Unforeseen Consequences of COVID-19:

Work Preparation and Planning for Mothers with Substance Use Disorders



West Virginia University.

Background

- Over the past two years, the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic has had deleterious effects for people working or receiving education at home
- Effects are compounded when a mother is working from home, has an infant and is also dealing with a substance use disorder (SUD)
- Employment and educational delivery formats have changed drastically during the pandemic to accommodate employee and student availability and expectations
- However, an increase in requests for remote work or education can contribute to long-term effects of isolation
- Maternal workforce expectations and education and employment planning efforts within the IMPACT WV program (WVIMPACT.org) have also shifted
- IMPACT WV mothers have given birth to infants diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) or who were exposed to substances in utero
- Mothers are referred to an education and employment specialist to help find educational and/or employment opportunities
- Mothers' interests, expectations and resources are valuable pieces of information used to successfully navigate work force, education or life skills training

Objectives

- Describe the deleterious effects the isolation of COVID-19 had for this population
- Identify how effects are compounded when a mother has an infant and is also dealing with a SUD
- Recognize the need for increased education on common life skills to help build a positive lifestyle supporting recovery, mental health and wellness

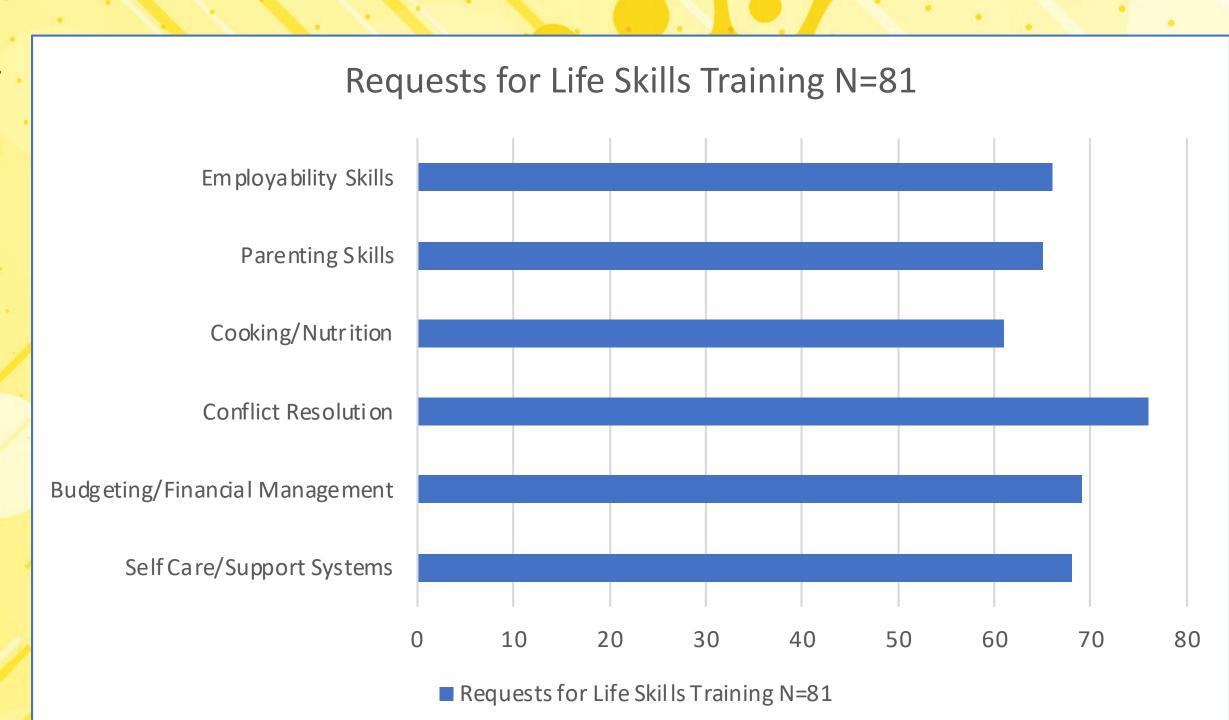
Description of the Program

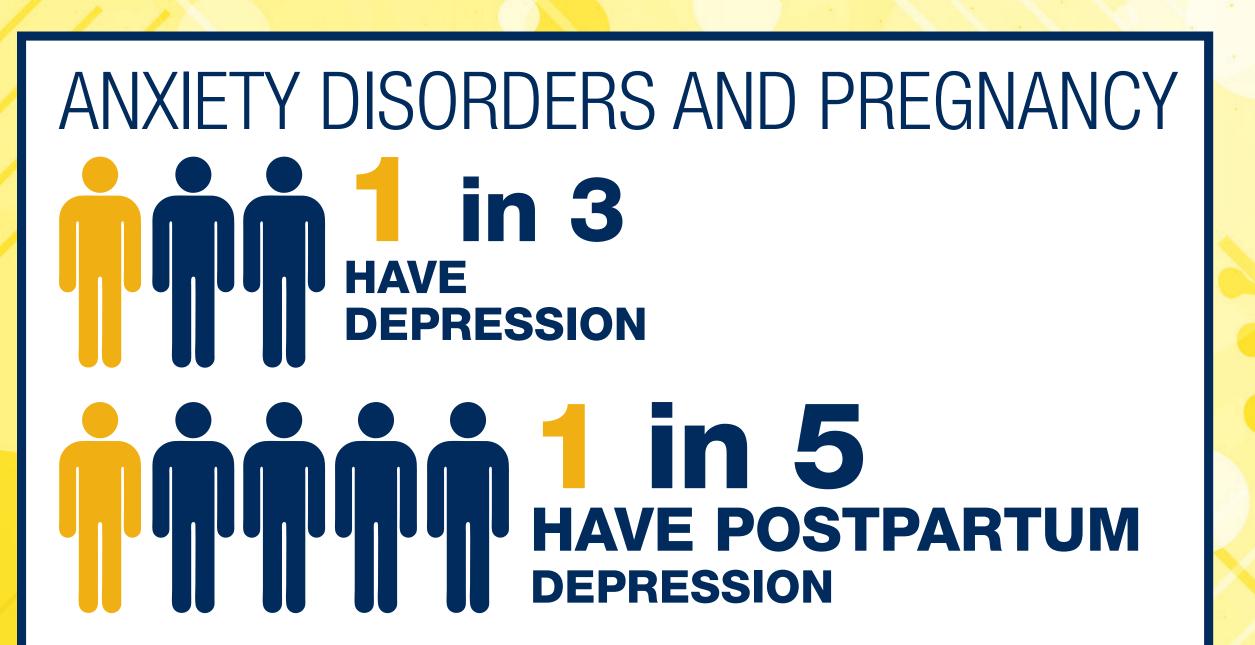
Statistics were gathered on remote employment and education percentages prior to the pandemic along with isolation effects on mental health and overdoses during the pandemic.

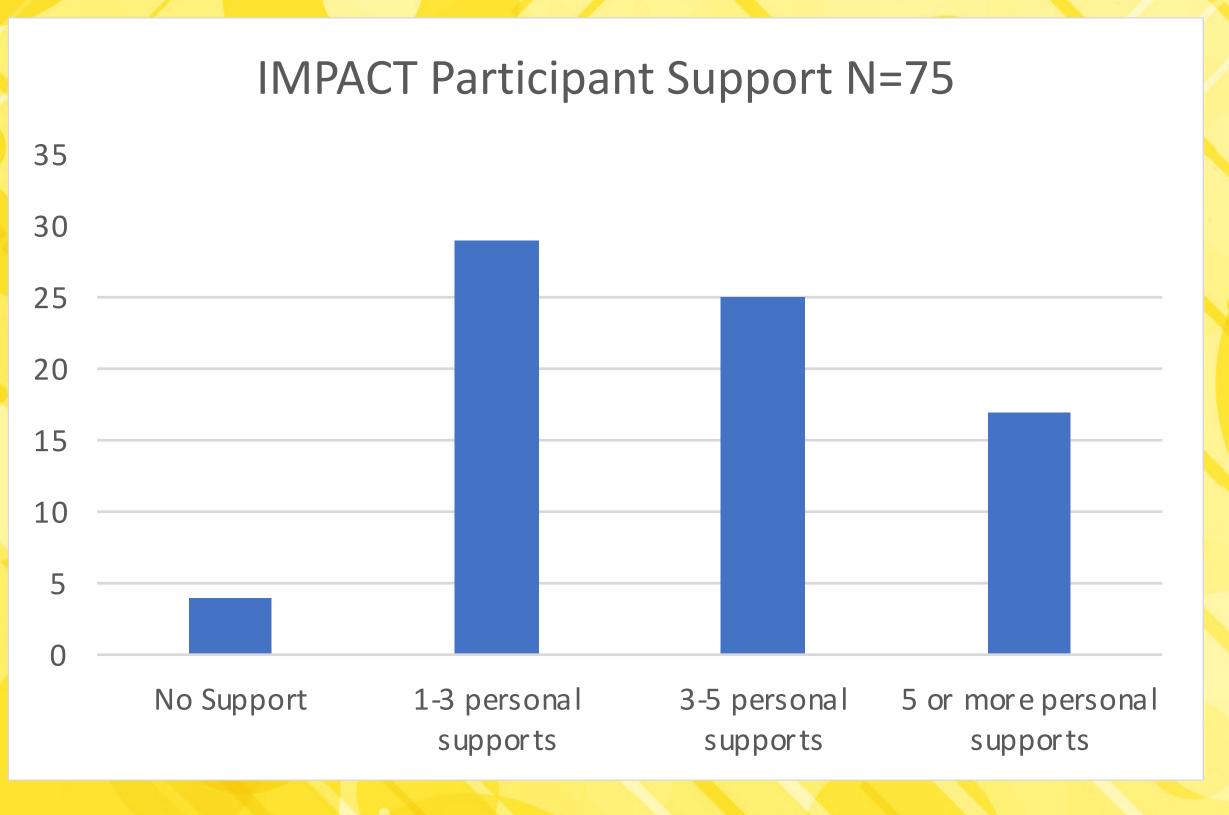
Maternal depression screens were completed on IMPACT participants along with education and employment intake forms to identify barriers to education and employment.

