



IT'S TIME TEXAS —————

BURNOUT TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS

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A photograph showing a female teacher with dark hair, wearing a light-colored top, leaning over a desk to assist a young girl with dark hair in a blue sweater. They are both looking down at a colorful activity on the desk. The background is a blurred classroom setting with a green chalkboard and other students.

INTRODUCTION

The recent pandemic has shed light on how overstrained educators, school staff, and administrators have become and continues to push the limits on what is manageable. Instead of having a balance of work and personal priorities, educators have even less time than before to properly prepare for student success. Educators and school staff are having to wear many more hats and attempt to fill capacity gaps left by consequences of the pandemic and limited budgets. School districts across the country are reporting shortages within almost every area of the school community and educators and naming burnout as the #1 reason for considering leaving the profession. With over 65% of educators in Texas considering quitting, burnout is impacting how schools operate and how children learn and thrive. This toolkit is intended to provide educators and school administrators an understanding of what burnout is, ways to identify burnout, and tools to address it at an individual and school community level.



WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Burnout is a form of exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged emotional, physical, and mental stress. Burnout happens when you are overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life's incessant demands (Brennan, 2020). Burnout affects people in multiple aspects of life, not only their work. It can affect productivity and people's ability to accomplish everyday tasks and their ability to relate to others. Burnout can affect your home, work, and social life. Long-term burnout can make you more vulnerable to more severe physical and mental health effects.

"Teaching is what I always wanted to do, but I'm just kind of fed up with how I've been treated at my district, and how my colleagues have been treated, and am just trying to find something else that would give me and my family work-life balance."

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BURNOUT AND REGULAR STRESS?

(SURBHI, 2017)

BASIS FOR COMPARISON

STRESS

BURNOUT

Meaning

Stress refers to the body's response to physical, mental, or emotional pressure caused by normal life activities or events.

Burnout refers to a state of mental or emotional tiredness, occurring due to continuous exposure to stress.

Physical Responses

Anxiety, mood swings, guilt, fatigue

Physical symptoms such as: Headaches, stomachaches/intestinal issues, hypertension.

Emotional Responses

Loss of motivation and hope

Chronic exhaustion, unable to cope, low energy.

Work

Dissatisfaction with work

Bored with work

Job Commitment

Dropped off

Virtually zero

Results in

Lack of concentration, tends to forget things

Forgetfulness is more frequent

Undergoes

Physiological changes

Psychosomatic complaints


VS

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PREVENT AND RECOGNIZE IT?

Burnout is serious and should not be ignored. It can affect your physical and mental health. Burnout can negatively affect your daily life and your interpersonal relationships.

Causes of burnout can be from:

- Unmanageable workloads
- Unfair treatment at work
- Confusing work responsibilities
- Lack of communication or support from managers
- Immense deadline pressure



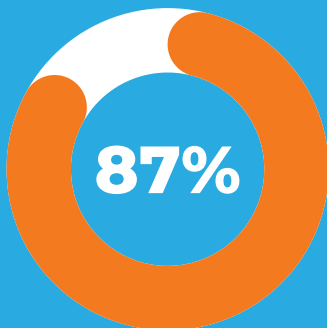
"With the workload, demands from the state, pandemic restrictions, and lack of pay, I feel as if I am doing less of what I love, which is teaching,"

PREVALENCE OF BURNOUT FOR EDUCATORS IN TEXAS:

You are not alone! A recent 2021 poll conducted by the Charles Butt Foundation, teachers in Texas discovered that:



“68 percent of Texas teachers seriously considered leaving public school teaching in the past year (2021)”



“87 percent reported work-related stress to be a major challenge”



“69 percent of teachers feel their pay is unfair”



SELF ASSESSMENT:

It is important to recognize the warning signs of burnout before it starts affecting your professional and personal life. Here you will find helpful tools that can help you identify if burnout is happening to you.

- Recognizing the early signs and symptoms of burnout can help you be proactive about a plan to combat it. A free burnout self-test, such as the free tool by [Mindtools](#), can help to figure out a person's risk for burnout by focusing on the emotions and experiences related to the workplace.
- To further evaluate burnout, the [Maslach Burnout Inventory](#) for Educators is an evidence-based tool that measures the degree to which someone is experiencing burnout. (Note: There is a cost related to the use of this particular tool)

"I'm doing what I can to make sure the next generation of teachers doesn't think it's always like this, because for some new teachers this is all they've experienced. This is all they know."

BURNOUT PREVENTION AND REMEDIES

Identifying burnout is an important first step. If you are at high risk for experiencing burnout or currently experiencing burnout, it is important to develop an action plan that works for you. Below are some suggestions for actions to take once burnout is identified. Here is a summary of a few ideas and suggestions taken from the [teacher self-help tool kit](#) developed by Routledge, as well, as some It's Time Texas resources to consider:

1



Avoid toxic thinking.

Consciously replace negative, toxic thoughts with positive ones. It's natural to have negative thoughts sometimes. You are human! But it is important to not let the negative thoughts consume you

2



Find a healthy place to vent.

