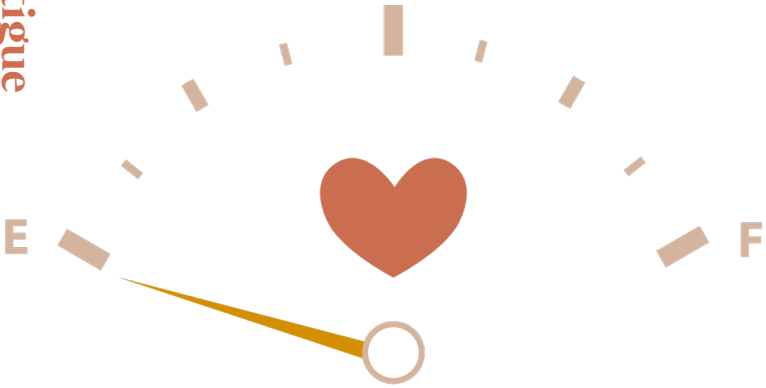


# SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS



# Compassion Fatigue & Burnout



- ▶ Bottling up emotions
- ▶ Chronic exhaustion
- ▶ Feelings of isolation/ disconnection
- ▶ Feelings of guilt, fear or hopelessness
- ▶ Substance Abuse
- ▶ Compulsive behaviors
- ▶ Poor self care
- ▶ Nightmares/flashbacks
- ▶ Physical ailments
- ▶ Decreased pleasure
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Mental and/or physical exhaustion
- ▶ Preoccupation

**93% of elementary school teachers, 46% overall, report high levels of stress at their job. The first step in avoiding compassion fatigue and burnout on the job is to keep your eye out for symptoms.**

**We all know its good to practice 'self care' when you're feeling stressed, but practicing it even when you aren't stressed can help build resilience and make daily stressors feel less overwhelming. Here are our suggestions:**



### **Exercise**

Exercise can lower cortisol, your body's stress hormone. It can also release good chemicals in your body called endorphins which can improve your mood. Even yoga or taking a quick 10 minute walk per day can help keep stress at bay.



### **Cut back on the caffeine**

Caffeine is a stimulant and can make some feel anxious. Although coffee can be healthy when taken in moderation, consider cutting your intake back if you are feeling stressed out or overwhelmed.



### **The old-fashioned pen and paper**

Keeping a journal can help relieve stress and anxiety. Take a moment to jot down your feelings and thoughts. Not only are you allowing yourself time to emotionally process your feelings or thoughts, but you are improving your cognitive functioning and strengthening your immune responses.



### **Bubblegum anyone?**

So easy, anyone can do it. According to several studies, chewing gum can help you relax and reduce stress levels.



### **Laugh**

Watch a funny movie, tell a good joke, or call that friend that knows just how to evoke a good belly laugh. Laughing is good for your health and can help to relieve stress.



### **Breathe**

Breathing – the one thing that you do the most and don't give any thought to – can be one of your greatest tools to relieve stress and become healthier. Deep breathing affects your relaxation response by activating your parasympathetic nervous system. Simply stated? Deep breaths equal a slower heart rate, and a slower heart rate can make you feel calmer. Learn more on deep breathing with this video.



### **Music**

You only need to see how a child responds to music to understand its effects. Music can energize us and calm us. Try some classical, lo-fi beats, or other soothing tunes to help you relax.

# Foods for Fighting Stress

- ▶ Foods that are high in antioxidants, like 1 oz. of **dark chocolate** or **handful of berries**.
- ▶ Omega-3 fatty acids found in **tuna, sardines, halibut, salmon** and **chia seeds**.
- ▶ Potassium & B-Vitamin rich foods like **pistachio nuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds** and **bananas**.
- ▶ **Avocados** are a source of healthy monosaturated fats, fiber, potassium, vitamin C and vitamin B6.
- ▶ Leafy greens can provide magnesium and folate which include **spinach, kale, asparagus** and **swiss chard**.
- ▶ **Eggs** which are a good source of Vitamin B12, Vitamin D and tryptophan which encourages serotonin production.
- ▶ Certain spices like **ginger root, cinnamon** and **turmeric** are anti-inflammatory.
- ▶ Probiotics, which can help your digestive system, like **yogurt, kefir** or **kimchi**.



**Stress can be intense during a pandemic. You can mitigate those reactions and increase your wellbeing and focus on the job by trying the following:**

### **Remain Hopeful**

- Consider the situation in a broader context or keep a long-term perspective.
- Look for opportunities to see this as a growth or learning experience.
- Find things to be grateful about.
- Draw upon your spirituality, those who inspire you, or your personal beliefs and values.

### **Increase Your Sense of Safety**

- Use all safety precautions put in place for you at work (and for your families at home).
- Seek out accurate information from the CDC or WHO.
- Use a buddy system to check-in and take care of each other.
- Take brief breaks for basic physical care and refreshment.
- Make plans for what will happen if someone in the home or your work unit becomes ill or if quarantine or shelter-in-place measures are ordered.

### **Stay Connected**

- Consider it crucial to connect more with co-workers, leaders, family, friends or mentors.
- Prioritize making time for those who can help with problem-solving, decision-making, resource sharing and mutual support.
- Be creative in connecting via phone, email, text or video calls.

### **Improve your sense of control and competence**

- Give your self a break if you make mistakes, we are living in unprecedented times.
- Accept circumstances cannot be changed, focus on what you can alter.
- Increase positive coping behaviors that have worked in the past.

### **Find More Ways to be Calm**

- Realize that it is understandable to feel anxious or worried about what has or may happen.
- Reduce the amount of times you check the news if it increases your stress, particularly prior to sleep.
- Prioritize stress management and be diligent when you find a method that works for you. Practice slow, steady breathing and muscle relaxation, as well as any other actions that are calming for you (yoga, exercise, music, staying busy, keeping the mind occupied).