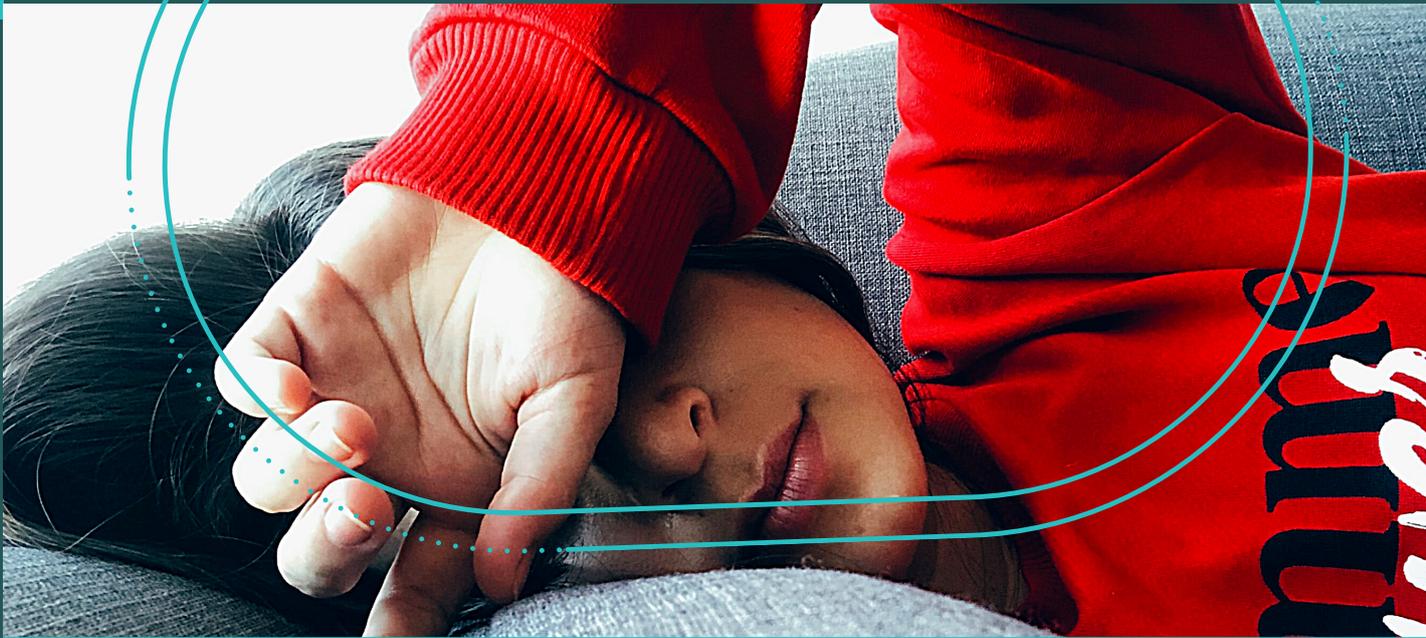


#6 SELF-CARE SKILLS FOR TEACHERS



7 ways to allay the post-adrenaline blues

Today is day four of having the learners back at school, and I woke up this morning feeling completely deflated, dejected and depressed. It is has not been easy this week to leave my warm bed to be at school at 6 am to start screening the kids, but I today had to drag myself to school. I am tired, dog-tired and the day has not even started. I don't know how I will cope, not with this day and also not the rest of the year. It is such a contrast to the beginning of the week when I was excited to be back despite the hard work of getting everything ready and my concerns about the virus.

For weeks you have driven yourself to get everything ready for the learners returning to school and now they are here!

But all of a sudden all the anticipation and excitement, good and not so good, has dissipated leaving us with only the daily slog of dealing with Covid19 safety measures while trying to save an academic year and a landslide of negative emotions.

And because our body and minds are not separate entities, it also affects us physically – from feeling fatigued to the point of wanting to sleep all day to struggling to sleep, from overeating to having no appetite, from seeking solitude to not wanting to be alone. Our emotions range from sadness to anger to apprehension to feeling dispirited in the space of a few minutes. In fact, some may even start questioning whether they want to remain in the teaching profession.

This feeling of having lost one's oomph after a particularly stressful time is called the 'post-adrenaline blues'.

SELF-CARE SKILLS FOR TEACHERS: DEALING WITH DEFENSIVE REACTIONS

Although stress has a reputation for being something to avoid or at least manage, it is our stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, that drive us to deal with a difficult situation. Our stress response is both the result and the impetus for our physical, emotions and mental vigour to help us survive the threat we experience.

So after the rush of adrenaline supplying us with the energy to fight, flee, freeze or act in flow to the dangerous situation, which in this case is the pandemic, our adrenal glands become depleted. That is when we experience the post-adrenaline blues.

Now, if you had the time to take things easy and you could do things to support your nervous system like, relax, sleep etc., the body would replenish the hormones / neurotransmitters and you will feel rejuvenated.

However, the situation you are faced with now is one of huge change, high levels of anxiety and prolonged pressure. Your body-mind reacts to this by continuously triggering the stress response to ensure your survival.

Unfortunately the threat will not be letting up anytime soon and you don't have the luxury of time to relax and refill. But here is the thing: if we want to avoid a crash (physically, emotionally and / or mentally), we have to understand this important fact:

We cannot change the way our physiology deals with stress. No use fighting with our body-mind. It will just add extra stress and be sure, nature will win. But this is what we can do:

- **Be good to yourself** – Accept your experiences and feelings, don't judge and don't push too hard.
- **Take really good care of yourself** - Prolonged stress also suppresses our immune system, something we cannot afford at this time.
- **Prioritise your own wellbeing** – You can't pour from an empty cup. Give yourself time to do things that help you relax and recuperate.
- **Support your nervous system** with nutrients from green leafy vegetables (for Vitamin B complex, Vitamin C, Vitamin E and Magnesium), fish, avocados, almonds, broccoli, eggs and dark chocolate.
- **Stay active** even if you feel too tired.
- **Find your rhythm** – Rhythmic activities walking, running, knitting, carving, dancing support physical and mental health
- **And above all, don't skimp on food the soul** – music, laughter, fun, keeping good company even if only via Zoom, afternoon naps, or mid-morning naps if you want.

Be good to yourself and take care
Erika

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Teacher's Care
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SELF-CARE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS