

LABORING IN A TIME OF CRISIS: THE ENTANGLEMENT OF WELLNESS AND WORK IN WRITING CENTERS

Genie N. Gaiamo
Middlebury College
ggiamo@middlebury.edu

Like many of you, I found the Spring 2020 semester to be a whirlwind, and not in the usual way. COVID-19 fundamentally changed many aspects of daily living, from how we work and attend school to how we shop for groceries and connect with our families. Our lives shifted swiftly, with little forewarning, and, in many respects, may never be quite the same again. I write these words at the beginning of April on a sunny spring day from my kitchen. Light filters into the room as I type. I hear birds singing and the backyard work of my neighbors: the growl of lawn mowers, the piercing drone of sawing, the percussive of stapling. From where I sit, in my relatively quiet corner of the world, life seems to be going on. People walk their dogs. They order curbside pick-up. They say hello to their neighbors.

Of course, this is a privileged space. In New York City, the city of my youth, my family and friends live and labor under very different conditions. The National Guard has been deployed to set-up temporary hospitals and testing sites around the city and the state. Mobile morgues have been set up in the streets. Assisted living and nursing homes have been put under strict lockdown. Most everyone with roots in the City knows at least someone—likely more than one person—who has the virus. I listen to Cuomo. I call my parents. I text with my friends. I read the social status updates about who's sick, who's recovering, and who's not. Who's been deployed and who's volunteering. Who's working and who's out of work. In a time of crisis, I am split between many spaces—the relative comfort of my Midwestern home, the epicenter of the pandemic in America, the campus paths in rural Vermont that I recently walked with colleagues and with students. Academic life can already be so liminal, as many traverse great distances for their jobs and

live apart from their partners. Right now, my self is more fragmented than usual.

In that fragmented state, many of the discussions I am having lately revolve around work: who has it and who doesn't, who is working from home and who cannot, whether it is safe to work or not. The connections between labor and wellness have never been clearer to me. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, work (like many other regular activities), can be a path to security and "salvation," but it can also be hazardous in the immediate sense of the word. Working can literally kill.

Though I have thought a lot in the last decade or so about labor, injustice, and advocacy, my realization that work can kill became real for me when my mom—a single mother who has prided herself on going to work sick, who has taken off no more than a few days at a time for years, who is willing to brave dangerous weather, physical illness, and emotional hardship for her work—told me she that is unwilling to die for her job. I know this sentiment might seem mundane or otherwise melodramatic to some, but to witness this woman draw so stark a line by refusing to go into the office despite pressure to do so because a shelter in place order was issued for the state in which she works, was nothing short of miraculous. My mother broke the spell of normalizing bad behavior that was circulating in the early days of this pandemic, and laid bare the lengths that corporations, and some workers, are willing to go to skirt laws that are put into place for the safety and well-being of its citizens. This illustrates a refusal from a blue-collar worker, who has otherwise been dutiful and diligent her entire life, to endanger herself for her work. Right now, COVID-19 is laying bare the stark realities of capitalism and the ways in which human labor is exploited and discarded in this economic system, but it is also revealing a zeitgeist in which workers

are demanding security and safety and are refusing to work if these things cannot be guaranteed.

Labor and wellness are inextricably bound. In an ideal situation, our work would be

- Meaningful
- Engaging
- Stable
- Safe
- Ethical
- Fairly compensated

In addition, [OSHA notes](#) that workers have the right to

- Work in conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.
- Receive information and training (in a language and vocabulary the worker understands) about workplace hazards, methods to prevent them, and the OSHA standards that apply to their workplace.
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- File a complaint asking OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA's rules.
- Exercise their rights under the law without retaliation, including reporting an injury or raising health and safety concerns with their employer or OSHA.

Even during a pandemic, employers must take steps to mitigate or remove identified hazards. COVID-19 is showing us that our labor is far more precarious (and interconnected) than we would like to think. It is also showing us that issues of labor are issues of wellness. One cannot be well if one labors precariously. All of that precarity is turned inward into physiological symptoms such as stress, malnourishment, cognitive fatigue, mental health crises, chronic health issues, etc., and all of that precarity is externalized through risk taking behaviors, poor executive functioning, poverty, and other kinds of human suffering. Among those who labor precariously, are, unsurprisingly, minorities and minimum wage workers. In early April, the [CDC considered](#) and [subsequently loosened guidelines for essential critical workers exposed to COVID-19](#) so that they can return to work more quickly if

they are asymptomatic. Among those are many minimum-wage employees, such as grocery store clerks. Of the 700,000 jobs that have been eliminated, at the time of writing this, nearly [60% have been held by women](#). Minority and immigrant workers in [poultry factories are becoming infected and dying at alarming rates](#), and [healthcare workers are being disciplined and fired](#) for speaking out about their own hazardous working conditions.

