

# Burnout and depression: Two entities or one? CCNY provides answer

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Credit: George Hodan/Public Domain

Burnout and depression overlap considerably, according to the latest study on the subject led by psychology Professor Irvin S. Schonfeld of The City College of New York's Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership and his colleague, Renzo Bianchi, of the Institute of Work and Organizational Psychology, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland. The findings are based on a survey taken by 1,386 public

school teachers, from pre-K to 12th grade across the United States, including New York, during the 2013-14 academic year.

Based on their responses to a burnout measure, the teachers were categorized as belonging to either a burnout or no-burnout group. Less than one percent of the no-burnout group met criteria for a provisional diagnosis of depression, whereas 86 percent of the burnout group met these criteria.

In addition, the teachers in the burnout group were about three times as likely to have a history of depression and almost four times as likely to be currently taking antidepressant medication. Teachers in the burnout group were also more than twice as likely to report a history of anxiety disorders. When burnout and depression were treated as continuous dimensions, they were very highly correlated.

"Our purpose was not to determine the prevalence of burnout or depressive symptoms in a representative sample of teachers," explain Schonfeld and Bianchi. "Our analytic purpose was to determine the extent to which burnout and depression overlap, both dimensionally and categorically."

Entitled, "Burnout and Depression: Two Entities or One?" the study appears in the *The Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Provided by City College of New York

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