

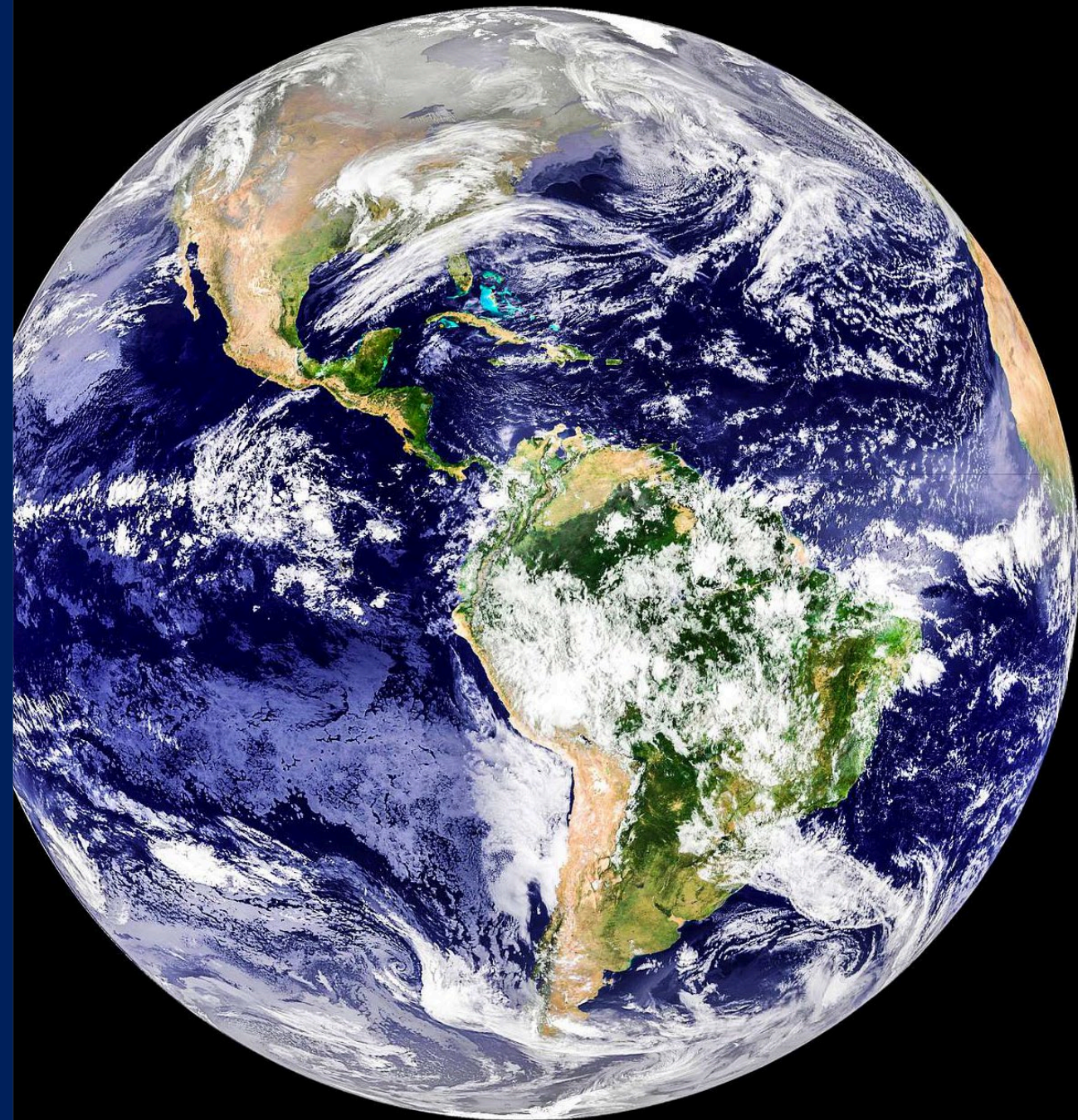


Navigating Uncertainty: Prioritizing Student Welfare and Staff Well-Being.

Presenter: Christina Furtado (she/her), MACP, RP (Qualifying)
Mental Health & Wellness Specialist, GuardMe

Introduction:

- Overview of the current global landscape impacting education.
- Importance of mental health and psychological safety in education.
- Overview of session objectives.





Learning Objectives



- Recognize Challenges: Identify key challenges posed by global uncertainty.
- Cultivate Resilience: Develop strategies for resilience and adaptability.
- Implement Solutions: Apply tools and best practices to safeguard welfare.



