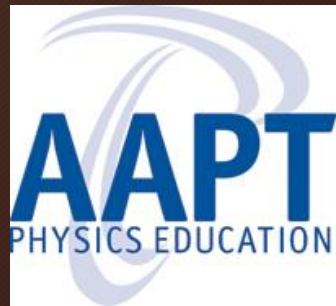




Helping our Students Adjust to a Post-Pandemic World

M. J. Wright
Adelphi University

Special thanks to:

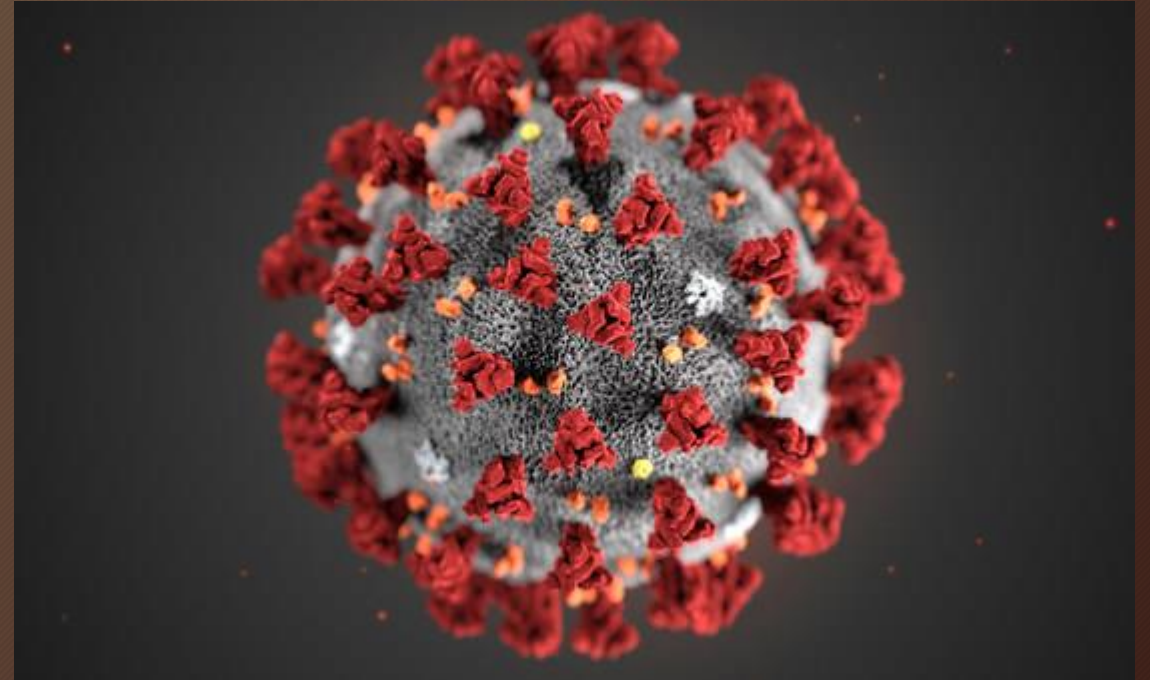


The Pandemic was a Major Disruption

Something I keep in Perspective

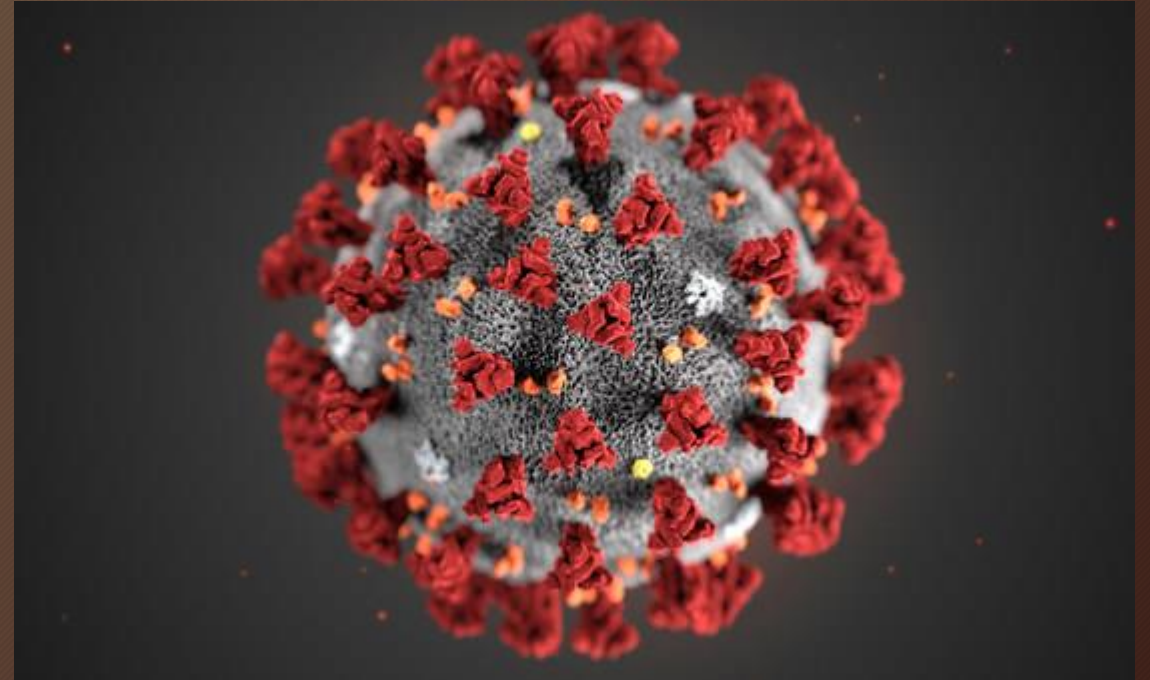
2 years out of 50 years is 4%

2 years out of 17 years is > 10%



Student Horror Stories of Pandemic

