

TeachingEnglish

Empowering Teachers: Well-Being and Resilience in EFL Contexts

Elsie Enanga

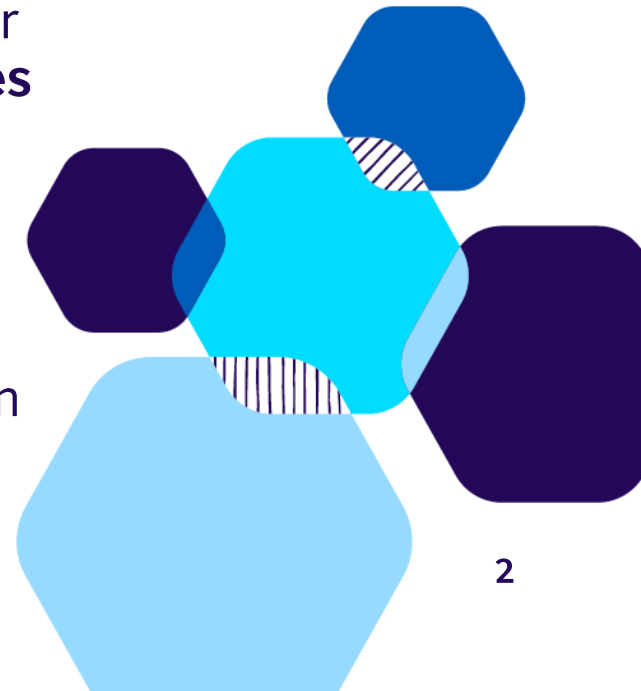
Saturday 6 September 2025

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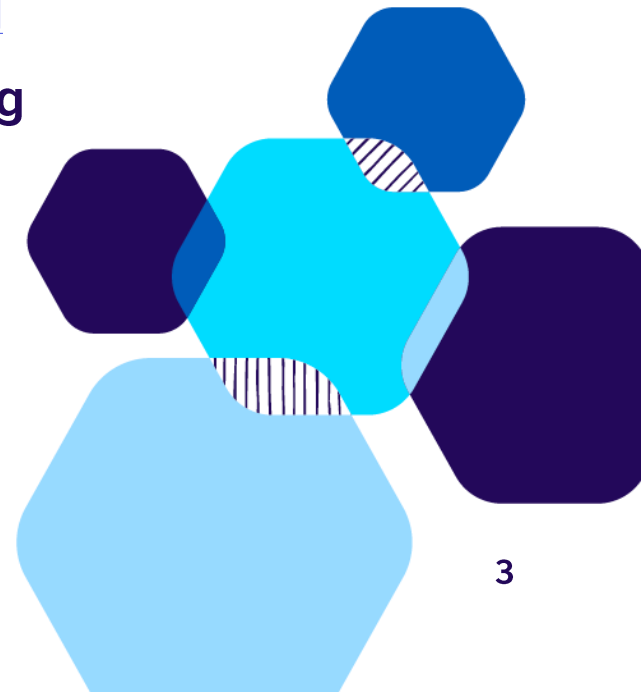
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Pre-webinar polls in Telegram discussion group

1/ What causes you most stress as a teacher?:

- a) Student behaviour **47%**
- b) Meeting deadlines / goals / targets **17%**
- c) Lack of resources **27%**
- d) Workload / admin **10%**

2/ What do you do to maintain your own wellbeing?:

- a) Exercise **55%**
- b) Hobbies **14%**
- c) Socialising **23%**
- d) Nothing **9%**

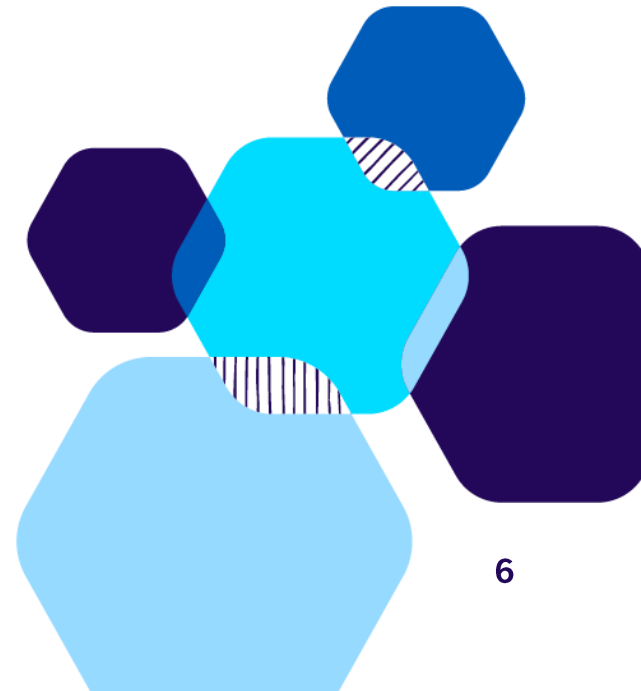
About the speaker

Elsie Enanga, is a passionate advocate for teacher well-being and innovative technology in education. She contributed to the British Council English Connects CPD video series supporting EFL teachers. Her work is particularly focused on low-resource contexts, demonstrating a commitment to accessible, quality education for all.



