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## TEACHERS' BURNOUT AND MENTAL HEALTH: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MEDINIPUR DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

In the demanding landscape of education, the escalating issue of teachers' burnout and mental health has become a critical focal point. The issue of burnout and mental health among teachers is a matter of great importance due to the significant impact it has on their overall well-being and the subsequent implications for the quality of education. The combination of excessive workloads, inadequate support, and structural obstacles puts considerable pressure on educators, highlighting the need for immediate attention and the implementation of complete solutions. In this essence, the present study investigated the current state of burnout and mental health among secondary level teachers of Purba and Paschim Medinipur district in relation to gender, habitation and work experience. A cross-sectional survey design was implemented by the researchers among 251 secondary school teachers. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) were used to collect relevant data. Findings yielded that male teachers were found with higher burnout than female teachers, which was statistically significant. Concerning mental health, the female teachers showed poor mental health than male teachers, and found difference was statistically not significant. Furthermore, teachers from semi-urban habitation showed higher burnout and poor mental than that of teachers from rural habitation. Finally, it was found that increased job experience has been shown to be associated with a likelihood of worse mental health outcomes and experiencing higher burnout.

**KEYWORDS:** Burnout, Mental Health, Mental Hygiene, Wellbeing.

### INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a psychological phenomenon that manifests as a syndrome marked by emotional tiredness, depersonalization, and diminished personal achievement. Frequently observed in reaction to persistent pressures within the workplace, individuals, even professionals such as educators, commonly encounter profound sensations of fatigue, disengagement from their tasks or obligations, and a perception of diminished personal efficacy. Burnout has been found to be associated with a decline in job performance, a sense of job discontent, and a detrimental effect on general well-being. Christina Maslach's research is widely regarded as a significant contribution to the study of burnout. Burnout

can be characterized as a complex condition encompassing emotional weariness, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). The aforementioned term has subsequently gained widespread acceptance and has been employed to comprehend the phenomenon of burnout across diverse occupational domains, including the field of education. Psychology Today defines burnout as "a state of chronic stress that causes physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment." The people who become teachers generally do well in school, enjoy working hard, and are always finding ways to get better. You should be proud of these qualities, but they can make teachers too focused on being perfect and not giving themselves enough time to rest and recover. On the other hand, World Mental wellness Day, held on October 10, emphasizes mental wellness globally. Teachers' mental health issues are receiving more attention. Since educators had to balance distant instruction, student well-being, and personal stress, the COVID-19 pandemic made matters worse. The US National Education Association showed that 82% of teachers experienced higher work-related stress during the pandemic. Burnout, anxiety, and depression can result from teachers' intense workloads, high expectations, and little resources. Teacher well-being and education quality depend on mental health. To improve teacher mental health, schools are realizing they need supportive policies and tools like counseling and stress management programs. The phenomenon of teacher burnout exhibits a strong correlation with mental health concerns, as the enduring strain and psychological depletion associated with burnout can potentially exacerbate symptoms of worry and despair. According to a scholarly publication in the "Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology" in 2019, it was discovered that educators who encounter burnout tend to exhibit elevated levels of symptoms related to depression and anxiety (Boujut et al., 2019). The arduous characteristics of the teaching profession, including substantial workloads and the imperative to adhere to educational benchmarks, may engender sentiments of powerlessness and emotional exhaustion, which serve as indications of suboptimal mental well-being. In response to this matter, educational institutions are progressively acknowledging the significance of adopting measures aimed at mitigating burnout and promoting the mental well-being of teachers. These measures encompass the provision of counseling services and the implementation of stress management programs.

