



Red4EdNC

Teacheritis – Are You or Your Children at Risk?

Nancy Mosley, Wake County Public School Teacher

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Symptoms

Teacheritis is a common ailment that afflicts millions of teachers in the United States every year.

- The most common symptoms are fatigue, headache, raw nerves, forgetfulness, diminished social activity, and intolerance to apathy/BS/ignorance/whining.
- Many teachers also experience teeth grinding, sore feet and back, fluctuating body temperature, and recurring dreams (forgetting to call in for a sub when you are out sick, not having your lesson plans ready on the first day of school, your students refusing to do anything you ask them to do, etc.)
- In rare cases, some teachers also develop obsessive behaviors like constant hand sanitizer use, re-reading emails 10 times before hitting send, and counting how many papers are left to grade every two minutes.

Causes

Teacheritis can be caused by a number of physiological and environmental factors.

- Your risk of chronic teacheritis is higher if you are a new teacher, a teacher with young children, or a teacher who is close enough to retirement to start counting down the years.
- Teachers with a history of [anxiety and depression](#) are more susceptible to teacheritis, as are those with family or medical concerns.
- There also seems to be a correlation between teacheritis and the number of workdays lost to inclement weather, frequent changes in state curriculum and testing policies, and stagnant pay.
- Teacheritis is not contagious, though someone with prolonged exposure to senioritis or adolescent hormones may develop symptoms. Students should use caution when interacting with a teacher suffering from teacheritis, as there have been some reported cases of evil eye and uncontrollable sarcasm. Afflicted teachers will need to take measures to ensure this condition does not cause stress on their partners and children.
- There may also be a component of Seasonal Affective Disorder involved in teacheritis since it seems to be worse in the fall, winter, and spring and better in the summer.
- Triggers of an acute teacheritis episode may include events such as: a student misrepresenting you to their parent or administrator to deflect taking responsibility for their own actions, parents enabling their child to be disrespectful and/or irresponsible, 18-year-olds

complaining that you don't play enough games and give them video guides, or a meeting of colleagues where everyone is touchy and defensive because you can't agree on how to solve the achievement gap or handle the phone cheating epidemic.

Diagnosis

Teacheritis is usually self-diagnosed, though some teachers need to be alerted by a family member or colleague who detects symptoms. Students often misdiagnose a teacher suffering from teacheritis with diseases such as Not Being Chill or Getting Old. A teacher who becomes sick easily or is extremely fatigued, anxious, depressed, or obsessive-compulsive should seek prompt medical attention, as there may be other issues that will get worse if neglected.

Treatment

- Proper rest, nutrition, and exercise will alleviate the physical symptoms of teacheritis. The most commonly prescribed treatment for teacheritis is stress management - cutting back hours, going to bed earlier, taking a true lunch break. Teachers sometimes resist this course of treatment because they cannot figure out how to meet all of their professional obligations if they take more time for themselves.
- Some teachers self-medicate by eating, drinking margaritas, or binge-watching shows to relieve the pain of teacheritis, but the relief is temporary and there can be adverse effects like weight gain or setting a bad example for your kids.
- Other more radical and costly therapies include providing teachers [sufficient time, resources, and support](#) to manage all the demands and expectations of students, parents, administrators, and colleagues. Unfortunately, teachers who request this treatment are often denied and this can actually make the condition worse if they feel powerless or hopeless about the situation.
- Teachers who have spiraled from teacheritis into something more serious like workaholism or depression may need to try therapy or a support group that helps them learn to suppress negative feelings like guilt and try a different mindset that could promote recovery.
- One of the most effective ways for a teacher to reduce the symptoms of teacheritis is to focus on the positive: All of the students who tried their best, showed maturity, engaged themselves in critical thinking, were sincere and honest, had positive attitudes, admitted when they were wrong, made you laugh, and gave you hope for the future. The parents who said thank you, the colleagues that helped you make a tough decision, the administrator that encouraged you to set limits and take care of yourself. The family that loves and supports you unconditionally.

Prognosis

There is no cure or vaccine for teacheritis; even after teachers quit or retire, they can experience residual pain. However, with the proper support and treatment many teachers learn to manage the condition so that it does not prevent them from creating a positive learning environment, growing professionally, achieving personal health, and being there for their families