

20 ways to connect

- 1. Four at the Door.** Take the first two minutes of every day to make sure you connect with young people by using the "Name, Head, Hand, Heart" rubric.
 - **Name:** Remember their name early, use it often.
 - **Head:** What are they interested in? Ask about it!
 - **Hand:** Give a handshake or a high five.
 - **Heart:** Ask how they are doing. Listen to their answer.
- 2. Greetings.** Come up with a signature greeting. High fives, hand shakes, verbal hellos.
- 3. Games.** Short warm ups and other games can set a good tone for the day.
- 4. Stay calm.** Staying calm even when young people can't is a powerful way to build respect and model regulation.
- 5. Roses, Buds and Thorns** Young people identify the best part of their day/week (rose), the most challenging (thorn), and what they want to work on tomorrow/next week (bud). This exercise is best when done regularly.
- 6. Sparks.** Every young person has something that lights them up and that they love doing. Learn about it. Help them express it.
- 7. Leader of the day.** Give young people opportunities to be a leader and have their voice heard.
- 8. The S.S. Report.** Young people identify when they felt most successful and when they felt most stuck. This exercise is best when done regularly.
- 9. Question of the Day.** Day begins with young people asking a question they would like the answer to. This can engage the seeking brain.
- 10. Daily poll.** Take 2 minutes to do a "speed round" poll question answer. It could be as simple as "What is your favorite food?"
- 11. Art speaks.** Provide clay, markers, colored pencils, paints, pipe cleaners etc... and consider these activities:
 - Create an object that describes how your day is going.
 - Draw or a place where you feel most safe and calm.
 - If your feelings were an animal today, what would they be.
- 12. Facilitate exercises that allow students to share their experiences and passions.**
- 13. Attend extracurricular activities.**
- 14. Visit a site in young people's community.**
- 15. Tell your own stories.** When you share with young people, they feel more comfortable sharing with you.
- 16. Learn about their world.** Whether it is cultural traditions or pop culture references - interact to learn.
- 17. Share a photo.** Ask young people to bring in photos related to a theme and have them share.
- 18. Ask for participation equitably.** Ensure that everyone has a voice by monitoring yourself and ensuring all youth have opportunities to respond.
- 19. Smile and laugh.** They say laughter is the shortest distance between two people. Be willing to have fun.
- 20. Map it.** Work with your team or department to track which young people are being connected with and identify young people who are falling through the cracks.

Growth mindset inventory:

Read the following statements about nurturing a growth mindset in students. Which one stands out as something you do really well? Which would like to do more of?

1. I make a point to connect with my students every day in some way.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

2. I believe that students can learn new things and can improve if they put in the time and effort.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

3. I provide support and communication, but don't solve students' problems for them or do tasks that they could do themselves.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

4. I acknowledge when something is difficult but encourage students to persevere and brainstorm solutions.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

5. I try to help students turn challenge and disappointment into learning opportunities.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

6. I have clear and reasonably high expectations for my students.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

7. I model that success takes practice and effort.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

8. I give my students honest praise, connected with results, not for half-hearted attempts.

Never thought of this. I try! Got this one covered.

S.O.S. Plan

1. Name a student who has been struggling this school year.
2. Think of a student in your classroom who is struggling this year. How do you think this student would answer the three "S.O.S. questions?"
3. Think about what you are already doing to create S.O.S. for this student. What do you want to keep or fix? Think about what you might do differently. What do you want to stop or start?

KEEP DOING	FIX OR CHANGE
STOP	START

4. How will you know if you are successful in creating SOS for this student? What evidence will you accept that you are making progress?