844 Black Americans, 8,182 Asian Americans, and 1,886 Indigenous Americans (APM Research Lab, 2020). By the end of October 2020, the racial minority collective experienced a disproportionately high number of reported deaths in the United States. They also endured the harsher effects of a global health and economic crisis while also being further exposed to episodic events showcasing a nation's continued legacy of systemic racial injustice (Kola, 2020).

Evidently, what took place in the United States created prolonged hardships and potentially traumatic conditions for the domestic community; however, the transnational community also bore witness to *other* traumatic worldly events. In developing countries such as Afghanistan, Venezuela, Somalia, and Yemen, ongoing issues with poverty, famine, medicine shortages, disease, natural disasters, civil wars, or other economic or sociopolitical turmoil made containing COVID-19 outbreaks, infections, and deaths even more complex (International Rescue Committee, 2020). In a May 2020 155-country survey, over 50% of the countries reported—including countries with more-developed economies—had tremendous difficulties in treating those living with non-communicable diseases/illnesses (i.e., hypertension, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases) and providing rehabilitative services as a growing number of hospital beds became occupied with COVID-19 patients (WHO, 2020a). By the first week of August 2020 to October 16, 2020, JHUCSSE (2020/2021) reported a staggering increase from 19,481,330 total COVID-19 cases globally to 39,131,360, a 100.4% increase in just over nine weeks. By mid-October, the world reached a COVID-19 death toll of over one million people (1,101,083). Although large-scale COVID-19 vaccination efforts began slowing the spread of COVID-19 within the first quarter of 2021 in the United States and across the world, by June 2021 the national total of COVID-19 infections and deaths had already reached 33,137,285 and 590,167, respectively. COVID-19 cases had also reached an astonishing global total of 167,045,252 and humanity continued to mourn the deaths of 3,467,796 COVID-19 victims worldwide. Despite exceeding 1,677,742,273 administered COVID-19 vaccinations by June 2021 (JHUCSSE, 2020/2021), the illness continues to threaten and claim lives in countries, regions, and sovereignties across the world.

Additionally, the world collectively witnessed the unspeakable horrors of other instances of violence and destruction taking place amidst a pandemic. In August 2020, an enormous explosion in Lebanon's capital of Beirut made world news as it claimed the lives of over 135 people, injured over 5,000, and left more than 300,000 people homeless (Giordano, 2020). Societies around the world were exposed to graphic media footage of injured civilians, death, and destruction caused by the explosion. In the United States, an onslaught of natural disasters devastated communities such as historically large conflagrations in western states causing mass displacement of tens of thousands of civilians (Alonso & Sanchez, 2020), a growing frequency of torrential rains, flooding, and hyperactive hurricane season which wreaked havoc in southern states (Dolce, 2020a), record-breaking occurrences of earthquakes and

seismic activity among fault line states (Childs, 2020), and an extremely rare 140-miles-per-hour derecho in the Midwest which destroyed over \$7.5 billion in land and property and much of its agricultural (i.e., soybean and corn) industry (Dolce, 2020b). It is clear that the United States and the world were forced to cope with an unfamiliar range of human distress, tragedy, and pain caused by economic, civil-political, cultural, educational, biological, humane, and more dangerous forces of nature, all of which warrant the question of how such unique forms of collective psychological suffering will impact systems of higher education and student overall well-being. Such inquiry must involve a closer look at mental health in the age of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The subsequent sections of this chapter purposefully situate pandemic-era topics at the intersection of mental health and higher education in the United States as the primary focus. This focus is necessary as during the time of this writing, the United States not only surpassed every global country in the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths; it has also endured its third wave of Coronavirus cases (Hellman, 2020; Leatherby, 2020). It is urgent to note, narrowing this chapter's contextual focus this way is *not* an attempt to delay or diminish any sense of urgency for global higher education systems to examine the depth and implications of pandemic-era domestic traumatization taking place in countries across the world. However, this specific focus may provide timely insight that paints a more vivid portrait of a future relationship between mental health, student wellness, and higher education after COVID-19's eradication.

