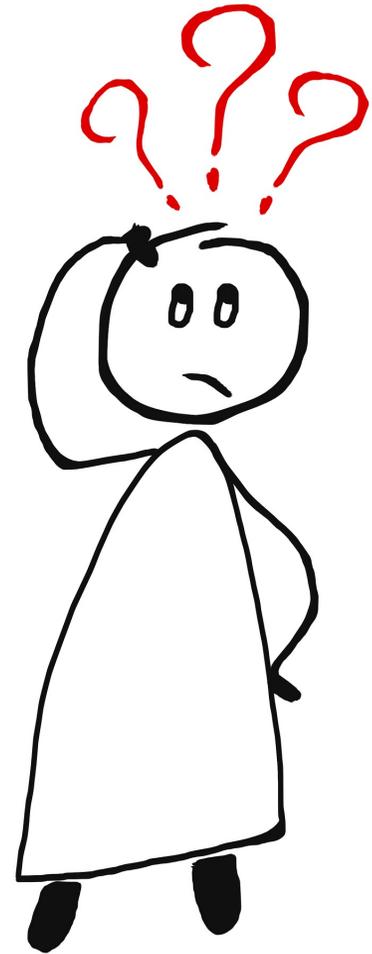


# Managing the Challenges of Living & Learning Online

Elisabeth Bailey – Celebrate SoTL Panel, Fall 2020

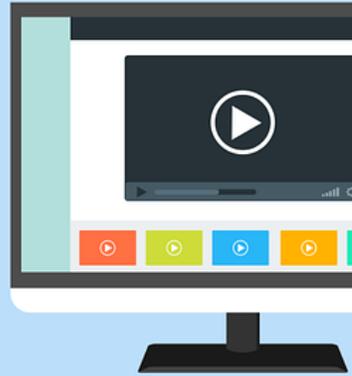
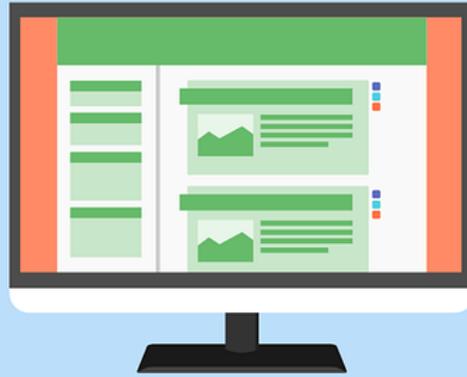
## Key Questions:

- What do we know about the unique challenges of remote learning during the pandemic?
- What are some strategies to mitigate these challenges & support students' wellbeing in online learning environments?



# Living & Learning Online during COVID-19 = *Screen Time on Steroids*

- *The pandemic is a unique time to consider remote instruction*
- *Teaching & learning remotely is just one element of our online lives...*



# Impacts of screen time on health & wellbeing:

## In children & adolescents

- Moderate screen time (~4 hr/day) is associated with lower psychological wellbeing
- Heavy screen time (7+ hr/day) is associated with a ~2x increase in risk of depression and anxiety

*“Across a diverse array of well-being measures...**psychological well-being was progressively lower from 1 h a day of screen time to 7 or more hours a day of screen time, particularly among adolescents** (Twenge & Campbell, 2018).”*

# Impacts of screen time on health & wellbeing:

Similarly, in University students...

- High screen time is significantly associated with increased depression, anxiety, and poor sleep quality
- Low physical activity (sedentary behavior) also contributes to decreased wellbeing & poor sleep
- While higher physical activity levels are associated with improvements in psychological wellbeing & sleep (Wu et al., 2015)
- *“Compared with prior academic terms, individuals in the Winter 2020 term were more sedentary, anxious, and depressed (Huckins et al., 2020).”*



## Other challenges:

- Overarching stress of the pandemic
- New tech competencies for teachers & students
- Less opportunities for organic, one-on-one connection
- More challenges to creating community & a sense belonging
- Necessity of technology, WiFi, quiet spaces, etc. to engage → greater impact on students who are already disproportionately impacted by the social determinants of health
- And, of course, Zoom fatigue...



