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**School Practitioner  
Listserv**

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network  
for Sharing and Interchange**



**December 8, 2014**

**Request from a Colleague**

**>Responding to Teacher Burnout**

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**>Reaction to "Variability in Community ADHD Care"**

**Center Featured Resource**

**>2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student  
and Learning Supports –**

**>Self-Study Surveys Revised for the Initiative Already Online**

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.  
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of  
the weekly exchange, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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## **R**equest from a Colleague

"How can I help teachers who are burnt out because they continuously have an unusually high number of 'behavioral students' in their class?"

## **C**enter Response:

As we find with so many of the problems experienced at schools, teacher burnout requires an understanding of causality. The causes of teacher burnout include institutional, impersonal, and personal factors. We know that most teachers come to the profession wanting to make a difference in the lives of students and society. Despite the talents they bring, classroom teaching challenges the best, and their work is widely undervalued.

Commonly cited data estimate that half of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The numbers reflect widespread institutional failure to create a working environment that supports teachers and students.

Those interested in this topic will find helpful resources by going to the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on *Burnout* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/burnout.htm>.

To start with a broad perspective, see the Center's document  
>*Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/burnout/burn1.pdf>

### **Excerpt:**

“Ultimately, the problem of minimizing burnout resolves down to

- reducing environmental stressors
- increasing personal capabilities
- enhancing job supports

The behavior referred to as burnout is a psychological phenomenon. One way to understand the problem is in terms of three psychological needs that theorists posit as major intrinsic motivational determinants of behavior. These are the need to feel competent, the need to feel self-determining, and the need to feel interpersonally connected. From this perspective, burnout can be viewed as among the negative outcomes that result when these needs are threatened and thwarted....

Each day elementary school teachers enter a classroom to work with about 30 students. Secondary teachers multiply that by a factor of at least five.

These students bring with them a wide variety of needs. And, in some classrooms, many students have become disengaged from the learning process. Upon entering the classroom, the teacher closes the door, and all present try to cope with each other and with the designated work. The day seldom goes smoothly, and many days are filled with conflict and failure...

From an intrinsic motivational perspective, a school that wants to prevent burnout needs to be experienced by staff and students as a caring, learning environment in which there is a strong collegial and social support structure and meaningful ways to participate in decision making. One key element is transforming working conditions by opening classroom doors and creating appropriate teams of staff and students who

support, nurture, and learn from each other every day. In general, the array of people who can end the isolation of teachers in classrooms includes: (a) aides and volunteers, (b) other regular/specialist teachers, (c) family members, (d) students, (e) student support staff, (f) school administrators, (g) classified staff, (h) teachers and other professionals-in-training, (i) school and community librarians, and more.”

***Teachers Can’t and Shouldn’t be Expected to Do it Alone!*** Schools must develop strategies that enable the above noted array of personnel to play a greater supportive role directly in classrooms. To this end, teachers need to be encouraged to learn how to invite in and work collaboratively with others in their classroom. And learning and student support staff need to learn more ways to work collaboratively with teachers *in the classroom*.

With respect to enhancing positive interactions between teachers and students, we always stress ways to support teachers in moving away from overrelying on social control techniques for classroom management and discipline. Students differ in terms of their engagement in learning as well as ability levels. Teachers need support in providing truly personalized learning opportunities and minimizing learning and behavior problems. Such support will enable them to get to know students in one-to-one and small group situations with a view to better matching teaching to student interests and abilities and maintaining a caring and responsive context for learning. To these ends, the process objectives are to develop a classroom infrastructure that transforms a big class into a set of smaller units and to use school and home strategies that prevent and immediately address a wide range of problems .

When a teacher encounters difficulty in working with students with mild-to-moderate behavior, learning, and emotional problems, they need more than discipline strategies. A few prominent examples of effective practices are: strategies to engage student interest and attention, one-to-one or small group instruction (e.g., tutoring, cooperative learning groups), enhancing protective factors and resiliency, and assets building (including use of curriculum-based approaches for promoting social emotional development), as well as an array of strategies for accommodating and teaching students in ways that compensate for differences, vulnerabilities, and disabilities. Again, such approaches are made feasible by opening the classroom door and inviting in support.

All the above are the focus of *classroom-based learning supports* (one of the six arenas of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports). See the Quick Find on this topic at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm>; and see the reference to the self-study survey on Classroom-based Learning Supports cited at the end of this *Practitioner*.

