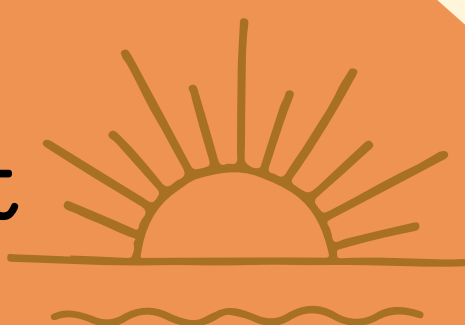


Promoting Well-Being *for the* **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR**

Why It's Important



Practicing Self-Care



Setting Boundaries



Building a
Support Network

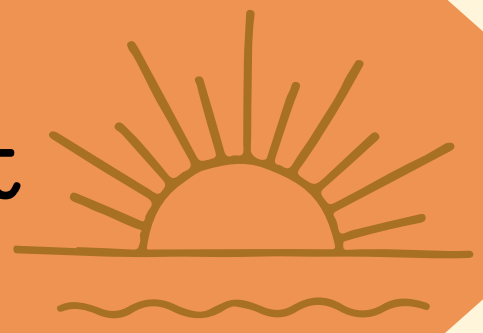


Coaching Corner

Questions to reflect on how you can prevent burnout or compassion fatigue.

Rather than viewing self-care as self-indulgence, try reframing it as self-respect (NAEYC, 2020).

Why It's Important



Early childhood educators are dedicated. They dedicate their time, energy, and professional responsibilities to the children they teach, as well as families, specialists, support staff, colleagues, administration, and the community.



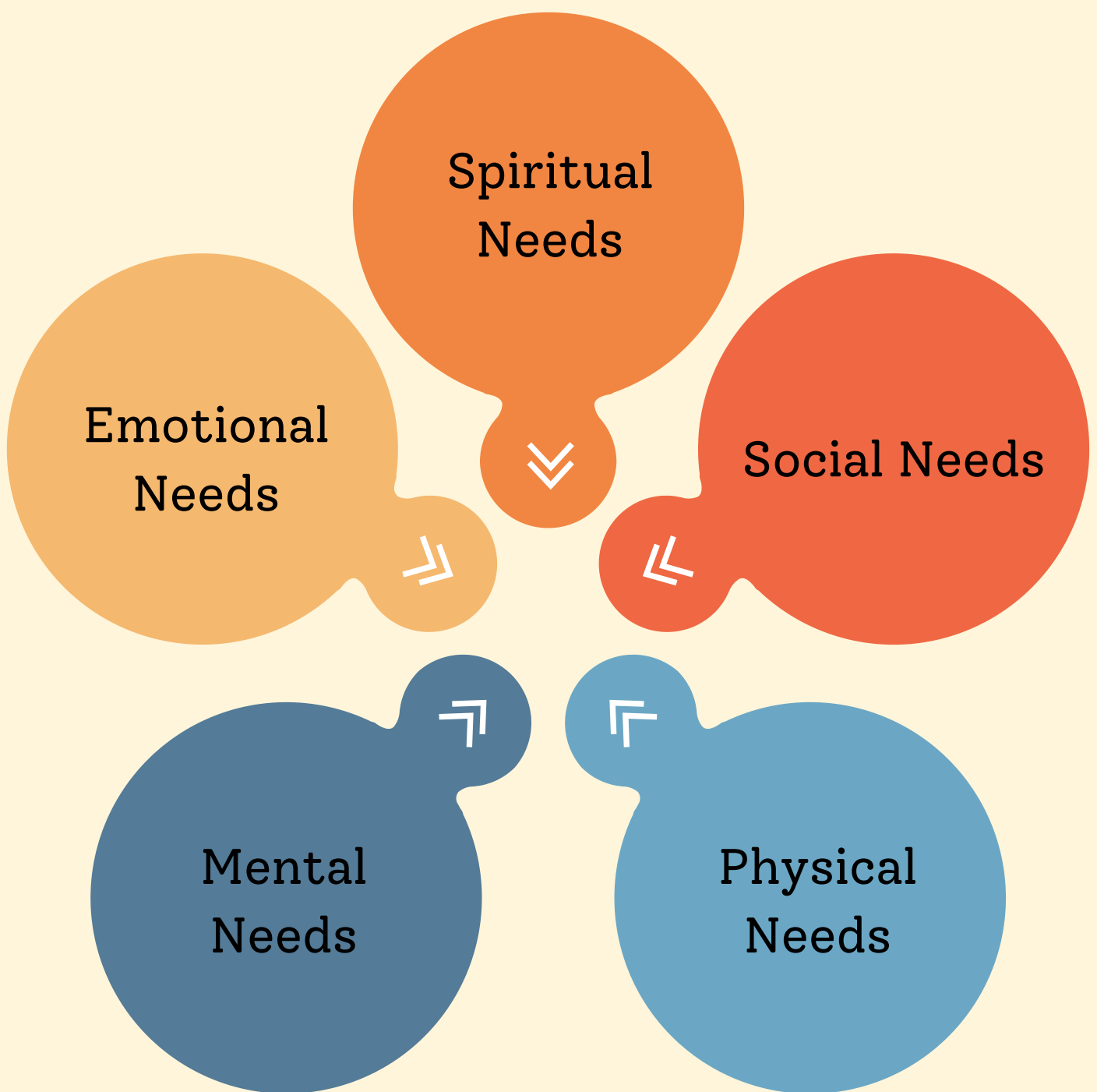
Early childhood educators are at high risk of developing burnout and secondary traumatic stress (STS), otherwise known as compassion fatigue.



