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Specialist

MASTER CLASS

Social-Emotional Learning & Trauma-Sensitive Practices in English Language Teaching

- with Janine Darragh and Luis Javier Pentón Herrera -

Session 6 Supplementary Guide

Teacher Well-Being and Self-Care



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Summary

In this session, Luis and Janine shed light on the well-being challenges teachers face. Janine describes how secondary trauma, which results from indirect exposure to traumatic events, can affect English language teachers working with people from around the world who may be living in contexts of crisis or who have experienced traumatic events. Luis goes on to describe teacher burnout, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory as a framework. Together, Luis and Janine then present strategies and tools for emotional regulation and self-care that teachers can use to improve their mental health. The session concludes with a discussion of the role that peers and institutions have in supporting teacher well-being.

Session Takeaways

1. Secondary trauma can affect teachers whose students have experienced trauma.
2. Burnout affects teachers' ability to support students effectively.
3. Teachers can support their own well-being through emotional regulation and self-care.
4. Teachers thrive when they receive the support of their peers and institutions.



Glossary

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| access to similar others | Having contact with people who have had similar experiences as one's own and receiving support from them. |
| emotion labor | Efforts expended by teachers and other professionals to regulate their own emotions while also managing others' emotions. Note that the term "emotional" is not used here. |
| mindfulness | A meditation practice in which a person focuses their awareness on what they are feeling to help improve habits and reduce stress. |
| negative self-talk | A person's critical internal dialogue that negatively impacts their mental health. |
| positive self-talk | A person's internal dialogue that makes them feel good about themselves. |
| primary trauma | Trauma experienced personally either as a victim or witness of a traumatic event. |
| secondary or vicarious trauma | The emotional stress that occurs when an individual hears about another person's trauma experience(s). |



Case Study: Signs of Secondary Trauma

The symptoms of secondary trauma vary from person to person. In the following excerpt, Janine describes her own experience of secondary trauma while working with teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya.

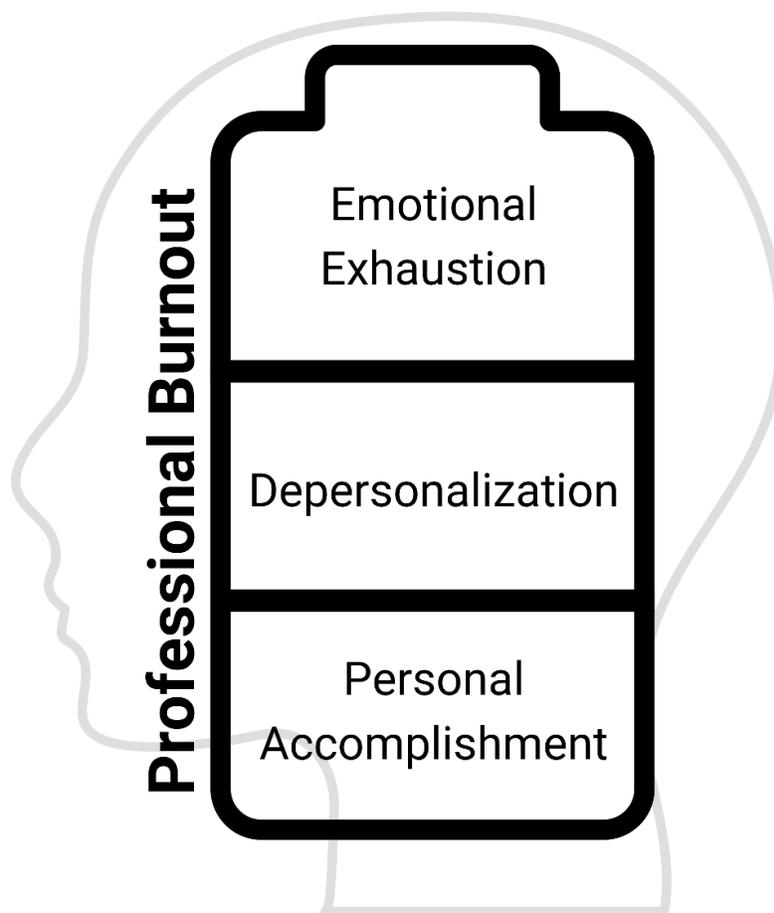
Content warning: The following excerpt refers to an act of violence that may be upsetting to some individuals.

