

Decline in Educator's Wellbeing

Prioritising Yourself is not Selfish

Let's talk about compassion fatigue. Are you aware that “teachers and education stakeholders provide emotional labour and should plan to face mental health challenges throughout the course of your career”? ([Source](#))

One recent study by the Canadian Teachers' Federation sounded a national alarm and reported that 70% of teachers reported concern about their mental health and noted unbearable levels of stress, anxiety and the ability to cope with the demands of teaching. ([Canadian Teachers Federation](#))

Educators Care Deeply.

Most education stakeholders, and especially teachers, thrive when students learn. Their accomplishments spark joy. For those who love working and learning alongside students and colleagues, caring is an inherent part of our personalities and makes us uniquely well qualified to be educators.

As educators, we create brave and caring learning spaces for students and teach that relationships are significant, trust is valued and ALL stakeholders are capable. The costs of caring, especially in the last several years during the pandemic, are extremely high. The price tags for emotional labour are compassion fatigue and educator burnout, when we don't prioritise self-care our bodies keep score.



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[Here's a short self-assessment quiz you can take to evaluate your overall mental wellness:](#)

Self Assess your Health & Wellness

- **Are you prioritizing** the requirements of your current position, as a valued education stakeholder, by providing emotional labour at the expense of your **mental health & wellness?**
- **Are you struggling in silence**, while prioritising the needs of your students and their families above self-care and your own family?
- **Are you experiencing a solitary and/or confusing search for mental-health resources?**
- **Are you lacking assertiveness skills** while working in a complex school environment to advocate and acquire care for your physical, emotional, spiritual, psychosocial needs?
- **Have you experienced anxiety, dread, negativity and/or stigma in your workplace?**
- Have you felt uncomfortable when someone brings up the topic of their mental health struggles or yours?
- **Are you working and learning alongside colleagues and leadership, which avoids or discourages open conversations about mental health and wellness?**
- **Does perceived stigma get in the way of boldly sharing that you're struggling with anxiety, overwhelm, depression or other mental health challenges?**

If you answered "Yes", to one or more... prioritise yourself and acquire mental health and wellness care and supports you deserve.



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Seeking Support

If you have a mental health concern – Talk to trusted individuals on staff, your administration, a colleague or family member. Start with telling one person! It gets easier.

- Mental Health Support Line: Call **310-6789** (no area code).
 - This number will connect you to your local BC crisis line without a wait or busy signal, 24 hours a day. Crisis line workers are there to listen and support you as well as refer you to community resources.
- Crisis Centre Chat: Visit crisiscentrechat.ca to chat online with a crisis responder.
- It's available from noon to 1:00am every day.

Final Mental Health Tips

Get Started with Acquiring Supports you Deserve

As an Emotional Labourer who can expect compassion fatigue and educator burnout during your career in education, proactively get the care you need and require.

Courageously share your struggle with a trusted family member, colleague and/or your spiritual community leader and your family doctor. Your doctor can be a strong advocate, and a confidant and listener. If they're not, seek the practitioner you deserve who can meet your needs and offer support.

- Find out if there are **peer supporters** available in your community or online.
- Check your **extended benefits** coverage. Utilise what is available; you're worth it. Ask a trusted care-partner to help you explore what's available if you're not feeling confident or assertive enough to do this for yourself. Family and Friends want to support you.



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- **Watch for available CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) programs** in your community, online, or possibly through your benefits provider. Some districts offer coverage for online CBT training. While working through these offerings, perhaps choose the option of having a therapist to check in with. *Helps for accountability and your journey to wellness.
- **Seeking confidential support** and asking what's available if you're not comfortable with in-person counselling.

There are various platforms available such as video-conferencing, email, or online groups. Ask a trusted person (your doctor, family member, colleague) that you know for recommendations that you can count on. It's easier than looking at lists of available practitioners online.

- **If you have a mental health concern – seek support** and if you're experiencing a Mental Health Emergency call for help immediately.

If you have a Mental Health EMERGENCY:

- **Call 9-1-1 for help right away**
- **Go to your local emergency room.** Residents of Vancouver can also go to the **[Access and Assessment Centre](#)** at Vancouver General Hospital from 7:30am to 11:00pm.
- If someone talks about ending their life and you don't know how serious the situation is, **call 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) for advice.** It's better to ask for help early—don't wait and see if it gets worse.
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This resource was created by Jocelyn Bystrom, School Educator and Stigma-Free Society Champion.