Mental Health Suffering

Living in a world plagued by a dangerous virus, individuals in societies across the world struggled with adapting to what the World Health Organization (2020b) refers to as *the new normal*, a time when humans were expected to normalize stressful social and health conditions while taking preventative measures to minimize COVID-19 exposure. Mental health experts assert such intense collective experiences with distress may contribute to higher levels of human psychological disturbances over time (Cassata, 2020; Perel, 2020; Wright, 2020). Mental health experts highlight the following pandemic-era stress factors as ones that may have long-term mental health implications globally: (a) maintaining a sense of normalcy when a lingering disease threatens lives; (b) personal or secondary experience of virus-induced illness and loss of life; (c) overwhelming distress caused by uncertain health and economic outcomes (i.e., unknown timeline of pandemic duration, unknown cure, job security and financial stress; and (d) other *threat multipliers* such as natural disasters and civil unrest (Luest et al., 2020). Those weathering the pandemic became increasingly likely to experience intrusive emotions, problems with sleep or concentration, being constantly on guard, difficult emotions, feeling numb, avoidance behaviors, negative thoughts, or changes in eating patterns (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Gillihan, 2020). Based on well-documented, empirically based psychological research regarding

natural disasters and human-caused tragedies (Miller, 2006, 2017; Neria et al., 2011), mental health experts foresaw long-term traumatic complications with individual and collective mental health beyond a time when COVID-19 is eradicated (Zhai & Du, 2020). The significance of this prediction means that the state of mental health will not look the same in the foreseeable future as it was before the global pandemic. The chapter challenges the reader to reimagine the role global higher education will play vis-à-vis lingering traumas of a generation of student COVID-19 era survivors.

Prevalence and Impact of Student Trauma in Higher Education

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, trauma researchers estimated 66%–85% of college-age students in the United States had experienced one to several traumatic events in their lifetime including but not limited to family violence, childhood neglect, painful interpersonal relationships, sexual assault, and other physiological/psychological forms of maltreatment (Carello & Butler, 2015; Costa, 2020; Frazier et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2008). Students with traumatic histories and those from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, gender/sexual minorities, low-income, immigrants and refugees, students with physical/intellectual disabilities) have higher risks of experiencing trauma-related stress factors such as posttraumatic stress, destructive social behaviors, poorer physical health, substance abuse, revictimization, depression, and various other traumatic risk variables during their postsecondary education (Anders et al., 2012; Carello & Butler, 2014; Cless & Nelson Goff, 2017). Students with unaddressed or ongoing posttraumatic stress are at highest risk to encounter academic risk factors such as lower grade point averages, poorer classroom performance and attendance, and dropping out of college (Bachrach & Read, 2012; DeBerard et al., 2004; Miller, 2020).

Systems of higher education can expect dramatic shifts in percentages of students living with trauma histories as an entire generation of students will have survived one of the world's most deadly global health crises and other traumatic worldly events taking place simultaneously across the world. Most students will have been exposed to traumatic experiences personally or vicariously during the COVID-19 era such as Coronavirus-related pain or death; widespread civic distress such as financial and food insecurities; intensified education and health disparities; heightened domestic, political, and personal violence; horrific tragedies like the Beirut explosion; or through devastating natural disasters. Given that post-secondary students with traumatic histories are at higher risk for experiencing academic challenges, the traumatic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and evidence predicting higher rates of human trauma (Gruber et al., 2020), global higher education must redirect attention to the severity, prevalence, and implications of a traumatizing era in human history when addressing student post-pandemic mental health challenges postsecondary education.

Trauma-Informed Frameworks and Higher Education

Clinical researchers have made groundbreaking contributions to the study of human psychological trauma since its origins in psychoanalysis (Carello & Butler, 2014; Freud, 1989). Most advancements in psychological trauma studies have been oriented to improve the ways clinical disciplines and professions (i.e., counseling, social work, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and others) engage in trauma research, evaluation, intervention, and treatment. Although inquiries of the study of trauma have covered vast trauma-related content areas (e.g., the etiology of trauma, the biopsychosocial sequelae of trauma across the lifespan, trauma symptomatology, psychopharmacological intervention) which have primarily examined human responses to traumatic circumstances, the study of trauma has pushed beyond such a medicalized scope to include inquiry regarding the psychosocial repercussions of broader oppressive social conditions (APA, 2013; Herman, 1997). Such progressive paradigm shifts have resulted in new *trauma-informed* (TI) perspectives which examine the links between human trauma psychopathology, broader macro trauma exposure (i.e., oppressive socioenvironmental milieu, ideological, structural conditions), and a push for various human service organizations (e.g., mental health facilities, community centers, colleges and universities) to develop TI organizational cultures.

