

# Teacher Wellbeing

2023 Report



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# Overview

**Kami was founded to help make teachers' jobs easier.**

Prompted by this ethos, we survey thousands of teachers each year to find out how they feel about their work and wellbeing. This year's report includes data taken from over 2,400 teachers in the US who answered our questionnaire.



**Written in collaboration with Dr. Christina Costa.**

A professor of psychology, author, and speaker, Dr. Costa is an expert in wellbeing and resilience.

She's passionate about inclusive education and improving the lives of teachers to promote career satisfaction and longevity.

## Who we are

Here at Kami, we come to work each day to foster a positive learning journey for everyone. We're here to save teachers time and help students learn their way – with a little Kami magic.

# Let's start with some stats

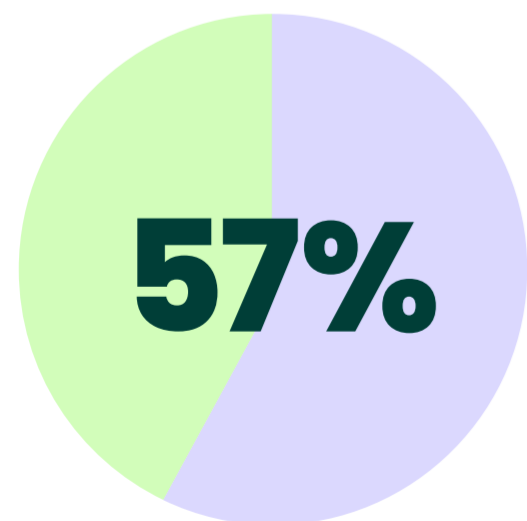
**Over 50%** of teachers feel they don't have time to support their students' mental health.

**Over 85%** Over 85% of teachers feel there's not sufficient support to avoid stress or burnout.

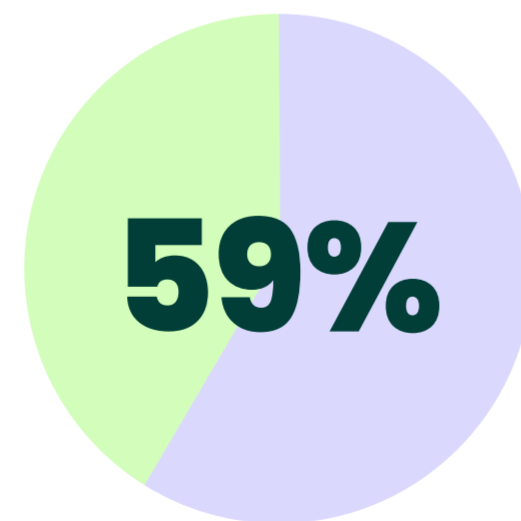
**1 out of every 2** teachers has no time to engage with family or friends.

**2 out of 3** teachers are unhappy and feel anxious or depressed.

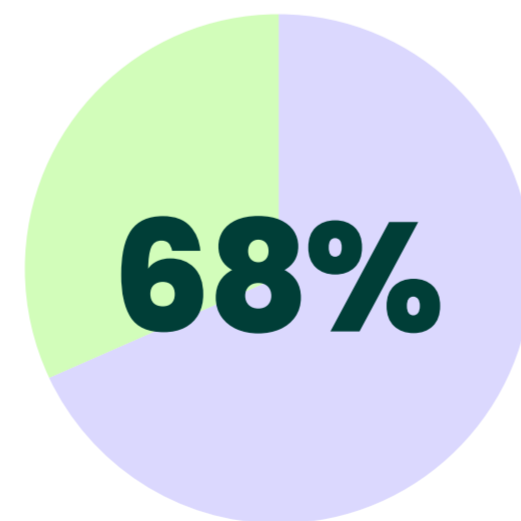
**1 out of every 2** teachers has had to seek external support for work-related stress or anxiety.



