



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE FOR EDUCATION

MENTAL HEALTH -MANAGING STRESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Dr. Emily J. Hernandez, LMFT
EASE Director

E

As an employee of your district, you have access to the EASE program, a specialized counseling service...

- paid for by your district
- endorsed by leadership & management
- staffed by professional counselors
- voluntary and CONFIDENTIAL

A

EASE provides face-to-face counseling, phone consultations and community referrals. Immediate family members* are included (children up to age 26)

S

EASE counselors specialize in:

- Work related problems
- Stress
- Family problems
- Emotional distress and crisis
- Substance abuse
- Anxiety and depression
- Grief, loss and transitions

E



EASE SERVICES



HOTLINE

Unlimited 24 hour access to a live counselor



INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Referrals for individual counseling (for self or family member) with a professional counselor near your home or work



CONJOINT COUNSELING

Referrals for couples/marital, or family counseling with a professional counselor near your home or work



EASE LOCATIONS

9300 Imperial Highway, ECE Building, Suite 800

Private Entrance in the back of the building

Confidential Office Space

Ample Parking



Satellite Offices:

35 contracted therapists

2 additional office spaces in Downey

Arcadia, Covina, El Segundo, Gardena, Glendale, Long Beach,

Orange County, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, Valencia, Redondo

Beach, South Pasadena, Santa Monica, Whittier



Innovation

EASE offer TELEHEALTH options for employees with transportation, location, time barriers and COVID concerns.





PAIN

SUFFERING

CONFUSION

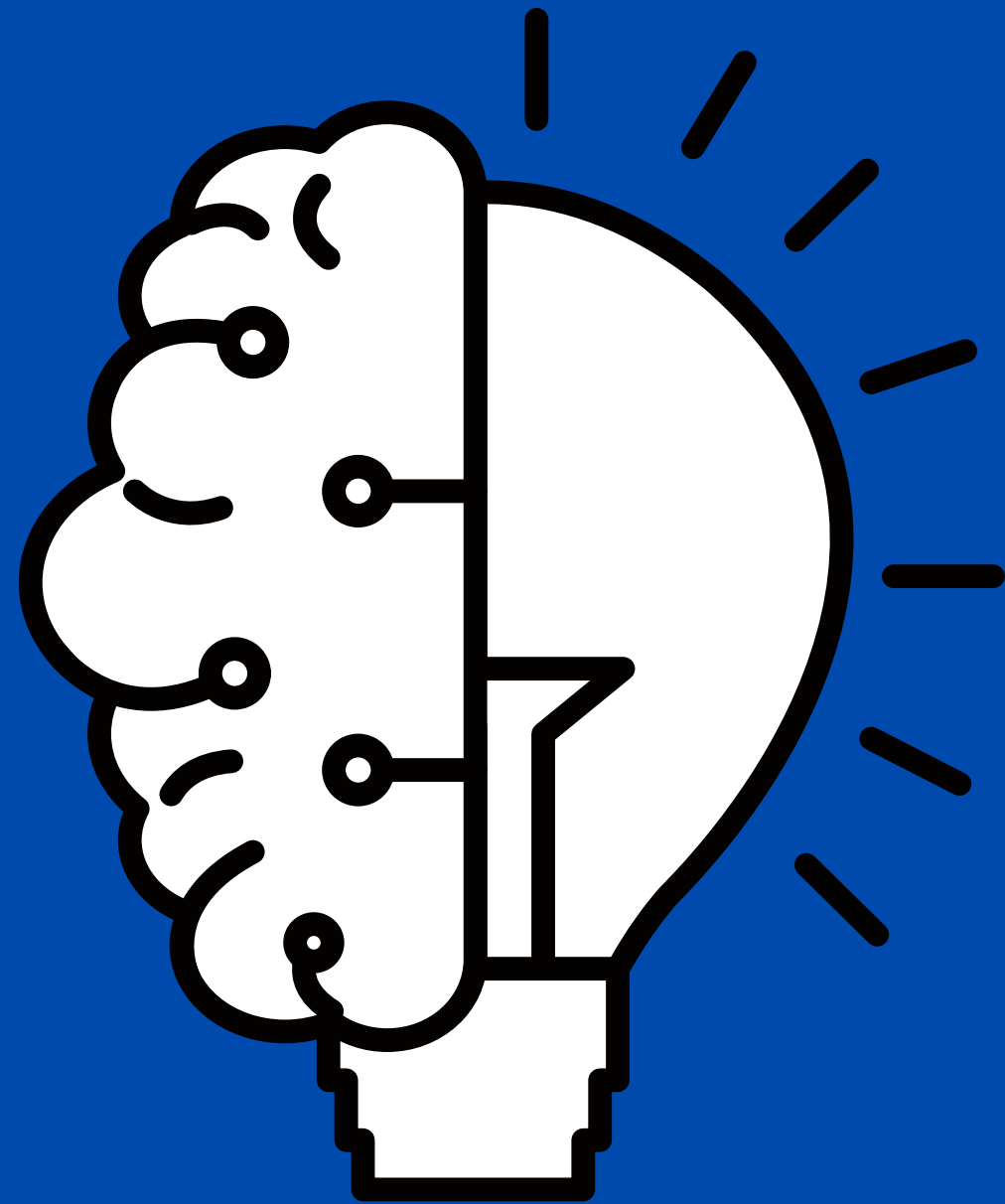
OVERWHELM

ANGER

RAGE

LOSS

SADNESS



The pandemic has transformed many individuals lives, views and interactions with others.

