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Know thyself

By: Andrew Miki



Earlier in the school year, CPCO and **Starling Minds'** founder and CEO Dr. Andrew Miki, launched an online mental health initiative supporting our Practising Associates. To learn more about Starling Minds, please read our [earlier blog post](#).

The Starling program was developed by Dr. Andrew Miki. Andrew is a registered psychologist with over 10 years of experience working with patients to treat depression, anxiety and other mental health issues using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

This is the first of several posts Andrew is contributing to our blog:

A large part of my private practice is focused on treating educators who are off work due to anxiety and/or depression. One of the first administrators I worked with was a 58-year-old Principal named David [note: I have changed the name of this individual to protect his confidentiality/privacy].

Like many administrators, David began his career as a teacher because he wanted to make a difference to others' lives. In his late thirties, David realized that he had a desire to serve a greater number of people and increase his sphere of influence. Despite having a young family, David decided to spend what little extra time he had on fulfilling the requirements to become an administrator.

When we first started working together, I assessed David's personality using the framework of the **Five Factor Model**. Like most administrators, David's **emotional stability** was very high compared to an average person as he demonstrated a lot of grit throughout his career. He secured a teaching contract soon after putting himself through university. He decided to become an administrator while all three of his children were less than five years old.

After six years working as a Vice-Principal, his board decided to offer him a Principal position at an inner city school. Although it was challenging, his successes established him as a strong and dependable leader. David's tireless work ethic and devotion to his profession reflected a very high level of **conscientiousness** that I often see in administrators.

Also consistent with many administrators, David was higher on the **openness, extraversion** and **agreeableness** scales. He had a passion for learning and experiencing new things. He genuinely loved interacting with people and he cared deeply for the teachers, staff, students and parents at every school he worked at. He was firm when needed, but always tried to be fair. He was well-respected by his community.

As I learned more about David and his recent struggles, it became clear why he was on a medical leave. He had been

working at a prominent high school in an affluent area for the past three years. The parents had high expectations and often had poor boundaries with David and several teachers. They often called David outside of school hours and expected him to resolve their issues.

David appealed to his board but he found little support — especially from a younger superintendent who he had some issues with in the past. Feeling hurt and unsupported after all his years of service, David found that, for the first time in his career, he was losing the passion he once had for his job. It seemed no matter how hard he worked, he couldn't keep his head above water. The final straw was his middle child's recent diagnosis of a mental health problem. In our first meeting, it was obvious that David was exhausted, overwhelmed and disappointed in himself for not being able to work through everything as he had always done in the past.

Does David's story resonate with you? Do you think it's understandable what he is experiencing? Do you think it is healthy? And what can you do to make sure you stay healthy?

Find out how **Starling Minds** can help you or someone you know.

Subscribe to our blog for the latest updates and weekly posts, including an upcoming re-cap of the CPCO Conference & AGM 2016 and more from Dr. Andrew Miki.