



I didn't know that!

Learning from Colleagues in our SoTL Journey

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Land Acknowledgement

The land is acknowledged as our Mother, the Earth. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to honor and support the *Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages that belong to the land of Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis.

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to working towards mending colonized lands and protecting the land in a way that demonstrates honour, respect, and love.

The University of Saskatchewan extends this commitment to the lands and Treaty territories (Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10) that constitute kisiskâciwan ([Saskatchewan], “*the swift current*”, *Cree/Saulteaux*), and all Indigenous people that call kisiskâciwan home. We are born to the land and the land claims us.

SoTL Project

SoTL-specific grant funding

(Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning @ uSask)

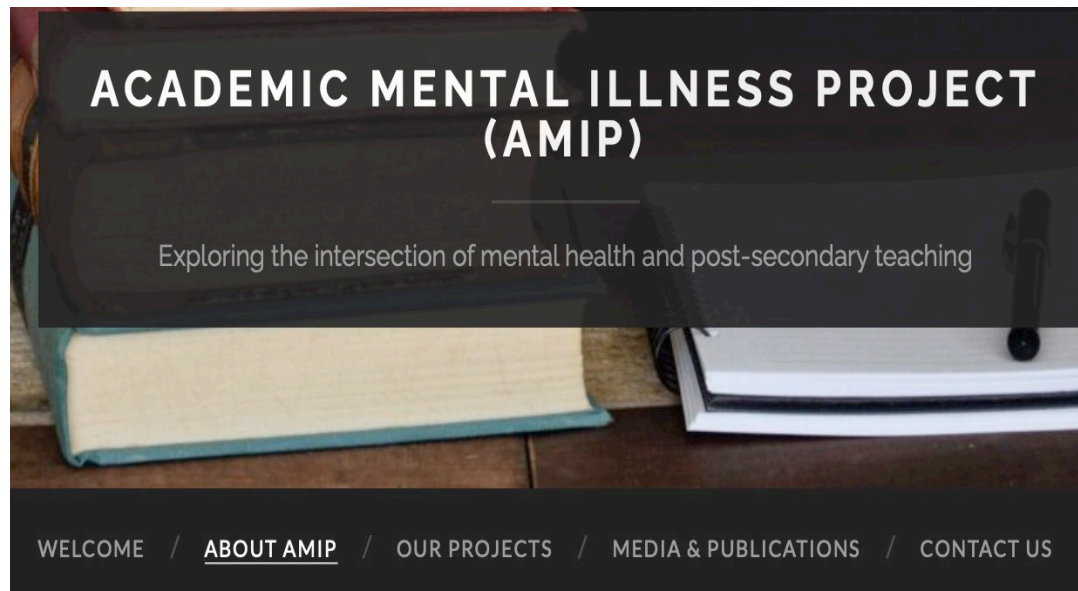
- Focus on **interdisciplinary** teams investigating a shared SoTL question
- Recruited **research team members** (many of whom are **open about living with mental illness**) from: Psychology, History, Education, Kinesiology and Engineering
- **Research question:** How does mental illness influence the experiences of post-secondary instructors, including their teaching activities, research, community work, and career trajectories?

Interdisciplinary study

- Mental illness can impact **instructor performance**, teaching, and productivity (Campbell, 2018; Fox & Gasper, 2020; Waterfield et al., 2017).
- Both mental illness, and the **act of disclosing**, can result in a complex array of perceived benefits and risks (Campbell, 2018; Fox & Gasper, 2020)
- Qualitative and quantitative data gathered through **student surveys** and **group auto-ethnography**

Developed into a formal group

- Members added from other universities and disciplines
- Regular meetings of the group + ongoing auto-ethnography focus groups
- Multiple activities, grant applications, publications, and presentations that expanded upon our initial question



