

# Considering practice educator wellbeing in this challenging world


Siobhan Maclean  
For NOPT  
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# We know that social workers are vulnerable to:

- Work related stress (human health and social work most common sector impacted by work related stress in HSE figures 2022)
- I think that there is also a great deal of work related anxiety that we are not talking about enough
- Vicarious / secondary trauma
- Compassion fatigue
- Burnout...
- They are also vulnerable to moral injury which I find professionals know less about



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and cheek. The person's eye is closed, and a single tear is visible on their cheek. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the texture of the skin and the emotion of the moment.

"...moral injury  
may result from  
social workers  
being exposed  
to sustained  
ethical stress –  
the stress  
experienced  
when workers  
cannot base  
their practice on  
their values."

(Fenton and Kelly 2017)

# The risks of moral injury for practice educators

The usual risks that all social workers face, but heightened risks due to:

- More regular discussion and focus on values and ethics and the core of social work
- Failing a student and all the emotional challenge that brings
- How do we give students a realistic picture whilst also maintaining optimism – not killing off the “idealism”

# WHAT HELPS? (FACTORS WHICH MIGHT MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF MORAL INJURY: RESEARCH BASED)



Team working and a sense that you belong to a community of practice



A strong reflective culture



Good quality emotionally supportive, reflective supervision



In depth reflection with a particular focus on feelings and emotions



'Education' about the potential of moral injury and permission to talk about and explore the depth of the injury with colleagues



Clear recognition of the importance of your work and value being placed upon this

# WHAT DOESN'T HELP? (FACTORS WHICH MIGHT MAKE THINGS WORSE: EXPERIENCE - BASED)



Working in isolation from colleagues – team not a 'secure base'



No space for reflection



A climate of toxic positivity



Conversations are shut down 'positive vibes only'



