

**COVID-19 Impact in Israel:  
A Call for International Networking to Promote Resilience and Coping among  
Front-Line University Social Work Students**

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COVID 19 is a serious challenge faced by university students responsible for the well-being of individuals, families and communities (International Federation of Social Workers, 2020). This brief report provides insight of COVID-19 impact on the health and well-being of Israeli university social work students during the first and second waves of infection.

**“R.M.” is a 26-year old female student who works as a counselor in a community based mental health residential facility for young adult patients.**

*"I'm a very social and friendly person that needs social interaction, so social distancing and quarantine led to deterioration of my mood resulting in short episodes of depression, low self-esteem and incompetence... In response, I began self-medicating with cannabis and alcohol more than before ... In the beginning, it was a way to deal with boredom, but [overtime] it was needed to escape reality and generate calm....During quarantine, I was heavily self-medicating but continued my client responsibilities...."*

**“Y.M.” is a 22-year old male student providing mental health services to youth with behavior problems placed in a residential facility.**

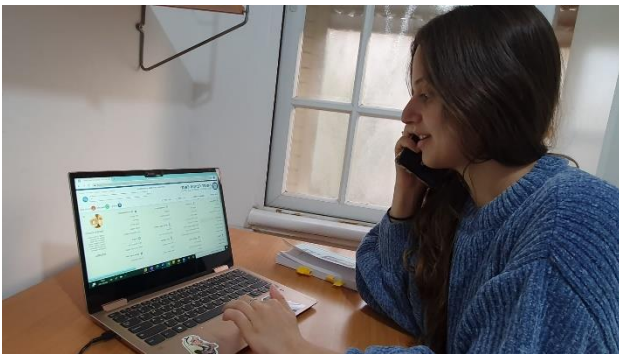
*"As an instructor in a home for at risk youth, the coronavirus outbreak was an emotional obstacle for me, a heavy responsibility regarding the emotional therapy I provide to teens... At the beginning of the outbreak, the fear was intense and I was quarantine for two weeks. That decision caused me much guilt, leaving the teens when they needed me most."*

**“M.S.” is a 23-year old female student counselor working with older adults at a local welfare office.**

*"At the beginning, I didn't take the virus seriously and continued to do my clinical work online ... I was highly affected by older clients who expressed anxiety, fear and loneliness... and began to experience such conditions myself. My workplace offered me to stay home. I felt guilt and anxiety about that decision.....As weeks went by, my clients began to relax and adjust to the situation; and, my ability to treat them became better."*

## Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major crisis with multiple consequences for those needing and providing support and services. For social work students addressing COVID-19, opportunities for international peer contact and experience sharing should be promoted to build student resilience and coping during disaster conditions that call for social work intervention.



## References

International Federation of Social Workers (2020). Statement on IFSW and Covid-19. Available at: <http://www.ifsw.org/statement-on-ifsw-and-covid-19>. Accessed November 6, 2020.

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