Our Objectives:

- To define and discuss well-being and resilience and see how important they are for EFL teachers
- To provide case-studies and practical solutions and strategies
- To discuss characteristics and pitfalls of teacher burnout and other stressors / challenges



Introduction

How are you doing? How are you feeling?

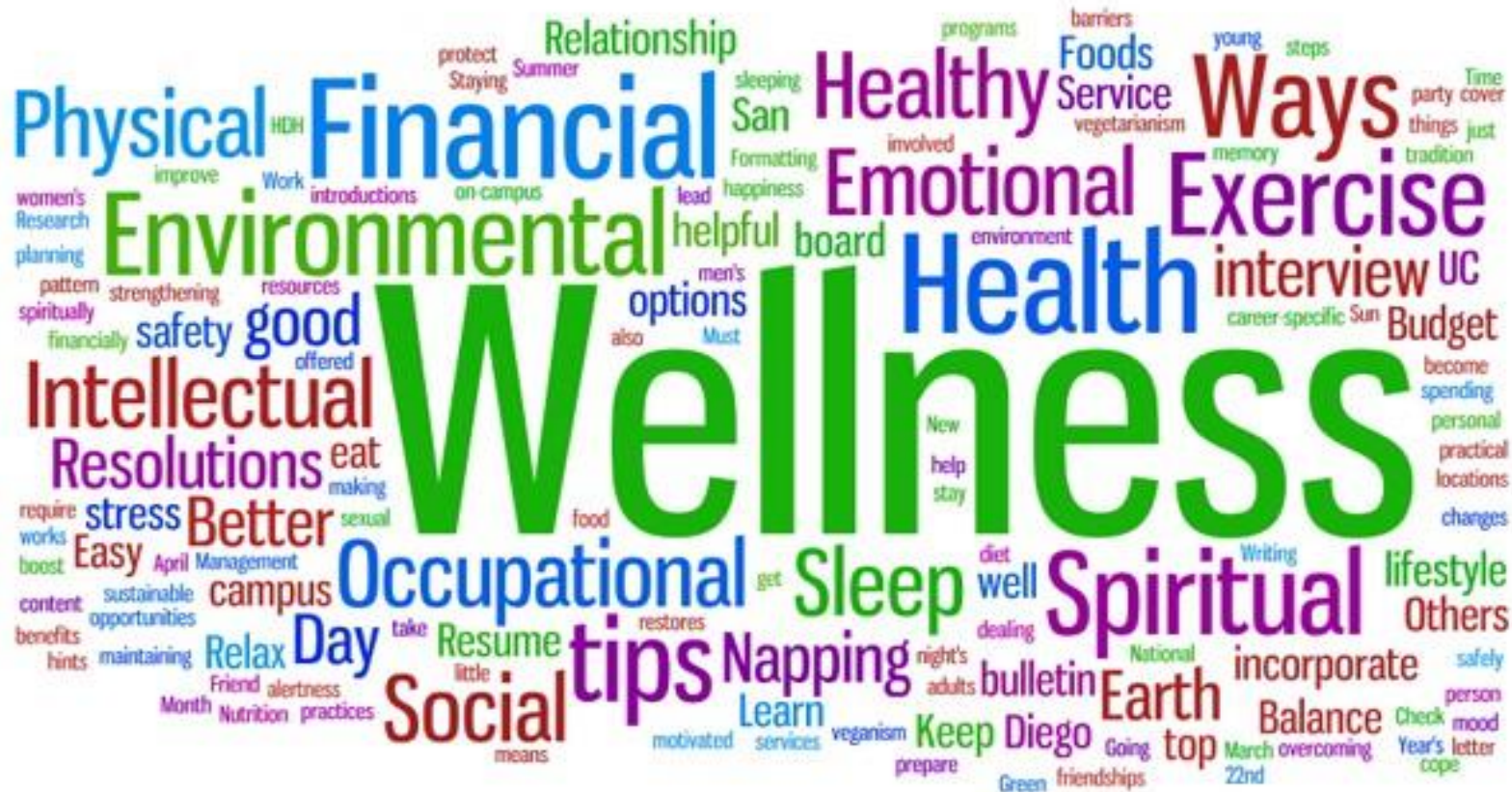
Answer in the chat

Hello, how are you doing? We believe you are alright.



Hello , yes, we have the victory!