### **Significance of the Study**

The phenomenon of teacher burnout carries substantial consequences for the field of education. The phenomenon of burnout has been found to have negative consequences on teacher performance, including diminished effectiveness, increased absenteeism, and elevated turnover rates. These outcomes, in turn, have the potential to interrupt the continuity of education for students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Additionally, it is possible that this could lead to adverse teacher-student relations, so influencing the effectiveness of teaching and the academic achievements of students. The importance of addressing teacher burnout cannot be overstated in the context of maintaining a conducive learning environment. It is imperative for educational institutions to place a high priority on the well-being of teachers by implementing support systems, reducing workload, and providing opportunities for professional development. This approach is crucial in order to address and alleviate the negative consequences of burnout, which can have adverse impacts on both educators and students. The

phenomenon of teacher burnout and its associated mental health challenges significantly influence the field of education. The aforementioned problems have a direct impact on the performance of educators, encompassing their capacity to deliver instruction effectively and establish a conducive classroom atmosphere. Consequently, this can result in diminished student involvement and worse scholastic performance. The occurrence of high turnover rates among teachers, primarily attributed to burnout, is a significant challenge to maintaining the consistency of education and has a detrimental impact on the whole school environment (Hakanen et al, 2006). The importance of teachers' well-being cannot be overstated in the development of healthy teacher-student interactions, which are integral to facilitating effective learning. It is imperative to address these challenges. It is imperative for schools and educational institutions to accord utmost importance to the mental health and overall well-being of teachers. This can be achieved by providing comprehensive support systems, counseling services, and enacting policies that effectively address burnout and foster a conducive work atmosphere. Teachers who possess emotional and mental well-being are more proficient in delivering education of superior quality, thereby fostering a positive and efficient learning environment that yields advantages for both educators and students. Research studies have shown that excessive burnout might potentially have negative effects on the mental health and overall well-being of those engaged in various occupational pursuits (Demirci et al., 2010; Känel et al., 2020; Koutsimani et al., 2021). Extensive investigations have been conducted in India about the topics of burnout and mental health among teachers, particularly in the state of West Bengal as well. However, deficiencies in research pertaining to this issue were identified among the instructors of certain districts like as Purba and Paschim Medinipur. Therefore, in this present study, researchers tried to investigate the current state of burnout and mental health among secondary level teachers of both Medinipur district and formed the statement of the problem as - **“Teachers’ Burnout and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Survey of Secondary Schools in Medinipur District”**.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The researchers limited the study's scope and this study's focus for reasons that the researchers themselves admitted were inadequate for covering all parts of the issue. These are the limits of the study-

- i. Only two districts i.e., Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal were surveyed.
- ii. Only 251 secondary school level teachers were the participants of the study.
- iii. The study was delimited to only secondary school-level teachers from rural and semi-urban areas.
- iv. The study was delimited to only three demographic or independent variables i.e., gender, habitation and work experience.
- v. Only descriptive and parametric tests were used to present the actual nature of the data and analysis procedure.

### Objectives of the Study

Taking into consideration the existing research gap and its alignment with the specified delimitations, the study's objectives were created and explicitly articulated as -

- i. To find out the present status of teachers' burnout and mental health.
- ii. To examine the teachers' burnout and mental health on the basis of their gender.
- iii. To examine the teachers' burnout and mental health on the basis of their habitation.
- iv. To examine the relationship among work experience, teachers' burnout and mental health.

### Hypotheses of the Study

Following null hypotheses were formulated based on research objectives as -

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** Teachers' burnout and its dimensions do not significantly vary by their gender.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** Teachers' burnout and its dimensions do not significantly vary by their Habitation.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** Teachers' mental health does not significantly vary by their gender.

**H<sub>0</sub>4:** Teachers' mental health does not significantly vary by their habitation.

**H<sub>0</sub>5:** There exists no significant correlation among teacher's work experience, burnout and mental health.

### Study design

The present study implemented a cross-sectional survey design in order to achieve its objective. The population of this study consisted of secondary school-level teachers from rural and semi-urban areas in Purba and Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal. A simple random sampling technique was employed to choose a representative sample of 251 secondary school-level teachers from the districts of Purba and Paschim Medinipur in the state of West Bengal. This study examined the present status of teachers' burnout and mental health, using them as dependent variables. The study also explored the potential influence of independent variables such as gender, habitation, and work experience.