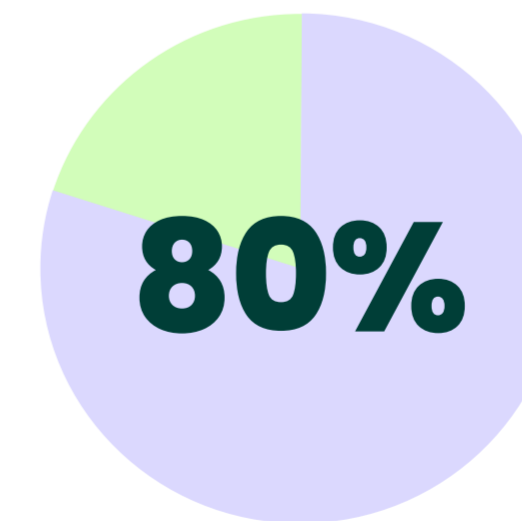
of teachers entered the profession to prepare young people for the future.



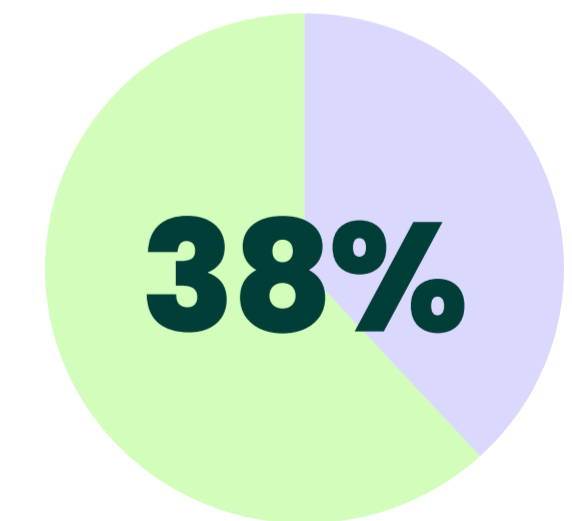
of teachers have classes with over 20 students in them.



of teachers feel their mental health has a direct impact on their students.



of teachers have considered leaving the profession.



of teachers plan on remaining in the profession for the foreseeable future.

# Wellbeing, what is it?



## **Noun: The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.**

Wellbeing is the quality of an individual's life. There are several ways we can measure wellbeing, such as a person's mental, physical, economic, and emotional health. The different forms are connected. For example, improved physical health (e.g., maintaining healthy sleeping routines) is associated with improved emotional health; as anybody who has missed out on a good night's sleep will tell you!

Keeping this in mind, you can see how if one aspect of someone's life is causing them stress, it can spill over and negatively impact them on every level. The same is true of somebody's employment. Job satisfaction, job security, and professional support networks are all crucial factors in making sure that teachers are able to perform at their best. We believe that when teachers are given the resources to maintain their mental health, everybody wins.

**"It is a multidimensional concept that encompasses physical, emotional, and social aspects of a person's life."**

**Dr. Christina Costa**

# Why teacher wellbeing is a **community** issue

**Teaching is exciting and dynamic. It stretches teachers physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.**

“Teacher wellbeing is critical for several reasons. Firstly, teachers play a vital role in shaping the minds and futures of their students. They are responsible for creating a positive and nurturing learning environment, developing engaging and effective lesson plans, and providing support and guidance to their students. However, teaching can also be a demanding and stressful job, which can negatively impact a teacher’s wellbeing. If teachers are not prioritizing their wellbeing, it can impact their ability to perform their job effectively, which can, in turn, negatively impact their students.

Secondly, teacher wellbeing is important because it can impact the retention of teachers in the profession. Teaching can be a challenging job, and if teachers are not taking care of their wellbeing, it can lead to burnout and a desire to leave the profession. This can be detrimental to schools and students, as high teacher turnover can disrupt the learning environment and impact student achievement.

Finally, when schools prioritize teacher wellbeing, it can lead to increased collaboration, communication, and teamwork among staff, which can ultimately lead to improved student outcomes.”

Dr. Christina Costa

## Improving school culture

“Prioritizing teacher wellbeing is essential because it can improve overall school culture. When teachers feel supported and valued, they are more likely to create a positive and inclusive learning environment for their students.”

Dr. Christina Costa

## How teachers feel about their careers

Teachers joined the profession for a variety of reasons. However, over half of the teachers we spoke to said they became teachers to help prepare young people for the future.

