

REDUCING STRESSORS IN SCHOOLS

by:

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The events in the past years due to the pandemic have brought tremendous stress and trauma that are still present up to now. Counseling has been given more emphasis than it has received in the previous years. No doubt that the stress of the disruptions in the previous and current school year has impacted all educators, teachers and school leaders alike. All are overwhelmed with long workhours and crushing workloads that come simultaneously in both online and physical set-ups. These all add up to the emotional and physical pressures they face everyday.

There are bigger problems that are not within the school leader's authority to change. However, there are problems that are within his power such as class size, class programs, and school activities. To lessen the burdens put on teachers' shoulders, the school needs to acknowledge its role in the problem and plan school practices, structures, and well-being of the school leader himself, the teachers and the school staff.

First thing to do is to have a thorough conversation with the teachers. Listen to them on what they need and how to help them. Encourage teachers to identify the causes of their stress and what things can help them. Do not tell them what to do, instead, provide for them what can help them. For example, the teachers think Zumba sessions help them destress, invite a Zumba instructor to have once a week or twice a month one-hour Zumba in a Friday afternoon to help teachers destress and unwind.

Give teachers an actual break. A few minutes to breathe in some fresh air in the middle of the day can do wonders. Refrain from giving work on weekends and beyond school hours. Remember that teachers have personal lives also that they need to mind and enjoy. With this, stop watching the clock and cut some slack for the teachers as they

have been working so hard already with teaching coupled with many reports and paper works.

A few minutes for meditation and quiet time in a school wide schedule can also help a lot. A breather is vital to help teachers feel rested even for a few moments. Most importantly, assure the teachers and school staff that their wellness is valued and that the school, through you as the school leader, is ready to help develop means to cope.

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