

Keeping Your Battery Charged When Powering Down is not an Option



BACK TO SCHOOL 2022



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Presenter



Associate Professor of Special Education

Department of Teacher &
Special Education

Central Michigan University

Who is in
the
audience
today?

Please let me know if you are a:

- Teacher
- Other service provider (e.g., mental health, social work, speech-language provider)
- Building level administrator
- District level administrator
- Higher education faculty/staff
- Community partner
- Who have I missed?

What brings you here today?

In other words, what do you hope to learn or accomplish as a result of participating in this session?

Survey URL

<https://forms.gle/iBHx5vVJ1nrStBRr6>



Intended Purpose of this Session

Phrases an educator often hears:

- *Take a mental health day.*
- *Recharge over the break (or summer).*
- *Set better boundaries!*
- *Put yourself first! You can't pour from an empty cup.*
- *Quit your job and make more money elsewhere.*

However, these aren't so easily done when you are in position to take time off or walk away (can't "power down").

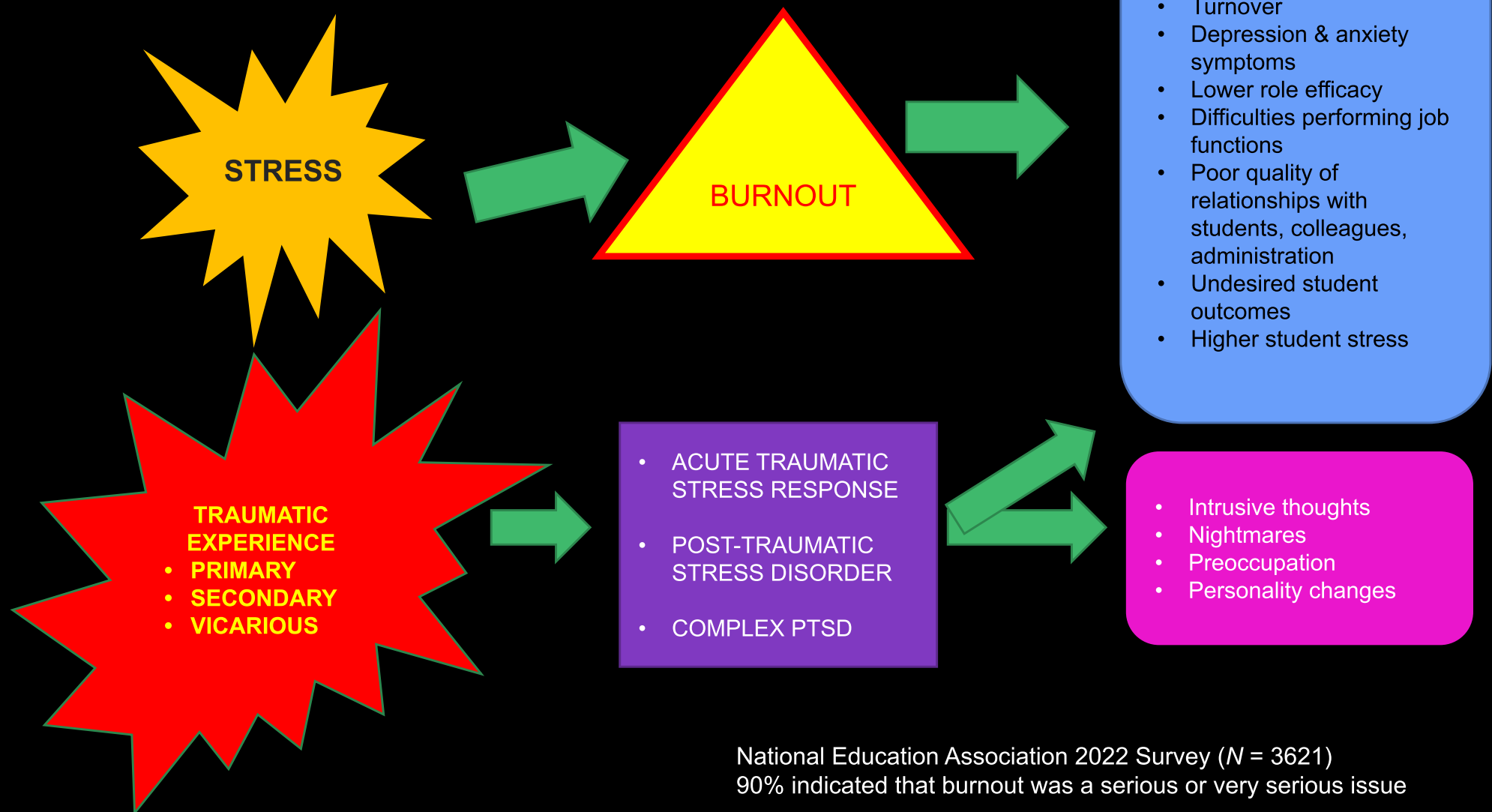
How do we manage the demands on our energy without completely shutting down?