Meanwhile, our field is having a reckoning of its own. While many of us have moved online and, for now at least, are trying to finish the semester and plan for summer and fall terms, precarity lies just around the corner. Higher-education institutions are taking different approaches to supporting, articulating, and understanding how we labor. Some are asking staff (and sometimes faculty) to track their daily remote work hour-by-hour and even minute-by-minute. These same institutions (and many more) are requiring workers to sign remote work contracts. Others are guaranteeing wage continuity only through the end of June. Institutions are responding to the financial fallout from the pandemic crisis in other ways, including salary cuts, adjunct cuts, hiring freezes, etc. At the same time, many institutions are bombarding their workers with faux or shallow wellness advice. [Some in the field are wondering](#) if COVID-19 will signal the death knell of higher education as we know it, which only contributes to the stress we are experiencing at our home institutions.

In this time of great uncertainty, what can our community of writing center professionals do to help? At the moment, writing center folks are doing what we know how to do best: supporting students and supporting one another. In the last month, a wellspring of resources, webinars, workshops, discussions, and resource repositories have emerged to support WCAs in the transition to online tutoring platforms. An attendant set of resources have been developed to support our wellness and care. In early April, I offered one such resource—a workshop and discussion on wellness and care in writing center work. I initially responded to our campus's going remote—accompanied by attendant feelings of isolation in the first year of my new job—by starting to work

on my manuscript on wellness and care in writing centers. I realized quickly, however, that in a crisis of this scale there is simply too much lag time between *now* and *then* for a book. My colleagues want and need wellness advice and support *now*. And I can't blame them. While I am the type of person who is always waiting for the other shoe to drop (chalk this up to living in NYC during 9/11 and in Cambridge during the Boston Marathon bombing), I too have been seeking out ways to understand and place this current moment within the larger framework of both personal and professional experiences. It is no surprise that I first turned to research and government guidelines to theorize how WCAs can respond during a protracted world-wide crisis.

The [CDC guidelines for “getting your workplace ready for pandemic flu”](#) (2017), recommend the following:

- Plan before the pandemic.
- Take action during the pandemic.
- Follow-up after the pandemic.

Planning Before the Pandemic

In my book project, I discuss at length how to develop emergency operations plans but, suffice it to say, there is simply no way to create a plan for every emergency. When I worked at a community college, we had back-to-back Nor'easters for five weeks, a gas leak, and a bomb threat, all of which closed our schools and writing centers with little forewarning. When I worked at The Ohio State University, we sheltered in place during an active “shooter” (stabber) event. Now, while at Middlebury College, we are facing a worldwide pandemic that has brought many lives and economies to a grinding halt. Although there are many possible scenarios that we can envision that may affect our work, I want to reassure you that not foreseeing this crisis was not your fault. However, going forward, developing even a general emergency plan (perhaps one that maps out short-term, middle-term, and long-term crisis responses) would be a good standard practice for most every writing center. While many of our colleges and universities have their own emergency operations plans, we know that one size simply does not fit all in these circumstances. Collaborating with campus emergency planning

committees or departments is recommended as you develop your plan. [FEMA also has a set of resources for emergency planning in higher education](#). Once you develop your plan in concert with whatever campus entities are connected to emergency planning and response, I suggest you share it with your staff and dedicate time to talking it through. You might even want to workshop it with your staff as additional concerns might arise from them as they relay their lived experienced working in the center.

Taking Action During the Pandemic

By the time you are all reading this, however, you likely have taken significant action in response to the pandemic. Many of you have moved your courses and your writing centers online. You have trained tutors in synchronous and asynchronous tutoring. You have helped troubleshoot technology and settled on standard practices for your writing centers on how to deliver remote and virtual tutoring. Bravo!

In the early weeks of movement to online education models, many colleagues crowdsourced training materials, marketing materials, and user guides to programs such as WCOOnline, Zoom, Google Hangouts etc. One thing to do, if you have not done so yet, is to register for the WCenter listserv, SLAC WPA (if you are part of a SLAC or have interest in it), and the Facebook group “Directors of Writing Centers,” where colleagues share resources freely and frequently. Recognize that you do not need to labor alone—there are resources out there that, with some modification, are useful for training and onboarding tutors in virtual (and other) environments.

