

School Mental Health is Not Just for Students: Why Wellness Matters

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DISCLAIMER

- The speaker does not have any financial disclosures to report
- Just because you teach wellness does not mean that you embody all aspects of wellness in your own daily living



Center for School Mental Health

MISSION

To strengthen the policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth

- Established in 1995. Federal funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration.
- Focus on advancing school mental health research, training, policy and practice at local, state, and national levels.
- **Shared family-schools-community mental health agenda.**
- Co-Directors: Nancy Lever, Ph.D. & Sharon Stephan, Ph.D.
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Why Wellness?

- 10 years direct service provision in schools
- 20 years of administrative leadership/technical assistance SMH
- Co-led two R01s with Dr. Mark Weist considering the value of Wellness in School Mental Health
- Working at local, state, and national levels to improve quality and sustainability in school mental health
- Lived experience as parent/spouse/employee

Many Employees are Unwell

- According to the US Department of Health & Human Services, for every 100 employees in this country:
 - 27 have cardiovascular disease
 - 24 have high blood pressure
 - 50 or more have high cholesterol
 - 26 are overweight by 20% or more
 - 10 are heavy drinkers
 - 59 don't get adequate exercise

New Hampshire's Health Status (2015)

- America's Health Rankings[®] is a composite index of over 20 different metrics (e.g., smoking, physical inactivity, obesity, diabetes, infant mortality, immunizations) for an annual health snapshot
- 5th Overall (up to slots from 2014)
 - In the past 2 years, drug deaths increased 29% from 11.2 to 14.5 per 100,000 (higher than national rate of 13.5)
 - In the past 2 years, poor physical health days decreased 11% from 3.7 days to 3.3 days in the previous 30 days

Causes of Stress

- **Money** and **work** are the leading causes of stress
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of Americans report work-related stress



(American Psychological Association, 2007)



Stress impacts your ability to do your job

- Stress is one of the main preventable causes of employee absences.

Ipsos-Reid employee wellness statistics study (2004).

- According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, stress-related disorders are one of the most prevalent reason for worker disability, costing between \$20-\$30 billion annually due to worker absenteeism

Why Wellness in Schools?

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"I know the kids don't like you and pick on you, but you have to go to school...you're the teacher."



If the oxygen masks drop down, **put your own mask on first**, and then help the person next to you.

Why Wellness in Schools?

- High rates of stress for school staff
 - Vicarious trauma and secondary stress
 - High rates of teacher turnover
 - Economic benefits
 - Benefits for Adults and Students in Schools
- 

**WHO SAYS
TEACHING IS STRESSFUL?**



I'M 39, AND I FEEL GREAT!

“We ask teachers to be a combination of Albert Einstein, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr. and...Tony Soprano. We ask them to be Mom and Dad and impart tough love but also be a shoulder to lean on. And when they don't do these things, we blame them for not being saviors of the world. What is the effect? The effect has been teachers are incredibly stressed out.”

--Randi Weingarten

President of American Federation of Teachers

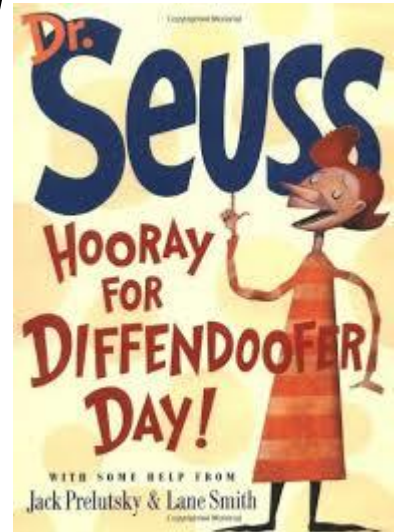
Common Sources of Educator Stress

High Stakes Testing (1500 PK-12 Educators)

- 72% felt “moderate” or “extreme” pressure from school and district administrators
- 42% reported emphasis on standardized test scores had a “negative impact” on classroom
- 45% considered quitting because of standardized testing

High Stakes Testing and Stress

*"All schools for miles and miles around
Must take a special test,
To see who's learning such and such -
To see which school's the best.
If our small school does not do well,
Then it will be torn down,
And you will have to go to school
In dreary Flobbertown."*



Hooray for Diffendoofer Day! Published by Alfred A. Knopf Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 1998.

Common Sources of Teacher Stress

- Large class size
- Behavioral challenges in students
- Inadequate resources & poor physical space
- Bureaucracy
- Workload & Paperwork
- High responsibility for others
- Perceived inadequate recognition or advancement
- Gap between pre-service training expectations and actual work experiences



Compassion Fatigue/Vicarious Traumatization/Secondary Traumatic Stress

The emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those experiencing the consequences of traumatic events. It can occur due to exposure on one case or can be due to a “cumulative” level of trauma.

