Transforming Field Education: Voices of Field Educators in Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) is a partnership project that aims to better prepare the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students, developing and mobilizing promising and wise field education practices, and improving the integration of research and practice in field education. Six practicum students and research assistants from the social work programs of the University of Calgary and the University of Toronto coordinated this project under the supervision of TFEL's Project Management Office.

For the study, 31 focus groups were conducted with 99 participants to address the following research question: What is needed to transform social work field education? Field instructors, field coordinators and directors, faculty field liaisons and others involved in field education took part in focus groups that were moderated by one facilitator and one note-taker. The majority of participants came from the provinces of Alberta and Ontario, however, the study sought to include field educators across Canada. To support the investigation of ideas and themes, and to minimize interpretation bias, multiple methods were used to analyze data collected from focus groups (Doody et. al., 2013; Wiggins et al., 2004); namely, constant comparison analysis in tandem with thematic analysis. These analysis methods are effective in team research when multiple researchers conduct the analysis (Guest et al., 2014).

The study findings identified four central themes: Student Preparedness for Practicum, Impacts of COVID-19, Decolonization of Field Education, and Innovative Practices for Field Education.

The study findings show that the majority of participants suggested a number of changes to transform field education: incentives for field educators such as professional development credits; an increase in resources such as time to facilitate supervision; increased placement options for non-traditional students such as self-directed practica; and various forms of support for field instructors that ranged from reduced workloads in agencies to a peer mentorship and support community for field instructors. Notable findings included holding social work field education in a higher regard that reflects the importance of field education in social work for students and increasing funding opportunities to support the development and sustainability of resources for field instructors. Participants suggested developing a national resource-sharing network be developed to support learning opportunities and to strengthen social work field education.

Student preparedness is a topic area revealed in the findings. The research highlights the importance of improving the integration of theory into practice by adding more simulation-based learning into the curriculum. This approach may also improve critical thinking and offer more hands-on opportunities so that students are spending less time learning foundational knowledge in the field, and more time building their social work competencies.

Study participants discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on field education. The findings elaborate the disconnect felt amongst students and field educators and the shortage of social work placements for students.
Participants also noted the increased flexibility and accessibility resulting in a new standard for field education post-pandemic. Focus group participants noted the disruption created by the COVID-19

pandemic on field education, leaving some students possibly unprepared for in-person practice, while also having a unique set of skills relevant to the post-pandemic world.

Findings reveal that decolonizing field education is necessary to transform social work field education. Participants expressed the need to meaningfully incorporate Indigenous social work, foster meaningful conversations around decolonization, and improve the admission process to allow more diversity in social work programs. Reflexivity was named as a crucial skill in recognizing and taking part in the necessary changes to decolonize social work field education.

The findings also highlight innovative practices for field education, shared by participants as solutions to common changes in the field. Innovative practices include support and incentives for field educators, partnerships with non-traditional field placements such as macro-opportunities, as well as pedagogical shifts in field education. Much of the innovative practices require partnership, community, and calling on accreditation bodies to support the success of field education.

The major implications of the study include:

1. Building awareness of the current state of social work field education in Canada;
2. Collaborating with social work accreditation regulators to cultivate interest in field instruction;
3. Acknowledging that decolonization is essential, in all aspects of social work education, including field education;
4. Integrating and sustaining the supportive practices in field education that developed from the COVID-19 pandemic, including adopting more flexible and accessible approaches to field education post-pandemic; and
5. Developing innovative resources to support field educators.

To achieve these recommendations, field educators will need support for ongoing collaboration and partnership with all involved in field education.

INTRODUCTION

The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project, funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), conducted research to better understand what is needed to transform social work field education in Canada.

Transforming Field Education: Voices of Field Educators in Canada report presents the findings of 31 focus groups conducted between October 2021 and April 2022. The findings reflect the experiences, challenges, and suggestions of field educators and interested parties across Canada on how to transform field education. Key concepts that were explored include necessary resources, field instruction strategies, better ways to prepare students for the field and for practice, decolonizing field education, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on field education (see Appendix A). This study addresses a critical gap in social work field education literature within the Canadian context.

Social work field education in Canada is in a state of crisis (Ayala et al., 2018; Bogo, 2015). Social work programs are experiencing increased barriers to delivering high quality field education. Barriers include resource scarcity, difficulties in staff retention, increased student enrollments, and financial cutbacks (Ayala et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2013). Field education is an opportunity that not only fosters and enhances students' social work identity but also their ability to incorporate theory, research, and knowledge into practice (Bogo, 2015). Field education is crucial in a social work student's learning journey, offering meaningful direct practice experiences in a supervised learning environment (Ayala et al., 2017). Students use field education as an avenue for building skills, increasing competency of social work practices, and gaining positive work experiences in different social work areas and specialties (Bogo, 2015).

With a limited amount of research on the importance of Indigenous culture, practices, and perspectives in field education, it was deemed beneficial to examine and integrate this area of practice into field education training and existing models (Clark & Drolet, 2014). Existing literature on this area of practice supports the integration of Indigenous intersectionality into field education, and to create a culturally rich and supportive environment for social work students (Clark & Drolet, 2014).

The findings reveal four central themes including innovative practices for field education, impacts of COVID-19, student preparedness for practicum, and the decolonization of field education. The report aims to create opportunities for dialogue on how to transform social work field education since it is critical to students' learning and professional development. The overall aim of the study is to inform the development of more sustainable models of social work field education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social work field education literature is growing, with more knowledge on the benefits and challenges of offering high quality experiences for students and educators, as well as other stakeholders in field education (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2008; Drolet et al., 2023). Agencies and institutions are reporting increased resource scarcity, yet greater number of student enrollments and placement requests (Cleak & Smith, 2012; Hardy et al., 2021). Among this

