



***TEACHER STRESS
MANAGEMENT
TOOLKIT™***

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TEACHER STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT™



Hi, My name is **Dr Hayley Watson** and I help **School District Leaders** to improve the confidence level of their teachers in managing the mental health of students, so that students do not fall through the cracks and teachers do not burn out.

This **Teacher Stress Management Toolkit** will help you cut to the core of low motivation in your staff (aka the things that make them take those extra “sick” days), revitalize your teams in a way that increases morale and buy-in of all your initiatives, and fully empowers them to support the wellbeing of their students with confidence without worrying if they are “saying the right thing” or “missing the signs”.

The end result: **Your teachers will be more engaged than ever.**

More motivated than ever.

And their confidence in supporting the wellbeing of their students will be taken to a **whole new level.**

EASY TO IMPLEMENT, EMPOWERING TO DELIVER

I want to show you how to implement a system that boosts the wellbeing of your staff in a way that doesn't require you to become a mental health expert.

One that alleviates your worries about the motivation levels of your staff.

One that doesn't make you feel like you are banging your head against the wall trying to help your teachers get on board with things you KNOW are good for them and their students. And one that ultimately feels AMAZING to implement, while giving your teachers an instantaneous belief that YES, they are supported!

If you're sending wellbeing resources out to your teachers and hoping they will make use of them in their own time, read on. If staff wellbeing sounds great but people are not taking action to support wellbeing in your schools EVERY DAY... then definitely read on!

School wellbeing should never be an after-thought, and it should never require teachers to decide when or how they are going to fit wellbeing into their schedules. Ideally wellbeing is something that comes from the top down, and is infused into daily, weekly, and monthly communication with staff. But it's not just about consistency. **It's what you say** and **how you say it** that matters most.

If you want the stress levels of your staff to truly decrease so that they have the confidence to support the wellbeing of their students, you have to communicate in a way that makes it clear that your staff's wellbeing is your top priority, ensures that you actively surface any barriers to wellbeing that they are experiencing, and provides them with practical tools for taking their wellbeing into their own hands.

THIS WILL HELP THE 90% OF TEACHERS WHO STRUGGLE

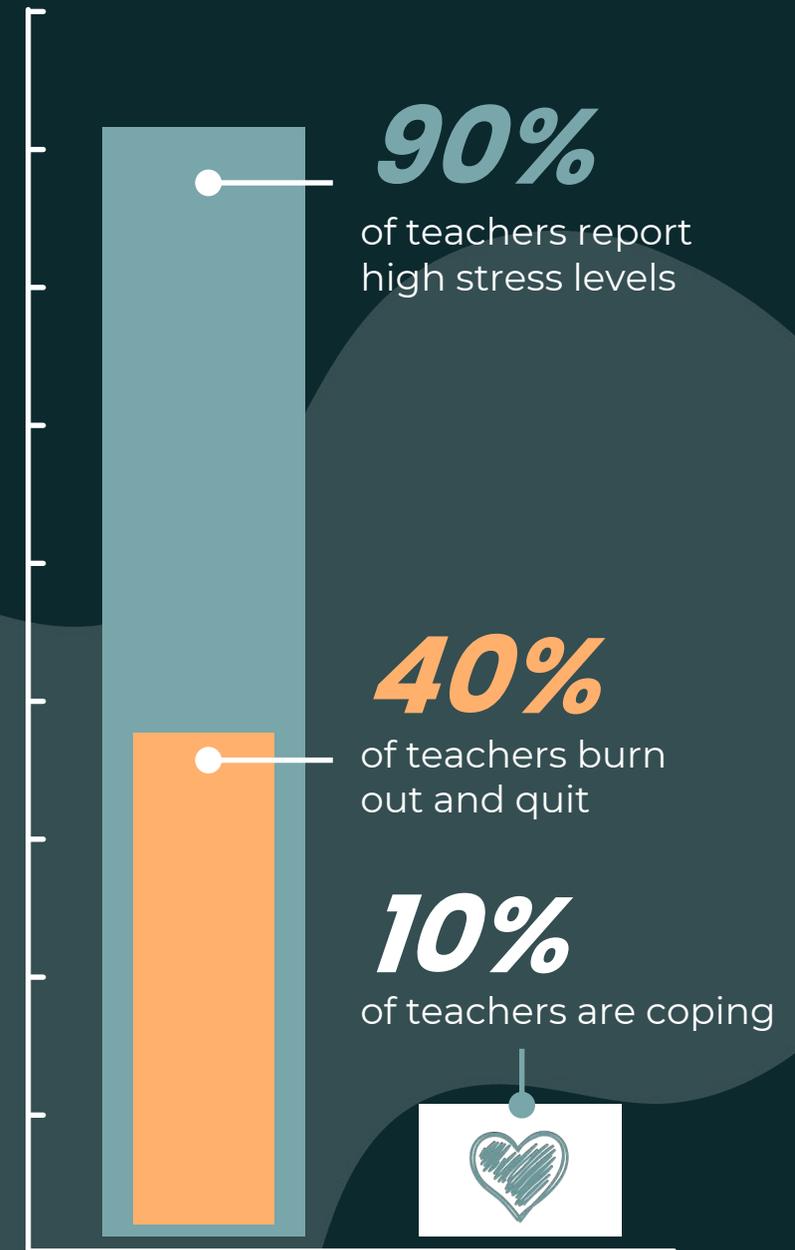
There are 5 key psychological principles that you can implement as a District Leader to enable teachers to better manage their own stress levels and be more able to support the mental health of their students.

