

Psychologists face huge workloads and need more support

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COVID-19 has placed unprecedented pressure on our health system and many people's mental health is suffering because of it, including psychologists who are experiencing "pandemic burnout".

Psychologists are now facing a one-in-100 year situation, where they can relate to their clients' anxieties and trauma because they're living through it themselves.

Case loads and demand is becoming unmanageable and people are leaving the profession because of it.

World events such as war, natural disasters and the ongoing pandemic mean that anxiety levels are at record

highs, and our mental health system is buckling under the pressure, with long waitlists and psychologists feeling completely overwhelmed and overworked.

One in three psychologists is now unable to see new clients, but prior to the pandemic only one in 100 was not taking new clients on.

Psychologists are also not immune to their own mental health struggles, and those that are struggling simply don't have the time to seek help or can't access their own psychologists due to the current strain on services.

More must be done to support psychologists.

I believe we're in the eye of the storm of a mental health crisis that will have far

reaching effects for generations to come.

It's time to start investing in fixing the mental health system and increasing the pipeline to help give psychologists the support they need and deserve.

Reducing the red tape, and the arduous and confusing reporting requirements that psychologists have to navigate daily would help reduce work load levels.

Psychologists on average spend an additional 17 hours a week doing unpaid reporting work.

These hours would be much better spent on seeing additional clients or on self-care.

Current statistics show that the Federal Government is only meeting 35 per cent of its

psychology workforce target listed in the National Mental Health Service Planning Framework; the largest shortfall of all mental health professions.

It's clear psychologists need money injected urgently to help bridge the gap.

The Australian Psychological Society is calling for the Federal Government to invest \$5 million to create more than 3500 supervisors and 6000 additional work-ready placement psychologists within two years.

This is a good first step in helping reduce pressure on these vital frontline workers.

As psychologists we are consistently absorbing and supporting other people's emotions and experiences;

having time to connect to our own therapists allows us to release our own and makes us better caregivers.

This is desperately needed for psychologists, particularly now, but severely lacking.

Psychologists, therapists (and all healthcare workers) can hold space to help others while working through their own challenges, but it's very important that they're addressed and cared for.

The danger for all of us comes when the stakes are too high; asking for help or taking time off should be encouraged, because the ramifications of our caregivers burning out is simply catastrophic.

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