More commonly-held assumptions about why people teach, such as the draw of long holidays, are actually less popular choices. In fact, as you will see in this report, the majority of teachers work long hours and are run down. The idea that teachers finish at 3:00PM and get more holidays is a myth that needs to be quashed.

The inspiring thing about teachers is not only why they got into the profession, but also how they feel about their jobs. We found that 3 out of 5 teachers like or love their job and are motivated by their students. While it may not seem like a big deal, it's a promising statistic, when you consider that 2 in 3 teachers are unhappy and feel anxious or depressed.

As you will see throughout this report, teachers are struggling, but it's encouraging to see that they still enjoy what they do. We must then ask what can be done to support teachers to go from surviving to thriving.

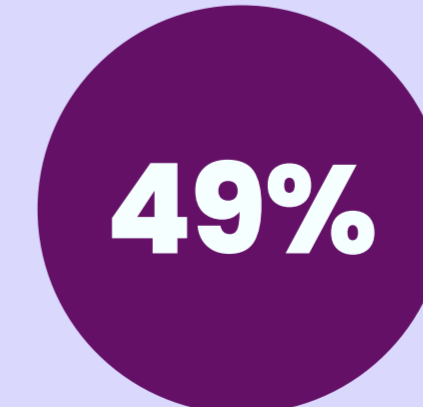
Which of these statements best describes your view on your career as a teacher right now?



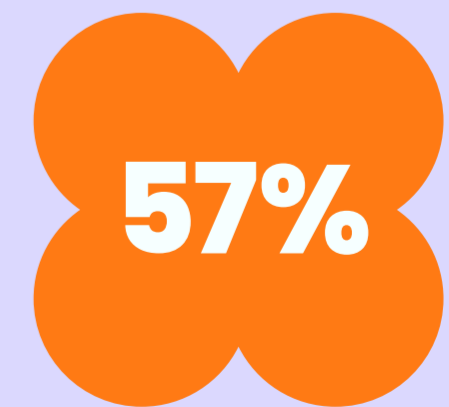
What were your main reason(s) for becoming a teacher or entering the teaching profession?



To do something good and give back.



To encourage a continuous love of learning.



To help shape young minds and prepare them for the future.

# How teachers are feeling right now

**1 out of every 2**

teachers feels they are too busy or stressed to make an impact on their students.

**2 out of every 3**

teachers are unhappy and feel anxious or depressed.

**1 out of every 2**

teachers has no time to engage with family or friends.

“Depression and anxiety are common mental health conditions that teachers may experience. Depression is characterized by feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in activities. Anxiety is characterized by feelings of excessive worry and fear. If you are a teacher experiencing depression or anxiety, it is important to seek support from a mental health professional.”

Dr. Christina Costa

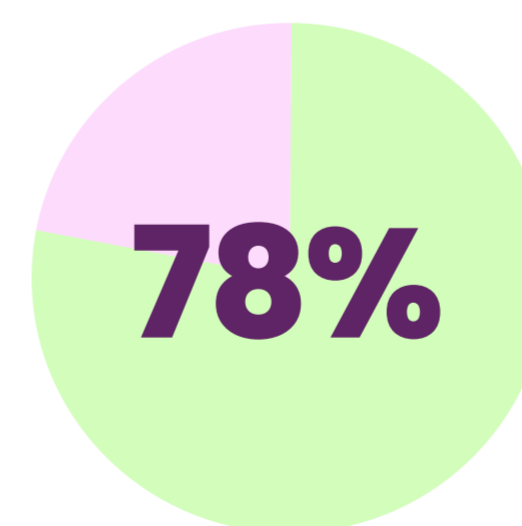
While teachers love what they do, and joined the profession for all the right reasons, it's clear they are struggling with heavy workloads and stress.

As a result, more than half of teachers don't have enough time to engage with family or friends outside of work (52%) and 62% feel that they are tired and run down.