Continuing to Act During the Pandemic

Once the move to online and remote work is complete, once the tutors are, at least, nominally trained, and the dust has settled on the keyboards and tablets, as it were, where then do we turn our attention? How do we labor with wellness and care in mind?

Many Writing Center Administrators (WCAs) I have spoken with have noted that there are multiple barriers that both tutors and students face as they try to engage with the writing center. Many

WCAs are reporting that tutors are withdrawing from their work, students are struggling with motivation and time management, writing center numbers are down. They are also reporting the wide differences in technological and spatial access affecting both staff members and clients. I know how hard it is to see all this precarity laid bare for us. Many think that college—especially residential college—is somehow an equalizer and, were these students back on campus, these barriers to learning would be mitigated significantly. In reality, our students and staffs labor under precarity all the time and this crisis is just pushing the unseen out into the open. Many college students, we know, [face issues of homelessness and food insecurity](#). Many students do so much work outside of school, in addition to caregiving, that they struggle with keeping up with schoolwork, even in a regular semester. One outcome of the COVID-19 crisis, I hope, is that we nuance how we understand access and inclusion—both for our staffs and our students—and that online pedagogical models become normalized across all kinds of institutions of higher education. I also hope that we discuss scaffolding and prioritization of learning goals, as many of us have had to pull back on our course material (and grading models), perhaps to positive rather than negative effect.

For the moment, however, WCAs can assess the level of access students have to internet and quiet space by asking them. At Middlebury, we added a set of questions (Appendix A) to the appointment form through WOnline. These questions allow tutors to adjust the kinds of support they provide to clients and to prepare themselves for providing support through the chat/audio/video functions of the program. Similarly, these questions can also help with technology support, as WOnline’s synchronous tutoring platform doesn’t work well on cell phones.

Provided students need asynchronous support because of access issues, responses from these questions justify the inclusion of other kinds of tutoring services, such as asynchronous tutoring via WOnline, email, Zoom, or phone. Finding out as much as you can about your clientele and their needs can help to shape the kinds of services

writing centers pivot to offer. These questions can also be posed to tutors and shape how they are trained and the kinds of tutoring they provide.

Of course, many of the suggestions I am making right now require a kind of “agility” that is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and insensitive to the current crisis. To that point, I am not so sure that a single-minded focus on sustaining “business as usual,” despite the extreme circumstances we currently face is what we need right now. In the same discussion that I had with WCAs, many pointed to behaviors, such as withdrawal, lack of motivation, feelings of isolation and depression, that signal tutors (not just clients) are also facing crisis. We know that many college students face mental health concerns in a regular semester and that these trends track with adult Americans’ experiences of mental health concerns. At the moment, nearly 50% of respondents in a survey noted that their mental health was being affected by COVID-19, [according to findings released by the Kaiser Family Foundation](#). This suggests that mental health concerns are on the rise for Americans; college students (and tutors) are likely no exception to this trend.

This is where issues of wellness and care come in. We have an opportunity to make wellness and care a central part of our training and support for writing center tutors. Of course, sharing resources with tutors on wellness, labor advocacy, and other pertinent resources (see Appendix B) is a relatively quick way of doing this. Other more time intensive activities include establishing online forums for tutors to share their daily experiences while living and tutoring under shelter in place orders, as well as scheduling online synchronous discussions about the emotional challenges that tutors are currently facing with their work (and in their broader lives), if they are willing to share. The resources I share (Appendix C) define the symptoms of burnout as well as ways to mitigate those symptoms through practices that increase self-awareness, such as reflection and mindfulness activities (Sanchez-Reilly, et al.). These practices lead to increased job engagement, compassion, self-care, and outcomes for our clients. Conversely, clinicians who possess lower levels of self-awareness have a greater likelihood of

compassion-fatigue and burnout. Critical to engaging in “care” work, then, is the development of a toolkit of practices and activities that facilitate healthy work practices and care practices. While building community in an online environment is challenging, much of what makes up our daily lives has disappeared or changed significantly in a short amount of time. Writing centers, then, can provide much needed community, including socialization and reflection opportunities. We always talk in our field about how writing centers are a [community of practice](#) (Geller, et al.). Now we have the chance to reimagine different ways of practicing community in online environments to explicitly include mindfulness and reflection practices.