Being Trauma-informed or TI means understanding the dynamic ways in which violence, victimization, and various human trauma exposures affect individuals, families, and communities (Bent-Goodley, 2019; Butler et al., 2011). Harris and Fallot (2001) developed five basic principles (i.e., safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment) which have set the foundation of what it means to be TI. Further, TI principles make up what is known as *trauma-informed care* (TIC). TIC approaches help organizations minimize individual-level trauma reemergence through policy and practice, while maximizing opportunities for individuals to heal and recover from past traumatic experiences (Fallot & Harris, 2009), and works as a way to minimize the potential of people who have already experienced past trauma from developing posttraumatic stress disorder or PTSD (Brown, 2018). For the sake of clarity, Carello et al. (2019) highlight two distinctions between TIC and what is known as *trauma-specific services* (TSS). TSS are specific to treating individual trauma cases in clinical settings. For example, a university student survivor of a natural disaster seeking mental health services may receive TSS services (e.g., Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and other forms of psychotherapy) from their university's mental health intervention program to help strengthen self-regulation and coping strategies. A second distinction between TSS and is that the latter considers the pervasive nature of human trauma and helps transform organizational structures and human service delivery in ways that respect and appropriately respond to the effects of trauma at all levels (Bloom, 2010; Harris & Fallot, 2001). In the same vein of the previous example, the student's teacher could engage in TIC in the

classroom by becoming familiar with the potential impacts posttraumatic stress has on student behavior (e.g., class avoidance, declining grades) and restructure the course in ways that prioritizes student safety and success (e.g., alternative assignments, flexible deadlines, mental health days).

Carello and colleagues (2019) also note that human service systems could offer trauma-specific services without being trauma-informed or be trauma-informed without offering trauma-specific services. Therefore, it should be understood that TI organizational systems recognize the prevalence of trauma, its impact on human lives, and incorporate those understandings in policy, procedure, and practice (Collin-Vézina et al., 2020; Yatchmenoff et al., 2017). Although TIC was originally developed for clinical organizational systems, in the past 20 years the intellectual community outside the clinical sciences has begun to examine traumatic experiences as outcomes of oppressive social systems and structures and broadened TIC models that reach other non-health related human service systems—including systems of higher education.

Carello and Butler (2014) highlight the prevalence of trauma amongst college students and the potential for learning environments to become ground zero for traumatization, retraumatization, or vicarious/secondary traumatization. In response, Carello and Butler (2015) developed a *trauma-informed educational practice* (TIEP) teaching model which integrate TIC elements in pedagogical practices which aim to reduce student traumatization and promote student resilience and emotional safety. Other trauma and education scholars have also contributed recent and relevant work to the growing efforts of creating more trauma-informed education cultures in both higher education and K12 education contexts (see *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education* [Venet, 2021]; *Building a trauma-informed restorative school: Skills and approaches for improving culture and behavior* [Brummer & Thorsborne, 2021]; *Trauma-Informed Classroom Care Model* [Cless & Nelson Goff, 2017]; *ISTSS Best Practice Parameters* [International Society for Trauma and Traumatic Stress, 2016]; *Trauma-Informed Practices for Postsecondary Education* guide [Davidson, 2017]; *Safeguarding Mindfulness in Schools and Higher Education: A Holistic and Inclusive Approach* [Burrows, 2017]; Nikischer's [2018] trauma-informed recommendations for writing and teaching about violence; *Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning in Times of Crisis* [Carello, 2020]; and *A Model for Trauma-Informed Education and Administration* [Harper & Neubauer, 2020]).