- Lost > 5 close family members
- Was sick for a large amount of time
- Had to do online classes in their car at fast food restaurants because they didn't have wifi.
- Stuck in households with difficult parents.
- Child care of siblings



Students and Faculty Are Burnt Out

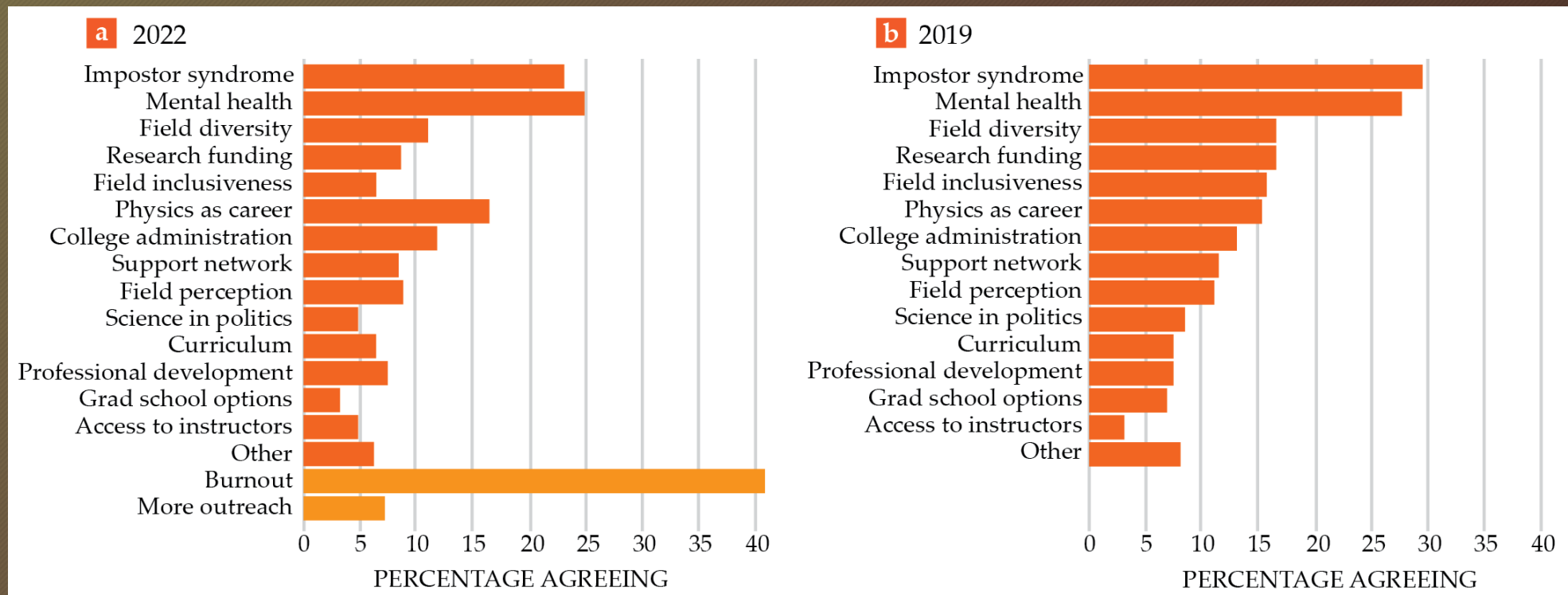


- Its not just Students.
- Faculty are burnt out too!

