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Should journalism curriculae include trauma resilience training?

An evaluation of the evidence from a scoping literature review and a pilot study

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Abstract

We investigated the claim in literature that exposure to work related traumatic events affects the wellbeing of journalists. We did this through a scoping review of studies on practising journalists; studies on journalism curriculae and reflections on findings of a questionnaire pilot study of journalism students' experiences of exposure to traumatic events through teaching materials. We found evidence to suggest that practising journalists who are regularly exposed to traumatic events are susceptible to a range of adverse psychological reactions including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and that the teaching of resilience is not widely included in journalism curriculae. The pilot study indicates that teaching materials did not evoke adverse psychological reactions with damaging effect to students' wellbeing. Nevertheless, we rec-

ommend the inclusion of resilience training in journalism curriculae to be taught by an interdisciplinary team of scholars in order to build resilience among journalism students and equip them to cope with the increasing risk of journalism practice in the twenty first century.

Keywords: trauma, PTSD, resilience, journalism, coping strategies, curriculum.

Introduction

Scholarly studies on journalism and trauma consistently conclude that journalists who witness trauma and disaster events are at risk for physical, emotional, and psychological injury (Buchanan & Keats, 2011; Keats & Buchanan, 2012).

Studies have also found that almost two thirds of journalists feel ill prepared for their first trauma related assignments (Simpson & Boggs, 1999; Amend et al., 2012). These would be incidents which, by the criteria of the American Psychiatric Association (2013) involve exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: directly experiencing the traumatic events; witnessing, in person, the events as it occurred to others; learning that the traumatic events occurred to a close family member or close friend; and experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic events (ibid).

Professional journalists rarely talk about the emotional and psychological impacts of doing their job. However, some break this taboo by speaking out. For example, the BBC announced in January 2020 that after decades of covering conflict, Fergal Keane would be changing his role from that of Africa editor to further his recovery. And his BBC colleague, Jeremy Bowen, Middle East editor, also spoke about his own diagnosis of PTSD in 2017, characterised by bouts of depression attributed to aspects of his work (Keane, 2020).

Journalism is not only about glamour and glitz but also about extreme life experiences. According to Dart Centre Europe (2015), journalists frequently bear witness to human suffering, whether covering mass disasters or individual atrocities, and are sometimes the direct targets of violence (Smith et al., 2015). The latter claim is evident in the report by Reporters Without Borders (2019) that 941 journalists have been killed over the past 10 years. Of these, some 63 percent of journalists killed were murdered or deliberately targeted (Woodyatt, 2019). Moreover, journalists are exposed to human suffering by covering events such as domestic violence, racism, court cases, and via user generated content. In these instances, journalists are having to gather horrifying details from dangerous scenes, process it all, and then report it back to the public (Lifton & Faust, 2009; Dworzniak & Garvey, 2019).

While few journalists are habitually engaged in reporting conflict and disaster, most journalists at some time will confront violent, distressing situations – terror attacks, violent crime – and therefore need to be prepared. Some examples of distressing situations journalists have found themselves reporting include Derek Bird shootings, Manchester Arena attack, Boston Marathon, 9/11, and school shootings such as Dunblane and Lockerbie. The Manchester Arena bombing happened on 22 May 2017 when an Islamist extremist suicide bomber detonated a shrapnel laden homemade bomb at a concert by Ariana Grande as people were leaving the venue. Journalists were with first responders at the scene of carnage to witness 23 dead bodies and over 800 wounded people including children. It is fair to say that the people as well as journalists who witnessed the attack will have been distressed, to some degree, by what they witnessed.

The above assertions raise some pertinent research questions: is there is a problem with journalists being unprepared to encounter traumatic situations, and if so, how significant is the problem? Is journalism education able to address these problems? If so, how might it best prepare students for these events? These are pertinent research enquiries because a review of journalism curricula in the UK found that courses are not sufficiently preparing students for the risks associated with exposure to traumatic stressors as part of their work (Specht & Tsilman, 2018).

We attempt to answer these questions through a scoping review of prior scholarly works to examine evi-

dence of emotional and psychological effects of exposure to critical and traumatic events on journalists on the one hand; and through a pilot study to explore the extent to which journalism education is addressing these problems to better prepare journalism students, make recommendations, and identify research gaps for further studies on the other. These are pertinent research enquiries because journalism underpins democratic societies, facilitates the sharing of ideas and debates amongst citizens, and fosters the exercise of fundamental human rights.