challenge, several factors are contributing to field educators lack of interest in supervising students. Factors include workplace stress, decreased agency funding, lack of agency support, and competing demands. As a result, field educators are left with insufficient time, support, and space to offer students' field placements (Hardy et al., 2021; McConnell, 2016; Strang, 2021). Some field educators view field instruction as an increased workload without financial incentives (Cleak & Smith, 2012). All of this has led to challenges in the recruitment and retention of enough field educators to meet the greater number of students who require placements to meet their graduation requirements. While many field educators will continue to supervise students, others have opted out due to lack of support (Hill et al., 2019). For example, Hill et al. (2019) concluded educators require professional development opportunities, decreased workload, as well as increased institution and agency support. Further, intentional relationships between field educators and institutions/agencies leads to improved retention (Hardy et al. 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted social work field education significantly by posing safety concerns and restrictions resulting in field education stakeholders needing to quickly adapt to meet their education requirements (Davis & Mirick, 2021). While the pandemic posed challenges, it became a time of creativity, flexibility, and innovation to reach alternative ways to deliver field education. The result was field education transitioning to hybrid or online forums, which allowed for increased autonomy over subsequent changes with respect to classes, meetings, and overall uncertainty of the pandemic (Melero et al., 2021). Among online forums came the rise of macro-level, self-directed, and project-based placements. (Morley & Clarke, 2020; Strang, 2021). Group-based supervision models were also explored, with Cleak and Smith's (2012) findings revealing positive experiences of both students and educators.

There has been increased research and discussion in recent years on decolonizing social work field education (Chilvers, 2021; Clark et al., 2010). Clark et al. (2010) found in a qualitative study on understanding decolonization in field education that inviting Indigenous social workers and Elders to be meaningfully included in field education as well as integrating anti-oppressive practices and spirituality, would greatly impact the multidimensional process of decolonizing field education. Additionally, wellness plans and reflection exercises can support educational practices by bringing awareness into the foundations of social work education. Barriers are not uncommon in making meaningful change, and decolonization is no exception. Chilvers (2021) concluded the central barriers to decolonization are competing demands as well as lack of support and isolation within agencies.

Field education stakeholders are responsible for new and innovative ways to transform social work field education. The current state of field education has come with its challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, greatly disrupting what field educators and students have come to know about field education. However, the challenges proved to be catalysts for creativity, flexibility, accessibility, and innovation resulting in a new standard of field education. This study aimed to

collect experiences and ideas from field educators on what is needed to transform social work field education in Canada where stakeholders can be set up for success.

TRANSFORMING THE FIELD EDUCATION LANDSCAPE (TFEL) PROJECT

The TFEL partnership brings together a diverse team of social work educators, researchers, and partners to address the field education crisis by creating new training and mentorship opportunities for students. The project aims to assess the current state of social work field education in Canada and create opportunities for student research in developing new models of practice (Drolet & Harriman, 2020).

The goal of the TFEL project is: "to integrate research and practice in the preparation of the next generation of social workers by developing partnered research training initiatives, both within academia and across the public and not-for-profit sectors, that enhance student research practice knowledge and applied skill development" (Drolet, 2020, p. 3).

The project is built on an inquiry-based learning and transformational approach to create "opportunities for students and postdoctoral fellows to explore, identify, and develop promising practices for integrating research training in social work practice" (Drolet, 2020, p.7). This study is part of a series of research activities within the overall project designed to create new knowledge that will inform the development of sustainable models of field education in Canada.

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment Strategy and Process

To best capture Canada's social work field education landscape, the research team targeted a sample population of field educators. Inclusion criteria were experts in field education: field coordinators, directors, and staff, field instructors, and faculty field liaisons from various organizational contexts and geographic locations. Participants were recruited across Canada. Following approval from the University of Calgary's Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, participants were contacted by email and invited to participate in semi-structured focus groups. The study participant recruitment information and poster were published in the TFEL monthly newsletter, on the TFEL website, and on social media accounts including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn. This request for participation was also shared via emails to TFEL network members including co-investigators, partners, and collaborators. These individuals shared the study information with their networks to recruit additional focus group participants. Participants who agreed to participate were emailed a list of 3-5 proposed focus group questions prior to their scheduled focus group session to give them the opportunity to think about their responses before taking part. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that both the micro (e.g., field instructors within agencies) and macro (e.g., organizational and/or program directors) levels of social work field education were captured. In order to provide sufficient opportunity for potential participants to partake in the study recruitment took place in the Fall of 2021 and Winter of 2022.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Characteristics

	n=99
Role	
Field Instructor	51
Field Coordinator	19
Faculty Field Liaison	4
Unidentified	12
Other Stakeholders in Field Education, including agency directors, program directors, faculty members, and researchers	13
Geographic Location	
British Columbia	17
Prairies Canada	33
Atlantic Canada	2
Ontario	39
Quebec	8

Data Collection

From September 2021 through April 2022, 31 focus groups were conducted with 99 field educators across Canada (See Figure 1). Each focus group lasted between 60 – 130 minutes and was facilitated by a minimum of two trained TFEL practicum students and/or student research assistants. The questions used in each focus group were selected from a list of 24 ethics board reviewed questions (See Appendix A). Focus groups were conducted with 3-5 participants, and audio recorded on Zoom or Microsoft Teams platforms, transcribed, and made anonymous prior to coding and data analysis. Focus groups were conducted online due to social distancing protocols and restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coding and Thematic Analysis

All focus groups materials were transcribed and coded. NVivo 12.0 software supported data analysis and coding of focus group transcripts. The data were analyzed independently by five research assistants with support from TFEL supervisors, who met weekly to discuss emergent themes. Microsoft Teams, email, and weekly team meetings held on Zoom were the primary means for team communication and consultation. Both during and post data collection, a codebook was developed as a tool to organize and communicate codes between research assistants. Codes were added to a three-column "master" codebook which consisted of the code name, definition, and a quote from the raw data.

Research assistants regularly updated the codebook independently and met as a team to collapse codes to maintain the reliability of the data by ensuring consistency among language used, common codes, and review emerging themes. After the coding of each focus group interview, two documents were generated: a verbatim coded transcript and a summary sheet.

Participants came from five general categories representing the range of people involved in field education: field instructor, field coordinator, field liaison, unidentified, and other stakeholders in field education (See Table 1).

The research findings are organized into four overarching themes: Student Preparedness for Practicum, Impacts of COVID-19, Decolonizing Field Education, and Innovative Practices for Field Education (See Table 2). This section outlines key topics within each of the four thematic areas, their sub-themes, and quotes labelled by role and province.