## **L**istserv Participants:

In your locale, how are teachers supported to keep them from becoming overwhelmed? Who works with them in the classroom to address problems? Send responses for sharing to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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# **F**eedback

## **Reaction from a colleague to November 24 Practitioner FYI about "Variability in community ADHD care"**

From a Supervisor of Special Education and 504 Services

“As a public school educator and administrator, I totally agree with the report. In my experience, many of these children are put on medication based solely on parent input, which is only sometimes problematic. There is such a wide variation in outcomes for these children in the school setting depending on how they react to the medication prescribed and to the whether the information from the parent was truly reflective of the student behavior at school.

Often times when behavior continues to interfere with learning environment the student will continue to receive consequences school. That is usually when I meet with a parent and suggest they discuss with the doctor what is happening at school. Many of my high poverty parents need guidance on how to manage their child's behavior problems by communicating with both school and doctor. They believe that the professional knows what is best.

What is missing in the equation is communication between the doctor and the school, but also advocacy for the parent to understand their role in the process to keep lines of communication flowing. The most successful students are those whose parents are able to communicate effectively both at school and in doctor offices.

The second missing piece is that of teaching students pro social skills to help them navigate the school environment. That has increasingly become the task of many schools, especially those with large numbers of high poverty students who come to school with a host of behaviors that become barriers to learning. Schools need to be given the resources to deal with these barriers because most educators are not equipped with those resources. Educators are struggling and would welcome assistance.

I find that about 95% of my day as an administrator was spent dealing with the social emotional needs of our students. As a district supervisor I now spend the majority of my time assisting schools to identify interventions to assist high need students whose extreme behaviors disrupt the learning environment of their peers. Finding alternatives for these students is increasingly becoming a burden on already stressed schools. For many of these students, their ADD/ADHD behaviors progressively become barriers to learning as they move up the grade levels. School become, increasingly, a difficult place for them to experience success as they get older.

In closing, the solution I see as having the best outcomes, is connecting these students to community resources. The key to success though, is keeping lines of communication flowing between schools, parents, and community care/health services.”

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## Center Featured Resource

### ***2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports will be launched in January – Revised Self-study Surveys Already Online***

We are morphing the New Directions initiative into a direct action movement. The aim is to mobilize direct action to (a) elevate school improvement policy discussion for ending the marginalization of student/learning supports and (b) move toward transformation of such supports.

During 2015, we will increase our Center's support of those pioneering state and district initiatives that already are implementing learning supports as a third component of school improvement policy, as well as coaching and providing technical assistance for those who indicate a desire to move forward.

In addition to releasing a new online book entitled *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*, our Center will be revising and adding to our online, free resources – including professional development activities, powerpoints, implementation resources, and the System Change Toolkit. And, of course, we also will continue providing free online technical assistance and coaching.

***Revised Self-study Surveys Already Online.*** The new book will include an updated set of the Center's popular self-study surveys focusing on the six content arenas of a learning supports component. We have already replaced the old surveys online. They can be accessed through the System change tool kit (see Self-study Surveys in Section C) or downloaded directly as indicated below.\* Please share these resources with interested colleagues.

***Interested in transforming student and learning supports?*** Let us hear your views about direct action to end the marginalization and transform student and learning supports. Also, let us know if you are ready to move forward to develop a Learning Supports Component to better address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. And let us hear your perspective on how all this fits with the current local, state, and federal agenda for school improvement and how mental health in schools is embedded. Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or to [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)

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\*Download the full set of surveys at  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>

Or access each separately as follows:

>*Introduction to Self-Study Surveys*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/intro.pdf>

>*General Overview survey of Student & Learning Supports Activity, Processes, and Mechanisms* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/general.pdf>

(1) *Classroom-based Learning Supports*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/classroomsurvey.pdf>

(2) *Supports for transitions*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionsurvey.pdf>

(3) *Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/homeinvolvementsurvey.pdf>

(4) *Community Outreach and Collaborative Engagement*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/communityoutreachsurvey.pdf>

(5) *Crisis Assistance and Prevention*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/crisissurvey.pdf>

(6) *Student and Family Special Assistance*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/studentfamilysurvey.pdf>

Note: Center resources can readily be revised to fit a specific situation for local schools/communities. Please feel free to adapt them.

***Please share relevant resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences! Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)***

**Note: Responses come only to the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA for possible inclusion in the next week's message.**

**We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange* on our website at**

**<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>**

**and to *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page**

**<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>**

**For Recent Previous Postings, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>**