



NWTU UNION NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sarah Wethered

Hello members,

Welcome back everyone. I hope that you all were able to find some time this summer to relax, recharge, and renew relationships. We all needed that break from our classroom duties this summer as our work lives after Spring Break were all drastically changed after the declaration of the pandemic and the move to first remote learning, and then a hybrid model.

It was strange for me to not enter my office in the NWSS Library at the beginning of September. I missed reconnecting with my friends and colleagues, meeting the new teachers at the school, and helping the new NDub students find their way around that huge building. Yes, my office in the union office is much bigger, doesn't smell of 70 years of students, and I don't share with anyone, but it's just not the same. Nonetheless, I am excited and honoured to be serving as the NWTU president this year.

From the beginning of August, Kristie Oxley (1st VP), D'Alice Marsh (2nd VP), and I have been meeting weekly with senior admin to discuss the restart plan and to provide our input. I also spent much of this summer meeting with HR about personnel items, attending health and safety meetings, attending weekly BCTF meetings, and answering member questions - so many questions.

I am very thankful to have the support and experience of two excellent vice presidents, our table officers, and staff reps, as well as past president, Eric Young. With this support network, I am able to continue advocating for improvements in health and safety and reduced classroom density, as well as upholding our hard worn classroom and composition language and specialist teacher ratios.

The first two weeks of school has not been easy. Our schools and classrooms look different. Some schools have had massive shuffles because a large number of their students have opted into our new DL option. We've had to deal with poor air quality, first because of the wildfires from the western United States, and then from the Pier Park fire, all while trying to maintain social distancing and dealing with less than ideal ventilation options. I am very proud of the work of our staff reps and our site health and safety committees in their continual work on improving conditions for both staff and students.

This is going to be a challenging year, however, we all need to work together. Thank you for everything you do for the students of our community - the one that I am proud to call home.

Sarah

As a reminder, you may contact me via email at lp40@bctf.ca, or call our office at 604-526-8990, or call my cell phone at 778.789.5713.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 28 - Non-Instructional Day

October 12 - Thanksgiving

October 13 - NWTU Executive Committee Meeting

October 23 - Provincial Pro-D Day

STAY UP TO DATE

Want to be up to date on local union issues?

NWTU Email List

http://bit.ly/NWTU_email_list



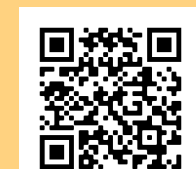
NWTU Facebook Page

http://bit.ly/NWTU_Facebook



NWTU New Teacher & TTOC Email List

http://bit.ly/NWTU_NT-TTOC_Email



NWTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TABLE OFFICERS 2020-2021

Position	Name, Site & Email
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Wethered, <i>NWTU Office</i> lp40@bctf.ca
1 st Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kristie Oxley, <i>District</i> vp1@nwtu.ca
2 nd Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D’Alice Marsh, <i>FRMS</i> vp2@nwtu.ca
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rome Lavrencic, <i>NWSS</i>
Recording Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jim Russell, <i>POWER Alternate</i> jimrussell604@outlook.com
Bargaining Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darryl Schelp, <i>Lord Kelvin</i> dschelp@telus.net
Pro-D Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kristie Oxley, <i>District</i> vp1@nwtu.ca Carmen Woo, <i>EGMS</i>
Aboriginal Education Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary Joanne Hunt, <i>NWSS</i> mjhunt@gmail.com
Health & Safety Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glenn Bullard, <i>Virtual School</i>
Social Justice Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dragana Sacco, <i>NWSS</i> dsacco@shaw.ca
New Teacher and TTOC Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karin Krueger, <i>NWSS</i> kruger.nwtu@gmail.com Dominic Pistor, <i>NWSS</i> dominic.pistor@gmail.com
Local Representatives to the BCTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bruce McCloy, <i>NWSS</i> bmccloy@gmail.com Darryl Nakashima, <i>NWSS</i> nakashima@telus.net
Alternative Local Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Wethered, <i>NWTU Office</i> lp40@bctf.ca

OTHER ELECTED POSITIONS

Position	Name, Site
School/Site Staff Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each elected at their school/site
New Westminster and District Labour Council Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominic Pistor, <i>NWSS</i>
2019-2020 Bargaining Advisory Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darryl Schelp (Chair), <i>Lord Kelvin</i> Timothy Dodds, <i>NWSS</i> Karin Krueger, <i>NWSS</i> D’Alice Marsh, <i>FRMS</i> Darryl Nakashima, <i>NWSS</i> Eric Young, <i>Lord Kelvin</i>