Lack of honesty about the current working situation



Managers removed from what is going on – lack of accessibility

**CRCF  
RESEARCH  
REPORT**



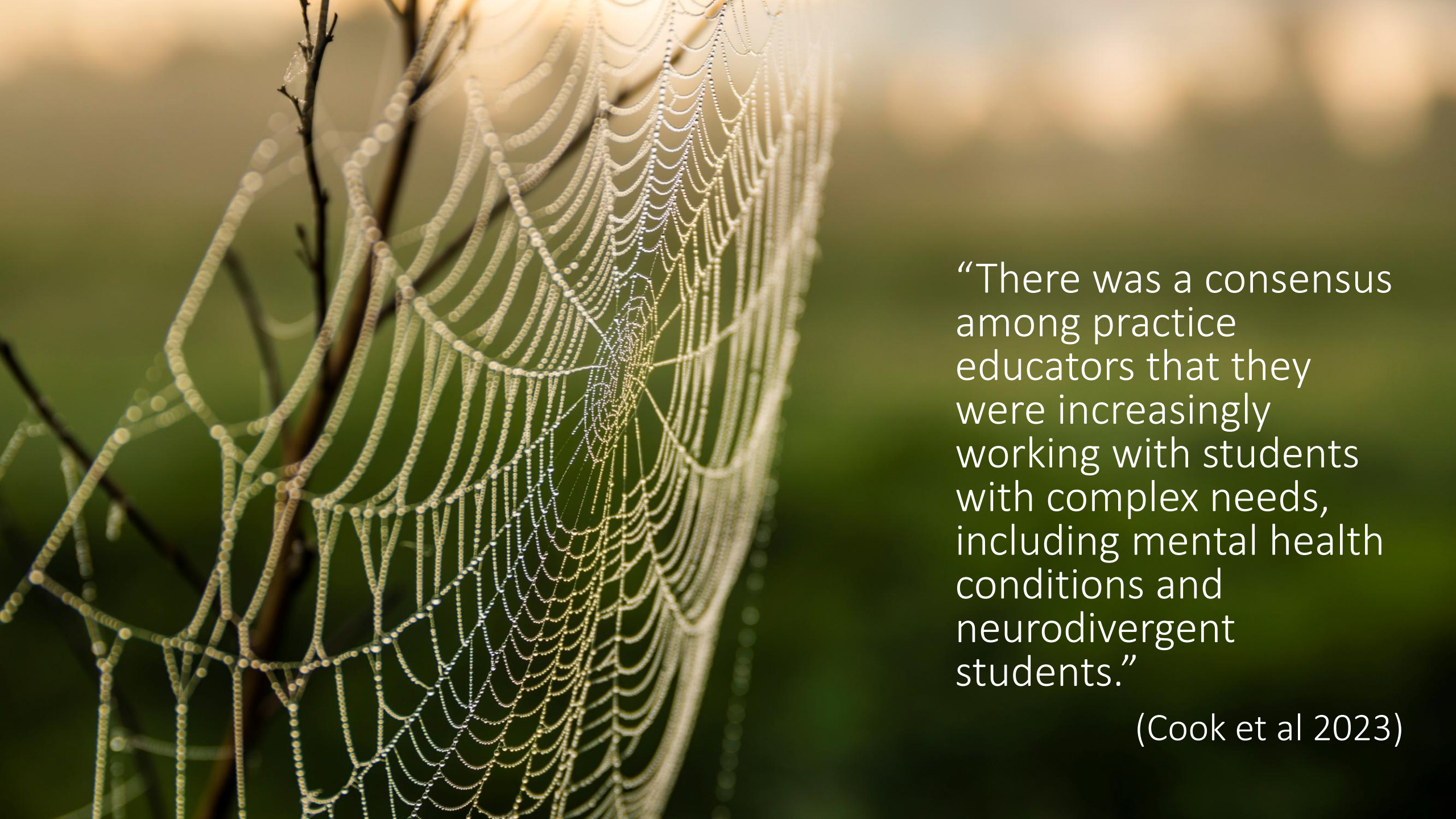
**PRACTICE EDUCATION IN ENGLAND:  
A NATIONAL SCOPING REVIEW**

Dr Laura L. Cook, Dr Mark Gregory, Thomas Butt, Joanna Shakespeare  
September 2023

**research  
in practice**



- ‘Emotional labour’ when working with struggling students
- Lack of workload relief
- Insufficient remuneration
- Institutional racism
- Inconsistent support for disabled and neurodivergent practice educators
- Critical role of managers and teams



“There was a consensus among practice educators that they were increasingly working with students with complex needs, including mental health conditions and neurodivergent students.”

(Cook et al 2023)

# Six 'asks' from practice educators

- Social Work England enabling practice educators to annotate the register with their role.
- Fair and consistent remuneration for practice educators.
- Consistency of placement paperwork and student assessment frameworks across course providers (though this was not supported by course providers interviewed by the research team).
- Greater representation of diverse voices in practice educator training and a wider range of training and career development opportunities for practice educators.
- Clear, defined routes for career progression within the role including opportunities for 'experienced' status, and more equitable routes into practice education, especially for global majority social workers.
- Workload relief and protected time.

Social workers know about the importance of space and place, after all we take a person in environment perspective...





Can you put  
it over there,  
please.



# CIPD domains of workplace wellbeing

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Health

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Good work

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Values / principles

---

Collective / social

---

Personal growth

---

Good lifestyle choices

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Financial wellbeing

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“The most important strategy in your personal life is to have one. Your personal life must be a priority, which is another way of saying you must be a priority.”

(Saakvitne and Pearlman 1996)



*When we suppress  
our needs, we model  
that  
neglect and abuse are  
acceptable*

*Jennifer Nadel*



What does  
Self Care look  
like to you?

It's not a  
crisis  
response

# 4 Areas of Self Care

<u>PHYSICAL</u>	<u>PSYCHOLOGICAL</u>
REST GLUCOSE SLEEP MOVEMENT/ACTIVE EATING HYDRATION REACTIONS HUG/PHYSICAL AFFECTION SMOKING PEE OUTSIDE WATCHING MOVIES	REFLECTION. BOUNDARIES WORK/LIFE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION RAWT TALKING THERAPY PEER SUPERVISION
<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>PROFESSIONAL</u>
FAMILY + FRIENDS HOLIDAY LOOK FORWARD TO ACTIVITY ICE-SKATING PUB-DANCING ACAP EVENTS	LAUGH! 😊 HUMOUR LISTENING CELEBRATE GO IN OFFICE YOGA ASK FOR HELP-ADVICE SUPERVISION OFFER TO HELP What works/what not PERMISSION

