

Does Stress Matter? Findings from a Self-Report Survey of Contract Cheating Behaviours of Canadian College Students

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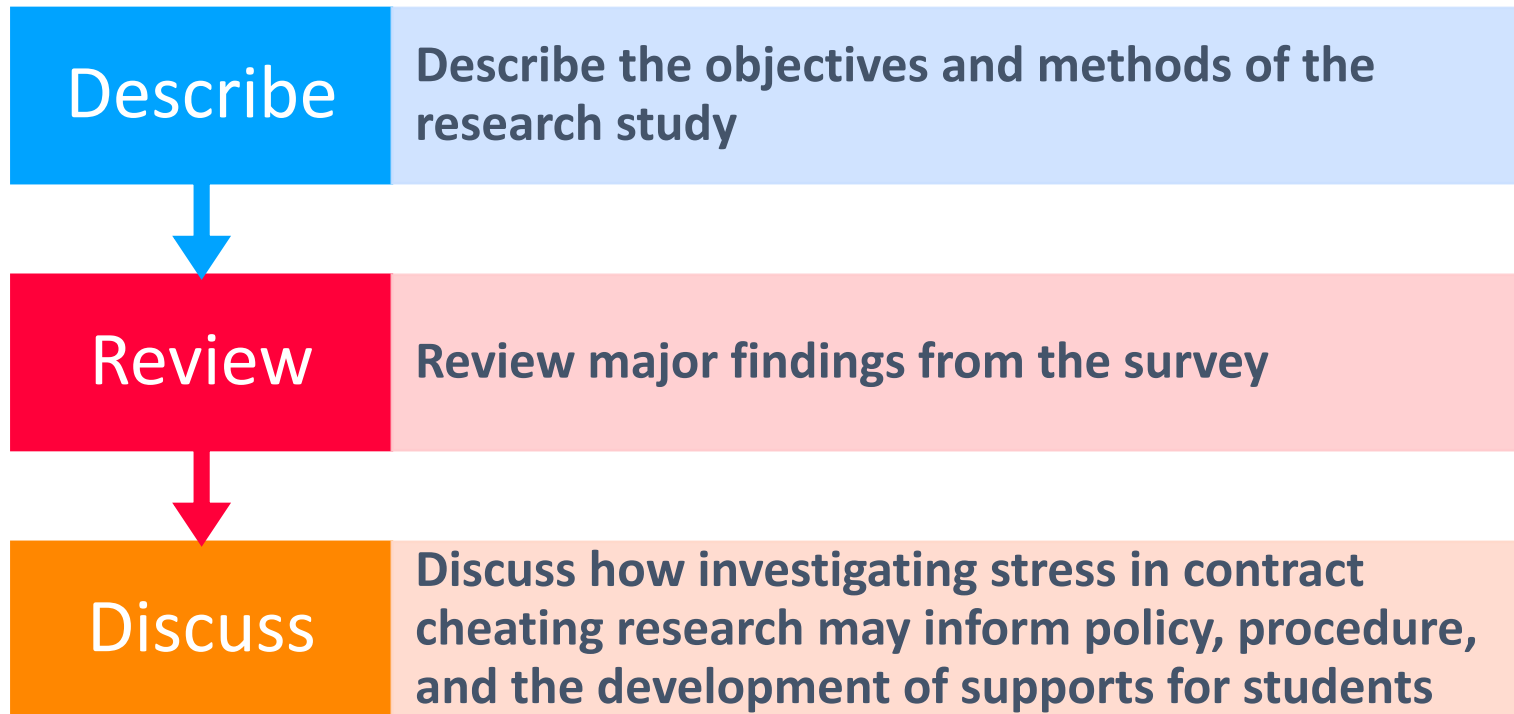
Acknowledgement of Territory



Past, Present, and Future. Indigenous Placemaking Installation, Calgary Public Library. Paintings completed by Roland Rollinmud, Keegan Starlight, and Kalum Teke Dan.

Bow Valley College is located in the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina, and the Iyarhe Nakoda. We are situated on land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, and the traditional Blackfoot name of this place is "Mohkinstsis" which we now call the City of Calgary. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Objectives



Additional Information About This Research Project:

Ferguson, C. D., Toye, M. A., Carver, C., Pictin, T., Eaton, S. E., & Boisvert, S. (2022). *Understanding Student Experiences of Commercial Contract Cheating and Other Outsourcing Behaviours – Research Report*. Calgary: Bow Valley College.
<https://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/115343>

The report can also be accessed on the ACAI website
<https://albertaacademicintegrity.wordpress.com/category/resources/>

A recording of this presentation can be found here <https://youtu.be/QPjZXVq4hhA>

Should you have questions at a later time please contact:

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Previous Research on Contract Cheating