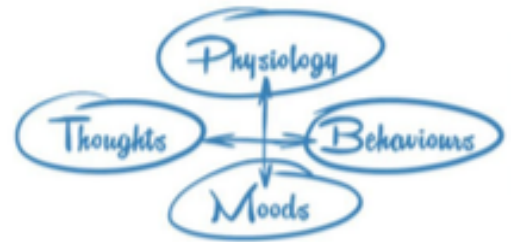
MANAGING YOUR MENTAL FITNESS AROUND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

The role of educators has many stressors in a “normal” year, technology, students’ and parents’ expectations, reporting/IEPs, class size and composition, among many others. However, this year there are additional stressors caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Restart Plan, health risks (personal and family), safety plans, heightened confusion, anger, and frustration with the ever-changing expectations to the Restart Plan.

The following are three strategies as outlined by Starling Minds to improve teachers’ resilience to stress:

1. Self-Awareness

Is an individual’s ability to focus on their self. Being able to recognize thoughts and behaviours influence one another and physiology and moods influence one another. It is an overall ability to understand how their emotions, actions, and their thoughts are related and do not exist independently. Self-awareness is the ability to pay attention to the body and mind, to recognize when emotions, actions, and thoughts are no longer aligned. To be able to recognize that there was a trigger, even if it is not possible to specifically identify the trigger, and to recognize when you get past the point of control.



2. The Mental Fitness Continuum

Most individuals are familiar with the Physical Health Continuum; healthy and exercising regularly visit the doctor for annual check-ups to unhealthy does not engage in physical activity, may require assistance with daily tasks.

Similarly, there is the Mental Fitness Continuum. An individual with a “healthy” mental health is able to perform normal daily functions with very little to no added stress. This person does not display any symptoms and are high functioning. As an individual begins to move down the continuum, they begin to experience reversible distress that may have been caused by a busy day or an unexpected event. They are beginning to display some symptoms of unwellness and are beginning to demonstrate functional impairment, they are no longer able to be productive in performing regular daily tasks. These individuals have entered into the borderline level on the continuum. Often times at this point if the individual does not have support and does not seek professional support they will fall further down the continuum and will become unhealthy. Reaching an unhealthy level on the continuum does not occur over night, not within days, or weeks, to reach this level most often it will take months or years. It can be described at hitting rock bottom.

3. Building Resilience: An ability to adapt to change and bounce back after illness or hardship.

At this level the idea is to use awareness tools, such as online apps, that help track moods; how long it last, how upset, how often does it re-occur. By tracking daily moods and conducting monthly assessments it is possible to determine the level of mental fitness for that individual, thus, allowing them to develop strategies to improve resilience.

Regulation Tools

- Strategic breathing, mindfulness
- Behavioural strategies (e.g. hobbies; share your concerns, needs, feelings and emotions)
- Self-care (sleep, diet, exercise, personal grooming, take time each day doing an activity you like: reading, listening to or playing music, spending time with a pet)

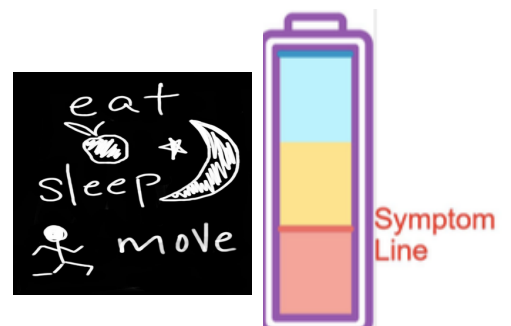
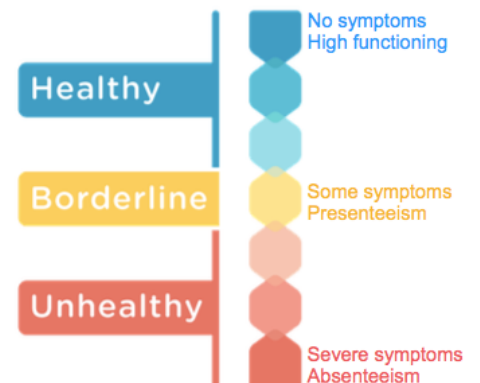
Resolution Tools

- SMART goal setting
- Through balancing (positions)
- Talk to a trusted advisor
- Assertiveness skills

If you are struggling and need help, please reach out for support. You may self-refer to any of the following health and wellness programs, BCTF Health & Wellness Program, Starling Minds, or Homewood Health. You are also welcomed to contact the NWTU Office at 604.526.8990.

