

Community Feedback / Teacher Testimony

1. How has COVID-19 negatively impacted your mental health as a teacher?

- The impact of Covid has affected me tremendously. I am faced with the decision to continue to provide for my family financially or risk illness by being face to face in the classroom. I put in a request for accommodations to work remotely and was denied. Both my own personal children have asthma and I have a preexisting condition. The stress of it all has taken a toll on me.
- Along with my personal needs I have had to try to tend to the needs of students and parents during remote learning and teach curriculum with rigor. Many students were not completing assignments and parents were beyond frustrated with the work load. Student were having to manage their own emotions and try to discipline themselves to follow the curriculum expectations. I spent a lot of time trying to tend to the needs of families and their situation. Showing them empathy and giving them a pass on assignments. Students were not performing and parents were struggling managing work demands and monitoring their children.

2. How did you realize your mental health was being affected? Was there a defining moment or did it happen over time?

- I constantly monitor my mental health as an educator. I take mental health days off from work as needed before Covid. The work load increased and expectations became unrealistic. I found myself constantly working. Emails were coming in non-stop. The stress of the virus on family and friends being sick were heavily on my mind. I found myself constantly feeling the need to check on family and friends. I was in a cleaning frenzy. It was a gradual increase but it wasn't much I could do. I stopped watching the news and I kept my children home. We changed how we did things as a family. I began to set boundaries with work. I only answered during the school work day with just a few exceptions.

3. What coping techniques, methods of recharging, and/or resources did you find helpful in dealing with the added stressors the COVID-19 pandemic has caused you as a teacher?

- I used this time to get better connected with the Lord. My church began to implement a prayer line 3x a day, 7 days a week and a daily morning bible study. I've always considered myself to be a strong believer but this situation helped me see areas of need. I used SEL activities with my children and students. We practiced mindfulness activities daily.

4. Reflecting on your personal experience, is there a message of hope you'd like to share with your fellow community members?

- This pandemic has been eye opening. It caused me to stop and reflect on what is important. Sometime we just need to stop and think about what matters. Money is important, jobs are a necessity but nothing beats family. Time is short and I'm glad I've had an opportunity to refocus my time on what matters most.