This is also the time, however, for WCAs to deeply consider how they advocate for their staff. For example, in the dizzying moments after students left campus, I was given conflicting information regarding student workers. At first, I was told students could not continue working. Then I was told students who are currently based in the US and have access to online technology could work. In the interim, I was vocal in noting that without student workers, we would not only have almost no academic support in writing (not to mention all other disciplines), but we would also effectively be putting hundreds of students out of work during a financially precarious time. I am not saying that my arguments were the only factor in changing the policy, but writing center directors occupy a critical position in terms of speaking up for workers—student, professional, faculty—especially during a crisis. Asking to be at the table during decision-making processes—especially during emergencies—is one way to be a proactive advocate. Additionally, reviewing institutional accreditation guidelines is a useful way in which to advocate for tutoring, since many accreditation boards consider learning resources to be mission-critical.

Of course, in the long term, the stress of remote learning, coupled with the financial and emotional toll of quarantine, may affect the emotional and mental health of our staff. In this case, we need to advocate for mental health support for our staffs. Of course, if our centers are staffed by peer tutors, one might argue that we

point them to student counseling services; however, as para-professionals and professionals, our tutors are on the front lines of educational work, which has been made more stressful by the sudden move to online learning. We need to advocate for mental health support that recognizes the dual roles our peer tutors hold as both students and workers, and we need to ensure that our professional tutors—many of whom may be part time—have access to affordable counseling. This means advocating for the extension of [employee assistance programs](#) (EAP) to part time workers and demanding an extension of the amount of care provided through these programs. If no such EAP program exists at your institution, advocate for it. It might still not be enough support, but it is a start. Conveying to our institutions that [writing center work is part of the helping professions](#), and that our tutors may suffer increasingly from burnout as they labor under extraordinary stressors, is critical to this endeavor. Additionally, developing group support, such as a group yoga session, a group therapy meeting for tutors, and other community-oriented care activities will help to continue to build community and establish support structures where many have been taken away during this pandemic. As we know, the success of our work—of the project of learning—depends on the emotional wellbeing of our workers.

There are also moments where we need to simply say that enough is enough. We may be subtly pressured to perform through coercive Pollyannaish stories our institutions highlight featuring employee “grit” and “resilience.” We may be overtly threatened with dire predictions about the fates of our centers and hiring prospects. We may simply not be able to hold onto tutors this semester because they quit. Similarly, our clients may drop off and be incapable of seeking out our services—already a common observation among WCAs on message boards. In these instances, the gospel of productivity—alluring as it may be—ought to be ignored. Reportage for this semester ought to look very different from previous semesters. IWCA ought to issue a statement about performance and assessment metrics in writing centers during a crisis. Generally, requests for adding *more* support,

more programming, *more* interventions, ought to be met with skepticism and reluctance. Try not to give into the cult of academic productivity. Recognize that while some of us might be in relative comfort working from home, [millions around the world are struggling](#); therefore, we WCAs ought to be scaling back as we calibrate what is meaningful, equitable, and manageable work. We are not simply working from home; we are working from home during a worldwide crisis and so are our employees and our clients.

Following-up After the Pandemic

I cannot tell you when the pandemic will abate. There may be multiple waves of infection and a need for further quarantine. Some worry that this cycle will become the new normal. Whatever happens, I recommend following up with one another after shelter in place orders have lifted—or even after the first or second semester online has passed. The experience of a collective trauma is one that sticks with us for a long time after the fact. Processing this experience together, perhaps with a counselor present or at-hand, is important to healing.

In the meantime, I want to end on a positive note. We are currently on the cusp of a lot of exciting research and thinking in the fields of wellness and labor advocacy, both within and outside of our field. Some suggest a [new protest movement focused on labor rights is emerging](#). Many writing center workers are thinking about and attempting to enact fair working conditions during this extraordinary moment. Part of this advocacy work—a lot of it—ought to be focused on meaningful and impactful wellness interventions as well as advocating for our workers' rights. The growing interest in this topic among WCAs suggests that we are moving into what might be a sea change in how we prepare our workers for labor in writing centers. The next step, however, requires acknowledging that we can only do so much in terms of wellness if the environments we labor in are themselves unwell. As the national drama plays out in a fundamental tension between the safety of our populace and the re-opening of our economy, I urge us to think beyond our day-to-day work and interrogate what writing centers are in a time of crisis; work and

wellness do not need to be at odds with one another. However, when we inevitably return to some kind of “new” normal, work that tethers wellness to labor is critical.

