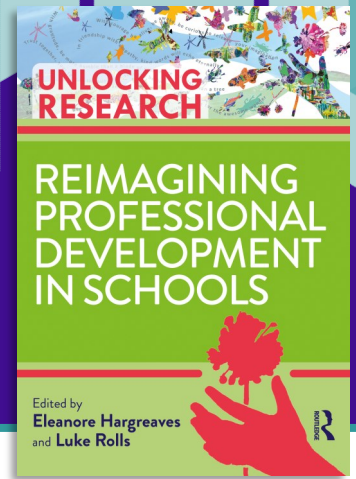


Teacher Wellbeing

CHAPTER 14 | GLAZZARD & STONES: SUPPORT & TEACHER WELLBEING



Connecting Cope with Covid-19

“The problem of teacher stress is pervasive. It is evident across all sectors of education and across countries.” (Gray et al, 2017)

In March 2020, the Covid-19 lockdown brought a sudden halt to the well-rehearsed routines of schools and teachers up and down the country. This sudden disruption has left teachers exposed to entirely new and different experiences. Teachers have had to adapt at a moment's notice to new ways of working and teaching. Many are not teaching lessons remotely and teaching resources have had to be adapted rapidly. Teachers have always played a crucial role in supporting and meeting the holistic needs of their pupils. However, this role has become ever more apparent in recent weeks. It can be argued that the role of the teacher has been re-framed. Many teachers will be mourning the loss of interaction with colleagues and young people. Social connections have been disrupted both in the work place and otherwise and we have been forced to adopt new ways of maintaining social connectivity. The significance of these changes is likely to have a detrimental effect on teacher's psychological wellbeing. To exacerbate these concerns, teachers will also hold concerns about their own health and the health of their significant others. This emphasises the need to consider wellbeing as a multi-dimensional perspective. Its reach extends into all aspects of our health: physical, social, emotional and psychological. As such, it is critical that as educators we take time to reflect on our professional roles. The current situation may have provided an opportunity to develop a work-life balance with sustainability as its core. When there is a wider re-opening of schools in the coming weeks and months, teachers need to feel refreshed and energised rather than burnt-out. As an educator, take this time to reflect on your priorities, to consider what is important and to engage in self-care and family connectivity. Focus only on what you can control and remember that this global pandemic is not your fault.

Facilitating self-reflection (for individual reflection)

The table below outlines some strategies that you might utilise to support you to be mentally healthy as a teacher. Take some time to reflect on these and consider what they mean to you. Think about how they might support you to balance your personal and professional commitments. The table encourages you to think about the ways in which you may already draw on these strategies as well as how to further develop these within your own context.

Strategy	How you already draw on this	How to further develop this
<p>Dedicate time to 'de-stress'</p> <p><i>We must recognise our own de-stressors. What makes you feel relaxed and refreshed?</i></p>		
<p>Social connectivity</p> <p><i>Talking to friends and significant others can support you to resolve problems and develop personal relationships. How regularly do you maintain social connectivity?</i></p>		
<p>The sustainability of your work-life balance</p> <p><i>Trying to be available to all on a 24/7 basis can lead to anxiety and stress. How and when do you 'switch-off'?</i></p>		
<p>Your physical wellbeing</p> <p><i>There is a close link between physical and mental health (Mental Health Foundation, 2016). How do you support your own physical wellbeing?</i></p>		
<p>Practising mindfulness</p> <p><i>Mindfulness involves focusing on calmness at the present moment. Try to find some time to think about peacefulness in your busy life. How do you practise mindfulness?</i></p>		