Table 2: Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Student Preparedness for Practicum	Improved Theory into Practice Integration
	Hands-On Experience
	Critical Thinking Education
2. Impacts of COVID-19	Increased Flexibility
	Reduced Capacity for Placements
	Reduced Hours for Practicum
	Disconnection
3. Decolonizing Field Education	Decolonization as a Multidimensional Process
	Meaningful Inclusion of Indigenous Social Work
	Engagement in Critical Dialogue
	Teaching Reflexivity
4. Innovative Practices for Field Education	Support for Field Instructors
	Non-traditional Placement Options
	Evaluation Methods
	Pedagogical Shifts in Field Education
	Financial Compensation in Field Education
	Resource Sharing

Student Preparedness for Practicum

Student preparedness is defined as the level of student readiness to begin practicum. Field educators identified improving integration of theory into practice and hands-on experiences, as well as the importance of teaching critical thinking. Participants shared that the direct involvement and active participation of students in practicum settings are indicators of success for the field.

Improved Theory into Practice Integration

Improved Theory into Practice Integration refers to the need to address the gap in students' learning of theories in the classroom to actively apply theories in direct practice during and post-placement. Participants expressed that the lack of integration of theory in practice frequently interfered with the ability of field instructors to teach students the skills they needed to learn while in placement.

I would really appreciate a greater emphasis on training students on how to build rapport with a variety of people from diverse, marginalized backgrounds, and clients who have different impressions and past experiences with therapy. I find by the time students get into and through a master's degree, they're remarkably competent at reading texts and learning interventions and strategies, developing skills and awareness around making clients feel really comfortable, and sort of designing that introductory piece with them is a far greater value in the field, frankly, than strictly model based interventions. So, emphasizing those points, not necessarily eliminating those model-based interventions [is] important, but I would probably emphasize the former over the latter. (Field Instructor, Alberta)

Participants indicated that when students are lacking foundational social work knowledge and skills, valuable time is taken away from engaging in enriched practicum experiences.

One of the themes that keeps coming up from a lot of colleagues, including myself, who take students is social work education has a lot of theory woven into it, but within healthcare practice and working frontline and like diving into hospital practice, there's a huge disconnect in terms of preparedness just because they're having to apply that theory to practice. But they don't know a lot of the basics of working frontline once they're entering and the preceptors are having [to] spend a lot of time to orient to that, which is taking away from learning some of the clinical hands-on skills. (Field Instructor, Alberta)

Field educators report needing to be more involved in the integration of theory into practice, rather than facilitating and supporting the learning outcomes the practicum setting offers. They advocated for social work academics to provide more curated experiences to help bridge the gap between classroom learning and practice application prior to students beginning their placements. Examples include critical thinking skills, building rapport with diverse populations, and innovative thinking in crisis scenarios. Lastly, participants stated theory into practice integration should begin prior to practicum to allow for a more meaningful learning environment.

Hands-On Experience

Hands-on experience refers to the importance of students' frontline experience prior to practicum. Similar to the previous section, the lack of hands-on experience results in field educators allocating more attention to teaching and linking skills and less on facilitating and supporting the learning outcomes the practicum setting offers. To better prepare students for the field, participants suggested that universities add or enhance role-playing simulation activities in the curriculum.

We try to filter for easier clients and cases, but some are very green and they didn't used to be. I think that it's been a bit hands-off. A few years ago, it started to slip a bit in terms of they're coming with more experience only because I think the therapists are swamped and now that you know you're just going to job shadow me for months is lessening, that's my theory as to why it's changing but for quite a while, I found they came with very little introductory skills to therapy. They mainly observed and did very instrumental things like helping complete forms and such. (Field Instructor, Ontario)

It's interesting because the faculty speaks so frequently about the application of theory to practice and yet I think the students kind of come in with sort of an ideological idea of 'Oh I'm going to work in mental health I'll do therapy and it'll be counselling and my patients or have a clients will want to come to see me' and it's this sort of like well, the reality is a lot of people are in involuntary mental health settings and what does anti-oppressive practice look like to someone who your detaining in a hospital [who] doesn't think they're sick and you're strapping them down and injecting them full of medications they think are poison. (Field Instructor, Ontario)

Some participants stated that students can have a strong academic background with little to no experience in the social work field; however, this is not always the case, particularly with mature students who have several years of work experience in social services. While participants often acknowledged practicum as a learning environment, they expressed the importance of prior experience to build on to prepare students for practice and graduation.

Critical Thinking Education

Teaching critical thinking refers to educating students on how to apply analysis and evaluation skills generated by reasoning and reflection in order for them to make informed and intentional decisions. Participants expressed how social work programs investing in more curriculum on critical thinking would lead to increased opportunities during and post-practicum.

Research courses should teach social workers how to do QI projects or think systems issues through using something like Lean Six Sigma. I do not know any social worker at [hospital], who are doing their own research, but they could do QI and system modification projects if they had the tools…QI is quality improvement and social workers here are on a QI Council it's about innovating services and practice. Very useful skill set, and it is related to Six Sigma that's a process analysis to identify areas for improvement in a process. It's used a lot in in the business world and also in healthcare around services that have a process. (Field Instructor, Ontario)

But across the board, when we look at the lifespan of someone, everyone should have a basic, fundamental understanding. For example, what it's like to take someone's rights away to make a decision, whether they're youth in care, whether they're a senior, whether they're an adult with a brain injury. We have students coming to us that have no understanding of what that is, and that's a huge component of working in healthcare. But I think it's applicable to any setting you work in, whether it's counseling or not, as someone who has increased decision making issues or cognitive issues impacting their ability to make safe decisions, and so at a baseline the students are coming in very green from those areas and we're having to orient them, and we just don't have enough time within the three [to] four months placement. (Field Instructor, Alberta)

Some participants stated that it is not enough for students to only learn theory to work with clients, but to also apply themselves to various work scenarios that affect multiple aspects of their profession. Participants addressed that what is learned in a classroom does not entirely translate to the social work field, therefore, students should be equipped with how to analyze and evaluate different elements in their journey to becoming a professional social worker. Further, critical

thinking skills woven into the foundation of courses through real-life case studies or reflective assignments would enhance the practicum experience by providing students the building blocks to any problem they might need to problem-solve.

