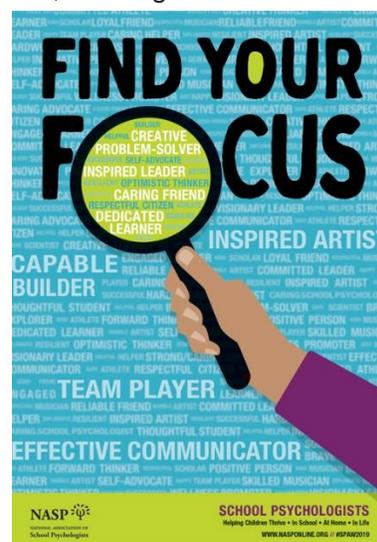


Using the Poster and Theme to Engage Students and Adults

School Psychology Awareness Week (SPAW) is a fun, easy way to highlight the important work school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive.

This year's theme, "Find Your Focus" is action oriented, flexible, and relevant to all age groups. Finding your focus can have a variety of meanings from paying attention, to being able to see an idea more clearly, to identifying an area of interest, or to being persistent or determined in one's effort. The goal is that we help students understand and strengthen their roles as learners, problem-solvers, creators, friends, leaders, and members of a team or the broader school community.

The SPAW poster can be used in many different ways to engage students and staff in various aspects of the theme, from starting school-wide initiatives to implementing classroom initiatives to working one-on-one with students to having conversations with parents about how to best support the growth and development of their children into thriving individuals. Using the poster as an idea starter, we can encourage our students as well as adults to focus on valuable resources to build the academic and social-emotional skills they need to promote personal achievement, growth, and resilience, as well as a sense of belonging and wellbeing. The activities can be adapted to students and adults, different age groups, and multiple contexts.



Consider hanging the poster in a strategic location so that you can refer to it as needed when providing direct services to students. Or hang the poster in a public space near your office and print out a PDF version to hang in your work area or carry with you to your different locations. (Note: A limited quantity of additional posters is available upon request). Following are some suggestions for how to bring the poster to life. (Also check out our Find Your Focus word games here.)

Suggested Activities for All Ages

Counseling Activities

Build social skills. The poster provides some initial ideas for character traits and roles that students can focus on to engage in prosocial behaviors which can help students develop and maintain strong

relationships. Discuss the ideas on the poster and consider why your students might see themselves in these different ways. Help them brainstorm other activities that will help them build self-confidence and connect with others in order to focus on an area that has meaning to them. Have them role-play specific behaviors with you or other members of the group and discuss when would be ideal times to try to engage in the behaviors that constitute the different roles. Consider sending each student with a homework assignment to try one new or challenging behavior from the list and report back at your next meeting.

Connect with school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports. Consider your school rules and how these behaviors support them. Help students see how engaging in these behaviors will help them meet personal or classroom goals. Encourage teachers to provide intermittent positive reinforcement in the form of verbal comments, thumbs up, or even school-wide tokens (e.g., magnifying glass.) for engaging in these types of behaviors. Include the words and explanations in the school's morning announcement. Consider using the poster as a kick-off to a year-long focus on positive social behaviors. For example, create a bulletin board that changes weekly or monthly to highlight different behaviors and other aspects of positive school psychology.

Create personal progress steps. Work with the art teacher or individually with students to have them create personal posters depicting what they would like to focus on in themselves. These may feature a goal, a key thematic characteristic as well as the steps that they want to take to reach a goal.

Perspective taking. Engage students in a discussion or activity about what it would feel like to be on the giving and receiving end of the activities. Use role-playing to help them understand another's perspective. Highlight the power of empathy and gratitude to create broader understanding, acceptance, collaboration, thankfulness and well-being in school.

The Three Good Things writing exercise. Teach students about the power of focusing on the positive. Instruct the students to write down three good things that happened each day for a week. The three things students list can be relatively small in importance ('I answered a really hard question right in Language Arts today') or relatively large in importance ('The guy I've liked for months, asked me out!!!'). Next to each positive event listed, they write a reflection on one of the following questions: 'Why did this good thing happen?', 'What does this mean to you?', 'How can you increase the likelihood of having more of this good thing in the future?' Reference: "Positive Education: Positive Psychology and Classroom Interventions". sas.upenn.edu. N.p., 2017. Web. 5 May 2017.

Individual goal setting. The poster includes descriptions of character traits that will help any student or adult focus on developing skills in certain areas of their lives! Help students consider what their one area of focus will be, how they see themselves developing toward that focus or behaviors that can engage them in the area in order to effect positive change in their lives and the lives of others. If you are using the poster option, let them pick their focus for the day or the week by using the printable magnifying glass to create a personal poster.

Build self-esteem and confidence. Lead a discussion about what focusing means. With students' help, list the steps needed to concentrate on learning a new skill such as riding a bicycle, learning to

swim, or memorizing the multiplication table. Have them write these steps perhaps in a game (reference NASP poster) and discuss how they connect to success. Have students write or draw a picture illustrating a time when they persevered and succeeded by maintaining their focus even though they felt like giving up. Then, discuss the feelings associated with their achievement such as pride, happiness, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These types of lessons can positively impact the classroom environment.