As for me, well, I am taking it day-by-day. I work within my limits. I check-in on my students, tutors, colleagues, family, and friends. I take long walking breaks multiple times a day. I try to eat as well as I can, and sleep as much as I can, which hasn't been all that much lately. I also have been engaging in meaningful creative work outside of my job; this is a luxury, I know. While the balance of my work priorities—in all their diversity and complexity—were beginning to shift before COVID-19, they have suddenly banked hard towards prioritization. I know not everyone can do what I do; this is the alluring unreality of the rhetoric of self-care, there are too many selves who have too many different levels of access to care; it takes a community. I hope this piece has introduced possibilities for how we re-think our labor, fundamentally, within a wellness framework. We owe it to ourselves, to our staffs, to our clients, and to our community of practice

Postscript

Of course, publication timelines cannot fully match the breakneck speed with which a crisis like COVID-19 evolves. Since writing this piece in early April, a lot has changed, but a lot has stayed the same. While most parts of the country have reopened, [we are still seeing an alarming rise in new cases in a number of places in the United States](#). Even while this is happening, many colleges and universities (including my own) are planning to welcome students back to campus in the fall, despite [some very clear barriers to achieving a safe in-person semester](#). Financially speaking, despite jobs rebounding in June, and a [stock market rally](#), colleges and universities seem to be accelerating austerity measures they started imposing fairly early on in the crisis, such as cuts to compensation and staffing. People on our listservs are discussing how these cuts have impacted their teaching and administrative loads, summer stipends, and staffing budgets. In the years to come, I hope that our field grapples with how quickly and to what extent institutions cut support for writing centers. Perhaps the larger

conversation that is taking place in higher education (and is mirrored in our national rhetoric) in which the prioritization of money over the safety of workers (among others) will come to our field and we will see this as a clarion call to engage in more intentional labor advocacy and wellness support for our practitioners. For now, however, I hope that WCAs (and tutors) will consider the very real downstream effects of returning to in-person tutoring in the fall and will plan accordingly with remote offerings.

By the time you are reading this, of course, the situation will have changed even further. Decisions about the fall semester, and attendant budgetary projections for the new fiscal year, will likely be finalized. Similarly, planning the next academic year will likely be in full swing, particularly for writing centers. As you plan, please consider the safety and well-being of your workers and, in particular, your workers of color.

I want to end this piece on labor and advocacy by talking about race. We need to do more, especially to recruit and support people of color, and particularly Black people, in writing centers. Another flashpoint during COVID-19 are the recent protests that are part of the established [Black Lives Matter](#) movement that have erupted around the world. While many of us were sheltering-in-place, Black men and women were murdered by the police. The systematic and historical oppression of Black people isn't a new phenomenon, yet what does seem to be new is the widespread engagement with BLM, [especially in small rural predominately white towns](#), as well as among some educational, government, and corporate entities—though one might argue that these are [opportunistic](#) in their own right. Taking all of this into account alongside the fact that [COVID-19 disproportionately affects and kills people of color](#), matters of advocacy and wellness must also be informed by anti-racism. These protests are yet another clarion call that I hope our field explicitly answers through evaluating our hiring practices, our engagement with institutional and local police departments, our training models, our values and mission, and our support (financial, emotional, professional or otherwise) of people of color—especially Black people—in doing writing center work. This fall, we face many challenges

(some of which are largely out of our control) but what is in our control is how we position and carry out writing center work during a time of crisis. This is a moment to reconceive our field and to develop anti-racist models of wellness and labor advocacy.