American Institute of Stress, 2016

Compassion Fatigue/Secondary Traumatic Stress and School Staff

- Not just mental health clinicians
- *“Any educator who works directly with traumatized children and adolescents is vulnerable to the effects of trauma.”*

-National Child Traumatic Stress Center



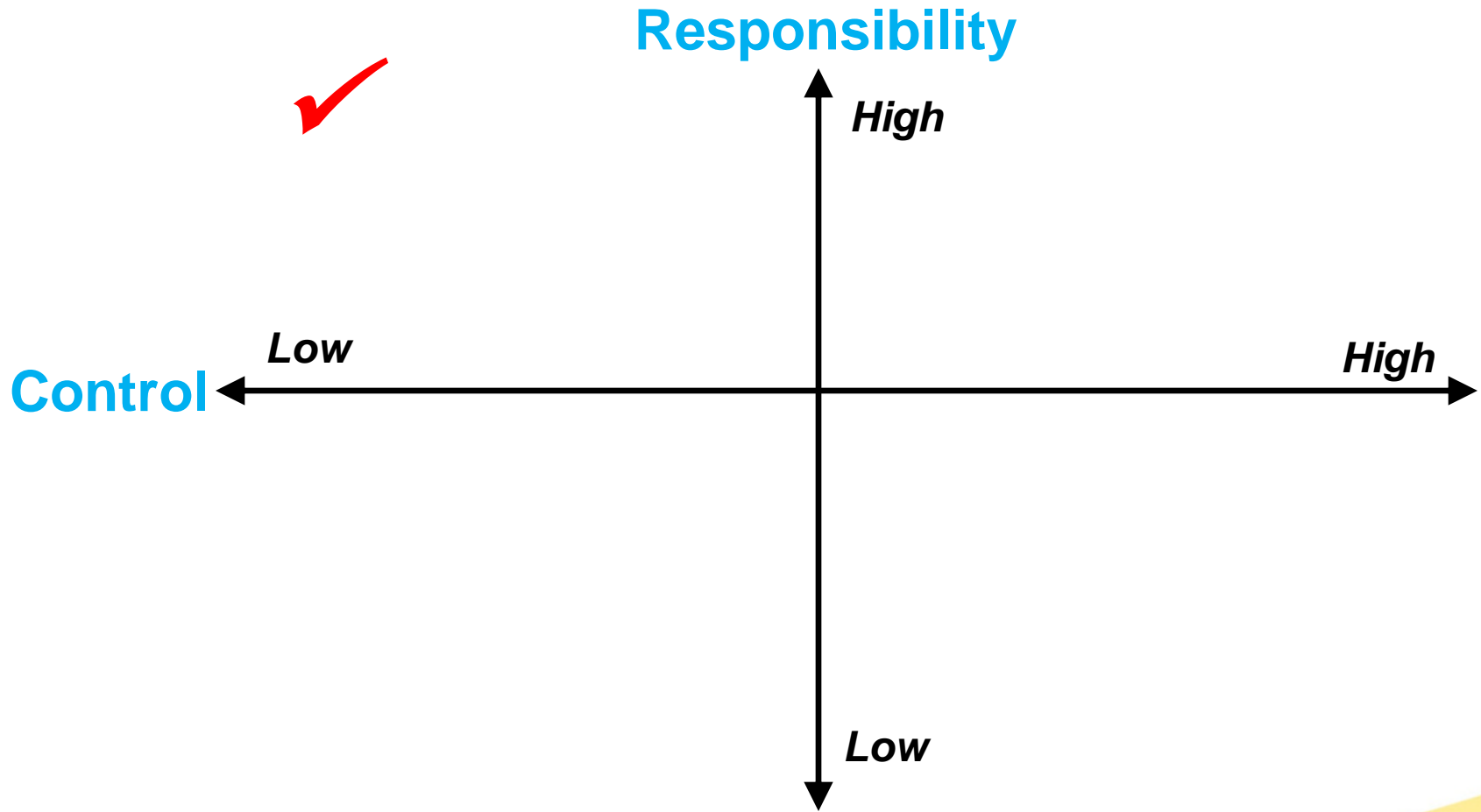
Burnout - Definition

- The condition of someone who has become very physically and emotionally tired after doing a difficult job for a long time (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- *A multi-faceted phenomenon comprised of three features*
 - **Emotional Exhaustion**
 - **Depersonalization**
 - **Reduced personal accomplishments**


Signs of Exhaustion and Burnout

- Emotional numbing, feeling “shut down”
- Loss of enjoyment
- No time or energy for yourself
- Sense of cynicism or pessimism
- Increased illness or fatigue, aches and pains
- Increased absenteeism, “sick days”
- Greater problems with boundaries,
- Difficulty making decisions, or making poor decisions

A Recipe for Burnout



Factors Associated with Educator Burnout

- Student misbehavior and disengagement
 - Low sense of self-efficacy
 - Inadequate salary and perceived lower status of the profession
 - Time pressure
 - Lack of autonomy
- 

How does Teacher Stress Impact Students?