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/faculty-development/regroup-and-refocus-strategies-to-avoid-professor-burn-out/>

Mental Health Is a Factor

Data from PhysCon:



B. Conrad and M. Wright. Helping the pandemic generation. *Physics Today*. 76 (9), 24-31 (2023)

Suggestions from the Psychology Peeps

- (Re)acclimatizing to studying
- Imposter syndrome and sense of belonging
- Mental health consequences of COVID-19
- Increasingly unattainable hidden curriculum
- Accounting for (in)equality of experience



M. Pownall, R. Harris, and P. Blundell-Birtill. Supporting Students During the Transition to University in COVID-19: Five Key Considerations and Recommendations for Educators. *Psychology Learning and Teaching*. 21, 3-18 (2021).

M. Wright, We Can't Ignore the Pandemic Fallout in Our Physics Classes. *Phys. Teach.* 61, 326 (2023).

1. (Re)acclimatizing to studying

- Assume the students don't have the skills (both soft and hard skills) to be successful.
- Tell them exactly what they need to do to be successful. I tell stories.
- Make yourself available for office hours (and even outside of them) and be prepared to help with even basic things.



Metacognition!

Metacognition for Exam

Indicate which thing that you did to prepare for the exam:

1 – some, 2 – most, 3 – Hit it out of the park	
Read textbook, filling in missing steps, for the associated chapters	
Knew how to do all of the homework problems (without having to look up answers)	
Did the practice exam after studying in game-like conditions	
Knew how to do all of the in class problems (without having to look up answers)	
After studying for a while, made a list of all of the things that you do not know.	
Reached out to a Subject Matter Expert (professor, upper-classmen, etc) to discuss things you did not know (a 3-here would have had a list, and would have addressed each problem on the list.)	
Studied in a group.	
Studied by yourself in a group, where you did the problem solo, and only asked people for help for those spots that you didn't know how to do.	

2. Imposter Syndrome & Sense of Belonging

- Imposter Syndrome - You look around the room and see that everyone “appears” to belong and you feel that you are a “phony” and don’t belong.
- Build communities of support for students in and out of the department, so they can build a sense of belonging.
- Team-up report!!

Rebuilding Physics Club



- Physics club involvement has dropped since the pandemic
- The club's momentum was disrupted.
- Advisers need to take the time to lead and generate motion.
- Less is more, Our S'mores night cost about \$30 and generated lots of smiles.

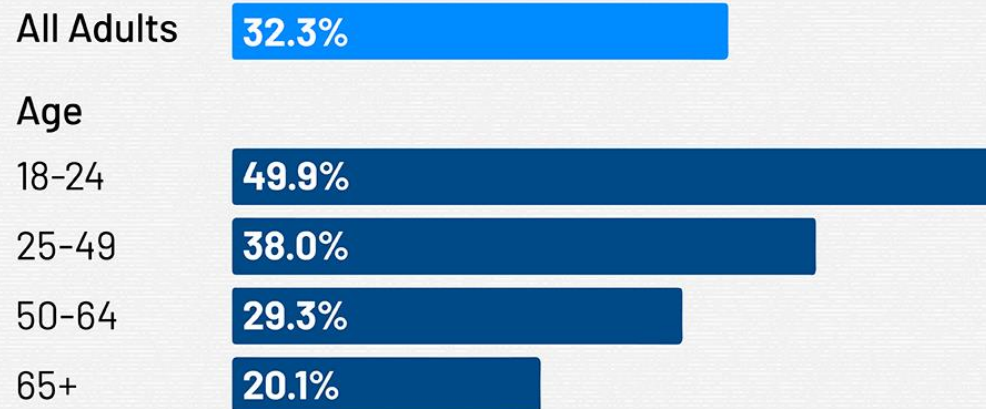
Building Connections

- Take time in class to connect
- Invite students to come to office hours for professional advice beyond the normal
- Encourage connectivity, bring students together
- Have a meal with students
- Connect students to alumni through events



3. Mental Health Consequences of Covid-19

Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety and/or Depressive Disorder, February 2023



KFF

The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use,
KFF (The Kaiser Family Foundation)

Sick Weeks in the a New World

- When we are sick professors cancel (or change) class.
- When students are sick they miss class and have to catch up.
- It's a problem when COVID makes you miss a week of school when the semester is only 15 weeks long.

