

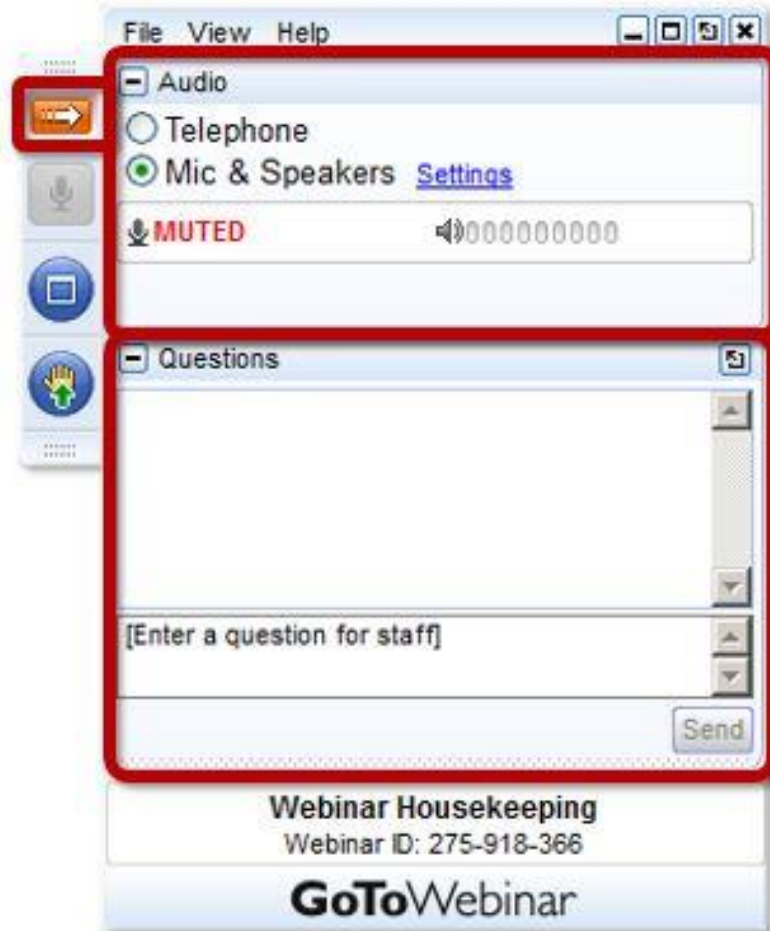
# FIREPROOF: BUILDING EDUCATOR RESILIENCE TO DECREASE TEACHER BURNOUT

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Learners Edge



## Your Participation

Open and close your control panel

Join audio:

- Choose "Mic & Speakers" to use VoIP
- Choose "Telephone" and dial using the information provided

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

**Note:** Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.

## Keely Swartzner, Presenter

- Is a huge hockey fan in the winter and loves to spend time on the lake during the summer
- Most recently served as a Special Education Coordinator in a suburban school district
- Worked in both Special Education and Administration for nearly 20 years
- **Current Role:** Director of Professional Development for Learners Edge



## Barb Istas, Presenter

- In her free time, loves to read, write, bike and hike.
- Former 6th grade Language Arts teacher.
- Taught for 25 years in a large, suburban school district.
- **Current Role:** Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at Learners Edge





@teachinghumor

**BEING A TEACHER  
IS EASY.  
IT'S LIKE RIDING A BIKE.**

Except the bike is on fire  
You're on fire  
Everything is on fire

“Fireproof does not mean the fire will never come. It means that when it does, you will be able to withstand it!”

-Fireproof – The Movie





# Outcomes for Today – Fireproof YOU!

- Understand the impacts of teacher burnout on a school community
- Learn about resilience
- Reflect on your own level of burnout and resilience
- Discover easy to implement strategies to build teacher resilience
- Make a plan for tomorrow


# Burnout

## Definition of BURNOUT

- 1 : the cessation of operation usually of a jet or rocket engine; *also* : the point at which burnout occurs
- 2 **a** : exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration  
**b** : a person suffering from burnout



## Examples of BURNOUT in a sentence



Teaching can be very stressful, and many teachers eventually suffer *burnout*.  
the *burnout* rate among teachers

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burnout>

# Why are we talking about this?

- Only 39% of teachers report they are very satisfied (the lowest in 25 years)
- 48% of teachers report that they are regularly under great stress
- 55% of teachers report their morale is low or very low.
- More than 41% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years of starting.
  - Losing early career teachers costs the U.S. up to \$2,200,000,000 every year!