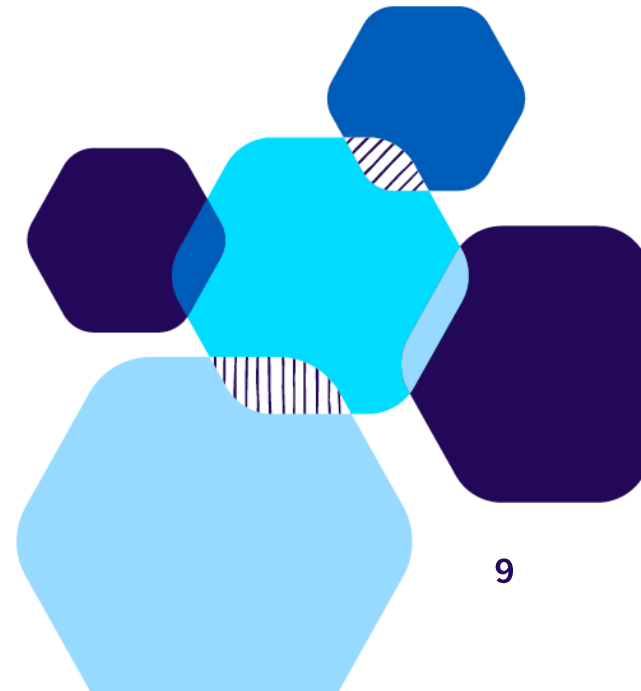
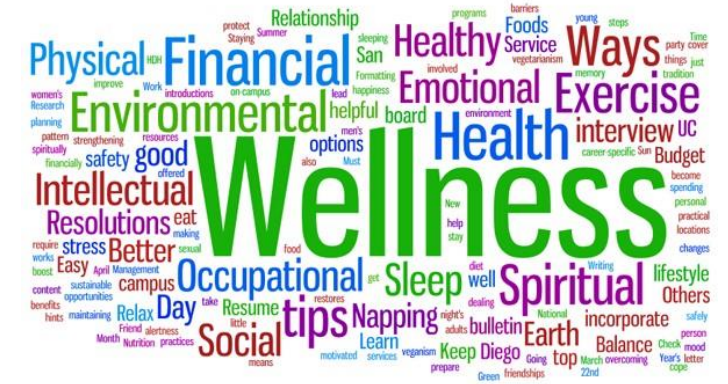
Why has well-being for teachers become so important in recent years?



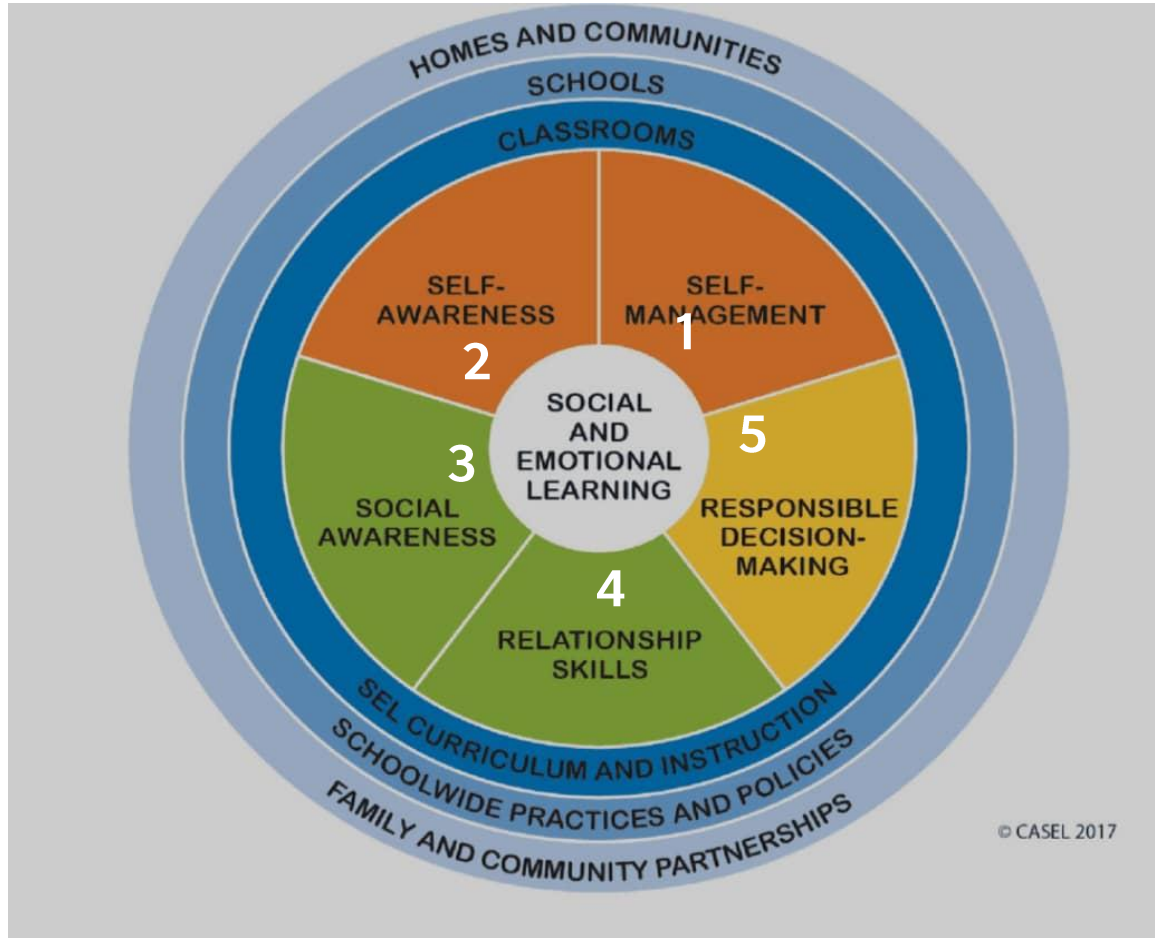
Answer in the chat

Why has well-being become so important recently?