Journal your thoughts or find a safe person you can talk to when you have a bad day or are frustrated or overwhelmed. Determine who your safe person is in advance and let that person know.

3

Adopt healthy habits.

Exercise, eat a nutritious diet, and go outside for fresh air and sunshine. It is easier said than done but adding healthy habits to your everyday life can make a tremendous difference to your mental and physical health. Start small and add something new every day, like adding a short 10 minute walk. An [It's Time Texas Health Coach](#) can help you create a personalized plan to incorporate healthy activities in your day that works for you. Our [Virtual Exercise Classes](#) can create more movement throughout your week.



BURNOUT PREVENTION AND REMEDIES

4



Learn to identify your triggers.

Take a moment to reflect about what triggers a stressful response. It might be helpful to write down these triggers when it happens. Once the trigger is identified, work to find ways to circumvent them.

5



Create a calendar and stay organized.

Have a calendar and try to stick to it. Make sure to include breaks in your calendar and respect them, ask others to respect your breaks and respect your colleague's breaks. Do not be afraid to have boundaries. For example, do not respond to emails after a certain hour of the day or during your lunch break, at the same time do not expect others to reply to your emails after hours.

6



Understand that it's ok not to be ok.

Seek professional help, if needed. As a teacher you are tasked with the huge responsibility of growing and enriching our future generation. Please understand that your own health and wellbeing is the ultimate priority! Be proactive and talk to a professional if you begin to notice signs of burnout. [NAMI](#) is a great resource with a wealth of information and resources about mental health. Additional mental health resources can be found here, [Public Health Collaborative Mental Health Resource Guide](#)

7



Create your support system.

Seek the support and buy-in from your colleagues, share your self-care strategies with them and work as a team toward reducing burnout collectively. It is very likely that your colleagues feel the same way you do, so start working toward these goals as a group.

BURNOUT PREVENTION AND REMEDIES

8

Create a Personal Action Plan.



An action plan can be a private, personal document where you plan in advance what to do in case you encounter a trigger that causes a stressful response. Being prepared ahead of time can be beneficial to avoid burnout. You can use this sample [personal action plan](#) but this plan is yours and you may add whatever you think it might be helpful for you. Here are some suggestions of items you might add to your plan:

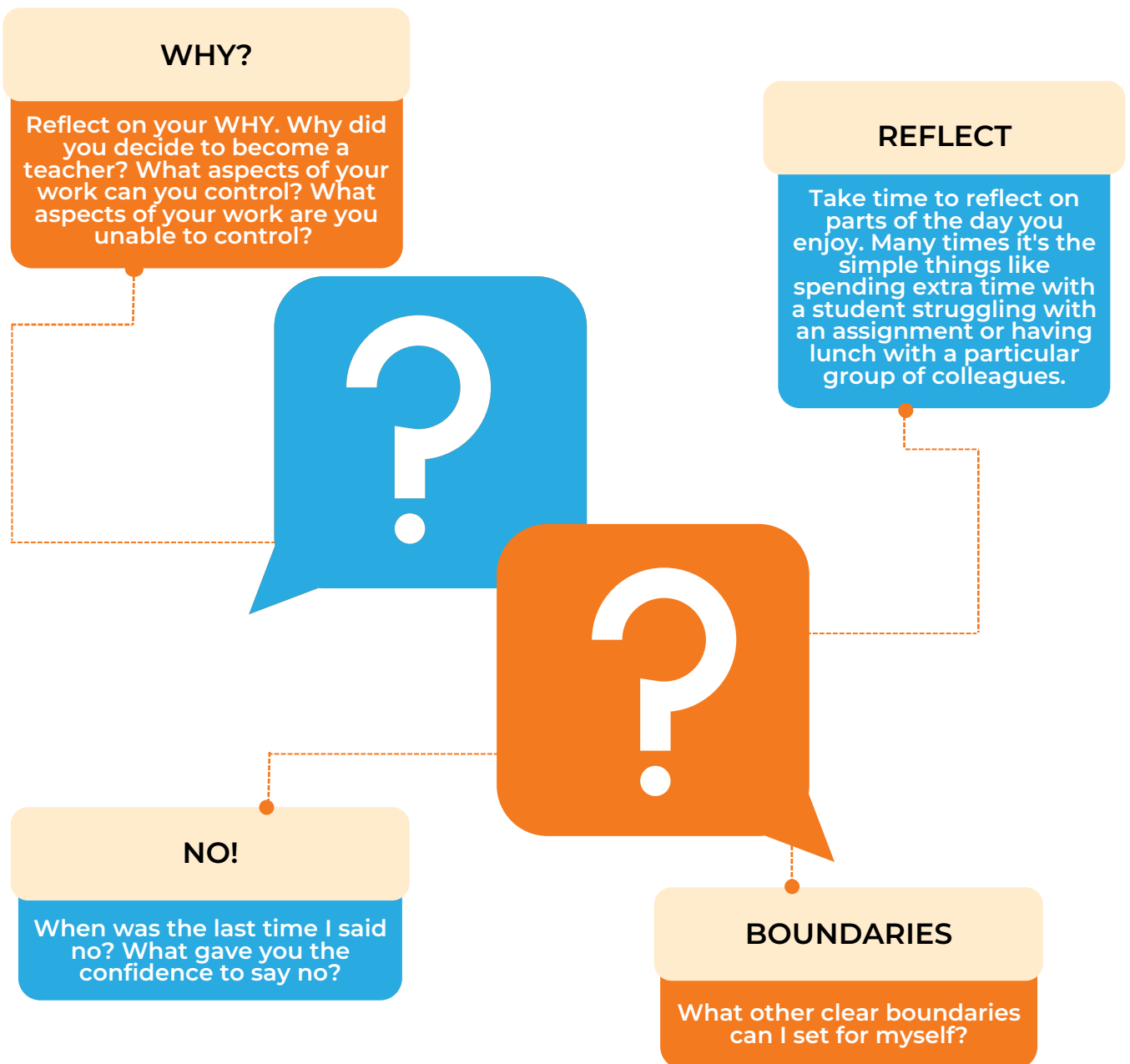
- Identify a safe person you can talk to when you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed.
- Schedule mental health breaks throughout the day or week.
- Identify background noise or music that helps you relax.
- Include self care activities, such as walking and going to the gym, on your schedule or calendar.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet every day.