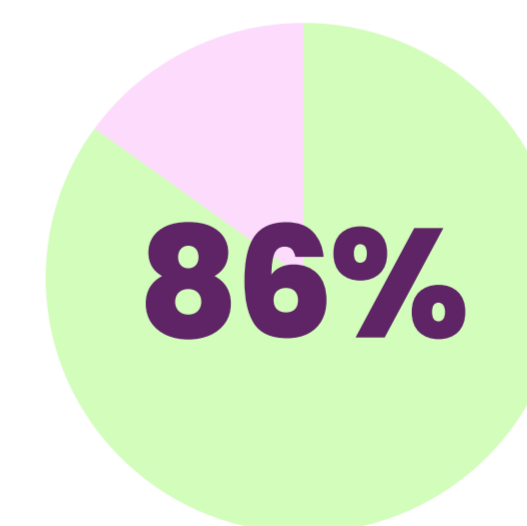
There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges and changes that teachers are still dealing with, as well as other problems such as safety concerns and student behavior.

However, it's important to note that there are some positive experiences as well. As Costa explains, “I think, as usual, teachers are stressed and largely feel unsupported. However, I think it is also important to acknowledge that there are many teachers that are thriving in their profession.”

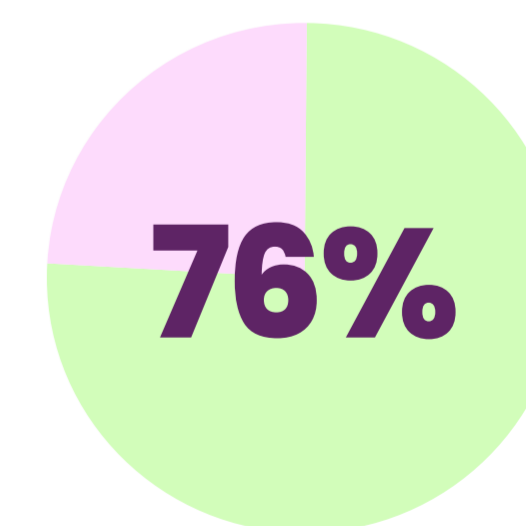
“Despite challenges, many teachers are also experiencing a sense of purpose and fulfilment from their work. They are proud of the resilience they have demonstrated in the face of adversity and the support they have provided to their students during a difficult time.”



I work long hours.



I am tired and run down.



I struggle with the workloads and expectations.