1. Global recognition of the importance of education and holistic role of educators
2. High rates of teacher burnout and leaving the profession
3. (Scientific) research on the impact of teacher well-being
4. Global teacher shortages
5. Advances in mental health awareness
6. Teacher strikes and advocacy movements
7. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic



CASEL Model for adult social emotional learning.(SEL)



Adult SEL as defined by CASEL (Collaborative Academic Social Emotional Learning): how adults develop and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals. SEL is about fostering personal and collective well-being, creative positive relationships and making responsible decisions.

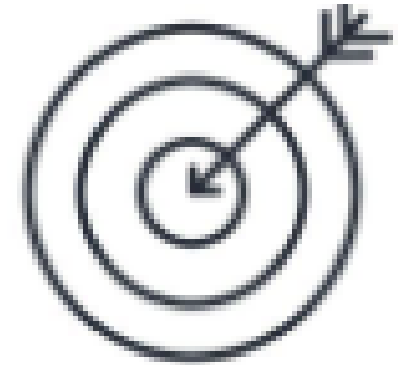
What is well-being?

Definitions:

1. 'the state of being comfortable and happy' OED
2. 'how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole' (New Economics Foundation - 2012)
3. 'the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the ability to manage stress'. (Psychology Today)

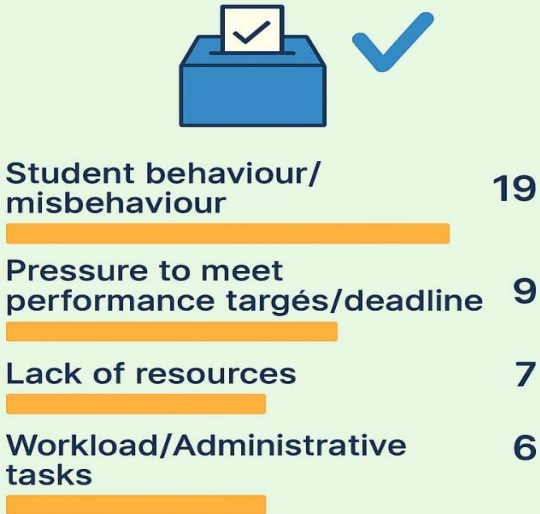
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/blogs/what-well-being-how-can-we-measure-it-and-how-can-we-support-people-improve-it>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-for-happiness/201901/what-is-well-being-definition-types-and-well-being-skills>

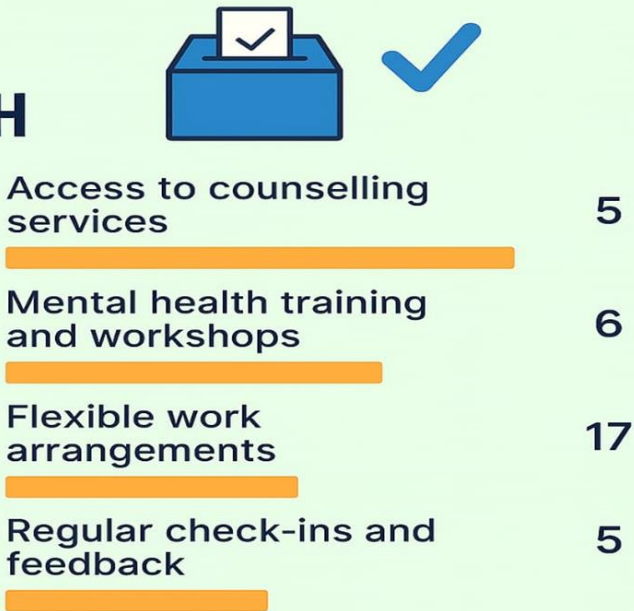


What do some educators say about well being?