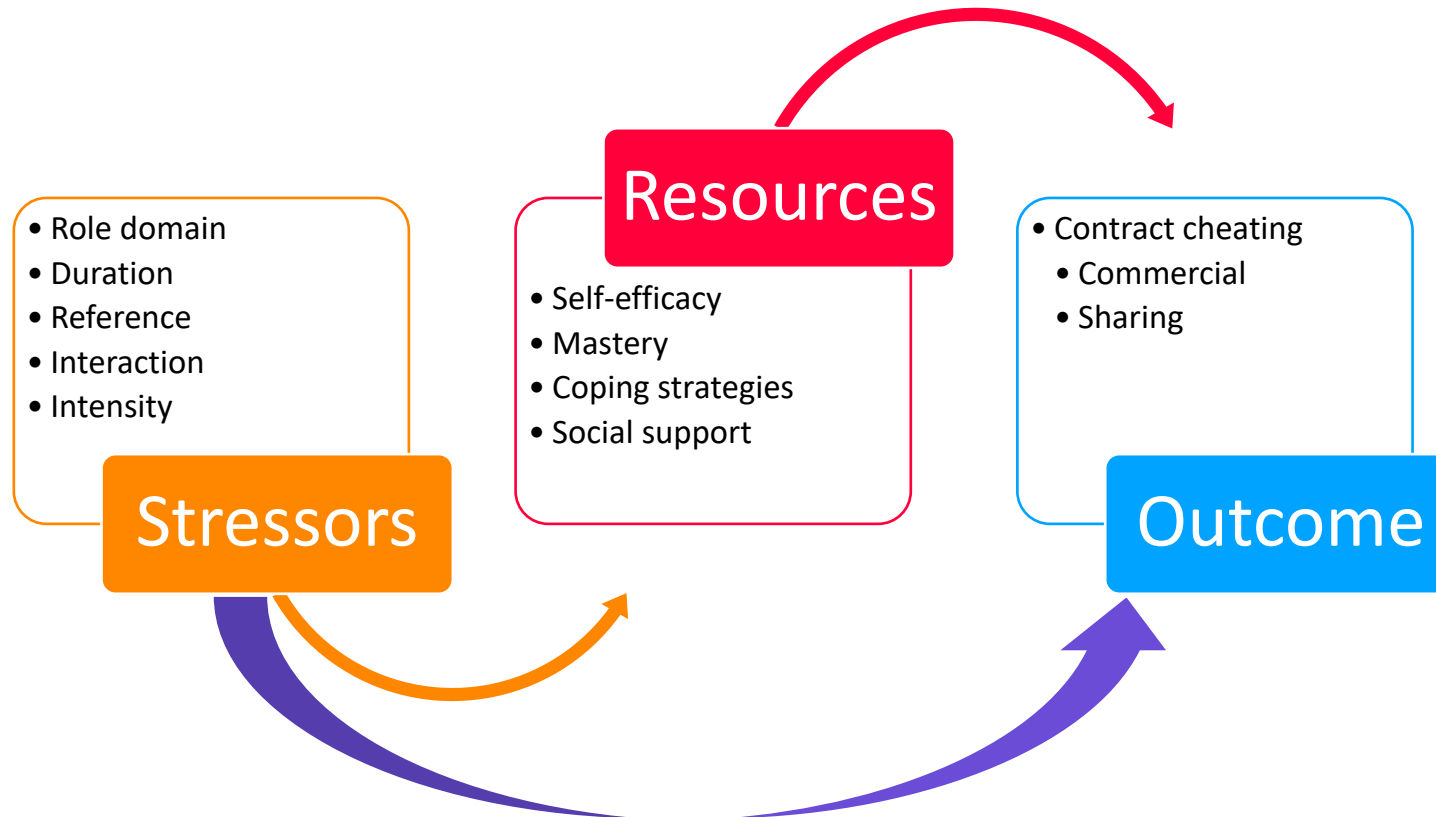
- Many notable studies on contract cheating internationally in the university context (e.g., Bretag et al., 2017, 2019a, 2019b; Clarke & Lancaster, 2013; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2016; Bjelobaba, 2021; Glendinning et al., 2017; Orim & Anirejuoritse, 2017; Awdry & Newton, 2019)
- Little research on contract cheating in community colleges and other non-university higher education institutions (Bretag & Harper, 2020)
- In Canada empirical studies on contract cheating are limited but studies where primary data were collected include those of Eaton (2019), Stoesz & Los (2019), and Thacker (2022).

Research Objectives

- Collaboration between Bow Valley College and Alberta Council on Academic Integrity funded by General Research Fund, Bow Valley College
- The main objectives were to:
 - address the need for more information about contract cheating at the college level in Alberta (Canada) that will inform / advocate for policy to protect students
 - explore the stressors students experience to inform post-secondary communities toward the development of supports for students
 - engage with students as partners in research

Theoretical Framework – Stress Process Model

“Personal problems can be and often are reflections of the structures and contexts in which people lead their lives” (Pearlin & Bierman, 2013, p.337)



Research Methodology

- Self-report survey research method was used to collect closed-ended and open-ended responses on the type, frequency, and seriousness of a variety of violation behaviours and the stress encountered while in their programs
- Responses were collected in Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, between October 25 and November 8, 2021
- **14.63%** response rate ($n = 916/6,271$)

Procedure



Student researchers, as survey administrators, sent recruitment email to learner institutional email accounts from a project email account



4 reminder email



Visited 13 classes (in-person and virtually)



Recruitment notices were published in the Student eNews each week



Recruitment graphic (created by BVC marketing) was posted to programs pages on D2L Brightspace (week 1 and 2)



SABVC (college student association) shared the recruitment notice on their social media platforms

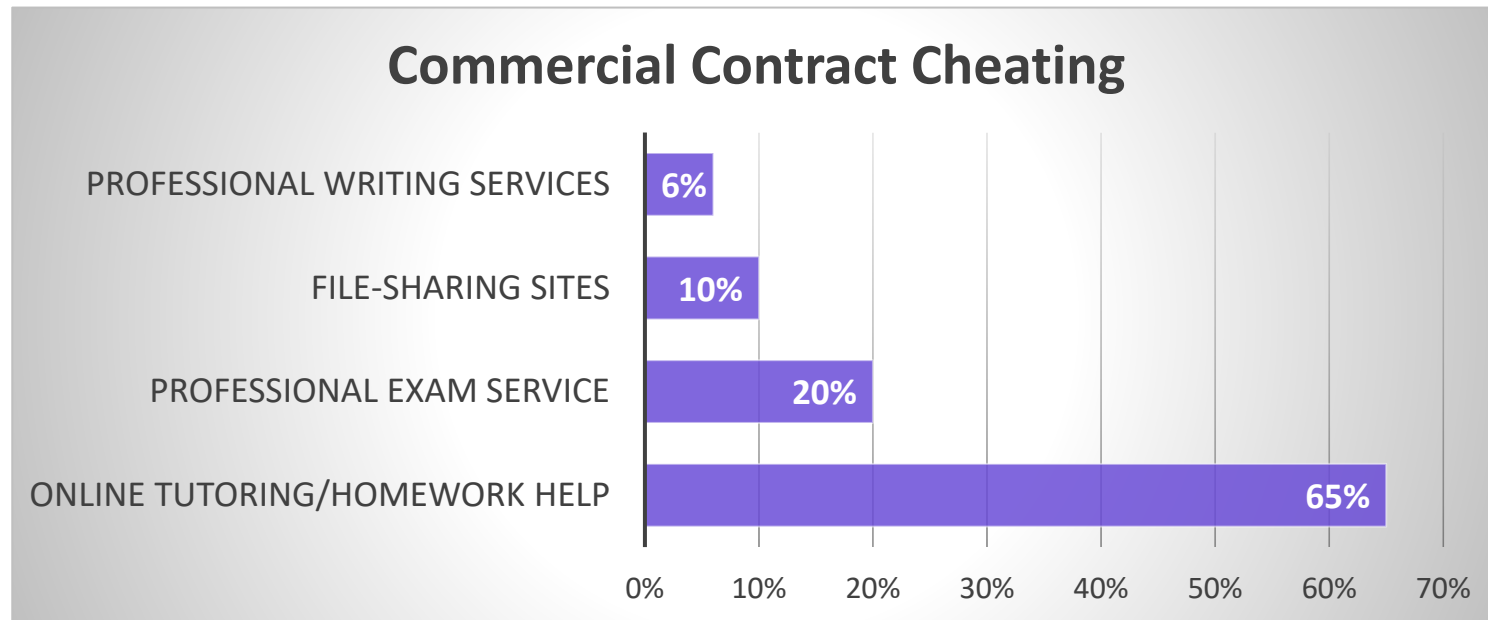


Student researchers created a recruitment video, link was included in all notices (received 153 views while the survey was live)

