

"28 January 2019 – Surveys of teachers and principals who quit the profession last year show they left mainly due to a lack of work/life balance and burnout from high workload. The survey respondents included 169 primary and 201 secondary teachers and principals."*

Media Release - NZEI Te Riu Roa

Stress and pressure are not the same things

Workplace stress is the result of not managing workplace pressure, which if left unchecked, can become burnout.

Stressors at school may be caused by parents; resourcing and budgeting constraints; tight deadlines; student poverty and neglect; non-routine learners; Ministry of Education demands; building and property; an Education Review Office visit; interpersonal conflict with or between colleagues; a dysfunctional team department or faculty; Kāhui Ako commitments; staff shortages and absences; acclimatisation to new flexible innovative learning spaces; new professional learning and development initiatives; a newly

established Board of Trustees or problematic Board, and preparing for a challenging performance conversation with a colleague.

Research reveals only 9% of the population will remain stress free when confronted with these sorts of workplace stressors. 91% of the population will experience degrees of confusion, feelings of being overwhelmed, and stress.

An increasing body of evidence shows turning workplace pressure into stress is a choice and it's entirely preventable.

Research (2017) shows those who manage workplace adversity without becoming stressed have developed a range of crucial meta-cognitive competencies enabling them to fend off multiple workplace threats. They understand how they choose to respond when confronted with potential stressors, they know the triggers they are especially sensitive to, and they subsequently make better choices and decisions at critical moments.

Over the last three-years we have explored workplace pressure, stress and burnout looking at research from the fields of human

and organisational psychology and applied those findings within the workplace contexts of teachers and school leaders. We have deliberately avoided 'bottom of the cliff' fixes designed to minimise the impact of stress. As a systems-thinking organisation we have explored how to help teachers avoid the mistake of turning work pressure into stress in the first place.

Prevention always beats a cure. Resilience is not about enduring. Workplace commitment is not 'workaholism'. Exhaustion should not be 'normalised'. Generosity is not being a doormat.

What happened when teachers at Waimairi School in Christchurch were supported in this way?

"I loved how you made me think, challenged my thinking and made me question every decision I make."

--Danielle Donehue, Teacher - years 5/6

"Tony, you have raised my self-awareness. I don't own others actions or behaviours... I no longer feel I need to 'fix' things."

--Gregg Smith, Teacher - years 4/3

"It is the first time I have done PD where it has been all about me. Thank you Tony, what a gift you have given me... my life back."

--Sue Howard, Teacher - years 5/6

"Tony, the professional learning you provided has been so powerful and profound for our pilot group that we are seeking ways for you to work with our teachers who have not yet had the opportunity."

--Mike Anderson, Principal