Impact of COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19 refers to the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic on social work field education in Canada. Various benefits and barriers were names by participants, reflecting on the changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants stated this transformative time in field education led to improvements in flexibility and accessibility. However, participants noted that many placement settings ceased offering placement opportunities due to their lack of capacity amongst organizational changes, uncertainty of service delivery, as well as in-person restrictions and lack of resources to support hybrid or online models. Discussions centered around what can and should be maintained post-pandemic.

Increased Flexibility

Increased flexibility refers to the opportunities posed during the COVID-19 pandemic to change how field education was being delivered. Many participants named flexibility as an indicator of accessibility. For many, this took shape by offering self-directed and hybrid or virtual placement options in settings that were traditionally in-person, resulting in increased accessibility.

> I think some of these changes will be sustained and I think there are agencies that are finding that virtual delivery is increasing accessibility to services for some people. I think when we think about field, we also need to think about what elements of self-directed practical activities should be maintained and what kind of function and role they play in terms of meeting certain competencies that students need after they graduate. (FGP, Alberta)

> And in a similar fashion their classes were remote, so their instructors allowed them to kind of take a separate space on the placement and go to class and then come back. And that really helped with scheduling because maybe there's a program that day that the student needs to be in for, but they have class and in normal circumstances, you know I can't come to placement, I have a class that day and school is on the other end of town.

> That's also something we've noticed, and I think that's great that accommodation that instructors make that yeah of course you can just go to class, for you know a bit of placement time and make up the time later. So that's really neat to see, and I think that's something that we should keep for sure, because I know that students appreciate that too. (FGP, Ontario)

> The ability to have that virtual connection with students to have privacy and that supervision is really different for us working virtually allowed for more private opportunities to check in one-on-one where, as a team of students, our physical spaces are very open and can be very chaotic. (FGP, British Columbia)

Participants reported that public health restrictions played a significant role in transforming social work field education by acting as a catalyst for major changes to be made resulting in increased

flexibility, accessibility, as well as an openness to new and innovative field education practices. Changes resulted in the possibility of self-directed practica, hybrid and virtual opportunities, increased macro placement options, and remote nation-wide placement options.

Reduced Capacity for Placements

Reduced capacity for placements refers to the lower number of field placements offered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Participants shared their experiences from the field when restrictions impacted how they delivered their placement, whether it be from the uncertainty of the time, capacity, or safety concerns.

> I think for us, the biggest impact was how much it took out of staff to just get through it all. So, we stopped taking students, but really because we just did not have the bandwidth to support a student, we were having enough trouble supporting our own staff and keeping things afloat. (FGP, Quebec)

> I think it's really the only way that it can work is that if the supervisors have that support to be able to perhaps have reduced, if it's clinical work, or reduce caseload for a period of time, so that they can onboard the student and get things started with that student, so that the student can be really having a great opportunity where they can then be contributing to the center. (FGP, Ontario)

Focus group participants discussed increased workload, reduced staffing, and heightened stress during the pandemic. While online opportunities for students were welcomed, students were restricted in their choice of hospitals, community-based agencies, and other popular choices among social work students. Participants reported that the reduced capacity for student placements has resulted in the under preparation of students entering the field. As a result, students can be left with addressing gaps in their experience and knowledge post-graduation.

Reduced Hours for Practicum

Reduced hours for practicum refer to the efforts made by accredited social work programs and the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE-ACFTS, 2014), to protect the health and well-being of students and field educators by reducing the total number of practicum hours needed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was in an effort for students to successfully complete their social work placement amongst a time of constant uncertainty.

> One of the things that I would love for us to keep is the CASWE guideline that we can reduce hours, and if you're impacted by COVID, [we] can have a reduction of hours but pre-COVID and post-COVID, we still have students who are impacted by significant things, right? Like we've had students who receive a cancer diagnosis during practicum, we have students who have significant family issues during COVID, or their field instructors have and so, you know the idea that maybe someone can have a reduction in hours because something particularly significant is happening in their lives isn't so out of the realm and I would love for us to be able to have these compassionate guidelines. (FGP, Alberta)

> For me, when I had the students the last couple of years and their placements were cut down to 300 hours. It just wasn't enough for me to provide the education or to provide the field placement that I thought the students needed, and so I felt that they were graduating actually not as prepared as they should have been. Usually, we would graduate ready to work in the field that we did our placement, and that just wasn't quite the case the last two years. Having the hours cut down just doesn't work, in my area. (FGP, Alberta)

CASWE's (2014) compassionate guidelines were shared by some participants as an example of what should be sustained post-pandemic. However, field educators named various concerns to surrounding the guidelines, particularly on whether reduced hours will adequately prepare students for the field leading to increased rates of burnout and ethical dilemmas. Participants shared their experiences having several students that, aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, have had significant events happen in their lives impacting their practicum obligations. Further, there is little flexibility within the pre-pandemic guidelines for disruption.

Disconnection

Disconnection refers to the feelings of social isolation field educators shared as a result of the lack of in-person interaction due to the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Field educators, agencies, and institutions had to find new and innovative ways to deliver their services and support student learning objectives.

> What I've heard from students is their disappointment that there's been less direct practice and what does that mean for them, you know confidence in doing direct practice because the formats and the forums are different. (FGP, Ontario)

> I'm quite distressed at the impersonalization of field education at this point. The fact that I am trying to engage with students from all over the country where I don't know the context, I don't know the resources, I don't know the community, I think, is a real disservice to the students in the field personally. (FGP, Alberta)

> I think it's created a lot of connection as well where before students have to kind of meet for office hours, schedule a time to come to campus, etc. Their advisors are just kind of an email and a zoom link away and so I think that is definitely a big change due to COVID, the digital space. (FGP, Ontario)

Focus group participants shared the importance of learning skills to succeed in virtual environments, such a cyber counselling and how to use virtual settings to increase accessibility. However, many field educators shared the disappointment students felt with their expectations of direct practice not being met. Further, field educators agreed with students sentiments that their may be a lack of preparedness for in-person environments. Participants also related the students feelings of disconnect in the supervisory relationship. This shared experience of adapting to this new way of operating led to a better appreciation for in-person work with service users to develop and build on social work competencies and connect theory into practice. In conclusion, there are benefits and skill development opportunities in both in-person and virtual practicum settings, but field educators favoured in-person experiences.