Methodology

To address the research questions, we conducted a scoping review to identify what the research in this area had uncovered and to discover what was provided by journalism courses in this field.

We began by systematically searching electronic databases (Scopus, Medline, Cochrane and CINAHL) using keywords or search terms: 'journalism* and trauma*', 'journalism* education* and trauma* teaching*', 'journalism* and resilience* training*', communication* and mass media*. These databases and search terms were discussed with the research team and agreed as most likely to generate relevant results from the search.

Reference lists and the website for Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma were also scanned for relevant materials. Studies were included whenever they provided investigation of the occupational stress of journalists; presented a qualitative and/or a quantitative design; the publication date was from 2009 to July 2020; and provided full articles published in peer-reviewed journals. We found 148 studies, but 50 studies met these inclusion criteria. Studies that did not meet these inclusion criteria were excluded.

The included studies were independently screened by both authors by examining the titles, abstracts and full text against the inclusion criteria. An agreement was reached regarding any contested studies.

The studies were conducted in four continents, that is, Africa (South Africa, Kenya), Asia (Japan), and Europe and America, and studies adopted a wide range of methods including focus group; scoping review; content description; mixed methods; survey (Impact of Event Scale; web based); reflective practice; critical ethnographic study; in-depth interviews and workplace observations with journalists; self-report questionnaire; thematic; descriptive statistics; and stepwise linear multiple regression analyses.

The University of Lincoln offers an undergraduate journalism course with a curriculum involving practical skills development which exposes students to potentially distressing images and vicarious exposures to situations which may be experienced as traumatic. To monitor a possible psychological impact of these exposures, a paper questionnaire was distributed to students in all year groups during January and February 2019. The pilot study questionnaire was a composite of The Impact of Events Questionnaire (IES-R) (Horowitz et al., 1979; Hyer & Brown, 2008), The Psychological Outcome Profile (PSYCHLOPS Version 5) (Ashworth et al., 2009) and The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988). These survey instruments are in regular use in clinical studies which monitor impact of trauma on survivors, levels of social support available as well as general adjustment in non-clinical populations. Coded survey returns were analysed using SPSS statistical software.

In addition to demographic data on age, gender and year of study, students were asked to identify situations that had arisen during lectures and practice-based classes which involved exposure to critical and traumatic events and to have these in mind when answering survey questions.

The consequences of journalists' exposure to traumatic situations

Journalists are exposed to traumatic situations by bearing witness, by being victims or both (Smith et al., 2015; Tandoc & Takahashi, 2018). The evidence of exposure to traumatic stressors are well documented. For instance, Ikizer et al. (2019) noted in their study of camera operators that, they have frequently witnessed dead bodies, injuries and accidents, and mourning of others over deaths of close ones (ibid).

Journalists who are directly exposed to traumatic situations have exhibited some psychological effects. For example, a study on non-war journalists found varying degrees of prevalence of PTSD, from 4.3 percent to 13 percent among United States and European journalists (Smith et al., 2015). Similarly, a study on Norwegian journalists who covered the 2004 Asian tsunami showed that 7 percent were classified as suffering

from probable PTSD nine months after the incident (Backholm & Idås, 2016; Idås et al., 2019). As a result, scholars argue that the coverage of trauma on a regular basis can lead to damaging psychological and emotional effects (Dworznic & Garvey, 2019).

The types of psychological effects evoked by traumatic stressors are varied. For example, some journalists reported mental health breakdowns following their coverage of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the United States in August 2005 and flooded New Orleans for weeks (Dworznic & Garvey, 2019). Similarly, journalists reported suffering from flashbacks and traumatic stress symptoms after covering the terrorist bombing at the Boston Marathon which killed three people and injured hundreds in April of 2013 (Zhao, 2016; ibid). Also, some journalists sought therapy after covering a mass shooting in Orlando, where a lone gunman entered the Pulse Nightclub and killed 49 people in June 2016 (Hayes, 2016; ibid).

