50 Things You Can Do Right Now to Support Students’ Mental Health and Wellness

1) Learn student’s first names and greet them when you see them—high five, handshake, smile.
2) Eat lunch with a student or group of students.
3) Attend students’ extracurricular activities (sports, music programs, etc).
4) Promote a growth mindset—praise effort and know-how.
5) Volunteer as a club advisor or coach.
6) Keep an optimistic focus on the future in conversations with students—‘you’re going to have so much fun in that class!’
7) Include older students directly in IEP and/or behavior plan discussions.
8) Have conversations with students about topics/activities that interest them.
9) Play a game of cards, checkers, chess, Connect 4, etc with students.
10) Ask about a class project that you know the student is working on.
11) Remind colleagues about the 5:1 ratio (5 positives for every correction)—model this yourself.
12) Encourage and model predictability and structure in school expectations.
13) Send a ‘shout out’ or note to a student with a compliment.
14) Call home and tell the parents/family something positive about a student.
15) Keep an ‘inspiration file’—students keep pieces of work they are proud of in a folder, and can look back on them when they are having a rough day.
16) Demonstrate/model gratitude—write down 3 things you are grateful for and post for students to see (encourage them to do the same).
17) Put a variety of post it notes on/outside your door, with positive statements/affirmations for students to ‘take what they need’ for the day.
18) Share your own interests with students—engage in common interests (build a model, doodle/color, etc).
19) State what you observe—’you look like you’re feeling sad today’—then offer the option of talking about it—model noticing how people are feeling and how to be supportive.
20) Have a prize/incentive box available for when students meet a goalachievement.
21) Offer to be an incentive/reward for students on plans—be someone they can eat lunch with, play a game with, spend time with.
22) Send regular (weekly, monthly) emails to staff highlighting strategies to support students with various needs (ADHD, anxiety, etc).
23) Offer to teach a lesson (or consult) on social skills, mindfulness, managing big feelings, etc in a classroom.
24) Teach staff a single, age appropriate coping skill at each staff meeting for them to share with their class.
25) Have a ‘School Psychologist Question Box’—students can put in a request to talk with you.
26) Work collaboratively with school counselors or social workers, and school nurses.
27) Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month (May) (many ideas online).
28) Offer to run a book study on a mental health or SEL topic within your building or district.
29) Have a poster with positive facts about a student and a ballot box for others to try to guess who this amazing student of the week might be—answers posted on Thursdays or Fridays.
30) Leave your office door open—be available to students, staff, and parents.
31) Have snacks available for hungry students.
32) Use students’ chosen names or pronoun preferences (when safe to do so).
33) Offer to be a Check In/Check Out person or mentor for a student.
34) Provide staff with easily implementable ideas to support SEL in their classrooms—offer to model any strategies they are interested in.
35) Be visible in the hallways—notice positive student behaviors—greet students and parents.
36) Help parents and students find the supports they may need outside of school—collaborate with outside providers for student success in school.
37) Offer to co-lead a group with the school counselor.
38) Offer to take a social skills group for the special ed teacher.
39) Provide information regarding ACEs, resilience, and trauma informed practice to your building staff—so they can support students in crisis.
40) Have a ready stack of your schools’ ‘currency’ (Eagle Feathers, Tiger Paws, etc) and hand them out when you see students engaging in prosocial behaviors/expected behaviors.
41) Do a ‘confidence challenge’—have students write down 10 things they like about themselves and when they show it to you they get a ‘reward’ (snack, small prize, etc)—they don’t have to let you read it, just show you that they did it (although many students would love to share it with you 😊).
42) Put up a question of the day or week on your door and encourage students to come chat with you and answer the question—great conversation starter.
43) Know students’ birthdays—give them a note or a card or simply tell them Happy Birthday when you see them.
44) Offer to be a ‘break’ or ‘calm down’ space for a student when needed.
45) Offer to go for a walk, take a break, walk the track, etc with a troubled student.
46) Have an emotions or Zones of Regulation visual on your door—encourage students to choose how they are feeling or what zone they are in.
47) Create a social detective scavenger hunt—have students find examples of prosocial or expected behaviors (per a scavenger hunt list of behaviors) with winners (make everyone a winner).
48) Be visible at recess or lunch—allow students to engage with you in play or conversation.
49) Arrange for a student to have a special job with you (delivering notes, taking something to a teacher, etc).
50) Share with your administrators and staff all the skills/domains of practice that school psychologists are trained in, especially regarding social/emotional learning and development—ask how you can be of help.