

Just Great Teacher Wellbeing

Supporting teachers, worldwide



@TeacherToolkit

Classroom Ideas, Teacher Training & School Resources

Less than ten years ago, you would struggle to find much academic research to support promoting teacher wellbeing and how it equates to higher pupil outcomes.

Today, this evidence base is now changing.

There are a small [sample of books](#) I'll reference in this resource, as well as my own work to reduce teacher workload and improve teacher wellbeing over the last 10 years. I'll also discuss the nature of toxic schools, a conversation nobody ever wants to have, unpicking the necessary factors in the teaching profession which drive teachers away from the classroom prematurely.



In this resource, you'll be presented with lots of thoughts about how to improve YOUR wellbeing. In turn, this can have an impact on your students.

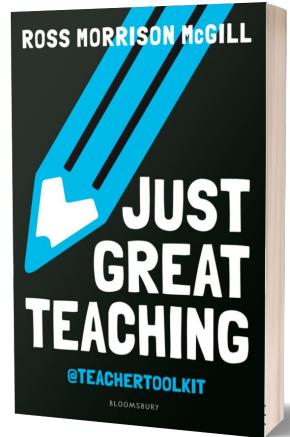
We know that the process that causes a teacher to leave the profession is something that starts a long time before a teacher actually leaves...

(Lindqvist and Nordänger, 2016 - page 75)

The key to developing teacher wellbeing as a strength, is to embed it within the culture of the school, ensuring everyone takes shared responsibility for it.

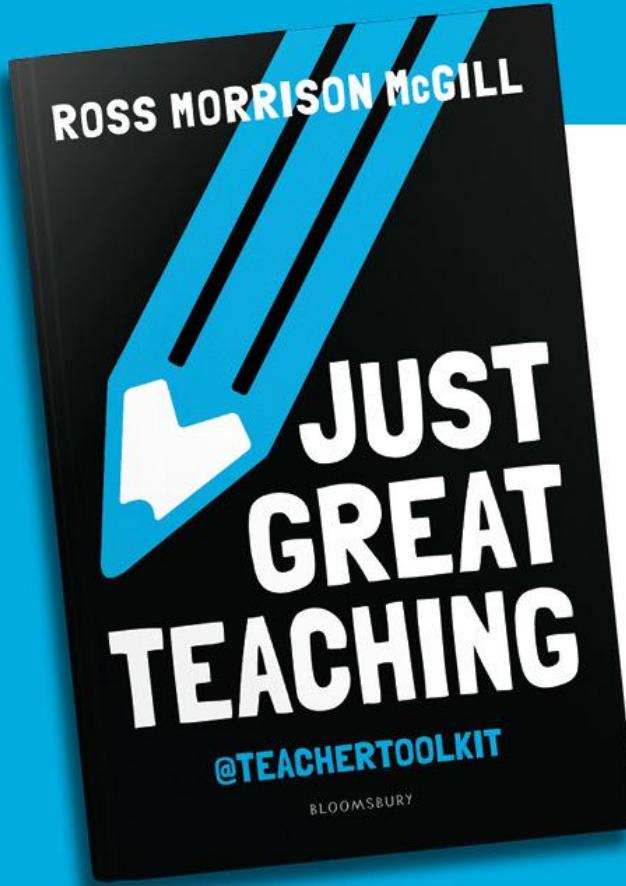
McGill, 2017

[Amzn.to/3klnlyz](https://amzn.to/3klnlyz)



10,000 Data Insights

@TeacherToolkit
Classroom Ideas, Teacher Training & School Resources



#JUSTGREATTEACHING



TEACHER WELLBEING

'54% of teachers and school leaders say teacher wellbeing is a weakness at their school, while only 26% say it is a strength.'

BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION

What does the research suggest?

1. In 2018–19, the DfE needed to recruit 32,226 new teachers.
2. For every 1% increase in pay for a shortage-subject teacher, there is a 3.1% reduction attrition. (*Education Policy Institute, 2019*)
3. Dating back to 2003, studies show teachers leave the profession due to workload in education (*Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014*).
4. British teachers (Varkey) said they were working longer hours per week (50.9) than anywhere else in the world, apart from New Zealand, Singapore and Chile.

Idea 1



Let's all talk about mental health

Workload and toxicity...

Workload is often associated with teacher mental ill-health, rather than having too much work!

45% (of 3,000 young teachers) plan to leave the profession in the next 5 years with half pointing to concerns for their mental health (NUT, Pells, 2017).



Figure 27: Secondary teachers', middle and senior leaders' views on the effects of revisions to schools' policies and approaches, which had been made as part of a specific attempt to reduce workload

