



"An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly."  
— unknown

## Key Priorities for Teachers

Establish a sense of safety, connectedness, empowerment, choice, and trust.

### Suggestions for educators to support **your own** mental health and well-being

- Create a routine that includes taking care of your physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health.
  - Physical: Eat well; get fresh air, movement, and exercise; practise good sleep habits.
  - Mental/emotional: Practise self-kindness and remember that it is best to take care of yourself before you try to take care of anyone else.
  - Social: Stay connected with friends, family, and colleagues.
  - Spiritual: Maintain or create a connection to mindfulness, meditation, nature, or organized religious practices.
- Take time to check in with yourself to gain insight into where you may be struggling. Once you identify the issues, create a plan to address the issues you can control and to work on letting go of the ones you cannot.
- Remember that, as adults, our behaviour is the best predictor of how our students and children will manage; they are watching and listening to us. When we take care of ourselves, we're showing them how they can take care of themselves too.
- Practise self-compassion. Remember to be patient and forgiving with yourself. Teachers are human too, and it is natural to struggle at times.

Through HumanaCare, members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society and their eligible family members can receive one-on-one counselling, as well as an array of other holistic support services. These include family, relationship, grief and bereavement counselling, as well as support for substance use, depression, work related stress, diet and nutrition, even legal and financial counselling.

To request services 24/7 any day of the year, connect by calling 1-800-661-8193 or going online at <https://humanacare.com/mts/> or [www.mbtteach.org/mtscms/2022/01/17/mts-humanacare/](http://www.mbtteach.org/mtscms/2022/01/17/mts-humanacare/).

## Suggestions for educators to support **students'** mental health and well-being

### **Establishing a routine and maintaining clear communication are crucial.**

Maintaining and communicating predictable routines is very important. Doing so helps students to maintain a sense of psychological safety—a sense that they can manage stress or connect with someone who can help them manage stress.

When there are changes in routine, take time to explain the changes. It reduces student stress and increases confidence that the adults can take care of them.

Encourage students to lead the way in sharing what they understand and do not understand about a change in routine. Approach their experiences with curiosity. Aim to clarify misinformation and connect students with other important adults as necessary.

### **Relationships and well-being can take priority over assignments and behavioral compliance.**

Alternative: Spend time intentionally focused on establishing a sense of security and belonging between yourself and your students and among students. Remember, you must make sure students' needs are met (as under Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs) before they can achieve their learning potential.

Students will fare best if they know their teachers care about their well-being just as much as their academics and behaviour. Providing structure and expectations will help contribute to that sense of security and to student success.

### **Students who may be at additional risk**

While not all families have a history of exposure to trauma, children with identified histories of trauma may be especially vulnerable to the impact of significant changes in schedule, routine, and expectations. Students who may be at additional risk include those

- who live with anxiety
- who live with depression or suicidal ideation
- who live with learning and attention disorders
- whose families may have lost jobs or income

## Helpful Resources

In addition to your school division's guidance counselling and/or clinical services (i.e., social work, psychology, etc.), some other helpful online resources include the following:

### **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**

#### *Trauma Facts for Educators*

This NCTSN resource offers facts such as "one in four children has experienced some form of trauma," and provides tips to educators to help students who have been traumatized.

[www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//trauma\\_facts\\_for\\_educators.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//trauma_facts_for_educators.pdf)

### **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development**

"Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies" by Jessica Minahan

*Educational Leadership*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (October 2019)

"When it comes to student trauma, there is much that is beyond educators' power, but there is also a great deal they can do to build a supportive and sensitive classroom environment. Here, author Jessica Minahan shares eight practical strategies teachers can use to help these students feel safe and ready to learn."

[https://ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership//oct19/vol77/num02/Trauma-Informed\\_Teaching\\_Strategies.aspx](https://ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership//oct19/vol77/num02/Trauma-Informed_Teaching_Strategies.aspx)

### **The Cult of Pedagogy**

This resource offers numerous articles, blogs, videos, and podcasts that support teachers and the art of teaching, as well as teacher self-care. It is an encouraging, stimulating community of teachers, supporting each other towards excellence.

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/>