## Zoom Fatigue...

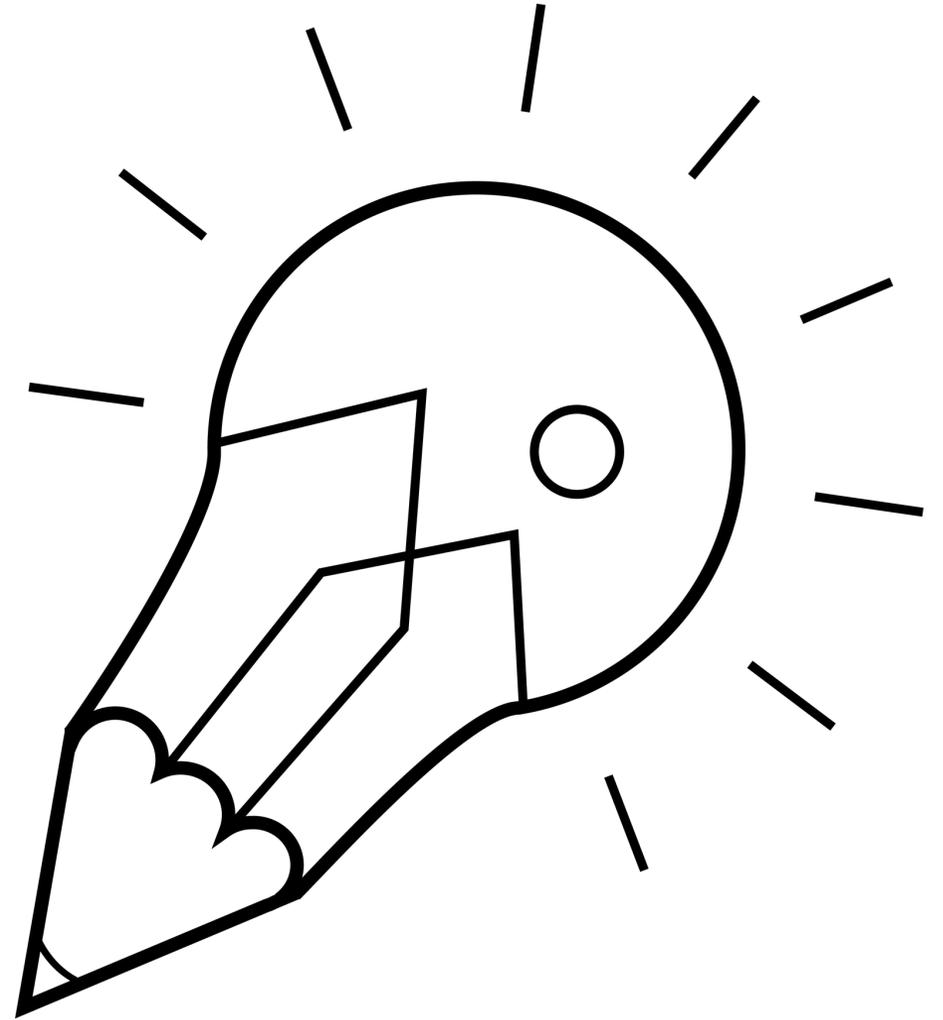
*"...describes the tiredness, worry, or burnout associated with overusing virtual platforms of communication. Like other experiences associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Zoom fatigue is widely prevalent, intense, and completely new (Lee, 2020)."*

### What contributes to Zoom Fatigue?

- Tiny lags in transmission & lack of full body/non-verbal cues impact our sub-conscious perception of the interaction (*this is tiring!*)
- Disruption of eye contact/gaze (*this is also tiring & confusing for our brains!*)
- Not in a shared environment, more opportunities for distraction
- Being online is also associated with more sedentary behavior