Major
Finding #1

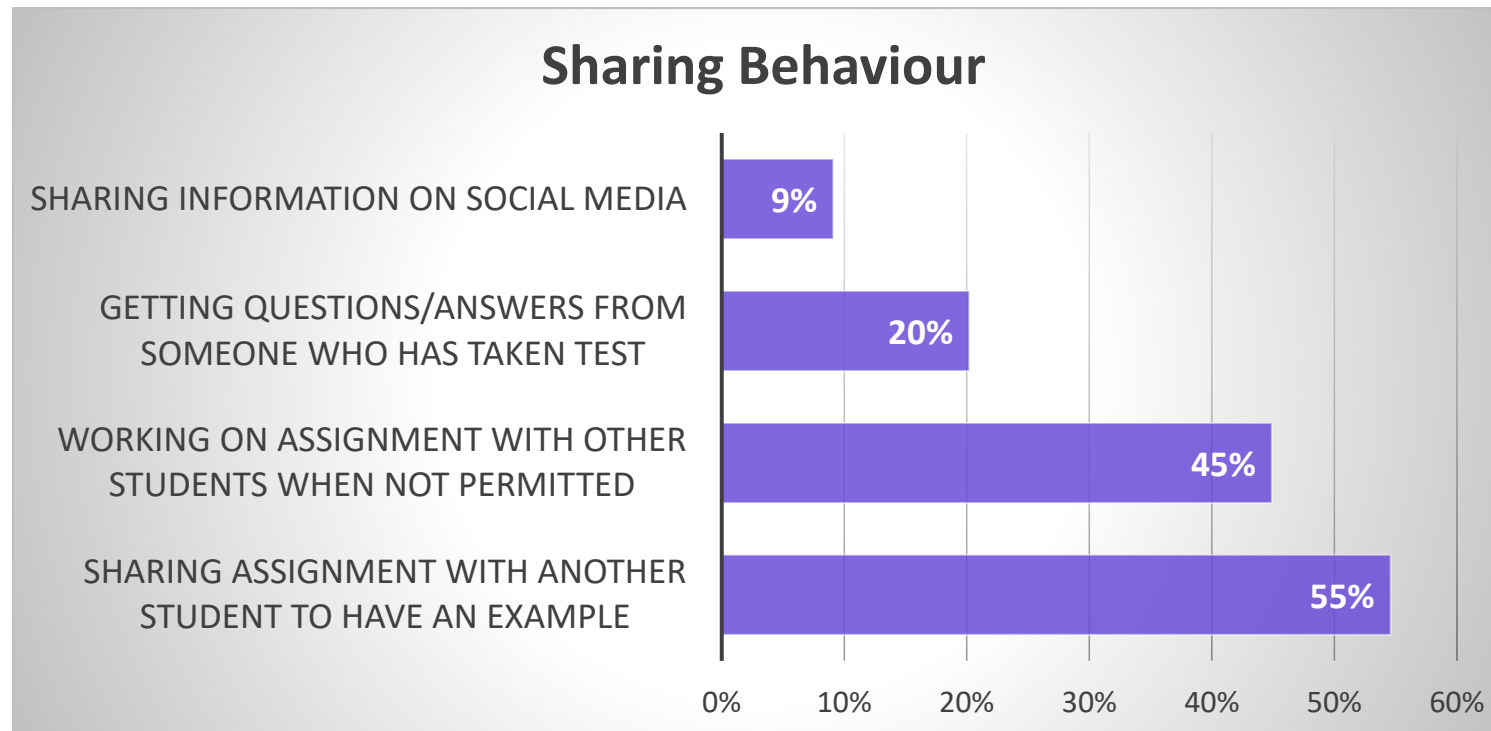
Students Engaged in a Variety of Commercial Contract Cheating Behaviours ...

- Overall, 13.9% (n = 104/749) of participants engaged in some type of commercial contract cheating



... and Sharing Behaviours

- 13.9% (n = 92/667) of participants engaged in some type of sharing



Who are the Engagers?