We will briefly discuss how various levels of the field influence educators' wellbeing or capacity to perform

- Please take what resonates and consider what you can do to address these concerns and how this relates to your role.
- Share with others you supervise, mentor, collaborate, etc.

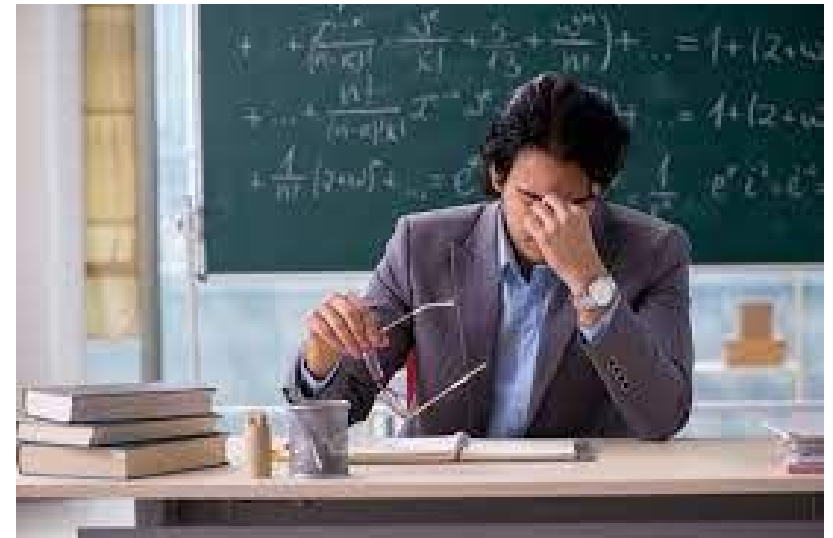
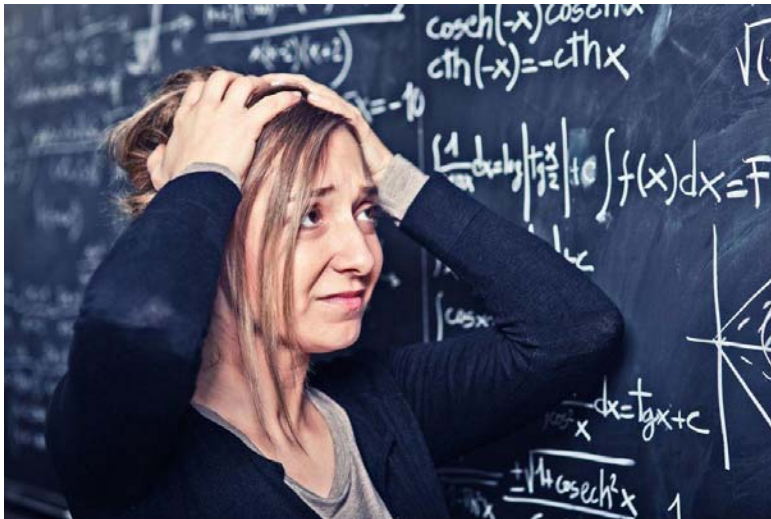
Draining Our Batteries: Stress, Burnout, & Traumatic Stress

(Ansley, 2018; Ansley et al., 2019; 2021; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Brunsting et al., 2014; Greenberg et al., 2016; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Wong et al., 2017)





Who should be most responsible for finding solutions to educator stress and burnout?



