

Mental Health of Teachers

The mental health of teachers is vital when considering education. Teachers with poor mental health will not be able to perform at their best, affecting their students and their abilities to learn. We must answer the questions: How does mental health affect the way teachers interact with their students? How can teacher burnout be prevented? With a lack of support from counselors and administrators, "...educators often find themselves having to take on the role of counselors, supporting the emotional healing of their students, not just their academic growth" (Lander, J.). This can result in compassion fatigue and burnout in teachers. Turnover rates increase as teachers experience burnout, which includes exhaustion, stress, frustration, and more, but there are preventative measures to decrease this, such as increased autonomy and support from administration. Burnout can occur when teachers have too much on their plates, and can come in the form of emotional exhaustion. When teachers are forced to take on roles of counselors, this can result in compassion fatigue, which is when teachers experience secondary trauma from working with those who suffered traumatic events (Lander, J.).

Furthermore, "Research has also shown that educators who are more socially and emotionally competent are more likely to create nurturing relationships and high-quality classroom environments that result in more academic success for students" (Valenti, M., et. al.). Teachers with competency in their emotional wellbeing are able to create more positive classroom environments. Emotional labor can be exhausting for teachers, especially those working with kids who have emotional or behavioral disorders (Valenti, M., et. al.). Trauma-informed schools are better equipped to deal with the mental health issues students face. Trauma-informed schools use social-emotional learning and focus on the wellbeing of students and teachers. Giving educators training and resources in order to deal with trauma can create more positive environments and help teachers deal with secondary traumatic stress. This

needs to be a school-wide approach, where teachers can work together to support each other and support their students (Lander, J.)

Burnout can affect not only teachers, but their students as well. Both teacher burnout and turnover occur at a higher rate in schools with low budgets and larger class sizes. There are not a lot of burnout prevention programs for teachers. Teachers who are experiencing burnout are not able to perform at their highest abilities. "Teacher burnout prevention is one of the most pressing needs in the educational sphere today. Teacher burnout requires that administration, teachers, support personnel and aides all work together to create a more nurturing environment for teachers" (The Graide Network). Without this support, this will lead to more unqualified teachers due to the absence of trained educators. In order to prevent burnout, there must be workshops/training to address teachers' needs (The Graide Network). We must look for warning signs of burnout and take preventative measures before it's too late.

References:

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