



EDUCATOR WELLBEING

A QUICK GUIDE TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT
STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL STAFF

NAME : _____

ROLE: _____



WHY EDUCATOR WELLBEING MATTERS

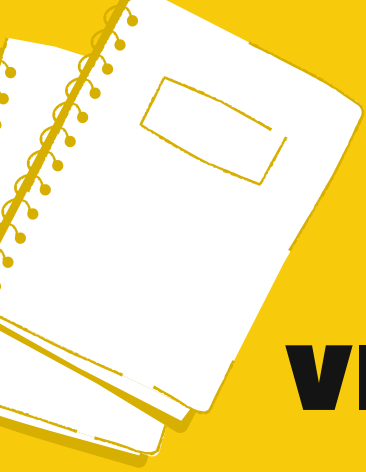
Research has found that educator wellbeing can have a direct impact on teaching ability and performance (Cumming, 2016). But most importantly, educators do a tough job and deserve to feel well, supported and appreciated while doing so.



According to a 2019 NASUWT survey, 90% of new teachers reported workload to be one of their biggest stressors, with pupil behaviour and accountability being listed among educators' top 5 concerns in the UK (NASUWT, 2019). While self-help strategies like mindfulness, yoga and self-reflection on work-life balance can be useful, it is clear that these 3 concerns are structural rather than individual challenges to overcome.

Therefore, this booklet will focus on **community support strategies** with elements of self-help to support schools and their individual educators to move towards building healthier workplace environments together.





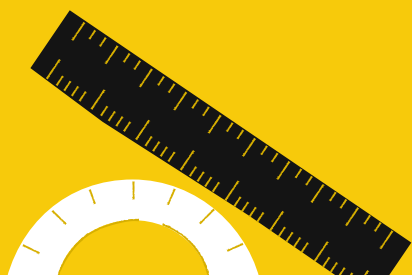
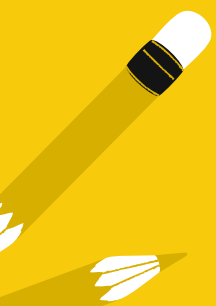
VICARIOUS TRAUMA

✦ Educators who work with refugee or asylum seeking students will often be more exposed to trauma than educators who do not. This exposure on a regular basis can have impacts on you and your colleagues. One key impact to be mindful of is **vicarious trauma**. ✦

Vicarious trauma is not something to be scared of, rather something to be aware of, so if you do find yourself or a colleague to be impacted by it, you know how to identify it quickly and can provide any support needed.

Vicarious trauma is when a person takes on the trauma of another person and can feel as if the trauma happened to them. Common signs include: unwelcome thoughts of students' traumas; nightmares; social withdrawal; negative coping skills both personally and professionally; hyperarousal to your safety; avoiding physical intimacy; increasingly pessimistic worldview; loss of work-related motivation; distancing from spiritual beliefs and stress-related medical conditions.

This is a type of trauma and it will pass when changes are made or you reach out for support.






COMPASSION FATIGUE

Another potential consequence of working on a daily basis with students impacted by trauma is **compassion fatigue**. This is when a person feels that they cannot commit any more energy, time, or money to the plight of others because they feel overwhelmed or paralysed by pleas for support and that the world's challenges are never-ending.

Common signs of compassion fatigue include: a decline in the ability to feel sympathy and empathy; compassion is replaced with apathy and sense of helplessness; profound emotional and physical exhaustion; becoming more task-focused than emotion-focused; negative emotions, anger, irritation and withdrawal from social situations.

This is not a type of trauma and it will pass but it is important to talk to someone about how you are feeling and discuss different ways of working so that you are able to get a break and take time to rest.





REFLECTION: WHAT DO WE ALREADY DO WELL?

List below strategies currently used in your workplace that support staff wellbeing or help to build a supportive community.
You can try this reflection independently or with a group of colleagues.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

CURRENT REFLECTIONS ON MY WORKPLACE

What could be improved in your workplace to help
build a supportive and resilient community to
enable improved educator wellbeing?



