



 Oregon Department of Education

Care and Connection: Activities

The following are some potential exercises, activities and events to celebrate Care and Connection at your school or school district:

Preparation

For Staff	For Students
<p>Create opportunities for staff to informally connect. Provide extra support and mentorship to staff and teachers who are new to the school community and/or the profession.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● “Buddy” program for teachers new to the school and/or new to the profession● Welcome breakfast/potluck lunch● Open forums/Q&As hosted by administrators for staff to ask questions and access support● Other ideas you may have that work for your school/school district	<p>Create welcoming classroom spaces. Are there extra touches that can make your school spaces more welcoming?</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Send an email or text, or place a phone call, from an administrator to students asking what questions or concerns they have for the current year● Provide students with a packet of resources (school map, counselor contact information, helpline information, etc.)● Warm lighting● Inviting music● Colorful pictures/objects● Welcome signs● Name tags for desks● Other ideas you may have that work for your school/school district

For Staff	For Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforcement of school values and commitments to creating welcoming and inclusive spaces for all ● Offer opportunities for reflection on a certain topic of the day ● Encourage staff to lead professional development in their respective areas of expertise <p>Provide explicit, non-stigmatizing and normalizing recognition that it is OK to not be feeling OK. Make staff aware of available resources should they need additional emotional support.</p>	<p><i>Note: these activities will vary by school, school district and staff member</i></p> <p>Provide explicit, non-stigmatizing and normalizing recognition that it is OK to not be feeling OK. Make students aware of available resources should they need additional emotional support.</p>

“We appreciate you” | Frequently throughout the school year

For Staff	For Students
<p>Create time, permission, and space for relationship building, and the formation of smaller groups within school communities.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider taking time during these meetings to invite each person to offer a response to “What I would like you to know about me is _____” ● Encourage creative responses using whatever medium is most comfortable for the individual. ● Emphasize resilience/healing/renewal rather than “getting back to normal.” ● Create space and time for connections across grade levels, content areas, classified/licensed staff, etc. ● Destigmatize the need for additional care or support to manage personal or professional stress. 	<p>Create time and space for students and teachers to get to know each other.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider inviting students to participate in an exercise where they respond to the statement, “What I would like you to know about me is _____” ● Give students time and creative license to develop a response through strategies such as: art, movement, music, singing, sharing an item or idea. ● Invite students to choose how they express themselves including the option to remain silent. All forms of expression are welcome.

“We value you” | Events/Activities

For Staff	For Students
<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Decorate the staff lounge area● Creating Calm Rooms where school staff can take time to care for their emotional well-being● Create a space for staff to share announcements, community events, shout-outs, etc.● Host food tastings to poll favorites among your staff● Invite staff voice and choice into activity and event planning	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reframe some of your traditional school activities, like an ice cream social, as a Care and Connection events

If needed, the Oregon Department of Education has many [resources](#) for students and families to help support mental and emotional health.