



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

“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.

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society offers support to all members:

- The Lifespeak Wellness Platform offers supportive and preventative ideas.
www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2019/01/07/lifespeak-wellness-platform/
- The Educator Assistance Program offers counselling sessions with professional counsellors.
www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2016/05/24/educator-assistance-program/

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 the current situation. 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 that come with social distancing, cancelled courses, remote learning, and reliance on caregivers for academics. 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
- who have loved ones particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus
- who have a caregiver who is a healthcare worker or in another occupation where they are exposed to the virus or are being asked to respond in an intense way
- who may be less supervised because of their caregivers' work

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:

Manitoba Professional Learning Environment

Join any of these groups that offer ideas, resources, and supports:

- Supporting Student Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Guidance and Counselling

www.mapleforem.ca

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

Trauma-Informed School Strategies during COVID-19

This document discusses how, in the time of COVID-19, schools can adapt or transform their practices by using a trauma-informed approach to help children feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. In this move to virtual learning, "schools can build resilience and coping skills, provide a much needed sense of safety and routine, and connect with families who might otherwise be isolated and overwhelmed."

www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/resource-guide/trauma_informed_school_strategies_during_covid-19.pdf

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

The Resilience of Youth: The Impact of Developmental Trauma, Covid-19, and Beyond

This resource examines four young adults who discuss their experiences and thoughts on resilience, and reflect on their goals, challenges, and coping styles. The participants' reflections give us insight into resilience and how it can affect developmental trauma.

www.nctsn.org/resources/the-resilience-of-youth-the-impact-of-developmental-trauma-COVID-19-and-beyond

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