

# System of Wellness Instruction for Teachers and Teens

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## Background

- Health, physical education, and wellness (HPEW) teachers support the development wellness of school-aged children.
- Teachers have been challenged to expand the scope of their instruction and support.
- According to the Center of Disease Control (CDC), “more than 1 in 3 high school students in 2019” experienced sadness or hopelessness, a 40 percent increase since 2009.
- A study published in February 2020, concluded that “teachers displayed high levels of exhaustion and inadequacy, and even increased levels of cynicism.”
- Consequently, the focus of this research is to create a behavioral health model (i.e., SWIFTT platform) to address teacher wellness.

## Hypothesis

We believe that the System of Wellness Instruction for Teachers and Teens (SWIFTT) will reduce teacher burnout and better equip them to address their student’s mental health as well as their own wellness.

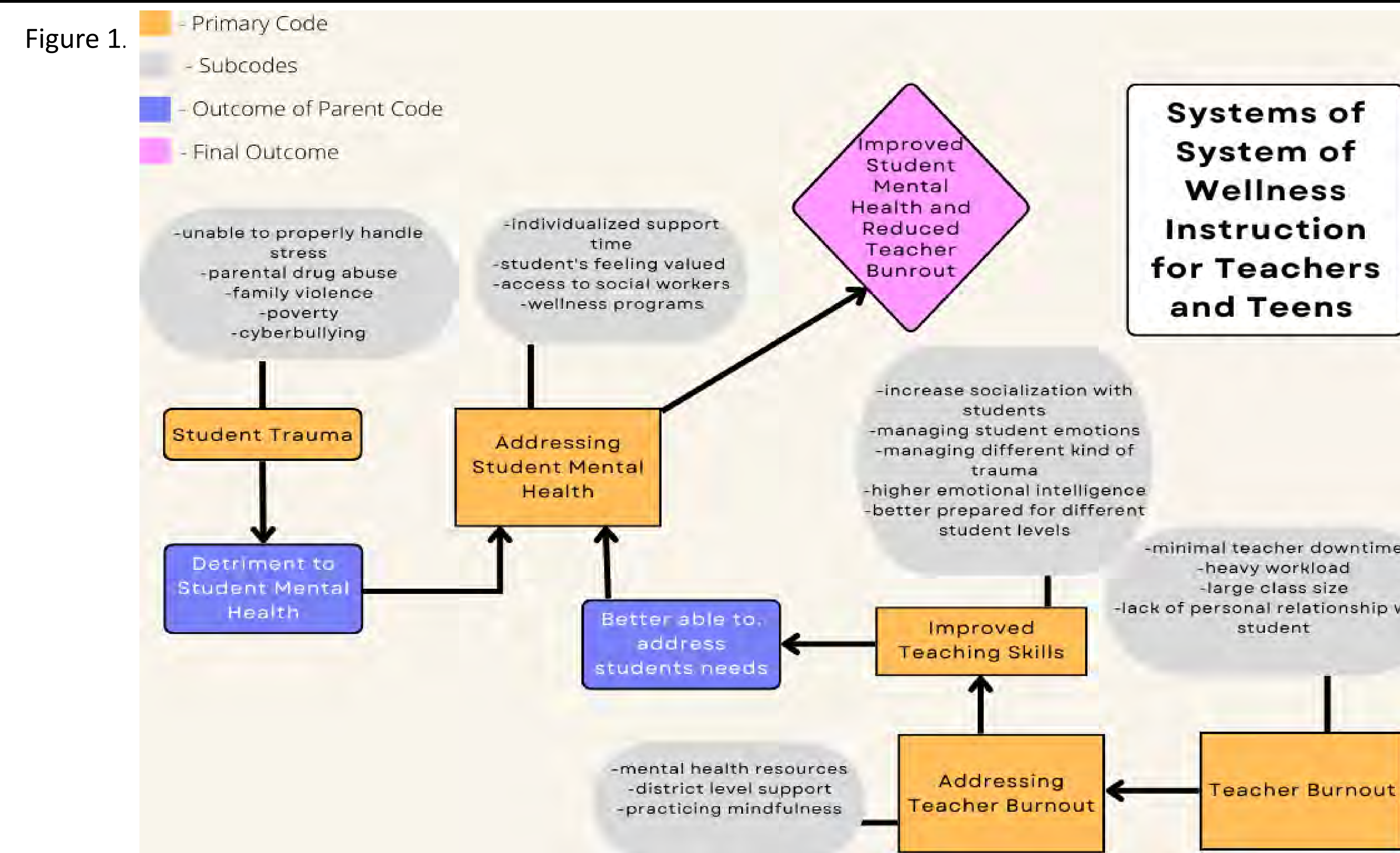
## Specific Aims

1. The aim for this summer project is to conduct a quality improvement study to investigate the feasibility and practicality of SWIFTT.
2. Explore HPEW teacher perspectives regarding stress, anxiety, burnout, and trauma in both the student and the teacher population.

## Methods

- We have currently interviewed 6 participants from a national HPEW teacher sample to obtain their perspectives regarding mental health wellness among the students that they serve and the teacher population.
- Interviews were conducted through Zoom, lasting 20-40 minutes and audio recorded. The interviews were transcribed using Otter.AI for analysis.
- Data from the interviews was analyzed using inductive open coding strategies. We used a qualitative software program called Dedoose to assist in our analysis.
- Data from these interviews were used to ensure that the SWIFTT platform is applicable to a broader audience beyond Southeastern WI.

## Results



- In total, 6 Milwaukee Public School teachers were interviewed thus far.
- There were 5 males and 1 female interviewed.
- 3 participants were in the age range of 40 - 50 years old, while the other 3 participants were in the age range of 50 – 60 years old.
- All of our participants has Masters degree with the exception of 1 participant whose highest level of education was a Bachelors degree.
- All of our participants taught in public schools.
- 2 participants had 10 – 20 years of teaching, and the other 4 participants had 20 – 30 years of teaching.
- Through open coding we identified 27 primary codes with each primary code including associated subcodes. Figure 1 displays selected primary codes and their connection to improving student mental health and reduced teacher burnout.
- From applying a grounded theory approach, we created a model/framework to illustrate teacher perspective on improving student mental health and teacher burnout.

## Discussion

- Among causes of burnout are minimal teacher downtime, heavy workload, lack of personal relationship due to student to teacher ratio (ie class size).
- Proposed teacher solutions include installation of mental health resources in schools, more dialogue amongst teachers regarding burnout, district level support, and practicing mindfulness.
- Teachers perceive that student mental health is suffering due to the lack of emotional intelligence where students are lashing out, unable to properly handle stress, parental drug abuse, family violence, poverty, and cyberbullying.
- All teachers suggested that physical activity would significantly improve student mental health, especially those dealing with trauma.
- Teachers emphasized that students need individualized one on one support and importance of the student’s perception of feeling valued.

## Future Work

Our research team will continue recruiting and interviewing Physical Education teachers. We will transcribe these interviews and continue analyzing data to recommend improvements to the SWIFTT model.

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3. Family & Community Medicine Department at the Medical College of Wisconsin
4. Health, Physical Education, and Wellness Teachers

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