

School Psychology Awareness Week

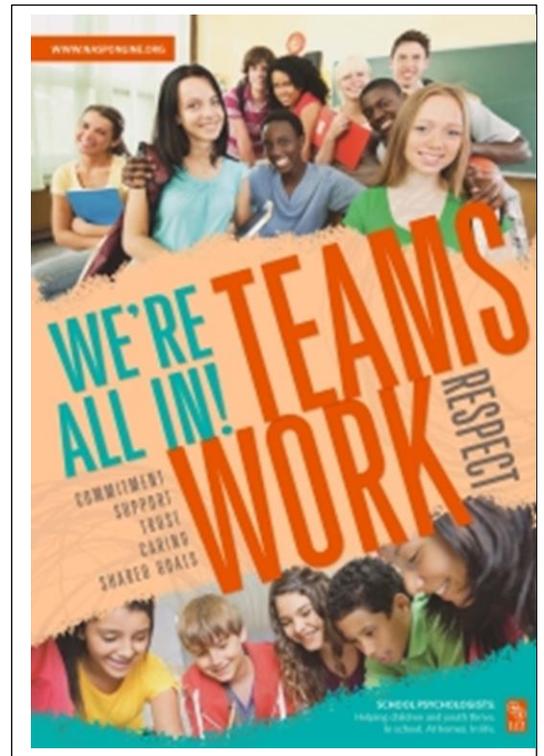
November 11-15, 2013; This Year's Theme:

“We’re all in! Teams work!”

The 2013 School Psychology Awareness Week poster is designed to inspire school communities, including students, staff, and parents, to consider the teams we serve on and how these teams benefit our school communities and individual students. It is a tool for our individual and group work with students, to spark conversations about belonging and making a difference. It can create the opportunity to identify where teams are needed and the roles they might serve. The theme, “We’re all in! Teams work!” emphasizes that in some capacity we are all members of teams!

Suggested Activities for Teachers, Students & Parents

1. Consider team memberships and characteristics. Introduce the concept of teams and have students brainstorm the characteristics of teams. Encourage them to consider the different teams they are on and the roles that they play. Help them see that teams can be a small group of students or a whole school community or even a town. Have them consider how their teams benefit the school or broader community.
2. Build connections. Encourage students to consider the connections they make with peers by teaming. In small groups, students can list the teams that exist in their classrooms. From reading groups to science experiment groups to tables, classrooms are a hotbed of teams. Have students brainstorm how these teams help the classroom by making learning fun, encouraging cooperation, etc. Students might also suggest new teams for the classroom.
3. Use current events. National events can highlight the important role of teams. Have students identify teams involved in an event and consider the different roles of they play.
4. No one is good at everything, but everyone is good at something. Teambuilding activities are a great way to demonstrate how each person can contribute to the group, but probably would not be able to accomplish as much as an individual.
5. Encourage family discussions about the family as a team.
6. Come together for a good cause. Show the strength of working together as a group to help the community. Students can create a fundraising activity for a local charity or volunteer to clean up a park or participate in a community food drive or toys for tots event. See how much you can accomplish by working as a team.
7. Show and tell. Have students identify one team that they are a member of and share information about that team with the class. Ask them to bring in an item from home that represents this team. Point out the variety of teams that exist.
8. Create team challenges. Grades, classrooms, and even schools are natural teams. Organize a competition that will benefit students or the school community. Consider cleanest cafeteria table, “greenest lunch shift,” or highest rate of homework completion challenges.
9. Home-school teams. School staff across the country, from rural to urban districts, lament the difficulty of facilitating home-school collaboration. Look into how we as students, parents and teachers can work together for the good of the school! Check out PTA’s and other school/ community collaboration groups!
10. Pay it forward. Challenge student and adult teams to use this week to set a short term goal and make a plan for how to meet it. For instance: A class might decide that they will leave their classroom extra clean to help the custodial staff. Or: A parent may set a goal to have their kids make cookies for the neighbors



11. The power of working together. Give students a problem to solve or a question with many possible answers (i.e. how many words can you think of that start with the letter “a”). Allow them a few minutes to think of as many answers as they can. Find out the highest number of solutions an individual student thought of and compare it to how many the entire class came up with together. Discuss how much stronger the class team is in comparison to each person as an individual.
12. Show the staff how integral they are to the school team. This week is the perfect time to take the opportunity to thank the staff for all of their hard work. Take some time to deliver compliments to individuals who are effective team members in your school. For example, leave them a note in their mailbox or on their desk, letting them know their work is acknowledged and appreciated.
13. Emphasize connections and contributions. Many students, particularly those who feel more socially isolated, may not see the connections that they have with peers within the school. Encourage them to think outside of the box and challenge them to think of as many teams as they might belong. Emphasize for these students that teams are not limited to sports or extra-curricular activities, but are inherent in any interpersonal activity that occurs throughout the day.
14. Consider the role of teams in careers. Have students choose different careers or jobs that interest them. In their research of these different jobs, have them consider what role teams play in their day to day activities. Consider how being a member of a team helps them be more successful at their jobs.
15. Use your team to make a difference. Give teams the opportunity volunteer with a local cause such as Special Olympics, Toys for Tots, or Habitat for Humanity. They may be surprised how much of a difference they can make and how much fun they can have banding together to help others.
16. Strengthen your school’s mission. Take the time to celebrate the school’s successes and remind staff of the mission and importance of working together in a positive manner. Teachers can have this same discussion with students in their classrooms.
17. Decorate doors. Have classes choose famous teams, not limited to sports teams. The class will design and decorate their classroom door sharing information about the team, including their accomplishments and how they benefit their local community.
18. Two is better than one. One stick is easy to break, but a bundle of five or ten cannot be broken. Illustrate for students that alone they may encounter struggles, but by joining with others and using each of their strengths, nothing is impossible.
19. Team stars. Share information about how important being a member of a team is to the success of a sports team. In addition to members of sports teams, consider police and firefighters, TV personalities, physicians, and others as virtually all professionals rely on teams.
20. Discuss the possible ways teams might be negative. Engage older youth in discussions about the potential negative outcome for teams, such as being exclusive or hurtful or generating an attitude of privilege or power among team members. Also, consider the potentially dangerous outcomes teams can have when teams engage in risky behaviors such as gangs. Encourage students to consider why adolescents are drawn to such groups and how schools might better meet those needs in prosocial ways.