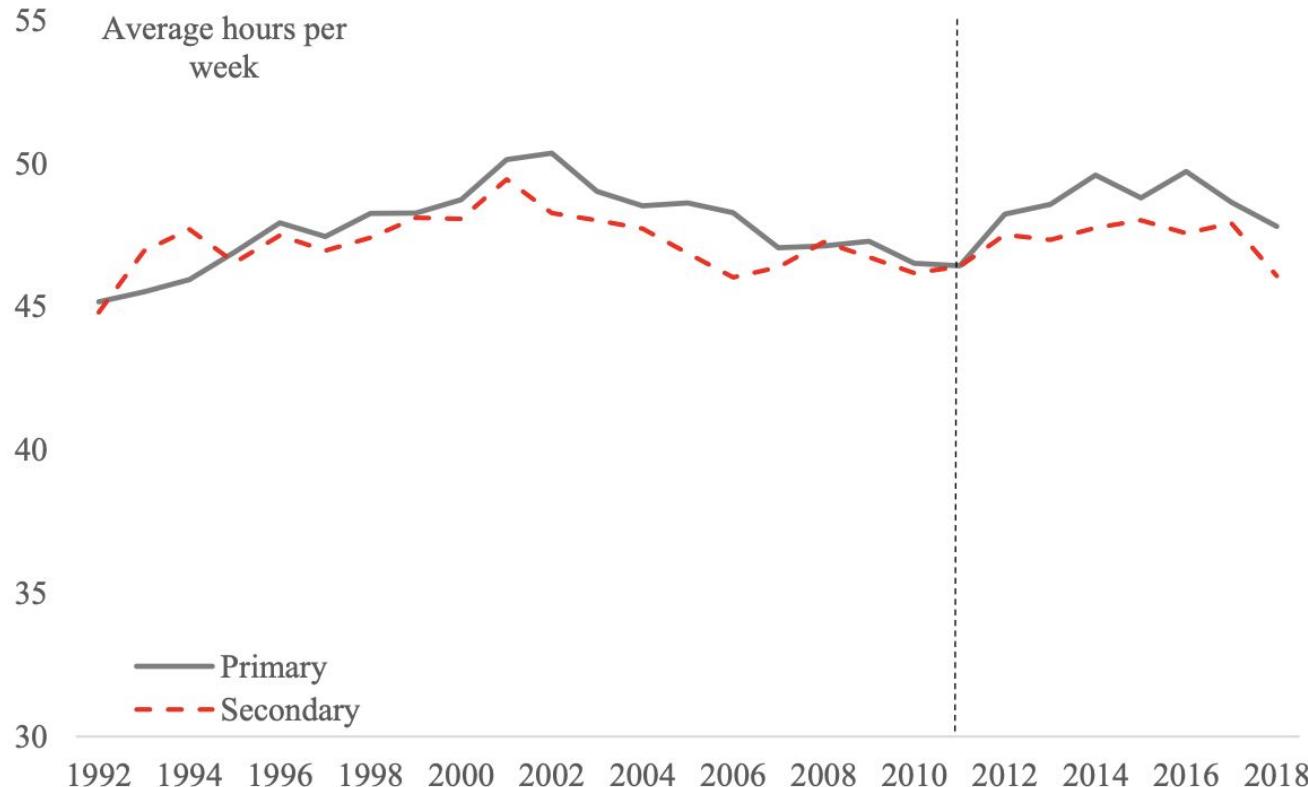


2016 vs. 2019

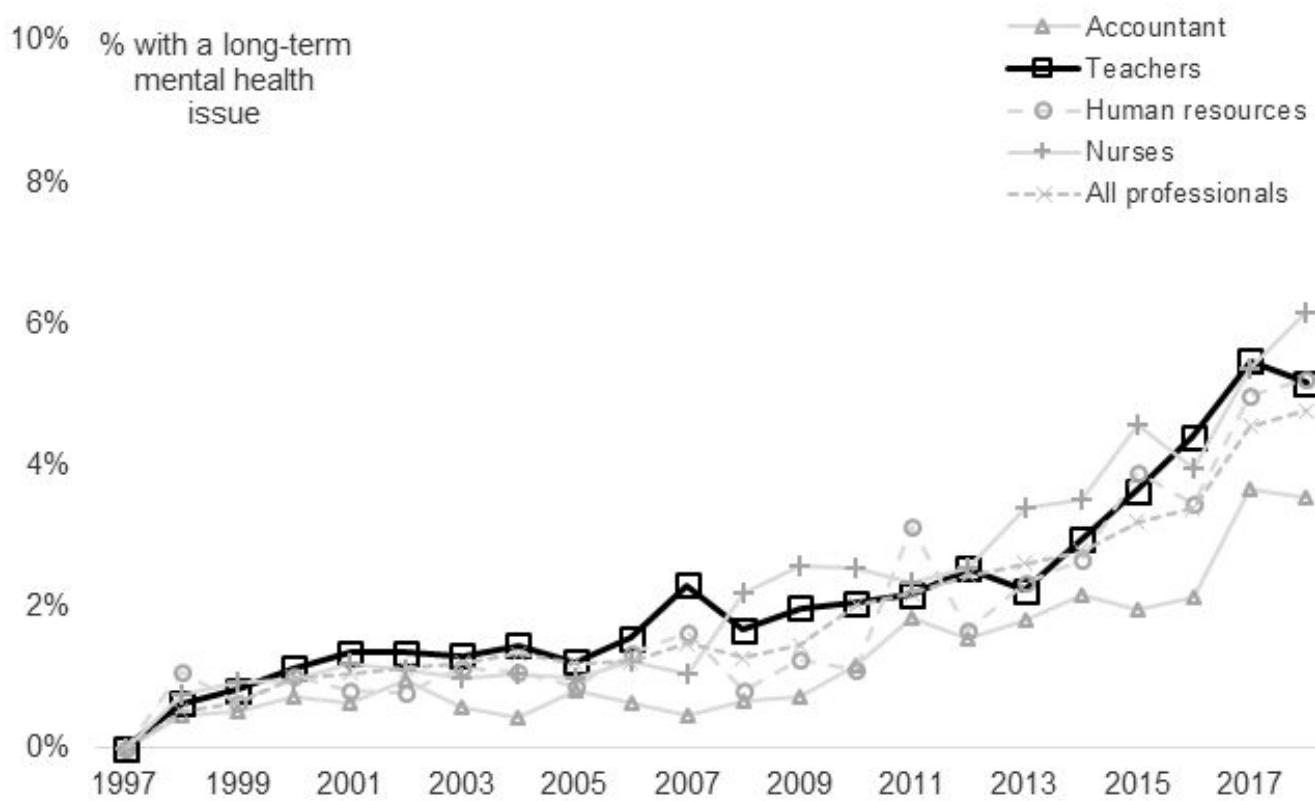
Biggest shifts:

1. **Marking and feedback** 23%
2. **Data collection** 15%
3. **Lesson plans** 13%
4. **Behaviour** 10%
5. **Appraisal** 10%

Figure 5. Trends in the average working hours of teachers between 1992 and 2018



Mental Health increasing...



What teachers tell me...

A sample of social media messages I receive from teacher working in a school near you...



Just been told by one of the Deputy Heads in my school that "A childcare emergency is not an acceptable reason for not attending directed time meeting". Both my wife and I are teachers and middle leaders (she has a meeting too) in separate schools. I've seen situations where female members of staff are allowed childcare emergencies, but I get "We've all got kids". Also no family friendly policy in place. It's enough to stop me wanting to turn up to work. Unions have been informed.

What teachers tell me...

A sample of social media messages I receive from teacher working in a school near you...



It's been a very tough time. I'll quote him, "I'm going to fucking destroy you! You'll never teach again!" So far has sabotaged 4 job offers

very personal vendetta that will have far reaching consequences for me and my kids. I need to find someone who can look past my reference. I'm impressing every school I interview at and getting job offers. But once they've spoken to those offers

evaporate 😔 keeps me awake at night if I'm honest

9:45 am

What teachers tell me...

A sample of social media messages I receive from teacher working in a school near you...



Hi! This is a really random question but thought it would be interesting to hear your stance.

My schools new policy is that we must produce learning maps (posh term for in-depth and lengthy lesson plans) for every single lesson!! We have not been provided with any extra PPA to produce these and it is completely unachievable, and after seeing your last post relating to work for the sake of work, wondered if you have seen any other schools across the country having to battle with school policy in this way?