Your plan should include SMART short and long term goals. This plan should be about you and what makes you feel joy...not your students, your family, or friends.



BURNOUT PREVENTION AND REMEDIES

Answering the following questions might further help you understand your level of burn out and help you create strategies to fix it. Self-reflection questions examples:



WHAT CAN ADMINISTRATORS DO TO SUPPORT TEACHERS?

Although this toolkit focuses on self-care activities to assist in preventing and combating burnout, school administrators and districts also need to be aware of ways to design and implement school structures and policies to alleviate burnout.

GIVING TEACHERS A VOICE IN DECISION MAKING THAT IMPACTS THEIR CLASSROOMS

Educators and staff want to feel their opinions are being heard and valued. Creating safe space and frequent opportunities for school staff to share their views and provide input on important issues that impact their classrooms can help strengthen the overall connection and build trust.



SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Encouraging educators to disconnect afterwork can help educators feel a better sense of autonomy and find their work more sustainable. It's important to allow for clear boundary setting of communication norms both with colleagues and students. Perhaps most important, administrators need to model these behaviors themselves.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS OF COLOR BETTER

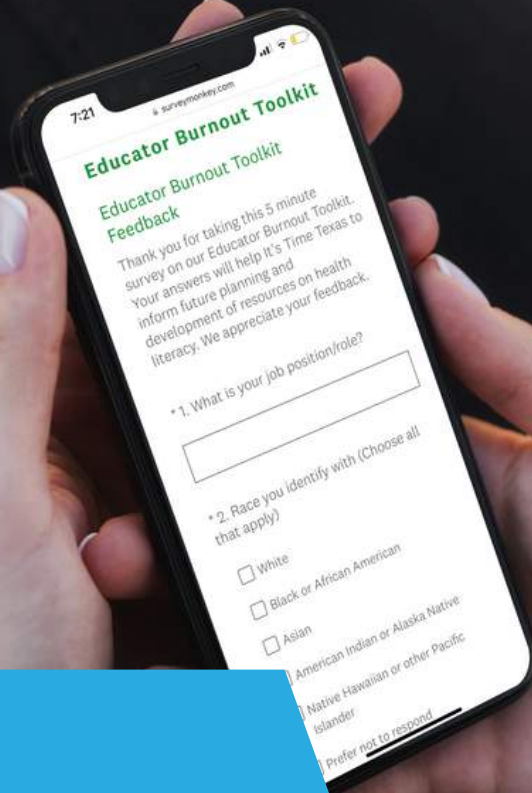
Recruiting and retaining teachers of color is essential. Research shows that students of color experience more academic success when taught by teachers of color. Unfortunately, educators of color are leaving the profession at higher rates than their white counterparts. Isolation and lack of culturally- appropriate professional development are just a couple of reasons why. Making space to learn about the lived experiences of teachers of color and build understanding around their unique needs as educators would assist in promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion. It's necessary to listen to what teachers of color say they need.





CONCLUSION

As a teacher, you are asked to take care of yourself AND your students. You are responsible not only for their academic success but their physical and mental wellbeing, too. It is important to remember your physical and mental wellbeing are equally important. If you are feeling overwhelmed with your job and that stress is affecting your professional and personal life, you are not alone! It is important to take a moment to reflect and recharge before continuing when necessary. It is also important to reflect about things you can change and control about your environment, lifestyle and routine in order to improve your situation and avoid or reverse burnout. School administrators should support an environment where teachers feel cared for and heard and where they are given the opportunity to take care of themselves as well as their students.



SURVEY

WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS TOOLKIT HELPFUL AND ENGAGING.

We ask that you take 5 minutes to complete this survey. Your answers will help It's Time Texas to inform future planning and development of resources on educator burnout. We appreciate your feedback.

**SCAN QR CODE
OR**

CLICK HERE:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/
r/educatorburnouttoolkit](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/educatorburnouttoolkit)



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THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN THIS TOOLKIT



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