Findings

- Before the pandemic
- o 6% of those employed worked primarily from home and 75% of workers had never worked from home⁽¹⁾
- About a fifth as many online enrollments for higher-ed as face-toface enrollments(2)
- During the pandemic
 - May 2020 over 1/3 of those employed worked from home⁽¹⁾
 - Spring 2021- online enrollments remained high, with over three times more enrollments in online courses than face-to-face courses
 - Spring 2022 50% more enrollments in online instruction than in face-to-face instruction⁽²⁾
 - IMPACT education and employment referrals
 - 83% requested education or employment
 - 33% requested remote work or
- Positives that have come from remote work or education
- Remote workers have been shown to be 35-40% more productive than their in-office counterparts⁽³⁾
- IMPACT participant barriers to education and employment reduced
- Lack of transportation or driver's license
- Lack of childcare

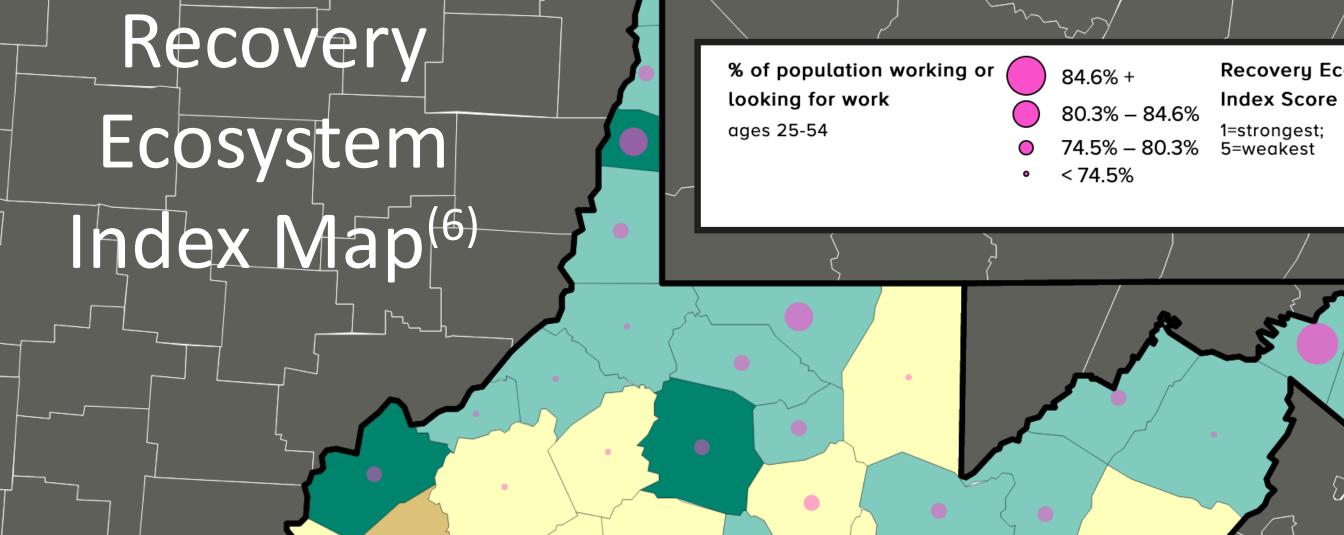


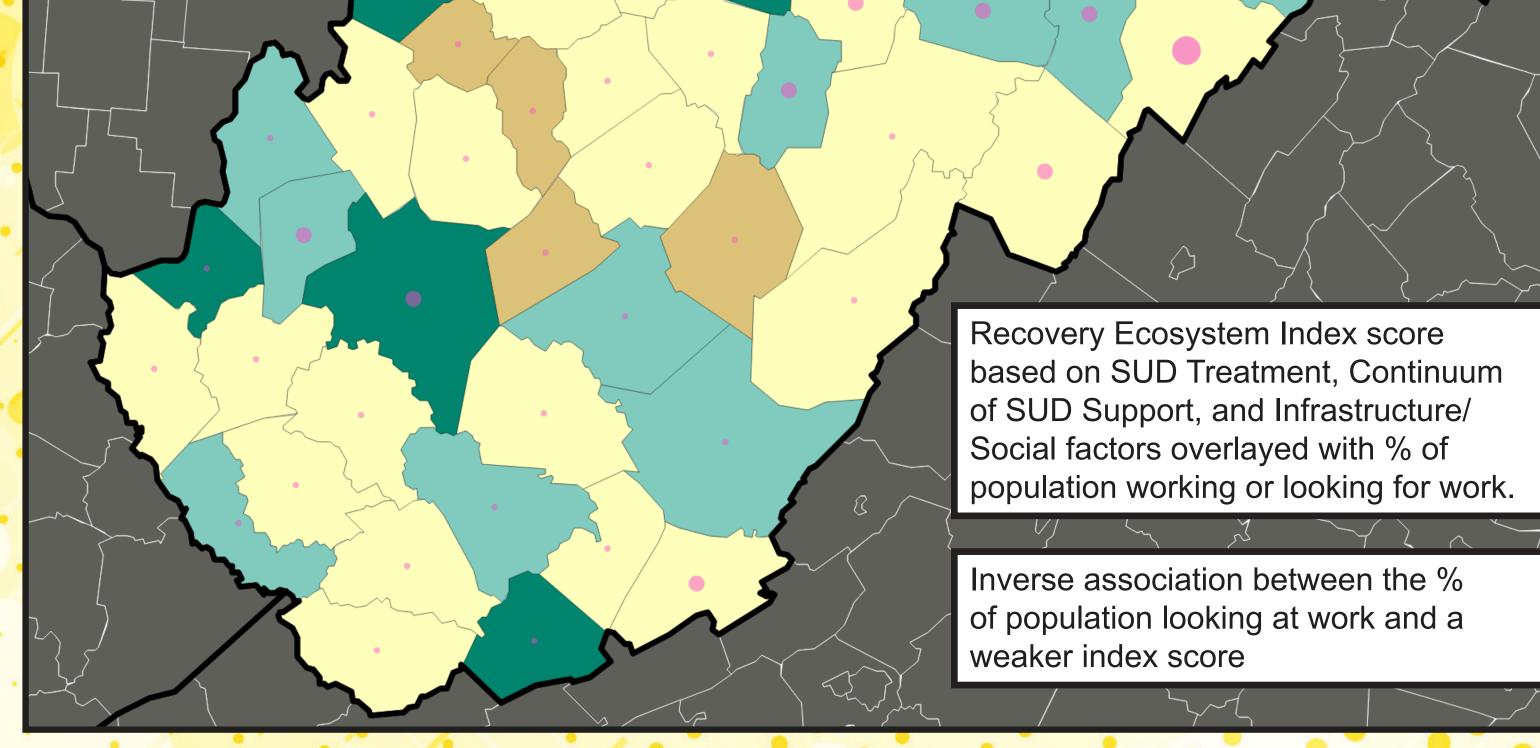




Challenges that have come from remote work or education

- 74% of people working remotely experienced a NEW mental health issue
- 55% said they had experienced two or
- Out of 124 IMPACT participants screened with the Edinburgh, overall, 18% were likely suffering from a depressive illness of varying severity with a score of 13-24
- Increasing number of women experiencing mood and anxiety disorders around the time of pregnancy including postpartum depression⁽⁵⁾
 - Compared to 2020 when the pandemic began, numbers had more than doubled and almost tripled in many