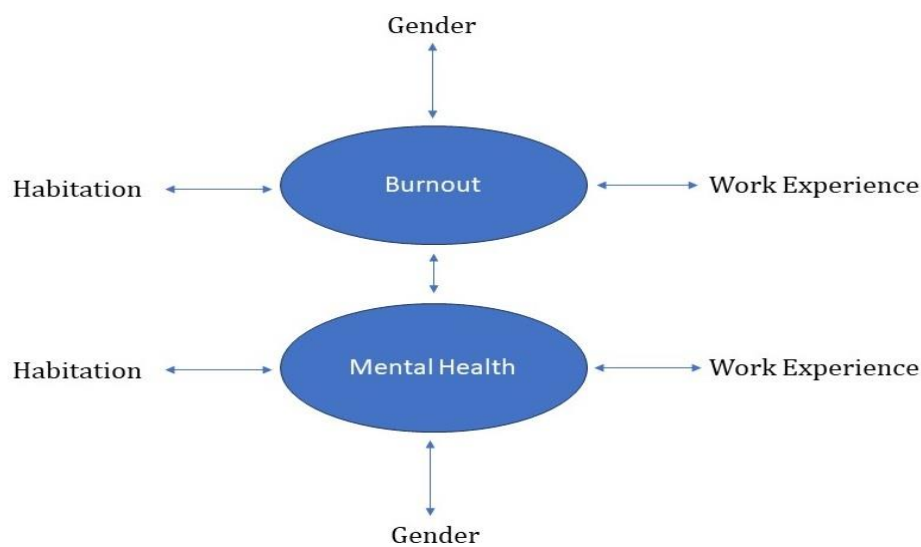
### Instruments used for data collection

i. **The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**, a 22-item Likert-type scale, was used as a measure of teacher burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The inventory consisted of three subscales: Exhaustion (EE: 9 items), Depersonalization (DP 5 items), and accomplishment (AP 8 items). Higher emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lower personal accomplishment lead to high burnout status.

ii. **The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)**, developed by Goldberg and Williams in 1988, is a measure comprised of 12 items. Each item evaluates the extent of a mental health issue experienced

within the previous few weeks. Respondents rate the severity of each item using a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 to 3. The scoring system was utilized in order to calculate a comprehensive score that ranged from 0 to 36. The positive items were adjusted on a scale of 0 (representing consistent occurrence) to 3 (representing absence of occurrence), whereas the negative items were adjusted on a scale of 3 (representing consistent occurrence) to 0 (representing absence of occurrence). Higher scores are indicative of poorer mental health.

**Figure 1.1: Showing Variable Interaction**



**RESULTS**

**Descriptive Analysis**

**Table 1.1: Descriptive statistics regarding burnout of secondary teachers.**

Burnout of Secondary Teachers					
Variables	Levels	Category	N (Frequency)	Mean	SD
Gender	Emotional Exhaustion	Male	117	12.03	5.911
		Female	134	15.90	7.566
	Depersonalisation	Male	117	8.50	4.003
		Female	134	8.92	4.754
	Personal Accomplishment	Male	117	30.46	7.742
		Female	134	19.73	9.713
	Overall Burnout	Male	117	50.98	10.692
		Female	134	44.54	12.232

<b>Habitation</b>	Emotional Exhaustion	Rural	122	14.02	7.546
		Semi-Urban	129	14.16	6.679
	Depersonalisation	Rural	122	9.06	4.072
		Semi-Urban	129	8.40	4.713
	Personal Accomplishment	Rural	122	22.16	10.437
		Semi-Urban	129	27.17	9.657
	<b>Overall Burnout</b>	Rural	122	45.23	10.633
		Semi-Urban	129	49.74	12.745

Figure 1.2: Showing independent variable-wise mean difference on burnout of teachers.

