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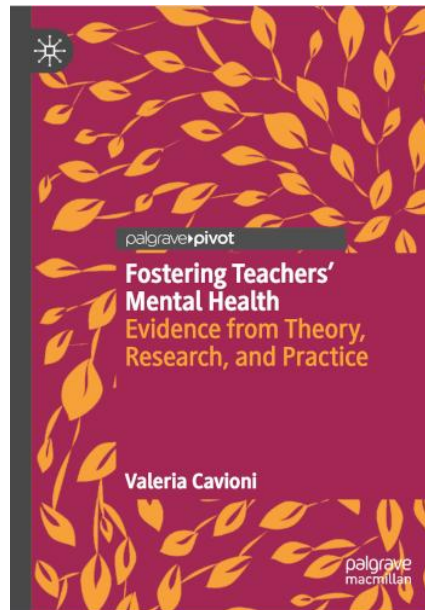
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Valeria Cavioni, psychologist and psychotherapist, is currently an associate professor at Universitas Mercatorum in Rome, Italy. Her research focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL), teacher well-being, and school mental health. She has worked with various organizations and has developed several evidence-based intervention programs for schools working to improve mental health.

According to RAND and their findings from the 2025 State of the American Teacher survey, teachers are more likely than similar working adults to experience poor well-being on every indicator they surveyed: depression, burnout, frequent job-related stress, and difficulty coping with job-related stress. This pattern has been noted previously (Steiner et al., 2025). While multiple indicators mental health have decreased since the COVID19 pandemic, when compared to similar working adults, teachers show a significantly higher percentage, ranging from 7% to 29% on each indicator.

In recent years, research has focused on student mental health, such as through the CASEL framework, neglecting to look more closely at the adults in the education environment who are supporting those students (Mahoney et al., 2021). Burnt out, stressed, and struggling teachers find it difficult to support their students' needs, when their own needs are not being met (Cavioni et al., 2023). An approach that prioritizes teachers' own mental health would yield better results in the educational mental health landscape, which would include a decrease in the indicators listed above from the RAND survey, as well as having a positive impact on student well-being. An understanding of the complexities of teachers' mental health, including its effects on school environments and



students, the crucial role of teacher-student relationships on student achievement, and intervention programs that have seen success in educational settings, can help schools to develop improved programs of support for both teachers and students alike. The author states, “This book seeks to bridge a critical gap by offering a comprehensive, research-informed exploration of teachers’ mental health, highlighting the crucial role of school-based interventions that prioritize teacher well-being” (pp. 3–4). This text presents key frameworks and models that help to both explain the state of teacher well-being and the necessary support systems for educators to enhance their well-being.

Organized into four chapters, including an introduction, *Fostering Teachers’ Mental Health* begins with the idea that teaching is incredibly relational, and how often this “deeply human dimension of teaching” (p. 2) is overlooked, including its impact on teachers’ well-being. The author explains that if teachers can have a significant lifelong impact on a student, we must prioritize teachers’ mental health in order to negate negative effects they may be experiencing, so that teachers can create a positive learning environment for students. The introduction also briefly outlines the three consecutive chapters, each of which start with a short abstract, including keywords, which is helpful as a reader to frame the discussion for each section.

Chapter 2 covers the complexities of teacher well-being, including risk factors associated with working in a school (such as work-related stress, burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, bullying, and emotional abuse from school leadership), as well as protective factors that can assist teachers in creating positive well-being (such as resilience, and social and emotional competencies). The author also explains why teachers’ mental health matters, stating, “Mentally healthy teachers are better equipped to foster strong connections with students, model effective emotional regulation, and cultivate a positive school climate that promotes resilience and academic success” (p. 14), while also destigmatizing mental health among teachers, emphasizing that proactive engagement with mental well-being is not solely for those in crisis, nor does it signify dysfunction. The frameworks included give a clear and articulate picture for readers to follow in order to have a full understanding of teacher well-being. Frameworks include Keyes’ (2002) three-factor model of well-being, Stamate et al. (2015) framework comparing psychological well-being versus psychological distress, Cavioni et al. (2020) framework for mental health promotion in schools, Mansfield et al. (2012) four-dimensional framework of teacher resilience, SEL competencies of the CASEL framework (Mahoney et al., 2021), and the Prosocial Classroom Model by Jennings and Greenberg (2009).

A key strength of this work lies in the extensive inclusion of frameworks and models. Chapters 2 and 3 present numerous frameworks and models that have been employed in the research, providing readers with a comprehensive foundational understanding across the areas explored within each chapter. Readers receive a wealth of background information on the topic of teacher well-being, and the inclusion of frameworks and models gives the reader multiple resources to explore if they wish to research further in an aspect of well-being. This is especially helpful for scholars looking to do additional

research in this area, or those who are looking to create programs for their own context, such as administrators or policymakers, since the information is highly condensed and easily accessible in this format. But for the same reason, this may be overwhelming or overly complex for those outside of academia, such as practicing teachers, as there is a wealth of information in a fairly short book, making it potentially a formidable amount of information to wade through.