Other types of effects include guilt, depression, compassion fatigue, burnout, avoidance, intrusive experiencing, increased arousal, desensitization or numbing (or sensitization), helplessness, and emotional lability including anger outbursts (Buchanan & Keats, 2011; Ikizer et al., 2019; Seely 2020). Guilt, for example, is associated with moral injury, that is, the injury done to a person's conscience or moral compass by perpetrating, witnessing, or failing to prevent acts that transgress personal moral and ethical values or codes of conduct (Litz et al., 2009). This could happen to journalists when they are forced to invade privacy and grief in doing a death knock story (Shay, 2014; Litz et al., 2009). Editors and news managers could also feel guilty at not having done enough personally to help the refugees, and of shame at the observed behaviour of others (Feinstein & Storm, 2017; Browne et al., 2012).

Journalists are at risk from two related forms of exposure, namely vicarious and secondary traumatization. The vicarious form involves reacting adversely from repeated exposures to other people's extreme experiences or their accounts of what has happened to them. Secondary traumatization is the duress resulting from hearing about the first-hand experiences of other trauma survivors. These instances confirm that journalists are at risk from absorbing some of the pain or grief of others which they encounter in the course of their reporting or editing (Beam & Spratt, 2009).

Desk-based journalists who use social media as a newsgathering tool can exhibit adverse psychological reactions (Specht & Tsilman, 2018). For example, Wendling's (2015) study found evidence that journalists using social media exhibit vicarious trauma, as more than 20 percent of research participants scored high on clinical measures of PTSD (ibid), and journalists were found to experience secondary traumatization when exposed to serious injury, unnatural death, accidents, terrorist attacks, and war (Ikizer et al., 2019). In these scenarios, journalists may exhibit significant negative psychological symptoms in the short, intermediate and long term which impact on their lives in a number of ways including not being able to pursue the life they had previously enjoyed and developing negative perceptions of themselves, others, and the world around them (Culver et al., 2011; Dworznic & Garvey, 2019).

However, clinicians have discovered that event-related psychological effects may appear months or years after covering traumatic scenarios such as war, natural disasters, domestic abuse, family violence or accident content. For example, Idås et al.'s study of Norwegian journalists who covered the 2004 Asian tsunami found that seven percent were classified as suffering from probable PTSD nine months after the incident (Backholm & Idås, 2016; Idås et al., 2019). The long-term effects are even worse among diaspora journalists, because being cut off from the support of family and friends back home means they are more psychologically vulnerable (Feinstein et al., 2016).

However, the scoping review reveals that the weight of evidence is inconclusive because scholars consistently conclude that journalists are at moderate risk of trauma-related psychological distress compared to other trauma-exposed groups (Simpson & Boggs, 1999; Novak & Davidson, 2013; Pearson et al., 2019; Feinstein et al., 2018). Nevertheless, journalists suffer a vast range of experiences from minor emotional effects of remembering to serious memory related reactions like PTSD. The inclusion of resilience training in journalism education; therefore, will provide students with the tools to deal with these reactions.

Coping strategies

Literature notes that only a **minority of journalists are at risk for long-term psychological problems and few** show signs of PTSD and depression. Scholars attributed this to resilience among journalists and to the claim that journalists enter the field understanding that reporting and editing may expose them to tragedy (Feinstein & Storm, 2017). Journalists expect that, and the satisfaction that they get from their jobs or the morale in their newsrooms does not appear to be linked directly to the violent events or traumatized

individuals whom they encounter in their work (Beam & Sprat, 2009).

A positive observation is that journalists have adopted coping strategies for dealing with negative stress sources including emotion-focused strategies (a slightly higher frequency in daily work than in critical events); problem-focused strategies (almost twice the frequency in critical events than in daily work); and denial/avoidance strategies (a residual frequency in critical events, which was five times higher in daily work) (Monteiro & Pint, 2017). Hence, Keats & Buchanan (2012) observed that developing coping strategies such as taking time for exercise, maintaining healthy sleep patterns, ensuring a balanced diet, and taking time for relaxation and socialization are examples of beneficial strategies for maintaining a balance between work and personal life (ibid). However, some journalists use less favourable coping strategies such as drinking, smoking, self-criticism, or self-blame, for acute or short term distraction from evoked emotional distress, which in general stands to be associated with greater susceptibility to symptoms of PTSD (Lee et al., 2017).

