

Early Childhood Resource Hub newsletter

Building resilience. For educators!

Is it too early in the year to be thinking about burnout? Every year, thousands of early years educators leave the industry. One contributing factor is burnout. Let's work to make 2019 a year where people feel supported and positive in their work. Find free professional learning, advice from experienced practitioners and some great resources to kickstart a proactive approach in your service.

More coulds, fewer shoulds

Anne Peters, former trainer and assessor, gives some tips for the year.

'So many of us get burnout as educators. No wonder the sector suffers from turnover of staff.

Well, one wonderful way we have to address burnout is to throw away all the **old** 'shoulds'.

Here is a list of some of those **old** 'shoulds' – and some 'coulds' that might replace them. Please feel free to make your own list, but remember to add a 'could' for every 'should' you throw away!'

More COULDs, Fewer SHOULDs

SHOULD – All children should participate in group time.

We **COULD** let those children who want to join in group-time do so, and let the others play as they please.

SHOULD – All children should make a beautiful Mother's Day gift/ Easter basket, Valentine's Day card, etc).

We **COULD** offer the activity to any child who wants to do it, but not insist on it.

SHOULD – We should celebrate all those national days, celebration weeks and important events (eg the Olympics and Commonwealth Games).

We **COULD** select only a few that are important to our community and let the others go!

SHOULD – We should design and set up gorgeous 'small world' experiences to inspire our children.

We **COULD** let go of this expectation so we do not need to spend countless hours searching for fake jewels in the sandpit, or removing feathers from the home-corner.

SHOULD – We should make sure the children's parents are always delighted with our program. We **COULD** provide a high-quality ECE curriculum and put our energy into that, rather than turning ourselves inside out trying to ensure that every parent is thrilled with our program.

SHOULD – We should spend every evening and weekend creating fabulous, inspirational, exciting projects for our children to do.

We **COULD** simply let them play with what we have on hand!

What would you like to give up? What could you replace it with, and would this help to reduce burnout?

Make 2019 a year of balancing priorities and demands with some re-energising strategies for you and the other educators in your community.

Free online professional development

The Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) program aims to help preservice educators build their awareness of the skills and practices that will help facilitate resilience. The program contains five online interactive learning modules: Building resilience, Relationships, Wellbeing, Taking initiative, and Emotions. Throughout each module participants can take self-quizzes, learn about skills and strategies, view videos, apply skills to realistic situations, learn about what experts in the field have found and build their own personal toolkit. Each module is linked to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standards. The modules are free, though you will have to register.



Resources

'You have to look after yourself'

This [article](#) focuses the challenges faced by early learning centre educators and where they source support at the macro, micro and personal levels. Working conditions and relationships are shown to be critical factors. The author also identifies having a passion for working with children as a major support, along with self-care.

'You can't drink from an empty cup'

This [article](#) was written by teachers in primary and secondary settings, and it includes some great practical tips for looking after yourself when stressed. Use the list as a stimulus/provocation in a staff meeting, or as an aid to planning how you might look after yourself in the coming twelve months.



gerard/flickr. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Leaving work before sunset is one of the tips offered in this article.

Wellbeing tools for you

The [Be You website](#) hosts online apps and resources to support mental health and wellbeing. Tools presented here offer guidance and practical strategies for you and other members of your community, including colleagues, children and people, and their families.

3 types of burnout

Overload, under-challenge and neglect – learn more about types of burnout and some warning signs in this brief [article](#).



Neeta Lind/flickr. CC BY 2.0

Exercise outside of work provides positive energy for many people.

Early childhood teachers: Annotated bibliography of teacher resilience

Access some [research papers](#) exploring factors that contribute to educator resilience.

Employment practices – a link to quality

This [newsletter](#) explores the correlation between employment practices and quality in services. Read the stories of services that have made decisions to improve the level of predictability for children, think about the place of incentives in improving workforce development, and consider some pointers for rethinking employment practices.

Positive early childhood education: Expanding the reach of positive psychology into early childhood

'[T]he psychological wellbeing in early childhood educators has specifically been shown to deteriorate after the first five years of service ... Factors contributing to this include time pressures, managing children's needs with personal needs, collaborating with parents and maintaining effective early childhood practices.'

Source: Baker, L., Green, S. & Falecki, D. (2017). 'Positive early childhood education: Expanding the reach of positive psychology into early childhood'. *European Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1, 8, 2017, p. 5.

This [article](#) argues for increased research into the concept of positive psychology and how it might be applied to both the working experiences of educators and the experiences of children in their care. It states that previous research has been on identifying the causes of stress and poor mental health, as opposed to taking a positive psychological approach of distinguishing what contributes to early educator resilience and wellbeing.



Martin Seligman's PERMA model

One part of this article argues that individual services could conduct an audit of their early education practices against [Seligman's PERMA model](#) (Seligman, 2011) and identify areas for improvement.

Read more about the use of positive psychology with children in this article: ['Words boost happiness in this early learning service'](#).

Child care staff: Learning and growing through professional development

This [document](#) is an evidence-based, practical resource for educators who plan and implement professional development within a service. It presents insights into innovative practice, practical ideas about how to support the professional development of early childhood staff.