Some teachers will naturally have developed the ability to thrive in a high-stress environment, and will naturally find the language and tools to respond in supportive and helpful ways when they notice their students are struggling, acting out, or apathetic.

But many do not. In fact, **50% of teachers report that they do not feel confident** in understanding and managing student mental health concerns, **even if they have gone through professional development training** on the subject.

One of the reasons for this is that **90% of teachers report high stress levels** in their job, and low ability to cope with it. This is what leads **40% of teachers to burn out and quit their profession** within the first 5 years. **When we are not coping with our own stress levels, it is impossible to support the wellbeing of those around us.**

If you can support your teachers with their own perceived stress levels, this will increase their ability to support the wellbeing of their students.



5 STEPS TO DECREASE EDUCATOR STRESS LEVELS

1

**ACKNOWLEDGE
THEIR
STRUGGLES**



2

**IDENTIFY
THEIR
STRESSORS**



3

**GIVE
THEM
TOOLS**



4

**CHANGE
UNHELPFUL
THOUGHTS**



5

**EMPOWER
THEM**





1

ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR STRUGGLES

The number one support that you can provide your staff is to let them know they are **seen** and that you **care**. Most of the teachers I talk to feel disconnected from school administration. I consistently hear the message: **“My leadership team doesn’t understand or care about what I’m going through”**. This belief crushes staff morale and engagement levels, and keeps teachers in a state of victim-consciousness where they are less likely to take actions to help themselves.



If you and your school leaders can take time in your staff meetings, email communication, and conversations to express and acknowledge that you understand how challenging their role is and how much stress they are under, this simple shift will change their perception of support. **When your teachers feel supported, their perceived stress levels will decrease.**



2

IDENTIFY THEIR STRESSORS

There is a common pattern in schools (and in our culture in general) to hide our struggles from colleagues and leadership teams in order to show we are “getting the job done”. While this sounds sensible, when we push away our feelings of stress and anxiety, our brain actually starts seeing these feelings as a **bigger deal**. This is why you might hear your staff complaining about things that seem quite minor and insignificant. Their pattern of suppression leads their brain to **perceive all stressors as insurmountable**.

The good news is that this pattern can be shifted by giving your teachers a chance to identify whatever is specifically causing them stress, and giving them opportunities to **talk about these stressors openly to their leadership team**.



If school leaders take 5 minutes at the beginning of staff meetings to **ask and genuinely listen** to the stressors of their staff, these stressors will be perceived as more manageable by teachers. You can encourage this by doing the same in your meetings with school leaders, and by taking the time to get out in the field and be a part of the meetings in your schools. When you show up, listen, and make any adjustments you can based on the feedback you are hearing (no matter how minor!) this **gives teachers the message that their stress is taken care of**, which means their brain can relax from the fear that they are facing huge problems that they have to “fix all on their own”.



3

GIVE THEM TOOLS

The biggest challenge with stress is that we often don't see it when it's happening. The majority of teachers that I talk to **NEVER feel that they have time to stop and notice if they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed** in the course of a school day.

This means that when they walk into class, they have no idea that their heart rate is racing, that their nerves are frayed, and that it is **harder for them to concentrate on giving a lesson.**

They don't notice that when a student expresses discomfort or doubt, **their automatic stress response is frustration rather than empathy.**

And they certainly don't notice that the reason they are **so**

resentful of their principal for asking them to catch up on their paperwork is simply because their brain is fried.

You can change this by proactively teaching your staff how to stop and notice their own body's stress response. It's as simple as pausing for 30 seconds and asking yourself: "Am I feeling anxious? Am I feeling tense? Am I experiencing any uncomfortable sensations in my body?" The good news is that simply noticing these stress responses automatically decreases them.

