

# News from Psychological Services

## WHAT IS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST?

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National School Psychology Week:  
November 9–13, 2020

### National School Psychology Week (NSPW)

The week of November 9–13, 2020 is National School Psychology Week! Please join us in highlighting the important work school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive! This year's theme is "**The Power of Possibility**," which conveys hope, growth, resilience and renewal. Possibility suggests that even something as small as a seed can grow into something magnificent. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect great wonders."

The word "power" implies that things can and will happen. When we focus on what is possible, we have hope that students will grow, thrive and bloom and will be empowered to take the action steps necessary to do so.

Our hope is to provide you with some activities to celebrate "The Power of Possibility," by connecting with students and staff to highlight how focusing on possibilities can help lead us to our goals, our interests, and our positive growth.

### What is a School Psychologist?

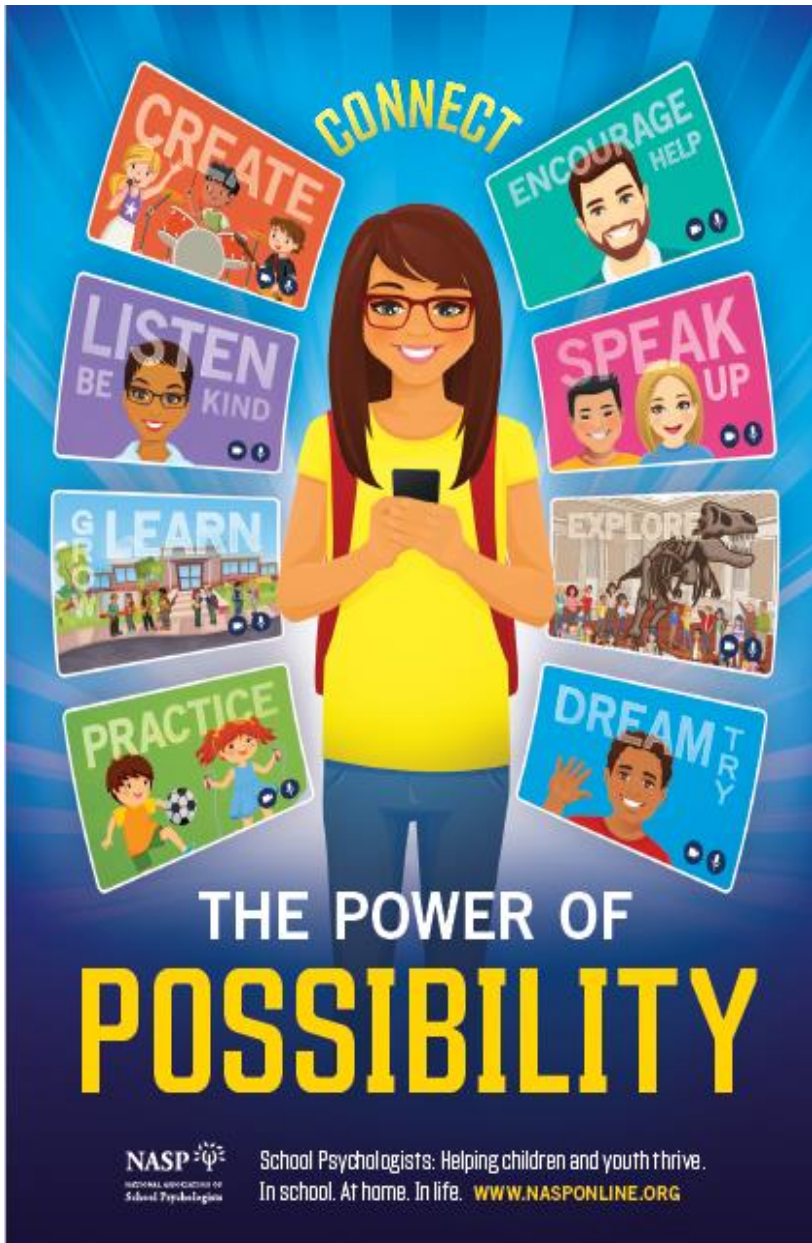
School psychologists are members of school teams that support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. School psychologists collaborate with families, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community.

**-National Association of School Psychologists - (NASP)**



### WHAT TRAINING DO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS RECEIVE?

School psychologists receive specialized advanced graduate preparation that includes coursework and practical experiences relevant to both psychology and education. School psychologists typically complete either a specialist-level degree program or a doctoral degree.