- 1. Do you speak up to politely and constructively challenge any extra workload that does not seem to be beneficial to students?**
- 2. Are you a problem solver, or a problem finder?**
- 3. When last did you say 'No' when asked to do a task?**
- 4. Who do you go to when you are struggling?**
- 5. Do you 'pull' or 'push' your emails to your devices?**
- 6. Do you collect work emails on a personal device? Who pays the bill?**
- 7. What are your plans for this weekend?**

8 Characteristics of a Toxic School



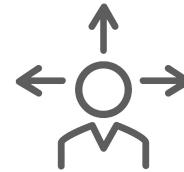
High staff turnover



A 'sinking' school



A 'hothouse' school



Repeated restructuring

1



Bureaucracy

2



Teaching culture
“Balkanisation”

3



Teaching culture
“Individualism”

4



A 'groupthink'
mentality

5

6

7

8

Leaving a toxic school

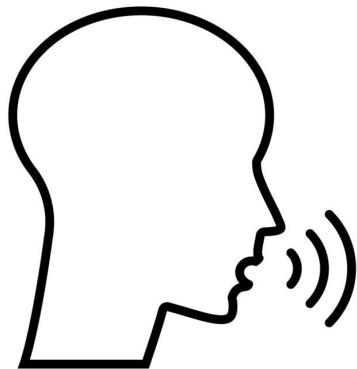
Always communicate your intentions...

- 1. Notice period**
- 2. Social media; keep your cards close**
- 3. Voluntary redundancy**
- 4. Agreed references**
- 5. Involve your union from start to finish - join a new one if you have to!**



[Read more...](#)

Idea 2



Make a wellbeing promise to yourself

Decision making and choices

Nigel Marsh

“Pause for a moment and take stock of your miserable existence....

If you do not define your meaning of work-life balance, someone else will design it for you ...

... and you may just not like their idea of balance.”



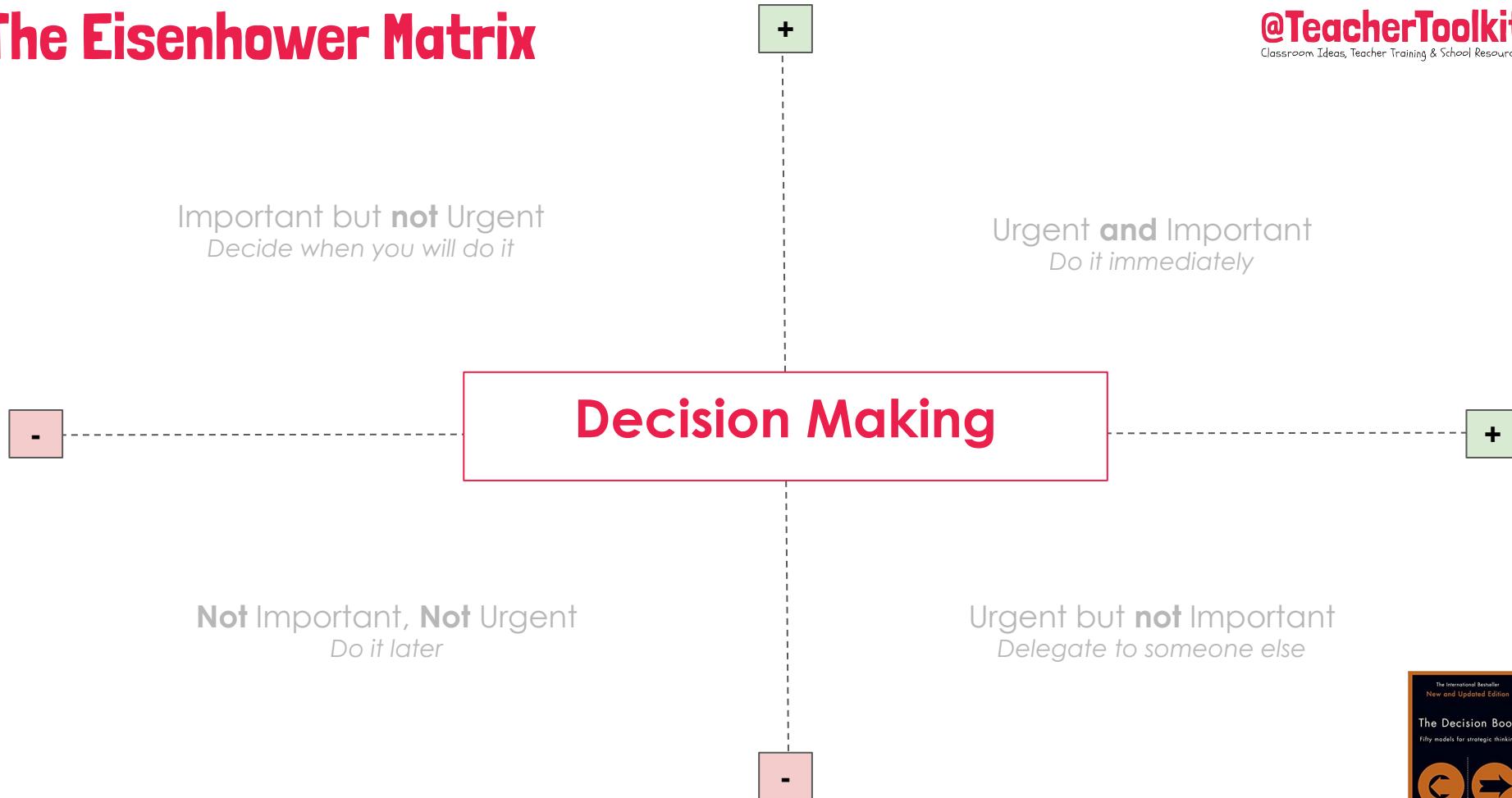


**How to make
work-life
balance work...**

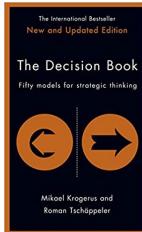
Nigel Marsh

WATCH
bit.ly/NigelMarsh

The Eisenhower Matrix



[The Decision Book](#), Krogerus and Tschappeler, 2017



Which apple?

