



Starting with wellness

September 2021

With the 2021-2022 school year now just underway, carefully consider your wellness needs if you haven't yet and at the same time, establish your wellness goals that you're realistically able to sustain. Every school year has its own challenges, and how you come into the year often has a significant effect on how you manage your wellness through the fall.

Here are a few guiding tips that might help you organize your thoughts around your wellness needs and help you establish goals to maintain your important self-care behaviours.

1. Re-establishing your basic wellness needs

For many educators, the beginning of September signals the time of year to re-establish day-to-day living routines that support the demands of back-to-school obligations. This goes for re-instituting fundamental wellness behaviours outside of work as much as those needed on the job. Start by setting up a healthy sleep routine and meal planning/shopping schedule. With the summer holiday behind us, it's time to turn out attention to the rigours of the school year. Being organized at home around your basic wellness needs is as important as establishing wellness goals, in and around work.

2. Assessing and identifying your work wellness needs

Again, this doesn't need to be overly complicated or herculean in effort. Many administrators establish fitness/activity routines in and around the work day. Some educational leaders partner up with colleagues to ensure greater traction and commitment to their activity plan. Whether you partner up or don't, ensure you 'schedule in' workouts into your week that allow for the greatest amount of consistency and ability to be accomplished. Like your fitness goals, schedule in regular nutritional and water breaks throughout your day. It may seem obvious, but I can tell you that I hear too often from administrators their resignation of not eating throughout the day, let alone hydrating themselves. Make your basic wellness needs a priority!

3. Setting realistic goals

This is probably the most critical component to maintaining a regular and consistent wellness plan

during the school year. You all know how to help others to establish SMART goals. Apply these finely honed skills and coaching approaches to your own wellness needs. Take the time to ensure you're not over-reaching or expecting too much of yourself. It's better to get fewer wellness goals accomplished than chastising yourself for not following through on a more rigorous plan. Arguably, consistency is the most important component to reaching and maintaining wellness goals. Start with a plan that you can manage successfully and build on it as your time and energy allows. Be realistic!

4. Weekly review of your wellness goals and activity

Take the time weekly to review your ability to sustain your plan and re-establish your goals accordingly. Many take some time to revisit their wellness goals on Sunday as they prep for the week. Make notes throughout the week in your wellness diary or column in your planner, as a means to tweak your wellness plan as you learn about your school year rhythm and it begins to take shape. I know you are juggling many, many obligations and responsibilities, but by making your wellness a higher priority, you will be more able to meet the needs of others. This is again obvious, however, it's more important than ever to ensure your wellness needs are right at the top of your list of responsibilities and professional obligations.

Please reach out to the [BCPVPA EIP Program](#) should you seek support and guidance around remaining professionally well during this challenging time.

With great respect and admiration,

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Jack's column appears in BCPVPA's eNews the first Friday of each month.