



To: Principals/Teachers

Topic: **The role of Schools in providing Psychosocial Support to learners.**

Message Objective(s): **To build capacity for schools to provide psychosocial support to learners.**

Message: One can never over emphasize the importance of providing psychosocial support to learners in this pandemic environment we are living in.

Psychosocial support is vitally important as it addresses learners emotional, social, mental, and spiritual needs -all which are essential elements of positive human development. Psychosocial support also assist in building resilience in learners and allows them to cope with adversity brought about by the pandemic. We are currently in time of severe stress and children are facing the brunt of the pandemic with many schools reporting that learners are losing their parents/ guardians, or their parents / guardians are losing employment. Learners cannot cope with this kind of adversity without the psychosocial support from schools. Schools therefore must not view psychosocial support as an add on or complementary to academic learning but an important component of academic and social success.

Principals /Teachers must do the following:

- Provide supportive and caring learning environments
- Contribute to learner well-being
- Develop knowledge and skills
- Restore hope and provide opportunities
- Protect learners from any harm, including bullying
- Create structure and predictability and a sense of belonging
- Assist learners to build resilience in face of severe stress and adversity that is currently obtaining because of job loses and death of parents/guardians

How to boost Learner Well -being at school:

- Stick to basic needs like safe and secure environment
- Provide opportunities for learners to “ feel how you feel”
- Engage learners in positive activities like breathing exercises
- Encourage learners to laugh out loudly and put their minds elsewhere instead of focussing on adversity
- Involve all learners in extra -curricula activities to put their minds off heavy stuff

From: George Taodzera (Georget@nect.org.za) 079 368 0612

References: Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001); Psychosocial Support: A model for South African Schools. (2021)