

STAFF WELLBEING

Live Life Well @ School



Schools are busy, unpredictable and complex environments, which can impact on the energy levels of teachers and school staff as they manage competing demands and constant change. This can impact on the mental health and wellbeing of staff, with a focus on self-care identified as an important priority in school settings (1, 2, 3).



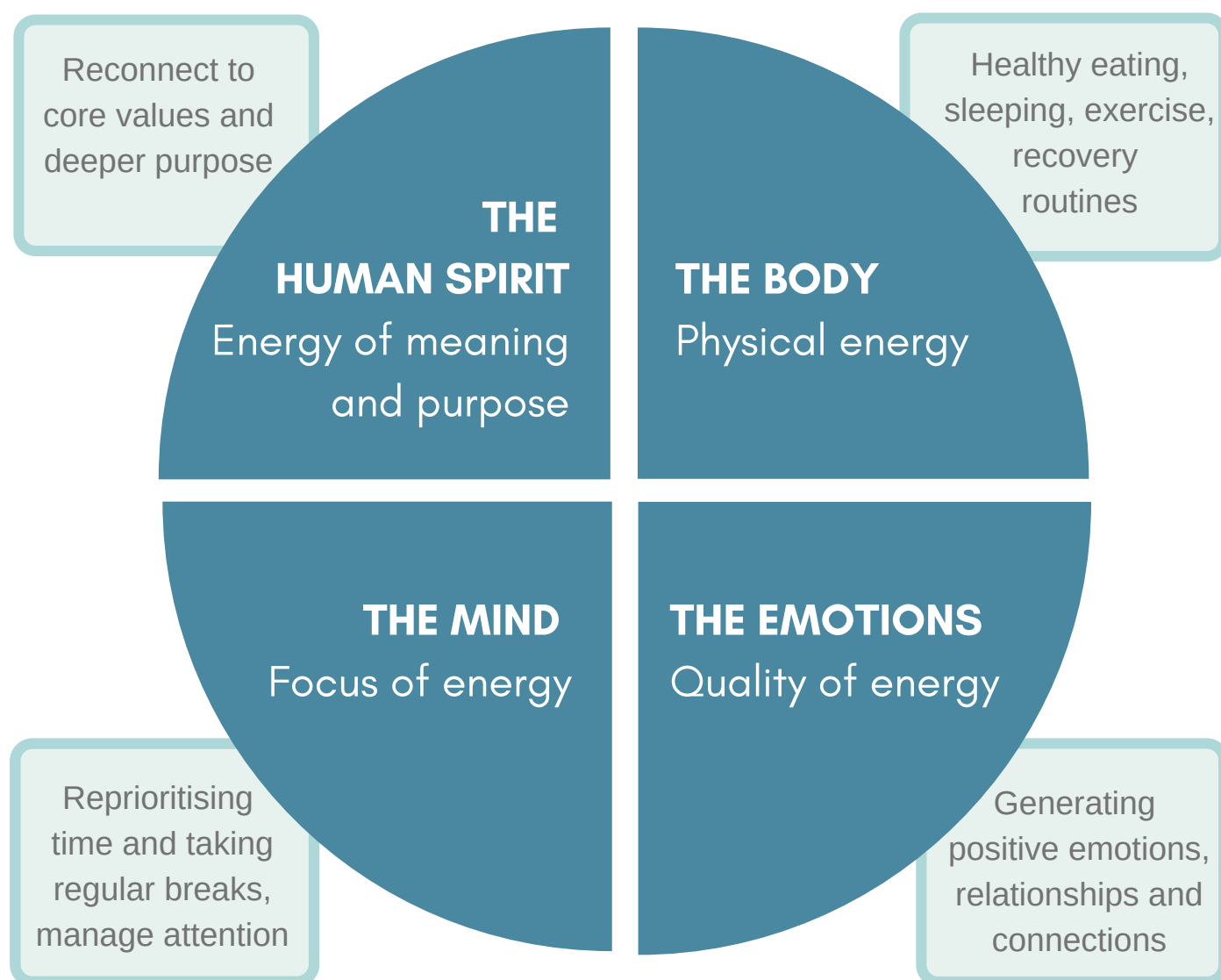
We need to remember the importance of prioritising our own wellness, before helping others. Managing our energy levels will help us avoid burnout, exhaustion and depletion of our health. We are then able to support our students more effectively.