Evidence of what is being done about these effects

Clinicians and scholars have made some suggestions about how to help journalists cope with trauma. Pearson et al. (2019) argue that mindfulness-based meditation offers promise to help journalists build resilience to post-traumatic stress (ibid). Novak and Davidson (2013) also suggest that the stories that journalists have of themselves can shape their resilience and the way they work; therefore more attention needs to be paid to them (ibid). Idås et al. (2019) observe that exposure to trauma could promote post-traumatic growth (PTG), that is, a cognitive process whereby negative experiences may initiate reflections on life and result in strengthened self-esteem (ibid, p.2). PTG is enhanced by access to social support (SS) which induces the perception of being cared for and of being part of a supportive social network that provides assistance (Taylor, 2011; Idås et al., 2019). For example, a study on Australian journalists concluded that growth is related to personal trauma management strategies, including peer and management support and opportunities to reflect (McMahon, 2016).

However, some journalists are reportedly reluctant to seek help for dealing with negative stress sources. Keats & Buchanan (2012) attribute this to silencing fears or behaviours that may be perceived as weakness; defining who and what is successful in a journalism career; and bowing to pressures related to extended work hours (ibid). The implications are that journalists were more likely to turn to family members than managers or colleagues for support after traumatic incidents and they were less positive about seeking organizational help for trauma-related problems (Greenberg et al., 2009). While some resort to unofficial confidential talks with experienced colleagues (Idås, 2013; Idas et al., 2019), others compartmentalize the problem; use drugs and alcohol, and remember the higher purpose of their job (Seely, 2020).

Based on these assertions and the fact that journalists sometimes work alongside firefighters, police and paramedics, we recommend that journalism educators should take seriously the assertion that journalists are susceptible to the psychological and emotional reactions evoked by trauma. By doing so, they stand to benefit personally and as a profession from resilience training during university studies and as part of continuous professional development.

Journalism curriculae

The scoping review reveal evidence that almost no course in the UK is teaching the risks of vicarious trauma or user generated content (Specht & Tsilman, 2018). Specht & Tsilman reached this conclusion by inspecting the course description of 63 journalism related courses including specifications of the courses, the names and description of all modules and course introduction materials such as videos (ibid). Seely's (2020) study reached a similar conclusion by noting that journalists felt ill-prepared to cover certain story assignments and would have liked a lecture series and guest speakers who could speak about trauma on a personal level (ibid). We propose that teaching materials should focus on resilience building.

Some scholars argue that journalism courses are not sufficiently preparing students for the risks of vicarious trauma found in the industry (Specht & Tsilman, 2018). For instance, McMahon (2010) describes the presence of trauma literacy in journalism education as embryonic at best and non-existent at worst (McMahon, 2010, Seely 2020). In sounding a note of warning, Specht & Tsilman (2018) said the growing body of evidence of vicarious trauma among journalists suggests that universities may not be meeting the needs of

their students by largely avoiding the subject matter of risks arising from exposure to traumatic stressors (ibid). To address these shortcomings, they recommend a new emphasis on vicarious trauma, coupled with training and interdepartmental support (ibid).

However, there is evidence to suggest that journalists have given a high level of support for trauma training in journalism schools, with some specifically pinpointing a lack of trauma education in the college classroom as a problem (Masse, 2011; Dworznik & Garvey, 2019). Moreover, some scholars argue that the best place for trauma training is in journalism schools because young journalists are highly likely to encounter trauma very early in their careers (Barnes, 2014). Some studies have made a case for the importance of incorporating more trauma education into curriculae. According to Dworznik & Garvey (2019), journalists need to be taught to understand both their own psychological reactions to trauma and critical incident stressors as well as those of trauma victims (ibid). This is because most newsrooms do not offer a supportive environment for young reporters who are either dealing with their own psychological reactions to trauma or need guidance on how to approach victims (Duncan & Newton, 2010; Dworznik & Garvey, 2019).

We discovered journalism schools in the US to be ahead of the UK in incorporating resilience training in journalism curriculum. In the US, trauma training began in the early 1990s (Rentschler, 2010). However, the training on offer is still patchy. For example, a US study found that of the 41 respondent schools, only one offered a course specifically aimed at teaching journalists how to protect themselves from psychological trauma and how best to interact with victims of trauma (Dworznik & Garvey, 2019); and only one (2.4 percent) indicated that they had a course in their curriculum dedicated specifically to teaching how trauma can impact journalists. Thirty-five (85.4 percent) indicated that they taught about journalist trauma as part of other courses in their curriculum. Five indicated that they do not teach this topic at all (12.2 percent) (ibid).