4. Hidden Curriculum

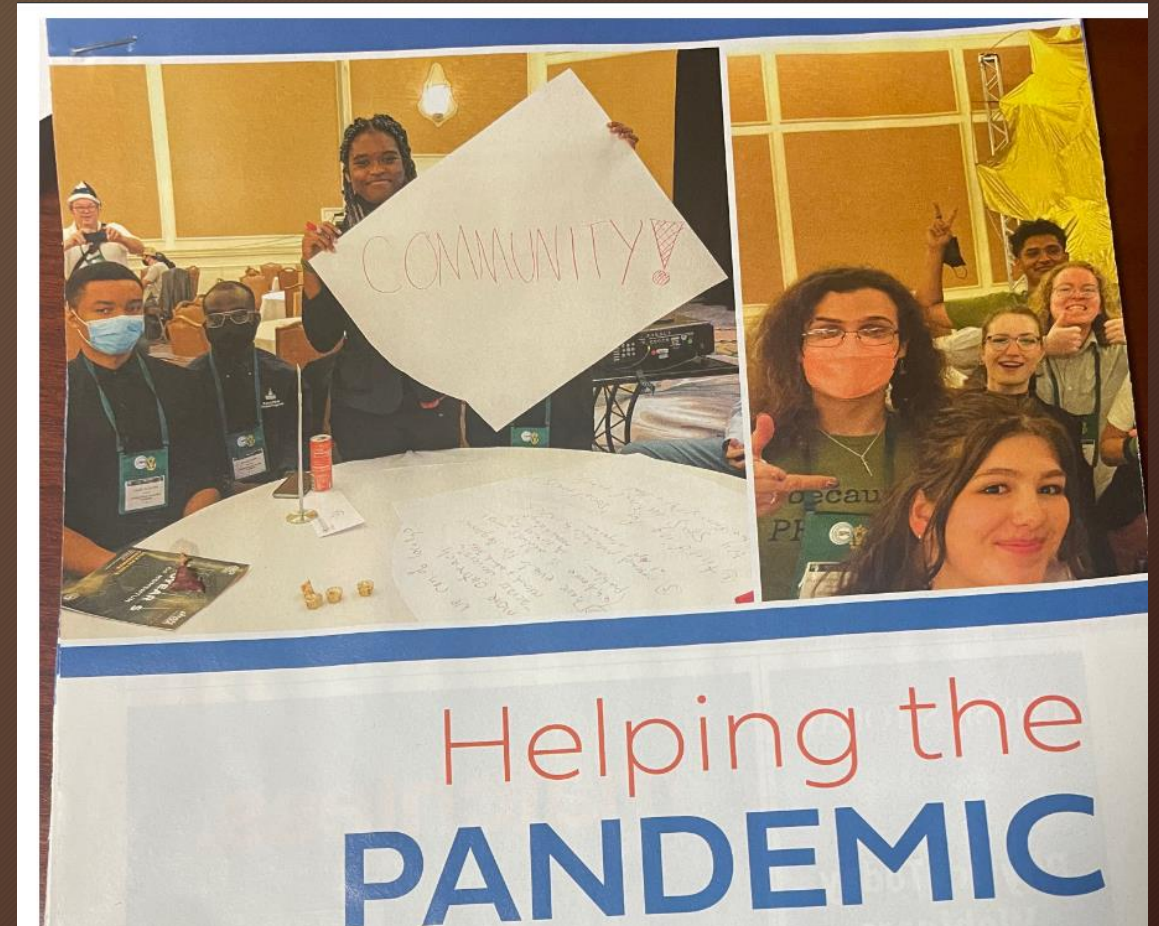


<https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/cartoon-students-working-together>

- A **hidden curriculum** is a set of lessons "which are learned but not openly intended" to be taught in school such as the norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in both the classroom and social environment. [Wikipedia]
- We missed out on many opportunities to learn this during the pandemic.

Pandemic made Hidden Curriculum Worse

- Online classes occurring
- Limited classroom interaction
- Reduced friendships
- Build communities!



5. Inequality of Experience

Students had different experiences during the pandemic

- Bad Experiences
 - Lost family members
 - Family conflict
 - Lack of IT resources
- Good Experience
 - pods



How Do We Catch Students Up?

- Scaffolding, Scaffolding, Scaffolding
- Learning doesn't happen immediately ...
Have patience
- Hands on learning
- Get students into the department doing simple research projects even if they have to take lower-level math classes



Other Things We Can Do

- Industry Board
- Workshops outside of class
- Trips
- Research
- High School Outreach



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Main Take Aways

- Be Patient!
- Connect with Students!
- Connect with Community!
- Help students with everything when they need it - Just in time

Questions