*Concepts and images have been taken from the **Starling Minds webinar presented by Stuart Bowyer, Managing Your Stress, Anxiety, and Worry from Returning to School During COVID**, presented to at the Health & Safety training on August 26, 2020.

Mental Fitness Continuum



HEALTH & WELLNESS

With the start of a new year during a global pandemic, it's a good time to review what health and wellness benefits we have access to.

Through our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) offered through the School Board, teachers and their families have free access to life coaching, counselling, and online resources through Homewood Health. After a quick registration on their website (www.homeweb.ca), members have access to online resources on topics such as:

- Nutrition
- Lifestyle changes
- Smoking Cessation
- Childcare and parenting
- Elder and family care
- Money management
- Career planning
- Pre-retirement

Members can also contact Homewood Health by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-663-1142 for confidential counselling or referral to counselling close to home.

Teachers also have free access to the BCTF Health and Wellness Program, including Living with Balance workshops and the Starling Minds (<https://www.starlingminds.com/>), an online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Program. There are also workshops that can be booked for an entire staff.

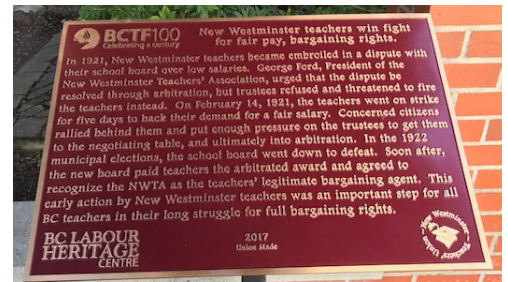
For more information on what the BCTF offers, please visit the BCTF website (<https://bctf.ca/wellness/>).

BC LABOUR HERITAGE PLAQUE

In 2017, the New Westminster Teachers' Union was chosen by the BC Labour Heritage Centre to have a plaque celebrating the 100th anniversary of a 1921 strike. This strike was seen as a turning point in teachers' unions across British Columbia. The NWTU was one of six locals in BC selected to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the BCTF.

After years of working with the City and the BC Labour Heritage Centre, the NWTU is happy to announce that the plaque has recently been installed at 6th Street and Royal Avenue, across from City Hall. This was the location of the Board Office in 1921.

If you would like to learn more about the historic 1921 teachers' strike in New Westminster please follow this link, <http://bit.ly/1921Strike>.



NON-ENROLLING MEMBER (R/E TTOC) SURVEY

Attention all non-enrolling members (i.e., LSTs, Teacher-Librarians, School Councillors, District Itinerants, etc.). Please complete the following online Google form if you requested a TTOC when you are absent, and you:

- were pulled from your non-enrolling position to cover another teacher's class, or
- requested a TTOC when you were absent and one was not dispatched,
- or
- requested a TTOC when you were absent and the TTOC was pulled to cover another class.

Thank you, this information may be helpful in an upcoming failure to fill arbitration. There is no end date attached to this survey, and you are encouraged to revisit this survey every time one of the above instances occurs.

<https://forms.gle/7R5j4e2PtaxBwXsA9>

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PROVINCIAL SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION DAY

October 23 is Provincial Specialist Association Day. On this province-wide Pro-D day, most PSAs offer a conference. While this year conferences will be held virtually, it does not deter from the

Remember that our Pro-D funds, as well as Pro-D remedy funds will pay for the registration for PSA conferences, as well as PSA memberships. PSA Conferences are a great way to connect with other teachers and learn about the latest ideas in your teaching area.

At this time the regular conference brochure has not been made available. However, go to the following link and click on October 23 to read about all the conferences currently being offered virtually. <https://bctf.ca/PDCalendar/>

If you do not see a conference you would like to attend, you may be interested in examining what resources are available through the PSAs. <https://bctf.ca/PSAwebsites.aspx>.

NEW TEACHER & TTOCS

We are pleased to be supporting Teachers-Teaching-on-Call and early career teachers in their first years of teaching. To be most effective, we want to be able to communicate directly with you! We'd love to be able to share resources, have meetings specific to your needs. As such, we need your personal, non-district, contact information. Please take the time to complete the New Teacher/TTOC Email List.

We are looking forward to supporting you and your needs.

http://bit.ly/NWTU_NT-TTOC_Email