

With a most-welcome summer break just around the corner, we can turn our attention to attending more to our own needs. Like never before, navigating the 2021-2022 school year has been very taxing for many educational leaders. Focusing on our own personal and family needs, and prioritizing those over the summer holiday, can be the best remedy for overcoming the rigors of a demanding past school year.

Wrap

Plan in advance

Wrapping up the school year in a way that lets you be free of further work obligations is step one. Establish an end-of-year priority list and task sheet that you can physically check off.

Creating healthy 'book-end' work boundaries and realistic goals allows for greater work separation and downtime over the summer. Set daily/weekly goals through June into early July to ensure you are 'on track' to end the school year with a more purposeful sense of completion.

Reflect

Be mindful

Spend some time on the weekends through June identifying what you truly need over the summer to get recharged and rejuvenated.

Many have given more of themselves than ever before to meet the needs of others over this past school year, often at the expense of their own needs. It might be helpful to take stock of that awareness while you are still in the midst of the demands and pressures of your role.

Pay attention to what you are needing – and lacking – beyond sleep and rest. It's time to prioritize your needs and those of your family. When you create a list of actions that you can reliably review and revert to, it can take the guesswork out of what you need once you have the time to focus on yourself and your family.

Release

Disconnect / Connect

We have been bombarded with so much news of conflict, angst, fear, and loss. Take time to disconnect from electronic devices and media/social media feeds. One's perception of threat and fight-or-flight activation can remain artificially heightened even after you've left the work setting for summer holidays. Give yourself a break from what can be an unsettling and disruptive relationship for a while. Do make a point to connect with nature and healthy relationships. With COVID-19 slowly taking a backseat in our lives right now, find connections that are affirming, nourishing, and nurturing over the break. This will help you settle into a state of being and grounding that will serve you well in reclaiming greater vitality and the sense of community we've all been dearly missing.

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