Give out "Find Your Focus" bookmarks to provide a regular visual reminder. This bookmark reflects the School Psychology Awareness Week theme as well as key reminders of how students and staff can highlight any number of items in our lives to focus in on to work towards our goals and thrive. A thematic word can direct us into taking steps toward positive change in their lives and the lives of others. These bookmarks are an excellent giveaway for families/guardians attending Back-to-School nights or conferences. They are also excellent data collection tools for students. Have them tally on an attached paper how many behaviors they engage in during the course of a week. You can order bookmarks for a small cost through the [NASP website](#).

Link to the Gratitude Works program and THRIVE wristbands. Identify one of the actions that embody gratitude and select one of the Gratitude Works activities to do.

Classroom Activities (K-8)

Start the day in a positive light. During morning class meetings, the teacher can pick one password, a key thematic word, that can help us set goals or lead discussions to help children create the connections necessary for skill building. Further, teachers can pick one item that represents a positive social interaction. That would be the theme of the morning meeting. As they share, each student takes a turn to do or say something that reflects the general idea.

Classroom lesson. Work with teachers to design a writing, social studies, or health lesson on how they can find their unique areas of focus which can impact on peers, adults, and students themselves. Have students pick different suggestions from the list or develop one of their own to relate how even small behaviors, particularly interpersonal ones, can leave a lasting impression on others and change the course of your day and that of others. Some suggestions could be, have students write about the password or thematic word or behavior and why it is important to them or to others. Talk about how kind acts "ripple" and change how everyone is feeling and acting. Work with speech pathologists to include the words in vocabulary and concept formation lessons.

Hold a scavenger hunt. Have students work as a class-wide team to each find someone throughout the day who is demonstrating one of the concepts or behaviors from the poster. See if together the class can identify all of the concepts. Or have students select five concepts to find that day and see if each student can find people demonstrating these concepts. Provide an opportunity to share at the end of the day.

Create problem-solving connections. Help students create leadership groups that focus on areas they are interested in. Topics could include issues portrayed on in the media or on the news (civil unrest, crime, violence, social justice, politics, racism, sexuality, bullying, etc...) Work with students on developing strategies for expression of their thoughts and ideas. Areas to consider: working with

others with opposing views, strengthening their public speaking skills, and attendance to events, community social or civil events. These groups can also be used to teach problem solving and conflict resolution skills.

Infographics. Check out our [reproducible infographics](#) on the NASP website for use with your students. They offer valuable information and suggestions for children on how children can Find Your Focus! These can be posted or used for a whole group lesson or individual lesson. These infographics cover key concepts relating to this year's theme including being a dedicated learner, inspired leader, caring friend and being a creative problem-solver.

Empower your students. Consider nominating students for the [NASP Student Power Award](#). This award was created to honor students who support others and recognize students for progress toward personal goals, optimism, problem solving, eagerness, resiliency and dedication. This would be a great way to honor students at an awards ceremony that parents can attend.

Bulletin Board Activities

Make it interactive. Print the [magnifying glass template](#) (from NASP website) for students to write down a key word, their password to help direct us towards positive change and contribute to the classroom or school community. Pin/tape the magnifying glass on the wall to create a display of steps contributing to a positive school community. Have students discuss how all of the positive behaviors and actions help to create a positive charge and connect. You can also create spotlights, flashlights, glasses, microscopes or binoculars with words on them and put them in an envelope taped to the wall next to the poster along with a large poster board or sheet of paper. Students can pick an action they have taken that week or one that they have seen someone else do and tape it to the blank sheet.

Catch them being good. Praise and positive attention can go a long way in boosting students' positive behavior and can greatly impact school climate. Positive emotions and the sense of success can buffer kids against negative reactions to adversity. This can help children unlock their potential and thrive. Work with students and staff to identify and reinforce positive behaviors when they are exhibited throughout the school. Write the positive act or behavior on a [magnifying glass](#) found online and post on the wall so that students can see how to Find Your Focus, by making positive choices and the progress created by the good things they do. This can be part of a larger school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports program or specific to individual classrooms. Browse your local library for books that help teach these skills.

Word Cloud. Engage your students in creative thinking by generating as many thematic words as possible when discussing how a student can Find Your Focus! Build these key terms into a word cloud and post these word clouds on a bulletin board to display your SPAW 2019 Find Your Focus ideas. Or create example word clouds using free online platforms like <https://www.wordclouds.com/>.

Suggested Activities for Working With H.S. Students

Standing in the Shadow of Our Success. This activity is used to review and reflect on personal and group accomplishments. Individually, participants are asked to consider their roles in their groups' success. One by one, participants are asked to physically "stand in the shadow" (the place in the room) where they felt they contributed most in moving the group forward. For example, someone who helped facilitate a large group discussion might go stand by the board. Participants are invited to say 1 or 2 sentences about their contribution.