Envy

Golden Delicious

Honey Crisp

Pink Lady

Red Delicious

Granny Smith

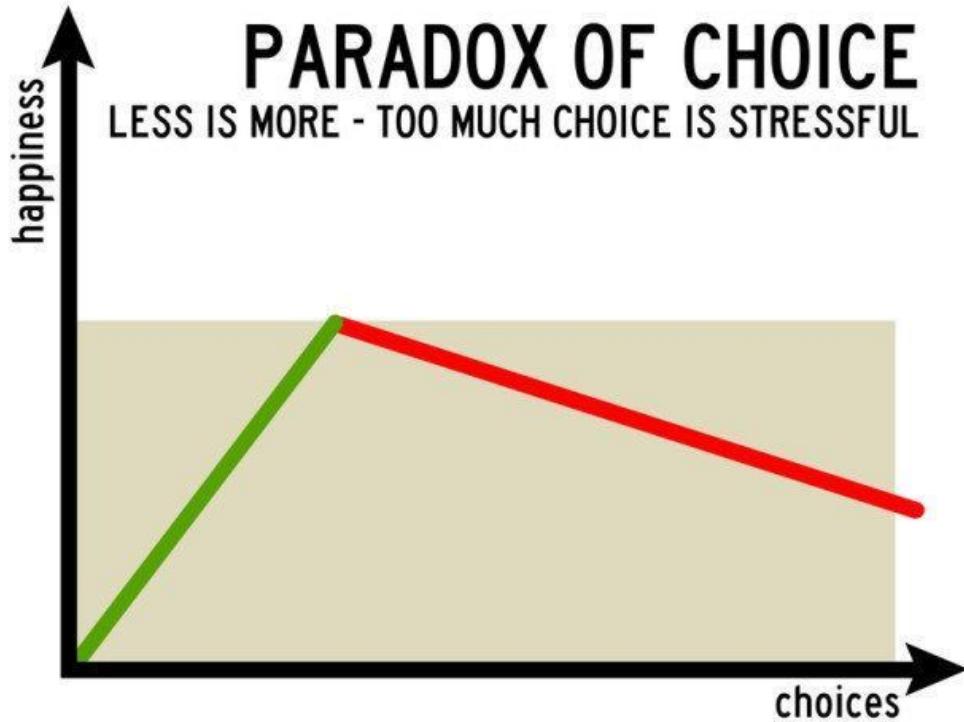


Which apple?

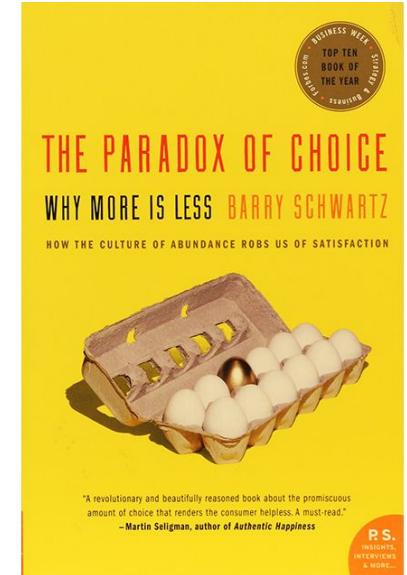
Granny Smith



Pink Lady



[The Paradox of Choice](#), Barry Schwartz, 2016



The Jam Study: [Read more](#)

“When participants were faced with a smaller rather than larger array of jam, they were actually more satisfied with their tasting.”

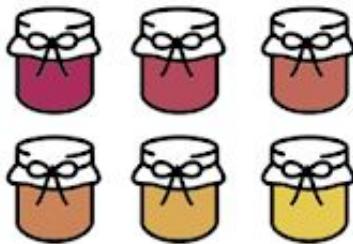
Too many choices?



24 choices of jam

attracted 60% of the shoppers

3% of shoppers bought jam



6 choices of jam

attracted 40% of the shoppers

30% of shoppers bought jam

Sheena Iyengar Columbia University and
Mark Lepper of Stanford University

The Boston Matrix

+

Growth



Question Marks

The future potential is doubtful...

-

Share

+

Strategic Planning

an important model for allocating resources



Dogs

Not worth investing, low growth

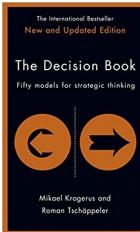


Stars
Rapid growth...



Cash Cows

Create profit, but need replaced



[The Decision Book](#), Krogerus and Tschappeler, 2017

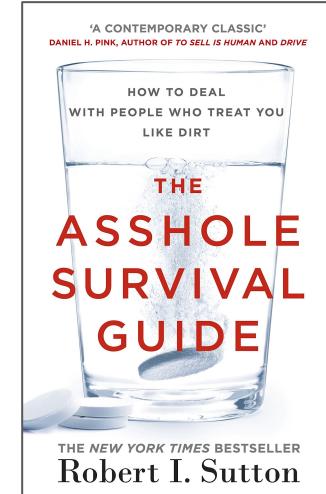
Idea 3



Improving your wellbeing consciousness

Self-reflection and control

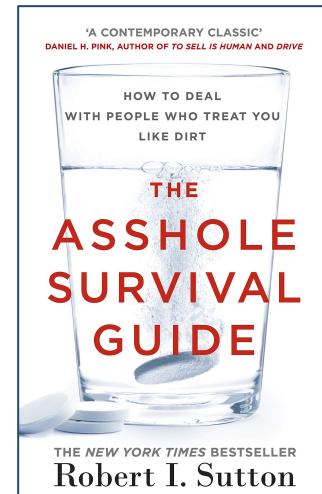
'Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, first make sure that you are not, in fact, just surrounded by assholes.'



[The Asshole Survival Guide](#), by Robert I. Sutton 2018

Are you working with a bully?