Building on those concepts, Chapter 3 examines the role of teacher-student relationships and how they shape both students' academic and social emotional development. The author demonstrates the reciprocal nature of teacher student interactions, that teacher well-being fosters student well-being, which circles back to foster teacher well-being. Cavioni states "Positive teacher-student relationships act as external scaffolding, providing temporary, structured support that helps children develop independent self-regulation skills" (p.67). The author illustrates the long-term impact of pleasant and unpleasant memories on students by presenting a study in which participants were asked to recount school-related episodes with teachers, categorized as either pleasant or unpleasant. This study revealed seven primary positive themes and six primary negative themes. The stories included in this section show the lasting impact these moments had on the participants years later. One framework included in Chapter 3 includes Cavioni & Grazzani's (2023) dimensions of community, as well as an observational tool, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed by Pianta et al. (2008).

Chapter 4 describes two European intervention programs that have been studied for their effectiveness, both of which had a focus on teacher well-being. This is a relative strength of the book, since it gives practical implications of the material from the previous chapters. Administrators or policymakers who are creating programs in their own contexts would find this chapter particularly helpful in development of their own initiative, as the details of the included programs may help to guide in the establishment of a program fit for their own environment. The first program was the Promoting Mental Health at Schools or PROMEHS, which was implemented across the entire school population instead of a specific at-risk group during the COVID-19 pandemic. Training for teachers consisted of 25 hours, which provided theoretical knowledge and practical guidance on promoting mental health in schools. After evaluating the impact of the program, a statistically significant improvement was found in all assessed areas, including teacher-student relationships, emotional regulation, social awareness, and interpersonal relationships. The second program was Teaching to Be or T2Be, which used gamification to provide an engaging and interactive approach to teach growth and well-being in social and emotional learning. The program consisted of 12 narrative-driven levels which were completed over 5 months, which encouraged self-reflection and active participation within each objective. Focus group discussions were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the researchers found enhanced teacher emotional competence, promotion of teacher self-care practices, improved resilience, reduced burnout, more effective classroom management, improved social awareness, increased teacher collaboration, and enhanced critical thinking skills.

One limitation of these programs is their implementation in Europe, and how they may apply to the United States. While the two programs discussed in the book were not trialed in the United States, the sites were varied, having been studied in Croatia, Portugal, Latvia, Italy, Greece, Romania, Austria, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia, and Spain, “demonstrating their adaptability and effectiveness across different cultural and educational systems” (p. 134). One element to consider when thinking about promoting these programs in the United States is the amount of similar initiatives U.S. teachers are already asked to take part in, and how this may fit into or replace the existing programs schools are already implementing.

A further critique of the text was the small number of citations in certain sections, which would provide readers with additional resources for further investigation. This would be especially helpful to newer researchers in the field who may need more guidance on the subject matter. One such example appears on page 18, where the author asserts “The teaching profession is widely recognized for its high levels of work-related stress, partly due to the complexity and diversity of tasks teachers must manage daily. Teachers are required to operate on multiple levels”. The inclusion of citations for such statements would be advantageous for readers seeking to delve deeper into these explanations. Another limitation of the text is the exclusion of different educational contexts (how different educational contexts may impact teacher well-being), as well as little focus on issues of equity in teacher and student well-being. While equity is partly discussed in relation to resilience, it could be a more central theme of the book. Despite these limitations, the author comprehensively depicts the state of teacher well-being, as well as programs that have been researched in the school environment.

Fostering Teachers’ Mental Health provides a timely and comprehensive exploration of teacher mental health, bridging a crucial gap in educational research that often overlooks the well-being of the adults supporting students. Those with an interest in protecting and fostering teachers’ mental health, such as policy makers, school boards, and school administrators, will find this text offers a helpful overview of the issues teachers are dealing with today. Teachers may also find this book helpful in their pursuit of their own well-being. By examining the complexities of teacher well-being, the profound impact of teacher-student relationships, and presenting evidence-based intervention programs, the author offers valuable insights for teachers, policymakers, and school administrators. The book successfully presents a holistic view of the current state of teacher mental health and actionable strategies for improvement. Ultimately, it underscores the necessity of prioritizing teacher well-being to foster positive learning environments and enhance student outcomes.

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About the Reviewer

Carrie M. Webster is a doctoral student in teaching and learning at Illinois State University. Her current research focuses on the well-being of teachers with ADHD and the development of community within affinity groups. Carrie is a Family and Consumer Science Teacher at Bloomington (IL) Career Academy, where she instructs students from 17 different high schools in advanced culinary arts. Having pursued a non-traditional route into education, encompassing culinary school followed by two bachelor's degree programs, she has now accumulated 12 years of high school teaching experience. She completed her MS in teaching and learning from Illinois State in December.



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Valeria Cavioni is a psychologist and psychotherapist who obtained her PhD in psychology at the University of Pavia. She is an associate professor in developmental and educational psychology at the Mercatorum University, in Rome. Her main research interests include the design, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based intervention projects for the promotion of socio-emotional learning, resilience, mental health and the prevention of behavioural problems in educational contexts. From 2018 she has been the Chair of the ENSEC (European Network for Social and Emotional Competence). She is a member of the editorial board of the journals *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*.

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