

<p style="text-align: center;">Stress Network Conference – November 2005-12-02 Workshop Report</p>
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Work-Life Balance – Tom Lewis, Facilitator of Teacher Support Network (TSN)

Following on from the extensive presentation by Patrick Nash, Chief Executive of TSN in the morning, Tom introduced himself and explained his remit within TSN.

Using his PowerPoint presentation (included on the Stress Website Conference Report Section) he talked in depth about Confidentiality and how to overcome the difficulties of sufferers who are afraid to admit their perceived 'failings'.

He referred to:-

<p style="text-align: center;">CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE</p> <p>How sufferers may feel and be seen by peers and managers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IDENTITY OF BEING</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DIFFICULTIES WITH SAYING NO</p> <p>How will it affect me?</p>
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He also discussed the fact the teachers, as will many others feel they ruin their status if they admit difficulties and especially if they leave, with a possible reference-based cloud over their heads.

In identifying how stress and pressures affect people's work, he revealed that sufferers lose sight of their personal lives and interests and especially their hobbies and other interests which can be a distractor.

In so doing they lose sight of their own work-life balance and allow their home life to be too much invaded by their work.

[Teachers, it has to be remembered are contracted for 1,265 hours in the year but are also expected to work under their own direction outside those hours in their own time and place of choosing. Such additional expectations are often enforced by over-demanding and bullying line managers.]

The workshop then moved on to examine Well-being and consider how this was perceived by the group in their various experiences and employment sectors.

Some discussions took place on the definition of 'whole people', noting that many of people's social needs are often forgotten and ignored.

Groups examined what Well-being meant to them and fed back with comments:

Socialising; friends & family; happy and content; fulfilment in your own mind; walking and taking exercise; getting back to nature; being treated equally; being valued and respected; having peace of mind; having a balance in life including e.g. creativity;

If you aren't well how do you feel?

Waking up and sleeping difficulties; irrational judgements; crying; losing or gaining weight; denial of situation; feeling run down; forgetfulness; no cycle of well-being; being

self protective and defensive – especially at home?; loss of interest; poor relationships (work & home); unable to manage change; healthy workplace?; work-life support is important; awareness of bullying; need clear policies on Dignity at Work.

The group then began to consider the Wheel of Well-being which was briefly explained as included in handouts on website.