Works Cited

- “Access to Higher Education for Students Experiencing Homelessness.” *National Center for Homeless Education*. <https://nche.ed.gov/higher-education/>
- Achenbach, Joel. “Coronavirus is Harming the Mental Health of Tens of Millions of People in U.S., New Poll Finds.” *Washington Post*, 2 April 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/coronavirus-is-harming-the-mental-health-of-tens-of-millions-of-people-in-us-new-poll-finds/2020/04/02/565e6744-74ee-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html
- “Campus Emergency Management Resources.” *FEMA Emergency Management Institute*. <https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/ccmr.aspx>
- CBS News. “CDC Set to Loosen Back-to-Work Guidelines for Some Who Self-Isolate, Pence Says.” *CBS News*, 18 April 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-cdc-guidelines-back-to-work-self-isolate/>
- Duarte, Fernando. “Black Lives Matter: Do Companies Really Support the Cause?” *BBC World Service*, 12 June 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200612-black-lives-matter-do-companies-really-support-the-cause>
- “FAQ: What is an Employee Assistant Program (EAP)?” *US Office of Personnel Management*. <https://www.opm.gov/faqs/QA.aspx?fid=4313c618-a96e-4c8e-b078-1f76912a10d9&pid=2c2b1e5b-6ff1-4940-b478-34039a1e1174>
- Farzan, Antonia Noori, et al. “Nine States Hit Record Highs for Covid-19 Cases as Pence Calls Fear of Second Wave ‘Overblown.’” *Washington Post*, 17 June 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/06/17/coronavirus-live-updates-us/>
- Featherstone, Jared, et al. “The Mindful Tutor.” *How We Teach Writing Tutors: A WLN Digital Edited Collection*, edited by Karen G. Johnson and Ted Roggenbuck, 2019. wlnjournal.org/digitaleditedcollection1/
- Geller, Ann Ellen, et al. *Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. UP of Colorado, 2007.

- Gallagher, Dan and Aimee Maxfield. "Learning Online to Tutor Online: How We Teach Writing Tutors." *How We Teach Writing Tutors: A WLN Digital Edited Collection*, edited by Karen G. Johnson and Ted Roggenbuck, 2019. wlnjournal.org/digitaleditedcollection1/
- "Get Your Workplace Ready for Pandemic Flu." *US Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. April 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-work-set.pdf>
- He, Laura and Anneken Tappe. "Dow Rallies into the Close after Soaring More than 800 Points." *CNN*, 16 June 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/15/investing/global-stocks/index.html>
- "Helping Professions." *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/helping-professions>.
- Horsley, Scott. "Women Are Losing More Jobs in Coronavirus Shutdown." *National Public Radio*, 8 April 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/08/829141182/women-are-losing-more-jobs-in-coronavirus-shutdowns>
- Jordan, Miriam and Caitlin Dickerson. "Poultry Worker's Death Highlights Spread of Coronavirus in Meat Plants." *New York Times*, 9 April 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/us/coronavirus-chicken-meat-processing-plants-immigrants.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>
- Kavadlo, Jesse "The Message is the Medium: Electronically Helping Writing Tutors Help Electronically." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2013. <http://www.praxisuwc.com/kavadlo-102>
- O'Hehir, Andrew. "Protest in a Small Town: Black Lives Matter Comes to Rural America—And It Matters." *Salon*, 15 June 2020. <https://www.salon.com/2020/06/15/protest-in-a-small-town-black-lives-matter-comes-to-rural-america--and-it-matters/>
- Perry, David. M. "For Some Colleges, Missing the Fall Semester May Be Just the Tip of the Iceberg." *CNN*, 15 April 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/15/opinions/colleges-and-higher-ed-COVID-19-changes-perry/index.html>
- Sanchez-Reilly, Sandra, et al. "Caring for Oneself to Care for Others: Physicians and Their Self-Care." *The Journal of Supportive Oncology*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2013, pp. 75–81.
- Scheiber, Noam and Brian M. Rosenthal. "Nurses and Doctors Speaking Out on Safety Now Risk Their Job." *New York Times*, 9 April 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/business/coronavirus-health-workers-speak-out.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>
- Steinberg, Laurence. "Expecting Students to Play It Safe if Colleges Reopen Is a Fantasy." *New York Times*, 15 June 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/coronavirus-college-safe.html>
- Subbaraman, Nidhi. "How to Address the Coronavirus's Outsized Toll on People of Colour." *Nature*, 18 May 2020. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01470-x>
- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *New York Times*, 13 April 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/opinion/protest-social-distancing-covid.html>
- Vegas, Emiliana "School Closures, Government Responses, and Learning Inequality around the World During COVID-19." *The Brookings Institution*, 14 April 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/school-closures-government-responses-and-learning-inequality-around-the-world-during-covid-19/>
- Wamsley, Laurel. "White House Announces New Guidance For How Critical Employees Can Return To Work." *National Public Radio*, 8 April 2020. <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/08/830310903/white-house-announces-new-guidance-for-how-critical-employees-can-return-to-work>
- "Workers' Rights." *US Department of Labor: Occupational Safety and Health Administration*. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3021.pdf>

