

The education profession is known for its high levels of stress and burnout. Teachers who at one time felt passionate and excited about their jobs, experience feelings of chronic exhaustion and hopelessness about the profession. Not only does burnout impact a teacher's effectiveness on student learning, but it can also lead to early retirement or leaving the profession all together after only a few years of teaching. In fact, more than 41% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years of starting. The following are signs to help identify when teacher burnout has become a problem.

Warning Signs of Burnout

- 1) Exhaustion. The fatigue becomes so deep that there is no way to turn it off.
- 2) Extreme graveness. The smiles, laughter, and passion to teach are gone.
- 3) Increased anxiety. The constant, nagging feeling that you can and should do more, while simultaneously realizing you need to unplug and spend more time with your family.
- 4) Being overwhelmed. Wondering how administrators can add one more task, expectation or mandate on an already full plate. Compromising values of excellence to stay in compliance.
- 5) Becoming invisible. Stop attending social gatherings and lunches. No longer participating in meetings and email exchanges.
- 6) Sharing ideas stop. The sharing of information is no longer a priority. Emails sharing lesson plans stop as the focus turns to just making it through the day. An educator's confidence level may fall, and the fear of sharing bad lessons is high.
- 7) High levels of complaining. An educator who is dealing with burnout will rarely talk with peers. However, when they do talk, they focus on the negative. Educators start to see everything as wrong and nothing can be fixed, so why bother trying.
- 8) The Spark is gone. The excitement and charisma that went along with being a teacher is no longer there.

Confronting Burnout

- 1) Teach in the moment. Use mindful meditation breathing techniques to bring you closer to the present moment. Being in the present moment means being more pro-active and controlled in difficult situations.
- 2) Take time for yourself. Take "me time" each day to do something for yourself.
- 3) Limit what work you bring home. Choose a reasonable time to stay after school to prep, grade, or get organized. Then whatever you don't finish, write yourself a note to complete the work either before or after school.
- 4) Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether this means requesting parents to assist with planning a holiday party or asking students to switch papers with their peers and grade them. Anything to take a little off your plate will help you avoid burnout.

- 5) Remember why you became a teacher. Connect with pre-service teachers just entering the field who are excited and enthusiastic about their upcoming career. Sign up to have a student teacher in your classroom.
- 6) Lean on a colleague. Connect with fellow teachers to see how they combat teacher burnout.
- 7) Take a day off. You are entitled to a personal day off once in a while.
- 8) Network with teachers on line. Start your own website or join in on the conversations with teacher bloggers. These sites tend to be positive and motivating for teachers.
- 9) Find something new. Try taking a new professional course or go to a workshop.
- 10) Stay away from negativity. Avoid negative colleagues or professional events that bring you down. Spend time with people who have a positive outlook on teaching.

Chesser, Lisa. "25 Tips To Reduce Teacher Burnout." *Teach Thought*,
<https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/25-tips-reduce-teacher-burnout/>

Cox, Janelle. "Teaching Tips: 10 Ways to Deal with Burnout." *TeachHub.com*,
<http://www.teachhub.com/teaching-tips-10-ways-deal-burnout>

Pillars, Wendi. "Six Signs of – and Solutions for – Teacher Burnout." *Education Week Teacher*, 20 May 2014, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2014/05/20/ctq-pillars-signs-of-solutions-for-burnout.html>.

Provenzano, Nicholas. "Teacher Burnout: 4 Warning Signs." *Edutopia*, 22 May 2017,
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teacher-burnout-four-warning-signs-nicholas-provenzano>.

Rankin, Jenny Grant. The Teacher Burnout Epidemic, Part 1 of 2. "How prevalent is burnout in the teaching profession?" *Psychology Today*, 22 Nov. 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/much-more-common-core/201611/the-teacher-burnout-epidemic-part-1-2>.