Previous studies found that the content of media ethics courses in journalism programmes is inadequate for training new journalists for dilemmas they may face on the job (Amend et al., 2012). For example, only a handful of schools offer media ethics courses with a simulation or trauma training component, which might include inviting trauma victims to speak to students about their experiences, learning strategies to cope with stress and secondary trauma, and mock interviews with actors posing as victims (ibid).

The literature also indicates that journalism students are ill prepared to cover the death knock. For instance, Duncan & Newton (2010) observe that few journalists appear to receive formal training, or indeed advice or instruction from senior editorial staff, and whilst most journalism courses now integrate ethical reporting into their curriculum, few instruct students in approaches to intrusive reporting or, to use the journalism industry term, a death knock (ibid). However, scholars acknowledged the difficulties of re-creating the challenges of the death knock, and ape the industry's aforementioned preference for "learning by doing", because the tutor would have to subject the student to what could be extreme emotional stress, a position at odds with the institution's duty of care to students (ibid).

Approaches to address this gap

Different approaches have been taken by journalism educators to address the gap in journalism education to prepare new journalists for dilemmas they may face on the job. For instance, scholars advocate that trauma training should be infused more strongly into the existing curricula (Dworznik & Garvey, 2019). To illustrate, Duncan & Newton (2010) suggest teaching students to reflect critically, not only on specialist modules about media ethics, but reflecting across the journalism curriculum will assist them in identifying the stress points in their reporting and in taking appropriate, positive action; thus giving them greater control over the situation (Duncan & Newton, 2010).

Kay et al. (2011) added that ethics teaching should include trauma reporting and the skill for reflection-in-action while covering trauma, interviewing survivors, or creating news items about communities where trauma has occurred (ibid). Similarly, Seely (2020) argue that university courses could bridge the gap between theory and practice by incorporating ethical discussions into the classroom regarding the idea of reporting with sensitivity, minimizing harm to victims and the community, and avoiding sensationalized reporting (ibid).

Adopting a trauma informed approach could help to introduce resilience training into the existing curricula. Resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of risk (Thompson et al., 2011; Pearson et al., 2019). For the purpose journalism education, it means gaining a better understanding of what those who have suffered traumatic events, who are grieving, are going through, and a better understanding of how to respond to them and specifically, how

not to aggravate their suffering by building empathy.

Maynard et al. (2019) identified four key elements of this approach including realising the impact of trauma; recognizing the symptoms of trauma; responding by integrating knowledge about trauma policies and practices; and resisting re-traumatisation. They also identified six principles of this approach including safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice and choice; cultural, historical and gender issues (ibid).

In addition, Barnes (2014) argues that some basic skills for journalism students could include how to assess any risk to themselves and, secondly, how to deal with a potentially traumatising situation, be it an accident, suicide or murder. Thirdly, there are lessons to be learned about appropriate questioning when dealing with victims as well as fact checking, to avoid revictimising the victims (ibid).

Some scholars argue that resilience training should encompass the emotional aspects of telling traumatic stories (Young, 2011; Dworzniak & Garvey, 2019). In terms of specific effects, Seely (2020) suggests that traumatic stress, burnout, and sensitivity should be addressed not only in relation to crime and accident stories but also in relation to stories involving sexual assault and harassment, political issues, and immigration—which often involve reporting on victims and addressing emotionally charged topics (ibid).

Incorporation of resilience training in journalism curriculum

Rentschler's (2010) study gives us an insight by noting three examples. Firstly, some journalism schools have created stand-alone programmes, such as the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma associated with the Department of Communication at the University of Washington-Seattle. Secondly, others incorporate training exercises into their existing curricula without separate programmes, such as Indiana-Purdue University's journalism programme in Indianapolis and the University of Colorado-Boulder. Thirdly, some programmes establish formal relationships with academic experts in traumatic stress and psychiatry in addition to individual victim advocates and advocacy organizations, such as the Victims in the Media Programme at Michigan State University and their collaboration with the Michigan Victim Alliance (ibid; Beam & Spratt 2009).