Commercial Contract Cheating

- Working vs Not working

Sharing Behaviour

- Domestic vs International
- Not Married vs Married
- Younger vs Older

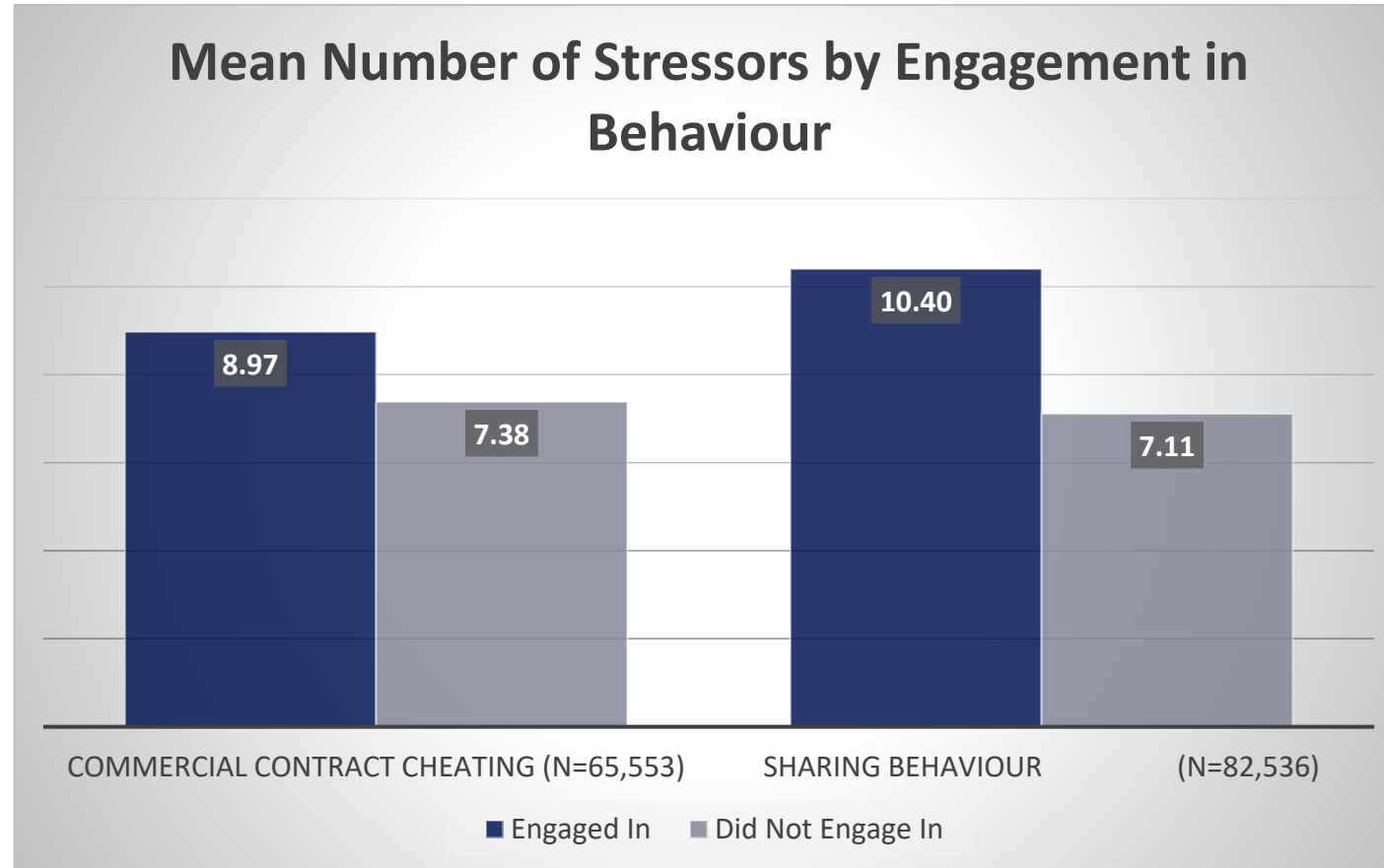
**Major
Finding #2**

Top Twenty Stressors Reported are Telling

Stressors	%	n
COVID-19 pandemic	61.2	382
Increased academic workload	54.3	339
Worried about your overall performance in college	49.5	309
Not achieving the grades, you wanted to	38.3	239
Moved	35.4	221
Fear of not graduating	26.9	168
College conflicting with job	26.3	164
College conflicting with family life	26.0	162
Unable to find work	23.9	149
Major financial crisis	19.9	124
Change of job	18.6	116
Exam stress due to e-proctoring surveillance	17.5	109
Family life conflicting with college	17.3	108
Close relationship ended	16.7	104
Work conflicting with college	16.2	101
Economic recession	15.9	99
Trouble accessing a computer or other technology necessary for completing your assignments/exams	14.9	93
Worried about losing job	14.1	88
Trouble working with or getting along with college peers	13.9	87
Missed too many classes and have fallen behind in homework/assignments	13.9	87

Major Finding #3

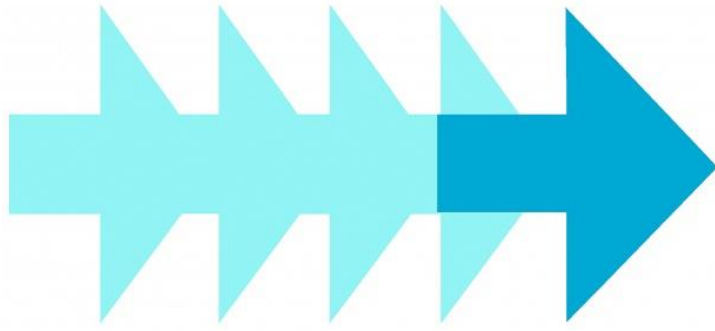
Those Engaging in Violation Behaviours Had Significantly Higher Levels of Stress



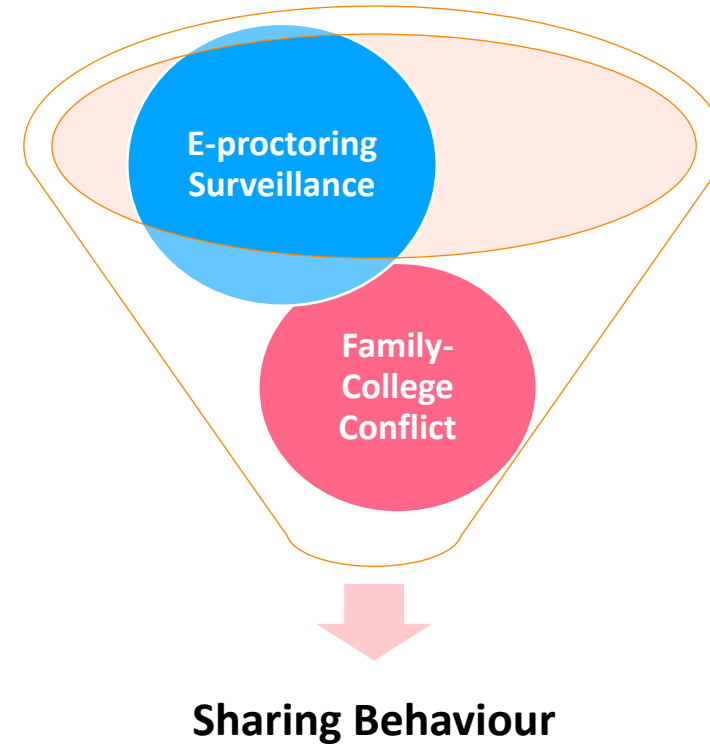
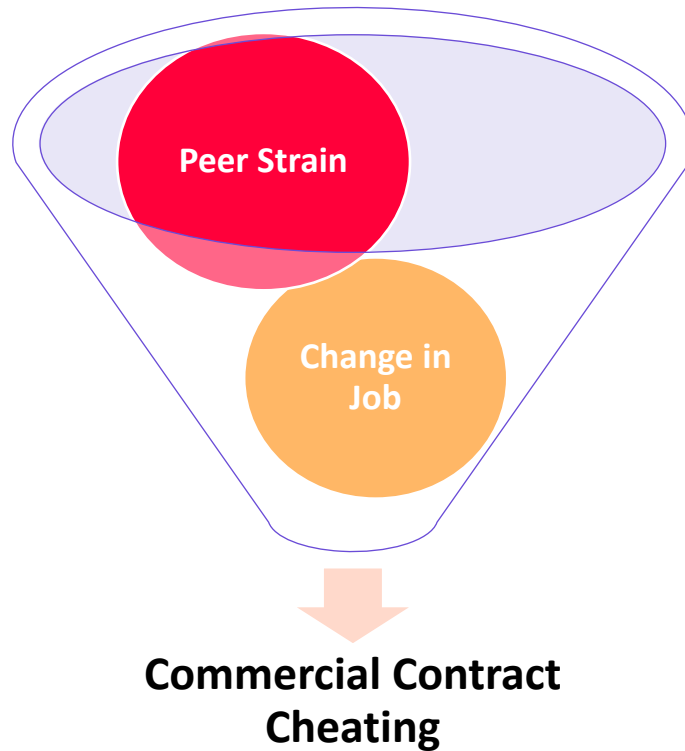
**Major
Finding #4**

