

Building Relationships Through Professional Development

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Introductions...



Your Name, Where You're From,
Your Role, *and...*

Red	...your favourite hobby!
Green	...your favourite place on Earth!
Yellow	...your role model!
Orange	...your most embarrassing moment!
Purple	...your favourite 'student' memory!

Checking Our Beliefs...



"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

- Maya Angelou

"The task of Leadership is not to put greatness into people but to elicit it. For the greatness is there already."

John Buchan

"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things."

- Mother Teresa

Understanding the Role of the Educational Assistant

An **Educational Assistant** (EA) helps deliver educational programs in Ontario schools, and plays an increasingly vital role in today's classrooms. EAs support classroom teachers working with individual or groups of students, and work alongside and under the guidance of teachers. The EA role is linked to the introduction of Bill 82 in 1980, which outlines the need for EA staff in serving children with special needs.

Understanding the Role of the Educational Assistant

EA duties *may* include:

- assist students with lessons under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher
- assist students with special needs with mobility, communication, and hygiene
- assist with classroom inventory, or in library or office if assigned by principal
- monitor students during breaks, recesses, and lunch
- accompany or supervise students during activities in the gym, lab, library, resource room, and on field trips
- carry out behaviour modification and other therapeutic programs under the supervision of care providers (e.g., SLP, OT, PT, etc.)
- assist with data collection regarding student behaviours and learning.

Understanding the Role of the Educational Assistant

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*An Educational Assistant and a teacher are a team. The EA is assigned to help meet the needs of specific students and/or program needs within the school. **The teacher is ultimately responsible for the education of all students in the class,** and the EA serves as a support.*

”

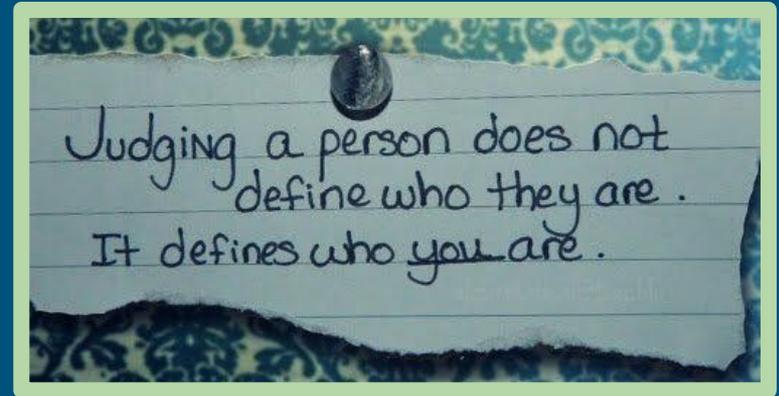
Recognizing When Staff Are Feeling Overwhelmed

- Fatigue
- Cynicism
- Irritability and/or impatience
- Lack of energy
- A change in job performance
- Decrease in job satisfaction and pride
- Attendance

Remember...



and...



What Causes Job Burnout?

- Lack of control
- Unclear job expectations
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamics
- A mismatch between the staff member's values and the values of the school/school board
- Poor job fit
- Extreme working conditions (monotonous or chaotic)
- Lack of support
- Work-life imbalance

Building Relationships & Developing People

The Ontario Leadership Framework is based on more than eight years of research by leading experts and extensive consultation with educators across the province. The framework provides leaders and aspiring leaders with a clear roadmap for leading school communities. The framework has five pillars:

- 1) Setting Direction
- 2) Building Relationships and Developing People
- 3) Developing the Organization to Support Desired Practices
- 4) Improving the Instructional Program
- 5) Securing Accountability

[Let's Take a Peek...](#)