- A huge indicator for risk was the amount of support the mother has when they return home
- Individual with a strong support system is
- Less likely to develop postpartum depression
- More likely to seek help if they do
- 50% of people with a SUD have a mental health condition such as depression⁽⁷⁾
- CDC statistics show that drug overdose deaths in the U.S. reached an all-time high in 2021 with 107,600 deaths(8)
 - 13% increase since the year prior from 93,655⁽⁹⁾





- Biggest reason for the upsurge was the increase in isolation
 - Meetings are one of the sole supports for many individuals in recovery who do not have a strong support system elsewhere (8)
 - AA/NA meetings were cancelled due to the pandemic
 - Virtual meetings quickly developed in response to the gap in services
 - Did not offer the same environment and many began to decline in attendance
 - Limited in person support coupled with isolation and other stressors
- Led to difficulty for
- Individuals with a SUD to remain sober
- Others to avoid addiction in the first place

"Daily routines provide solace, and when these routines are disrupted, they exacerbate depressive moods. Anxiety tends to be future-focused, and no one knew how long the pandemic would last."

- Dr. Alan Cavailoa, Ph. D., director of addiction studies at Monmouth University

Conclusions

- IMPACT participant barriers to education and employment including lack of transportation or childcare were reduced
- Options for remote education and employment have increased
- Providing strong personal supports and life skills can help in recovery and mental health.

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