Decolonizing Field Education

Cull et al.'s (2018) definition of decolonization was shared during the focus group discussions:

> Decolonization is the process of deconstructing the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. Decolonization also involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. (p. 7)

Focus group participants were asked "what decolonizing field education means to you and ways to achieve it". Participants shared that decolonizing social work field education is a multidimensional process that includes teaching reflexivity, meaningful inclusion of Indigenous social work, and engagement in critical dialogue.

Decolonization as a Multidimensional Process

This sub-theme refers to decolonization as an intricate system involving multiple areas. Participants discussed the admission process, curriculum, and diversification within agencies as central to transforming existing colonial structures. Post-secondary intuitions were discussed by participants as a starting point for change, beginning with accepting diverse students into social work programs and creating partnerships with community agencies to offer placements.

> Especially when you spend most of your career in a medical model which is a really heavy topic, and I just don't even know where to start to peel back the layers. I work for an organization that tries to focus on diversity and tries to do some decolonizing but probably has a long way to go. (FGP, British Columbia)

> I think it's evolving over the years and it's more of an open discussion now than it was 15 years ago. More open and comfortable for students and staff to have these discussions. But there's definitely still work to be done. (FGP, Quebec)

The medical model was a common example shared by participants as a system that sustains colonialism. However, similar to other experiences of colonialism shared by participants, they expressed that they did not know where to start or how to make meaningful change. Similarly, participants felt restricted in their respective agencies and institutions due to lack of time, resources, and support. Focus group participants emphasized the importance of meaningfully consulting and involving Indigenous stakeholders, gaining agency support, and continuing to engage in critical dialogue. Participants acknowledged progress in decolonizing social work field education, however noted that there is much work to be done.

Teaching Reflexivity

Reflexivity is defined as the ability to look both inwards and outwards to recognize the connections with social and cultural understandings (White, 2001, p. 10). Focus group participants stated that self-awareness and critical thinking are necessary skills for decolonizing social work field

education. Further, they noted that one should be mindful of their positionality, social location and degree of power, particularly as a field educator working directly with students.

> I think in terms of preparing students for diversity, critical thinking, and self-reflection, we all did those reflections in our social programs. I do think those are useful, because I find myself constantly reflecting about how me in the role is affecting, and who I am is reflected in the relationship that I have with constituents, and I think that's something that I can always try to do near the beginning, and just like: how do you think you'll be affected, like your identity, how do you think that's going to be reflected in the relationship you have with anyone who walks through the door? (FGP, British Columbia)

> I have to be really reflective in my practice and I think I talked to students about that as well, like we're reflecting on our practice but also reflective in terms of thinking about who we are and what we bring to our interactions. For me, I'm a middle-aged white guy and I bring that to each interaction that I participate in and that impacts people in certain ways and I need to consider that and need consider that when I'm working with a student. (FGP, Ontario)

Participants discussed that meaningful integration of reflexive practice into the curriculum and field education learning goals prepared students for their future as social workers. They shared that students have often entered their placement with a high degree of reflexivity. In fact, they effectively connect their social location to the broader social and cultural landscape. Participants also shared their own reflexivity as it related to their relationship with students and their agency. Reflexivity was noted as a foundational skill for disrupting colonial practices and participating in the meaningful transformation of social work field education.

Meaningful Inclusion of Indigenous Social Work

Meaningful inclusion of Indigenous social work refers to the intentional involvement of Indigenous people, perspectives and ideologies into social work field education. Focus group participants shared examples such as offering Indigenous courses created and taught by Indigenous professors, incorporating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), 2012), and partnering with placements that offer opportunities to learn from and work with Indigenous community members.

> Another piece that I know my colleague and I are looking to do [is] a little project in decolonizing field education. We thought about how we bring in Indigenous mentors. So looking at recruiting and relationship building with more Indigenous social workers in the community that can be field instructors or mentors to our students. (FGP, British Columbia)

> We have Indigenous courses that are taught by non-Indigenous people... that doesn't make sense to me. (FGP, Ontario)

> The starting place is creating and having more field placements in Indigenous agencies, so that we are working and connecting, and I think in some ways, demonstrating that social work, we're educating students differently than in the past. And so, there's that shared knowledge exchange that they get to experience social work in a different way and social

work students get to you know, understand the importance of Indigenous knowledge, elders, you know the holistic approach. (FGP, British Columbia)

Black and BIPOC students, racialized students, Indigenous students are struggling to get in a legitimate or appropriate placements, and that includes LGBTQ and other you know equity seeking groups. So basically, I see the problem is or the crisis or the other complexity is you have this field work coordinator has certain capacity, they have students submit their preferences and they have you know shortages already in the agencies, you have to match students with their interests […] How do we ensure equity and justice, how do we ensure, there is no shortage of placements, how do we ensure the best matches and offer student choices and that skills in the future careers […] I do think that could be one reason why we have to argue that we really need to transform the whole field education model. This is not the only model. There are other models that I think we need to explore in Canada and elsewhere else. (FGP, Ontario)

Participants expressed concern for the current lack of Indigenous involvement in field education. However, they shared experiences when they have meaningfully included Indigenous social workers in their own work. They named meaningful inclusion as a central indicator of decolonizing social work field education, and foundational to the multidimensional process.

Engagement in Critical Dialogue

A key component of transforming field education is engaging in critical dialogue, which refers to intentional conversation about decolonization. Coinciding with the previous sub-theme of Meaningful Inclusion of Indigenous Social Work, participants noted the importance of engaging in critical dialogue with Indigenous community members.

Decolonizing should start from the mind, the body, the language, the rules and the super messy. There's so many ways to decolonize our thoughts and thinking and the languages, the way we communicate with each other, the relationships, so there's so many ways. (FGP, British Columbia)

I think that we can take lots of workshops and we can take lots of seminars, but until we actually put into practice what we need to do differently, none of that will really matter. So, it's having those conversations and it's calling out situations and people, I think, that are not intending to cause harm, but are causing harm, without even realizing it. (FGP, Alberta)

I think being aware of our students' knowledge and having conversations about how decolonial practices might actually look like. How can we put them into place is difficult and I think that we can't shy away from these conversations. (FGP, Quebec)

Focus group participants highlighted critical dialogue as a gentle approach to identify and respond to people or situations that are causing harm. They placed the responsibility of engaging in critical dialogue on everyone, especially field educators in their time with students. While noting it can be difficult to have these necessary conversations, it is integral to the decolonization of social work field education.