Classroom simulations could also help to introduce resilience training into the existing curricula. According to Amend et al. (2012), simulations are an efficient way to educate and prepare journalism students for the situations and ethical dilemmas they will encounter in their careers, and we propose ways to effectively implement such forms of training (ibid). They argue that simulations allow students to engage in behaviour that approximates a realistic situation, to act and react to the situation as a journalist might, while at the same time permitting the instructor to observe, coach, and ultimately comment (ibid). The use of case studies is also a good way to infuse resilience training into the existing curricula. For instance, Melki et al. (2013) note that instructors can assign readings on the history of war reporting, discuss the symptoms of PTSD, and talk about case studies. The concept of self-care, which is often overlooked in the classroom, should be discussed to normalize discussion of mental health and eliminate stigma (ibid).

Mindfulness-based meditation also helps to infuse resilience training into the existing curricula. Scholars argue that it has the potential to strengthen journalism graduates' resilience, deepen their learning and shore up their moral compasses as they enter an occupation where their reporting can expose them to trauma and the upheaval in the industry can subject them to stress, burnout and other mental health challenges (Pearson et al., 2018). Mindfulness is defined as 'bearing in mind' or 'inclined to be aware' (ibid). For example, Ryerson University's School of Journalism in Toronto Canada introduced mindfulness-based journalism to its curriculum in 2018 with a one-hour weekly class supplemented by students undertaking individual meditations ten minutes per day and maintaining a record of their experiences in a journal (Pope, 2018).

Fundamentally, the scoping review reveal some benefits of including trauma training in journalism curriculum. In New Zealand for instance, Barnes (2014) observes that changes to journalism curriculum promote equipping students with skills to recognise signs of stress in themselves as well as victims (ibid). The implication is that journalists learn to see affect as a valuable news commodity and a different orientation to their jobs (Rentschler, 2010). Barnes (2014) adds that the workplace can underpin this training with recognition and support, which has been shown to improve productivity and resilience (ibid). Without this workplace support, Young (2011) cautions that young and talented journalists may leave the profession because no one explained that it was acceptable to feel emotional (ibid).

Challenges to the incorporation of resilience training

The scoping review reveals some challenges to the incorporation of trauma in journalism curricula. For instance, the topics of journalist trauma and victim trauma are those that are included if there is time, or not considered a priority among other skills and topics that must be taught (Dworznic & Garvey, 2019). Barnes (2014) found that covering the full curricula, coupled with increasing time pressures, meant journalism teachers simply could not include trauma training (ibid). Moreover, a qualitative study of journalism educators found they would like to see more attention paid to the topic, but that perceived barriers—including accreditation issues, lack of time and resources, and lack of knowledge about the topic—stood in the way. Several mentioned that it was not an appropriate subject matter for an introductory journalism course (Melki et al., 2013).

Another challenge is that the textbooks for introductory news writing courses contained little, if any, acknowledgment of the emotional toll of the journalism profession (Hopper & Huxford, 2017; Seely, 2020). To address this, organizations such as the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at Columbia University offer classroom resources, readings, and training opportunities - tools that may mitigate instructors' perceived barriers and offer supplemental readings on trauma and self-care to fill the gaps in textbooks (Seely, 2020).

Perhaps, the greatest challenge is how to address the lack of enthusiasm among journalism educators to include resilience training in journalism curricula. According to Specht & Tsilman (2018), journalism educators viewed trauma predominantly as an issue of war correspondence and foreign reporting, with great doubts expressed over the seriousness of vicarious trauma caused by user generated content and its necessity in university curricula (ibid). Similarly, a survey of accredited U.S journalism schools found only one programme among the respondents offered a course about trauma reporting (Dworznic & Garvey, 2019; Seely, 2020); and another survey in 2013 shows that 50 percent of journalism educators said trauma reporting received little to no attention in the curriculum (Melki et al., 2013; Seely, 2020).

However, these challenges cannot be overcome without institutional support. Hence, Specht & Tsilman (2018) suggest the creation of guidelines on how to teach vicarious trauma in the university to give confidence and support to educators, and to establish a mandate for better integrated teaching across faculties, bringing in experts from other fields to support journalism education (ibid). And policymakers have a role to play too. For instance, the UK Department for Education and National Health Service has identified trauma, attachment, and post-traumatic stress as key areas where schools need guidance (Department of Health and Department of Education, 2017 in ibid, 2019).