Not All Types of Stress Are Associated with Violation Behaviour

	Commercial Contract Cheating		Sharing Behaviour	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total Stress (0-64)	8.83* (n=66)	7.37 (n=554)	10.40** (n=82)	7.10 (n=537)
Role Domain				
Work (0-9)	1.62 (n=66)	1.31 (n=556)	1.48 (n=82)	1.32 (n=539)
Family (0-20)	1.15 (n=66)	1.13 (n=556)	1.63* (n=82)	1.06 (n=539)
School (0-17)	3.70 (n=66)	3.05 (n=556)	4.46** (n=82)	2.92 (n=539)
Duration				
Life events (0-45)	6.03* (n=66)	4.82 (n=554)	6.93** (n=82)	4.65 (n=537)
Chronic strains (0-15)	2.05 (n=66)	1.85 (n=556)	2.49** (n=82)	1.78 (n=539)
Reference				
Personal (0-46)	8.05* (n=66)	6.64 (n=555)	9.13** (n=82)	6.44 (n=538)
Network (0-17)	0.79 (n=66)	0.74 (n=555)	1.27* (n=82)	0.67 (n=538)
Interaction				
School-related role conflict (0-4)	0.92 (n=66)	0.85 (n=556)	1.11 (n=82)	0.82 (n=539)
School-related role strain (0-4)	1.36 (n=66)	1.11 (n=556)	1.57** (n=82)	1.07 (n=539)
Intensity				
Traumatic life adversities (0-11)	0.71 (n=66)	0.50 (n=556)	0.93** (n=82)	0.46 (n=539)



A Closer Look



**Major
Finding #5**

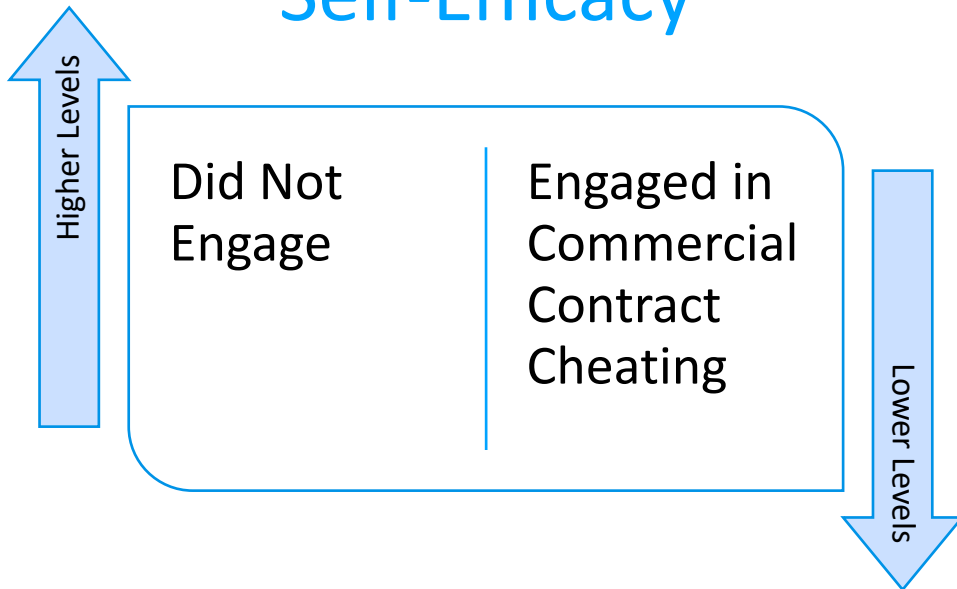
Some Groups of Students are Exposed to More Stress Than Others

	Student Status		Full/Part-Time		Gender		Employment Status		Marital Status	
	Inter-national	Domestic	Full-time	Part-time	Female	Other Gender	Working	Not Working	Married	Not Married
Total Stress (0-64)	5.97 (n=224)	8.41** (n=381)	7.48 (n=548)	8.43 (n=54)	8.06 (n=482)	7.36 (n=129)	7.66 (n=370)	7.40 (n=233)	6.59 (n=273)	8.31** (n=332)
Role Domain										
Work (0-9)	1.18 (n=224)	1.42* (n=383)	1.32 (n=550)	1.61 (n=54)	1.29 (n=484)	1.50 (n=129)	1.53** (n=372)	1.07 (n=233)	1.20 (n=274)	1.47* (n=333)
Family (0-20)	0.70 (n=224)	1.39** (n=383)	1.09 (n=550)	1.76* (n=54)	1.18* (n=484)	0.93 (n=129)	1.12 (n=372)	1.17 (n=233)	1.17 (n=274)	1.11 (n=333)
School (0-17)	2.44 (n=224)	3.50** (n=383)	3.16 (n=550)	2.81 (n=54)	3.01 (n=484)	3.47* (n=129)	3.09 (n=372)	3.20 (n=233)	2.57 (n=274)	3.57** (n=333)
Interaction										
School-related role conflict (0-4)	0.48 (n=224)	1.07** (n=383)	0.83 (n=550)	1.24* (n=54)	0.89 (n=484)	0.71 (n=129)	1.01** (n=372)	0.62 (n=233)	0.87 (n=274)	0.85 (n=333)
School-related role strain (0-4)	1.04 (n=224)	1.19 (n=383)	1.15 (n=550)	0.98 (n=54)	1.08 (n=484)	1.32* (n=129)	1.09 (n=372)	1.21 (n=233)	0.94 (n=274)	1.29** (n=333)
Intensity										
Traumatic life adversities (0-11)	0.38 (n=224)	0.59** (n=383)	0.50 (n=550)	0.70 (n=54)	0.48 (n=484)	0.63 (n=129)	0.53 (n=372)	0.49 (n=233)	0.46 (n=274)	0.85 (n=333)