Understanding the Impact of Uncertainty



Impact on Mental Health:

- Heightened anxiety and stress levels
- Increased depression and isolation
- Erosion of psychological safety

Factors Driving Uncertainty:

- Immigration policy changes (impact on international students) Economic crises and institutional resource strain
- Political instability and societal shifts

Impact on Communities:

- Uncertainty breeds fear and lack of control
- Decreased academic performance and engagement
- Challenges to social and emotional well-being

Emotional Health & Psychological Safety

Definitions:

Emotional Health: The ability to manage and express emotions in a constructive way, leading to positive relationships and effective coping with life's challenges.

Psychological Safety: A belief that one will not be humiliated or penalized for speaking up, making mistakes, or taking risks within a group or organization.





Signs of Compromised Well-Being



- **Disengagement:** Lack of participation in class, online activities, or group work.
- **Absenteeism:** Increased frequency of missing classes or meetings without clear reasons.
- **Behavioral Changes:** Withdrawal from social interactions, irritability, or a sudden drop in performance.
- **Emotional Outbursts:** Increased emotional reactions such as crying, anger, or frustration in response to minor stressors.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Headaches, fatigue, or other unexplained health issues linked to emotional strain.



Recognizing the Challenges



Specific Pressures on Students and Staff:

- Academic Pressure: Intense focus on performance, grades, and success can lead to chronic stress.
- Job Insecurity for Staff: Staff face stress from contract uncertainty, workload demands, and administrative changes.
- Social Isolation: Lack of community or support networks among both students and staff.
- Financial Strain: High tuition costs for students and budget cuts for educational institutions.
- Imposter Syndrome: Feelings of inadequacy or unworthiness despite success, affecting both students and staff.



Data & Statistics on Mental Health Trends



Increase in Anxiety and Depression: Over 50% of students report high levels of anxiety, especially around exam periods.

Faculty Mental Health Crisis: 1 in 4 faculty members report symptoms of burnout, with rising levels of stress among educators.

Social Isolation & Loneliness: 60% of students experience feelings of loneliness, impacting their emotional well-being and academic engagement.



Fostering Resilience and Adaptability



Definition of Resilience:

- The ability to bounce back from setbacks, manage stress, and thrive in the face of adversity.
- It involves maintaining emotional well-being, problem-solving skills, and persistence despite challenges.
- Resilience empowers students and staff to adapt to changing academic demands and personal challenges.



Key Strategies to Foster Resilience:



Growth Mindset: The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort and perseverance.

Stress Management Techniques: Mindfulness, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation to reduce stress and enhance emotional regulation.

Self-Care Practices: Physical activity, adequate sleep, healthy nutrition, and social support to maintain overall well-being.



Debunking Buzzwords: Resilience, Growth Mindset, and Self-Care

Resilience Misconception: "Just think positive and push through."

Reality: Resilience involves acknowledging and processing emotions, seeking support, and adapting over time. It's about recovery, not ignoring pain.

Growth Mindset Misconception: "Anyone can achieve anything with hard work alone."

Reality: Growth mindset helps in learning from setbacks, but external factors like systemic challenges also play a role in success.

Self-Care Misconception: "Self-care is just pampering yourself."

Reality: True self-care includes emotional, physical, and mental practices such as setting boundaries, seeking therapy, and maintaining balance. It is about Prevention and not Intervention.