- Teachers who are on the path to burnout report significantly more:
 - Negativity in their interactions with students
 - Sarcasm
 - Aggression
 - Responding negatively to mistakes

Working in Schools can be Challenging

- 80% of teachers reported feeling physically and emotionally exhausted at the end of the day”
- Surveys of 30,000 teachers revealed **89%** stated they were enthusiastic about teaching when they started, **only 15% feel that way now**

Workforce Issues

- 10% of teachers leave after 1 year
- 17% of teachers leave within 5 years
- In urban districts, up to 70% of teachers leave within first year
- More teachers leave when compared to social service professionals, including mental health service providers
- **Over 4 years rates of**

teacher dropout > student dropout

Teacher Turnover

- Not a problem limited to novice teachers.
- 80% in top quartile of academics leaving education in first five years

The Value of Having A Caring Adult in a Youth's Life

- Developmental research shows increases in the likelihood that they will flourish, and become productive adults themselves.
 - These adults can include teachers and other school-based staff.

So What Do We Do?



Wellness is an Active Process...

- Wellness is an active **process** of becoming **aware** of and making **choices** toward a more **successful** existence.
 - Process --improvement is always possible
 - Aware -- continuously seeking more information about how we can improve.
- Choices -- consider a variety of options and select those in best interest.
- Success -- determined by each individual to be their collection of life accomplishments.

KEY COMPONENTS

Medical
Emotional
Environmental
Occupational
Physical
Intellectual
Mental
Social
Spiritual
Financial

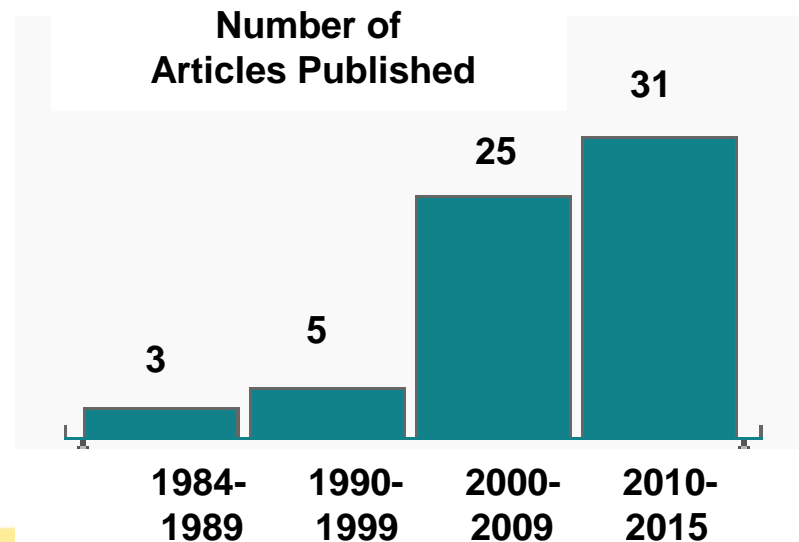
State of the Research: SAMHSA National Registry on Evidence-Based Programs

17 Programs listed under **keyword of *wellness***

- 3 focused on K-12 students
- 2 focused on college students
- 1 focused on 3-12 and college students
- 0 specifically targeted school staff

State of the Research: PsycINFO

- PsycINFO search for “wellness” and “teacher” in abstract = 64 peer-reviewed results
- Published between 1984 and 2015
- Dramatic increase in last 5 years