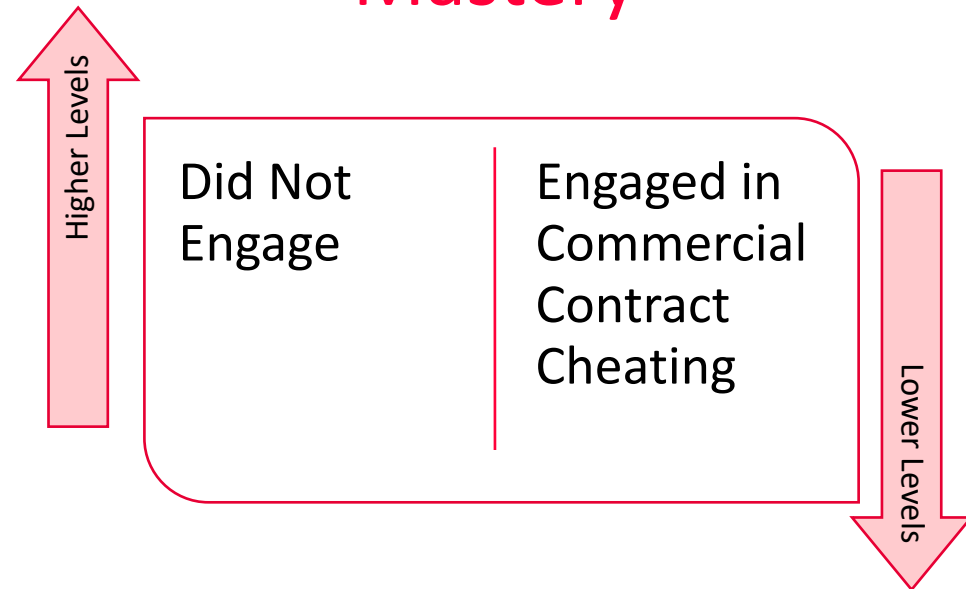
Use of and Access to Personal and Social Resources Vary