Innovative Practices for Field Education

Innovative practices for field education refer to creative ways to transform field education. Participants discussed the individual and systemic challenges faced in their roles, and ways to innovatively solve them. The study identified six sub-themes within the theme innovative practices for field education: i) Support for Field Instructors, ii) Non-traditional Placement Options, iii) Evaluation Methods, iv) Pedagogical Shifts in Field Education, v) Financial Compensation in Field Education, and vi) Resource Sharing.

Support for Field Instructors

Support for field instructors refer to resources and incentives that contribute to the success of those who supervise placement students in the field. Participants stated that support varies between agencies and institutions, as well as availability of faculty field liaisons. They discussed that community support would make up for the inconsistencies in supports between agencies, particularly in agencies with few social workers. Additionally, participants report limited time and space to be a field educator despite the expectation from their agency to provide field supervision.

> There are two social workers at my agency or [in] my building, so most people aren't social workers, so I was saying just having groups to talk about what's the best, what works, what doesn't – that would be helpful. (FGP, British Columbia)

> I think having a person at the agency that the practicum staff can go and just talk to, and also just to create some protected time even to just have your supervision with your student because you're still having to fit that in amongst all your other expectations. (FGP, Ontario)

> In some jurisdictions there's actual incentives to be a field instructor and to take on the educational responsibility, above and beyond the clinical relationship of being a social worker. I don't know whether it's anywhere in Canada, where there's additional recognition to be a field instructor, to contribute to the education of a social work student. (FGP, Quebec)

Focus group participants shared the importance of recognition as an incentive, stating that some institutions grant titles such as 'adjunct lecturer' to field educators. Additional supports field educators named were monetary compensation and professional development credits. However, participants debated whether the responsibility for delivering such supports fall on agencies, institutions, professional social work associations, or individuals.

Non-Traditional Placement Options

Non-traditional placement options refer to alternative forms of practicum to ones considered 'mainstream' (e.g., clinical placements). Participants provided examples such as self-directed, research and policy placements. Additionally, rotational placements were defined as an opportunity for students to gain a broader picture of various social work roles in a given agency, to experience different programs and/or specialties prior to choosing post-graduation.

. . . we have really interesting work happening in community agencies, where we do not have social workers employed, and so, if we had the financial support within the university to hire external field instructors, we could have students supervised in a community agency … they're kind of interesting ideas that we could work with if we had the capacity to put something like that in place. (FGP, British Columbia)

[Students] had an interest in macro level work and didn't really find themselves practicum options that were presented to them. [They] often had to create those themselves, so things like getting involved in social enterprise or social innovation, that's not necessarily in the list of practicums that are available … (FGP, Ontario)

I work in a hospital and what I think would be greatest is if we did rotational practicums like what nurses and doctors do that way people could have one overseeing clinical supervisor who meets on a regular basis, sets goals, monitors throughout the duration the placement. Then every couple of months you go into a different clinical area… I think for mental health especially and addiction specializations. (FGP, Ontario)

Focus group participants discussed offering non-traditional placement options would result in improved social work competencies. Additionally, non-traditional field placements would broaden the current field education landscape leading to an improved reputation of social workers in agencies where fewer social workers are employed. Macro placements were highlighted as potential options such as research and policy; as well as settings such as libraries, animal shelters, community centers, and more that, with increased planning and funding, could offer a valuable field placement experience.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods refer to the ways in which field instructors assess students in their practicum. Findings highlighted both effective and challenging field evaluation methods as well as suggestions for change. Participants expressed that the current student evaluation systems used in schools of social work need updating to better capture the nuances of student performance and uniqueness of individual student experiences.

The [evaluation system] is really antiquated, and the student evaluation form is not very useful. It's a process of checking boxes that are somewhat meaningless and they only give options that are either really fantastic or really terrible. (FGP, Ontario)

If we can identify some core things for our social workers to do and be, some core common beliefs values, etc., … Then that again would help us in our field offices to understand how to evaluate our students, how our students are to be evaluated within the field and also the support that we can provide to the field instructors around what they have to teach their students. (FGP, Ontario)

Several participants reported the need to update systems for student evaluation within practicum and felt that universities were responsible to oversee strengthening this process. Other participants, however, identified the role of regulating bodies outlining professional standards within field education and social work to determine how to evaluate a student in practicum. Overall, there was agreement between participants that none have experienced an evaluation tool that proved to capture the overall student performance and learning experience in placement.

Pedagogical Shifts in Field Education

Pedagogy is defined as the teaching process and is a critical as well as distinctive aspect, which is used by the CSWE with reference to social work field education (CSWE, 2008). However, focus group participants highlighted barriers of limited access to resources such as time, space, and funding on the teaching process. Participants discussed the necessary shift of field education to a more respected status in academia to strengthen the appeal of field instruction and to attract funding in better alignment with its central component in social work education.

> . . . is the recognition of field education as signature pedagogy to go beyond lip service because some schools have this neoliberal managerialist orientation in treating field education. [Some perceived that] what we do is just simply an administrative process of matching students to placements. Rather, it is also valuing the educational piece and the learning that we provide to our students. (FGP, Ontario)

> Maybe across the board if being a field educator had a more status symbol in your career and if the requirement to have was taking the bare minimum education, that might be one way that all of field is elevated across the board. (FGP, British Columbia)

Participants discussed the interconnectedness of the community that makes up field education such as the key roles that coordinators, faculty field liaisons, and directors play in the holistic student learning experience. Entry-level training was a common idea shared to prepare field educators and regulate field education across Canada to meet a standard of practice. Similarly, to provide a sense of community among educators.