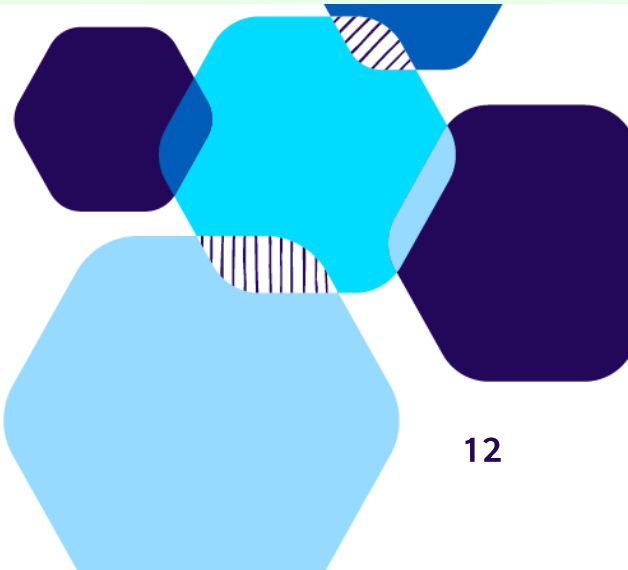
TEACHER STRESSORS POLL RESULTS



SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH POLL RESULTS



SELF-CARE POLL RESULTS



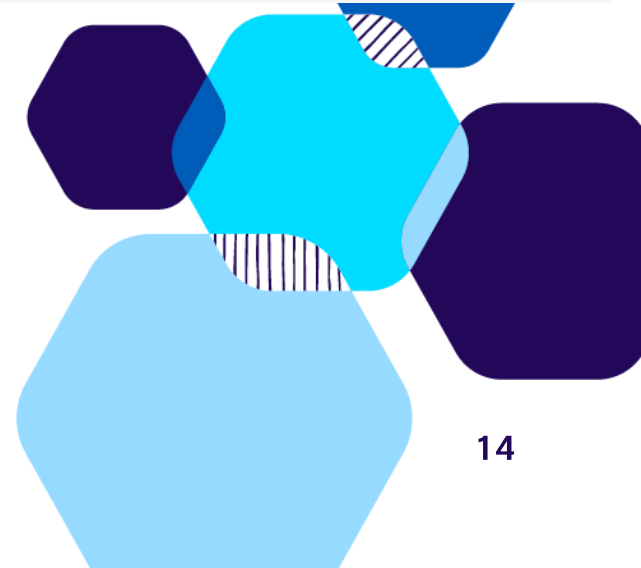
Characteristics of teacher burnout

- Chronic exhaustion
- Lack of motivation
- Emotional detachment
- Irritability and mood swings
- Decreased performance
- Physical ailments
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Absenteeism
- Feeling ineffective and unappreciated
- Withdrawal from colleagues
- Neglecting self-care



Educator resilience – true or false?

1. Educators who practice daily mindfulness and regular exercise are more likely to sustain their well-being under pressure.
2. Viewing classroom setbacks as opportunities to learn demonstrates a growth mindset in teaching.
3. Working in isolation without peer support fosters stronger resilience than collaborating with colleagues and mentors.
4. Anchoring everyday lessons to a deeper sense of purpose has little impact on a teacher's long-term motivation.



Building resilient lives as EFL educators

Five Pillars of Resilience

1. **Self-Awareness:** Conscious knowledge of your own personality.
2. **Mindfulness:** The ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us.
3. **Self-Care:** The practice of taking action to maintain or improve our health.
4. **Positive Relationships:** Those people in our lives who support and care for us and we care for them.
5. **Purpose:** Helps us shape our mindset and attitude toward others and toward our experiences.



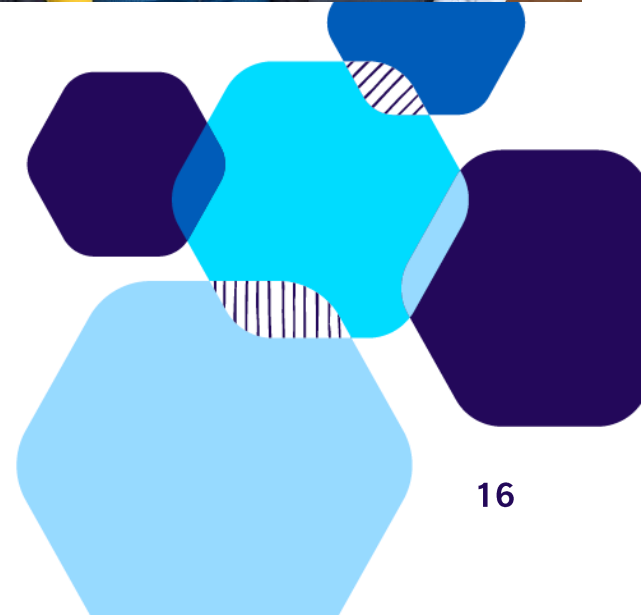
Developing Resilience

- Develop self-care (physical and mental).
- Also develop a growth mindset: the conviction that abilities can be developed through dedication and learning.

Building a resilient life means:

- Learning to adapt to adversity.
- Learning to cope and offset factors that increase risk of mental health conditions.
- Resilience does not mean all problems will go away, it offers ability to see beyond the pressing situation.

<https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Web/sites/c>



Tips and benefits of maintaining resilience

Know your strengths and weaknesses

Competency, satisfaction, responsiveness

Find motivation from success stories

Emotional intelligence and empathy

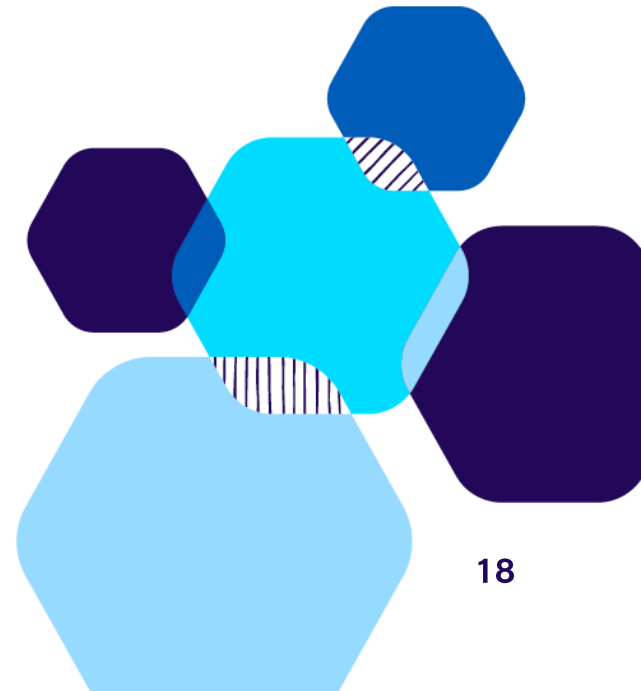
Self-care is cardinal

Effectiveness and efficacy



What is resilience for educators? True or false?