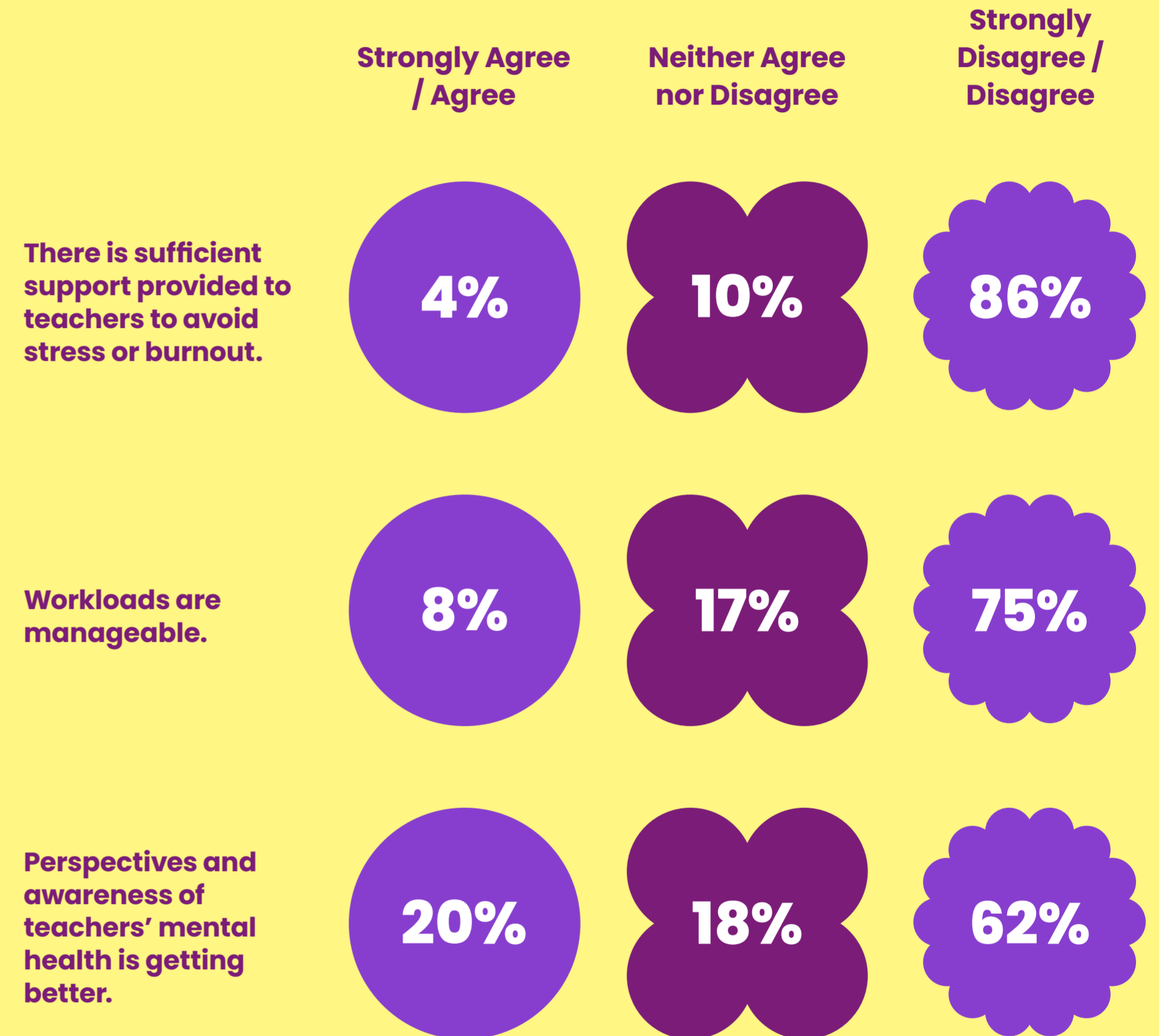
# Teacher stress and burnout

Every workplace has its unique challenges and associated stress that comes with it. However, our data shows that a huge number of teachers are under a lot of stress. Over 70% of teachers self-assessed their daily stress levels at a 4 out of 5 or higher.

Almost a third said they are so burned out that they don't know how much longer they can last. To really demonstrate how significant this statistic is, imagine if a third of the country's educators didn't show up for work tomorrow, or, even worse, ever again.

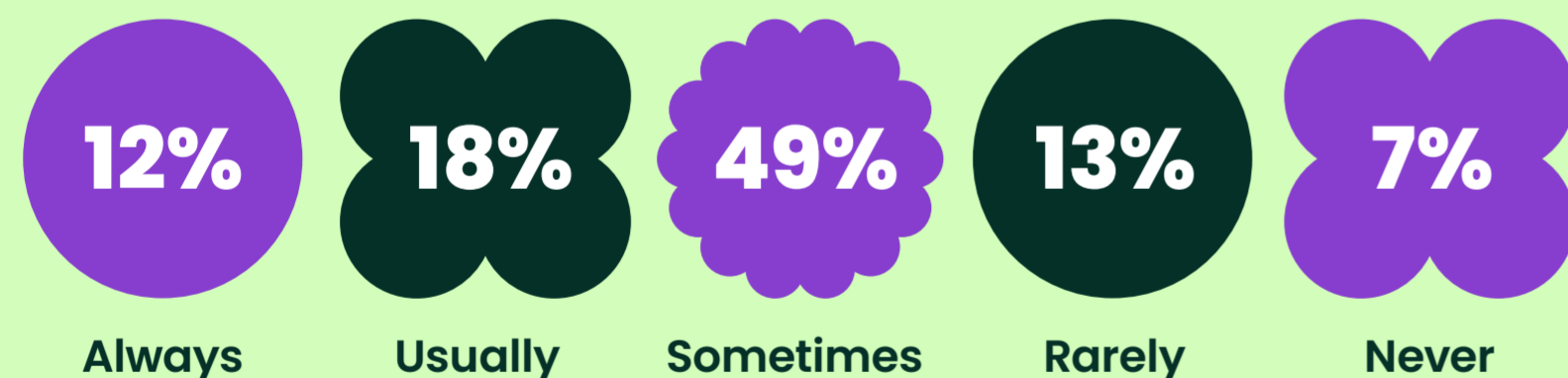
"It's essential to address teacher burnout by providing teachers with the necessary resources and support to prioritize their wellbeing. This can include access to mental health services, professional development opportunities, and a positive work environment. By supporting teachers' wellbeing, we can help ensure that they can continue to provide quality education to their students and promote positive outcomes for all."