Let them know you are paying attention to this in yourself too, and regularly communicate with them about what you notice individually and as a collective. By doing this, you will create a culture where it becomes second-nature to **check-in rather than check-out.**



You are not alone
in this.

4 CHANGE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Stress is caused not just by external circumstances (e.g., Your list of things to do) but also by **perceptions of those circumstances** (e.g., Looking at your list makes you think: “There’s no way I can get this all done!”)

Every single one of us has these negative automatic thoughts – they are a part of our survival instinct. But they are often subconscious, meaning **they are impacting us without us realizing they are even there.**

This is why when you do things to alleviate the stress of your staff, it seems to make NO difference at all. **If they don’t change their thoughts,** it doesn’t matter if the stressor has passed, **they will still feel stressed** by it!

The way to combat this is by helping your staff identify their

own automatic negative “stress thoughts”. They will do this easily when you role model it yourself.

If you regularly speak about **how your thoughts add to your stress,** you are helping your staff see how **common** and **normal** negative thoughts are, and that **they are not alone.** This empowers them to begin looking at their own thought patterns.

If you want to really accelerate your staff’s wellbeing, make a plan as a group to help each other **notice and change these “stress thoughts”.** A simple thought change that immediately decreases stress is stating a more realistic or helpful thought, e.g., “Things are challenging, but I know I am capable”.





5 **EMPOWER THEM**

At the heart of every overwhelmed teacher's stress cycle is the **belief that they are helpless**. One of the reasons that teaching is so stressful is because most teachers have very little autonomy over their time. This triggers a part of their brain that stores memories from childhood when they had little control over **anything**.

So when you ask your staff to finish their report cards, a part of their brain is **experiencing this current moment AND their parent yelling at them to put away their toys at the same time**. Now you see why they often respond so poorly!

You can change this by **encouraging actions that help your staff feel more empowered**.

When we enact any kind of action or strategy to help ourselves stay calm, the stored memories of our past dissipate, and **we are reminded of our own power, regardless of how much control we have over the daily tasks of our role**.

The best way to encourage these activities in your staff is to do them yourself, and share what you are doing with your team. **If they see you taking actions to proactively respond to your own stress, they will naturally feel empowered to do so themselves**. And as soon as they do, they will find all aspects of their job more manageable and less intense.



TEACHER STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT TM

Creating an effective Teacher Stress Management Plan requires you to communicate that your teachers' wellbeing is your top priority, provide time for teachers to boost their own wellbeing, and role model effective stress management strategies yourself.

NAME:

DATE:

<p>PREP What do you think are your staff's top challenges?</p>	<p>ASK Ask staff about their stressors. Who will you ask? When? How?</p>	<p>VALIDATE Choose a way to let staff know you care about their challenges. In staff meetings? Email communications? Conversations?</p>
<p>NOTICE Take note of your own stress response. What happens in your body? Mind? Actions?</p>	<p>COACH Share your stress response with staff and ask them to notice theirs. How will you action this? In a meeting? With all staff? Just a few?</p>	<p>CHALLENGE Identify your own stress thought(s). Create a new more helpful thought.</p>
<p>SHARE Share your 'stress thought' and 'helpful thought' with your staff and ask them to identify theirs. How will you action this? In a meeting? With staff?</p>	<p>ROLE MODEL Choose a stress management activity. How will you allow your staff to see you doing it?</p>	<p>CHANGE Ask your staff to identify one stress management activity/tool to share with their team. How will you action this? In a meeting? Over email? How will you follow up to encourage engagement? How can staff regularly share their wellbeing wins & needs?</p>



WELLBEING KICKOFF

NEXT STEPS

If you're currently NOT paying as much attention to your staff's stress levels as you know you should... or you know your teachers are under a ton of pressure and you wish you could help them feel refreshed and re-charged... I want you to PROMISE me you'll invest some attention here.

This could be the thing you and your team look back on 3 months from now when you're applauding increased engagement levels and productivity in your staff, not to mention the increased mental health support that your students are receiving every day.

So take some time to map out your Teacher Stress Management Plan with some major commitments and actions that will really serve your staff, so that they are equipped to support their students. At the end of the day, no teaching happens unless your teachers are showing up with clear minds to pass on their wisdom.

And I am here to support you make this happen! If you're a School District Leader and you're ready to get hands-on help from me personally, **book a Call with me to discuss the wellbeing needs of your District.**

We'll hop on a call and I'll help you figure out the best way to ensure that every one of your students and teachers are fully supported in your unique context.

I can also give you **free access to our online video-based educator wellbeing resources** that teach all the skills you just learned to your teachers in a simple and engaging online format.

Click
here

BOOK A CALL