

Helping teachers manage Covid burnout and stress

Sacap offers free mental health toolkit webinar

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Teachers are at the frontlines of their communities' responses to the Covid-19 crisis. As we move into the second pandemic year, there are millions of parents facing financial struggles, thousands of families impacted by the grief of losing loved ones and the constant stress arising from the fears, anxieties and frustrations affecting South Africans of all ages. It's not surprising that there are significant concerns about rising mental health disorders across the country.

With their learners' futures at stake, trying to teach effectively in ongoing circumstances that are completely opposite of what is conducive to learning, is a constant, heart-wrenching battle for most teachers. [Sacap](#) (The South African College of Applied Psychology) is inviting all teachers and educators to join a panel discussion with registered counselling psychologist and Sacap educator Clare Chester; educational psychologist Dr Anne Govender; and educational and research psychologist and Sacap's head of teaching and learning Dr Diana De Sousa, highlighting the unique challenges they are facing and presenting solutions to help them improve both their learners' and their own emotional well-being.

The 90-minute Sacap Mental Health Toolkit for Teachers webinar will take place on Saturday, 10 April 2021 from 9am to 10.30am. Attendance is free, and teachers can register [here](#).

Dr Anne Govender says: "The school community is expected to function normally in an abnormal situation. Teachers are under enormous pressure to deliver the curriculum as well as to catch up as much as possible but their modes of operation are completely disrupted. Support structures that take into account the intense mixed emotions of both teachers and learners need to be in place. Solutions-focused conversations and discussions around mental health play an important role in fostering resilience in the face of ongoing adversities."

As the leaders in their classrooms, a key element for teachers is their ability to recognise signs of mental health disorders in their learners, which often manifest in either disruptive or withdrawn behaviours. Clare Chester will help teachers understand the range of mental health disorders and to identify the signs that a

learner needs additional support. She says: “The strategies that we will unpack during the webinar are aimed at equipping teachers to know the warning signs of distress in learners, understand how to connect learners with resources to help them and assist them in building supportive social connections with peers.”

A critical component of the webinar is the mental health toolkit, which will be shared with all participants. Dr Diana De Sousa says: “Teachers are carrying a uniquely difficult burden right now. Managing their own stress and worry, but also tasked with supporting and guiding students through the subjects they teach during Covid-19. Secondary traumatic stress or compassionate fatigue can impact all areas of a teacher’s life, and the effects can range from mild to debilitating. It’s important for teachers to understand the risks, be aware of signs and symptoms, and take action to protect and enhance their mental health. Our mental health toolkit for teachers provides them with simple, usable ways to practice daily self-care and, importantly, model these positive behaviours for their learners. Teachers need to embrace that when they take good care of themselves, they are also taking good care of their learners.”

All South African teachers and educators are invited to [register for the free webinar](#): **Sacap Mental Health Toolkit for Teachers**
Saturday, 10 April 2021
9am to 10.30am

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