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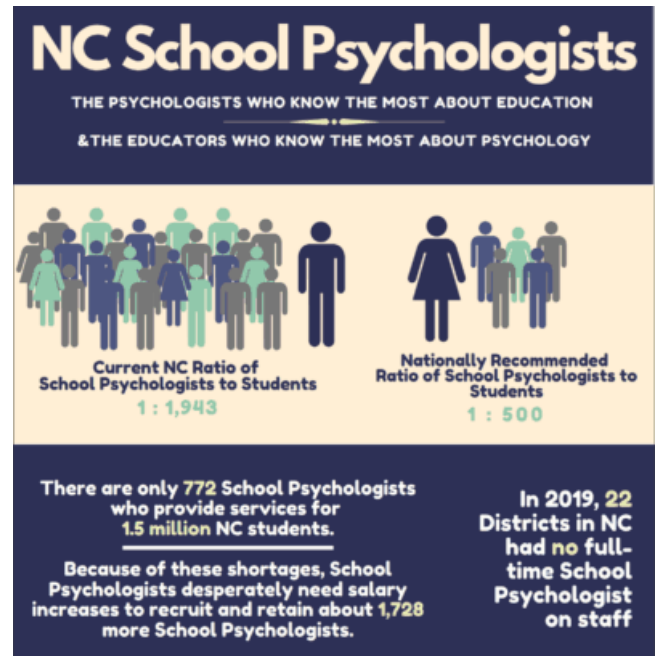
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**Why Do Children Need School Psychologists?**

All children and youth can face problems from time to time related to learning; social relationships; making difficult decisions; or managing emotions such as feeling depressed, anxious, worried, or isolated. School psychologists help students, families, educators, and members of the community understand and resolve both long-term, chronic problems and short-term issues that students may face. They are a highly skilled and ready resource in the effort to ensure that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and in life.

***SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach.***

We specialize in Learning, Behavior, Mental Health, and School Systems.

**We Provide:**

- ✓ Academic, behavioral, and mental health supports
- ✓ Evaluation, assessment, and data analysis
- ✓ Consultation with teachers and families
- ✓ Culturally responsive services
- ✓ Crisis prevention and response

**We Support:**

- ✓ Struggling and diverse learners
- ✓ Student achievement and well-being
- ✓ Safe and supportive learning environment
- ✓ School-family-community partnership
- ✓ School-wide data-based decision making

## Suggested Activities for Students to Celebrate "The Power of Possibility"

**Build social skills.** The NSPW poster provides some initial ideas for prosocial behaviors that can help students envision the power of possibilities to develop and maintain deep friendships. Discuss the ideas on the poster and consider why they might be good suggestions for the students in your group. Help them brainstorm other activities that will help them build self-confidence and connect with others in order to overcome barriers and understand what's possible. 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 these behaviors.

**Create personal progress steps.** Have students create personal posters depicting how they can activate the power of possibility. These may feature the action words on the poster, a key theme or the steps that they have taken to discover and explore new possibilities.

**The Three Good Things Writing Exercise.** Teach students about the power of focusing on the positive. Instruct 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 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.

**Build self-esteem and confidence.** Lead a discussion about what perseverance sustained by hope means. With students' help, list the steps needed to learn a new skill such as riding a bicycle, learning to swim, or memorizing the multiplication table. Have students write or draw a picture illustrating a time when they persevered and succeeded even though they felt like giving up. Ask them to identify the hope and power of what they believed was possible that got them to persist. Then, discuss the feelings associated with their achievement such as pride, happiness, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

**Create problem-solving connections.** Help students create leadership groups within your class 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.

**Make it interactive.** Print/share the Power of Possibility [footprint template](#) for students to write down a key word or phrase to help direct them towards what is possible for them to contribute to the classroom or school community. Put these on the classroom wall or class Canvas page to create a display of ideas for contributing to a positive school community. Have students discuss how all of the positive behaviors and actions help them to reach toward the power of possibilities within themselves.

**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 embrace the power of possibilities to grow and thrive. When you see a student display a positive behavior or act, write it down and post it in a common area (in the classroom or on the class Canvas page) so that students can see the power of possibilities and how to work toward what is possible for them by making positive choices and noticing the progress created by the good things they do.

**Index Cards.** Give students two index cards. On one card they are asked to write one thing they've learned, changed, or tried that helped them move toward a new possibility. 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.

