



## New Teachers and Work/Life Balance

You've chosen a brilliant and rewarding career which will have many high points. There will also be tough times. The important thing is to recognize this and take care of yourself. Stress will not only affect your life as a teacher, but also your home life.

Remember, stress is not a weakness, and you are not failing if you feel stressed.

### Dealing with stress

- You have a professional responsibility to monitor your health and wellbeing.
- Recognize your stress, and be aware of the issues you face at work and at home.
- Take action. Deal with one thing at a time, and ask for support. Involve your colleagues if the issue is an organizational one.
- Change your thinking. Step back and take a fresh look at the situation.
- Make boundaries - something produced in three hours will be different from something produced in one hour, but is it any better?
- Keep fit. Exercise regularly and make sure you're eating healthily. Try to avoid increasing your intake of alcohol and caffeine, and although smoking may seem to help, it really doesn't. A healthy lifestyle makes it easier for our bodies to cope with the effects of stress.
- Rest and relax. Keep at least one day of the weekend free and try to avoid taking work home on at least one evening.
- Make sure you get sufficient sleep each night.
- Avoid paper shifting.
- Visit your doctor if things aren't improving.

### Tips for maintaining a healthy work-life balance

- Speak up when work expectations and demands are too much. Senior staff members need to be aware of those pressures in order to help you address them.
- Others will not expect you to know everything or have all the answers - so don't expect this of yourself.
- Prioritize - try to 'work smart, not long'. Set yourself a certain amount of time per task, and try not to get caught up in unproductive activities.
- Take breaks. This can sometimes be difficult when you have responsibilities out of the classroom, but do your best to break for lunch at least, and get out of the classroom.
- Draw a line between work and home. If you do need to bring work home, make sure you have a designated working area - that you can close the door on.

- Try to ensure that family, friends, exercise and leisure activities don't suffer because of long working hours.
- Assess your work- life balance in collaboration with your colleagues if you can. The more visible the process, the more likely it is to have an effect.