These TI educational models and approaches have tremendous potential to help minimize student (re)traumatization in K12 and higher education settings. However, conversations regarding the traumatic implications of the COVID-19 era on college student education must expand to include other broader, progressive conceptualizations of human trauma such as human rights violations created by existing oppressive social conditions such as institutionalized racism, gender-based violence, generational poverty, inequitable access to education and healthcare services, food insecurities, inadequate housing and unsafe living conditions, warfare, bigotry—all of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human Rights and Trauma Perspectives in Post-Pandemic Education

As educational systems work to create methods to minimize the traumatization of COVID-affected students, it is critical that they welcome a trauma-informed perspective toward understanding often-overlooked transgressions afflicting generations of students navigating worldly social systems. Broadly, such historical and contemporary encroachments on human rights have far-reaching, systemic, and potentially traumatic effects on global peoples' physical and mental wellness particularly for the world's most vulnerable and historically marginalized populations.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was developed in 1948 by a collective of global national leaders who believe humans are born with certain inherent, indivisible, fundamental rights and protected freedoms regardless of place of residence, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, language, gender and sexual orientation, color, or any other social status (United Nations, n.d.). The evolution of human rights discourse has roots spanning various global philosophical and theological foundations, several socialist and collectivist movements (e.g., universal suffrage movements, international labor movement, Civil Rights movement, Feminist Movement), and other historically significant eras of human history (e.g., Enlightenment, Anti-colonial, French Revolution) (Butler & Critelli, 2019). International human rights discourse has been instrumental in the fight to end global human degradation, economic/social/health inequalities, discrimination, torture, and in the protection and preservation of the planet humans occupy (Moyn, 2010). Considering the aforementioned traumatic events/exposures taking place simultaneously in the United States and throughout the world during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., death, violence, destruction, racial/social injustice)—it is crucial to conceptualize ways both trauma-informed and human rights perspectives can help strengthen awareness of and forecast the implications of COVID-19 pandemic student traumatic exposures. This kind of complex critical inquiry is unique to the study of higher education; however, such transdisciplinary perspectives may yield a new vantage point for how higher education institutions view historical, pandemic-era, and contemporary student trauma and help inform systems-level approaches toward addressing and minimizing student (re)traumatization.

Butler and Critelli (2019) amalgamate human rights and trauma-informed lenses to conceptualize a *Trauma-Informed Human Rights* (TIHR) framework which expands the scope of human traumatic stress beyond a medicalized model. TIHR integrates the trauma-informed perspective, human rights principles, and historical/sociopolitical dimensions to contextualize human trauma as products of broader institutionalized social problems (de Jong, 2002). More succinctly, TIHR is a holistic framework encompassing the full spectrum of *traumatic exposures* (TE) and *human rights violations* (HRV). Butler and Critelli (2019) recognize that “TEs and HRVs often occur together

and in some cases are simply different descriptions emphasizing different aspects of the same experience” (p. 40). Further, they argue potentially traumatic experiences may look and feel different across individuals, groups and social contexts, may often overlap, and range from: (a) natural disasters (i.e., tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes); (b) mental and physical factors (i.e., disease/illness, neuropsychological ailments; physiological injury); (c) incidental events (i.e., motor vehicle accidents, exposure to death, violence, destruction); (d) human behavior (i.e., sexual victimization, child abuse and/or neglect, warfare, terroristic acts); (e) institutional forces (e.g., systemic racism and xenophobia, transnational colonialism, slavery, genocide, institutional negligence and betrayal). Given the aforementioned evidence shared earlier in this chapter, the range of TEs and HRVs may very well include the potentially traumatic repercussions of global health pandemics. Thus, an integrative, multidimensional, multidisciplinary perspective such as TIHR is one possible, trauma-informed approach to frame what mass complex trauma—such as trauma manifested during the COVID-19 pandemic—looks like in tertiary education. Moreover, the TIHR framework’s theoretical foundation may help push the study of higher education toward achieving a more nuanced understanding of individual, groups, communities, societies, and generations of complex human suffering and trauma emerging where Butler and Critelli (2019) describe the *nexus* of traumatic exposures and human rights violations.

TIHR Perspective in University and Higher Education Practice

In a new trauma-laden post-pandemic educational landscape, global tertiary education systems will need to develop trauma-informed criteria that better accommodate emergent student mental health challenges. A TIHR framework can help shift colleges and universities toward a more trauma-informed education system which addresses the full range of student trauma spanning across all TE and HR violations. To be clear, the goal of a TIHR approach is not for school agents or education systems to play a therapist role, rather, it is to help higher education systems deliver an education that understands the implications of trauma on students’ ability to learn and grow. Utilizing the TIHR framework to help develop more trauma-informed educational structures and cultures could unveil a promising pathway toward improving learning and increase successful outcomes for a higher proportion of students predicted to live with trauma histories in a post-pandemic society. This next several statements help unpack the *chronic food insecurity* (CFI) social phenomenon, its relationship to the COVID-19 pandemic, and formulate a conceptual example of how tertiary education could envision what a TIHR perspective could look like in post-pandemic university and higher education practice.