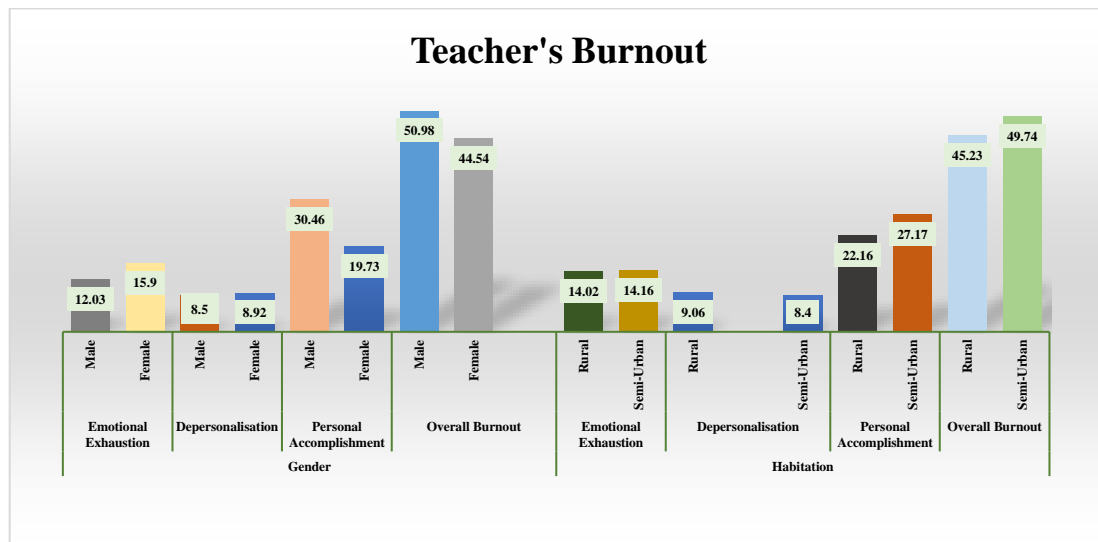


Figure 1.2 showed that two independent variables-wise mean differences on overall burnout and its levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment of secondary teachers. The gender-wise mean score of male teachers’ overall burnout and its levels were 50.98, 12.03, 8.5 and 30.46 respectively, and for female teachers’ burnout and its levels were 44.54, 15.9, 8.92 and 19.73 respectively. On the other hand, habitation wise mean score of rural areas overall burnout and its levels were 45.23, 14.02, 9.06 and 22.16 respectively, and the mean score of semi-urban burnout teachers and its levels were 49.74, 14.16, 8.4 and 27.17 respectively.

**Table 1.2: Descriptive statistics regarding mental health of secondary teachers.**

Mental Health				
Variables	Category	N (Frequency)	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	117	17.56	5.814
	Female	134	18.01	6.117
Habitation	Urban	122	17.59	6.560
	Semi-urban	129	18.01	5.370

