

EMPATHIC PARTNERSHIPS



LEADERS

- ▶ Cultivate empathy within your staff by recognizing it as a learnable skill.
- ▶ Create opportunities for formal and informal dialogue to understand colleagues' perspectives and feelings.
- ▶ Be visible and approachable to encourage open communication.
- ▶ Show respect and explain decisions clearly, even when unfavorable.
- ▶ Offer support and encouragement, recognizing the interconnectedness of good relationships and effective leadership.
- ▶ Conduct surveys or open forums to understand staff needs and perspectives.
- ▶ Schedule regular check-ins with individual staff members.
- ▶ Be mindful of your own biases and assumptions.
- ▶ Seek feedback on your communication and leadership style.

TEACHERS

- ▶ Approach your supervisor with understanding and respect, even when you disagree.
- ▶ Communicate openly and honestly about your needs and challenges.
- ▶ Be proactive in seeking support and guidance from your supervisor.
- ▶ Build relationships with colleagues through collaboration and open communication.
- ▶ Recognize that empathy is a vital skill for effective teaching and classroom management.
- ▶ Practice active listening and seek to understand students' perspectives and feelings.
- ▶ Create a safe and supportive classroom environment that fosters trust and respect.
- ▶ Be mindful of your own biases and assumptions when interacting with students.
- ▶ Seek feedback from colleagues and students to continually improve your teaching practice.



A PRINCIPAL'S GUIDE TO COMBATING EMPATHY FATIGUE

Empathy fatigue is a serious issue facing teachers, leading to burnout, decreased morale, and health problems. As a principal, you play a crucial role in creating a school environment that supports teachers and prevents empathy fatigue.

SIGNS OF EMPATHY FATIGUE

Emotional: increased irritability or frustration; loss of motivation; cynicism; feeling overwhelmed; difficulty dealing with stress and/or conflict; increased anxiety.

Behavioral: withdrawing from others; increased absenteeism; decreased engagement in PD; difficulty making decisions; reliance on unhealthy coping mechanics.

Physical: fatigue; insomnia; headaches and stomachaches; changes in appetite/weight; lowered immune system.

Cognitive: difficulty concentrating and remembering things; poor decision-making; self-criticism; loss of creativity and problem-solving skills.

COMBATING STRATEGIES

Create awareness:

- Discuss empathy fatigue openly and regularly, framing it as a solvable problem and not a personal weakness.
- Provide resources and information about self-care.

Facilitate collaboration:

- Encourage collaboration and teamwork amongst teachers.
- Build personal connections through social events.
- Foster a supportive and understanding environment.

Develop staff well-being:

- Offer confidential counseling services or EAP programs.
- Encourage teachers to take advantage of health plans.
- Organize bonding activities like potlucks or book groups.
- Offer after-school classes for teachers in various interests.



A PRINCIPAL'S GUIDE TO COMBATING EMPATHY FATIGUE

Describe your overall school climate:

AWARENESS

List specific initiatives you've implemented to raise awareness of empathy fatigue. Were they impactful?

TEAM BUILDING

How have you promoted team-building? How have they impacted teacher morale and collaboration?

WELL-BEING

What are some resources or programs you've implemented to support staff well-being? Were they utilized? Effective? How were they perceived?

