



Honoring the Human Experience of Teaching: Mental Health Strategies That Work

Principal Leadership Academy

- Jenna Heinlein

<https://tinyurl.com/LeaderSSD>





Agenda/Expected Outcomes

- Participants will explore the **current state** of factors most impacting the **mental health crisis in schools**.
- Participants will learn **specific strategies** to address the issues of **burnout** and **compassion fatigue** for **teachers/staff**.
- Participants will reflect on how **modeling** and supporting **best practices** in mental health can increase **staff engagement** and **resilience** during the school day.
- Participants will create **an action plan** that supports **wellness** and **well-being**, so **teachers/staff** feel as if the **work in schools** is **worthwhile**.



Agenda/Expected Outcomes

Participants will create **an action plan** that supports wellness and well-being, so teachers/staff feel as if the work in schools is worthwhile.





PLEASE SEE Example and Blank Template

CULTIVATING SEL FOR ADULTS

Learn	
Collaborate	
Model	<div>I</div>



Your Turn: How Might You Cultivate SEL for ADULTS

LEARN: Help staff **reflect** on personal social and emotional competencies. **Build capacity** for how staff support SEL in their peers

COLLABORATE: Set up **structures** for how staff will work together: (e.g.-professional learning communities (PLCs); peer mentoring for staff)

MODEL: Support staff in **modeling** SEL competencies, mindsets, and skills throughout the school community.

Agenda/Expected Outcomes: Key Themes



- We will be co-creating action plan while we work together.
- You are human & are supporting/supervising other human beings.
- We can learn & use skills that honor the human experience.
- Explore how you can model best practices to navigate those factors impacting engagement & resilience each day.

INCLUSION: Supporting **ADULT SEL** in **SCHOOLS** is like _____.

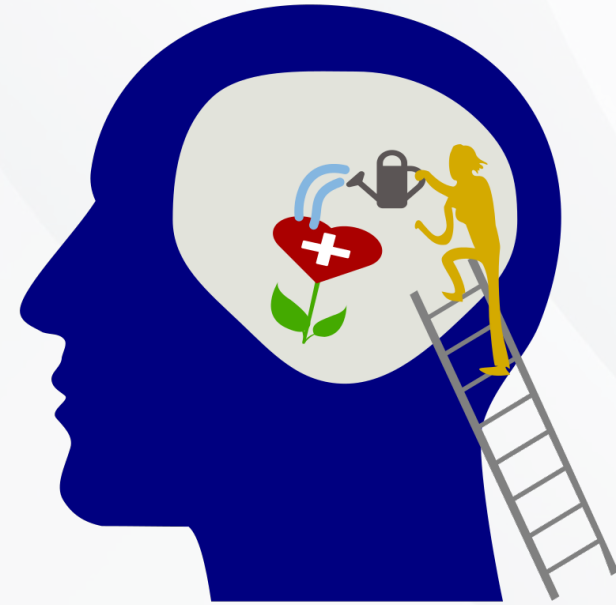
- Choose a picture to fill in the blank.
- Turn and talk with partner to discuss the picture you chose & why.





Agenda/Expected Outcomes

Participants will explore the current state of factors most impacting the mental health crisis in schools.





WHAT ARE YOU OBSERVING? NOTICING?

You are on the front lines of observing and noticing the impact of burnout and compassion fatigue on the staff you serve?

What do you see?



What do you hear?



What are some of the impacts of stress, compassion fatigue and burnout?



Current State

How do you measure burnout / compassion fatigue within your school?

- informal measures

 - 1:1 check ins/conversations

 - attendance

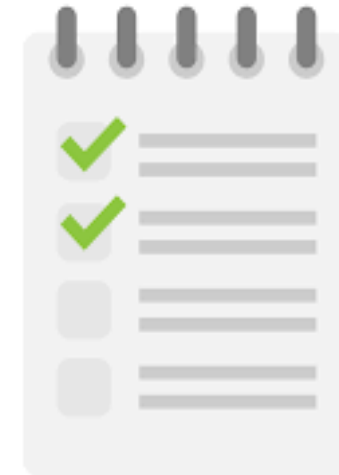
 - active participation

- formal measures

 - school survey

 - district survey

 - building leadership team





Factors Impacting Mental Health In Schools- PANDEMIC and...

EDUCATORS

- Lack of resources
- Work-Life balance
- Political issues
- Staff shortages
- Meeting diverse needs of students
- Missing self-care
- More tasks /lack of time
- Carrying others' emotional burden
- Long hours/Work day
- AND.....