**Figure 1.3: Showing independent variable-wise mean difference on Mental health.**

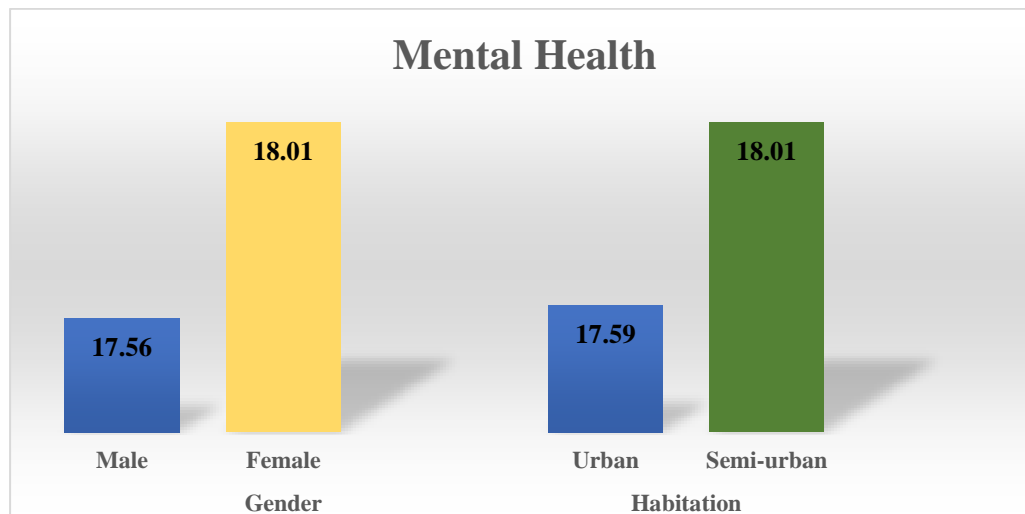


Figure 1.3 showed two independent variables-wise mean differences on mental health of secondary teachers. Gender wise mean score of male teachers was 17.56 and female teacher's mean score was 18.01. Habitation wise rural areas teacher's mean score was 17.59 and semi-urban teacher's mean score was 18.01.

**Hypothesis testing:**

**Table 1.3 Inferential statistics based on H<sub>01</sub> to H<sub>04</sub>.**

Independent samples T-Test							
Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Remarks (0.05 level)	Hypotheses Testing (95%)
<b>Gender</b>	Emotional Exhaustion	-4.468	249	<b>0.000*</b>	-3.870	Significant	<b>Rejected</b>
	Depersonalisation	-0.755	249	0.451	-0.422	Not Significant	Failed to reject
	Personal Accomplishment	9.583	249	<b>0.000*</b>	10.730	Significant	<b>Rejected</b>
	<b>Overall Burnout</b>	4.409	249	<b>0.000*</b>	6.438	Significant	<b>Rejected</b>
	<b>Mental Health</b>	-0.596	249	0.552	-0.451	Not Significant	Failed to Reject
<b>Habitation</b>	Emotional Exhaustion	-0.163	249	0.871	-0.146	Not Significant	Failed to Reject
	Depersonalisation	1.174	249	0.242	0.654	Not Significant	Failed to Reject
	Personal Accomplishment	-3.954	249	<b>0.000*</b>	-5.015	Significant	<b>Rejected</b>
	<b>Overall Burnout</b>	-3.033	249	<b>0.003*</b>	-4.507	Significant	<b>Rejected</b>
	<b>Mental Health</b>	-0.553	249	0.581	-0.418	Not significant	Failed to Reject

**Results of H<sub>01</sub>:** It can be observed from Table 1.3 that the computed t-value of burnout and its dimensions as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment of secondary teachers based on gender found to be  $t_{(251)} = 4.409$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ; emotional exhaustion  $t_{(251)} = -4.468$ ;



**p=0.000**; depersonalisation  $t_{(251)} = -.755$ ; **p=0.451** respectively. Except for depersonalisation, all other dependent factors were showed significant variation with gender. Therefore, the aforesaid  $H_{01}$  is partially rejected.

**Results of  $H_{02}$ :** It can be observed from Table 1.3 that the computed t-value of mental health of secondary teachers based on gender  $t_{(251)} = -.596$ ; **p-value= 0.552**. The found difference in mean is statistically not significant at 0.05 level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the aforesaid  $H_{02}$  is failed to reject and found differences cannot be attributed to any chance factor.

**Results of  $H_{03}$ :** It can be observed from Table 1.3 that the computed t-value of burnout and its dimensions as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment of secondary teachers based on habitation found to be  $t_{(251)} = -3.033$ ; **p=0.003**; emotional exhaustion  $t_{(251)} = -.163$ ; **p=0.871**; depersonalisation  $t_{(251)} = 1.174$ ; **p=0.242** respectively. Except for emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, all other dependent factors were showed significant variation with habitation. Therefore, the aforesaid  $H_{03}$  is partially rejected.

**Results of  $H_{04}$ :** It can be observed from Table 1.3 that the computed t-value of mental health of secondary teachers based on habitation  $t_{(251)} = -.553$ ; **p-value= 0.581**. The found difference in mean is statistically not significant at 0.05 level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the aforesaid  $H_{04}$  is failed to reject and found differences cannot be attributed to any chance factor.