Beyond CFI’s association with *Adverse Childhood Experiences* or ACEs (i.e., childhood exposure to adverse forms of abuse, neglect, violence, or toxic stress)

in trauma research (Chilton, 2015), the negative consequences of CFI have also posed as complex barriers facing students on their pursuit of financial and academic success in adulthood (Broton et al., 2018). Food insecurity is also one of many potentially traumatic adverse risk factors contributing to anxiety, stress, depression, drug addiction, and overall occupational and educational wellness (Chilton et al., 2015; Raskind et al., 2019). Although CFI has impacted the lives of generations of students and families, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and made CFI a more pervasive issue for millions of students and families in the United States (Gundersen et al., 2020). Given the increased severity and prevalence of food-insecure students and families in the wake of a devastating pandemic, tertiary education systems might consider innovative, systems-level TIHR-informed policies, procedures, processes, and practices which: (a) reframe CFI as a systemic, potentially traumatic, human rights violation deep-rooted in a legacy of unjust social conditions; (b) disarm institutional structures and forces contributing to student and family CFI in university and higher education settings; (c) reduce the number of students and families enduring CFI; (d) function in ways that do not subject students and families to CFI (re)traumatization; and (e) strengthens student and family overall safety, empowerment, agency, dignity, and mutual trustworthiness long after the COVID-19 pandemic.

A TIHR perspective in higher education practice might begin with university systems' recognition of sociohistorical contexts regarding state-sanctioned food (in)accessibility across generations of diverse student populations, particularly those from the most marginalized backgrounds. Further, higher education systems may also benefit from understanding the adverse impacts of food insecurity on student biopsychosocial and educational well-being, and begin centering the sociohistorical, sociocultural, socioeconomic, dietetic, affective, among other defining characteristics of what food (in)security and (in)accessibility means for a generation of student pandemic survivors and an increasingly more diverse future college student population. Practical approaches toward this distant future may involve consideration of existing trauma-informed CFI research which recommends the development and implementation of systems-level, non-stigmatizing, developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed screening protocol may help identify students and families currently enduring and/or at risk of enduring CFI among other maladaptive health behaviors and outcomes in the future (Raskind et al., 2019). In other work, Chilton and colleagues (2015) recommend the potential of integrating nutrition and other public assistance programs (e.g., food/cash allotments, access to affordable childcare, behavioral health support, prior exposure to potentially traumatic experiences) that holistically address a spectrum of risk factors which may contribute to student and family CFI.

Although the example provided of what TIHR in higher education practice could look like from a conceptual understanding, empirical research regarding TIHR's broader applicability, efficacy, and implications in university and higher

education contexts is vastly underexplored given that the TIHR's framework was recently conceptualized (see Butler & Critelli, 2019). Nonetheless, this chapter highlights TIHR's tremendous potential to ground trauma-informed and human rights discourse and theoretical traditions to transform existing higher education cultures that holistically and systematically addresses and minimizes student (re)traumatization while simultaneously promoting student success. As the pandemic persists during the final writing stage of this chapter, there is significant promise for the future of trauma-informed work in education as trauma-informed education researchers continue to develop COVID-19 sensitive, trauma-informed approaches and practices that human and education service systems can enact as the United States and the world continue to endure prolonged uncertainty, ambiguous loss, anticipatory grief, lasting psychological stress, and other mental wellness challenges (see Carello, 2020; Collin-Vézina et al., 2020; Harper & Neubauer, 2020; Luest et al., 2020; Perel, 2020; Wright, 2020). These COVID-19 sensitive trauma-informed approaches and the TIHR framework have potential to complement one another when designing a trauma-informed higher education system aimed at minimizing acute trauma and human rights-related trauma risk factors in post-pandemic tertiary education. Such integration could potentially yield new iterations of TI perspectives relevant to post-pandemic higher education systems, help reimagine and normalize pre-COVID-19 TI teaching/service models (see Burrows, 2017; Carello & Butler, 2014; Cless & Nelson Goff, 2017; Davidson, 2017; ISTSS, 2016; Nikischer, 2018) and help inform TIHR organization-specific policy, procedures, and practices. Moving forward, this chapter advocates for domestic and global tertiary education to reimagine and internationalize ways COVID-19 sensitive trauma-informed education models and the conceptual TIHR framework considers the spectrum of pervasive traumatic exposures and human rights violations and the historical, contemporary, systemic, and transcendent relationships to student (re)traumatization and vicarious traumatization.