## Teacher burnout is an epidemic!

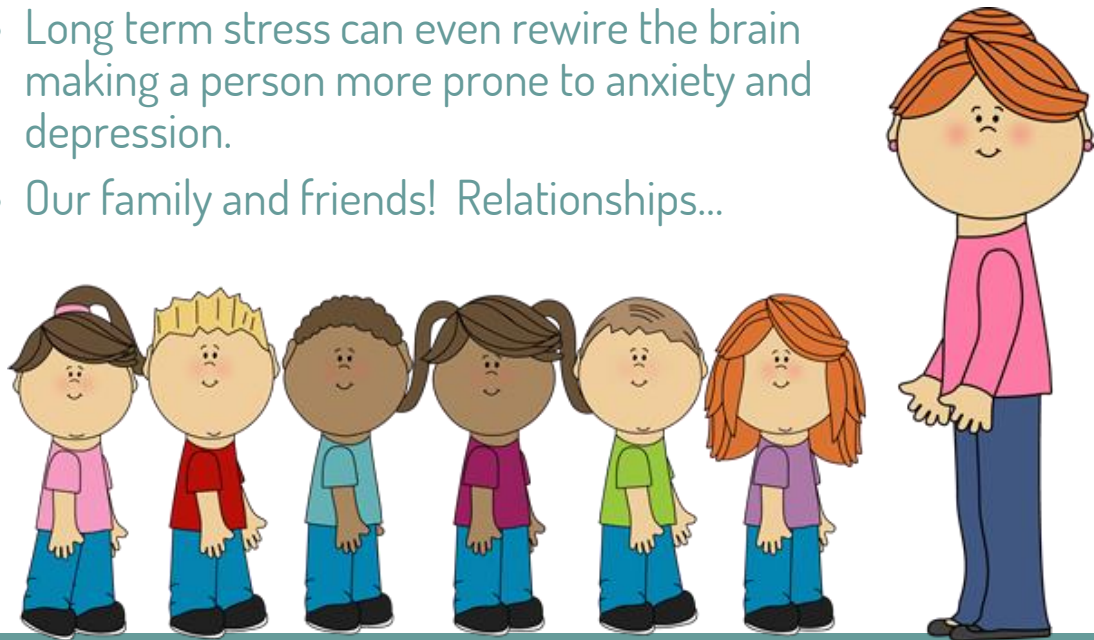
TEACHER BURNOUT IS AN EPIDEMIC!



# Impacts of Burn Out on a School Community

- **The teacher themselves! YOU!**

- According to the CDC, (2006) inner city high school teachers were more likely to get an ulcer than any other profession! An ULCER!
- Long term stress can lead to serious health problems.
- Long term stress can even rewire the brain making a person more prone to anxiety and depression.
- Our family and friends! Relationships...



- **The school district!**

- Sick days and subs
- Hiring new teachers
- Possible poor decision making
- Difficulty staying in compliance

- **The students, our students!**

- Moods and attitudes about school are largely shaped by teacher energy and attitude
  - Anxiety
  - Lower enthusiasm for learning
- School is sometimes the safest place for students in their day!
- Poor planned or implemented lessons
- Poor relationships with teachers





# It's Time to Gear Up!

# Resilience!

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# Educator Resilience

re·sil·ience

/rəˈzilyəns/

*noun*

1. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.  
"the often remarkable resilience of so many British institutions"
2. the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.  
"nylon is excellent in wearability and resilience"



<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

# 2004 Study on Resilience in Urban Teachers

## Resilient teachers:

1. Have personal values that guide their decision making. They feel “called” to do this work.
2. Value professional development and actively seek it out.
3. Mentor others.
4. Take charge and solve problems.
5. Stay focused on children and learning.
6. Do whatever it takes to help children be successful.
7. Have friends/colleagues who support their work emotionally and intellectually.
8. Are not wed to one way of teaching and are interested in new ideas.
9. Know when to get involved and when to let go.