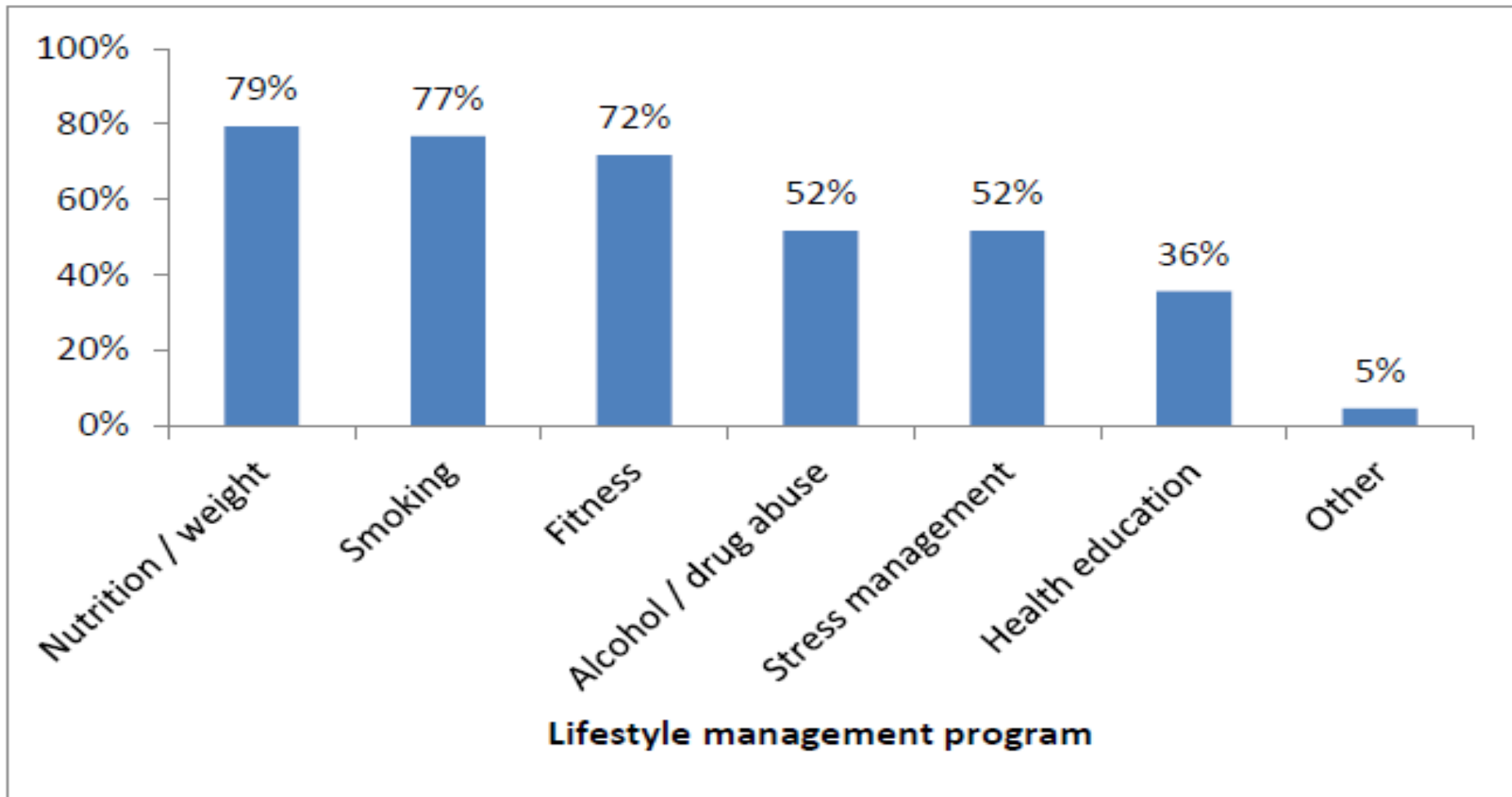


State of the Research: PsycINFO

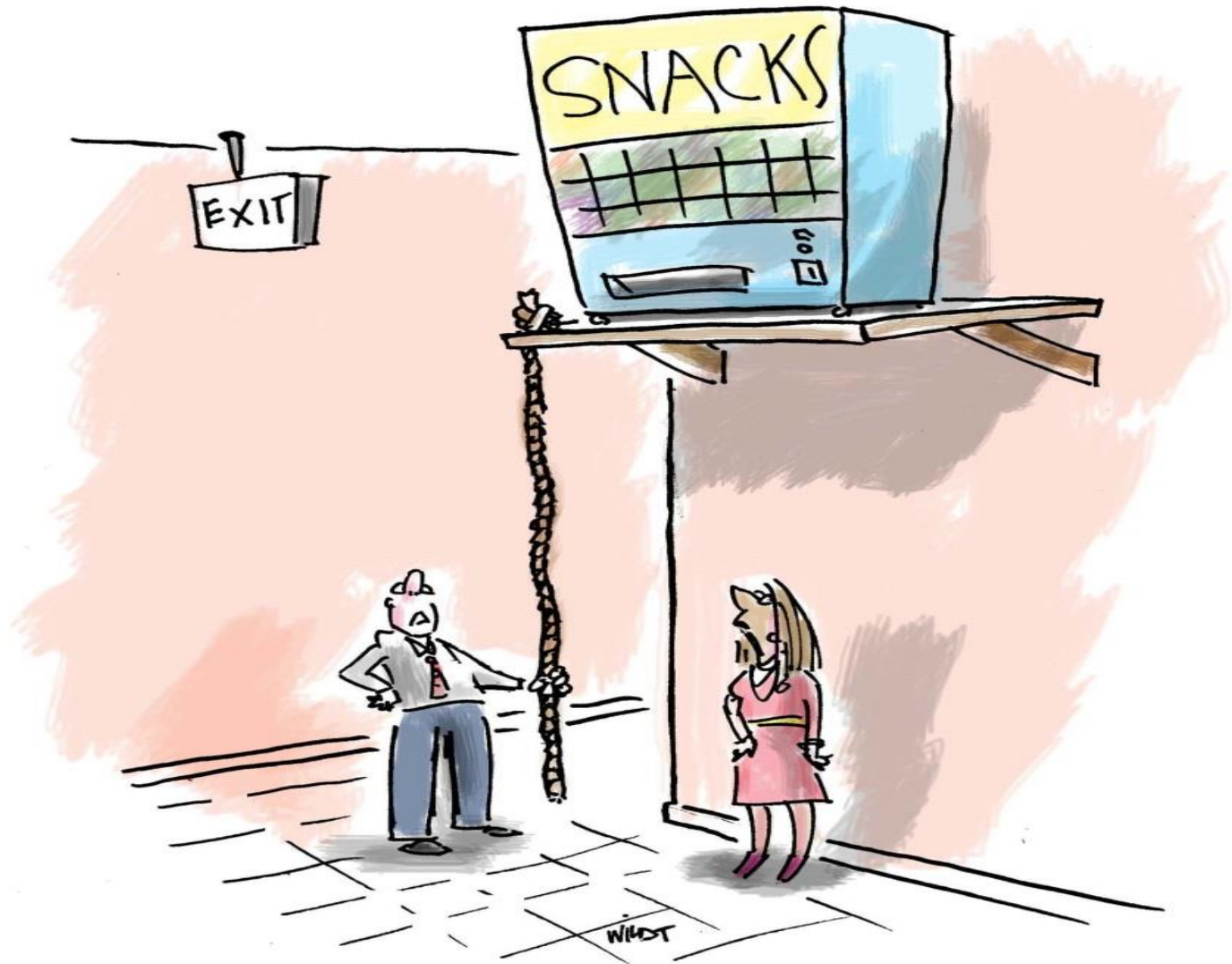
- Focuses on a range of topics, such as:
 - Relation between teacher wellness and child outcomes (e.g. academic achievement)
 - The role of teacher wellness in promoting child-school connectedness
 - Burnout, depression and teacher-efficacy
 - Measurement