The pandemic may have impacted your:

- Fears and anxiety
- Stress levels
- Home and work transitions
- Interaction with friends, family and colleagues
- Overall well-being
- Self care practices

COVID & MENTAL HEALTH

EFFECTS OF COVID ON OUR MENTAL HEALTH:

- Bereavement
- Isolation
- Loss of income
- Increased levels of alcohol and drug use
- Insomnia
- Anxiety

These effects of the pandemic may be triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones.



FEAR AND ANXIETY



COMMON REACTIONS:

- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping
- Anger
- Anxiety, worry or panic
- Feeling helpless or confused
- Social withdrawal
- Overexposure to media
- Feelings of loss or grief



b r e a t h e

MANAGING FEARS & ANXIETY



Recognize & validate grief



Stay in the present



Separate out what you can & cannot control



Notice & manage your worried thoughts



Pay attention to joy



Find the right balance of structure & flexibility



Get active



Invest in social connectedness



just breathe

STRESS



WHAT IS STRESS?

- Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."
- In less formal terms, we feel stressed when we feel that "things are out of control."
- Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response.
- The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses.
- Stress is a normal part of life.
- You can experience stress from your environment, your body, and your thoughts.

STRESS



EDUCATOR WELL-BEING

Awareness of mental health and its impact on overall well-being is important for everyone, but particularly critical for employees working in the field of education.

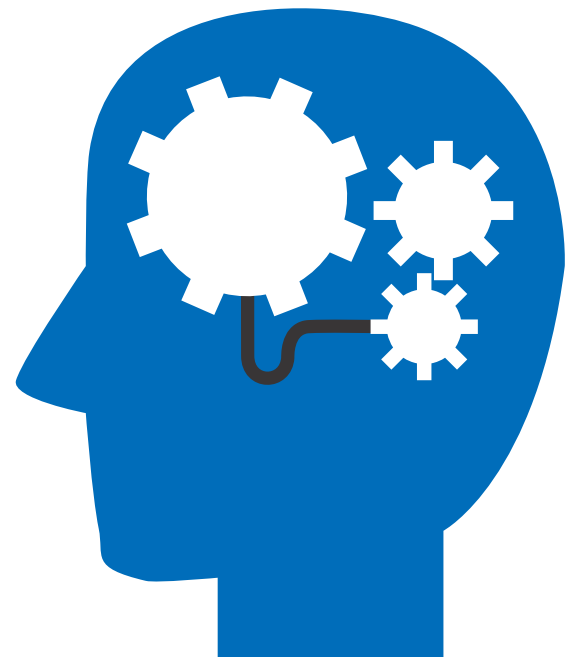
- Teaching is a highly stressful occupation and teachers suffer from more mental health problems than other professions (Kinman, Wray, & Strange, 2011).
- A body of research indicates that teachers are more vulnerable to work-related stress, psychological distress and burnout than many other occupational groups (Johnson et al., 2005; Jones, Huxtable, Hodgson, & Price, 2003; Kyriacou, 2000).

While personally rewarding, providing ongoing extensive support to students often leads to the educator's own health and well-being being set aside. In turn, the educator's mental health suffers, and so does the ability to provide the best support for students.

SIGNS OF STRESS OVERLOAD

EMOTIONAL

- Angry outbursts
- Irritable
- Worrying
- Anxious
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling apathetic



PHYSICAL

- Eczema
- Headaches
- Gastric problems
- Heart racing
- Breathing difficulties
- Get sick easily

BEHAVIORAL

- Sleep disturbance
- Appetite change
- Alcohol/drugs/nicotine
- Forgetful
- Can't focus
- Withdrawing



EFFECTS OF STRESS



HOW OUR BODIES REACT TO STRESS

- A series of automatic biochemical changes
 - Adrenaline and cortisol flood system
 - Heart rate, blood volume, blood pressure UP
 - Perspire, yet extremities go cold
 - Digestion, reproduction, growth, tissue repair, immune system shut DOWN
-
- Same response whether real or imagined



TECHNIQUES FOR PHYSICAL RELEASE

- Physical exercise: yoga, walking, running, bicycling
- Relaxation
- Deep breathing exercises
- Meditation
- Laughter – keep a sense of humor, avoid taking everything too seriously



TECHNIQUES FOR COPING MENTALLY

- Discard negative beliefs & learn to talk to yourself in positive ways.
- Accept that conflict is inevitable, seek solutions.
- Practice saying “no” to added demands on your personal time.
- Focus on accomplishments rather than on shortcomings.