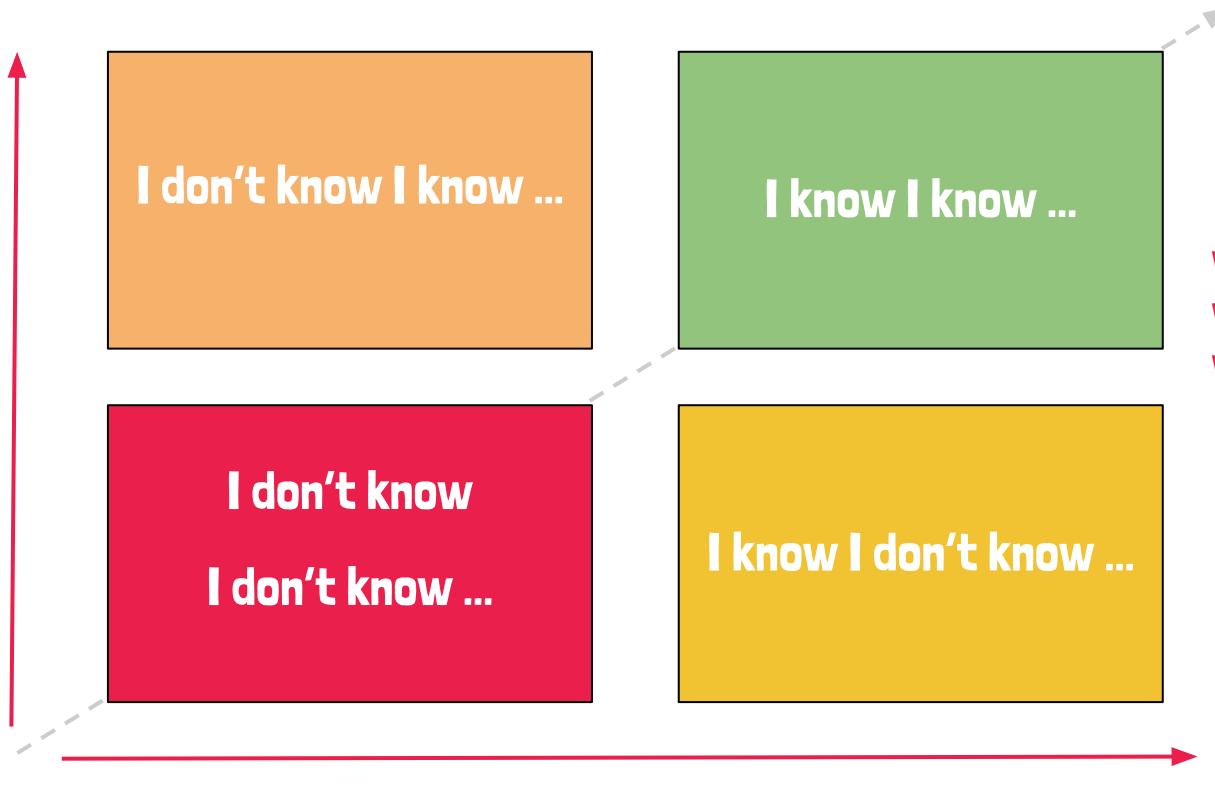
1. Shouting or interrupting.
2. Passive aggressive behaviour, e.g. invisible and ignoring requests.
3. Choosing the same people, i.e. having favourites.
4. Asking, 'Are you done with this yet?'
5. Holding mandatory meetings just for the sake of it.
6. Being taunted for working 'too hard'.
7. Name calling or constant teasing.
8. Glaring or wearing a 'morning' face.
9. Treating everything as an emergency.
10. Loud object-banging or using the 'F-word' in every sentence.



[The Asshole Survival Guide](#), by Robert I. Sutton 2018

Making The Unknown, Known

Unknown
Visibles



What do I know?
What do I not know?
What do I know I don't know?

References:
Coaching for teaching and learning:
a practical guide for schools,
CfBT Education Trust (2011)

Known
Visibles

After-School & Weekend Planner

How do you plan to walk away from work?

Day	Example	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Event	Gym							

Tips for logging off...

Push or Pull emails? The major difference is the method of message retrieval.

When "Push" is configured, emails arriving instantly into your inbox.

With “Fetch” means YOU CHOOSE...

Accounts Fetch New Data

Push

New data will be pushed to your iPhone from the server when possible.

EdD
Mail, Contacts, Calendars Fetch >

Yahoo!
Mail Fetch >

Gmail
Mail, Calendars Fetch >

Support
Mail, Contacts, Calendars Fetch >

Holiday Calendar
Calendars Fetch >

iCloud
iCloud Drive, Mail, Contacts, Safari and 6 more... Fetch >

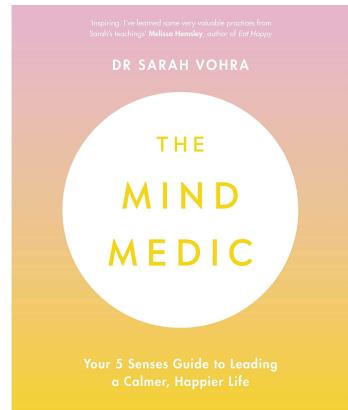
Ross Morrison McGill
Contacts, Calendars Fetch >

'Letting go' of perfection!

Ask yourself:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a perfectionist?
2. Do you always think that you should give something 100%?
3. Do you spend a long time making decisions for fear of getting it wrong?
4. Do you find the simplest task and take longer for you to complete?
5. Do you struggle when other people are tasked with making a decision?
6. After you have done something, do you find yourself being self-critical?
7. Do you find that you always put things off?

[The Mind Medic](#), by Dr Sarah Vohra 2020

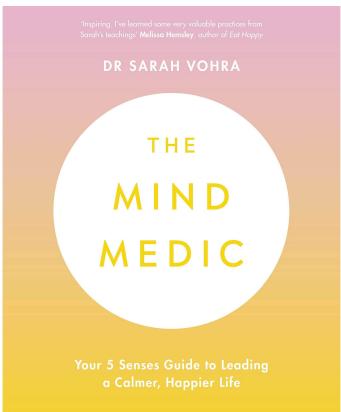


The 5 senses overview

See	Hear	Smell	Feel	Taste
Screen use	Hear yourself	Breathe in: mindfulness and meditation	Time to worry	Food glorious food
Social media	Just say 'no'	The smell of the great outdoors	Perfectly imperfect	Keeping it regular
Body image	Mark of approval	Smelling the bullshit	Feel confident in your own skin	Throwing out the rule book
Change your outlook	Start to hear compliments	Sweet smell of success	Lightening the load when feeling under pressure	The drug and supplement trap
Choosing the people you see	Taking criticism on the chin	Scents, sleep and all things self-care	Stop feeling like an impostor	Revenge tastes so sweet

"The 5 senses plan is a simple method to help you pinpoint your life stresses... You experience the world through your senses... and you may struggle to put your finger on what it is about a particular interaction."

[The Mind Medic](#), by Dr Sarah Vohra 2020



Idea 4



A whole-school wellbeing policy

Strategy for impact on others...

*Off the top of your head, jot down
10 wellbeing ideas your school currently offers its staff....*

1. Is your wellbeing policy more than a piece of paper?
2. How do your support staff feel about their CPD?
3. Can teachers walk out of school at 3.30pm?
4. When staff depart your school, are they gushing with genuine emotion?
5. Are all teacher deadlines monitored by one person?



Staff Wellbeing Policy – 10 Ideas

1. No written lesson plans of any kind.
2. No pressure to put on a show in lessons. A culture of typicality is reinforced by no lesson gradings.
3. No cover duty for more than one lesson, every half term.
4. No expectation to answer emails outside school hours.
5. No written reports to parents or carers.
6. Marking is for one audience and one audience only: students.
7. No data is to be entered more than once.
8. CPD is delivered as twilight finishes by 4.15pm, with days off in lieu.
9. CPD on managing stress is provided with a message, that keeping things to yourself is not a sign of strength.
10. Open-door senior leadership – no concern is ever too small, and senior leaders are very visible at all times..