Appendix A

Appointment Form Questions That Assess Students' Access to Technology and Space

Check the box that best describes your technology access
Access to a computer
Access to a tablet
Access to a smartphone, only
Other (text form)
Please check the box that best describes your internet connection
Internet connection that supports streaming video and audio
Internet connection that supports audio only
Internet connection that does not support video or audio
Please check the box that best describes your current space situation
Access to a private space
Access to a quiet shared space
Access to a louder shared space

Appendix B

Resources for Online Learning and Tutoring in the Pandemic

Labor Advocacy and Policy Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/gr-pan-flu-work-set.pdf>
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-FS-3747.pdf>
- OSHA preparedness: <https://www.grainger.com/know-how/industry/public-sector/kh-will-your-campus-be-ready-should-osha-come-calling>
- American Association of University Professors: <https://www.aaup.org/about-aaup>
- Precarity in the Academy: <https://universitybusiness.com/COVID-19-how-adjuncts-are-impacted>
- Practical and Legal Issues for Employers during a Pandemic: <https://www.arnoldporter.com/en/perspectives/publications/2020/03/pandemic-coronavirus-practical-and-legal>
- US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/pandemic_flu.html
- Workplace Pandemic Preparedness and the Americans with Disabilities Act: https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/pandemic_flu.html
- Responses to Lack of Workplace Safety: <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/11/872856822/thousands-of-workers-say-their-jobs-are-unsafe-as-economy-reopens>
- Taking a Stand in the Workplace: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/business/taking-a-stand-in-workplace.html?action=click&module=Editors%20Picks&pgtype=Homepage>
- Can Faculty be Forced Back on Campus? <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Can-Faculty-Be-Forced-Back-On/248981>

Selected Wellness Resources:

- American College Health Association Video on Mental Health in COVID-19 Era: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCMtgCLX2Q&feature=youtu.be>
- CDC Guidelines for managing stress: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- Jared Featherstone (personal website, meditation resources): <https://www.jaredfeatherstone.com/meditation>
- Mindful Tutor Article: <https://wlnjournal.org/digitaleditedcollection1/Featherstoneetal.html>
- Psychology Today Therapist Directory: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- Therapy Matcher: <https://therapymatcher.wordpress.com/contact/>
- Yoga breathing technique, 4-7-8 breath, Dr. Andrew Weil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz4G31LGyog>
- Yoga for Writers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQWwWaWXPS0>
- Journaling how-to: <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/11/875054593/not-sure-what-youre-feeling-journaling-can-help>

Selected Online Tutoring Resources:

- DePaul University Tutor Handbook (chapters 5 and 6 on asynchronous and synchronous tutoring best practices): <https://condor.depaul.edu/writing/tutors-handbook.html>
- “The Message is the Medium: Electronically Helping Writing Tutors Help Electronically” (Kavadlo): <http://www.praxisuwc.com/kavadlo-102>
- “Learning Online to Tutor Online: How We Teach Writing Tutors” (Gallagher and Maxfield): <https://wlnjournal.org/digitaleditedcollection1/GallagherMaxfield.html>
- Another Word University of Wisconsin Blog: <https://dept.writing.wisc.edu/blog/the-online-writing-center-is-about-equity-for-students-and-for-you-too/>

Free Internet and Other Resources:*

- [FCC agreement](#) stating that providers will waive late fees, not cut-off service for lack of payment, and open hot spots.
- [Charter Free Internet offer for 2 months](#)
- [Comcast COVID-19 response](#): offers free WiFi for 2 months to low income families plus all Xfinity hot-spots are free to the public during this time
- [Altice/Suddenlink response](#): offers 30 MB internet to any new subscriber free for 60 days. No late fees or terminations for existing customers
- [AT&T COVID-19 response](#): offers open hot-spots, unlimited data to existing customers, and \$10/month plans to low income families
- [Sprint COVID-19 response](#): provides unlimited data to existing customers, and, starting Tuesday, 3/17/2020, will allow all handsets to enable hot-spots for 60 days at no extra charge, also follows FCC agreement.
- [T-Mobile COVID-19 response](#): unlimited data to existing customers, and will allow all handsets to enable hot-spots for 60 days at no extra charge, also follows FCC agreement.
- [Verizon COVID-19 response](#): no special offers but following the FCC agreement.

*This information comes from UCI’s Coronavirus information page, which has an excellent section covering [Student FAQs](#).