Creating a Culture of Support

Understanding Cultural Safety

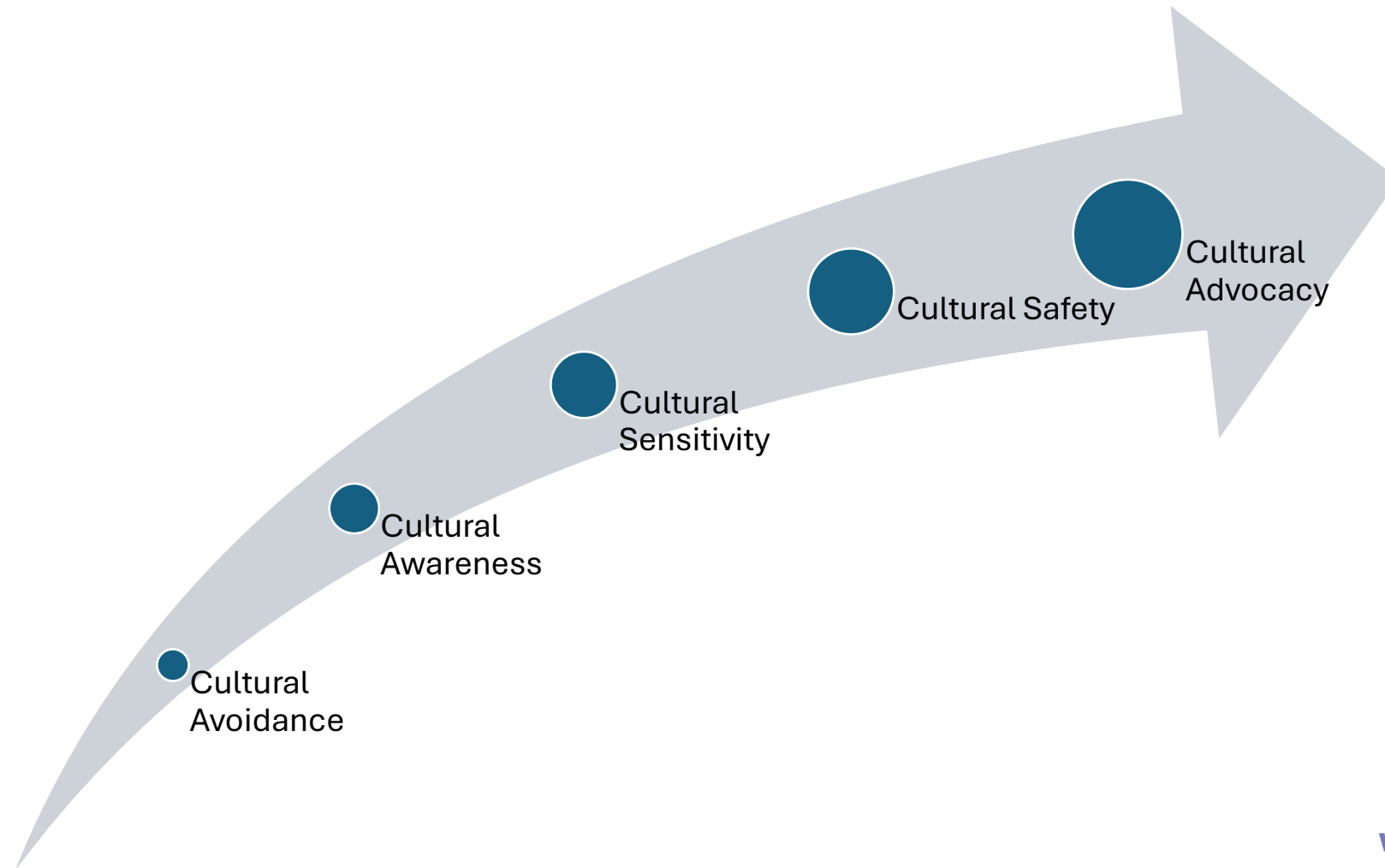
What is Cultural Safety?

- A framework for creating an environment where individuals feel respected, valued, and free from harm or discrimination.
- Focuses on addressing power imbalances, systemic barriers, and unconscious biases.

GuardMe
WELLNESS & LEARNING
INITIATIVES



Key Concepts



Cultural Safety is Not...

1

Being kind/polite/sensitive

It is about justice doing

2

Just learning about culture

We have to learn the history

3

Inclusive or diverse

ICS cannot exist in EDI models



Importance of Cultural Safety



Why Does Cultural Safety Matter?

- **For Students:**
 - Improves emotional and psychological well-being.
 - Builds a sense of belonging, reducing isolation.
 - Increases participation and academic performance.
- **For Staff:**
 - Reduces stress and burnout.
 - Encourages collaboration and innovation in diverse teams.
 - Fosters trust and improves retention.



Cultural Safety





Key Tools for Safeguarding Welfare



- **Wellness Programs:** Workshops, fitness, meditation, and stress management.
- **Peer Support Networks:** Peer counselors, buddy systems, and shared resources.
- **Mental Health Check-Ins:** Regular, informal check-ins to monitor emotional well-being.



Implementing Effective Wellness Programs



- Why They Matter: Boosts satisfaction, productivity, and well-being.
- How to Implement:
 - Identify community needs (surveys or focus groups).
 - Offer a variety of activities (physical, mental, emotional).
 - Gather feedback and adapt based on effectiveness.



Peer Support & Mental Health Check-Ins

- Peer Support Networks: Build a sense of belonging, reduce isolation, foster empathy.
 - Example: Peer counselors, student mentoring programs.
- Mental Health Check-Ins: Create safe, confidential spaces for regular check-ins.
 - Digital check-ins can be used.



Best Practices for Mental Health & Inclusivity



- Mental Health Awareness: Educate on mental health conditions and reduce stigma.
- Inclusive Programs: Ensure accessibility for diverse individuals (language, disability).
- Supportive Culture: Promote open dialogue, reduce stigma, and normalize seeking help..



Key Takeaways

- Navigating Uncertainty Together
- Resilience as a Tool for Growth
- As educators, we have the power to influence the well-being of our communities.
- Let's commit to taking proactive steps to safeguard the mental health and well-being of all of those we serve.



Questions?

How did
we do?

Post-session feedback survey



Our Social Media

@guardmecanada

- ✓ Follow
- ✓ Like
- ✓ Share 😊



@guardmeeurope

- ✓ Follow
- ✓ Like
- ✓ Share 😊



Let's Stay Connected

Christina Furtado



647-922-5198



christina@guard.me