A wellbeing policy

1. Look at this wellbeing policy website

www.barrbeaconschool.co.uk/47-things-we-do-staff-well-being

2. Does your school have a wellbeing policy?
3. If so, what features in it?
4. If not, what would you include?



Barr Beacon School
Proud to Succeed

Staff well-being: 50* things we do

*and counting

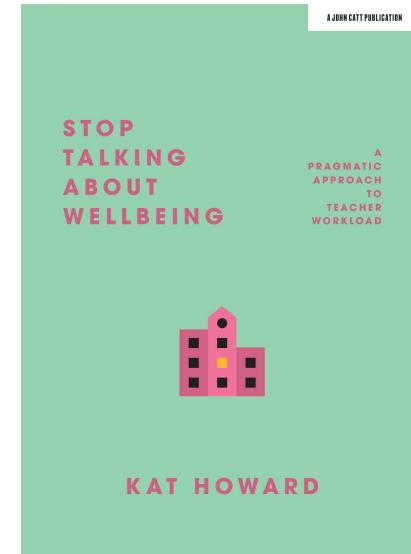
Teaching and learning, planning and curriculum

- We trust teachers to decide the best approaches for their pupils.
- Teaching and learning policy is co-designed with subject specialists because they know what works best for different subjects.
- No need to write lesson plans of any kind.
- Although schemes of work and resources are provided, they are not prescriptive – teachers can adapt them however they like.
- 22/25 periods of teaching per week maximum.
- No nonsense differentiation. E.g. No need to add 'stretch tasks' or bolt anything on. No V.A.K. No differentiated outcomes. Differentiation = everyone teaches for the top, with some just requiring more support than others.
- Expert media team for designing lesson resources, editing videos, etc.
- No pressure to 'put on a show' in lessons: A culture of typicality is reinforced by no lesson gradings (outstanding, good, etc).
- No one covers more than one lesson a half term.
- A culture of 'geek is chic', with pupils eager to learn.

A wellbeing manifesto for schools...

“Workload is intrinsically linked to your wellbeing”, yet wellbeing is “a distant concept that no-one really masters in reality...”

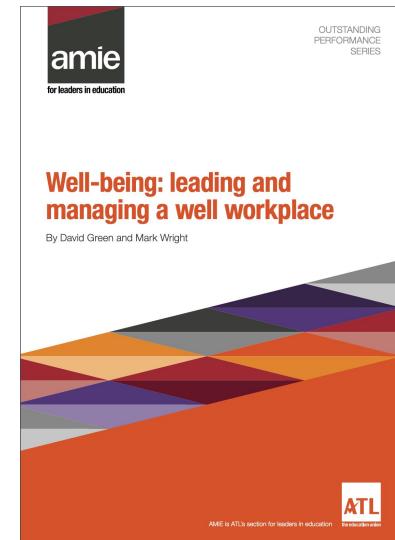
1. Place priority upon the work teacher do, e.g. Mark, Plan, Teach
2. Balance workload with fewer things in depth
3. Eradicate hierarchy and give staff a voice
4. Ensure that humanity is central to schools
5. Train staff in order to move them onwards
6. Avoid fear
7. Master gratitude



6 signs of a healthy workplace

Six specific indicators which all contribute towards what prompts a sense of evident wellbeing in a healthy workplace (within several minutes of visiting):

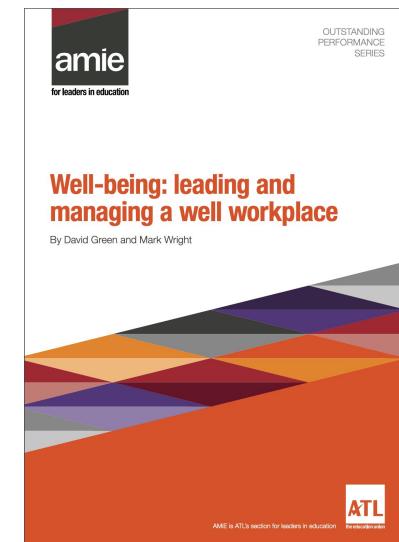
1. Line managers are confident and trained in people skills
2. Employees feel valued and involved in the organisation
3. Jobs are flexible and well-designed
4. Managers have work in knowledge and practical experience
5. Managers promote a wellbeing culture, particularly return to work discussions for staff who have been sick
6. Managers know how to deal with common problems E.g. stress



Leading a wellbeing workplace strategy

This book is produced by ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers), now the National Education Union. It was published in 2014 and is full of great advice. One example from Pro Derek Mowbray recommends the following framework:

Monitoring	Culture	Leadership	Working environment	Personal resilience
Assessment of staff wellbeing	Purpose	Ethics	Staff health	Self awareness
	Vision and values	The person		Determination
	Culture	The leader		Vision
	Corporate strategy	The style		Self confidence
	Structure	Emerging leaders		Organisation
	Rules	Adaptive		Problem solving
	Resolving issues			Interaction
	Partnerships			Relationships



Mental Health support...

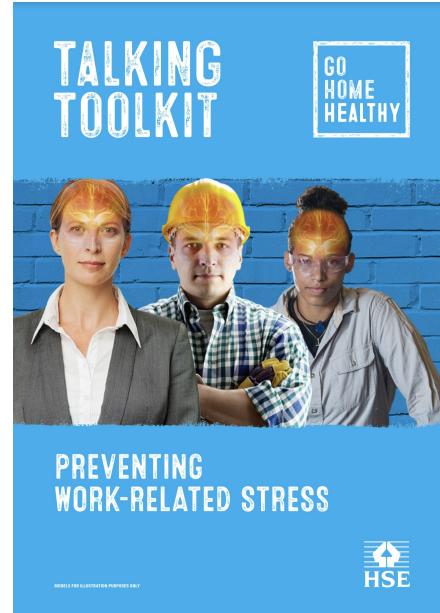
Presenteeism is the condition of being at work when you really should be at home because of illness.

editionsupport.org.uk

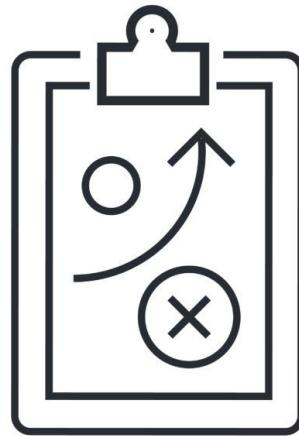


Practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector to help people deal with stress and anxiety, bullying, career and money worries...

www.hse.gov.uk



Idea 5



Taking control of teacher workload

Marking and meetings are the biggest gripe from teachers.

