

## MIND MATTERS: THE IMPACT OF MENTAL HEALTH ON TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

*by:*

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Teachers play a crucial role in shaping their students' minds and futures. Their profession is rewarding and demanding, requiring them to fulfill numerous responsibilities to provide learners with a quality education and support.

Teachers frequently encounter many challenges that contribute to this strain. They must meticulously plan and deliver engaging lessons, create and grade assignments, manage classroom dynamics, attend to the individual requirements of students, and keep up with administrative duties.

All these obligations can result in increased levels of tension and pressure. It may be difficult for teachers to reconcile their personal and professional lives, resulting in feelings of burnout, exhaustion, and even mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

In a study conducted by Capone and Petrillo (2020), it was discovered that various categories of teachers exhibited a similar pattern of deteriorating mental health. This alarming finding suggested that teachers experience elevated levels of occupational stress. Teachers' mental health is negatively affected by factors such as frequent changes in regulations, unnecessary non-teaching tasks, intense competition, centralized teaching control, and low socioeconomic status. To address this global problem, reducing teachers' occupational tension and implementing effective measures to enhance their mental health is crucial.

Jimenez (2021) identified several vital recommendations to support teachers' mental health and well-being. A healthy lifestyle that includes obtaining 7 to 9 hours of sleep is essential for a healthy mind and body. Participation in wellness programs such as yoga or Zumba can substantially enhance teachers' mental approach to their work. In addition, teachers must develop effective coping mechanisms and self-management skills to handle difficult situations better.

According to Simran Agarwal's blog, the following are the four most important reasons why educators should prioritize their mental health:

## 1. Effects on the Emotional State and Learning Environment of Students

Aside from imparting knowledge, teachers are responsible for creating a positive and nurturing learning environment. Students view them as role models, and their emotional state can significantly impact how they feel in the classroom. A cheerful and content teacher radiates positivity, which can encourage students to be more engaged, motivated, and enthusiastic about learning. On the other hand, a stressed or overworked teacher may unintentionally pass on their negative emotions to their students, negatively impacting their emotional health and academic performance.

## 2. Serious Effects on the Development of Students' Mental Health

Teachers can play a crucial role in identifying the early warning indicators of mental health problems among their students. If they maintain good mental health, they are better equipped to recognize potential risk factors and symptoms of mental health conditions in their students. Creating a supportive and welcoming classroom environment encourages students to seek assistance when necessary. Early intervention and support can prevent the escalation of mental health issues into more severe conditions and contribute to the improvement of students' mental health as a whole.

### 3. Influence on Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching is a challenging and complex profession requiring imagination, sensitivity, and effective communication. When mentally at ease and fulfilled, teachers can bring their finest selves to the classroom. They can create engaging and meaningful student learning experiences, adapt their teaching strategies to each student's requirements, and foster an inclusive classroom environment. In contrast, when instructors are overworked or suffering from burnout, their teaching effectiveness may decline, affecting the quality of education students receive.

### 4. Implications on Personal and Professional Life

Teachers frequently face obstacles in their professional lives, such as heavy workloads, grading, lesson preparation, and managing classroom dynamics. The difficulty of balancing these responsibilities with personal life can contribute to stress and anxiety. When teachers experience excessive tension and emotional strain, it can hurt their well-being in and out of the classroom. It may be difficult for them to manage obstacles effectively, and their personal relationships and overall quality of life may suffer.

Promoting teachers' mental health is essential for their well-being and the educational system as a whole. A mentally healthy educator is better suited to support their students' emotional and academic development, resulting in a positive ripple effect throughout the school community.

#### *References:*

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