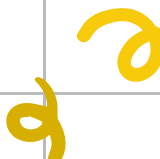

KEY STRATEGIES

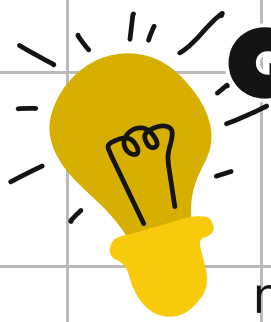


Community support strategies:

- ✓ 1 GROUP REFLECTION
- ✓ 2 COLLABORATIVE WORK PROJECTS
- ✓ 3 APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK MECHANISMS
- ✓ 4 MENTORING PROGRAMMES
- ✓ 5 STAFF CELEBRATIONS/OUTINGS
- ✓ 6 PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Add your own suggestions here:





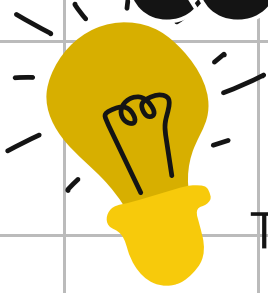
STRATEGY 1: GROUP REFLECTION

This strategy can take place during a morning briefing and can help stay keep up to date with what's going on in school, hear about each others concerns and celebrate each others successes. A quick model to structure these group conversations on can be **highlights**, **headaches** and **horizons**. This can help to balance the reflection so it is not all negative or positive but an accurate review of the current situation.

It may take time for staff to feel comfortable to voice their views so it is important that leadership staff model this practice by taking part. Depending on your team's size, perhaps ask just one person from each department can share, ensuring new staff speak each time.

**HOW COULD THIS
LOOK IN MY
WORKPLACE?**

STRATEGY 2: COLLABORATIVE WORK PROJECTS

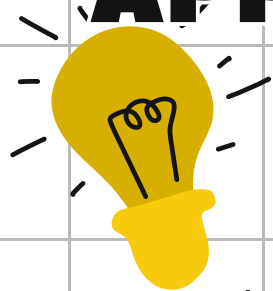


This strategy can help to lessen the burden of deadlines and workloads on individuals by finding better ways of sharing the load.

Having an environment where staff feel comfortable sharing their work can save a huge amount of time and having structures that encourage team members to collaborate on planning projects, consider faster ways of marking and other key tasks can avoid staff doubling up on work and creating resources which may already exist.

Research and development working groups can also be an excellent way of finding better ways of working and ensuring that your team is staying up to date with current good practice.

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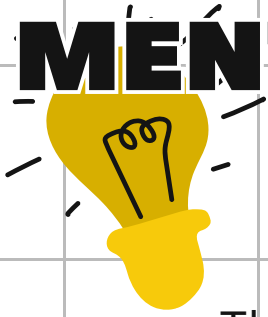
STRATEGY 3: APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

This strategy can have a significant impact on a team's dynamic and individuals' feelings of self-worth. Staff who feel listened to and can see that school leadership take their feedback seriously will undoubtedly have a better experience than staff who feel unable to speak or ignored when they do. Frustrations often come about when staff have ideas to improve current practices but are met with barriers to seeing those changes implemented by leadership.

School leadership can foster a culture of listening by hosting office hours where staff can drop in to pitch their ideas or dedicating time in staff meetings to discuss key challenges and staff solutions.

**HOW COULD THIS
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WORKPLACE?**

STRATEGY 4: MENTORING PROGRAMMES

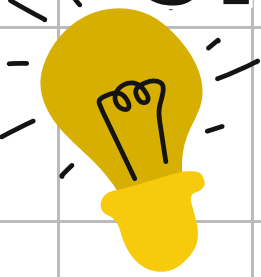


This strategy can help staff get to know each other better and encourage staff with specific skills or areas of knowledge to become ‘experts’ who can mentor staff with an interest or need in that area.

