

Over 90% of elementary and middle school teachers have a problem that impacts effectiveness:

I wrote this before COVID 19. Can you imagine what the statistics might be like now!

The University of Missouri researchers discovered that 94% of middle school teachers experience high levels of stress. Earlier studies focused on elementary teachers and found that 93% were highly stressed. There is every reason to believe that when high school teachers are studied, that the results will be similar. University educators were not studied throughout most research on this because it was long believed that they didn't have stress in their profession. Ummmm I'll just leave that there... 😊

There are several critical reasons why this must be addressed:

1. Faculty stress is contagious to students, impacting student outcomes. Students in classrooms with highly stressed students were shown to have lower grades.
2. Faculty stress leads to burnout and then attrition. Schools invest greatly in recruiting and training new teachers but lose them at high rates. Addressing stress could provide a better return on that investment.
3. Behavior and classroom management problems can occur. High stress impacts emotional regulation which can lead to behavior problems. Students in classrooms with highly stressed teachers had more behavioral problems.

These researchers found that only 7% of elementary teachers felt that they were getting the support they needed to cope with their on-the-job stress. Increasingly, educators have become aware of the need for trauma-sensitive classrooms and for students to have instruction in social-emotional skills. It is becoming clear, however, that we must also address faculty stress and intervene for better outcomes.

While some practices that teachers learn to help their students address stress can be beneficial for themselves as well, strategies that are applicable to teachers specifically are also important. Professional development for faculty should address not only classroom practices, but also wellness practices for the teachers themselves. We need to look at school-wide interventions and practices to create a healthy and effective environment for all.

For more information check out previous blogs. For information on a presentation to address faculty wellness click here (June link to new talk for faculty such as giving in Houston. If we don't have one I need to write one). For a presentation addressing the creation of a trauma-sensitive classroom click here.