Wellness Programs in the Workplace

Figure S.1: Among Employers Offering a Lifestyle Management Program, Percentage Offering Specific Interventions



SOURCE: RAND Employer Survey, 2012.



"Part of the company's new fitness program, I presume."

Measuring Staff Wellness in Schools

The CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard

- Employers **assess** their evidence-based health promotion interventions
- Helps **identify gaps** in health promotion programs
- Prioritize high impact **strategies**
- Available at **no-cost**

http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/worksite_scorecard.htm

The *Professional Quality of Life Scale* (*ProQOL*)

- No cost, www.proqol.org
- 30 item well-validated, self report measure of the positive and negative aspects of caring
- Measures Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
- It can be given individually or in groups
- The measure was developed with data from over 3000 people

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Questionnaire

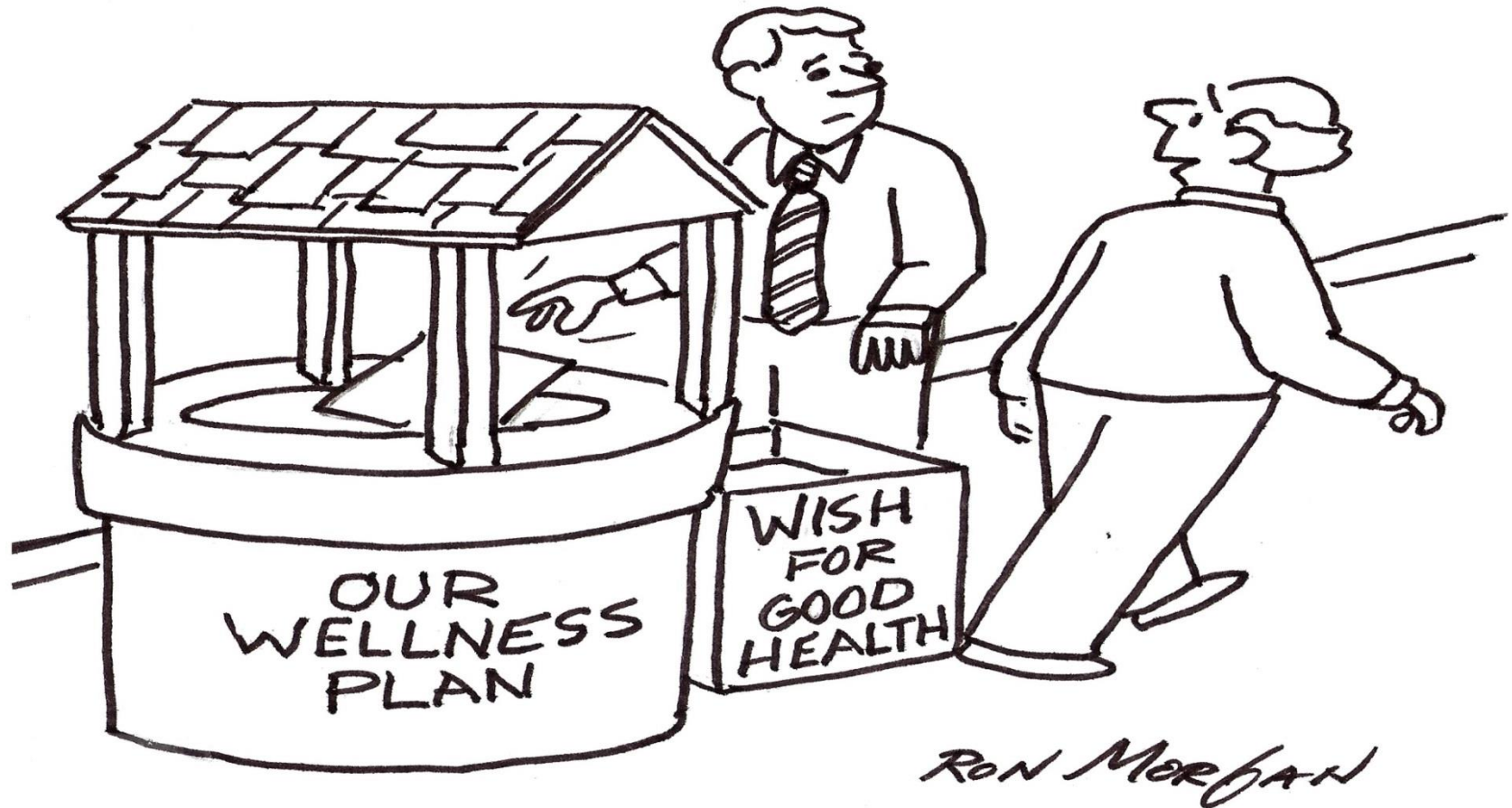
(TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)

