



DR. SHELDON EAKINS

What to Do When You Need to Recharge

Website: leadingequitycenter.com

Podcast: [Leading Equity Podcast](#)

Twitter: [@sheldoneakins](#)

Online Course: [Teaching Through a Culturally Diverse Lens](#)

A little bit about Sheldon

- ❑ Director of the Leading Equity Center.
- ❑ The host of [Leading Equity Center](#) podcast.
- ❑ Special education director of a tribal school on a Native American reservation in Idaho.

How do you maintain wellness on the journey to becoming an educator?

- There are many things you have to learn as a new educator.
- One is to be aware of and learn about the cultures you are reaching.

How can you stay connected to other like-minded educators when you don't physically live near them and are the minority?

- Social media can be a tremendous resource for teachers who need and want to connect.
 - Voxer
 - Twitter
 - Podcasting

What challenges do teachers of color have when trying to maintain their wellness?

- When you think about the comfort that you need to fall back on when you have had a rough day, as an educator of color these options may not be available depending on where you live.
 - Where do I go to get my hair cut?

- Where can I find the food that I like?
- You may have to find something new that brings you joy because the comforts that you want or need are not available to you.
- Find friends and allies who you can be comfortable with and be yourself.
 - If someone has grown up in a place that is predominantly white and they have not had the opportunity to live in a diverse area they come with lots of stereotypes. What they think they know comes from TV or movies. This makes it incredibly difficult for people of color living in rural areas to find those friends and allies that they can truly be themselves with.
 - Finding others who you can recharge with when you need a break is an important part of staying well when you feel isolated and alone.

Recharging in order to have brave conversations.

- Racial battle fatigue is caused by the stress put on people of color living or working in a predominantly white area and constantly dealing with microaggressions and deciphering the layers of discrimination and deciding whether or not to respond.
- It is a constant battle for people of color and you feel alone and tired. You still keep going but it's tough and it is vital that you have time to recharge so that you can keep going.

"If I don't do the work, who is going to do it? If I don't say anything, who will?"

How do you balance being a voice for change and equity and needing to take time for yourself to take a break and recharge?

- It's hard to pick and choose when to take a break and get "me time". You never know when a student is going to come to you and need help.
- If you are the only teacher of color at a school you may become the only person that students feel comfortable talking to.
- As more and more students depend on you it becomes almost impossible to take a break, even if you need it.
- Family time is your time to recharge. Make your family time sacred and use that time to take a break from the demands put on you.

Does teacher wellness play a role in the ability for educators to have those difficult conversations around equity?

- Being able to find someone who shares a common experience and mindset is helpful when having conversations on equity.
- It helps to have someone that you can physically have a conversation with and work through times when you are hurt and sad and discussing issues around equity.

What are the needs of our students in terms of wellness?

- Home visits can make a huge difference when building relationships with students and their families.
- If a parent can't make an IEP meeting offering to do that IEP meeting at their home can make it possible for everyone to attend.
- Making sure that the resources we provide our parents, the assessments we send home, the communication tools are culturally based help build and foster relationships.
- Students may just need a chance to talk. You can be that person for them by just listening.
- When you know your students well and have a relationship with them you can tell when something is "off" and you can have a conversation with them to try to get to the root of the problem.

Leading Equity Podcast

- The [Leading Equity Podcast](#) focuses on providing educators with the tools and resources necessary to ensure equity at their school.
- Guests are invited on to have a conversation around topics that center around equity.

Resources:

- Dr. Eakins' online course [Teaching Through a Culturally Diverse Lens](#) is a course that focuses on helping educators be able to be more culturally minded.