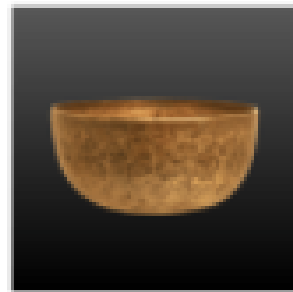
TECHNIQUES FOR COPING ENVIRONMENTALLY

- Use organizational skills – adopt methods for keeping track of commitments, due dates, and events.
- Involve family members in household responsibilities; delegate.
- Develop a support network – friends and family members.
- Limit activities – eliminate or cut back on involvements; learn to say “No!”

STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY TOOLS



Insight Timer



Calm



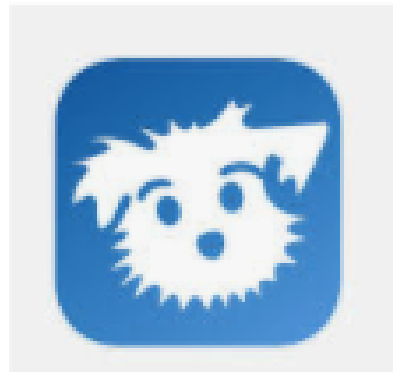
Breathe 2 Relax



The Mindfulness



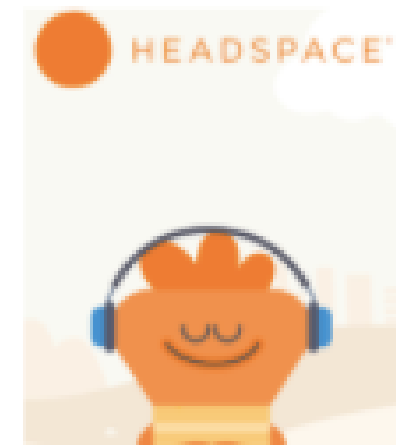
Down Dog Yoga APP



Yoga Studio



Headspace



Happify: for Stress & Worry



**SELF CARE IS AN
ETHICAL IMPERATIVE
FOR HELPING
PROFESSIONALS.**

**SELF CARE IS A PRIORITY AND A
NECESSITY
-NOT A LUXURY-
IN THE WORK THAT WE DO.**

**EVERY PLANT HAS THEIR OWN
REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER
TO GROW...**



AND SO DO PEOPLE.



SELF-CARE



WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

Intentional activities that benefit your psychological, physical and spiritual well-being. Self-care prevents us from succumbing to burnout, compassion fatigue and various illnesses. While anyone can experience these issues, those working in helping professions are more likely to develop these symptoms.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

To improve your overall mindfulness and stress resiliency. Developing a regular practice is vital to promoting mental wellness.

SELF-CARE ISN'T



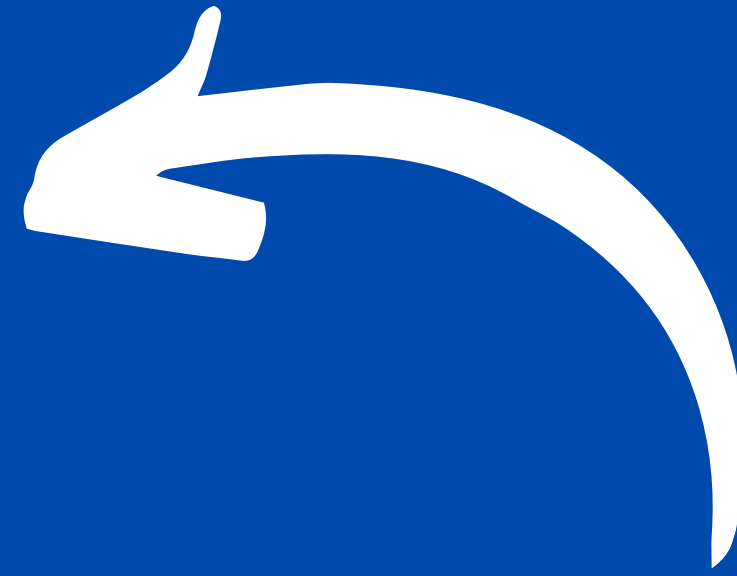
Self-care is not something we force ourselves to do, or something we don't enjoy doing. It is something that refuels us, rather than takes from us.

Self-care is about considering your needs and knowing what you need to do in order to take care of yourself so that you can take care of others as well.