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Addressing the Realities of Stress, Burnout, & Trauma

Who can help?



Systemic

- **Policies, mandates, funding**

School

- **Leadership practices**
- **Working relationships**
- **Job design**
- **Access to resources**

Individual

- **Skills development**
- **Coping and lifestyle practices (self-care)**



Systemic

Local, state,
and federal
government,
boards, offices,
etc.



Where Improvements “Should” Start

- This level holds the most power and authority (Garcia & Weiss, 2020)
 - Policy, mandates
 - Funds
- Where the educators have the least control



Advocacy

What we can control

- Union participation
- Marches, rallies
- Meet with legislators
- Write letters
- Make TikToks
- Vote

What we cannot control

- Whether or not the people currently in office will make moves to help
- Whether or not the people in office *can* overcome opposite to such help

School



Work Context – Relationships, Job Design, Access to Resources

(Ansley, Blinder, Demere, Varjas, Benson, & Ogletree, 2019;
Ansley, Houchins, & Varjas, 2019;)

Working Relationships

- Inverse correlation between job satisfaction and stress levels; $p = .009$
- Satisfaction with relationships with the people in the building (e.g., administration, colleagues) □ strongest correlation with job satisfaction; $p < .001$, $p = .001$
- Satisfaction with relationships with students and parents/guardians □ also correlated with job satisfaction; $p = .049$, $p = .016$

Questions to Ask about Relationships

- Are administrators visible? Do they interact with teachers, staff, and students to show interest as people?
- Do administrators visit classrooms for more than evaluations?
- Are teachers and staff given positive as well as constructive feedback?
- How are staff treated if they need to take a day off?
- Are teachers/staff encouraged to limit their work engagement outside of contracted hours?
- Do staff collaborate more so than compete?
- Are all staff members treated as valuable for their unique strengths and contributions?
- Can staff be vulnerable and ask each other for help?
- In regard to their staff, how do school leaders respond to parent/guardian complaints?

Job Design

- Manageable workload, equitable among staff
- Autonomy (e.g., freedom over what is taught, discretion with behavior management)
- Planning time
- Expectations or demands



Questions to Ask about Job Design

- Aside from the typical expectation to adhere to curricula, who decides what is taught?
- Aside from schoolwide student behavior policies, who decides how each classroom is managed?
- Are teachers and staff utilized in the most effective and efficient ways?
- What time is allotted for planning?
- What if a teacher/staff needs to use the bathroom?
- Is there time for duty-free lunch during the day?
- Are expectations of teachers/staff adjusted accordingly to account for conditions (e.g., short-staffed, school closings)

Access to Resources

- Human capital (e.g., staffing, support) that affects relationships and job design
- Resources for personal support (e.g., mental health, discounts from businesses)
- Instructional resources
- Professional development opportunities



Questions to Ask about Resources

- What resources are teachers/staff provided? And does this come with training on how to use the resource?
- How much money do teachers have to personally spend in order to do their jobs effectively?
- What resources are available in terms of wellbeing?
- What are the existing partnerships with community-based agencies or businesses and how do they contribute positively to your school(s) and/or staff?
- What does the school do to engage parents/guardians in productive ways?



Balanced



Individual



Burnout

Personnel - Teachers, School
Staff, Administration

Can Self-Care Help?

Coping & Lifestyle Practices (Self-Care)

(Ansley et al., 2021; Ansley & Wander, 2021)

- This level is ***most*** controllable for each educator.
- Relationship to stress
- Activation of relaxation response; opposition to stress response
- Integrated strategies, based on energy psychology, often have quick results
- Self-compassion
- Use of cognitive reappraisal
- The Empowering 8 ([link](#))

Any Remaining Questions?



ansle1b@cmich.edu



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brandi-ansley/>



dr_brandi_ansley

Many Thanks!



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