Based on the evidence of a lack of introduction of resilience training in the existing curricula and the institutional challenges, we argue that journalism educators have a duty of care towards journalism students and should prepare them to cope with the effects of exposure to traumatic event.

Reflections on findings of a pilot study

Both in terms of number of students affected and the levels of distress attributed to teaching materials, returns indicate low impact of exposures among participants. Some variations were noted according to the type of situations and scenarios that had been used for training purposes. The more serious a traumatic incident (terrorism, war) the more marked was its impact. Also, more personal contact with trauma survivors, for instance through direct interview or attending Coroners' Courts, appeared to be recalled as more distressing experiences. However, evoked reactions were not considered qualitatively or quantitatively different from other events that arise ordinarily in their lives. A trend worthy of note was that returns from final year students indicate a keener awareness of life stresses, including those arising from trauma related teaching materials, than reported by their cohorts in years one and two. Levels of social support were reported to be high for all participating students and showed no consistent association to acknowledged impact from exposure to potentially distressing materials.

Conclusions and recommendations

This scoping review and the survey have, may be for the first time, collated a range of publications which lend substantial evidence-based support to university teaching staff and academics who have led the way on

challenging journalism courses to introduce curriculum changes that take into account risks arising for qualified journalists when assigned to scenarios involving exposure to critical incident and traumatic stressors.

The aim is to develop both personal and professional resilience to minimise, as far as possible, the broad range of event related adverse psychological reactions documented in this scoping review. While the principle of so doing is strongly supported and universities which offer journalism training have a duty of care to their students, it is far from clear how this resilience training might be delivered, how effective the various chosen approaches may be in the short, intermediate and longer terms. As the momentum of recognition for this unmet need is gaining pace, an additional question arises as to the extent to which the format used for resilience training may present psychological risks to journalism students. In this regard, some reassurance emerged from participants in a pilot study conducted among journalism students at the University of Lincoln, UK. On the questionnaire measures used in this paper-based survey, teaching materials used had not impacted adversely to the extent of leading to significant functional impairments. However, it is noteworthy that while this is true for the generally successful students who attended lectures and took part in the survey, the sample comprises of only 75 percent of the total student intake for this three-year undergraduate course.

This leaves many absent journalism students for which there is no evidence to draw on. To the extent that this balance of participants and non-participants is likely to repeat itself in future student surveys, courses and universities should, by all reasonable means, seek to clarify reasons for their absences. While these may include adverse life events, relationship crises and academic struggles largely unrelated to journalists' resilience training, there should be an acceptance that exposures to potentially distressing teaching materials become entangle with other life processes so that some students may be more at risk than others and may react in idiosyncratic ways that compound the distresses of their lives. These challenges can all be addressed through further systematic research. Generalisability of findings will improve by ensuring high levels of cooperation and coordination between journalism courses in the UK and internationally. Experience gained to date is encouraging so far that a pilot study achieved what is generally considered a high level of student participation. It is also strongly recommended that a comprehensive research strategy should include ways of systematically following up students' reasons for deciding not to participate in this research or for being absent at relevant times for data gathering.

The limited survey experience gained to date also indicates that the use of questionnaires designed to monitor the impact of critical and traumatic events such as war or natural disasters on survivors are insufficiently sensitive to gauge any impact that resilience training may have upon the overall functioning of journalism students. This is consistent with observations made in other surveys involving student populations. The research imperative is to use methods and methodologies which make possible a disentanglement of both the positive and troublesome psychological impact of resilience training with the broader background life stressors which arise as part of student life.

One of the suggestions arising from this scoping review is that some assignments given to qualified journalists are of such a nature that some work-related psychological impact should be anticipated and fore-warnings should be given to students. To recognise this is to accept that some responses are to be expected and may even be adaptive for journalists in the field as well as subsequently. To the extent this is true, it removes evoked reactions from the realms of pathology to the realms of distress and personal suffering which is likely to be acute and short term but may also extend into the longer term.

Indications are therefore that if resilience training is one of the aims of journalism courses, one of its key elements will have to be awareness raising about the ways all humans can be affected by critical incidents and trauma and which are the steps to be taken to reduce the intensity, frequency and impact of evoked reactions upon their lives in the short, medium and longer terms. This way, links are made to lifestyle adjustments that are advantageous for high risk journalists prior to assignments and how to manage their personal and social resources to mitigate the impact of what they have reported upon.

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