

For teachers and education staff

Challenging black and white 'perfectionist' thinking



Black and white:

If my pupils don't get perfect grades I have failed them as their teacher.

There is so much to do. I need to fit as much into my school day as possible.

My colleagues are either good or bad. If they say something wrong they are toxic.

If I don't have perfect lesson plans I'll let down my department.

My head of department is under a lot of pressure, I don't want to say no to this project as I will add to their stress.

Shades of grey:

I have done the best I can for my pupils. My influence is only part of the story. Their achievements are not solely a reflection of me.

There is lots to do, but I also need to allow myself time for breaks and rest throughout the day. It will stop me burning out and I will be better at my job in the long run.

As human beings we are complex and sometimes we make mistakes.

My lesson plans are good enough and that will do for now.

I see that my head of department is stressed, but I still need to say no on this occasion in order to protect myself. It does not mean I am not hard-working or that I am slacking. I am a better colleague to her if I avoid saying yes and letting her down later.