



**Educator
Mental Health:
It's Okay Not
To Be Okay.**

Active Minds

The leading non-profit in the United States working to change the culture around mental health.

Powered by a network at more than **1,000 schools, workplaces, and communities**, and through a widespread social audience.

Inspiring mental health advocates dedicated to **preventing suicide and saving lives.**

Empowering all of us to **change the conversation about mental health.**



NEA Health and Safety Program

- Focuses on health and safety in schools overall, including:
 - Environmental and Occupational Health – Heat, Indoor Air Quality, CPR Trainings
 - School Safety – Gun Violence, Violence Prevention
 - Mental Health Promotion, Social Media and Youth Mental Health, Educator Mental Health



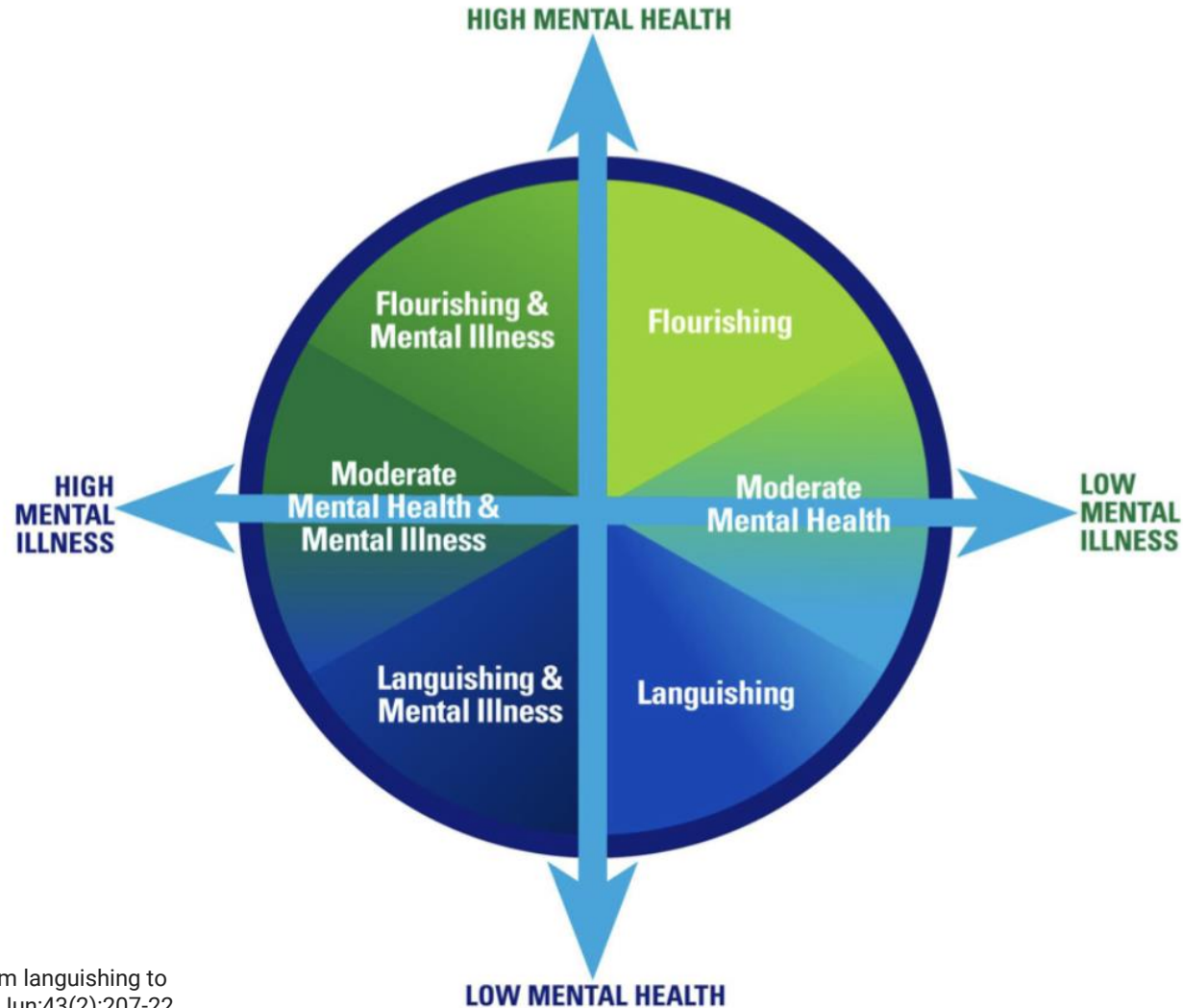


We all have mental health.

And it's as important as our physical health.



Defining Mental Health



Keyes CL. The mental health continuum: from languishing to flourishing in life. J Health Soc Behav. 2002 Jun;43(2):207-22.

What can impact our overall productivity and wellbeing?

Diagnoses: conditions we live with

- Physical and mental health conditions

Trauma: what has happened to us in the past and present

- Violence, childhood trauma, divorce, loss, etc.