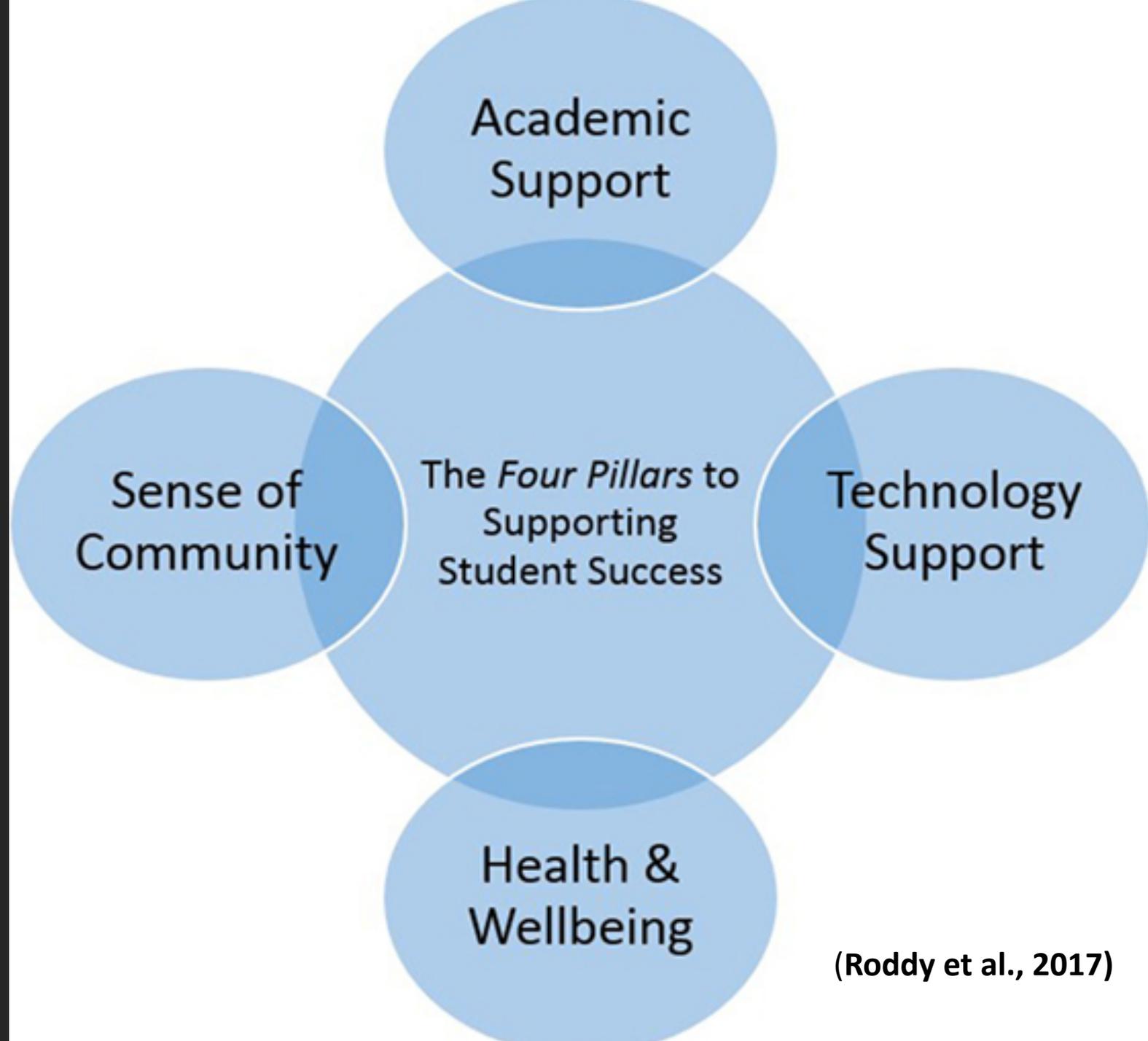
## What about the bright side?