1. Resilience for educators is the capacity to adapt, persist, and thrive amid the unique challenges and demands of teaching.
2. It goes beyond mere endurance, inviting teachers to maintain their well-being and discover genuine joy in their work.
3. By fostering resilience, educators not only safeguard their own health but also create a more positive, supportive environment for their students. This dual benefit underscores why resilience is essential for sustaining a fulfilling teaching career.



So when we know it's not good, what can we do to help improve teacher well-being?

- a. Self-help?
- b. As individuals / with colleagues?
- c. In schools?
- d. Unions?
- e. Teacher Associations?
- f. Schedule downtime?
- g. Professional counseling?



Research by Sarah Mercer

If teachers are happy and satisfied, then they teach to the best of their ability.



<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/world-teachers-day/2020/teacher-wellbeing>

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Some activities to try out:

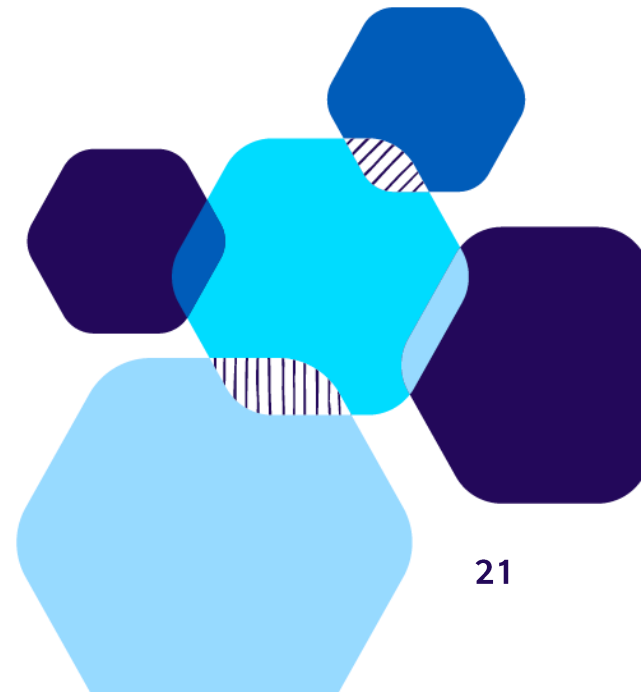
Teacher self-care: ABC

Accept what
you cannot
change

Balance the
personal
and the
professional

Connect
with others
and care
for relationship
s

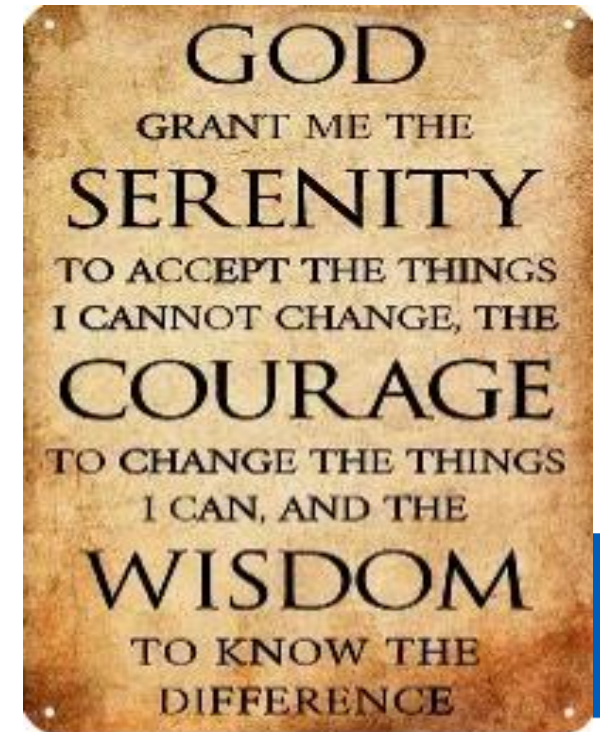
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/world-teachers-day/2020/teacher-wellbeing>



Tips for improving our well-being

- a. Physical activity (sport? running?)
- b. Mental / spiritual activity (meditation?)
- c. Count to 10
- d. Breathing exercises
- e. Get mentoring / coaching
- f. Establish clear boundaries / say 'no'
- g. Prioritise
- h. Get a support network
- i. Improve time management
- j. Develop hobbies / interests outside work
- k. Maintain a positive / growth mind-set
- l. Develop good eating / sleeping habits