- 24 items, asks teachers to indicate “How much they can do” in response to various classroom and instructional challenges.
- Measures three efficacy dimensions:
 - **Instructional strategies** (*How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?*)
 - **Classroom management** (*How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?*)
 - **Student engagement** (*How much can you do to foster student creativity?*)

Interpersonal Mindfulness in Teaching Questionnaire (IMT)

- Only measure - mindfulness in teachers
- Two distinct factors:
 - Teacher Intrapersonal mindfulness
 - Teacher Interpersonal mindfulness
- Validated through confirmatory factor analysis
- Test-retest reliability for both scales medium-large range
- Over 6 months, **interpersonal mindfulness predicted teacher burnout and instructional efficacy** in working with students

The Economics of Wellness



"Some health plan, huh?"

The Economics of Wellness

- RAND suggest **participation in a wellness program over five years = lower health care costs and decreasing health care use**
- Healthcare expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1999)

The Economics of Wellness

- 2010 meta-analysis on the impact of workplace wellness programs found that:
 - Medical costs fall **\$3.27 for every \$1 spent**
 - Absenteeism costs fall **\$2.73 for every \$1 spent**

(Baker, Cutler & Song, 2010)

- 2005 meta-analysis found that employee wellness programs are cost-effective:
 - a **\$5.81 to \$1 return-on-investment ratio, on average** (Chapman, 2005)

The Economics of Wellness


- 42 published worksite health promotion programs

Companies with **effective wellness programs** had an average of:

- **28% reduction in sick days**
- **26% reduction in health costs**
- **30% reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claims**
- **\$5.93 to \$1 savings-to-cost ratio.**

Why are Teacher Wellness Programs in School Important?

Reduces:

- Risk of developing diseases
 - Rates of workplace injuries and compensation claims
 - Employee medical costs which can allow for sustainable health care coverage and lower out-of-pocket costs
- 

Why are Teacher Wellness Programs in School Important?

- Employees more **satisfied** with their jobs
- Improved employee **performance**
- Fewer **absences**
- Help **combat stress** and build **healthy coping** strategies
- Improved **retention** of teachers

Healthy employees provide the continuity and stability so essential for educational success

Standards for Teacher Wellness

- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation published a Healthy Schools Program Framework (HSPF) with best practices across multiple areas including **teacher and staff health**.
- The HSPF standards are broken down into three categories:
 - Bronze
 - Silver
 - Gold

HSPF Standards for Teacher Health Promotion

- Bronze
 - Health assessments for staff once a year
 - Programs for staff members on physical activity
 - Modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors

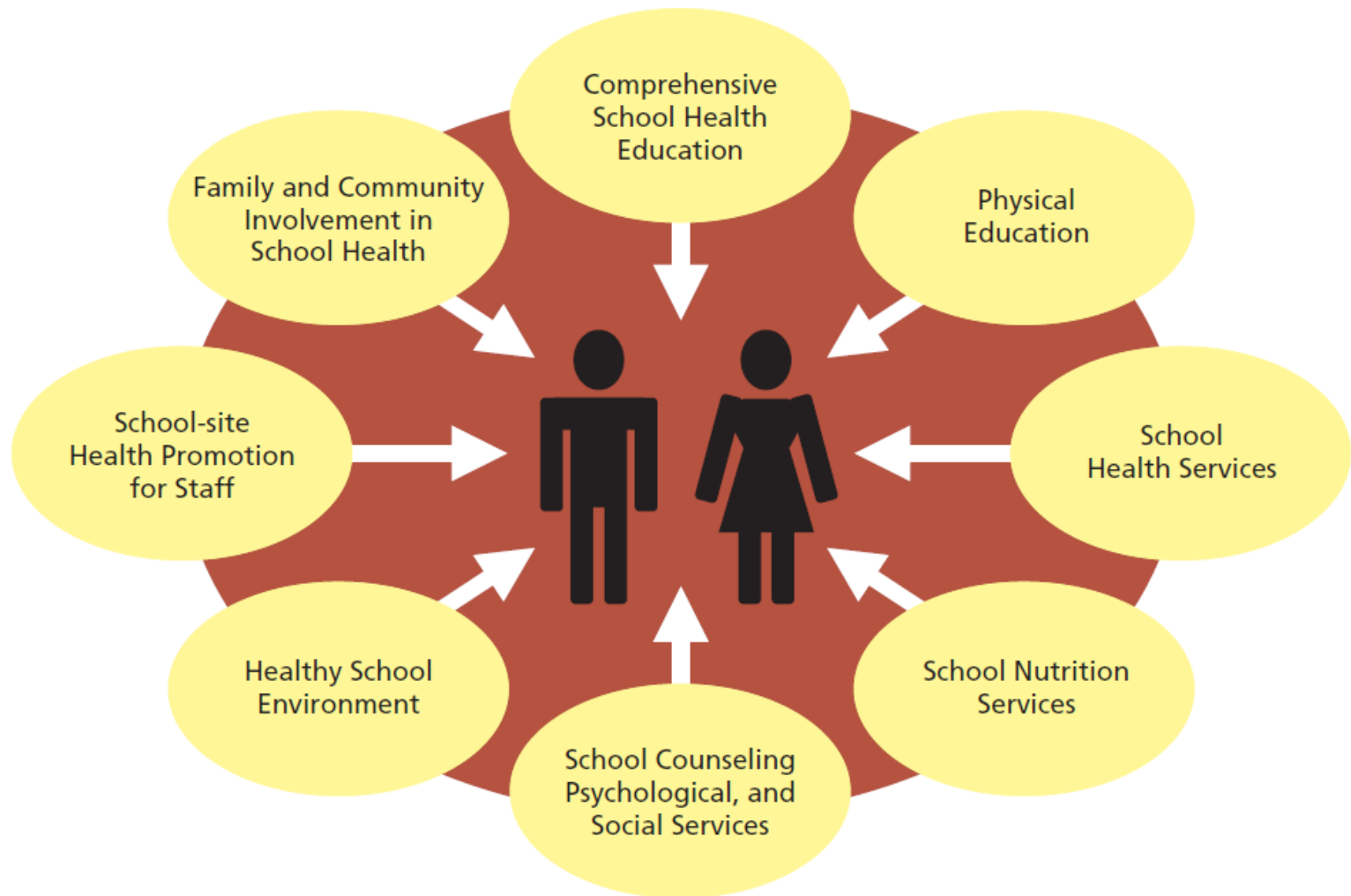
HSPF Standards for Teacher Health Promotion

