



Centre of Excellence for
MENTAL HEALTH

To: Our colleagues throughout Quebec From: The Centre of Excellence for Mental Health



What is Well-Being?

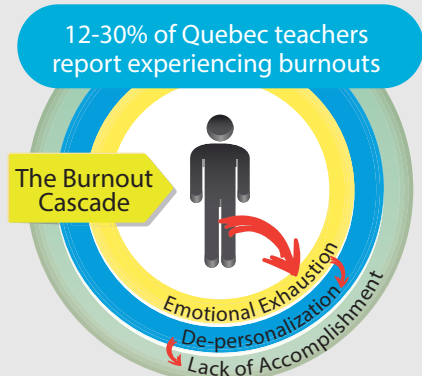
The World Health Organization describes mental well-being as a state in which individuals realize their abilities, can cope with normal stresses, work productively and able to contribute to their community. **Mental well-being is more than an absence of mental illness.**

How is Well-Being Related to Teachers?

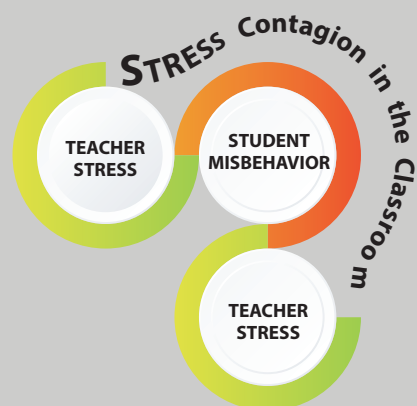
Teacher wellbeing includes a sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in collaboration with colleagues and students (Soini, Pyhältö & Pietarinen, 2010).

In the Absence of Well-Being

Teachers experience as much stress as police officers and paramedics. Emotional exhaustion can lead to burnout, which impacts teacher recruitment, retention, turnover, and satisfaction.



When teachers reach burnout, they begin to depersonalize relationships with students, impacting conditions for learning, and feelings of ineffectiveness.



For details on stress contagion in the classroom:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1145076.pdf>

Why Teacher Well-Being?

- Enhances physical and mental health, leads to fewer sick days & job satisfaction
- Enhances effective teaching practices, competence, self-efficacy & motivation
- Better equipped to support students & parents
- Instills positive school environments
- Promotes student school satisfaction & well-being
- Leads to better student academic performance & motivation

Staff Wellness

Contextual factors can lead to professional flourishing:

- Focus on purpose & goals, allow for autonomy
- Maintain realistic & manageable work demands
- Value, respect & celebrate professional expertise & work practice

Nurturing Teacher Well-Being

At the Individual Level

- Social and emotional learning practices (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqNn9qWo01M>)
- Interpersonal mindfulness practices
- Support from like-minded colleagues
- Self-care: cognitive reappraisal (changing our self-talk), sleep, healthy eating, creative & physical activities. Choose a daily self-care practice for 10-15 minutes (keep it simple)
- Focus on solutions & parts of the work that provides meaning
- Implement activities that bring joy into the classroom
- Prioritize your well-being

At the Organization Level

- Peer mentoring & professional learning communities
- Formation of a school wellness committee & initiatives
- School board policies on staff well-being
- Professional development on mental health literacy & stress management

"Self-care is not a luxury, it is a human requisite, a professional necessity, and an ethical imperative."
John Norcross and James Guy

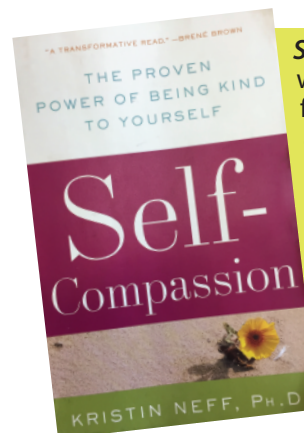


Core Ingredients to a Wicked Problem

Self-Compassion includes self-kindness (gentle and understanding with ourselves), a recognition of our common humanity (we are all fallible), and mindfulness (hold our experience in balanced awareness, allows responding rather than reacting, and recover from overreactions quickly). Self-compassion can enhance well-being and emotional support to students.

Gratitude practices tend to make people feel happier, hopeful, vital, and satisfied. Writing about what we are grateful for or keeping a gratitude journal can enhance emotional and physical health.

"Care for yourself as hard as you care for your students."



Additional Resources

- CARE for teachers: <http://www.care4teachers.com>
- Teach Resiliency: <https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/teach-resiliency>

If you have found this postcard to be helpful and informative, please share it with colleagues. Dissemination of information about mental health is the first step toward promoting better mental health!

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