- Personal resources matter for commercial contract cheating

Self-Efficacy



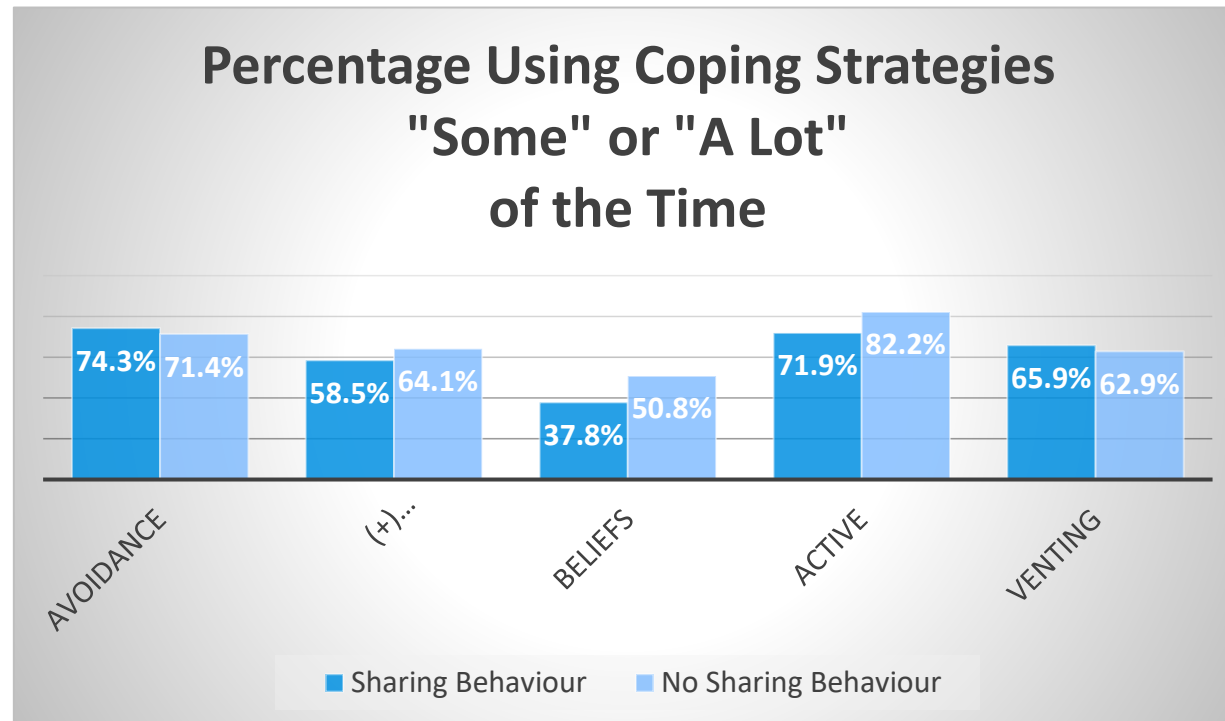
Mastery



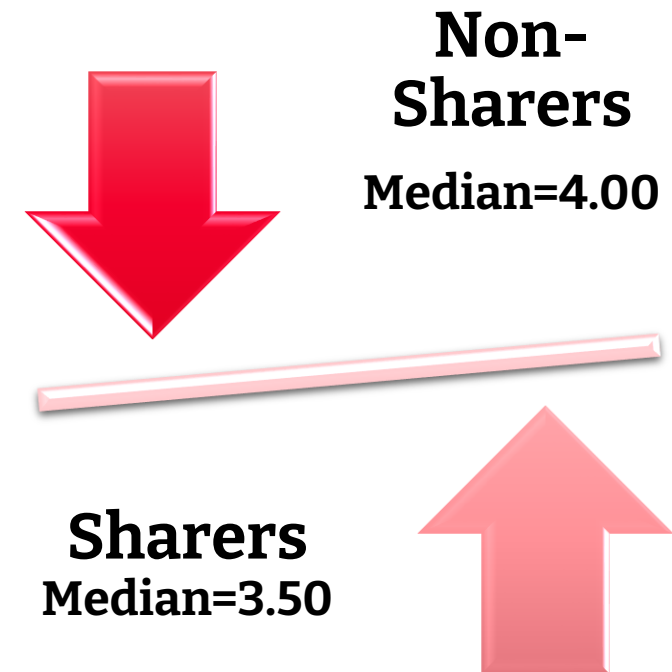
Coping Strategies and Social Resources

- Coping strategies and social resources matter for sharing behaviour

Coping Strategies



Instructor Support



Putting the Pieces Together

Commercial Contract Cheating



Non-working Students

Report LESS commercial behaviour

Lower levels of stress

More peer support



Working Students

Report MORE commercial behaviour

Higher work stress and role conflict

Less peer support

Sharing Behaviour



International Students

Report LESS sharing behaviour

Lower levels of stress

Higher levels of mastery

Use coping strategies

More social support



Domestic Students

Report MORE sharing behaviour

Higher stress levels

Lower levels of mastery

Do not use coping strategies

Report less social support

Commercial Contract Cheating Services: Support Providers or a Means to Cope with Stress?

Chegg Life > Health + Wellness > Tips for managing academic stress

Chegg Life Money ▾ Health + Wellness Life Skills Resources ▾ Chegg home | Help | Sign in



STRESS

Tips for managing academic stress

from The Jed Foundation Jan 26 2023 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Share](#)

Limitations

- Results may not be representative of the extent of post-secondary student experiences with contract cheating.
- Use of checklists to measure academic integrity violations and stress may not capture diverse perspectives and interpretations of behaviours considered as violations of academic integrity and events considered stressful.
- Students generally report higher stress than other populations (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Larcombe et al., 2016), but as this study was completed during a pandemic, it may not reflect levels of stress typically experienced by learners.



Informing Policy, Procedure, and Development of Supports for Learners



Challenges The Way We Think About Stress

Common View of Student Stress

Stress as an Individual Choice and Personal Failing



Don't be pushed by your problems.
Be led by your dreams.
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

The greatest weapon against stress
is our ability to choose one thought
over another.
– William James

Stress is caused by being 'here'
but wanting to be 'there'.
– Eckert Tolle

In the middle of difficulty lies
opportunity.
– Albert Einstein



Stress is ...

- an artefact of the constraints and pressures arising from a student's location in social institutions, systems of stratification, and social relationships



Seeing stress in this way ...



Allows us to see that stress is a more than a personal problem but also a public issue



Stress is not uniformly distributed among students and personal and social resources that help reduce stress are not equally available to all students



By tackling the structural conditions that lead to stress we may help alleviate stress that is linked to violation behaviours

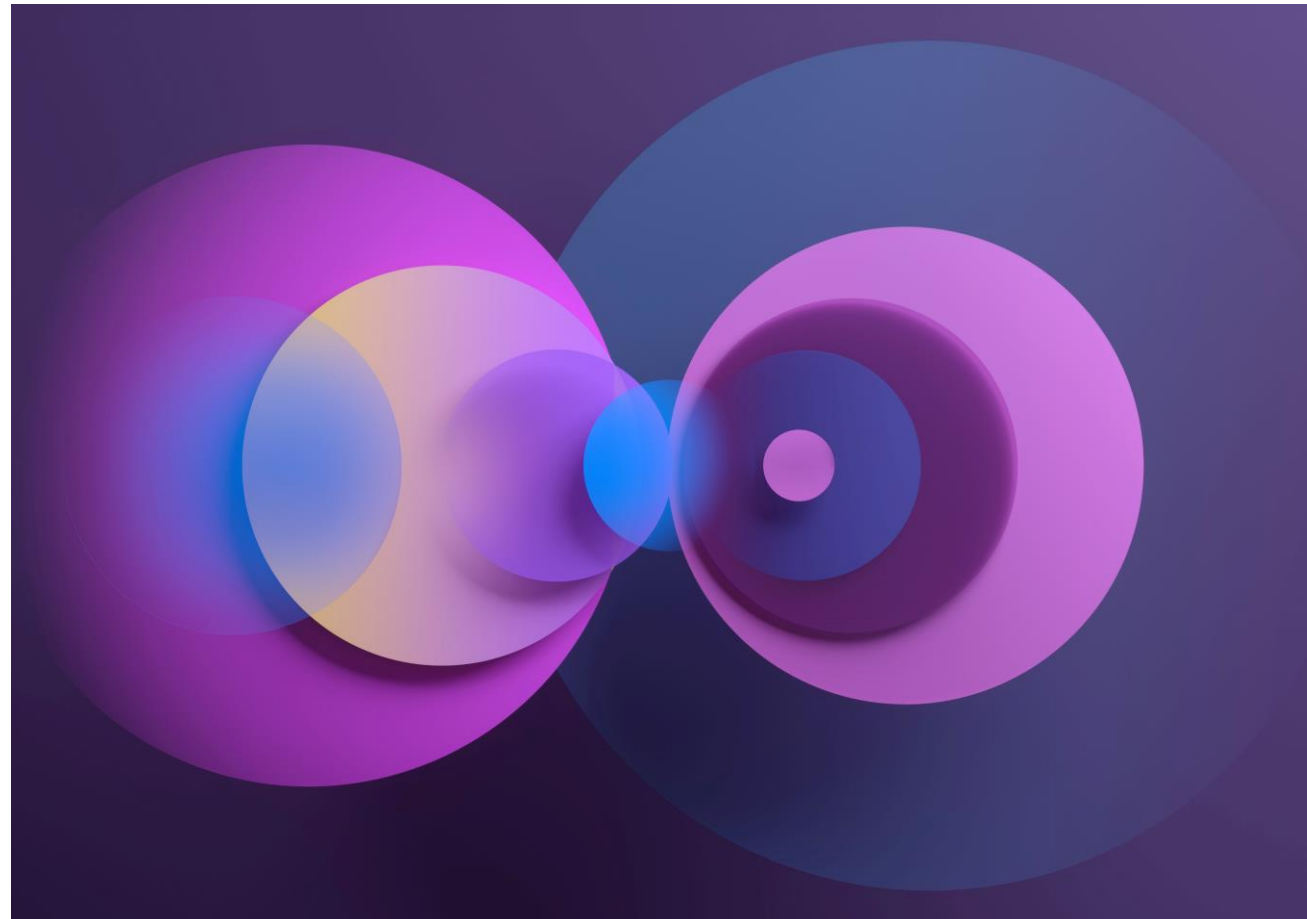


Individual Level Supports Are Not Sufficient

Consideration of Stress Must Exist at All Levels of our Institutions and Beyond

Mega
(Beyond)