# Knowing this, administrators can...

- Take proactive steps to develop emotional resilience in staff by:
  - Providing time for educators to share belief systems and stories related to the reason they became an educator, successes they have had, etc.
  - Developing and improving mentoring systems or teaching partnerships.
  - Developing relational trust among staff. “Trust has been called the connective tissue that holds improving schools together.”
- Supporting!





# So how do we increase our own resilience?

**The following ideas will both increase resilience AND decrease burnout:**

- When you question why you are doing what you are doing, write it down!
- Rest
- Have a “think partner”
- See failures as learning opportunities
- Celebrate successes
- Increase your emotional intelligence
- Check your “inner critic.”
- Learn and move on



- Track your improvement over time
- Start each day fresh
- Look at criticism objectively
- Make changes if needed
- Face issues head on
- Look back on trials with pride
- Volunteer to make connections, see the bigger picture and feel good.

# Self-Awareness

**“Learning more about yourself, and how you respond to life’s curveballs can really help you to develop the resilience that will help you meet your goals.”**

- What brings you down?
- What lifts you up?
- What drives you?



- **Are you experiencing burnout?**
  - Take this QUIZ!  
\*\* I scored 30 before taking my new job. (The embers of your passion for teaching need stoking!)
- **What is your level of resilience?**
  - Take this QUIZ!  
\*\* I got: You are quite resilient!

**Quiz Links:**

[http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Teaching Tolerance 51 ED Cafe.pdf](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Teaching%20Tolerance%2051%20ED%20Cafe.pdf)  
<https://www.verywell.com/quiz-how-resilient-are-you-4008851>

# Support Measures - Collaboration

- A lack of community is one of the primary factors that creates burnout out at work.
- Teacher collaboration and sharing responsibility for all students increases retention, BUT:
  - 50-66% of teachers plan alone
  - Fewer than 50% work at schools where teachers concern themselves with students outside their own classroom.
- Teacher collaboration gives teachers time and support to handle challenges and succeed! (RESILIENCE)





# Support Measures – Try These!

- Get a mentor!
  - Find a partner in change.
  - Join an on-line community.
  - Forge cross school partnerships.
  - Find a healthy place to vent.
  - Find opportunities to laugh.
- Enlist HELP!
    - Volunteers
    - Student aids
    - Good students
    - Other staff members
    - Retirees
  - Keep lunchtime sacred.
  - Know when to call for help.
  - Develop a solid relationship with your administrator.



**Do NOT Withdraw!**

# Community Building – Parent Engagement

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, parental engagement is a key factor in teacher retention, and teachers experience great satisfaction when parental involvement grows.
- Teachers want more and parents want more!
  - Exude care!
  - Find creative ways to bring parents into classrooms.
  - Maximize parent teacher conferences.
  - Communicate across language barriers and regularly.
  - Resolve to have a positive mindset.
  - Offer parent workshops.



# Community Building – Beyond Parents

- Work with administration to build community involvement.
  - Libraries
  - Rotary club
  - Media
  - Senior citizens' center
- Host curriculum nights or showcases.
- Ask community members to serve on committees.
- Invite input.





# Fluff Eradication – Volume!

- “I enjoy the work. There is just too much of it.”
- Work overload is one of the primary factors that creates burnout at work.
  - Reduces effectiveness
  - Executive functioning overload
  - Overstimulated brain
    - Unable to think clearly
    - Unable to register emotions