# SELF-CARE WHEEL



## Self-Care Assessment

### 1 2 3 ★ Psychological / Emotional Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take time off from work, school, and other obligations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in hobbies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get away from distractions (e.g. phone, email)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn new things, unrelated to work or school
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Express my feelings in a healthy way (e.g. talking, creating art, journaling)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize my own strengths and achievements
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go on vacations or day-trips
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do something comforting (e.g. re-watch a favorite movie, take a long bath)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Find reasons to laugh
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talk about my problems
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall psychological and emotional self-care

### 1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eat healthy foods
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take care of personal hygiene
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exercise
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wear clothes that help me feel good about myself
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eat regularly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in fun activities (e.g. walking, swimming, dancing, sports)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get enough sleep
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to preventative medical appointments (e.g. checkups, teeth cleanings)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rest when sick
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall physical self-care

TAKE A LOOK AT THE FIVE  
PILLARS OF SUPPORT MODEL  
FROM SELF CARE PSYCHOLOGY



Their work is  
very accessible  
and usable...  
and comes  
from a lens  
which sees  
social work  
clearly

# 50 acts of self care

They made these freely available during Covid and although adapted for that time they are still incredibly useful for us and for our work with students





**Make sure that  
you take good  
care of yourself**

- Too busy to take care of yourself?
- See self care as selfish?
- Put firm work / life boundaries in place and work on your self care (this is not a crisis response)

If found  
please return  
to the person  
Manically packing &  
swearing & pulling  
out

HOTEL  
DES  
MONDES  
22 AVENUE DE L'OPERA  
PARIS

FRAGILE

AMBASSADOR HOTEL

HANDLE  
WITH CARE



Resilience / self care suitcases...

- International Str
- 1) Learn to
  - 2) Adapt at
  - 3) Know y
  - 4) Find ou
  - 5) Avoid
  - 6) Accept
  - 7) Take t
  - 8) Find t
  - 9) Deve
  - 10) Avoid

HOW  
DO YOU  
DEVELOP  
PROFESSIONAL  
RESILIENCE

research and  
a research  
1983) et al  
nature (Lord et  
02) suggests more  
people who stress are  
invaluable to social work  
practitioners on health  
ways impact on  
and wellbeing  
Negative impact on  
social work practice -  
particularly critical  
thinking and ethical  
decision making

SAMS SELF CARE  
SUITCASE



**FRAGILE**

**DO NOT  
STACK**



OPEN  
WHEN  
THINGS  
GET  
TOUGH.

CONTENTS  
VERY  
IMPORTANT!



The Balance  
Box is  
for when the life scale is tipping...

STRESS  
A ONE WAY TICKET  
IF WE SHARE

Recognising my stress / need for self care:

- I get a stiff neck / tight shoulders
- I become anxious a lot
- I struggle to sleep
- I get palpitations / sweating
- overeating / undereating
- headaches.
- self esteem drops
- worry a lot / obsess over nothing
- angry / irritable
- do things very quickly / rush.



MY SELF CARE PLAN.

Seeing • getting out in nature  
• Sunshine • Watch a comedy  
• the beauty / the positives

Hearing • calming / relaxing / slow music.  
• listening to nature.

Acting • laugh • self love  
• yoga • holidays • talk to someone  
• get therapy • healthy food • sleep  
• take a holiday.

Reading • self help / development books.

Evaluating • gratitude.  
• journaling / reflection  
• resting • the 'why' am I doing this

Some people are  
really good at  
packing...





# Grant and Kinman (2019) on developing professional resilience



Emotional literacy



Reflective thinking skills



Empathy



Social skills



Optimistic explanatory style

# Ordinary magic

(Ann Masten)





(in no particular order)

- Make sure that your inner voice is the same as the voice you would use with students! (be kind to yourself)
- Recognise that you are not alone
- Make use of the wide range of free self care resources – [selfcarepsychology.com](https://selfcarepsychology.com) and the self care webinar from social work student connect (YouTube)
- You give good advice – take it!
- Be particularly thoughtful in allocating work to the student (I know this is often an agency policy issue)
- Plan in report writing time – write the report to the student
- Go gently



**'If This Time'**