Circumstances: things happening in our lives

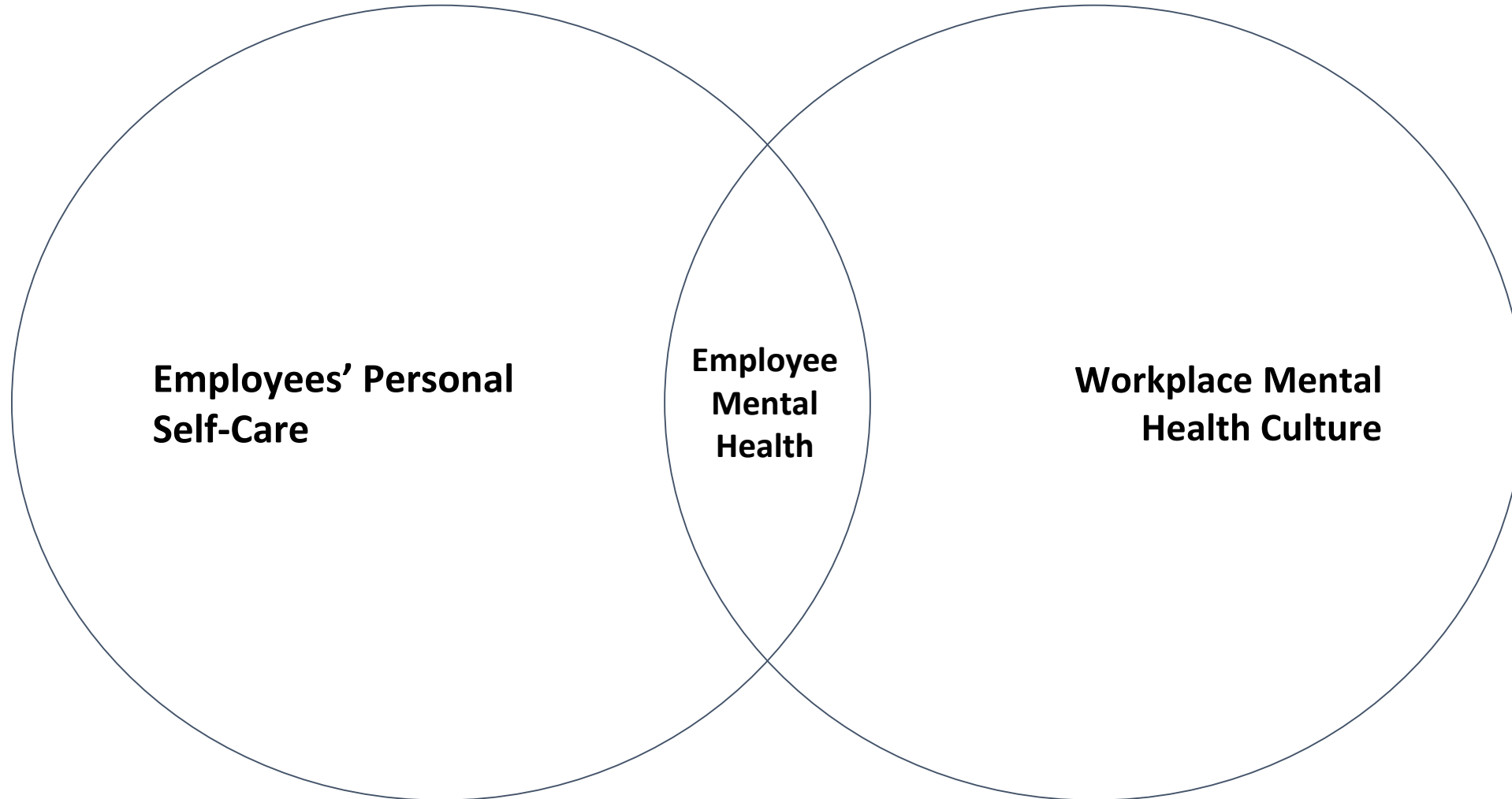
- My car was broken into last night, my grandmother is ill, my child kept me awake all night, extraordinary events, etc.

Environment: our workplace and culture

- Institutionalized oppression, discrimination or stigma, positive or negative culture, relationships with peers, physical space



Components of Responsibility for Mental Health at Work



What is a Mentally Healthy Work Culture?

- **Defining “health” and “sick time” broadly**
 - What if it was called a “personal health day” rather than “sick time”. The language we use impacts how we think about an issue. Consider that shift in mindset.
- **Modeling positive language, messaging, and behavior**
 - Regarding language, be cautious about the language that is used around the office that stigmatizes mental health. We talk about people-first language. Not using mental health as an adjective.



What is a Mentally Healthy Work Culture?

Allowing for employees to be honest about how they are feeling, but not obligated

Make check-ins during one on one meeting or staff meetings a norm. Make sure those who work for you know you are safe person to be honest with if needed. However, make sure employees do not feel obligated to share things they are uncomfortable sharing.



How to Identify a Healthy Work Culture?

Doing our part during the interview process...

How does your workplace handle workplace stress and burnout?

- Ask about policies or practices in place to mitigate stress and prevent burnout among employees.

Is there a policy on flexible work arrangements or remote work options?