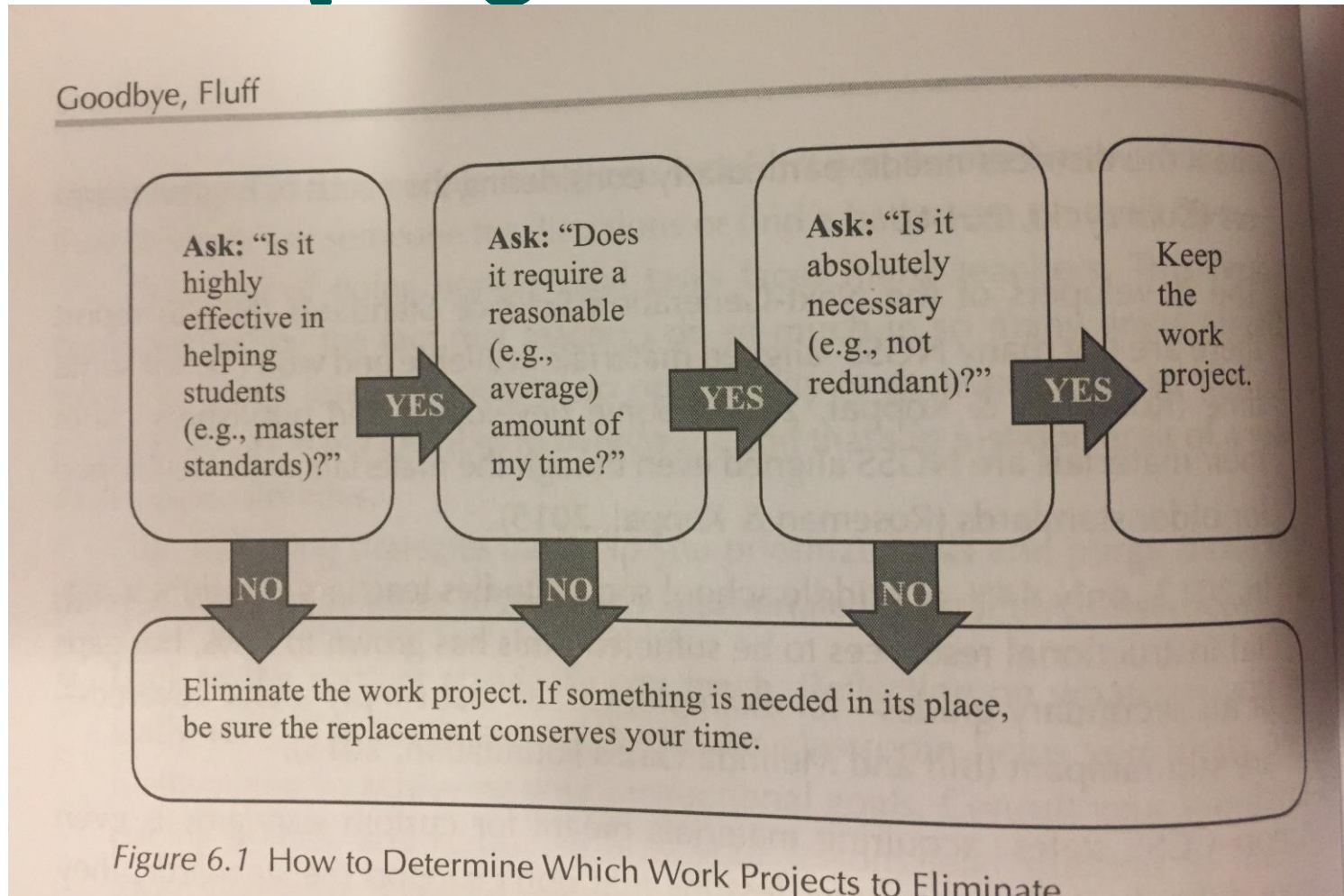
# Fluff Eradication – The Answers

- Challenge your view of grading.
  - Consider feedback turn around time.
  - Do students read your comments?
  - Rethink how your time is best spent:
    - Stellar, engaging lesson .
    - Grading, grading, grading.
  - Homework??



- Volume:
  - “Take a step back to assess what is most important and then letting go of less important tasks can help alleviate burnout.”
  - Let go of perfectionism.
  - Prioritize:
    - Content standards.
  - Purge.

