

Educators: Care for your mental health

As an educator going back to school in the context of COVID-19, you are likely to experience stress. Here are some ways to care for yourself, your family and colleagues:



Care for yourself

Look after your health:

- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise, eat sensibly, minimise alcohol and avoid smoking.
- Find fun or creative activities to do.
- If you have a chronic condition, adhere to your treatment.

Have healthy work habits

- Manage your time sensibly.
- Remind yourself of your purpose as a teacher.
- Be sure about your role and responsibility.

Minimise exposure to news sources that cause anxiety:

Seek information from trusted sources such as

- www.sacoronavirus.co.za
- www.nicd.ac.za
- www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Use your senses to relieve family stress

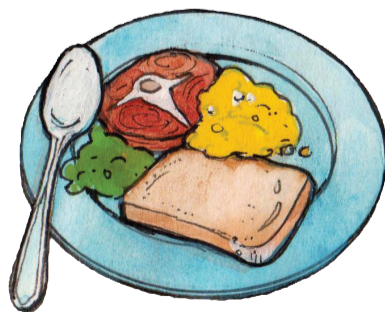
Sight and sound

If possible, go outside together and appreciate nature; watch an uplifting movie. Relax and listen to music together.



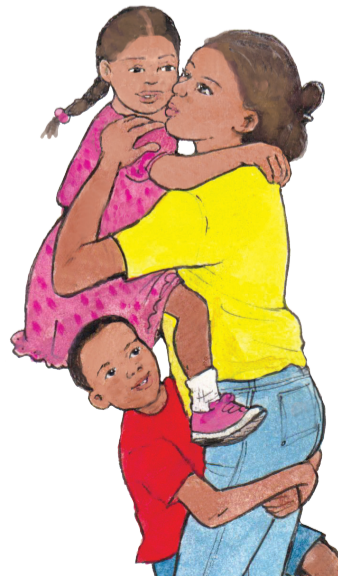
Smell and taste

Enjoy the smells and taste of home-cooked food together.



Touch

Give the family you are living with a daily hug.



Movement

Engage in physical activities like dancing and exercise together.



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Support your colleagues

Work with care:

- Treat colleagues and learners with respect.
- Support one another. Consider setting up a staff support group.
- Focus on finding solutions to problems in a supportive way.



Encourage teamwork

- Examine the team's workload to see how you can share tasks.
- Identify what needs to be changed to make the job easier: equipment, supplies, teaching space.
- Discuss each team member's role. Encourage everyone to participate in the team.

Recognise the signs of burnout:

Muscle tension, restlessness, irritability, difficulty sleeping, poor concentration, tiredness.

Where to get help:

- The province has an employee health and wellness service provided by Metropolitan Health.
- The service is available to all WCED employees and their immediate family members. It provides support for various issues, from family challenges, financial advice, relationships, medical advice and work-related challenges. These services have been adapted to help manage stress, anxiety and health during the current crises.
- Employees can contact the EHWP on their toll-free number: 0800 111 011 to have a confidential conversation with one of their counsellors.
- Employees can also send them a "Please call me" on *134*664*38# or email them at wced@mhg.co.za.
- More information can be accessed via the WCED's EHWP web portal at: <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/employee-health-and-wellnessprogramme>.



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