

Abstract

Facilitating Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence

During Times of Change and Crisis

by

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Research has shown that social and emotional learning (SEL) can benefit overall school climate through the development and maintenance of supportive teacher-student relationships and effective classroom management. However, school personnel encounter multiple occupational stressors unique to school environments that place them at risk of job-related stress and burnout. Teachers integrating SEL into their classrooms also encounter an assortment of logistical, didactic, and skill development challenges that impede upon their own personal social-emotional growth. Given the pervasiveness of stress and burnout among school personnel, the call for interventions designed to address the unique pressures of the profession are necessary. Developing teachers' coping skills through social-emotional interventions was important before COVID-19, and it factors quite differently when educators are separated from their school communities, transitioning to an online learning environment, and managing their own anxiety during unprecedented uncertainty. This study explored the ways teachers engaged with their own social-emotional competence, what was feasible, and what made pursuing a self-care practice challenging through periods of uncertainty and social instability. The researcher disseminated a survey to 125 teachers in the United States to capture their behaviors, characteristics, and opinions. The survey was completed by 94 teachers. Utilizing the action research process, the collaborative team composed of the researcher and intervention specialists from 7 Mindsets, an educational consulting company specializing in SEL programming, reviewed the survey data results collected and made suggestions regarding practical social-emotional learning activities

that can cultivate meaningful adult social-emotional competency experiences during times of change and crisis.