THE SET UP



Energy comes from four main wellsprings in our bodies: the body, emotions, mind, and spirit. Developing regular routines to renew and maintain each of these wellsprings has been shown to improve our mental health and strengthen our immune system.

If we do these routines enough, they start to become an unconscious and automatic part of our day.



Adapted from Loehr & Schwartz, 2001 (4)

References

- (1) Curry, J. R. P., & O'Brien, E. R. P. (2012). Shifting to a Wellness Paradigm in Teacher Education: A Promising Practice for Fostering Teacher Stress Reduction, Burnout Resilience, and Promoting Retention. *Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry*, 14(3), 178-191.
- (2) Roffey, S. (2012). Pupil wellbeing - teacher wellbeing: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational and Child Psychology*, 29(4), 8.
- (3) Riley, P. (2019). *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey: 2018 Data*. Victoria: Institute for Positive Psychology and Education.
- (4) Loehr, J. & Schwartz (2001). The making of a corporate athlete. *Harvard Business Review* (January 2001), 120-128.

SIMPLE IDEAS TO SUPPORT YOUR ENERGY LEVELS

It might become clear to you that you have a strength in one area and a weakness in another. You can pick and choose the ideas you feel will best support your balance of energy across the four domains.

Share these ideas with your colleagues and your school community, including parents—as a simple and effective way to support a whole school approach to wellbeing!

WEEK 1

Mental energy

Remember to Take Regular Breaks

When working from home, it can be easy to forget to take regular breaks. Schedule them in as an essential part of your day. Take time for morning tea, lunch and build in a regular stretch routine.

For some simple stretches check out

www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/six-simple-stretches

Physical energy

Establish an Exercise Routine

Start by setting aside 15-20 minutes a day for a walk or bike ride. If you are in isolation, climbing steps, exercise videos or gardening are great ways to lift the heart rate.

Check out some quick tips on how to keep active as part of your day.

www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au/quick-tips-for-busy-people

Emotional energy

Generate a State of Calm

Schedule one activity into your day that allows you to generate calmness. Mindfulness tools, puzzles, craft activities or listening to podcasts are some simple ways to get started.

Check out Smiling Mind and their mindfulness practices to support your wellbeing. www.smilingmind.com.au/

Spiritual energy

Set Up Firm Structures

Set up firm structures to avoid work and personal time blending into one. At the end of your workday turn your computer off, head out for a walk, change out of your work clothes, connect with a family member or do an activity you enjoy. This will allow your mind and body to transition from work to personal time.



I'M CHOOSING TO:

SIMPLE IDEAS TO SUPPORT YOUR ENERGY LEVELS

WEEK 2

Mental energy

Maintain Social Support and Connection

Most teachers are social beings and enjoy the connections gained from face to face interactions. Finding practical ways to stay connected to colleagues and students in an online world helps support wellbeing.

Consider:

- Daily check ins with your class. Brain breaks are a great way to connect - check out <https://nshp.com.au/LLWS-BrainBreaks>
- Online catch ups for morning tea with colleagues - bring some conversation starters to the meeting e.g. what is one superpower you wish you had, share the name of your first album purchased.
- Regular chats with friends and family- consider using zoom, skype, facetime or what's app to increase feelings of connection.

Physical energy

5 Tips for Healthy Eating

One of the most effective ways to maintain our energy during stressful times is eating well.

For some simple and practical tips on building healthy eating into your day www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au/food/top-5-tips-healthy-eating

Emotional energy

Power of Kindness

Acts of kindness have been shown to improve our wellbeing.

Simple things like checking in on our neighbours, smiling at others on your morning walk or checking in on a friend can make a huge difference to building community kindness. The great thing about kindness is its contagious.

Spiritual energy

Reconnect to Your Purpose

Try to do one thing each week that reminds you why you became a teacher in the first place.

Use a teaching strategy that you and your students all enjoy reminding you of the difference you're making in their lives.



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