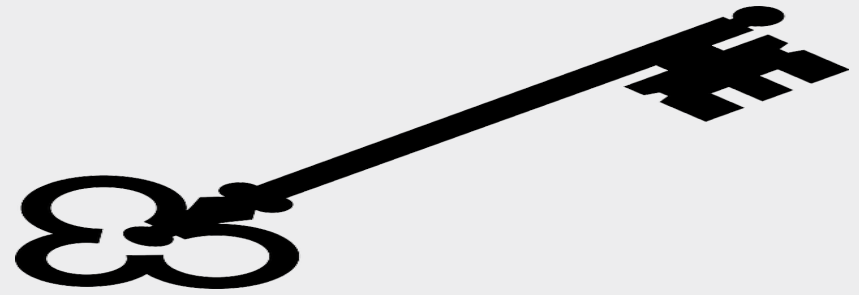
STUDENTS

- Increased stress, fear and anxiety
- Negative/Harmful family environment
- Abuse/Neglect
- Lack of support (friends, family)
- Social Media
- Peer conflicts
- Lack of sleep
- Political polarization
- Mass violence
- AND.....



TURN AND TALK

What you are thinking?





Agenda/Expected Outcomes

Participants will learn **specific strategies** to address the issues of **burnout** and **compassion fatigue** for teachers/staff.



The impact of stress on the job is REAL.

Ongoing
demand for
interventions
beyond
academics.



More
needs
than
resources
available.



**HIGH LEVELS
OF STRESS**



What is Stress?

Stress is any action that places special psychological or physical demands upon a person, anything that can **unbalance** individual **equilibrium**.

Decreased job satisfaction can impact **attitudes** and **moods** toward one's work, family, and ultimately, self.





Burnout



“A **prolonged response** to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.”

Burnout is “composed of **exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.**”

Can be linked to “demanding interpersonal situations, psychological strain, and a lack of support.”



Strategy 1: Honor Resilience & What Is “Real” To Them

- ❖ We want educators in our schools to find resilience and be resilient.

A first step is acknowledging that the work they do **IS NOT EASY**.
And that the hardships of the day are REAL. Be Authentic and Human.

- ★ Create and support the journey towards Resilience & Healing from the HARD STUFF.
- ❖ Normalize how staff can talk about mental health struggles and burnout/compassion fatigue with other trusted adults / support systems.



What does this look like?

- Teams to support one another
- Activities for team/trust building
- Modeling and practicing mindfulness
- Processing after stressful events together
- Utilizing a building leadership team to identify areas of need and potential supports





Strategy 2: PROMOTE Easy-to-Do “Brain” and “Body” Wellness!

- ☐ **GET** a Drink of Water
- ☐ **Take** a walk.
- ☐ **Make** a List
- ☐ **Talk** it out with someone else
- ☐ **Novelty** and fun
- ☐ **Music**
- ☐ **Go** outside / **Do** some stretching
- ☐ **WHAT ELSE? REFLECT.** Turn and Talk.



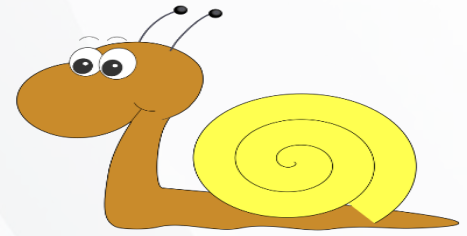


STRATEGY 3: Promote LOW & SLOW

Slow down your rate of speech and make sure to pause between sentences

Slow down your body movements

Slow down your “agenda” and take your time





STRATEGY 3: Promote LOW & SLOW

Lower the volume and pitch of your voice

Keep a matter of fact tone regardless of the situation

Speak in short sentences without a lot of questions





Strategy 4: Support Realistic, Practical, & Doable Priorities

- ★ Educators quite often feel they can not or are not doing ENOUGH to address trauma and reduce the hardships faced by students.
- ★ Help them focus on being fully present and doing their best work based on the task at hand. “Present” means living their values as an educator.
- ★ Support them in setting **realistic** goals despite the **MANY DEMANDS** being placed on them.
 - Burnout and stress happen with a “EVERYTHING IS IMPORTANT AND MUST BE DONE NOW” approach.



Agenda/Expected Outcomes

Participants will reflect on how modeling and supporting best practices in mental health can increase staff engagement and resilience during the school day.





