

Addressing moral distress among nurses after the COVID-19 emergency: The **ASSISTANCE** study

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The logo for Canopi, featuring the word "Canopi" in a black sans-serif font with a green leaf-like icon above the "i".

Canopi

The logo for Cardiff University, consisting of a red square with the text "CARDIFF UNIVERSITY" in white serif font at the top and "PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD" in white serif font at the bottom.

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The logo for the Burdett Trust for Nursing, featuring a blue stylized icon of a person's head and shoulders to the left of the text "Burdett Trust for Nursing" in a blue sans-serif font.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Burdett Trust for Nursing for funding this project as part of its *Covid-19: Supporting Resilience in the Nursing Workforce 2020* programme; Dr Bethan Jones, our project researcher who has moved on to pastures new, the Project Steering Group chaired by Dr Simon Cassidy and Canopi for supporting this study.



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Project summary:

- Moral distress in Registered Nurses and nursing students in Wales in the context of Covid-19.
- Three workstreams:
 - **WP1:** Survey study (Prevalence of moral distress and psychological effects).
 - **WP2:** Interview study (perceived helpfulness of HHPW intervention for registered nurses experiencing COVID-related distress).
 - **WP3:** Co-creating brief guidance to raise awareness of moral distress and assist RN's and nursing students to navigate and act on moral distress in practice.

Interviews:

Purposive sample of potential participants identified by HHPW

Data collected January-February 2022.

20 participants (Nineteen received one-to-one support and one received self-help support)

Semi-structured individual interviews recorded, transcribed, and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings

Four overarching themes were identified

“Covid changed things”;

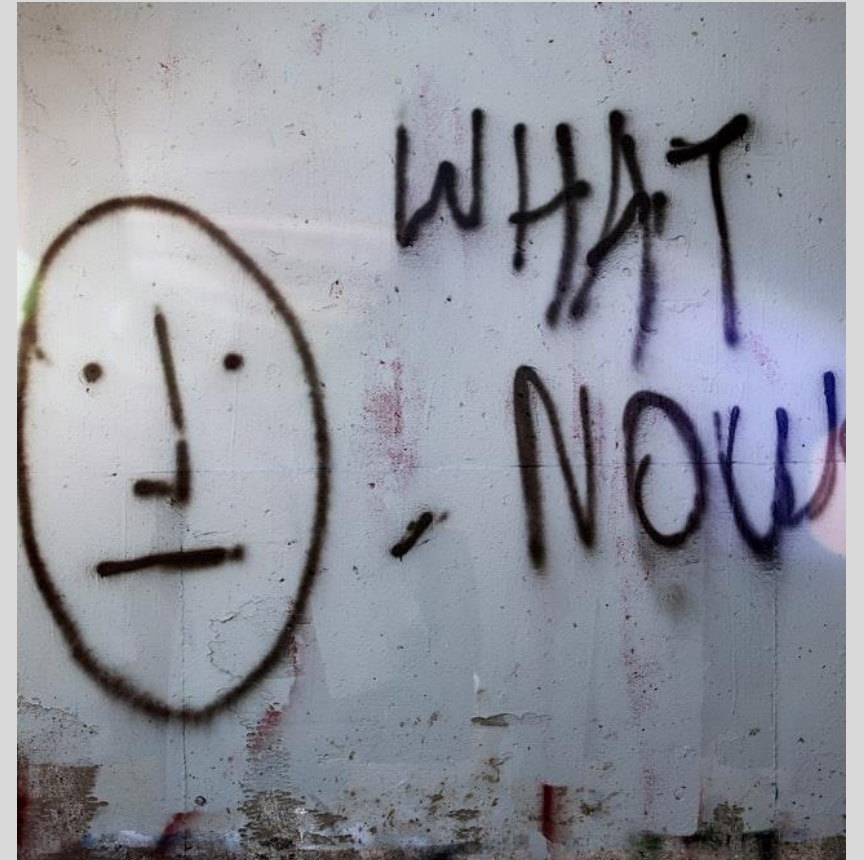
“You're a nurse, you're human”,

“I've got 'me' back” and

“Pretty close to miracle workers”.