Dr. Christina Costa



# What teachers have to say about teaching

Have you ever thought about leaving the teaching profession?



“It’s important to acknowledge that teachers are facing a range of emotions and challenges right now, and it’s essential to provide them with support and resources to prioritize their wellbeing.”

Dr. Christina Costa

With stress and burnout comes another problem — quitting. The statistics shown in this report make sense as more teachers are leaving the profession than ever before.

We found that 4 out of 5 teachers have thought about resigning. Whereas only 7% of teachers have never thought about leaving.

However, many teachers are staying in the profession. We asked them what makes them stay, and the most common answer was: their students (62%). This statistic provides a lot of hope — if teacher wellbeing can be prioritized, more teachers will stay and continue to have a positive impact on their students.

What makes you consider leaving the teaching profession? Most common words used:



# Current support for teachers

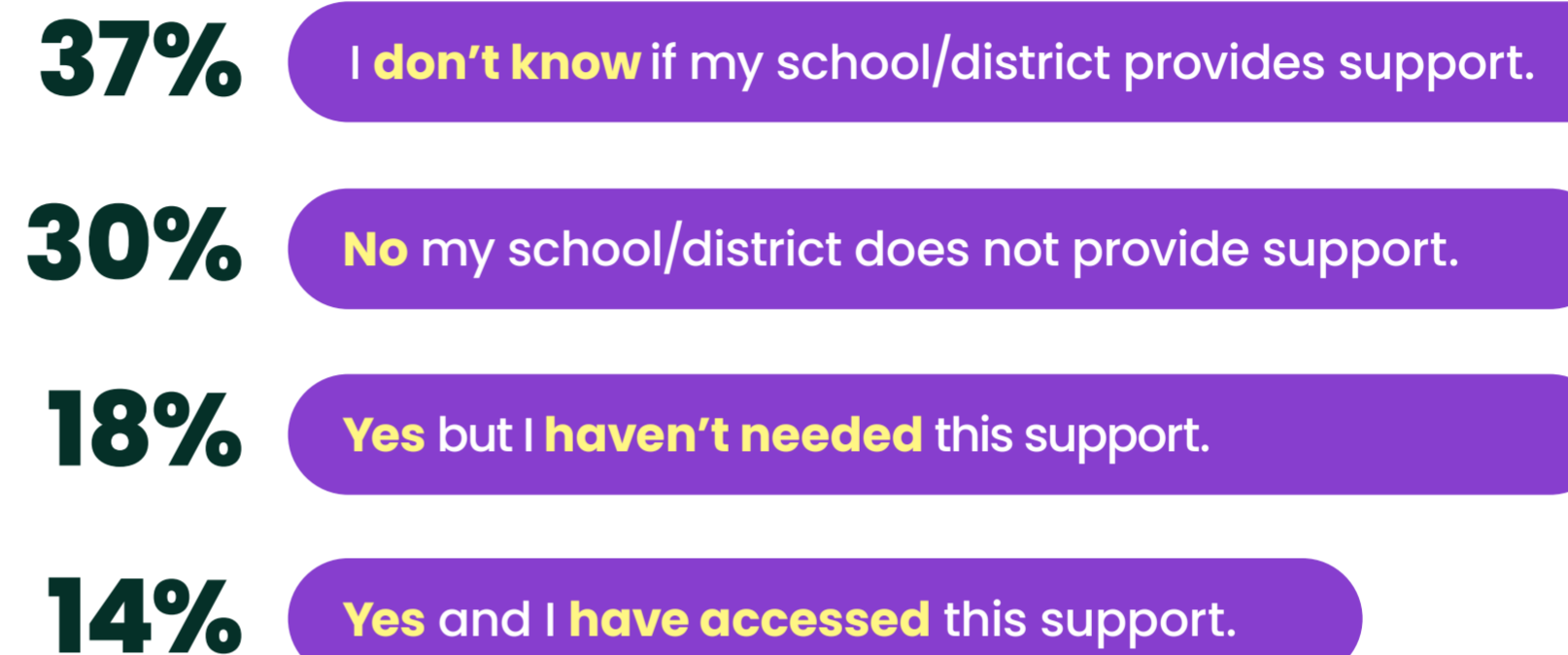
Awareness of teachers' mental health is increasing (20% of teachers agree that perspectives are changing), but there's still a lot of work to be done.

