

SDSCA

Dates to Remember!

March 1st 2026

**Outstanding Student
Council**

All State Student Council

**SDSCA State Officer
Candidate intent form**

SDCSA Convention:

Deadlines are fast approaching and please don't put off sending forms in until the last minute, that usually doesn't go well! I hope the school year is going well for all of you and that you enjoy any time off you may have with upcoming holidays!



“We’re Glad You’re Here!”

FRESHMAN BOOK FRENZY!

Enlist your student leaders to handwrite heartfelt, encouraging letters addressed to each incoming freshman. Hide these notes within the pages of freshman textbooks before the year begins. As your incoming class cracks open their books for the first time, they'll be welcomed with generosity and compassion!

RALLY VIPS!

Before your next rally, create and rope off “VIP Sections” throughout your gym. As students enter, surprise them with snacks, a high five, and a cheerful note, making them feel like honored guests! This is a great way to make students feel comfortable, excited, and welcomed!

WELCOME COMMITTEE

Kick off your first football game on a high note! Set up a spirit table just outside your stadium entrance filled with face paint, cheer/chant pamphlets, and school spirit shirts. With leaders stationed at the table, welcome new students by showering them in spirit and gear! Finally, offer to walk each attendee to the student section to find them a place to sit for the game!

MID-YEAR INTRODUCTIONS!

First impressions are just as important to new staff members as they are to incoming students. Just before the start of the new semester or school year, have your leaders create and facilitate uplifting campus tours for newly hired faculty members. These tours can showcase school traditions, important locations, and even facilitate introductions to other staff members!

SPIRITED DELIVERY!

Just before testing season, have one of your leaders dress as your school's mascot. Throughout the week, visit random classrooms and deliver surprises to various students and staff. Finally, take pictures of each surprise and post them on your program's social media account! This is an amazing way to generate a bit of positivity during a challenging time of the year!

“We’ve Got Your Back!”

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

Have your leaders create various sets of “additional instructions” for upcoming tests. Rather than being academic instructions or rules, these lists can include self-care tips, words of affirmation, or kind messages. Finally, have each set of instructions printed and stapled to the front of students' exams!

SUPPORT SQUAD!

During testing and/or finals, select a random passing period for your leaders to spread unexpected joy! When your day arrives, have your leaders dress in school spirit gear and walk the hallways spreading cheer. This “Support Squad” can hand out candy, pass out uplifting messages, and even play music to encourage students to keep their heads up!

TRULY MOTIVATIONAL

Just before finals, enlist the help of a local elementary school and ask 1st and 2nd grade classes to write motivational posters for your students during finals. While 6- and 7-year-olds might not know exactly how to motivate teenagers, they're experts at trying their best! Once your posters are completed, hang them around campus for students to enjoy!

1. What is stress?

To encourage mindfulness, we want our students to recognize the physiological signs of stress. We do this by setting up a very high-pressure/low-stakes activity, like a cup-stacking tournament. Single elimination, very little practice, totally unfair.

By the time we get to the final round, kids are jumping up and down and are in full fight-or-flight mode. This activity does a great job getting the kids to experience stress with little chance of lasting humiliation.

If you don't have sets of cups, a card game like War will do. The important thing is to put brackets on the board and act like it's the most important thing in the world.

Afterwards, I have the kids share what they were experiencing physically during the competition. Shaky hands, rapid heartbeat, butterflies, sweaty palms...

By the time we're done chatting they've all calmed down and have mostly forgotten about the tournament. It's a great chance to remind them that just because something doesn't matter long-term, it doesn't mean our stress responses change.

For example, how did you feel the last time you thought you lost your phone?

2. Fight or Flight?

Start with discussion on when conflict and when stress occurs (refer to #1 activity). Have students stand on which side of the room they usually are.

3. How to make stress your friend. (14min+/- Ted Talk)

https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend

4. Think-Pair-Share

What are some of the healthy ways you deal with stress? What are some of the not so healthy ones? Be honest!

Examples: Healthy - meditation, journaling, hanging with friends, talking to your mom, watching YouTube videos of cats falling down (within moderation of course!) Not Healthy - alcohol, drugs, bullying, food issues,

5. Video Project

Have students watch this video from Berna and Team Choices . . . <https://youtu.be/hW7nVYMYaHw>

Optional: you can have them partner to make their own videos, posters, presentations to share. You can find a rubric at <http://thehealthteacher.com/unit-plan-stress-management/>

6. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tell students that they are going to do an activity that will help them relax by tightening and releasing different muscle groups in their bodies. Students may sit or lay down on their backs (depending on space). Demonstrate/model each step for students in preparation for their participation. Then read and model the following instructions to your students twice for each direction:

1. Raise your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead. Try to touch your hairline with your eyebrows. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 2. Make a frown. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 3. Close your eyes as tightly as you can. Draw the corners of your mouth back with your lips closed. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 4. Open your eyes and your mouth as wide as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your face.
 5. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Close your fist tightly. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your hands.
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1. Stretch your arms out to the side. Pretend you are pushing against an invisible wall with your hands. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 2. Bend your elbows and make a muscle in your upper arm. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your arms.
 3. Lift your shoulders. Try to make your shoulders touch your ears. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 4. Arch your back away from the back of your chair (or off the floor). Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
 5. Round your back. Try to push it against the back of your chair (or against the floor). Hold for 5 seconds... and relax. Feel the tension leaving your back.
 6. Tighten your stomach muscles. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

7. Tighten your hip and buttock muscles. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
8. Tighten your thigh muscles by pressing your legs together as close as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
9. Bend your ankles toward your body as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds ...and relax.
10. Curl your toes under as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your legs.
11. Tighten all the muscles in your whole body. Hold for ten seconds...and relax. Let your entire body be heavy and clam. Sit quietly (or lie quietly) and enjoy this feeling of relaxation for a couple of minutes.

<https://backend.edutopia.org/sites/default/files/resources/stw-glenview-stress-reduction-activities.pdf>

7. Walk About

Have students line up in two single file lines. Their talking partner is by their side... walk together as a group (front of line leads) and students talk to each other. Rotate...continue.

You can also do it where they get a partner and a few topics and are sent to walk for 5-10 minutes.

8. Boundary Breaking

So often we listen to respond and/or talk and don't feel heard. This activity is two-fold; it helps with team-building, face-to-face connections but also gives a time where each member in your team/group has a chance to feel heard. Taking time to slow down and focus on each other. So many benefits! We did this every other Friday in my leadership class. See www.oasc.org >> Resources >> Documents >> Team-Building >> Boundary Breaking.

9. HeadSpace App

Show your mind some love with these guided meditations / animations. Meditation and Mindfulness. Basic Pack is free, you can pay for more.

10. Develop a Support System

Create your personal Board of Directors: a group that will help guide you through hardships, successes, and future endeavors. Think about a diverse group, such as peers, family, teachers, a trusted friend, coaches, community leaders, etc... to work with you to understand your goals, help manage stress, keep you accountable and to inspire you. Download the document at www.oasc.org >> Resources >> Documents >> Lessons >> Personal Board of Directors.

11. 4 Count Breathing / Tactical Breathing

In 1, 2, 3, 4 – Hold 1, 2, 3, 4 – Out 1, 2, 3, 4 – Hold 1, 2, 3, 4 Vision Square

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO-8_yrIPp4

Other Resources

<https://www.amazon.com/The-Stress-Reduction-Workbook-Teens/dp/1572246979>

Sara