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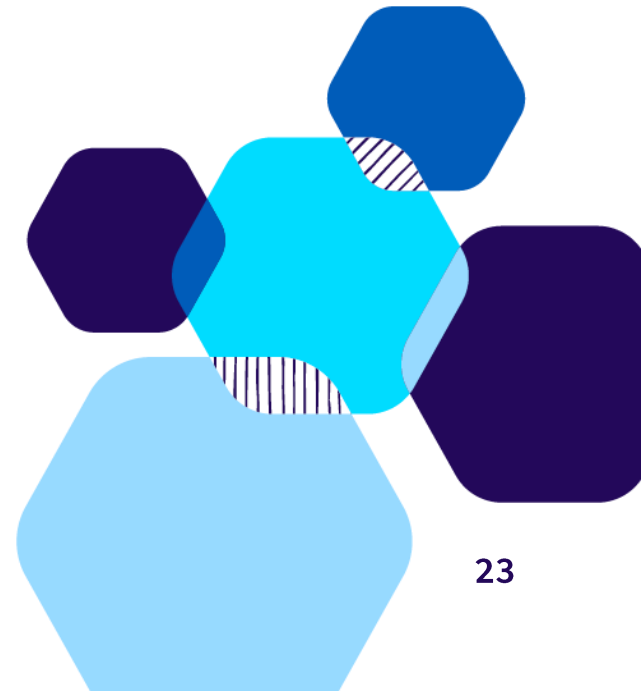


Which do you
already do?
Which will you try?

Snippets on well-being

- Learn to satisfice: satisfy + suffice = satisfice – learn to do enough but not be a perfectionist
- Be physically active
- Learn new skills as it raises self-esteem. Stop, reflect and feel proud about your achievements.
- Give to others. Engage in small acts of kindness and volunteer.
- Collaborate with others and learn from others.
- Pay attention to the present moment. Be aware of what is happening at present, your feelings and the world around you.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teachers/understanding-my-professional-identity>



*Caring for myself is not
self-indulgence, it is
self preservation.*

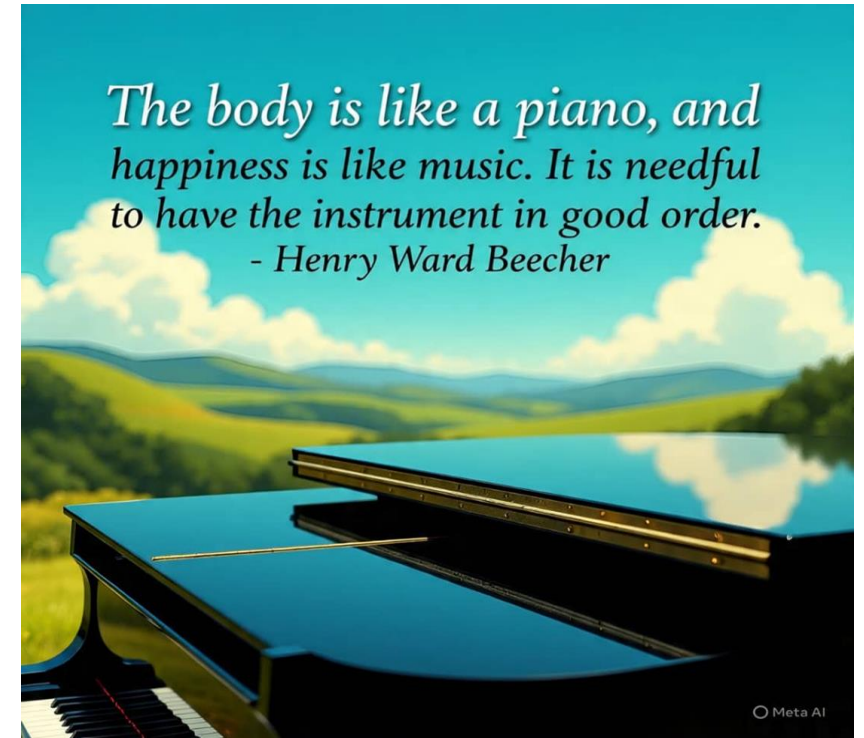
Audre Lorde

*We do not need to feel
guilty or selfish about
self-care. Teacher self-
care should be done with
a clear conscience.*

Sarah Mercer

*The body is like a piano, and
happiness is like music. It is needful
to have the instrument in good order.*

- Henry Ward Beecher



<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/world-teachers-day/2020/teacher-wellbeing>

Our wellbeing experience:

- Ask for help when things get tough, ask for consideration and extension of deadlines where possible.
- Personal and spiritual retreats to break off the cycle of work.
- Purposeful pursuit of kindness, making peace with others, spend quality family time for bonding, playing wellbeing games.
- Get the learners to lead and carry out classroom activities themselves instead of the teacher.
- Delegate – don't try to do everything yourself!
- Don't be afraid of failure – we become more resilient!