Top tips for rethinking marking in your school

- 1. Review assessment policies and get rid of ‘unnecessary’ marking processes.**
- 2. Remove the numerical features of all teaching and learning policies and focus on impact:**
 - a) Can a teacher manage the workload? (Start with the teacher who teaches the most children and work backwards.)
 - b. Does a teacher's feedback motivate and mean something to the student?
 - c. Does it leave the student with more work to do?
- 3. Banish the word ‘marking’ and replace the term with ‘feedback’. This can connote several things: written, verbal and non-verbal feedback, which places quality over quantity – always.**
- 4. Think about what your teachers are there to do and minimise or abandon the amount of administrative work they do. After you've thought about it, commit to doing something about it.**
- 5. Take something away from the teachers' workload tomorrow and they will thank you for it!**



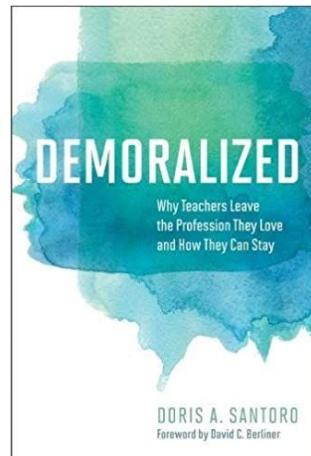
Top tips for rethinking meetings in your school

1. A stand-up meeting will go quickly, particularly if it involves a difficult conversation.
2. Turn meetings into professional development sessions. Instead of 'information receiving', ask those attending to 'bring and brag' ideas for information sharing.
3. Try walk-about meetings if only a couple or a handful of people are involved. They are good for your physical and mental health, and can drive fresh thinking.
4. Change the venue or rotate who chairs the meeting.
5. Plan a one-hour meeting but bring people together for 30 minutes only, then give them 30 minutes to go away and actually do the things you agreed and discussed.



Making sense of burnout...

1. *Don't confuse demoralization with burnout. The misidentification leads to ineffective remedies*
2. *Moral concerns in teaching need to be understood as a matter of professional ethics, rather than personal dilemmas.*
3. *Demoralization in teachers threatens the moral commitments and values that sustain many teachers' careers*
4. *School leaders and unions can exacerbate and alleviate demoralization.*
5. *Well-resourced schools are not exempt from reforms, which have demoralizing consequences for teachers.*
6. *Re-moralization is possible; it entails cultivating an authentic professional community.*



[Demoralized](#), Doris A. Santoro, 2018

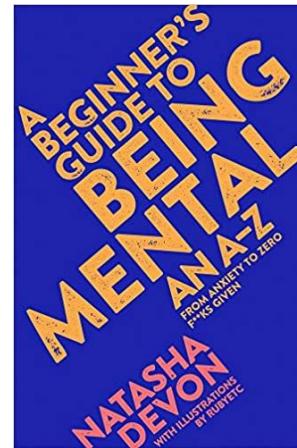
The Stress Bucket

"The model works on the basis that we all have a stress bucket (or stress container), the size of which varies according to our resilience. Those who experience a large amount of personal trauma are likely to have a small stress bucket that fills up relatively easily. It's important to acknowledge that stress is both inevitable and unavoidable... Self-harming behaviour like drinking, taking drugs or overeating are potentially unhelpful ways of seeking, what are, in actuality, human needs."

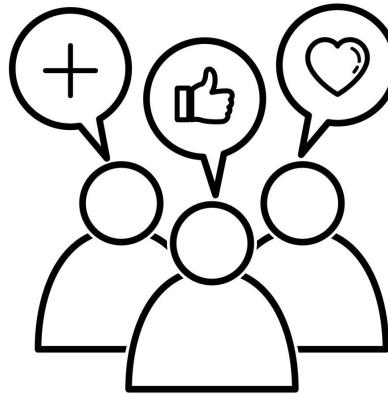
Solutions?

- Sport and exercise
- The arts
- Mindfulness
- Sleep...

[A Beginners Guide To Being Mental](#), Natasha Devon, 2018



Idea 6



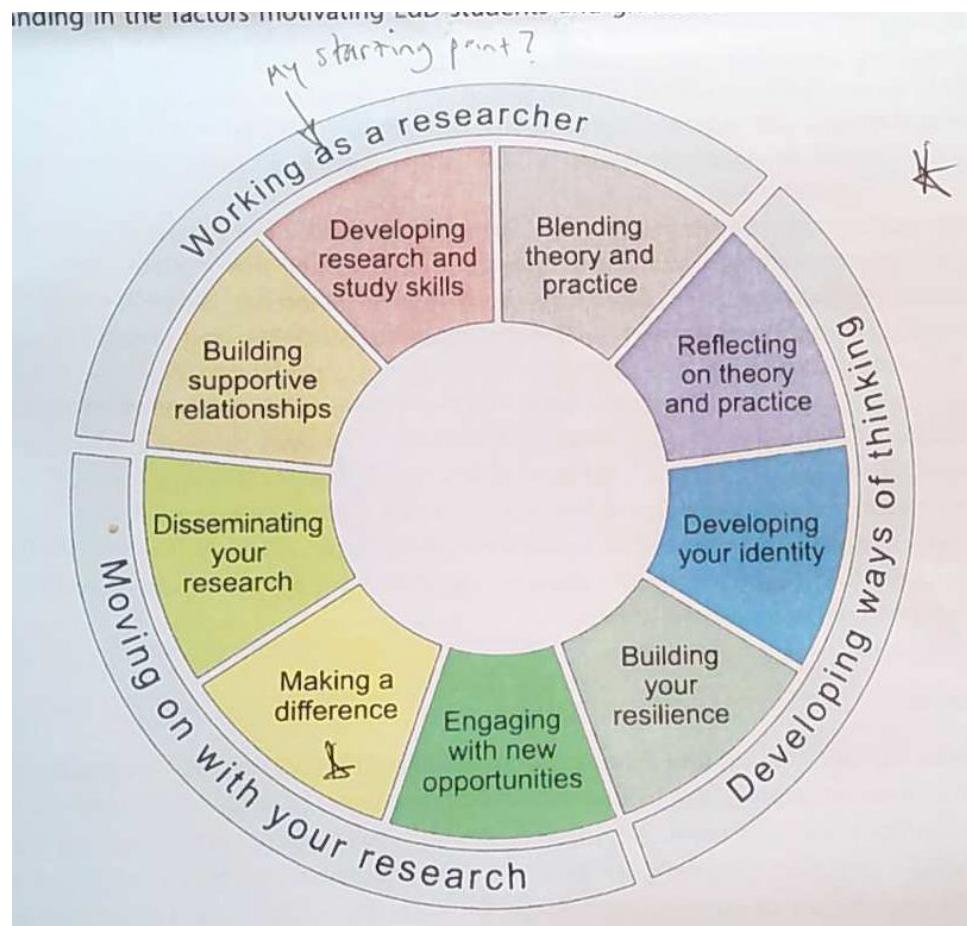
Wellbeing and professional development

How can schools take a research-informed approach to develop relevant and effective professional development opportunities around staff wellbeing?