**Table 1.4 Correlation table based on  $H_{05}$ .**

Pearson Correlation	Overall Burnout	Mental Health
Pearson Correlation	0.038	0.024
<b>Work Experience</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed) 0.55</b>	0.703
N	251	251

**Results of  $H_{05}$ :** Table 1.4 showed that teachers' work experience with mental health and burnout is positively correlated. The correlation between a teacher's work experience with mental health and burnout is statistically not significant at 0.05 level (**r=0.055**; **p>0.05**), Therefore, the aforesaid null hypothesis failed to reject and there exists no significant relationship between that teacher's work experience with mental health and burnout.

## Major Findings

### Overall

- The present status of overall secondary school-level teachers' burnout was found to be 47.54.
- The present status of mental health on overall secondary school-level teachers was found to be 17.80.

### Based on Gender

- ❖ Overall burnout of male teachers was found to be higher than female teachers and the difference was statistically significant.
- ❖ Emotional exhaustion of female teachers was found to be higher burnout than male teachers and the difference was statistically significant.
- ❖ Depersonalisation of female teachers was found to be higher burnout than male teachers but the difference was statistically not significant.
- ❖ Personal Accomplishment of male teachers was found to be higher burnout than female teachers but the difference was statistically not significant.
- ❖ Female teachers were found to have poor mental health than male teachers' but the difference was statistically not significant.

### Based on Habitation

- ❖ Overall burnout of semi-urban areas teachers was found to be higher than rural areas teachers and the difference was statistically significant.
- ❖ Emotional exhaustion of semi-urban areas teachers was found to be higher burnout than rural areas teachers but the difference was statistically not significant.
- ❖ Depersonalisation of rural areas teachers was found to be higher burnout than semi-urban areas teachers but the difference was statistically not significant.
- ❖ Personal Accomplishment of semi-urban areas teachers was found to be higher burnout than rural areas teachers and the difference was statistically significant.
- ❖ Semi-urban areas teachers were found to have worst mental health than rural areas teachers but the difference was statistically not significant.

### Based on the relationship among work experience, teachers' burnout and mental health

- ❖ Teachers' work experience is positively correlated with burnout and mental health but the correlation between work experience, teachers' burnout and mental health is statistically not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Present study was an attempt to investigate the current state of burnout and mental health among secondary level teachers of Purba and Paschim Medinipur district and discover the variation and

relation of gender, habitat and work experience with teachers' burnout and mental health. Statistical significance found on overall burnout considering gender where male teachers possessed higher burnout than female teachers. The finding was similar with a result of another research conducted by García-Carmona et al. (2018) that secondary school teachers are at high risk of burnout syndrome. Considering the interaction between mental health and gender of teachers, it was found that female teachers to have poor mental health than male teachers' but the difference was statistically not significant. This finding was supported by Nagai et al., 2007; Cooper & Kelly, 1993; Yang et al., 2009).

The study revealed that the level of burnout experienced by teachers in semi-urban settings was much greater compared to teachers in rural areas and no comparable findings from other research were discovered that either support or refute it. Moreover, it was found that teachers hailed from semi-urban areas were more prone to worst mental health than rural areas but the difference was statistically not significant. Again, no corroborating evidence from other studies was found that either substantiates or contradicts it.

Finally, the work experience of teachers appeared with a positive relationship with burnout and mental health; nevertheless, the statistical analysis reveals that this correlation is not significant. It implies that increased job experience has been shown to be associated with a likelihood of worse mental health outcomes and experiencing higher burnout (Gauche et al, 2017; Klein et al., 2019; Galaiya et al, 2020).

The research conducted on the phenomenon of teachers' burnout and its impact on their mental health highlights a worrisome pattern. The findings of this study demonstrate a significant occurrence of burnout among educators, which has repercussions for their general psychological well. Various factors, including an excessive workload, insufficient assistance, and organizational challenges, play a substantial role in contributing to this occurrence. It is essential to acknowledge and tackle these difficulties, since they have significant implications not just for the emotional well-being of teachers but also for maintaining a commendable level of education. The implementation of support systems, the promotion of work-life balance, and the cultivation of a pleasant school environment are identified as crucial techniques for addressing burnout and protecting the mental well-being of teachers.

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