Conclusion

This chapter does not proclaim a universal trauma-informed approach to remedy all student trauma-related barriers in higher education. Rather, this chapter asserts that operationalizing TIHR perspective(s) may more adequately address an anticipated mental health curve for students and the greater society. It is imperative for higher education systems to consider trauma-informed approaches when facing lingering mental health challenges which are likely to impact academic success of a generation of student pandemic survivors. It is difficult to gauge what the state of mental health will look like for students beyond the COVID-19 era, however, despite such uncertainty, a few things are certain. First, the adverse implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on systems of education will be a topic studied by many across all academic disciplines and professions far beyond the time when the

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is eradicated. Second, the years 2020 and 2021 will be marked in global history as the year that sparked reform and transformation of national economies, politics, healthcare, and human and social relations and what will shift the day-to-day lives of generations of global citizens to come, including tertiary education systems. Lastly, as the world moves forward, so must higher education systems that, too, will be recovering from the remanence of COVID-19 era setbacks. Therefore, it is in the best interest of higher education systems to play a stronger, holistic, truly transformative role in addressing a new social era riddled with unforeseen traumatic exposures, human rights violations, biopsychosocial and other emerging critical issues and challenges—all of which will play a role in how higher education systems enroll, serve, and graduate present-day and future student pandemic survivors.

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Bio

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COVID-19 AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges

Edited by **Ravichandran Ammigan | Roy Y. Chan | Krishna Bista**

Foreword by Darla K. Deardorff

 **STAR**SCHOLARS
NETWORK

Praise for this book

This book is a must-read for all university leaders and senior managers to enable them to get a better insight into the numerous challenges facing academia in the new normal, where it is not only about academic excellence but also about the human dimension through the enhanced use of technology.

—Dhanjay Jhurry, Professor and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Mauritius, Mauritius

This thought-provoking book captures contemporary changes to higher education at the micro and macro level post-2020. Stakeholders across the sector will benefit from reading the research-driven chapters that are stimulating and insightful. The book interrogates and challenges ways in which internationalization and global mobility can be re-imagined.

—Dawn Joseph, Associate Professor,
Deakin University, Australia

This book shows a more intensive and multi-faceted response by the higher education community to the pandemic that one might have expected. Attention is paid notably to sustain international life on campus.

—Ulrich Teichler, Professor Emeritus,
International Centre for Higher Education Research,
University of Kassel, Germany

This volume is a welcome addition to the literature on international Higher Education produced during the COVID-19 era. With a sensitively chosen array of topics, it shows new thinking around internationalisation, which is encouraging for all, and is exactly what is needed.

—Amanda C. Murphy, Professor and Director,
Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation,
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

With the COVID-19 pandemic seeing no end in sight and its effects on international higher education for students around the world yet unknown, the importance of this timely book cannot be overstated. At a time when we are

literally awash in countless editorials prognosticating on *possible* implications of this health catastrophe, it is refreshing to get a carefully collected series of essays that step back, take a deep breath, and bring us back to the fundamental questions we need to be asking at this most dangerous time for humanity.

—Bernhard Streitwieser, IEP Program
Director & Associate Professor of International
Education & International Affairs,
George Washington University, USA

This is a valuable addition to higher education for understanding the complexities that COVID-19 introduced into the academic landscape. This volume explores valuable topics and issues such as employability, research and mentoring, innovative teaching and learning, and emerging opportunities during the pandemic.

—Jane E. Gatewood, Vice Provost for Global
Engagement, University of Rochester, USA

This timely book is much needed for practitioners, scholars, and policy makers who are grappling with the challenges created by the pandemic. The book is comprehensive given the depth and breath of topics. The human centric approach is refreshing.

