



Renewed, Recharged, and Ready: Kicking Off the New Year Right



"The work that out-of-school time professionals do is essential. But you can't pour from an empty cup. We have to focus on our own needs, and the needs of frontline staff, to make sure we do the best work we can and give our kids meaningful experiences."

— Yana List, TA Liaison, 21st CCLC NTAC

Seasonal breaks give you and other out-of-school time staff (and your students) a chance to renew and recharge. What can you do to return energized and ready for what's next? Check out this takeaway for ideas highlighted in the [Renewed, Recharged, and Ready: Kicking Off the New Year Right webinar](#) hosted in January 2025. Guests shared practical ways to recognize the signs of compassion fatigue, cultivate resilience, implement self-care practices, and more!

Key Takeaways

- **Understanding Burnout** – Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress. Causes may include long work days, heavy responsibilities, and low salaries.
- **Preventing Compassion Fatigue** – Learn to recognize the signs of burnout and discover strategies to support yourself and your team in maintaining resilience. Compassion fatigue comes from repeated exposure to, and empathy for, the challenges or traumas of others.
- **Supporting Students and Staff Post-Break** – Set positive expectations ("Let's thrive in 2025!"), remind students and staff of routines and expectations, and use frequent one-on-one check-ins to intentionally support the transition back into the program.
- **A Community of Care** – Make sure that staff know that leaders care about them as individuals. Cover for each other when someone needs a break. Be willing to have hard conversations if you think someone may need professional intervention.
- **Focusing on Self-Care** – Identify strategies that help you maintain a positive outlook on your work, and cultivate a regular self-care practice. Prioritize balance and sustainability in your work.

"Community of care is really looking out for ... our staff, our students — and the climate and the culture of the afterschool program. So we really want to make sure that we're all OK and we're all ready to come back."

— Maria Olivier Flores, Afterschool Director, Peekskill City School District, New York





Action Tips

- **Get Back Into Programming** – In your first staff meeting after the break, engage in brainstorming around themes and projects to begin as a way to ease everyone back in the headspace of the program.
- **Ease Transitions for Students** – Students may struggle with the length of the day after the break. Start the afterschool program with personal check-ins and allow students who aren't ready to jump into programming to engage in a transitional activity.
- **Self-Assess for Burnout** – Use an assessment like the [Socio-Contextual Teacher Burnout Inventory](#) to check whether you, or any of your staff, are reaching your limits.
- **Practice Simple Self-Care** – Try two-minute strategies, like deep breathing, listening to a favorite song, coloring, or guided imagery whenever you need to restore your sense of calm. Find something that's easy to do every day and build from there.



Resources

- [Burnout Self-Test](#) – An online self-assessment to reflect on your current risk of burnout.
- [19 After-Winter-Break Activities](#) – A list of 19 activities to reestablish routines and strengthen community. These activities can be modified to serve all age groups.

"It's important that you do take some time to recognize what's going on inside because if you don't, then you'll ... walk away from the program altogether. And no one wants to see that."

— Kimberly Moore-Jones, 21st CCLC Site Coordinator,
Plainfield School District, New Jersey



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