When I was serving as a mobile mentor for teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, one of the teachers had not logged on for some time. This was not unusual as it was the rainy season and electricity to charge phones was generated from solar power. However, I still felt some concern for the teacher. One day I received a message in the group chat from the teacher saying that he was in hiding and fearful for his life. Someone had come into his family's tent and performed acts of violence against his daughter. He had fought back, and now was in hiding. He was worried about the safety of his family and himself. He was reaching out to the group for help. While I personally did not experience that horrific situation, it impacted me profoundly. I didn't realize it at the time, but I was exhibiting signs of secondary trauma. **I couldn't sleep**, and when I did, I had **nightmares** connected to the story that was shared with me. I became **impatient with others who shared their personal stresses** with me. I would think things like, "How can you complain about that when people have real life-threatening problems?" I felt **guilty** that I was safe, and I **didn't feel like engaging** in social activities with friends.



The Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981)

In the [Maslach Burnout Inventory](#) (MBI), Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson identify three dimensions to assess individuals' burnout levels: (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) depersonalization, and (3) personal accomplishment.



More resources on burnout:

- [Watch a video lecture](#) of Christina Maslach explaining her work.
- [Take a self-assessment](#) to determine your level of burnout. For a full, validated assessment using the MBI, you may purchase a copy [at this site](#).



Self-Assessment Tools for Teacher Well-Being

The wellness wheel presented in this session is just one of many tools for teachers to reflect on their well-being and initiate self-care. Peruse the list below for additional resources.

[The Wellness Wheel](#), Yale School of Medicine



Intellectual Wellness
The ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group interaction and community betterment.



Financial Wellness
The ability to identify your relationship with money and skills in managing resources. An intricate balance of the mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of money.



Emotional Wellness
The ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring.



Spiritual Wellness
The ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives.



Occupational Wellness
The ability to get personal fulfillment from our jobs or chosen career fields while still maintaining balance in our lives.



Physical Wellness
The ability to maintain a healthy quality of life without undue fatigue or physical stress.



Environmental Wellness
The ability to recognize our own responsibility for the quality of the environment that surrounds us.



Social Wellness
The ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world.

[Wellness Wheel Assessment](#), University of New Hampshire: Learn more about the eight dimensions of wellness and take the [wellness wheel assessment](#) to get personalized information about your well-being.

[UMatter Wellness Self-Assessment](#), Princeton University: Read about each dimension of the wellness wheel and take the [online self-assessment \(PDF version\)](#) to assess your personal wellness.

[The 8 Dimensions of Wellness](#), J. Flowers Health Institute: Learn about the eight dimensions of wellness and use the [wellness wheel worksheet](#) to reflect on your personal wellness.



Teacher Well-Being Resources

General Resources:

- [List of Well-Being Resources](#): Check out this list of resources by Specialist Heather Van Fleet that promote teacher well-being, from articles to apps.
- [Self Care Guide for Teachers](#): Download the guide for ideas on how to destress.
- [Destress Monday](#): Select from a menu of activities to help teachers destress.

Mindfulness & Meditation:

- [Luis's Mindfulness Exercise](#): Try the 'pause and breathe' exercise Luis demonstrates in the session video.
- [20 Guided Meditations for Teachers](#): Browse the videos and select a guided meditation that works for you.

Other:

- [Overcoming Negative Self-Talk](#): Read more about negative self-talk and ways to avoid it.
- [Preventing Compassion Fatigue](#): Learn about compassion fatigue and strategies to overcome it.

For Further Reading

Darragh, Janine J. & Gina Mikel Petrie. "I feel like I'm teaching in a landmine: Teaching in the context of political trauma." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 80 (2019): 180-189.

https://www.academia.edu/38368354/I_feel_like_Im_teaching_in_a_landmine_pdf

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Between the Toe and the Heel: Jobs and Emotional Labor." In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 137-161. University of California Press, 1983.

<https://caringlabor.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/the-managed-heart-arlie-russell-hochschild.pdf>

"Teacher Wellbeing: Key Findings from a Landscape Review." Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies / Education Equity Research Initiative, August 8, 2019.

<https://inee.org/resources/teacher-wellbeing-key-findings-landscape-review>

See [Course Bibliography](#) for additional sources related to this session.