—Fanta Aw, Vice President of Campus Life &
Inclusive Excellence, American University, USA

COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges

COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges addresses the lasting impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the higher education sector and offers insights that inform policy and practice. Framed in a global context, this timely book captures a wide variety of topics, including student mobility, global partnerships and collaboration, student health and wellbeing, enrollment management, employability, and graduate education. It is designed to serve as a resource for scholar-practitioners, policymakers, and university administrators as they reimagine their work of comparative and international higher education in times of crisis. The collection of chapters assembled in this volume calls for a critical reflection on the opportunities and challenges that have emerged as a result of the global pandemic, and provides as a basis for how tertiary education systems around the world can learn from past experiences and shared viewpoints as institutions recalibrate operations, innovate programs, and manage change on their respective campuses.

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Exploring Contemporary Issues and
Challenges

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**In memory of those who lost their lives during the
COVID-19 pandemic worldwide**

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>List of Editors</i>	<i>xix</i>

Foreword	<i>xxi</i>
DARLA K. DEARDORFF	

1 The Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education: Challenges and Issues	1
RAVICHANDRAN AMMIGAN, ROY Y. CHAN, AND KRISHNA BISTA	

PART I

COVID-19 and Global Issues in Higher Education	9
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2 The Evolution Revolution: The Application of a Leadership Adaptation Continuum to the Future of Global Higher Education Post COVID-19	11
ALLISON SILVEUS AND LESLIE EKPE	

3 Rethinking the Social Responsibilities of Universities in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic	25
HÀNG TRẦN THỊ, QUY DINH LE NGUYEN, AND LUC-DIEP TRA	

4 “Internationalization at Home” in the United States: Enhancing Admissions and Enrollment Practices for Marginalized Students During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic	39
RAQUEL MUÑIZ AND NATALIE BORG	

- 5 Financial Ramifications of Coronavirus on
Division I Athletic Departments** 51
MOLLY HARRY

PART II

**COVID-19 and Academic Issues in Higher
Education: Special Topics and Themes** 65

- 6 Traditional Exams, 21st Century Employability
Skills and COVID-19: Disruptive Opportunities
for Rethinking Assessment Design in Higher
Education** 67
ANDREW KELLY, CATHERINE MOORE, AND EMMA LYONS

- 7 From Hardships to Possibilities: Dissertation
Writing during the COVID-19 Pandemic** 80
JUAN MANUEL NIÑO AND ONÉSIMO M. MARTÍNEZ II

- 8 Disrupting Accommodations through Universal
Design for Learning in Higher Education** 93
CARLY D. ARMOUR

- 9 Reshaping the Landscape: Considering
COVID-19's Uncertain Impacts on Canadian and
U.S. International Higher Education** 107
MICHAEL O'SHEA, YOU ZHANG, AND LEPING MOU

- 10 The Vulnerability and Opportunity of
Privatization in Higher Education during a Pandemic** 123
ZIYAN BAI

PART III

**COVID-19, Wellbeing and Humanity in Higher
Education: International Perspectives and Experiences** 137

- 11 COVID-19 and Health Disparities: Opportunities
for Public Health Curriculum Enhancement** 139
ANULI NJOKU

12 Internationalizing Trauma-Informed Perspectives to Address Student Trauma in Post-Pandemic Higher Education	154
JOSHUA M. ANZALDÚA	
13 Global Collaboration for Global Solution in Academia: Opportunities and Challenges	172
EKATERINA MINAEVA AND GIORGIO MARINONI	
14 Humanizing the Academic Advising Experience with Technology: An Integrative Review	185
CHARLES LIU AND RAVICHANDRAN AMMIGAN	
<i>Index</i>	203

Tables

4.1	Examples of How to Integrate Internationalization at Home in Practice During and After the Pandemic	46
10.1	Sample State and Institutional Profiles	126
10.2	Sample Program Profiles	127
10.3	Interview Participants by State, University, Program, and Role	128
13.1	Impact on teaching and learning by region, International Association of Universities, 2020	176
14.1	Search Engines, Databases, Academic Articles and Books, and Keywords Used to Synthesize Literature	188
14.2	Categorization of Reviewed Interventions involving Technology for Academic Advising	189