“Covid changed things”

- *“Our whole... work pattern changed the way we tried to deliver care, changed out of... well, you could... in your worst nightmare, you could **not** make up the conditions we were working in.” (Jules)*
- *“Nobody knew what was going on, people were dying all over the place.” (Morgan)*
- *“When I think about moral distress, I don’t always think about some of the bigger decisions we’ve made about services; I think about the little things.” (Zoe)*



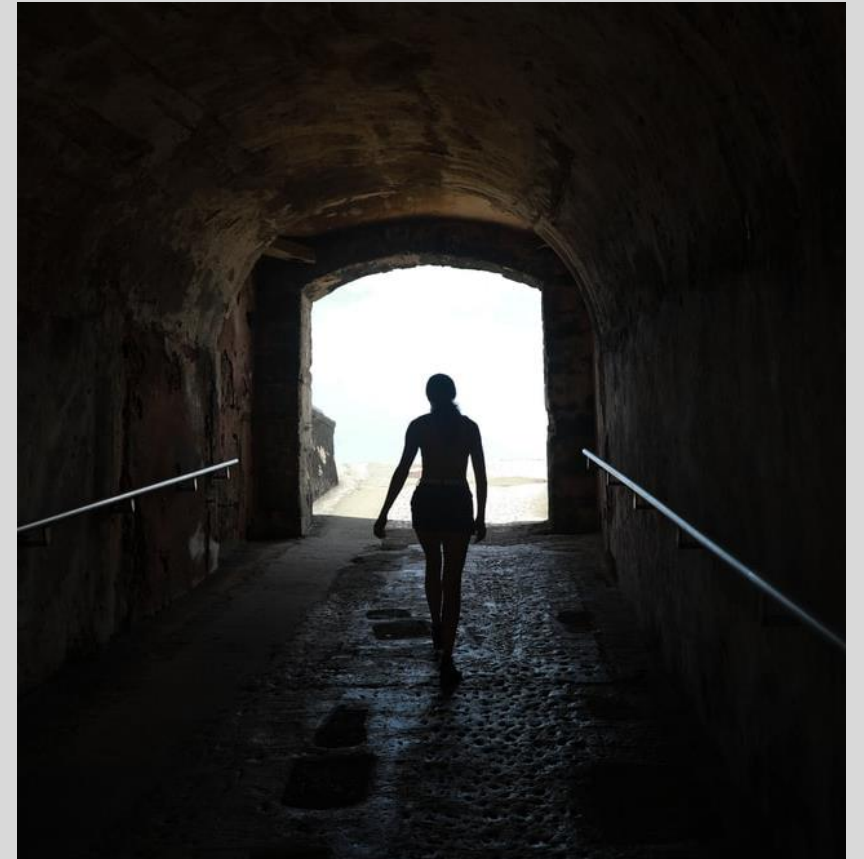
“You're a nurse, you're human”

- “...she was that little voice for me in a time when I just felt... you know, when you've been the person who's reassuring everybody else.” (Max)*
- “I can't remember the exact question he said, but it's basically along the lines of, 'Why do you not think that you can feel like this?' And I said, 'Because I'm a nurse'. And then he just said to me so bluntly, he said, 'You're not Superwoman. You're a nurse, you're human’.” (Sarah)*



“I’ve got ‘me’ back”

- *“If it wasn't for my sessions with my counsellor, it could have been a very, very different story.” (Jules)*
- *“... because I'm certainly a lot calmer this year than I was last year, I'm a lot more kind of more content.”(Sam)*
- *“I’ve stopped feeling guilty about certain things as well (...). So, yeah, it has really helped, and my partner says I’m a lot happier, I laugh a lot more, smile a lot more, like” (Jessie)*
- *“I have more of a work, life balance now. So, I sort of come home from work and then sort of like just forget it” (Val)*



“Pretty close to miracle workers”

- *“It needs to be there. Like, there isn’t anything else out there for nurses.” (Jessie)*
- *“I kind of knew the process in terms of like initial assessment, and that kind of thing. I didn’t expect it to be as quick as it was.” (Hannah)*
- *“I think that the sort of rapid turnaround is a massive bonus because, you know, if you're feeling that rough you want support then, don't you.” (Morgan)*
- *“It was great. I mean, the fact that it actually existed and was out there and was easily accessible as well. It wasn't a big ding-dong. You know, I contacted the service, I filled a few bits in, they rang when they said they would, we had the conversation, we set it up, we got on with it and it all just happens.”(Rhian)*



Conclusions:

- Participants found intervention very helpful.
- They particularly appreciated:
 - Contact with therapists who listened and gave them space to be vulnerable.
 - Speed and ease of service that minimised barriers to accessing support.
 - Judgement/stigma-free support from therapists who understood their experiences as a nurse.
- Participants suggested need for greater advertisement of the service as it was not always easy to hear about.



- Thank you for listening
- Does anybody have any questions?

