STRESS AND BURNOUT OF TEACHERS AND COPING STRATEGIES

Srinivasa T, Scholar, University College of Physical Education,
Dr. M.B. Keerthynarayanaswamy, Dean faculty of Edn. and Asso. Professor, Bangalore University.

INTRODUCTION
The teacher occupies a very important place in the educational process. A teacher is the medium through which objectives and plans can be actualized. For this, the teacher must have sound mental and physical health. Burnout as an individual negative affective experience occurring as a result of chronic work stress has became prominent in the teaching professional literature.

Maslach (1993) has identified a comprehensive, multidimensional model of burnout. This model conceptualizes burnout as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.

Teacher Stress and Burnout
Stress is inevitable in any career and is similar in many cases, as it is a personal and institutional problem. Specifically, The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) defines stress as: The physical, emotional, and mental strain resulting from the mismatch between an individual and his/her environment which results form a three-way relationship between demands on a person, that person’s feelings about those demands and their ability to cope with those demands.

Stress and Burnout Symptoms
The main categories or symptoms of teacher burnout are physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual (Brock & Grady, 2000). The physical drain of energy to work and give to the job creates poor sleep patterns, tense muscles, headaches, gastrointestinal problems, and high blood pressure, which sometimes lead to individuals being “more likely to have minor accidents such as bumping, tripping, or falling. Intellectually, a person experiencing burnout has a difficult time making decisions and taking responsibility.

Organizational aspects:
Stress management training: Stress Management Training (SMT) is employed by many organizations today as a way to get employees to either work through stress or to manage their stress levels; to maintain stress levels below that which might lead to higher instances of burnout.

Stress interventions:
Research has been conducted that links certain interventions, such as narrative writing or topic-specific training to reductions in physiological and psychological stress.
Individual aspects
Problem-based coping: On an individual basis, employees can cope with the problems related to burnout and stress by focusing on the causes of their stress. This type of coping has successfully been linked to reductions in individual stress.
Appraisal-based coping: Appraisal-based coping strategies deal with individual interpretations of what is and is not a stress inducing activity. There have been mixed findings related to the effectiveness of appraisal-based coping strategies.
Social support: Social support has been seen as one of the largest predictors toward a reduction in burnout and stress for workers. Creating an organizationally-supportive environment as well as ensuring that employees have supportive work environments do mediate the negative aspects of burnout and stress.

Vipassana Meditation:
“Vipassana is nothing but an art of living” (Goenka, 2002). Vipassana is derived from two roots. Passana means seeing or perceiving. Vi is a prefix with a complex set of connotations that can be roughly translated to mean in a special way, and also into and through a special way. The whole meaning of the word Vipassana is looking into something with clarity and precision, seeing each component as distinct, and piercing all the way through to perceive the most fundamental reality of that thing. (Gunaratan, 2002) According to Goenka (2000) Vipassana is: Introspection, insight which purifies the mind; specifically insight into the impermanent, suffering, and egoless nature or the mental-physical structure.

Conclusion
Workshops could be provided about these issues and also include how cognitive dissonance, mindfulness, and Vipassana could help reduce stress and burnout. We may enhance our motivation to take those steps by thinking of our self-care as a professional and an ethical imperative. Our job requires us to continually strive for a delicate balance between caring for others and caring for ourselves.

Reference:
Jeffrey Glogowski, Principles of Learning Institutions: Organization, Purpose, Goals, and Missions, Walden University, June 10, 2010