

FOR EDUCATION ASSISTANTS

Supporting students without losing yourself.

Kinder schools. Brighter tomorrows. Healthier you.

Steady support matters

1 Why this role can be hard

Education assistants (EAs) make a tremendous difference, and the role can also be emotionally and physically demanding.

Emotional labour

Caring deeply, managing big emotions, and staying regulated.

Sensory overload

Noise, chaos, crowded spaces and constant stimulation.

Behaviour support

Responding to challenging behaviours with patience and skill.

Split attention

Supporting multiple students, competing demands and frequent interruptions.

Caring for students with big needs

Supporting complex needs can be rewarding and exhausting.



Different abilities. Brighter futures.

2 Signs you may be running on empty



Body

- Constant fatigue
- Frequent headaches or tension
- Getting sick more often
- Feeling physically drained



Mood

- Increased irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Lower patience
- Feeling sad, anxious or emotionally flat



Thinking

- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling scattered
- Negative or self-critical thoughts
- Harder to problem solve



After-school crash

- Feeling exhausted as soon as the day ends
- Little energy for home, family or hobbies
- Needing to shut down or isolate
- Feeling like you have nothing left to give

3 What helps during the school day

Small, practical strategies can make a big difference.



Micro-pauses

Take a few slow breaths, stretch, or a 1-minute reset between tasks.



Co-regulation

Your calm presence helps students feel safer. Regulate yourself first when you can.



Realistic expectations

You can't do everything. Focus on what's possible right now.



Use your team support

Check in with teachers, EAs and admin. Share ideas, ask for help and problem solve together.



Plan recovery after hard moments

Build in a short break, a walk, water or a reset activity to help you recharge.

4 What helps after work

Your well-being outside of school matters too.



Create a transition home

Try a short walk, music or a few minutes in your car to shift out of "school mode."



Decompression

Do something that helps you release the day (movement, nature, a shower, journaling, or a quiet drink).



Prioritize sleep

Rest helps you feel more patient, focused and resilient.



Set boundaries

It's okay to leave work at school when you can. You don't have to carry every worry home.



Stay connected

Talk with a trusted friend, family member or colleague who understands. Shared experiences reduce the load.

5 When more support may help

Consider reaching out for professional support if you notice:



Persistent dread about going to work



Increased irritability or frequent emotional outbursts



Feeling numb, detached or hopeless



Difficulty leaving student distress at school (it follows you home)



Ongoing sleep problems



Feeling like you're not yourself anymore



Physical or emotional symptoms that don't improve

You can't pour from an empty cup. Caring for yourself helps you keep showing up for your students.

6 For schools and teams

Supportive workplaces help EAs – and students – thrive.



Clear role clarity

Understand responsibilities, expectations and lines of communication.



Regular check-ins and debriefs

Create space to talk, problem solve and process challenging situations.



Consistent backup support

Ensure access to help when situations escalate.



A culture of respect and psychological safety

Listen, value EA perspectives and recognize the important work you do.

Stronger teams create brighter schools.

7 Important to remember



You are making a meaningful difference. Your presence, patience and care help students feel safe, included and capable.



It's okay to have hard days. This work is complex and challenging – and you're still showing up.



Caring for yourself is not a luxury. It's a necessity. When you look after your well-being, you have more to give.



You are part of a bigger picture. Your work matters, and together we create kinder, more inclusive schools.

Supported EAs. Stronger Students.