Creating and Modeling a Culture of Wellbeing

“Health is an essential component of wellness, as healthy minds and bodies are shown to enhance reasoning, problem solving, learning, and creativity.”

- **Center for Creative Leadership**





Creating and Modeling a Culture of Wellbeing

Your actions are a foundation for the culture of your school buildings.

When you focus on your health and wellbeing, a strong message is sent to those you support and supervise.





Creating & Modeling a Culture of Wellbeing

Staff are watching and learn from your behavior.

- **Create boundaries on when you respond and send emails.**
- **Walk and Talk meetings**
- **Eating healthy**
- **Talking about your wellness journey**
 - **This includes the BIG 3: Sleep, Eat & Exercise.**
- **Brain breaks during meetings and school day.**



YOU CAN'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP!!

Please review the **Emotional Wellness Checklist**.

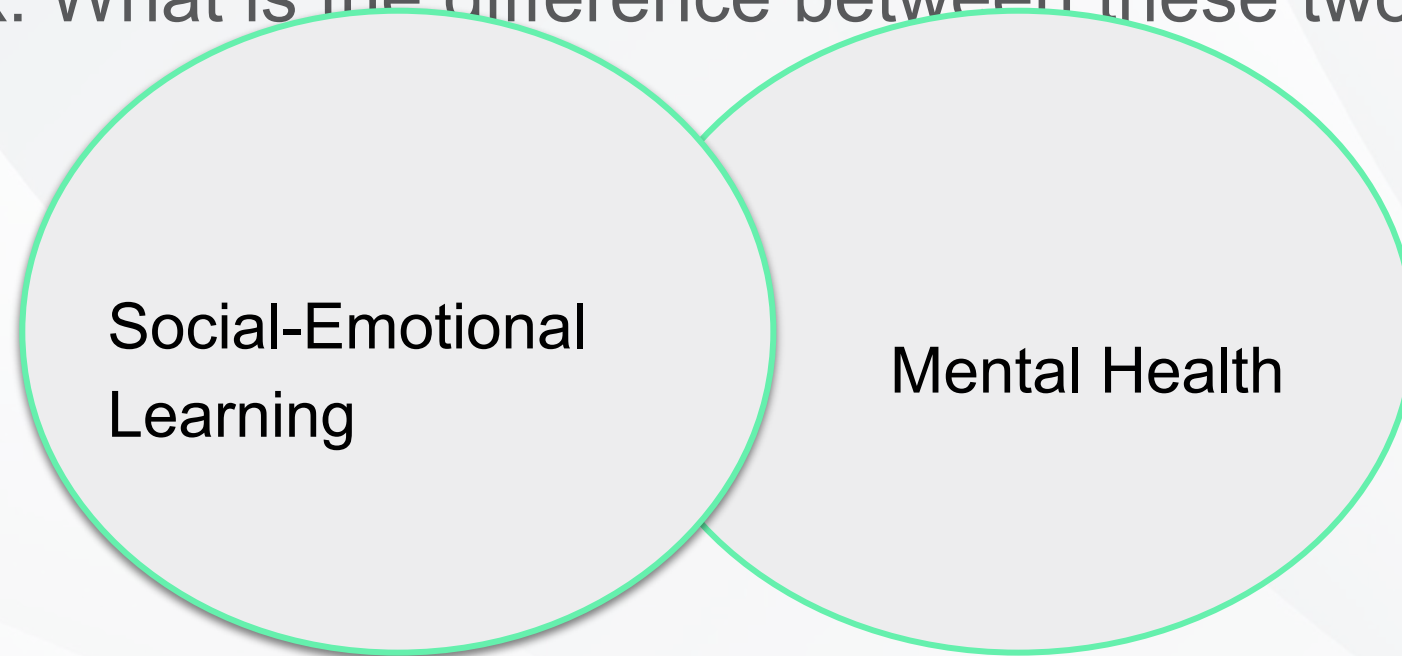
How might you **MODEL** and **SHARE** best practices in mental health so as to inspire staff engagement and resilience during the school day?





SEL And Mental Health

Turn and Talk: What is the difference between these two terms?





SEL and Mental Health

- SEL helps promote positive mental health.
- **SEL promotes “protective factors” that help reduce mental health risks.**
 - **Responsive relationships**
 - **Emotionally safe environments**
 - **SEL skills development,**
- SEL should be implemented as part of a system of mental wellness supports and resources that include promotion, prevention, early intervention, and treatment.