Macro
(Institution)



Meso
(Program)

Micro
(Individual)

Micro-Level: Individual Supports

Mental health support

- Counselling services
- Stress management workshops
- Support for those experiencing traumatic life adversities
- Targeted support for managing relationships
- Building peer support communities





Meso-Level: Program Development

Program development with stress and mental health in mind

- Number of courses/term
- Expectations and assessments for each course
- Rethinking implementation of stress inducing exam monitoring practices such as e-proctoring surveillance
- Staff-student partnerships

(Eaton, 2022; Lancaster, 2021; Lancaster, 2022)



Macro-Level: Institutional Policy and Initiatives

Teaching and learning supports

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Supports addressing structural conditions that bring about stress

- Housing & job insecurity

Policy

- Incorporate mental health supports into policy/procedure
 - Counselors as part of misconduct process, academic integrity peer support
- Care and attention to minimizing the stress of misconduct and reframing it as learning

Mega-Level: Beyond

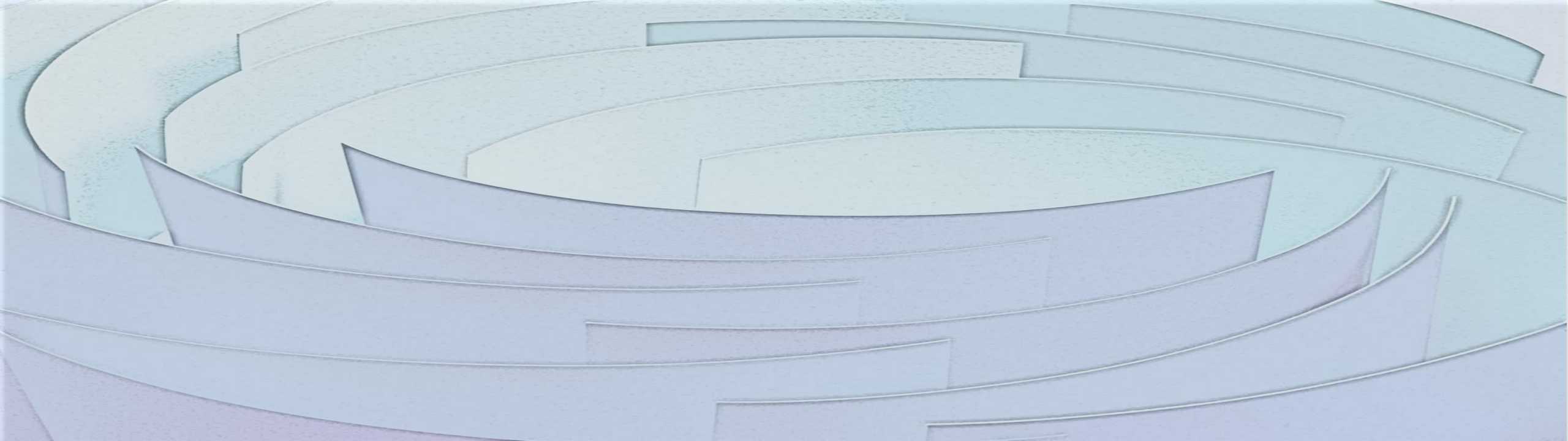
Engagement with national and international academic integrity communities

- Share information and ideas
- Push for change

Civic responsibility

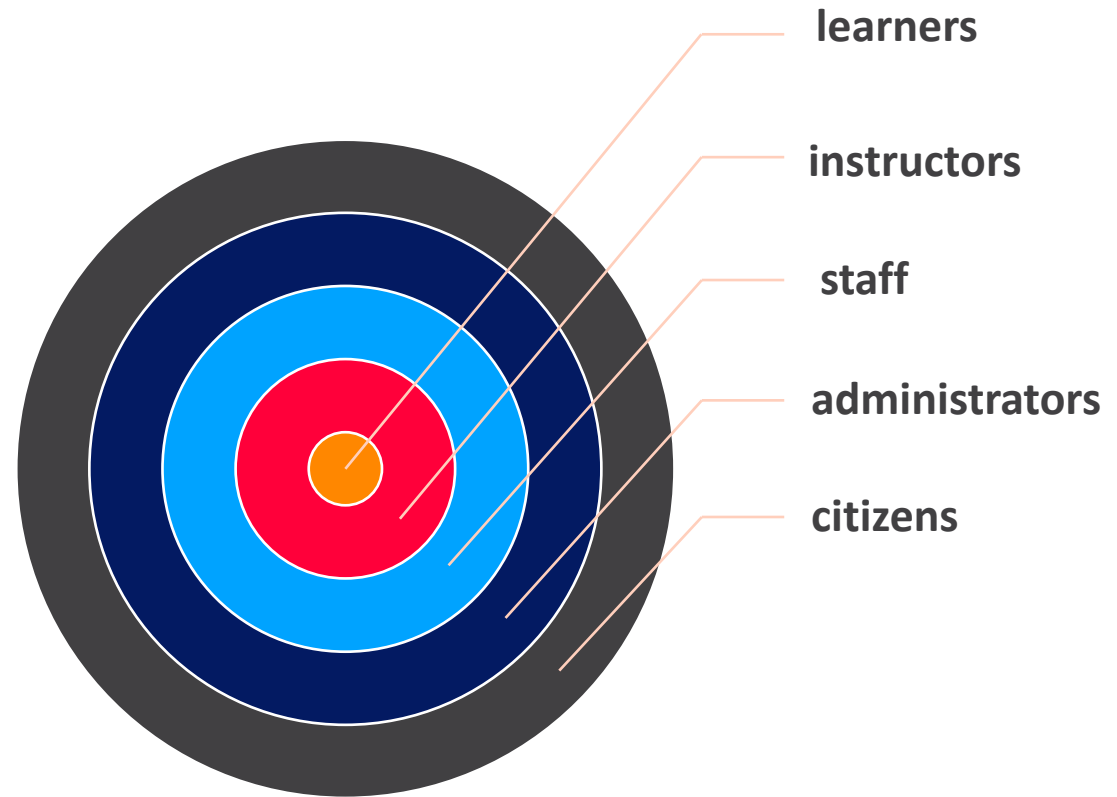
- Advocates for mental health and academic integrity





*"A good way to overcome stress is to help others out of theirs."
- Dada J. P. Vaswani*

**How can we
address
stress to
promote
academic
integrity
as ...**



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