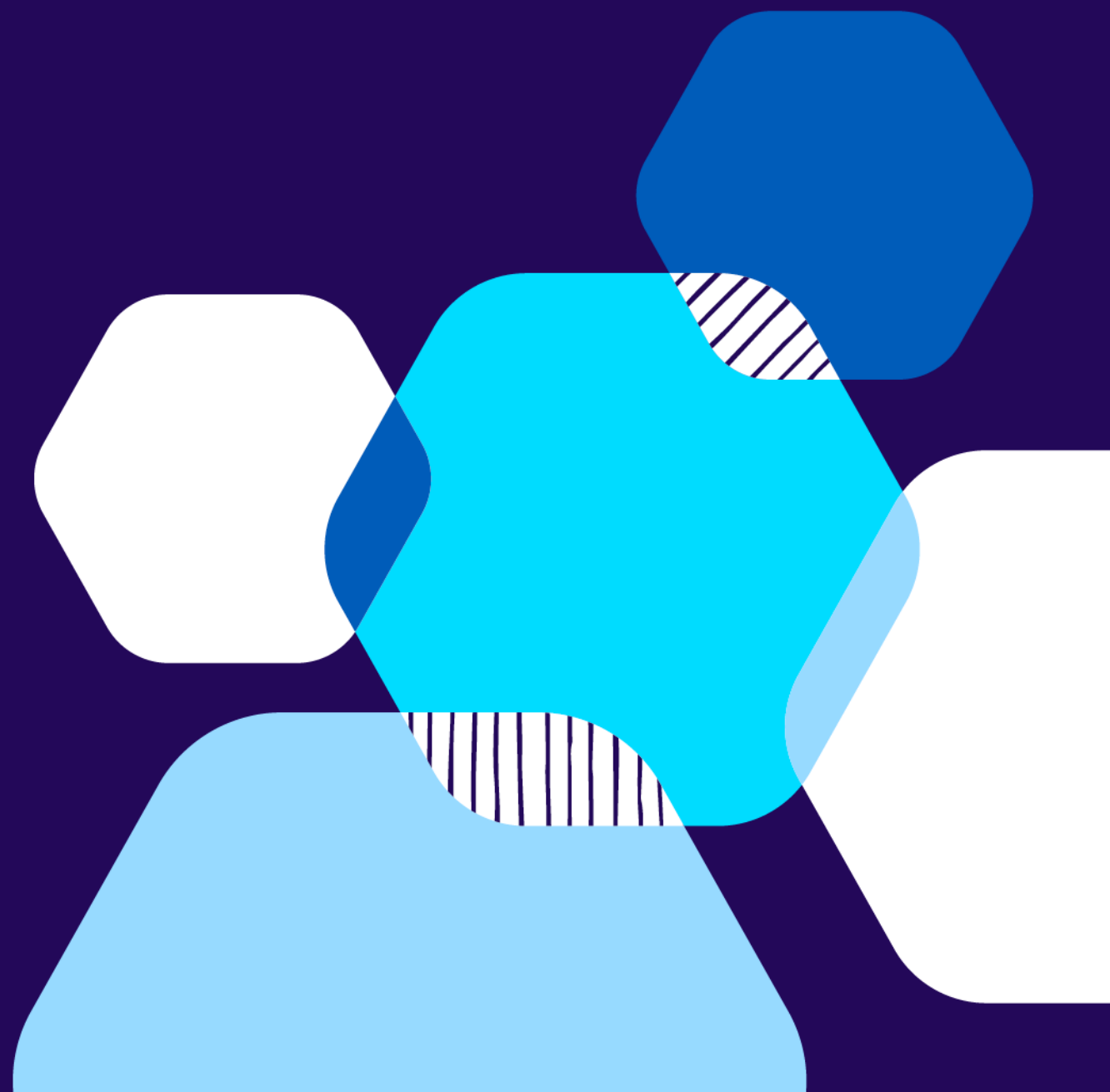
Our tips – try out before our Telegram discussion on Friday:

- Take regular short naps during free time or during breaks.
- Have off-screen time. Be intentional and plan ahead.
- Drink lots of water. You are what you eat.
- Avoid anger ‘Avoid loud and aggressive people, they are a vexation to the soul.’ (Desiderata)
- Rest and sleep is important!
- Never forget to take a deep breath and smile no matter the situation.



Thank you

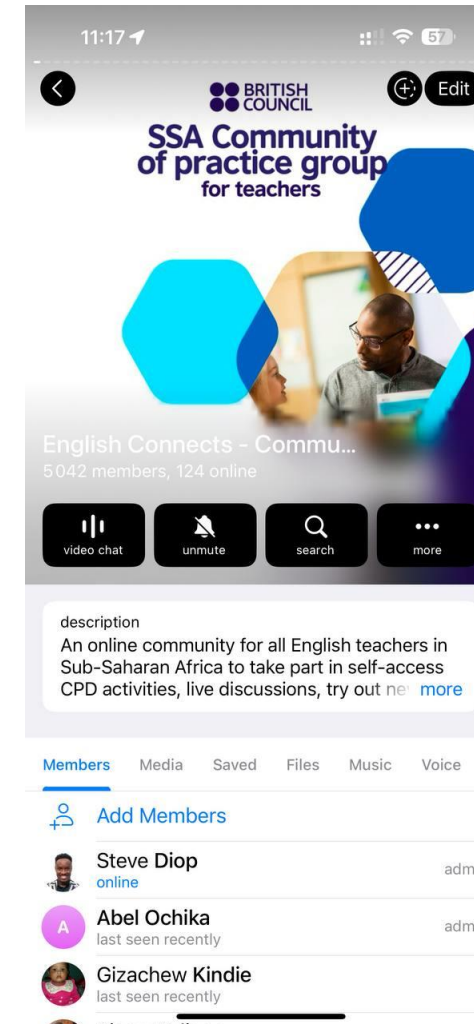
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18:00 Pretoria
19:00 Kampala
19:00 Addis

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