- Potential for more flexibility for students and instructors
- Less commute time = giving time back in each day
- Shaking up routines & challenging us to be creative and innovative
- Learning new & transferable tech skills
- Lots of **great resources at UBC** and beyond to support teaching and learning online



# Supporting Student Success Online:

*In an integrative review of best practices for intensive online teaching, Roddy et al. suggest these Four Pillars...*



(Roddy et al., 2017)

# UBC Resources that Help Uphold the 4 Pillars:

**Keep Learning:** <https://keeplearning.ubc.ca/>

- Great collection of strategies for student success in online learning environments including:
  - Tech & learning environment set up
  - Self-care tips
  - Easy ways for students to access academic/financial/tech or wellness support
- Familiarize yourself with these resources & suggestions
- Consider reviewing some of these tips & resources at the start of your class and link to this resource

# UBC Resources that Help Uphold the 4 Pillars:

- Excellent resources to support student health & wellbeing:
  - <https://students.ubc.ca/health>
- The updated Green Folder:
  - <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/health-wellbeing/assisting-students-distress>

Green Folder Fall 2020

## STUDENT HEALTH & WELLBEING

Supporting Students in Distress in a Virtual Learning Environment

**KEY MESSAGES FOR FACULTY & STAFF**  
As students work to achieve their academic goals during a time of remote learning, they are also balancing multiple challenges and priorities all of which impact their capacity to learn and thrive. We all have a role to play in supporting student wellbeing. Opportunities to support all students' wellbeing can be embedded in your learning environment proactively - you can explore strategies for embedding wellbeing in your online course design.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**CHALLENGES STUDENTS MAY BE EXPERIENCING**  
Students bring their unique selves and situations to any learning environment - in the classroom, and online. In addition to indicators identified in the Green Folder, students are likely to present with more during this time of the pandemic than during typical in-person academic terms.

**ACADEMICS** They are worried about failing, completing the term, graduation requirements, and other specific course/program uncertainties. They may not have access to reliable WiFi or suitable workspaces. It will be difficult to concentrate, stay motivated, and focused. There are many factors that increase the challenges students will be facing as they try and navigate through their academic work.

**ACCESSIBILITY** Students with disabilities or ongoing health conditions may have additional needs that require different degrees and levels of support in this new environment. Please be mindful, and reach out to the Centre for Accessibility as a resource.

**GENERAL UNCERTAINTY** Students are worried and scared for their families, inability to make plans and about their futures. Summer jobs, internships, and other arrangements are put on hold or cancelled. Some are completely isolated from family and friends which increase stress and worry. International students may have added stress due to visa concerns, lack of funding, and isolation from family. Students are struggling with a lack of purpose during this time.

**FINANCES** Students and their families are concerned about covering tuition fees, cost of books and supplies, rent, and food. For some families, income has been significantly impacted. Students may have difficulty getting a summer job to cover their expenses or provide for their families. Due to this pandemic, financial concerns create extensive challenges.

**LIVING ENVIRONMENTS** Students may be in environments and relational dynamics that are unsafe, abusive, and/or invalidating. Being in this space can negatively impact their well-being and their ability to be fully present in learning spaces. The physical spaces at home may also be challenging and restrictive. Students may not have access to quiet spaces to study or participate in online classes. They may also be juggling several roles at home (student, partner, parent, etc.) or caring for other family members or young children.

**MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS** Students have not only left behind their classes and academics, but also future goals and aspirations. There is a true sense of grief, sadness, and loss throughout our community. Mental health concerns (depression, anxiety, substance use, suicidal ideation, etc.) are causing significant challenges in being able to perform academic and personal duties.

# Final Thoughts...

- Consider ways to intentionally build connection & community
  - Creating consistent groups/cohorts within classes (for discussions, breakout groups, etc.), virtual office hours, ensuring time for Q & A at the end of live sessions, etc.
- Build in screen breaks & time for movement
  - Consider building reminders into asynchronous modules too
- Consider what needs to be delivered online & what can be taught or learned through offline experience – what guidelines, reflections and support can you build in to support learning during these experiences?
- Be curious about how you can improve the online experience for yourself & your students!

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