



The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign recognizes the stress our educators are under in both Maryland and across the country. We want the teachers within our schools to be safe, supported and healthy. With that in mind, we have developed this fact sheet for teachers.

## Main Sources of Teacher Stress

- Increased school threats - schools are often thought of and have been targets for violence.
- Challenging relationships - with school leadership, colleagues, parents, and students
- Job demands - high stakes testing and managing students with behavior problems
- Disempowerment - feeling lack of inclusion in school decision making
- Discussion & training of school safety

## Consequences of Teacher Stress

- Mental health - High levels of stress can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other diagnoses
- Physical health - psychological stress also affects physical health. Managing physical health by seeing a primary care physician regularly, eating a balanced diet, exercising, and getting enough rest can decrease health complications and improve overall quality of life and wellbeing.
- Teacher performance - teachers with high levels of stress show more symptoms of depression, which can negatively affect teacher performance.
- Student outcomes - teachers who report high feelings of burnout or depressive symptoms have classrooms with more behavior problems
- High turnover - It is estimated that between 23-42% of teachers stop teaching within their first five years. Reasons for leaving the field include: poor working conditions, low salary, student behavior problems, lack of classroom resources, lack of input with school decision making and unsupportive leadership.

## Tips for Educators

Be aware of the signs of stress, burnout or mental health problems.

- Emotional - feeling detached, overwhelmed, or hopeless
- Physical - having low energy, decreased concentration, sleeping poorly
- Behavioral - feeling increasingly irritable with students, colleagues, family or friends, excessive alcohol or substance use
- Professional - performing job-related tasks poorly, feeling low job-morale
- Cognitive - experiencing confusion, trouble with decision making, or trauma imagery
- Spiritual - questioning the purpose of life, feeling hollow
- Interpersonal - withdrawing from colleagues, friends, or family, feeling extreme worry about family members can diagnose ADHD, including school psychologists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, nurse practitioners, neurologists, psychiatrists and pediatricians.

## Use a team approach

Work alongside colleagues from your school district to advocate for policies that promote teacher well-being, eg. shared decision-making, mental health breaks, and increased classroom support.

## Reach out for help

Get support from your colleagues, school counselor/psychologist, trusted administrator, family, friends, primary care physician, and/or a mental health professional. Contact your school's employee assistance program (EAP) that provides assistance, support and referrals for professional mental health services.

## Practice self-care

Take care of yourself by eating well, exercising, participating in activities that bring joy, or taking a break during the work day.

## Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness can improve concentration and emotional self-regulation, decrease burnout symptoms and increase social and emotional competence. Implementing mindfulness practices in the classroom can improve the overall classroom environment. There are many websites, phone/device apps, and books available with helpful suggestions on how to integrate mindfulness into your life to reduce stress.

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## Resource Links

### American Federation of Teachers - 2017 Educator Quality of Work Life Survey

[https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/2017\\_eqwl\\_survey\\_web.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/2017_eqwl_survey_web.pdf)

### Teacher Stress and Health Issue Brief, Pennsylvania State University, Greenberg MT, Brown JL, and Abenavoli RM. September 1, 2016

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2016/07/teacher-stress-and-health.html>

### Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools School Employee Well Being Website

<https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/school-employees/>

### The National Child Traumatic Stress Network Self Care Tips for Educators

<http://traumaawareschools.org/resources-materials/3162/Self-CareNCTSN.pdf?1385564566>

### When Students Are Traumatized, Teachers Are Too

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/when-students-are-traumatized-teachers-are-too>

### Cultivating Mindfulness for Educators

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/07/learning/lesson-plans/cultivating-mindfulness-for-educators-using-resources-from-the-new-york-times.html>

### Mindful Schools Educator Course

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/our-programs/>

### Apps and Tools to Help Manage Stress for Teachers, Teach for America January 28, 2019 edition

<https://www.teachforamerica.org/stories/apps-and-tools-to-help-manage-stress-for-teachers>



Coordinated by



The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with School and Community Champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit [www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org](http://www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org)