

Canada Education

DISCUSSION KIT

SESSION 3.1



Your role in promoting staff well-being in your school

Reflecting on lessons learned from three B.C. school districts



In reference to the article *Staff Well-Being in Schools: Some B.C. ideas and approaches*

By Dr. Charlie Naylor

DISCUSSION LEADER CHEAT SHEET: Key points from the article

5 minutes

AIM: TO INTRODUCE THE SESSION AND TODAY'S THEME: **HOW EVERYONE CAN PROMOTE STAFF WELL-BEING IN SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

What's it about?	The author provides some initial learnings from three B.C. school districts where he worked as a Coach with district well-being teams. These teams, consisting of one senior administrator, one district-wide staff person, and one health authority representative, came together to support B.C. school districts in their approach to promoting mental well-being for students and staff.
How'd they do it?	Together, the team led several staff focus groups in each school district that included a diversity of staff: teachers, administrators, special education assistants, bus drivers, janitors, secretaries, etc. The Coach was a "critical friend" to the district team, aiming to support and enhance staff well-being by providing a neutral perspective, asking critical questions, and ideally engaging in dialogue with management, unions, Professional Development Chairs, and a range of committees.
Why should we care?	A school district is a highly interactive community. All staff members should be a focus of well-being approaches, because each person is one part of the whole and each can impact or be impacted by other staff, students and parents at different times. Educators and others working in K-12 systems are not healthcare professionals. We do not diagnose or treat physical or mental health issues. But what we can do is to maximize the well-being of staff by creating supportive and caring communities in which we work, thereby reducing the possibility of negative mental health issues arising.

DISCUSS

15 minutes

AIM: TO GET EVERYONE SHARING THEIR THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS

- 1 Staff in one B.C. school district overwhelmingly highlighted the need to improve professional relationships – with high levels of staff interaction, they felt that communications and dialogue could be significantly improved, which would also promote their well-being. This was a higher priority over improving resilience, addressing seasonal challenges, and improving work-life balance. **Are you surprised by this focus on relationships? Why or why not? How would you assess your own professional relationships at work, and are there any ways that communications and dialogue could be improved?**
- 2 The author states that, “It’s not up to the individual teacher, administrator or support staff worker to become more resilient. Neither is it up to the district to “fix” everything. It’s a combination, with individuals, groups and the district playing different roles but all having the potential to take some action.” **Do you agree that a workplace that supports good mental health and well-being starts with the individual? What are some simple, everyday ways that you, in your particular role, could possibly contribute to a healthy workplace for teaching and learning?**

DO IT

15 minutes

AIM: TO UNDERSTAND WAYS TO PROMOTE STAFF WELL-BEING STARTING TODAY

In small groups (2-3), choose a priority issue that you would like to improve in your school that impacts your well-being as a staff member, and fill-in the chart below according to each type of approach.

Priority Issue: (e.g. improve professional relationships)	
Type of Approach	What We Can Do
Individual: what each person might consider	(e.g. teachers add their educational assistant’s name alongside their name on their classroom door label)
Collaborative: what a group may choose to explore	(e.g. have more social events at school where all staff are invited)
Collective: what might be supported by a district	(e.g. provide funding for professional development on improving workplace dialogue)

Share back and display

Invite each group to share recommendations and insights.