ADULT SEL - An Emerging Field of Importance

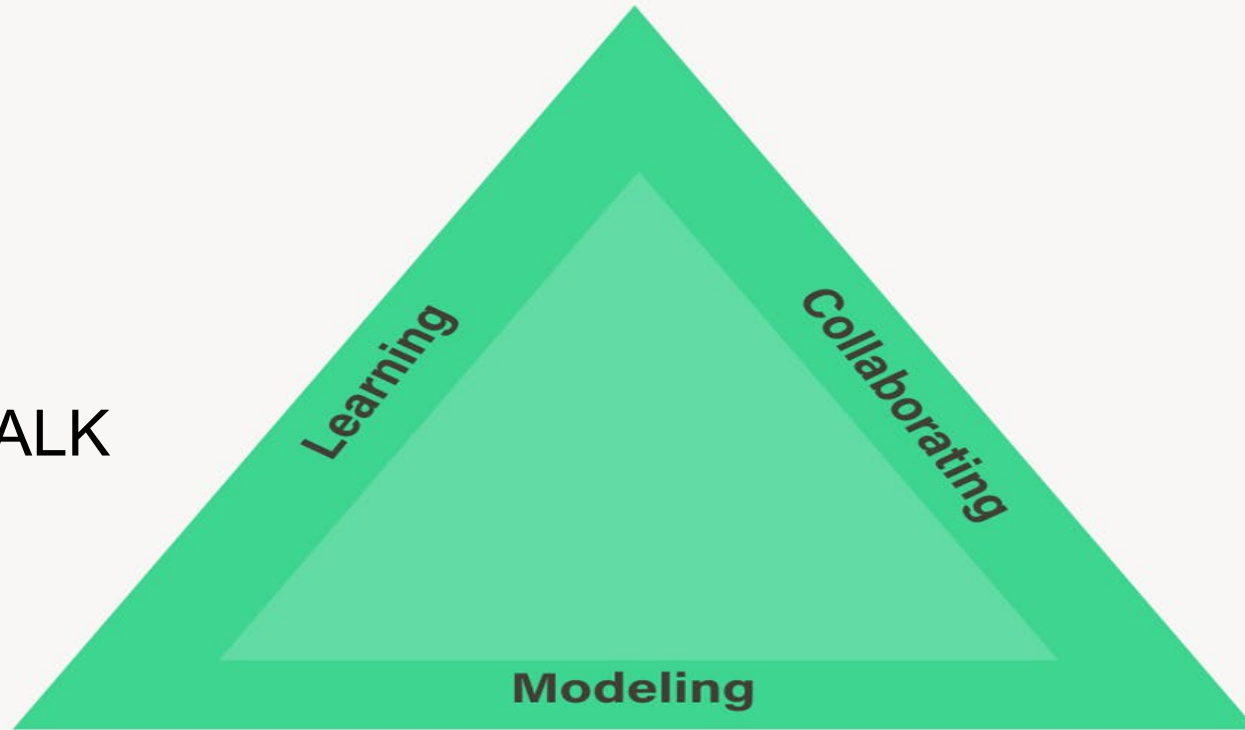
- Best practices for growing a community of adults who engage in their own SEL continue to emerge post-pandemic.
- As a school leader, your actions help cultivate adult social and emotional competence and capacity.



CULTIVATING SEL FOR ADULTS- ACTION PLANNING

YOUR TURN

- THINK
- WRITE
- TURN & TALK





Your Turn: How Might You Cultivate SEL for ADULTS

LEARN: Help staff **reflect** on personal social and emotional competencies. **Build capacity** for how staff support SEL in their peers

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Additional Tools/Supports: Education Development Center

*Free Tools to Build SEL and Mental Health Supports in Schools:
Using data to enhance students' and teachers' well-being*

<https://www.edc.org/free-tools-build-sel-and-mental-health-supports-schools>

How Should Schools Measure SEL Skills?

<https://www.edc.org/how-should-schools-measure-sel-skills>





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Closing and Cue Use



1. Work with your leadership team(s) at school and district level
2. Develop, Implement and Assess:
 - ❖ PRACTICAL and DOABLE Mental Health initiatives and strategies.
3. Continue to focus on your self-care, wellness and well-being



Traffic Light Reflection:

Mental Health
Strategies That Work:

- FOR YOU
- FOR ADULTS YOU
SERVE



Stop doing?
Continue doing?
Start doing?



THANK YOU!

The Work You Do Is Not Easy.

AND

It Is So Important.

Keep going! We need you!



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