

TED TALK: HOW CAN WE SUPPORT THE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS?

A Discussion Guide for American Spaces



[LINK TO THE VIDEO](#)

Speaker: Sydney Jensen

Duration: 11:30

Transcript: in 27 languages

[Social Emotional Awareness - Considerations for Teachers and Staff](#)

Don't forget: while we cannot always control what is happening to us and around us, we can control how we respond to it.

ABOUT THE TALK

Teachers emotionally support our kids -- but who's supporting our teachers? In this eye-opening talk, educator Sydney Jensen explores how teachers are at risk of "secondary trauma" -- the idea that they absorb the emotional weight of their students' experiences -- and shows how schools can get creative in supporting everyone's mental health and wellness.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Sydney Jensen believes in growing students academically, socially, and emotionally. Jensen, the 2019 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, is a ninth-grade English teacher in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jensen holds a Bachelors in English Education from the University of Georgia and is currently pursuing a Masters in Educational Leadership from Doane University.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of STATE
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

GLOSSARY:

- **Ice-breaker** - a thing that serves to relieve inhibitions or tension between people, or to start a conversation.
- **Trauma** - a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.
- **Mental wellness** - feeling balanced, connected to others, and ready to meet life's challenges.
- **Morph** - to *morph* is to change. It comes from the Greek word Metamorphosis meaning transforming.
- **Paramount** - more important than anything else; supreme.
- **Non-profit**: an organization that serves the public good and whose goal is not to make a profit.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How many of you are educators? Why did you become a teacher? Is teaching different than you expected?
- Sydney Jensen discusses how being a school teacher can be stressful and take an emotional toll on educators. What were some of the challenges she related from her experiences? Any of them sound familiar to you?
- Ms. Jensen describes extra steps she has learned to take to try to help students who are suffering from trauma. In trying to reach these students Jensen often becomes increasingly aware of the students personal problems. Is it possible for teachers to limit the amount of stress they feel when getting so close to their students' personal lives?
- Sydney Jensen warns teachers of developing “compassion fatigue.” What does she mean?

Additional reading and viewing:

[Share America: Democracy begins in the classroom](#)

[Share America: Meet 4 education change makers in Africa](#)

[Voice of America: Overseas instructor teaching in rural America](#)

[TFA: Everything Feels Impossible, but We Educators Keep Going for Our Students](#)