While there's some support currently available to teachers, 86% said they feel there's insufficient support to mitigate stress or burnout.

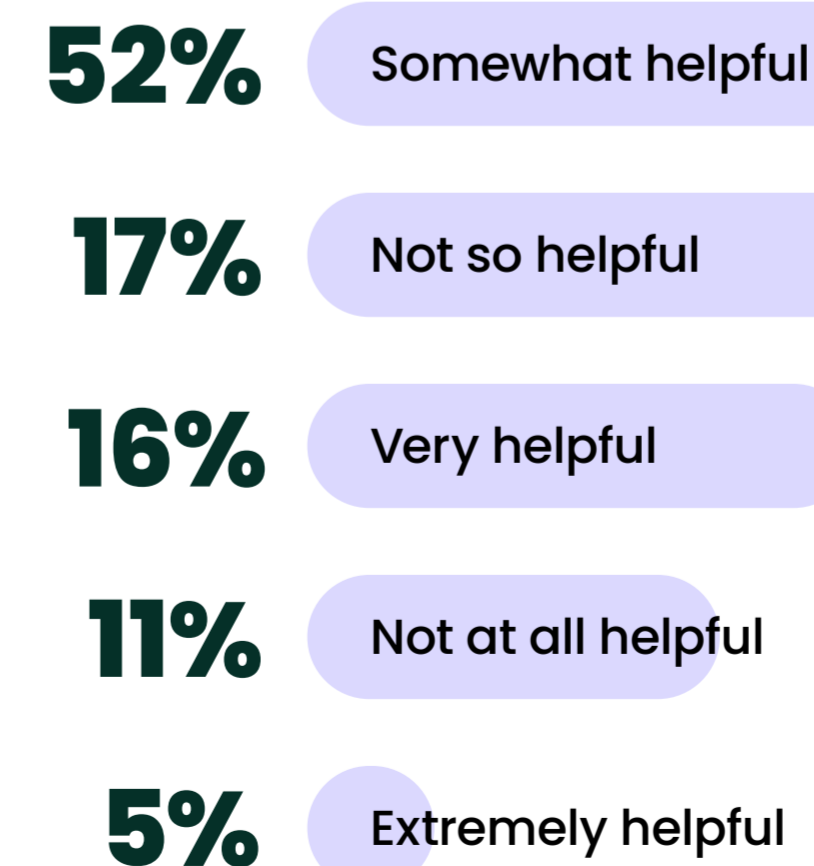
The data also shows that the support networks that do exist are not readily available to all teachers. Over a third of teachers surveyed didn't know if their school or district had support for work-related stress, and another 30% said there was no support provided at all.

A focus on teacher wellbeing at all levels is key, not just for teachers but as we know, for their students as well.

Has/does your school/district provide support or assistance for work-related stress or anxiety?



Which of these statements best describes your experience with the support you received?