Educators can combat burnout and compassion fatigue by:

- practicing self-care
- setting boundaries
- building a support network

Practicing Self-Care



- Talk to someone close to you
- Journal your feelings
- Exercise
- Spend time doing hobbies
- Eat nutritious meals
- Stay hydrated
- Spend time outside
- Practice positive self-talk
- Research a topic you're interested in
- Cultivate mindfulness
- Reframe negative thoughts
- Meditate
- Volunteer for a cause that nurtures your spirit
- Build time in your schedule to spend time with friends
- Attend to your health needs
- Get adequate sleep
- Read
- Do crossword puzzles or other mental challenges
- Talk with a therapist

'Taking care of myself doesn't mean 'me first'. It means 'me too.' - L.R. Knost

Setting Boundaries



Establishing boundaries can help maintain a work-life balance that optimizes energy and focus in both personal and work settings.



Steps for Setting Professional Boundaries:

- Define your priorities. Consider your values and what is most important to you.
- Set limits. Determine what you will and will not accept.
- Ensure your boundaries don't infringe on the rights of others.
- Predetermine the action(s) you'll take if and when your boundaries are crossed.
- Communicate clearly. Be honest and explain why you need your boundaries.
- Practice saying no. Start by saying no in less intense situations.
- Keep things professional. Be aware of your tone and communicate with respect.



Building a Support Network



Support networks consist of the people in your life on whom you rely for encouragement, guidance, and advice. This includes close family and friends, community-based organizations, virtual groups, and professional networks.



Join a professional learning community.

Three Big Ideas

01

Professional

Focus on RESULTS. Commit to the process and to one another. Prioritize meetings, come prepared, implement process roles. Use data to determine effectiveness in helping all children learn. Use evidence to improve professional practice and respond to individual child needs.

02

Learning

Focus on LEARNING. Create a safe space (judgement-free, open minded, vulnerability). Each teacher is valued for what they can bring to the table. Be open to new ideas, think outside the box, push past what has been done in the past. Focus on learning rather than teaching. Always circle back to the “why.”

03

Community

Focus on COLLABORATION. Collaborate with intention and purpose. Take collective responsibility for the success of each child. All members are mutually accountable. Work together interdependently, building shared knowledge and learning together.

Join a professional organization. Many national organizations also have state- or local-level chapters.



Childhood Education International



Division for Early Childhood

of the Council for Exceptional Children



NBCDI
National Black Child Development Institute



Coaching Corner

Questions to guide inclusive practices in the classroom.

- What aspects of teaching do you find rewarding?
- What are some self-care practices that help you manage stress and stay balanced during the school year?
- What boundaries have you set (or would like to set) to maintain a healthy balance between your work and personal life?
- How are you feeling about your job lately?
- If you're feeling overwhelmed, what are the biggest contributors to this feeling?
- Who do you turn to when you need encouragement or guidance?
- How comfortable are you reaching out to your colleagues or administrators for support?
- Do you feel like you have access to the resources you need to manage your workload effectively?
- How do you manage feelings of guilt or frustration when things don't go as planned?
- What are some small changes you could make to help you feel more energized in your role?
- How could you advocate for your own well-being while at work?



We need to be well to do well. If we are well, we can be the champion for children and families (NAEYC, 2020).

**Updated by members of the Content Collaborative
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