Online Security Guidance:

- Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) updates: <https://www.cisa.gov/coronavirus>
- CISA Insights on Risk Management for COVID-19: https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20_0306_cisa_insights_risk_management_for_novel_coronavirus.pdf
- FBI Guidance on Zoom: <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/boston/news/press-releases/fbi-warns-of-teleconferencing-and-online-classroom-hijacking-during-COVID-19-pandemic>
- FTC Information regarding scammers: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/coronavirus-scams-what-ftc-doing>

Appendix C

Wellness Topics and Discussion Prompts

Burnout—Notice the Signs

“Burnout is defined as a “progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work.”¹ It is further defined by 3 key characteristics” (Sanchez-Reilly et al., 2013):

1. physical and emotional exhaustion
2. cynicism
3. inefficacy

Activity—Reflect and Articulate:

- Check-in—How are we doing? Are we experiencing any of the characteristics of burnout?
- Articulate/develop a self-care plan to mitigate burnout feelings.

Advocating in a Time of Crisis

Activity—Discussion:

- How are we advocating for ourselves, for our tutors, for our colleagues, for our clientele?

Developing Self-Awareness

“The importance of developing self-awareness deserves particular attention as a realm of self-care. Self-awareness, **defined as a clinician's ability to combine self-knowledge and a dual-awareness of both his or her own subjective experience and the needs of the patient**, has been identified in the field of psychology as the most important factor in the psychologists' ability to function well in the face of personal and professional stressors. Greater self-awareness among clinicians may lead to **greater job engagement and compassion satisfaction, enhanced self-care, and improved patient care and satisfaction**. Conversely, clinicians who possess lower levels of self-awareness have a greater likelihood of compassion fatigue and burnout. **Data support mindfulness meditation and reflective writing as 2 methods of enhancing self-awareness**” (Sanchez-Reilly et al., 2013).

Activity—Brainstorming:

Brainstorm how we might develop self-awareness and encourage its development in our colleagues, our tutors, and our clientele.

Appendix D: Selected Wellness Bibliography

This list is drawn from my personal website, where I will update and provide further resources:

<https://geniegiaimophd.weebly.com/>

- Baker-Bell, April. *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*. Routledge, 2020.
- Concannon, K., Morris, J., Chavannes, N., & Diaz, V. (2020). Cultivating Emotional Wellness and Self-Care through Mindful Mentorship in the Writing Center. *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 44(5-6), 10-18.
- Degner, H., Wojciechowski, K., & Giroux, C. (2015). Opening closed doors: A rationale for creating a safe space for tutors struggling with mental health concerns or illnesses. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*.
- Emmelhainz, N. (2020). Tutoring Begins with Breath: Guided Meditation and its Effects on Writing Consultant Training. *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 44(5-6), 2-10.
- Gaiimo, Genie, (ed.). *Wellness and Care in Writing Center Work*. Digital Edited Collection: WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship. Forthcoming, early 2021.
- Green, N. A. (2018). Moving beyond alright: And the emotional toll of this, my life matters too, in the writing center work. *The Writing Center Journal*, 37(1), 15-34.
- Jackson, R., McKinney, J. G., & Caswell, N. I. (2016). Writing Center Administration and/as Emotional Labor. *Composition Forum* (Vol. 34). Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition.
- Mack, E., & Hupp, K. (2017). Mindfulness in the Writing Center: A Total Encounter. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*.
- Parsons, K. (2020). Tutors' Column: "Just Say 'No': Setting Emotional Boundaries in the Writing Center is a Practice in Self-Care". *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 44(5-6), 26-30.
- Perry, A. (2016). Training for Triggers: Helping Writing Center Consultants Navigate Emotional Sessions. In *Composition Forum* (Vol. 34). Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition.
- Sanchez-Reilly, S., Morrison, L. J., Carey, E., Bernacki, R., O'Neill, L., Kapo, J., Periyakoil, V. S., & Thomas, J. (2013). Caring for oneself to care for others: physicians and their self-care. *The journal of supportive oncology*, 11(2), 75–81.
- Simmons, Erik, Miller, Laura K., Prendergast, Caroline, and Christiana McGuigan. (2020). "Is Tutoring Stressful?: Measuring Tutors' Cortisol Levels." *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, vol. 44, no. 5-6, 2020, pp. 18-26.
- Wooten, Courtney Adams, Jacob Babb, Kristi Murray Costello, Kate Navickas, editors. *The Things We Carry: Strategies for Recognizing and Negotiating Emotional Labor in Writing Program Administration* (forthcoming Utah State University Press, August 2020).