If you do not care for yourself, you cannot care for others.

UNHEALTHY SELF-CARE

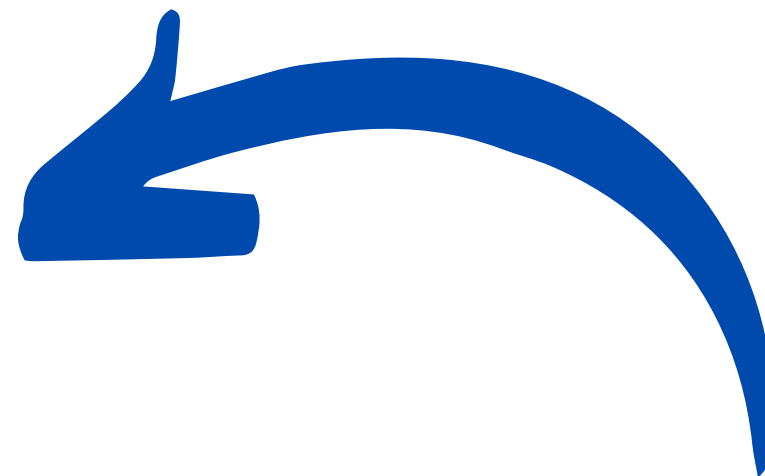
- Binge eating
- Skipping meals
- Excessive drinking
- Agitated behavior
- Negative self-talk
- Less sleep



UNHEALTHY METHODS

HEALTHY SELF-CARE

- Meditation/Mindfulness
- Journaling
- Exercise
- Drawing
- Yoga
- Regular sleep/eating patterns



HEALTHY METHODS



CREATING YOUR SELF-CARE PLAN

Although at times everyone experiences the similar stresses with work, family, finances and relationships, each person's self-care plan should be unique to them.

As you develop your self-care plan, it should suit and fit your needs, interests and schedule.

But first, it's important to identify what coping methods you currently engage in and whether they are unhealthy or healthy.

DAILY ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT



MAKE A LIST OF YOUR
DAILY ACTIVITIES

DAILY ACTIVITY

NOURISHING | DEPLETING | NEUTRAL

REFLECTIONS....

So... What to do?

- Increase the nourishing ones. Decrease the depleting ones.
- Change the way you "see" or "experience" them.
- Make it your choice to do them.
- Have control over "when" you do depleting activities.
- As a general rule- start and end your day with nourishing activities



Self-Care Planner

DATE / /

Mind

Blank space for notes under the Mind section.

Body

Blank space for notes under the Body section.

Top Three Coping Strategies

-
-
-

Barriers to Self-Care

Blank space for notes under the Barriers to Self-Care section.

Addressing Barriers

Blank space for notes under the Addressing Barriers section.



INDIVIDUALIZED SELF-CARE PLAN



Self-Care Planner

DATE / /

Mind

Empty text area for Mind section.

Body

Empty text area for Body section.

Top Three Coping Strategies

Three empty radio button options for coping strategies.

Barriers to Self-Care

Empty text area for Barriers to Self-Care section.

Addressing Barriers

Empty text area for Addressing Barriers section.

Share out.

Reflections....

- Which barriers did you identify in your self-care plan?
- How will you address those barriers?
- Which coping strategies did you integrate in your self-care plan?



DAILY SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

BASIC

TASK CHECKLIST

- WASH FACE/BRUSH TEETH
- EAT THREE MAIN MEALS
- DRINK WATER
- GET A GOOD NIGHT'S REST

PHYSICAL

TASK CHECKLIST

- EXERCISE FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES
- GO FOR A WALK/ENJOY FRESH AIR
- TAKE A NAP
- LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL

TASK CHECKLIST

- MEDITATE/PRACTICE MINDFULNESS
- SET A DAILY GOAL
- TALK TO A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE
- PRACTICE GRATITUDE



DAILY CHECKLIST

MON

6

GMT-07

5 AM

6 AM

SELF CARE: Morning Meditation, 6am

Coffee and book, 6:30am

7 AM

Shower and get ready

7 - 8am

8 AM

9 AM

Breakfast/morning snack, 9am

10 AM

11 AM

12 PM

Eat Lunch, 12pm

Walk, 12:30pm

1 PM

2 PM

3 PM

4 PM

5 PM

Eat Dinner

5 - 6pm

6 PM

Walk the dog, 6pm

7 PM

8 PM

Yoga, 8pm

Meditation, 8:30pm

9 PM

Relax, 9pm

10 PM



DAILY CALENDAR



LET'S TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT

Thinking about and creating our own self care
plan

- What kinds of self-care activities will you incorporate into your daily routine?
- How will you keep up with your self-care plan?

EASE

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EASE HOTLINE

1-800-882-1341

THANK YOU!



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

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Employee Assistance
Service for Education