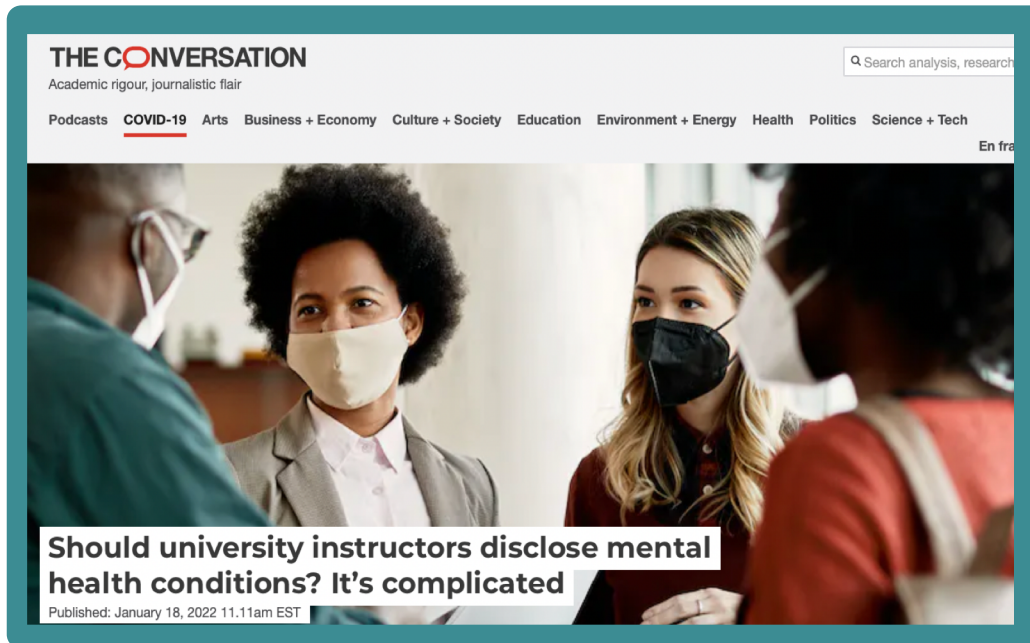
**Academic Mental
Illness Project (AMIP)**

www.sites.usask.ca/amip

Knowledge mobilization

Publications

- Conversation piece reposted to Academia Top Ten, The National Post and University Affairs (more traction than an academic journal)
- Different team members working on 5-6 papers based on interest and capacity



Presentations

- 2022 Symposium for SoTL (Banff, 2022)
- Canadian Psychological Association, 2023
- Council on Nursing and Anthropology, 2023

Grants

- A SSHRC Explore grant (USask)
- A SSHRC Insight Grant & IDG
- SoTL Ignite Grant (USask)

Growth/learning in four areas:



- 1. Practical skills**
- 2. Power of collaborative teams**
- 3. Navigating interdisciplinarity**
- 4. Self-care + relationship-building**

What did we learn?

1. Practical skills

- **Grant writing resources from all Faculties:**
Workshops and tips for developing institutional and national SSHRC grants applications
- **Accessibility considerations:** (ex. PowerPoint presentation fonts and formats best for people with dyslexia, hybrid meetings, etc.)
- **Ethics processes:** How to craft ethics apps to make the approval stage more seamless

What did we learn?

2. Power of collaborative teams

- **Equitable research roles:** How can we ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and to lead?
- **‘Many hands make light work’**
- **Access to interdisciplinary knowledge:**
 - Can apply to conferences, journals, etc. across several disciplines (not limited to one)
 - Learn how other Faculties engage in processes

What did we learn?

3. Navigating interdisciplinarity

- **Different pedagogies and practices** across Faculties (implications for disclosure)
- **Unpacked disciplinary differences:**
 - **Methodological:** Is thematic coding the same in Psychology and Education?
 - **Different terminology/concepts:** (ex. mental illness, disability, neurodivergent, etc.)
- **Career considerations:** How are we promoted? Will our connection to this project impact our tenure and promotion?

What did we learn?

4. Self-care and relationship-building

- **Mentorship:** More experienced team members offered formal + informal mentorship
- **We built relationships** where we felt safe:
 - Sharing our challenges and questions
 - Ideas/statements were held in confidence
- **Self-care:** Disclosure can lead to students disclosing to you - need to know how to support these students while taking care of your own well-being

Next Steps

- Continue publishing interdisciplinary work + some focused on individual disciplinary specific results
- Reapplying for competitions where we were not successful + applying for larger grants (interest from across the country)
- Continue to build connections and support each other

Conclusion

- Formal research topic is only one of many purposes of the group
- We built an environment where we felt supported
- We discussed issues not typically discussed in academic spaces
- The interdisciplinary and collaborative environment promotes creativity, galvanizes our efforts, validates our experiences, and ultimately makes us stronger colleagues and researchers

References

- Bergen, J., de Barros, A. C., Gelech, J. M., Forrester, S., Horwitz, S., & **Squires, V.** (2022, Jan.18). Should university instructors disclose mental health conditions? It's complicated. *The Conversation* <https://theconversation.com/should-university-instructors-disclose-mental-health-conditions-its-complicated-172583>
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