

Prevent Burnout During Student Teaching

It's news to exactly no one that being an educator is stressful. Educators spend long hours in an environment churning with mental, visual, and emotional stimulation. And when the end of the school day finally arrives, there is still more to do. This can lead to burnout—when an educator has exhausted the personal and professional resources needed to do the job.

Aspiring educators are certainly not immune to this. At times, they may feel overwhelmed and overworked from balancing exams, schoolwork, student teaching, and life in general. But you can learn to reduce stress and avoid burnout now—and when you enter the classroom.

Fully understand what people are asking of you.

Always ask questions when someone says, “Can you do this?” Make sure you understand the request, so you don't commit to something that is out of your wheelhouse. By knowing the process and time commitment in advance, you'll be able to make an informed decision as to whether you can handle the obligation. For starters, ask these questions:

- What would this involve?
- What kind of meetings would be needed?
- How much time do you expect this to take?

Set boundaries and stick to them.

Working long hours during the week and on weekends often come with the teaching territory and can quickly get out of hand. To prevent this, set boundaries around when you will stop working every night and the hours you will work on weekends.

Be sure to focus on yourself.

Taking care of your body and mind will help you perform at your best. That means sleeping enough and drinking plenty of water. If you feel sick, there is no shame in taking a day off. As we all know from living with COVID-19, by staying home, you are protecting your students and colleagues from getting sick as well.

Stay connected to others.

When the going gets tough, it's critical to stay connected to family and friends. Schedule a phone conversation, video chat, or marathon texting session



with a loved one or favorite friend at least once a week. Make sure you talk at a time when your tank is full, so it's a positive experience.

Show yourself grace and compassion.

Forgive yourself for anything that didn't go well and move on. It's a bonus if you can identify one good aspect of your day upon reflection. Educators regularly teach students coping strategies for handling difficult emotions. It's time educators embrace them, too.

Learn how to say no.

You can't do everything. So when you decide to say no, be respectful and clear. Here's how:

- Thank the person for thinking of you. Tell them you appreciate being considered, but you already have enough on your plate at the moment.
- If you're genuinely interested in the request but know you don't have the capacity, ask them to think of you the next time around.
- Even though you may want to do it all, saying yes to everything can hurt your career. Sometimes the best thing you can do for your students is saying no to things that won't serve them.

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