Financial Compensation in Field Education

Financial Compensation in Field Education refers to the value of offering field instructors financial compensation to incentivize field instruction of students as well as financially compensating students to offset expenses during practicum. Study participants stated that students were often doing their field placement, coursework, and engaging in paid employment at the same time. Paying students in field work would relieve some of the pressure felt by students. Participants expressed that financial compensation may be an effective method for increasing the accessibility of social work education programs for students.

> Practicums are unpaid, so students are also working on top of doing course load and practicum. So, if I were to change something, I would want practicum to be paid, because that could alleviate some pressure and reward the students for the work that they are putting in in all these agencies […] I think another reason why that would be a good idea would be accessibility. Not everyone can give up two to four days of the week just doing unpaid work,

so I think it would invite people, who couldn't do that, to be able to pursue social work as a career. (Field Instructor, British Columbia)

It's super unrealistic and unfair to expect a full-time student to then also give up their time freely for so long. It definitely would break down the barriers between how many people get to do practicums, how many people get to do degrees that involve practicums. I feel like that's probably preventing a lot more people from going into those fields. (FGP, Ontario)

If the universities are struggling, at least I know [name of institution] struggles to find placements for the students, well, maybe they need to come up with a plan to provide monetary compensation to these fields instructors who are taking on a huge amount of work for free. (Field Instructor, Ontario)

Financial Compensation in Field Education during field placement was reported by participants to increase the accessibility, desirability, and sustainability, of not only field education processes, but also social work as a profession. Participants addressed how financial compensation is linked to equity issues for students who face financial challenges as a result of unpaid practicum. Participants shared innovative ideas on where money can be allocated or reallocated in an effort to reimburse field education expenses. Financial Compensation for field instructors and students would contribute to a higher degree of professionalism and appreciation for the social work role as well as positively contribute to the practicum experience by creating a more accessible and equitable environment. It is important to note that financial compensation can include various forms (e.g., study grants, bursaries, awards, workload compensation, among others).

Resource Sharing

Resource sharing refers to the concept of field educators across the nation providing one another access to relevant supports that another stakeholder may possess (e.g., field coordinators from different universities sharing student evaluation methods). Resource sharing was identified by some focus group participants as a practice that could contribute to the transformation of field education. Participants also identified related challenges and limitations of resource sharing such as meeting agency specific needs, language barriers, varying provincial regulations, and nuances associated with confidentiality. Benefits of resource sharing included increase access to information, ideas, and inspiration. One participant mentioned, as a field coordinator, resource sharing provided them inspiration to develop innovative field education models relevant to their own contexts. The same participant also mentioned though that implementing these ideas within their field office was limited due to resource scarcity.

I think models and ideas of what others have done. I find it interesting when we talk with field programs across Canada, what some folks have done like having a clinical social work clinic, for example, is another idea that it's really interesting to me…that requires a lot of work on the part of the school and personnel that are in that school to maintain that in a facility and funding and so forth, so that had seemed above our ability to organize or beyond us. (Field Coordinator, British Columbia)

I think that if there was an ability to share resources, it would be really beneficial to others who are maybe starting an instructor role, or just getting into it. (Field Instructor, Alberta

Ideas on resource sharing were discussed in each focus group as participants shared trainings, supervision methods, and more. It was agreed that having a platform to share and receive best practices, ask questions, and get oriented on field instruction would add positively to the experience for both field educators and students. Resource sharing was said to be an opportunity to connect with peers to share their successes and challenges, often leading to emotional support and the relating of common experience. Further, resource sharing was found to be multifaceted with outcomes being meaningful connection, peer support, and improving the field education experience.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify what is needed to transform field education from the perspective of field educators (e.g., field education coordinators and directors, field staff, field instructors, and faculty and/or field liaisons) across Canada. Focus group participants shared insights based on their experiences with their respective agencies and post-secondary institutions. This study is in response to the challenges shared by field educators that act as barriers to delivering quality field education experiences for students. Further, field educators discussed the factors that impact retention and ways to address them such as providing incentives, recognition, and resources to support their success and wellbeing. Findings reveal four central components to transform social work field education that are preparing students prior to field placements, decolonizing field education, sustaining the increased flexibility and accessibility brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and finding new and innovative practices for field education. Partnership and collaboration among stakeholders were agreed by participants as being key indicators of successfully transforming field education in Canada.

There is limited research on student preparedness for practicum (Fulton et. al., 2019). Nonetheless, field education continues be foundational to social work practice. Consistent with the literature, participants note that students greatly benefit from pre-practicum education (Katz et al., 2014). Focus group participants discussed the inconsistencies in social work students' level of preparedness for practicum and agreed that it was primarily dependent on their experience prior to their commencing their programs. Further, academic institutions are not equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in their placements and field educators report needing to fill this gap in education, increasing their responsibilities. According to Maidment (2003), university social work programs should hold the responsibility for preparing students prior to entering their placements. Findings conclude that field educators access to the students reading list and syllabus prior to the start of their placement improves their facilitation of theory into practice integration. Participants report students entering practicum become quickly overwhelmed and are more at risk for burnout. Kanno and Koeske (2010) agree and name self-efficacy as a crucial skill that students should development prior to commencing their placement, reducing burnout and improving the overall student experience in placement. In agreement with Maidment (2003) and Katz et al. (2014), participants emphasized that simulation-based exercises, such as role-playing, best prepares students for their placement and, in turn, their professional social work career.

Decolonizing social work field education was discussed by focus group participants as central in the transformation of field education. Findings share that decolonization is a multidimensional process, with reflexivity at the forefront of meaningful change. Participants discussed that one's reflexive

practice is crucial in recognizing how they play a role in challenging or sustaining colonial practices by reflecting on their positionality, social location, and the power they hold in spaces. Participants shared that critical dialogue and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous social work, in agreement with the literature, is a catalyst for decolonization (Clark et al., 2010). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012) states that increased agency support is necessary for the inclusion and hiring of Indigenous stakeholders (Chilvers, 2021). Agencies and institutions are at the forefront of decolonizing social work field education by valuing and integrating non-Western models of healing and related practices in social work education.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a multitude of challenges for social work students and field education stakeholders. However, the challenges invite field education stakeholders to transform, adapt, be creative, and flexible in their approach to field education (Drolet et al., 2021). Social work students and field educators were impacted on many levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, needing to adapt in the early stages (Davis & Mirick, 2021). Study participants discussed what they would like to maintain post-pandemic, sharing that the pandemic increased flexibility and accessibility as a result of the shift to an online forum. Participants agreed that the online forum facilitated communication, scheduling, and was a cost-effective option for students and field educators. Additionally, increased flexibility led to students engaging in additional responsibilities (Melero et al., 2021). For example, students were able to better schedule schoolwork, family obligations, and part-time work/job(s).