# The relationship between student and teacher wellbeing



**“When teachers are burned out, they may be less engaged and effective in their teaching, which can lead to lower student achievement and academic outcomes.”**

**Dr. Christina Costa**

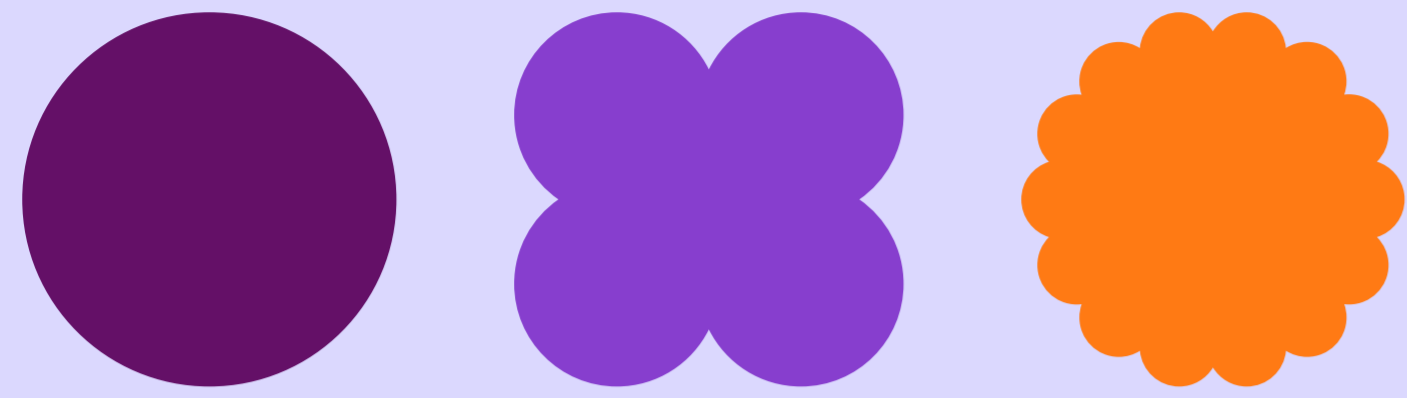
If teachers are not able to prioritize their wellbeing, their ability to perform their job effectively suffers, which negatively impacts their students. A teacher’s effectiveness is not only measured by their students’ test scores and grade point averages, but also by the positive relationships they build and the support they give.

Unfortunately, over half of our surveyed teachers said they don’t have the time to support their students’ mental health. This is a real problem as 82% said their students are also struggling with mental health issues.

**82%** of teachers feel their students are struggling with their mental health

**59%** of teachers said their students come to them for help with their mental health

**68%** of teachers feel their mental health has a direct impact on their students



# Opportunities for Change

This report shows that change is needed for both teachers and their students to thrive. The good news is that teachers want to make an impact, they like their jobs, and they want to stay for their students. With some increased support and positive change, they can continue to prepare young people for the future.

Implementing change is the responsibility of the community as a whole, especially those who affect education policy.

Here are some basic steps toward change recommended by Dr. Christina Costa.

## Share this report

The more reports and resources like this are shared with people who can drive change, the more impact they can have.

## Address workload issues

Reducing class sizes, providing adequate planning time, and limiting non-teaching responsibilities are some options, but there are many others.

## Create a positive school culture

This can involve fostering positive relationships between staff members, promoting work-life balance, and giving teachers the opportunity to voice concerns.

## Provide professional development on teacher wellbeing

Sessions can focus on topics such as stress management, self-care, and the services and resources available.

## Increase funding for mental health resources

Funding counseling services and mental health awareness campaigns can help to address teacher burnout.

## Advocate for policy changes

Lobbying for legislation that addresses issues such as workload and compensation can be done at the local, state, or national level.

## Where to go for **support and resources**

If you're a teacher struggling with your wellbeing, it's important that you find the time to get the help you need. Here are some options that you can explore suggested to us by Dr. Costa.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Many school districts offer EAPs. They provide confidential counseling and support for a variety of issues.

**School counselor or psychologist:** Schools often have counselors or psychologists onsite who can provide support and resources for teachers.

**Mental health clinics or providers:** Teachers can seek support from mental health clinics or providers in their community. Many insurance plans offer coverage, and some clinics offer reduced fees for those who cannot afford treatment.

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** NAMI provides resources, support, and advocacy for those affected by mental illness. They offer education and support groups for teachers and other professionals. Some clinics offer reduced fees for those who cannot afford treatment.

**Crisis hotlines:** Crisis hotlines provide immediate support and assistance for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) and Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741) are two options. Support groups for teachers and other professionals. Some clinics offer reduced fees for those who cannot afford treatment.



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