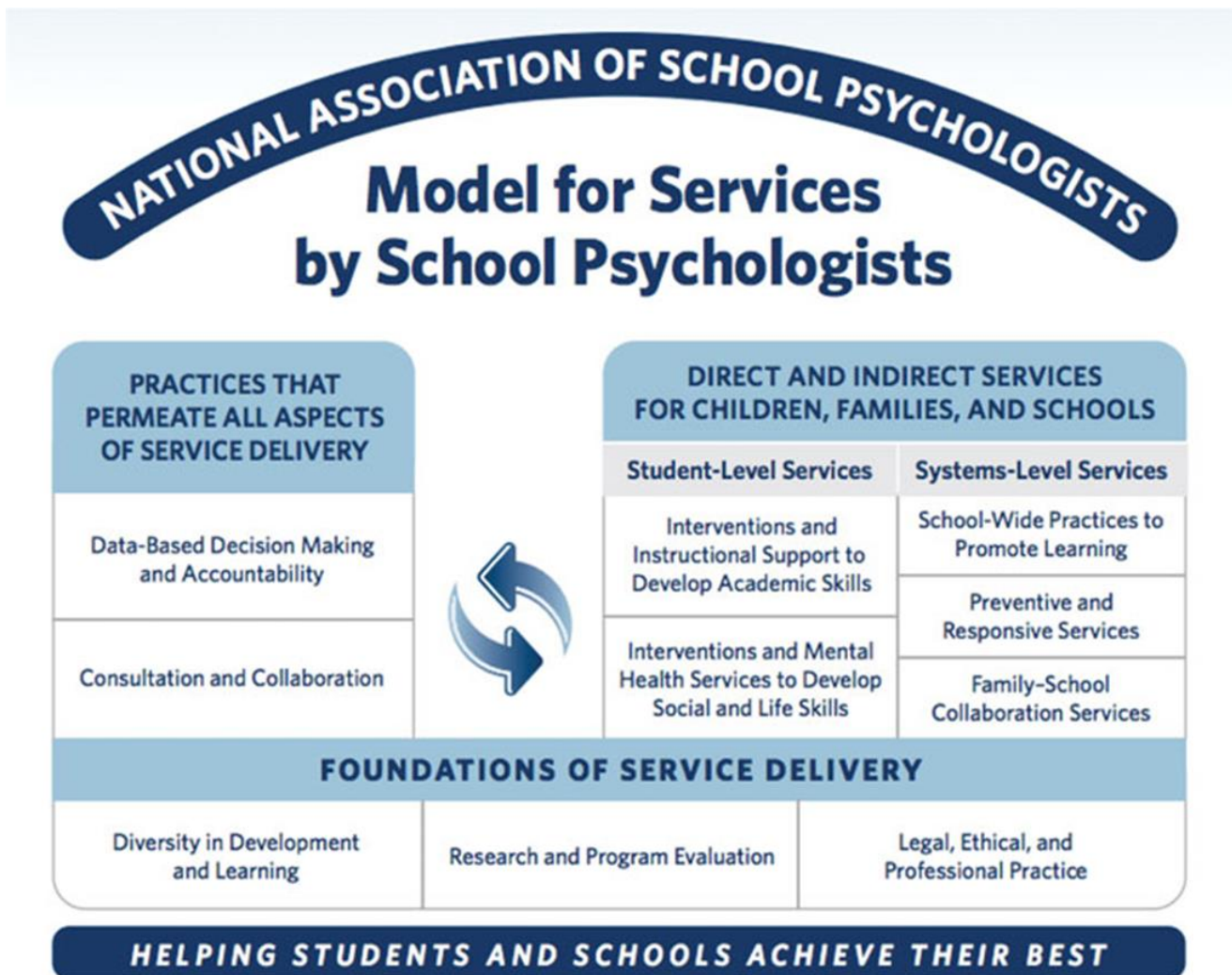


**If You Really Knew Me... Power of Possibility Group Activity.** *Before You Start:* Demonstrate what one round will look like. Lead a discussion about attentive listening before beginning the activity. Help students define what “attentive listening” means and what it looks like. It is fully hearing 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.

*How to Play:*

1. Group students in groups of two and decide who student A is and who is student B. To adapt this activity for remote learning, use channels on Microsoft Teams to break students into groups.
2. Student A silently listens to student B for one minute (or shorter for younger groups).
3. 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.”;
4. 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.

To find out more about all the ways school psychologists can help in supporting you, your students, and our school families, click [here!](#)



# SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

support students' ability to learn and  
teachers' ability to teach.

## THEY ARE EXPERTS IN



Learning



Behavior



Mental Health



School Systems

## THEY PROVIDE

- Academic, behavioral, and mental health supports
- Evaluation, assessment, and data analysis
- Consultation with teachers and families
- Culturally responsive services
- Crisis prevention and response



## THEY SUPPORT

- Struggling and diverse learners
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- School-wide data-based decision making

## THEY SERVE

in schools and  
other educational  
and clinical settings.



## RECOMMENDED RATIO

1 school psychologist per **500-700** students

**Lowering barriers to learning is critical to  
children's success in school.**

Contact your school psychologist to find out  
how they can help.

School Psychologists:  
Helping Children Thrive • In School • At Home • In Life  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

**NASP**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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**Designed by:** Megan Fox  
**Content created by:** Kathryn Morris, Ashleigh Langheim, and Jenilee Fleetwood  
**Edited by:** Gretchen Stumpf

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**Sources:**

**[https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy/national-school-psychology-week-\(nspw\)](https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy/national-school-psychology-week-(nspw))**

**<https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/who-are-school-psychologists>**