

## Educator Resilience: Tips on Self-Care in the Time of COVID-19

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide educators with tips for maintaining their personal well-being.

### Introduction

These are unprecedented times, and educators more than ever are confronting the challenge of balancing new work expectations, family responsibilities and personal well-being. Finding the time to take care of yourself is hard, especially when you are a caregiver and prioritize the needs of others. However, educators are at their best when they are fully charged mentally, physically and emotionally. Focusing on your own needs during a time in which others look to you for support is critical for the well-being of your students, your colleagues and your family.

### Physical Care: Sleep and Exercise

- **Get adequate sleep.** Seven to eight hours of sleep is recommended for adults to revitalize and repair body and mind.
- **Establish a routine.** It's important to create a daily work routine that takes into consideration the needs of the whole family, if applicable, and includes exercise and brain breaks.
- **Engage in physical activity.** Build health-related fitness activities that include aerobic activities (e.g., walking, jogging, biking, stair-climbing), strength building activities (e.g., push-ups, squats, sit-ups, weight-lifting), and flexibility activities (e.g., yoga, stretching routines, Twister).
- **Nourish your body.** Between lesson planning, researching learning experiences and attending professional meetings, it's possible to forget to eat. Don't.
- **Laugh.** Laughter triggers healthy physical and emotional responses in the body, including strengthening the immune system, elevating mood, diminishing pain and mitigating the negative effects of stress.

### Mental Care: Mindfulness and Learning

- **Be reasonable with yourself.** Recognize that shifting to remote learning will involve trial and error. Expect it, plan for it, and do your best. The brick and mortar school and schedule cannot be replicated intact online. It will look, feel and be different.
- **Find ways to relieve stress.** Identify one method of coping with stress and make a point of doing it every day. Protect your time and focus on engaging in activities that bring you peace or pleasure (e.g., listen to music, do crafts, garden, read for pleasure, etc.).

### Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact: Jess DeCarolis, Division Director, Student Pathways Division by email at

[Jess.DeCarolis@vermont.gov](mailto:Jess.DeCarolis@vermont.gov)

- **Unplug.** In order to maintain a healthy work/life balance, it is important to disconnect from technology whenever possible.
- **Engage in calming activities.** Incorporate activities that promote a sense of calm into daily routines, such as meditation, spiritual growth, yoga, crafting or completing puzzles.
- **Try something new.** Keep your mind sharp by spending a few minutes engaged in a new activity of interest, such as trying a new recipe, learning a new language, beginning a new hobby, etc.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Think of the way you would treat a good friend, a child or a beloved pet, and then begin treating yourself accordingly.

### **Social Care: Stay Connected with Others**

- **Seek support from colleagues.** Take the time to reach out to colleagues in order to provide emotional support to each other. Relationships are a priority at this time.
- **Stay in contact with family and friends.** Prioritize non-professional relationships. This could include using video conference tools, participating in online discussion groups or book clubs, texting, and writing letters.
- **Communicate respectfully.** Strong communication skills are particularly important in remote environments to prevent misunderstandings. T.H.I.N.K. before you respond -- is your response True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind?
- **Be kind to yourself and others.** Assume best intent and try to stay positive. Have patience with yourself and others; everyone is trying their best.
- **Set boundaries.** Plan communications and availability for students and families and colleagues, making sure that you set aside time for yourself. Think about how you can pare down the amount of communications you are receiving (e.g., planned office hours, how often you are checking in with students/families, etc.).
- **Take care of your family.** You are the best support for one another, so make a point of checking in during this period of social distancing and school closure.

For more information on caring for yourself, please read [Staying Mentally Healthy During Self-Isolation or Quarantine](#) from the Vermont Department of Health.

**If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact the following AOE staff from the Student Pathways Division:**

Martha Deiss at [martha.deiss@vermont.gov](mailto:martha.deiss@vermont.gov);

Emily Leute at [emily.leute@vermont.gov](mailto:emily.leute@vermont.gov); or

Susan Yesalonia at [susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov](mailto:susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov).

## **Sources**

[14 Tips for Teacher and Parent Self-Care](#)

[Laughter is the Best Medicine \(HelpGuide.org\)](#)

[Learning at a Distance Guidance](#)

[Prioritizing Self-Care While Working from Home](#)

[Sleep and Health](#)

[Taking care of yourself during uncertain times: Mindfulness and well-being for educators](#)

[Teaching Through a Pandemic: A Mindset for This Moment](#)

[THINK Acronym for Kinder and More Effective Communications](#)