This can be especially useful for newer teachers to learn from experienced colleagues but also for those who have more unusual professional experience or master’s degrees in key topics to share their knowledge with other team members. For example, a teacher may have worked abroad teaching using different pedagogical theories or may have written their master’s thesis on a topic that could really help their colleagues to work in new and more efficient ways.

**HOW COULD THIS
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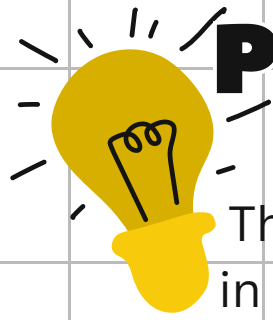
STRATEGY 5: STAFF CELEBRATIONS/ OUTINGS



This strategy can help to improve team dynamics, help staff to let loose and build stronger relationships so teams are able to provide better support to each other when necessary.

Some schools have staff **social committees** who organise a series of **non-compulsory events** throughout the year including meals, theatre trips, golf trips and celebrations that other staff can choose to attend if they'd like. They can also plan **celebrations** like "Back to School dinners" and end of year celebrations where awards can be given to staff who've made excellent contributions throughout the year or those who are leaving the team.

HOW COULD THIS
LOOK IN MY
WORKPLACE?



STRATEGY 6: PASTORAL SUPPORT

This strategy can help put support structures in place for staff who may need more bespoke guidance or a safe place to speak. As mentioned above, educators who work with refugee or asylum seeking students may find themselves temporarily experiencing vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue. One of the most helpful ways to move forward from either of these situations is to speak to someone and discuss how you are feeling.

Having pastoral staff who are trained and ready to support staff who are feeling unwell can give the team a safety net to fall on when they need it. Staff can use this service to debrief about situations before they become harder to manage and can use the pastoral support staff to gain a new perspective or guidance on how to cope.


**HOW COULD THIS
LOOK IN MY
WORKPLACE?**



PERSONAL TOOLKIT




TOOL 1: CBT THOUGHT TRACKER



This tool is based on cognitive behavioural therapy models which aim to help individuals reframe their thoughts about challenging situations so they are able to gain a more balanced perspective and cope better with the given situation.

This tool can be useful to educators and their students and can help individuals to manage their problems by changing the way they think and therefore, behave.



THOUGHT TRACKER

Situation and
initial worries



Current
feelings/mood



Factual evidence
to support worry



Factual evidence
to negate worry



Final judgement
of the situation



Final
feelings/mood



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PERSONAL TOOLKIT




TOOL 2: ANCHOR PLAN

Being a teacher can be stressful and sometimes we find ourselves focusing more on work than our personal lives and the things that help us to thrive.



Building an anchor plan can help you to reflect on what you enjoy, what makes you tick and what helps you switch off from work and let loose.