Index Cards. Participants are given two cards with the SPAW image on them (can use downloadable magnifying glass available on the NASP website as alternative). On one card they are asked to write one thing they've learned, changed or tried that made a powerful positive difference. On the other card they are asked to write one question they (still) have. After writing the question, they should add one person they could ask to brainstorm answers, one thing they could try to answer the question, or one small step toward gaining understanding and power over this lingering question.

If You Really Knew Me... Group Activity.

Before You Start: Demonstrate what one round will look like. Lead a discussion about attentive listening before beginning the activity. Help students define what "attentive listening" means and what it looks like. It is fully hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting and not thinking about your own thing or how you want to respond while being spoken to. It includes facing the person who is speaking, making eye contact, nodding or other physical responses to what is being said, etc.

Make sure students know if they are person A or B. Set up a space for everyone to stand in pairs.

How to Play:

- Group students in groups of two and decide who is student A and who is student B.
- Student A silently listens to student B for one minute (or shorter for younger groups).
- Student B finishes off the sentence, "If you really knew me, you would know that ..." What is being shared about themselves can range from:
 - Family information— "If you really knew me you would know that I am the youngest of 4 siblings."
 - School information— "If you really knew me you would know that my favorite topic in school is Art."
 - Favorite/ least favorite things— "If you really knew me you would know that I hate broccoli."
 - Anything else they want to share about themselves.
- Student B repeats this sentence over and over again completing it with a new piece of information each time. After a minute the roles are reversed and student B listens while student A shares.

Adults Matter, Too

Recognize colleagues. School psychologists and other adults working in schools face what can sometimes feel like overwhelming hurdles to meet students' needs. It can be easy to lose sight of the power of the small things we do each really are making on students' lives. Take the time to acknowledge these important steps. Recognize and honor colleagues, families/guardians or even community members in your school or district who has made an impact on the lives of students, families, and the greater school community through the [Possibilities in Action Partner Program](#). The program description, suggested selection guidelines, press release, and Possibilities in Action Partner certificates are available online.

Express gratitude. School administrators, teachers, and other school professionals can promote gratitude in students by modeling it. For example, schools could have periodic gratitude days, during which staff members announce what they are grateful for and ask students to do the same. In particular, it is beneficial for staff members to focus their thoughts and feelings of gratitude to specific people or students in the school and to directly express their gratitude in person. Use the downloadable and adaptable [Find Your Focus note card](#) or [Gratitude Works note card](#) to send gratitude letters.

Treat yourself and others. Use the downloadable [magnifying glass](#) (available at NASP online) a password or key thematic word you notice colleagues exhibiting which have had a positive impact on each other and/or students. Tape to it a small candy bar, tea bag or other treat and put them in staff mailboxes, on their desks, or in a basket in the staff lounge. Be sure to keep one for yourself!

Find Your Own Focus. Recharge yourself by allocating a few minutes this week do something that you enjoy or find relaxing. This will help to relieve stress, build resilience and enhance optimism. Encourage those adults around you to recharge and unlock your potential as well.

Guide leadership. Identify parents and/or guardians who demonstrate an interest in leading a group or organizing family friendly events. Assist them in organizing meetings for the families and community leaders to attend. Events can vary from cultural nights, homework help/tutors, award ceremonies, book clubs, fundraisers etc.

Involve your community. Work with school leaders to identify community agencies that work to create positive school climates. Many agencies are often looking for ways to get involved with schools and reach families. Consider contacting food banks, law enforcement agencies, recreation centers, and religious organizations. These organizations often work with families prior to enrolling in school so creation of ongoing partnerships can create a connected and positive environment where all stakeholders are working towards one goal.

Embrace culture. Encourage your school to embrace and honor the variety of cultures that exist in your building. Work with school leaders to infuse cultural lessons throughout the school year. Get your families involved. Reach out and ask about ways they would be interested in sharing the variety of cultural experiences that exist amongst the school community. Create "Show and Tell" opportunities within the classroom that will allow students to highlight strengths or areas of interest and aspects of their culture.

Engage families. Offer families/guardians increased opportunities to access the school building. Offer homework information sessions, positive parenting classes, trainings on alternatives in discipline, computer training courses, accounting courses, award ceremonies for parents etc. These events allow for the school environment to become a welcoming and warm environment that not only offers educational support to its students but also to parents and guardians as well.

Create critical connections. Identify at-risk students and assign a staff member or older student (mentor) to check in with them at the beginning of each day, and again before school ends. This system will be beneficial for the student who is being checked on, but the older student, as well. Ensuring our at-risk students are being supported is a great way to ensure all students are connected to support.

Social Networking. Participate in social media campaign through NASP with #SPAW2019. Engage on social media to share your SPAW ideas, highlight creative activities as well as connect with colleagues celebrating SPAW in a variety of ways. Read inspiring posts for additional unique activity ideas. Further, you can stay connected to your colleagues and see what is happening around the country by visiting the NASP website for daily recaps posted throughout SPAW.

Share Your Ideas

A number of these ideas come from school psychologists who created their own activities. We want to let your fellow school psychologists know about your creative ideas so that you can assist them to *Find Your Focus* too. Let us know what you did using the [SPAW feedback survey](#).