Building Relationships & Developing People

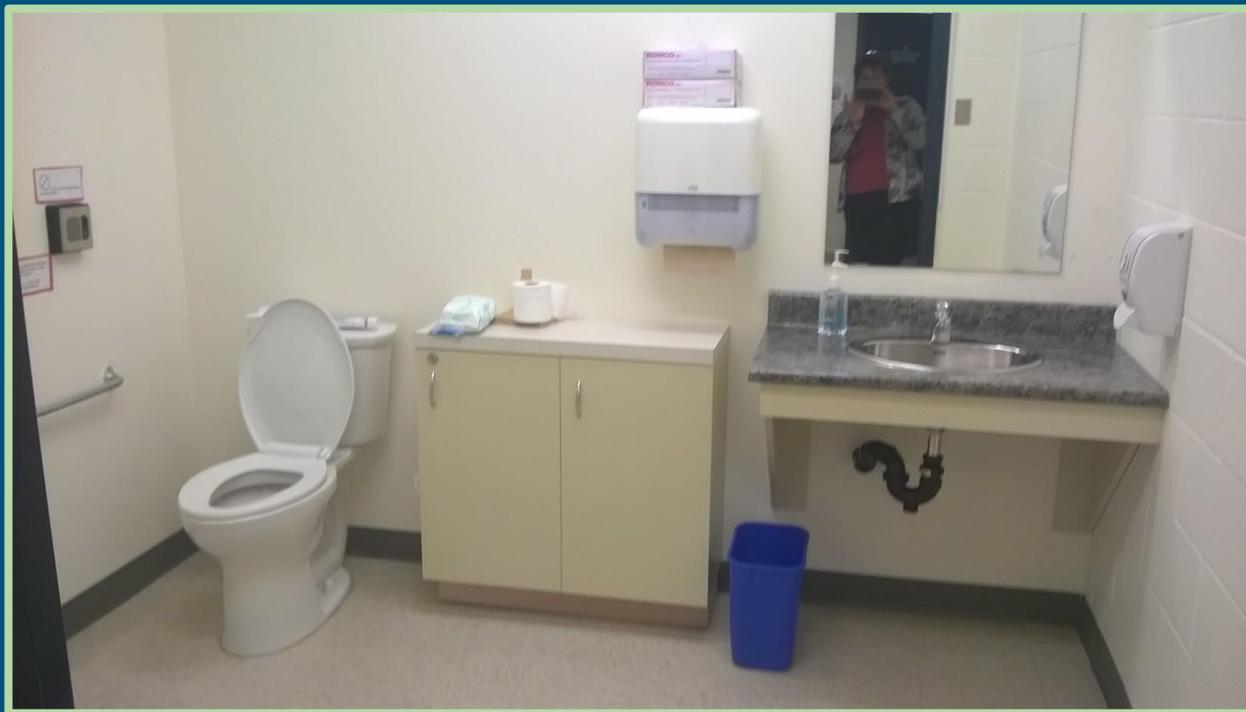
- Ask EA staff for input and, when possible, ensure schedules, job assignments, etc. reflect that input
- Clearly articulate job descriptions (verbally and in writing)
- Encourage and, perhaps, help facilitate team building activities
- When conflict arises (and it will), be transparent, fair, and solution-focused
- Utilize and celebrate the unique talents and skills of staff
- Remember that fair is not always equal (job assignments, schedules)
- Provide opportunities for sharing expertise and professional development
- Connect employees to services/supports through HR

Collaborative Cultures

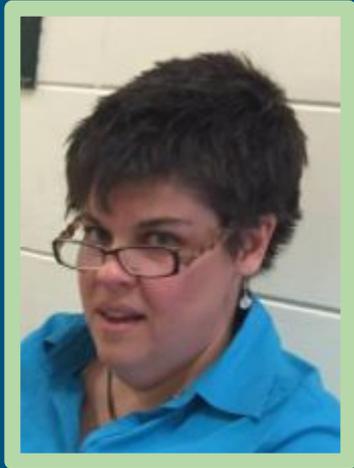
Some Ideas

- use icebreakers to begin meetings (e.g., Would You Rather?)
- facilitate monthly team building activities (e.g., “Team Building Tuesdays” on the first Tuesday of each month- 5 mins)- Check out this Team Building Manual from Able Trust in Florida (108 pages of icebreakers, team building games, workshop wrap-ups, and conversation starters).
- learn, play, and pray together!

Building on the Professional and Personal Capacities of Staff



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Angela

Think About It...

**No
SIGNIFICANT
LEARNING
OCCURS
WITHOUT A
SIGNIFICANT
*relationship.***

DR. JAMES COMER

**A PERSON WHO
FEELS
APPRECIATED
WILL ALWAYS DO
MORE THAN WHAT
IS EXPECTED.**

Trust & Transparency

Open and ongoing dialogue with staff is key to building trust, and so is demonstrating a genuine eagerness to support staff. Here are some questions that might solicit from staff ways to support their work...

What successes are you experiencing in your role as an Educational Assistant and current assignment?

What challenges are you experiencing in helping students meet IEP goals?

What strengths do you bring to the school and classroom, and how can we build on your skill set?

What parts of your role as an Educational Assistant are you having difficulty managing?

What professional development and/or training opportunities would you most appreciate?

What are your goals this term, and what do you need to achieve them?

Professional Development & Building Capacity

When we take the time to facilitate professional development, positive outcomes will result including:

- Staff retention/staff health*
- Deeper knowledge, understanding, and skills sets*
- A collaborative environment*
- Student learning and wellbeing*

“Educators benefit most from learning in the setting where they can immediately apply what they learn- in the school where they work!”

[Why Professional Development Matters](#)

The 'How' of it All...

- "Creative Scheduling"
- Book Clubs
- Lunch & Learns
- Mentor/Mentee Partnerships
- Classroom Visits
- Other ideas?

Don't Forget...

- Hospitality (treats)
- Icebreakers/Teambuilders
- "Play/Practice" Time
- Q & A
- Follow-up



A 'PD for EAs' Starter Kit

Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe

Simon Sinek

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