

#CreateConnectCare Idea Starters

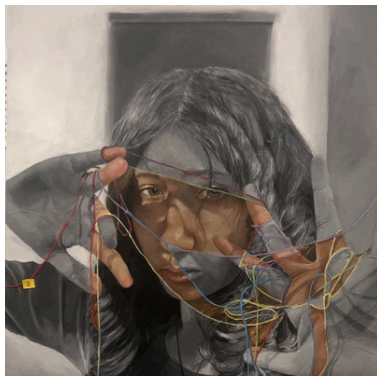
WHY #CREATECONNECTCARE?

The #CreateConnectCare Challenge invites young people to explore mental health and well-being, and share their stories, build empathy, and spark change through creative expression.

OBJECTIVES

Through this initiative, students will:

- Engage in meaningful reflection on their mental health and overall well-being.
- Foster supportive relationships with peers and strengthen connections within their community.
- Harness creativity to challenge stigma and ignite open conversations.
- Promote awareness and understanding of mental health and wellness.
- Take proactive steps through self-care practices and compassionate actions towards others.



Starter Activities to Explore the #CreateConnectCare Challenge

These engaging yet easy-to-integrate idea starters invite students to explore mental health through creativity, build supportive connections, and practice care for themselves and their communities. Designed to reduce stigma and promote well-being, these activities encourage students to express their feelings, support one another, and take meaningful actions toward mental wellness.

Visual Arts

"This Brings Me Joy" Collage

Students create a collage featuring images, words, and colors that represent things that bring them joy, such as favorite hobbies, cherished people, special places, or activities that make them smile. Each student selects or creates visuals that capture their unique sources of happiness and what lights them up. The collages are displayed together to celebrate the many different things that spark joy in our lives and to remind us of the importance of seeking out and savoring joyful moments for our mental well-being.

"Emotions in Color" Abstract Art

Students explore different emotions by assigning colors to feelings (e.g., calm = blue, energized = yellow, anxious = gray). They then create an abstract painting or drawing that represents how they're feeling today or a meaningful moment. Students share their artwork and discuss how expressing emotions visually can serve as a form of self-care and effective communication.

***Resource:**

These two different examples of the wheel of emotions provide learners with simple yet visual ways to understand their emotions and develop their emotional intelligence.

- [Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions](#)
- [Idaho State University's Wheel of Emotions](#)

"#CreateConnectCare" Mural

As a class, students collaboratively design a paper mural on the theme "#CreateConnectCare."

Create: Each student creates their own section on a piece of paper or poster board, illustrating how connection supports mental health through friendship, family, community, or support systems. Students can use markers, colored pencils, magazine cutouts, or mixed media.

Connect: Once completed, all sections are arranged and taped or pinned together on a classroom wall to form one large collaborative mural.

Care: The completed display serves as a visual reminder of the importance of reaching out and supporting one another.

Performing Arts

"I Am Not Alone" Monologue

Students write and perform a short monologue (1-2 minutes) about a time when they felt supported by someone or when they supported a friend. The focus is on recognizing that mental health struggles are shared experiences and that connection can make a difference. Students reflect on the power of showing up for one another.

"This Is Me" Movement Piece

Students create a short movement or dance piece (1-2 minutes) that expresses how they feel or how they take care of their mental health. They can choose music that resonates with them and use movement to explore emotions like joy, stress, calm, or hope. This activity emphasizes creative expression as a tool for emotional release and self-understanding.

***Resource:**

This video shows how Chelsie Hill uses dance to express her emotions and purpose, as well as connecting with others, making it an inspiring example of how movement can support personal well-being and self-expression.

- [This Woman Created A Wheelchair-Dance Team](#)

"Songs That Lift Us Up" Music Share

Students choose a song that brings them joy, comfort, or hope and share a 30-second clip with the class, explaining why this song matters to their mental well-being. After listening to several songs together, students discuss how music can be a powerful tool for managing emotions, lifting spirits, and creating connections. As an extension, the class can collaborate to create a "Mental Wellness Playlist" that everyone can access, building a shared resource of songs that support positive mental health.



Media Arts

"Mental Health Matters" PSA Video

Students work in small groups to create a 30-60 second public service announcement (PSA) video about mental health awareness, challenging stigma, or promoting help-seeking behaviors. They can use their phones or tablets to film, incorporating interviews, spoken word, music, or visual storytelling. The PSAs can be shared with the school community to spread awareness.

"Caring Acts Photo Journal"

Students document acts of care — for themselves or others — through photography over the course of a week. They might capture moments of self-care, acts of kindness, time spent with supportive people, or environments that bring them peace and tranquility. Students compile their photos into a digital slideshow or photo essay, accompanied by brief captions that explain why each moment is significant for mental wellness.

"Podcast Episode: Real Talk About Mental Health"

Students create a short podcast episode (5-10 minutes) where they discuss mental health topics relevant to teens, such as stress management, social media and well-being, or how to support a friend. They can interview peers, teachers, or counselors, and share resources. This activity promotes open dialogue and helps normalize conversations about mental health.



Culinary Arts

"Comfort Foods Cookbook"

Students contribute a favorite comfort food recipe, along with a short paragraph explaining what this food means to them or how it helps them feel better during tough times. They can include photos or drawings to personalize their entries. The class compiles these into a collaborative cookbook titled "Foods That Care for Us," celebrating the role of food in emotional well-being and cultural connection.

*Resource:

The video explains why comfort foods emotionally soothe and connect us, helping students understand and articulate the deeper meaning behind their own recipe choices.

- https://youtu.be/toCYKWDD_8c?si=Yn6zXmM4uN9mkGO
CBS Sunday Morning Video (5.21 minutes)

*Extension Ideas:

- Share copies with school counselors or community centers
- Organize a "Comfort Food Share" event where students bring dishes to enjoy together

"Mindful Cooking Activity"

Students prepare a simple, healthy snack (like a smoothie, trail mix, or fruit salad) while practicing mindfulness, focusing on the textures, smells, colors, and tastes. Afterward, they reflect on how slowing down and being present while preparing food can be a form of self-care. This activity emphasizes the connection between nutrition, mindfulness, and mental health.

*Resource:

This article highlights how the mindful, sensory nature of baking can reduce stress and support mental well-being, reinforcing the activity's focus on cooking as a form of self-care.

- [Mental Health Benefits of Baking](#)