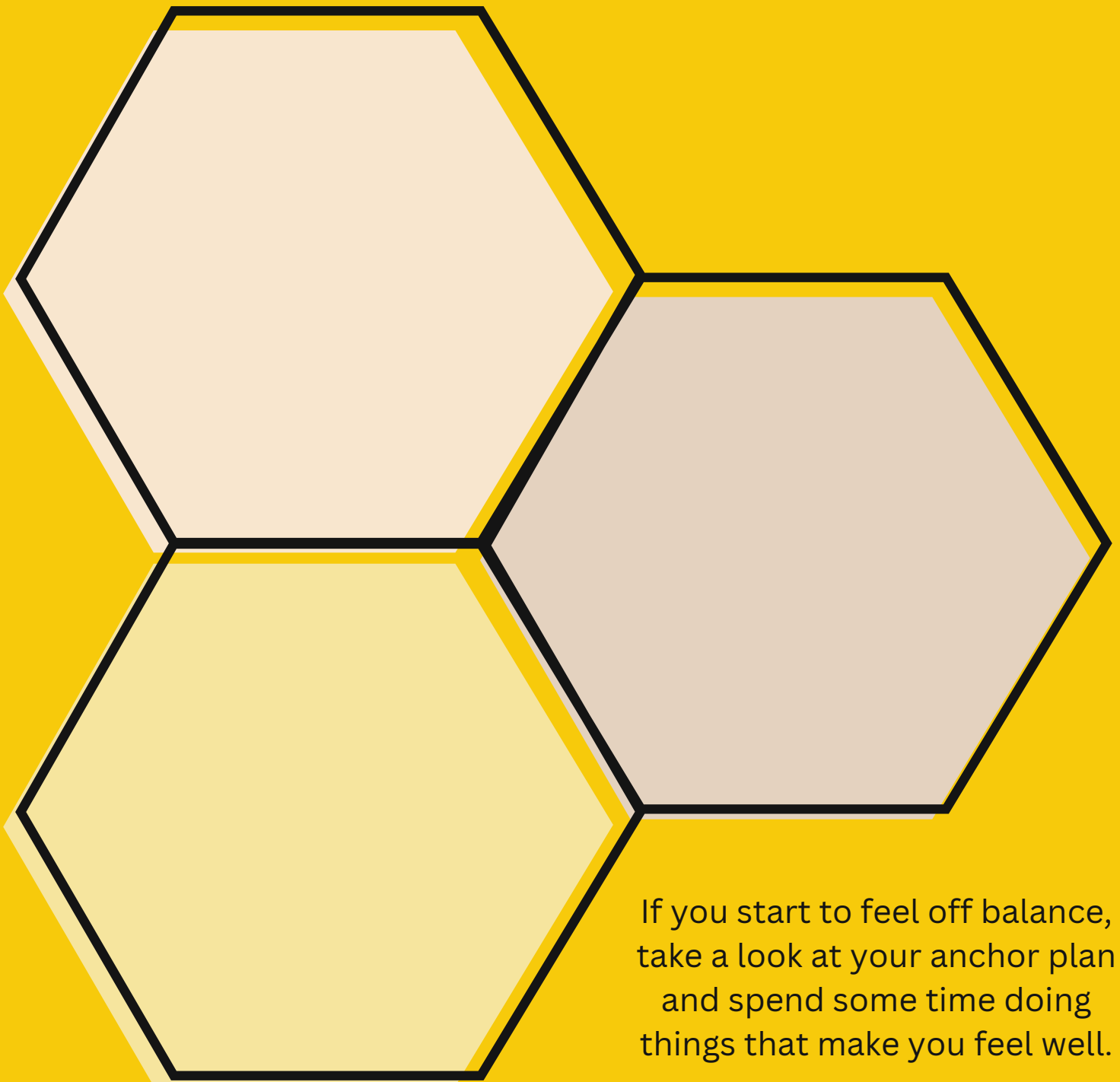
By building an anchor plan at a time when you feel well, you are preparing a fantastic tool to help you when you are feeling stressed or burnt out.



MY ANCHOR PLAN

Complete each of the areas with a selection of:

- ACTIVITIES THAT I LOVE
- PEOPLE THAT MAKE ME HAPPY
- MUSIC THAT BRINGS ME JOY
- PLACES THAT BRING ME PEACE
- ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS




If you start to feel off balance,
take a look at your anchor plan
and spend some time doing
things that make you feel well.



PERSONAL TOOLKIT




TOOL 3: ACCESS FURTHER SUPPORT



Some staff may find they need more bespoke support to help them manage stress, burnout or other conditions. In this case, ask your leadership team if they have invested in any **counselling services** for staff, or reach out to your **GP** to ask what support is available.

Reaching out for support before things get worse can make the situation much easier to manage and help you to maintain a sense of control over your health and wellbeing.



Further Reading and Training Opportunities

Reading:

Initiatives for promoting educator wellbeing: a Delphi study. BMC Psychol. 2024 Apr 22;12(1):220. Access via:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11036615/>

NASUWT, 2019: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/static/uploaded/30c31a30-b070-44f1-8e9f009b650bb350.pdf>

Training:

Well-Being for Educators of Students Affected by Forced Migration: Introduction to Mindfulness. Access here:
<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=3704>

