

## TEACHERS: PROTECTING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

### WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF

- **Set Boundaries Early On-And Hold Them-You** can't be on the clock at all times so set office hours.
- **Focus on What You Can Control-**Controlling what you are able to will help give you back structure and a sense of security that you've likely been craving. You are in charge of how you spend your free time, your priorities, and your mindset.
- **Move Your Body-**You spend a lot of time on their feet moving around your classroom. It may not seem like much, but you are actually releasing a lot of energy through constant movement.
- **Stay in Touch with Friends and Family-**Social connection is crucial during times of hardship, so lean on your support network.
- **Keep Up with the Self-Care-** Make sure you get at least 7 hours of sleep, eat a nutritious diet, spend time outside, and exercise regularly.
- **Maintain Reasonable Expectations-**Work on shifting your expectation—don't frame current experiences as "terrible," look at them as "different." Remember that you don't have control over your students' environment, background noise, workspace, or parental support. But you can still help make sure every student has the opportunity to succeed, by giving students access to you and the necessary materials.

### WAYS TO HELP OTHER TEACHERS

- **Check in on Each Other-**Just a genuine "How are you doing?" can really help a fellow teacher feel supported and more connected to the people around them. Listen to what they need; some people may need help finding resources, while others may want some time to vent with someone who gets it.
- **Keep Each Other Accountable for Self-Care-**
- **Expressing Gratitude-**Practicing gratitude is a great way to give yourself a more positive outlook. Try to name three things you're thankful for each day.
- **Take Time to Laugh-**Humor can be an effective coping tool during scary and tense times. Don't be afraid to lighten the mood by sending memes or sharing a funny story.
- **Pay Attention to Nonverbal Cues-**A lot of people have trouble opening up about how they're feeling, and others may not even realize that they're struggling if their mind is constantly focused on work. Typical body language varies, but if you notice a change like less eye contact or moving or talking slower, it's worth bringing up.
- **Lend Each Other Support-**There is a lot of power in shared experiences. People need social connection, and mutual feelings of vulnerability and stress often creates some of the strongest social bonds.

### WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE HELP?

Take a screening at [MHAScreening.org](https://MHAScreening.org) to see if you may be at risk.

Contact the Mental Health Services Department at DeSoto County Schools f-662-449-7299

Information taken from Mental Health America article titled Teachers: Protecting Your Mental Health-  
<https://mhanational.org/teachers-protecting-your-mental-health>