On the other hand, while participants agreed that the reduced hours for practicum were necessary during the pandemic, they expressed concerns as to students' professional social work development, and that this change should not be maintained post-pandemic. Focus group participants engaged in discussions on the lack of evidence to support the current number of hours necessary for students to learn fundamental social work competencies, in agreement with recent literature that states no empirical evidence exists (Petra et al., 2020). Participants stated their interest in further research on this area post-pandemic to better understand if reduced hours correlate with student preparedness for practice post-graduation.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a rise of macro, self-directed, and online placements. These expanded the opportunities of social work students and offered alternative avenues post-graduation not previously considered (Morley & Clarke, 2020). Participants stated that offering remote placements remotely was a more manageable workload, but also led to feelings of disconnection. Recent literature confirms this finding (Davis & Mirick, 2021; Dempsey et al., 2021; Zuchowski, 2021), stating that students and field educators reported feeling isolated during their placement.

Despite being recognized as a signature pedagogy within social work education (CSWE, 2008), participants expressed that field education lacks the status it deserves within academia and the resources to support transformative practices. The rise of neoliberal organizational structures, that are centered around costly and productive operations, have led to agency's reduced capacity to supervise placement students. As a result, there are decreased numbers of field educators (Hill et al., 2019; MacDonald et al., 2020). Participants discussed that to improve retention, there must be an increase in resources and incentives. Regulated entry trainings, professional development opportunities, and community support were named crucial for setting field educators up for success. Ayala et al. (2014) suggest virtual forums to deliver cost-effective and accessible online training

opportunities provided by universities. Canadian field educators created an online field education course that reflects this type of collaborative resource (McConnell, 2016).

Participants in this study also emphasized agency support as a key component for field educator retention. Adequate time, space, and supportive colleagues are foundational for field educator and student success. A study from Hill et al. (2019) agrees that reduced workload is the most significant factor in a field educators decision to invite a placement student. Field educators in the study noted that colleagues who also invite placement students are supportive in that they can collaborate and support each other. In turn, agencies with few social workers can lack recognition and support necessary to deliver quality field education.

LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations in this research study. Focus groups were facilitated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the experiences shared by participants may be reflected upon their current context, opposed to field education prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, findings may be less applicable to life post-pandemic due to the differences in how individuals, agencies, and institutions operate.

Students were not included in this research study. To learn about students' experiences in field education, visit the TFEL resources on the website: https://tfelproject.com/resources-tfel/. Further research is needed to incorporate student perspectives in identifying how to transform field education in Canada. Student perspectives are included in the TFEL Roundtable series held in 2022-2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Discussions with field education coordinators and directors, field staff, field instructors, and faculty and/or field liaisons provided insight into how to transform social work field education in Canada. The study provided a deeper understanding of what is currently meeting the needs of field educators and students, as well as challenges and recommended solutions. The following recommendations address how to transform field education:

1. Build awareness through accessible online platforms and networking events that create opportunity to share and discuss the current state of social work field education in Canada. Engage field education stakeholders by having critical discussion of what is currently meeting the needs of field educators and students, and how current practices and policies can be enhanced.
2. Develop innovative resources and incentives to support field instructors, including networking events and workshops, financial support, and opportunities for peer support wherein field instructors can share resources as well as create and sustain professional development communities. Create accessible modules that include resources such as recordings and helpful links that walk field educators through a nationally regulated training and how to maneuver common shared experiences.

3. Acknowledge that decolonization is essential, in all aspects of social work education, including field education. This process includes critical dialogue, diversity, and reflexivity. It is crucial that the curriculum be decolonized and that field education processes be diversified, through hiring Indigenous social workers and academics, to support the integration of Indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing, being, and doing.

4. Integrate the helpful changes to field education that have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, including adopting more flexible and accessible approaches to field education post-pandemic. This may include flexible scheduling for field educators and students, working remotely, and more macro-practice opportunities in placement.

To implement these recommendations, ongoing collaboration and partnerships are essential to proactively engage field education stakeholders to expand understanding about the critical role of field education in organizations and the profession, and in turn, nurture new field learning opportunities for social work students. Recognizing the important role of field education in students' learning was discussed by participants as being a major indicator of field education sustainability. To convey the importance of field education, students must have a positive practicum experience and early-intervention to consider becoming a field educator. While aspects of these recommendations involve changes to individual, agency, and social work education programs, leadership and initiative within accreditation bodies is integral to the sustainability of these changes. Schools of social work, in partnership with agencies, must advocate for additional resources to respond to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on social work field education. Future directions for research include exploring the perspective of students as key stakeholders in the field education process. Their expertise may contribute to innovative, effective, and sustainable change for the future of social work field education.

CONCLUSION

The TFEL project aims to inform the development of more innovative and sustainable models of field education through a diverse array of research activities that create new student training and mentorship activities which, in turn, contribute to transforming social work field education. The study highlights the experiences, perspectives, and recommendations of 99 social work field educators in Canada who participated in online FGD sessions. The key themes emerging from the focus groups include student preparedness for practicum, impacts of COVID-19, decolonizing field education, and innovative practices for field education. Participants shared the need for increased resources, collaboration, flexibility, diversity, and recognition, for field educators.

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APPENDIX A

Focus Group Questions

Please discuss the idea of sharing field resources across Canadian institutions. Is this possible? Is it desirable? What would it look like?

Please discuss from your perspective the absolute best ways to prepare students for field and practice.

Please discuss what decolonizing field education means to you and ways to achieve it.

Please discuss what changed significantly in field education as a result of COVID-19.

Please discuss what supports students can access and what supports you feel would be beneficial to offer.

How can field educators better support students?

Please discuss student expectations regarding field placements and whether these expectations are typically met.

Please discuss what is needed to better support field educators and transform field education.