# It's O.K. to purge!



# Fluff Eradication – Stop Overcommitting!

- Have a NO statement ready

*“Thanks for giving me the opportunity, but with my other commitments, I don’t think I could give this the attention it deserves.”*

- Ask for time to think if you need it
- Determine when a “YES” is ok

SAYING YES TO  
HAPPINESS MEANS  
LEARNING TO SAY  
NO TO THINGS  
AND PEOPLE THAT  
STRESS YOU OUT.  
-THEMA DAVIS



# Efficient Planning and Organization

- **Planning**

- Use technology
- Collaborate on lesson planning
- KEEP the good ones!
- Systems
  - Teach students
  - Use for differentiation/cooperative learning
- Have emergency lessons (standards based) on hand
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Keep a “to do” list/calendar sources



- **Organization**

- Declutter
- Purge, again!
- Establish order
- Have students help keep the room clean
- Consider going as paperless as possible
- Label
- Use file folders/boxes, supply caddies, plastic dishpans, etc.
- Color code

# Self-Care

“We must learn to take better care of ourselves, so we can take better care of others.”

–Mike Anderson from *The Well Balanced Teacher*

Disconnect      Food      SLEEP

Reflect      Spirit      Hydration

Exercise      RECONNECT

Physical Safety

# Now What?

- 85% of teachers became teachers because they wanted to make a difference in children's lives. (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014)
- To do that, we must build our own resilience and protect ourselves from burnout. Make yourself FIREPROOF!
- **Action Plan:**
  - What is one thing you commit to doing TOMORROW AND GOING FORWARD to lower your stress level and increase your resilience?



## Rate Your Level of Teacher Burnout:

- ☐ Feeling Fireproof!
- ☐ A Little Smoke, But No Fire.
- ☐ I'm Feeling Sparks!
- ☐ Singed Around the Edges.
- ☐ I'm Burning – Slowly But Surely.
- ☐ Flames – I Need a Fire Extinguisher – PRON
- ☐ I'm In Ashes (don't fret – you CAN recover!)



Build Your Resilience!

Flip over and pick one or two resilience strategies  
It's time to become FIREPROOF!

## Strategies to Build Teacher Resilience

(all it takes is starting with one and committing to it!)

### Collaboration:

- ☐ Get a Mentor.
- ☐ Join an Online Community.
- ☐ Eat Lunch with a Colleague.
- ☐ Vent – it's okay to let it out!
- ☐ Reach out to a cross-school colleague.
- ☐ Enlist Help: retirees, students, volunteers, parents, colleagues.
- ☐ Find ways to laugh more!

### Community Building:

- ☐ Host a Curriculum Night or Student Showcase.
- ☐ Work with Administration to build community involvement:
  - ☐ Libraries (use resources)
  - ☐ Rotary Club (speakers)
  - ☐ Senior Center (joint activities)

### Fluff Eradication:

- ☐ PURGE! Clean Your Desk.
- ☐ PURGE! Clean Your Work Bag.
- ☐ Give yourself an extra day (or two) to grade papers.
- ☐ Write a personal "NO" statement.
- ☐ Don't assign homework for a night (or two).

### Plan and Organize:

- ☐ Start using a new tech tool - have you heard of TED-Ed, Planboard?
- ☐ Find a colleague and swap lesson plans.
- ☐ Create a checklist with 5 things to get done this week. ✓✓✓✓✓
- ☐ Enlist/Assign students to help clean your classroom.

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### Self-Care:

- ☐ Disconnect from your cell phone for one night.
- ☐ Talk a long walk...even if it's cold (bundle up)!
- ☐ Buy or bring a good water bottle to school and hydrate often!
- ☐ Reconnect with an old friend.
- ☐ Start a Journal – what lifts you up? Best part of your day?





# QUESTIONS?

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# Resources

- **Learners Edge Course 898:** Mindful Leadership in Schools
- **Learners Edge Course 5792:** Refocus and Recharge: Strategies for Finding Balance in Teaching
- <http://athenatrainingandconsulting.com/professional-training-consulting-coaching/why-self-awareness-is-key-to-resilience-by-cindy-stradling-csp-cpc>
- <http://happyteacherhappykids.com/18-amazing-classroom-organization-tips-tricks/>
- <http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Teaching%20Tolerance%2051%20ED%20Cafe.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/ways-cultivate-your-emotional-resilience-year-elena-aguilar>
- <https://www.neamb.com/insurance/build-resilience-in-9-simple-steps.htm>
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