- Flexible work arrangements can contribute to a healthier work-life balance.

How does your workplace promote work-life balance?

- This question can reveal whether the company values and supports employees' well-being outside of work.

What mental health resources and programs are available to employees?

- Inquire about the specific resources the company provides to help employees manage stress, mental health challenges, or personal issues.

Can you describe your workplace's approach to employee wellness?

- This question can help you understand if the institution actively invests in employee wellness programs and initiatives.

Understanding Educator Burnout

- **Definition of Burnout:** Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. In the context of education, it occurs when the demands of teaching exceed the resources available to cope with those demands.
- **Why Burnout Shows Up in Education:**
 - **High Workload:** Educators often face heavy workloads, including lesson planning, grading, administrative tasks, and extracurricular responsibilities.
 - **Emotional Demands:** Educators frequently deal with challenging student behaviors, parental expectations, and societal pressures, leading to emotional strain.
 - **Lack of Resources:** Insufficient support, resources, and professional development opportunities can contribute to feelings of frustration and burnout.



Signs and Effects of Educator Burnout

- **Signs of Burnout:**

- **Chronic Fatigue:** Feeling constantly tired and lacking energy, even after rest.
- **Emotional Exhaustion:** Feeling emotionally drained, detached, or cynical about teaching.
- **Reduced Performance:** Decline in effectiveness, motivation, and satisfaction in teaching.



Signs and Effects of Educator Burnout

- **Effects on Work:**
 - **Decreased Student Engagement:** Burnout can impact educators' ability to effectively engage and motivate students.



- **Higher Turnover Rates:** Burnout often leads to educators leaving the profession prematurely, affecting continuity and stability in schools.
- **Negative School Culture:** Burnout can contribute to a negative school environment, impacting morale and collaboration among staff.

Preventive Measures

Self-Care Practices:

- Prioritize self-care activities and schedule them in your calendar

Work-Life Balance:

- Create boundaries between work and personal life to prevent overwork and burnout. Share them with your coach and or supervisor.

Support Systems:

- Take advantage of resources, mentorship programs, and opportunities for professional development and collaboration with your network and school.

Mental Health Support:

- Offering access to counseling services, mental health resources, and workshops to build resilience and coping strategies.

Self Reflection



Questions to ask yourself:

1. **Current Stressors:** What are the main sources of stress and pressure in your role?
2. **Signs of Burnout:** Do you recognize any signs of burnout in yourself, such as fatigue, cynicism, or reduced motivation?
3. **Coping Strategies:** What strategies do you currently use to cope with stress and prevent burnout?
4. **Self-Care Practices:** How do you prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance? **Create a self-care action plan.**
5. **Support Systems:** What support systems and resources do you have in place to help you navigate challenges and maintain well-being? When will you active that system?

Bargaining and Advocating for Mental Health

- **Union Health Benefits Committees**
 - Member leaders focusing on health benefits, including mental health
 - Can survey members about mental health coverage and gauge member satisfaction
 - Review mental health claims data and behavioral health service utilization to prepare for bargaining and joint labor-management committee (JLMC) discussions

Bargaining and Advocating for Mental Health

- **Healthcare benefits focused JLMC:**
 - Allows labor and management an opportunity to discuss employees' benefits needs, including mental health, and promotes the transparency of benefits needs
 - Can hear from consultants and health plan representatives on a regular basis to discuss plan issues and options, separate from bargaining
 - Can and should ask health plan representatives and consultants about their roles, their compensation, and why they recommend specific plans
 - Should also ensure that the employer provides information on projected cost increases available to the JLMC

Bargaining and Advocating for Mental Health

- When reviewing mental health benefits, ensure there is robust coverage of mental health services by analyzing the following:
 - Network coverage;
 - Type of health plan coverage;
 - Waiting periods;
 - Out-of-pocket expenses;
 - Employee Assistance Programs;
 - Wellness programs;
 - Telehealth services;
 - Prescription medications;
 - Mental health parity;
 - Paid medical leave;
 - Non-Discrimination protections; and
 - Privacy

NEA Member Benefits: AbleTo

- AbleTo is a NO COST mental health program provided to NEA members
- Manage mental health with evidence backed tools for stress, anxiety, depression, and other concerns
- This includes Coaching and Therapy services, available through your insurance provider:
 - Members will be responsible for copays and deductibles, but insurance will cover the rest!



Self-Care & Support

- Expand our idea of mental health
- Proactively engage with wellness practices and resources
- Model positive language, messaging, and behavior
- Show up for ourselves and those around us in safe and healthy ways





Pre-submitted Question and Answer

Resources

- NEA Bargaining and Advocacy for Mental Health:
<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/bargaining-and-advocacy-tactics-support-educators-mental-health>
- NEA Health and Safety Program:
<https://www.nea.org/healthy-schools>
- NEA Student and Educator Mental Health:
<https://www.nea.org/student-success/great-public-schools/student-educator-mental-health>
- NEA Member Benefits AbleTo Program:
<https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-mental-health-program>
- Active Minds:
<https://www.activeminds.org/>

Our experiences are
unique AND universal.

We're in this together.



active minds





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