



Staff Activity

CONNECTION CHAIN

Invite staff to pause, reflect, and name what helps them “push through” when work feels heavy. Together, your team will build a simple chain of supportive words and actions that becomes a visible symbol of resilience and connection.



Building Strength Through Connection

Every team faces tough stretches, but staying connected while things feel heavy is what keeps school communities steady and strong.

This activity helps staff reflect on what helps them “push through” and how leaning on each other creates lift during low moments. Using simple prompts and a shared reflection chain, your team will name the words, habits, and people that help them move forward.

The final product becomes a visual reminder that perseverance is a team sport. This activity fits easily into a January or February staff meeting, when energy dips and connection matters most.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Open with a Warm-Up Prompt

- Invite staff to reflect with a simple question such as:
 - "What is one word you need more of this week?"
 - "What is something that would give you a small lift today?"
 - "What helps you feel grounded when the week gets busy?"
 - "What is one thing you're proud of yourself for lately?"
- **Examples:** courage, clarity, patience, support, energy.
- Have staff jot their word on a sticky note, share it aloud, or add it in the chat if meeting virtually.

2. Set the Tone with a Grounding Thought (optional)

- Share a short quote, reflection, or affirmation about hope, perseverance, or starting again.
- Choose something that encourages calm and connection, and helps everyone settle into the conversation.

3. Small-Group Discussion: From Low to Lift (8–10 minutes)

Ask staff to talk in pairs or table groups about:

- When work feels heavy, what helps you move forward?
- Share a moment when you felt stuck. What made it challenging?
- What advice would you give your past self during a tough season?

This creates space for honesty, empathy, and shared strategies.

4. Whole Group Share-Out (3 minutes)

Invite a few groups to share a key insight, theme, or "lift" strategy they discussed.

Encourage quick snapshots, not long stories.

5. Connection + Action Step (8 minutes)

Bring everyone back together and explore two guiding questions:

- How does leaning on colleagues make us stronger as a team?
- What is one small action we could take as a staff to feel more connected during tough stretches?

Record ideas on chart paper, in a shared document, or on a whiteboard so they can be revisited throughout the semester.

6. Build the Stronger Together Chain (5 minutes)

Invite each person to finish the sentence:

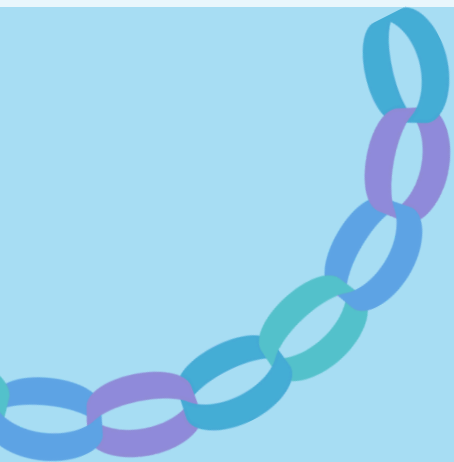
"We push through by..."

- Have staff write their sentence on a paper chain link (printable included) or type it into a shared digital version.
- Connect the links to form a chain that represents the collective strength of your team.

Closing Reflection Questions

Before wrapping up, take a moment to reflect as a group. These questions encourage staff to identify key takeaways, name support systems, and carry today's insights into future work.

- What is one small action you want to take after today's conversation?
- Where did you notice moments of strength or support in our team this month?
- What helped you feel lifted or encouraged recently?
- What is something you hope our team remembers on the tough days?
- How can we keep this sense of connection going throughout the semester?



Pro Tip: Display the chain in a shared space, feature it in your next staff newsletter, or revisit it at future meetings as a reminder of how your team supports one another.

ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

Physical Chain Build (In-Person)

Staff write their sentence on a colored strip.

Sort the chain by themes like belonging, growth, or support.

Hang it in the lounge or hallway.

Digital Chain (Virtual or Hybrid)

Use a shared Google Slide with link shapes.

Each staff member types their phrase on a digital link.

Leader arranges them in a long digital chain to include in newsletters.

Mini-Chains by Team

Each grade level or department makes a mini-chain.

Teams share their chain's themes with the whole staff.

Combine all mini-chains into one display called "The Lift Line."

LEADER TIPS:



Carry It Forward: Revisit the chain at future meetings, spotlight a link, add new ones each quarter, and turn repeated themes into quick shoutouts.

Layer the Lift: Pair the chain with your wellness calendar, gratitude wall, or other touchpoints to reinforce connection and highlight team strengths.

We push through by...

We push through by...

We push through by...

We push through by...

We push through by...

One thing that helps me feel supported is...

One thing that helps me feel supported is...

One thing that helps me feel supported is...

One thing that helps me feel supported is...

One thing that helps me feel supported is...

--

--

--

--

--

COLLABORATION

BUILT BY EDUCATORS, FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This resource was created in collaboration with dedicated educators and school leaders who believe in the power of connection, reflection, and supporting one another through every season of the school year.

Special thanks to Tiffany Litman, Executive Director of the Area Special Education Cooperative (ASEC), whose Push Through activity and Stronger Together Chain inspired this idea. Tiffany's thoughtful approach to fostering resilience and community reminds us that even small moments of reflection can build stronger teams and lift school culture in meaningful ways.



Tiffany Litman

Area Special Education Cooperative
East Grand Forks, MN

WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Thanks for downloading this resource—at [Alpaca](#), we're on a mission to **make school the happiest place to work**.



Tried an activity?

Send a photo or a staff testimonial to [our team](#), and we'll send you a coffee on us!



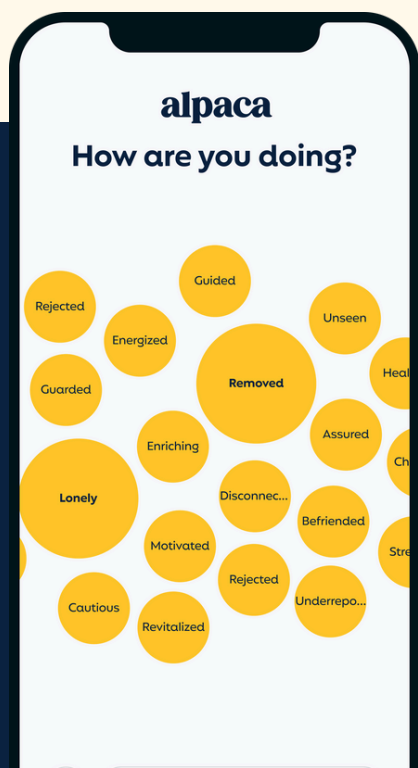
Got an idea brewing?

We love co-creating with school leaders—[drop us a line](#) with any resource ideas you'd love to see next.



Explore more!

Check out our [full resource library](#) for creative, ready-to-use tools to support you and your team.



SEE HOW ALPACA WORKS

Beautiful surveys, delightful care packages, and real insights on teacher wellbeing—everything you need to lead with confidence, all in one simple solution. [Book a quick demo!](#)