- Silver
 - Meets Bronze
 - Promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs using 3 or more methods
 - Programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management (free/low cost)

HSPF Standards for Teacher Health Promotion

- Gold
 - Meets Silver
 - USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards (foods and beverages served and sold to staff) including:
 - Staff meetings
 - School sponsored school events
 - Staff lounge

Coordinated School Health Model



Comprehensive School Employee Wellness Program Elements

1. Health education and health-promoting activities
2. Safe, supportive social and physical environment
3. Integration of the worksite program into the school or district structure
4. Linkage to related programs such as EAP
5. Worksite screening programs
6. Individual follow-up to support behavioral change
7. Education and resources for employees
8. An evaluation and improvement process

Teacher Wellness in Schools

- Only 25.5% of schools offer stress management education to staff (SHPPS, 2014).
- Education provided is rarely evidenced-based
- Little is known about how the stress management education provided in the schools effects teacher or student outcomes



Washoe County School District (Nevada) Wellness Program

- 6246 employees
- IV: Participant in wellness program or not
- DVs: 2-year health care costs and absenteeism
- Covariates: baseline health claims, absenteeism in 3 years prior, age, gender, job classification, and years in school district

(Aldana, Merrill, Price, Hardy, & Hager, 2005)

Washoe County School District Wellness Program

- Results:
 - No significant difference in health care costs
 - Significant difference in absenteeism
 - Participants has average of **3 fewer missed days** than non-participants
 - Equals a cost saving of **\$15.60 for every dollar** spent

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

- Mindfulness training shown to reduce stress, depression and anxiety
- Included in SAMHSA's National Evidence Based Program Registry (Ratings > 3 on a 0-4 scale)
- Created to address chronic pain, but useful for physical and mental health problems
- Two different research groups have adapted MBSR for teachers

MBSR for Teachers

- Flook et al., 2013
 - Elementary School Teachers; $n = 18$
 - 8 weeks, 2.5 hr/week, one day-long immersion (6hrs.)
 - Incorporated specific school-related activities and practices into the MBSR program
 - **Reductions in psychological symptoms and burnout, improvements in observer-rated classroom organization and increase in self-compassion.**

MBSR for Teachers

- Frank et al., 2015
 - High School Teachers; $n = 36$
 - 8 weeks, 2 hr/week; home practice
 - Group discussions on the application of mindfulness in daily life including the classroom
 - Discussions/instructions on how to introduce mindfulness practices to their students
 - **Improvement in: self-regulation, self-compassion, mindfulness and sleep quality**

The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

- Evidence-based professional development program designed to reduce stress and improve teacher's performance.
- 4 day-long sessions presented over 4-5 weeks
- Two 20-30 minute phone coaching sessions
- Focuses on three main content areas:
 - **Emotion Skills Instruction**
 - **Mindfulness/Stress Reduction Practices**
 - **Caring and Listening Practices**

CARE: Randomized Controlled Trial

- Waitlist Control Group
- $n = 53$ teachers
- Urban and suburban schools
- 5 full day sessions over 8 weeks
- Three 20 minute phone coaching sessions



CARE: Randomized Controlled Trial

- Results showed improvements in:
 - Well-being
 - Teacher Efficacy
 - Burnout
 - Mindfulness



- Future research is needed to assess CARE's effect on classroom and student outcomes

Community Approach to Learning Mindfully (CALM)