Researching Practitioner Development Framework

Schools can use this framework to define and nurture any professional development opportunities that aim to establish a wellbeing culture.



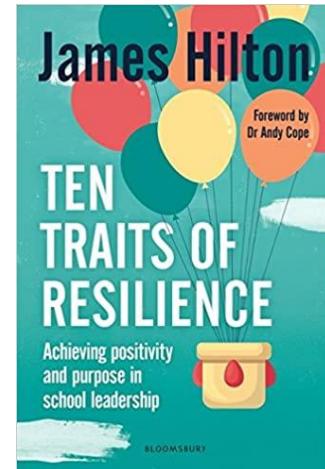
Researching Practitioner Development Framework (RPDF)

1. Working as a researcher:	
• building supportive relationships	
• developing research and study skills	
• blending theory and practice	
2. Developing ways of thinking:	
• reflecting on theory and practice	
• developing your identity	
• building your resilience.	
3. Moving on with research:	
• engaging with new opportunities	
• making a difference	
• disseminating research.	

7 tips on being more self-reliant

1. Be the source of your own self-confidence. Regularly list and remind yourself of your successes
2. Don't become reliant on others to motivate you are crazy
3. Toughen up (a little). We sometimes need to grow a thicker skin
4. Don't be oversensitive to criticism, particularly if someone is trying to help you improve
5. Don't allow fear of rejection or failure to haunt you
6. Remind yourself that usually massive rejection and failure or necessary precursor to success
7. Treat failure and rejection as feedback information.

Analyse it and then use it to build improve plans for a better future.



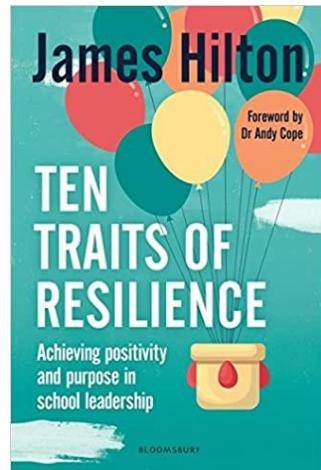
Developing curiosity in teachers

"Whilst some people just want to turn up and do the job and go home, others are up for the challenge and will do whatever they can to make things better for students despite the odds been stacked against them.

Early adopters of new ideas want to ask more reliable questions about the current model of our education system. The context in which we work affects our curiosity.

If I am a leader in an outstanding school or one in special measures, what I am curious about will be very different to someone else. Either way, we must use this curiosity to develop the profession as a whole, rather than seek to attain any accolades for a system that currently only recognises schools fall on the better half of the bell curve" (Ross McGill).

[Ten Traits of Resilience](#), James Hilton, 2018



"It's long been a commonly-held belief that those working in the education sector are at an increased risk of experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing compared to people in other, less stressful jobs."
([TES staff wellbeing report](#), October 2020)

What do you need to do to get started?



Tips for making wellbeing a school priority

1. Wellbeing is taken seriously by all staff; a shared responsibility
2. It's a high-priority and part of the school culture; part of school development plans
3. Consistency stems from constant professional development; nothing ad-hoc
4. Aims are realistic with a protected budget; appoint a wellbeing lead
5. Draw support from Investors in People; plus create a staff voice forum
6. Increase time spent on meaningful activities and equip individuals to manage their mental health.
7. There is some great advice in the NCB booklet...



Partnership for Well-being and Mental Health in Schools

A whole school framework for emotional well-being and mental health

SUPPORTING RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Sue Stirling and Dr Hilary Emery

This set of resources complements the whole school framework self-assessment and improvement tool and is specifically designed to be used by school leaders when applying the tool. See A whole school framework for emotional well-being and mental health in schools for more information on how to use the self-assessment available at <http://www.ncb.org.uk/partnership-well-being-and-mental-health-schools>.

If brings together the research evidence and provides practical support for setting out additional interventions and actions to support the emotional well-being and mental health needs of both students and staff.

SECTION ONE: Actions from the evidence
Key elements of an evidence based what works approach
DfE guidance on school cultures and structures

SECTION TWO: Tools and guidance
Comparing whole school approaches across different settings
Assessing and bringing together current practice
Primary School - lessons from primary practice
Secondary School - lessons from secondary practice
Types of support and services to consider

SECTION THREE: Tracking progress and identifying change
Capacity building for a whole school ethos & culture
Developing targets
What does good look like?

References and Sources

1. ATL Union, [Wellbeing in the Workplace](#), 2014
2. Barr Beacon School, [Wellbeing Policy](#), 2018
3. CfBT Education Trust, [Coaching for Teaching and Learning](#), 2011
4. Department for Education, [Mental health and wellbeing](#) (2018)
5. Devon, [A Beginner's Guide To Being Mental](#), 2018
6. Hilton, [Ten Traits of Resilience](#), 2018
7. Howard, [Stop Talking About Wellbeing](#), 2020
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“Ross helpfully explores how a school can become a research led institution and use a well crafted CPD programme to support this and to incrementally improve the quality of both teaching and learning across the education world...”

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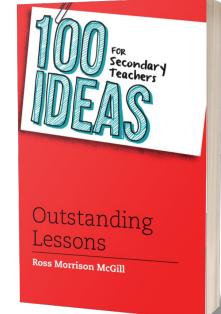
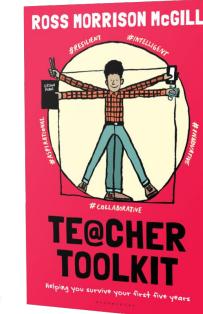
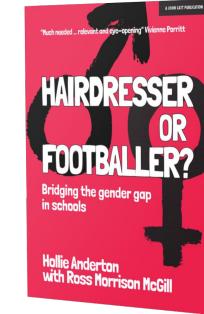
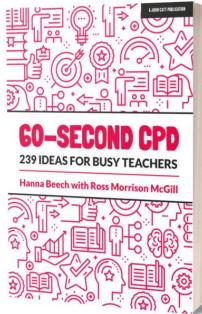


Ross McGill has worked in over ~200 schools, colleges and universities across the U.K., including schools in Belarus, Canada, Cyprus, China, Germany, Malaysia, Spain, Switzerland and the UAE.

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