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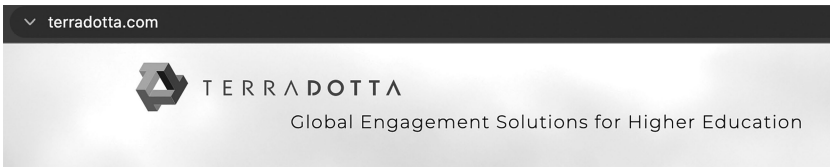
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Foreword

Darla K. Deardorff

The COVID-19 pandemic has represented a unifying challenge globally, providing a defining era in human existence as the pandemic upended life as we know it. *COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, edited by Ammigan, Chan, and Bista, delves into the pandemic's impact on higher education around the world. Such an exploration empowers “educators, administrators, practitioners, policy makers, and families” with ideas and guidance that not only can be applied in the current context but also in the post-COVID future.

As the world emerges from the COVID pandemic, it is good to remember the signs of hope that have been there all along from the small gestures of kindness to the heroic efforts of those on the frontlines, from strangers lifting their voices together in song across balconies as the pandemic began with the later Jerusalema dance challenge that swept around the world, even as the pandemic was raging. This pandemic has shown us that we are all truly interconnected, for better or for worse. Desmond Tutu reminds us that we are all in this together and that our humanity is bound up together. We are members of one human family, and when some members are hurting, we all are hurt. He goes on to say, “For us to engage in the practices that will ensure that we all prosper, we must come to know that each of us is linked in the chain of our common humanity.”

As we move into the light of a new day, there is radical hope in truly embracing our shared humanity. Let's seek to see ourselves in others. Let's seek to see the whole picture through discovering others' perspectives beyond our own. Let's seek to see the invisible among us and to remember the power of being seen and heard. As we do so, we can reflect on some of the following questions:

- What do I know about my neighbors?
- Do I make an effort to learn more?
- What are others' perspectives and can I articulate those?
- What are the connections I see in others to my own experiences?
- How much do I really listen for understanding and seek first to understand?

Higher education provides opportunities for students to explore these and other questions, as universities seek to educate global citizens. As we have come to understand more poignantly over the last year that we are indeed part of one global community, we need to remember that education is more than employment or even graduating global citizens—in the end, it is about how we come together as neighbors both locally and globally, to build a better future together. We can make choices every day that help make the world better for all. As Tutu noted, “When we step into our neighborhoods, we can engage in the practices of good neighborliness or we can choose not to. The quality of life on our planet now and in the future will be determined by the small daily choices that we make as much as by the big decisions in the corridors of power.” As we move forward into a post-pandemic era, we must remember that actions matter and what we do impacts others. What daily actions will we take to support the most vulnerable among us? To improve the quality of life for others? How will we uphold justice and dignity for all in the human family? In the end, how will we be good neighbors to each other?

Let us commit to taking action to address the racial injustices and inequities faced by our neighbors. Let us commit to being a good neighbor, as we live in authentic solidarity with each other, aspiring to be compassionate, generous, and kind, knowing that we can find our greatest joy in showing love to all and that in doing so, we are embracing the oneness of our humanity.

Bio

Darla K. Deardorff is the Executive Director of the Association of International Education Administrators, a national professional organization based in Durham, North Carolina, USA. She is also a research scholar with the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University, where she has been an adjunct faculty member in the Program in Education and a faculty affiliate with International/Comparative Studies. In addition, she is an Adjunct Professor at North Carolina State University, a Visiting Research Professor at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, and at Meiji University Research Institute of International Education (RIIE) in Japan as well as visiting faculty at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) in China. Dr. Deardorff has served on faculty of Harvard University’s Future of Learning Institute as well as Harvard University’s Global Education Think Tank, in addition to being on faculty at the Summer Institute of Intercultural Communication in Portland, Oregon. She has also been an affiliated faculty at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan) in the United Kingdom and taught at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand. She receives numerous invitations from around the world (in over 30 countries including in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Australia, and Asia) to speak on her research and work on intercultural competence and international education assessment, and is a noted expert on these topics, being named a Senior Fulbright Specialist (to South Africa and to Japan).

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