- Daily school-based intervention to promote/improve:
 - Social-emotional competencies
 - Stress management
 - Wellbeing
 - Teaching
 - Health
- Intervention included yoga and mindfulness practices
- 4 day a week for 16 weeks (64 sessions total)



CALM: Results

- Significant improvements in:
 - Mindfulness
 - Emotional functioning
 - Positive affect
 - Distress tolerance
 - Efficacy in classroom management
 - Physical symptoms
 - Blood pressure
 - Cortisol

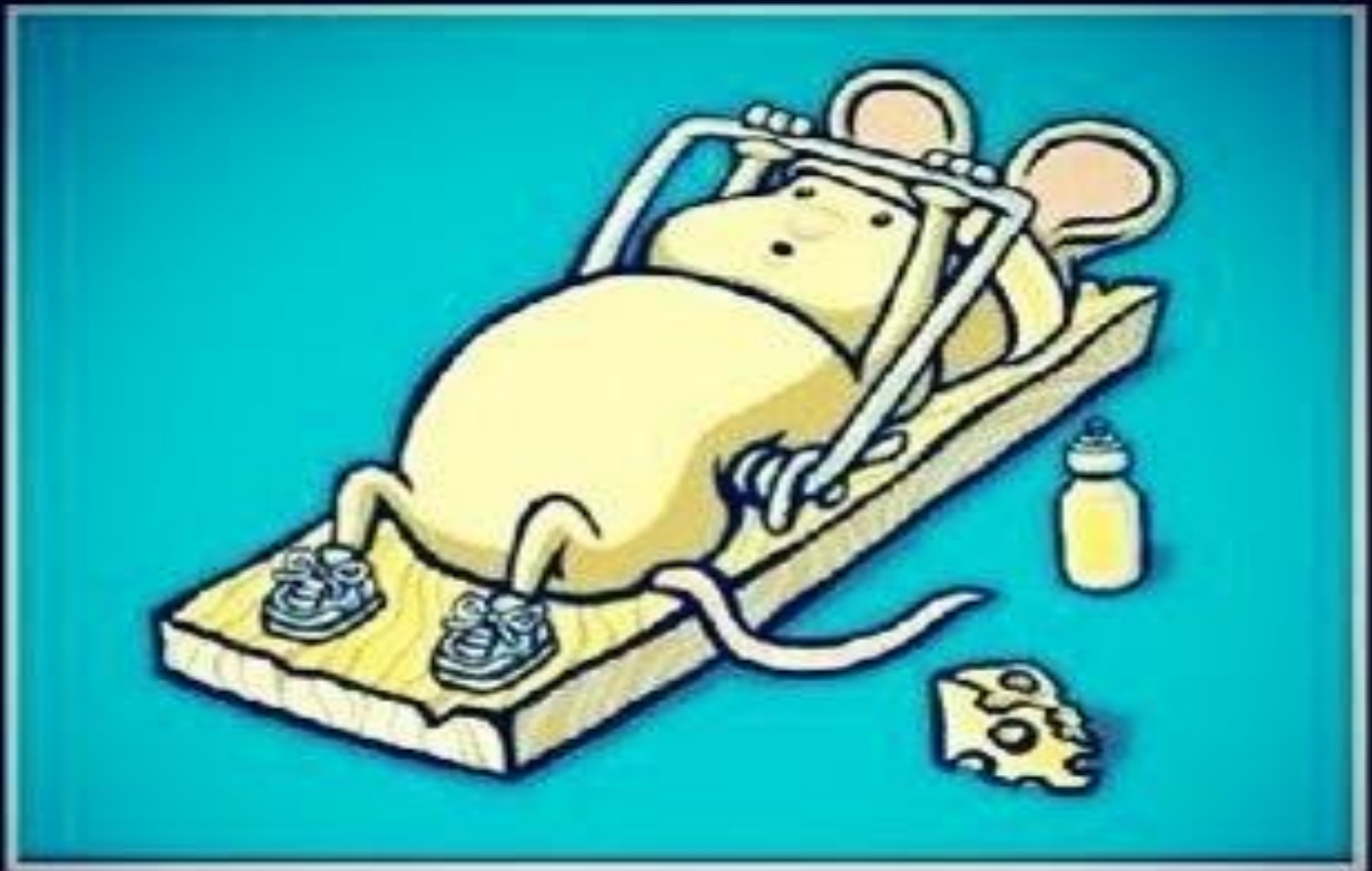


Change is Possible

- In a 10 week health promotion program for employees in Dallas Independent School District –focus on exercise and physical fitness
 - 44% of teachers changed their overall lifestyle
 - 68% changed their diet
 - 26% who did not exercise began vigorous programs
 - 18% quit smoking
 - 1.25 days less of absenteeism for exercising teachers, savings of \$149,578 for the district

School Employee Wellness Programs Make a Difference

- Programs that focus on nutrition, physical activity, and stress management:
 - Increase teacher morale
 - Increase ability to handle job stress
 - Reduce absenteeism
 - Result in higher levels of overall well-being
 - Save \$\$\$



**What doesn't kill you,
makes you stronger**

DON'T FORGET,
YOU ARE WHAT
YOU EAT.

I NEED TO
EAT A
SKINNY
PERSON.



W. W. W.

Questions

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