wellness & safety

Schools Insurance Authority

SIA for Kids — Schools in Partnership

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Rewire your mind for success: 7 daily affirmations that work

Our minds can get noisy — juggling to-do lists, worries and self-doubt. But neuroscience shows that the thoughts we repeat can literally reshape the brain through neuroplasticity, its natural ability to form new pathways.

That's where affirmations come in. Short, purposeful phrases that can help strengthen mental patterns that support focus, calm and motivation.

Backed by neuroscience, these seven short affirmations can help reduce stress, sharpen focus and boost confidence. Use them daily to create a calmer, more resilient mindset and share a favorite with your friends, family and co-workers to spread the good vibes.

1. "I am enough."
Builds self-compassion and quiets self-criticism.
Try this: Say it before a big task or tough conversation.

2. "I am safe right now."
Helps calm anxiety and grounds you in the present moment.
Use it: During moments of stress or when your mind jumps to "what ifs."

3. "Mistakes are how I grow."
Reframes failure as part of learning and builds resilience.
Say it: After a setback or challenging day.

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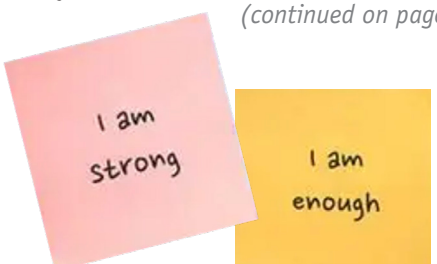

Storms are coming – is your campus ready?

In preparation for the upcoming storm season, now's the time for preventative maintenance. To reduce losses, we recommend the following:

- **Roofs**
  - Look for evidence of leaks.
  - Look for standing water, bubbles, or tears and cracks in roof covers.
  - Check parapet walls with your hands for bounce back. Walls should be solid, not spongy.
  - Check for gaps or broken roof flashing.
  - Clear debris on roofs and in gutters and downspouts.
  - Check gutters and downspouts for leaks and ensure they're secure to the building.
  - Consider a fresh coat of paint for weather-proofing help.

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SIA for Kids — Schools in Partnership

- Ergonomic tips
- Gateway's staff resources day

7 daily affirmations

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4. "My thoughts are not facts."
Stops overthinking by helping you observe — not believe — every thought.
Tip: Repeat when negative self-talk starts to spiral.

5. "My presence matters."
Affirms your worth and belonging, especially when you feel unseen.
Try it: Before meetings, presentations or social events.

6. "I can handle this one step at a time."
Reduces overwhelm and activates your problem-solving mindset.
Use it: When facing a busy day or complex project.

7. "Today is a new opportunity."
Encourages hope, motivation and a fresh start each day.
Say it: Every morning to set a positive tone.

Positive affirmations don't just help us as individuals, they can strengthen workplace culture, too. When employees practice supportive self-talk, they show up with more confidence, focus and resilience. Neuroscience shows that affirmations can:

- Lower the brain's stress response
- Boost focus and productivity
- Strengthen emotional intelligence
- Improve self-worth and belonging

Tip:

Open your next team meeting with an affirmation or share one in your internal newsletter. A few positive words can shift the energy for the whole day.

Remember, you don't have to change everything at once. A small shift can have a big impact.

By saying these phrases every day and posting them where you'll see them, such as on a mirror, desk or phone screen, you'll begin to plant the seed for lasting calm, focus and success.

Because you are enough. You are safe. And today really is a new opportunity.

Source: The Wednesday Recharge

Ergonomic toolbox

Simple ergonomic tips to improve comfort, productivity

Lita Chang, B.S., SIA Ergonomics Specialist

Spending long hours at a computer or desk can take a toll on your body. Poor posture and repetitive movements often lead to discomfort, fatigue or even injury, but small adjustments can make a big difference.

Start with **good posture**:

- Sit back in your chair with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Keep your head aligned with your spine, not leaning forward.
- Avoid perching on the edge of your seat or slouching.
- Shift positions often to keep muscles loose.

A few mindful tweaks to your workspace and posture can help you feel more comfortable, stay focused, and work more productively throughout the day.

Watch for more tips in future Wellness & Safety/Risk Review editions.

Spotlight on…

Gateway Community Charters holds staff development day

SIA recently had the pleasure of participating in Gateway Community Charters' staff development day, a dynamic event spearheaded by Human Resources Director Laura Barragan and the Professional Learning Team. The day was packed with resourceful and engaging sessions covering a wide range of topics, from classroom strategies and educational tools to health and wellness resources.

Staff development days like this one offer valuable opportunities for educators and staff to collaborate, refresh skills, review policies and strengthen connections. They're also a meaningful way to recognize the hard work and dedication that staff bring to their roles every day.

Kudos to Laura and the Gateway Community Charters team for creating such an inspiring and well-rounded event! SIA was honored to be part of the day and share helpful wellness and safety resources.

Does your district have an upcoming in-service, health, or safety event? Invite SIA to participate—it's a free benefit for all member districts. Email us at PreventionServices@sia-jpa.org.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month: Secure Our World

Gustavo Mastroianni, SIA Chief Information Security Officer

Every October, Cybersecurity Awareness Month shines a spotlight on the importance of cyber security and the critical role it plays in our increasingly digital world. Established in 2004 through a collaboration between the National Cybersecurity Alliance and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), this month serves as a reminder for individuals and organizations to take proactive measures to protect their online presence and sensitive information.

In today's interconnected world the threat landscape is more complex than ever. Cyber attacks can take many forms, from phishing scams and ransomware to data breaches and identity theft. With an ever-growing reliance on technology, it's crucial to understand that cyber security isn't just an IT issue, it's a shared responsibility that affects everyone. Research shows that 91 percent of cyber attacks start with a phishing email, making it the most common method attackers use to gain access. Additionally, the 2025 Verizon data breach investigations report found that human error contributes to 60 percent of security breaches, underscoring the need for better training and awareness across all levels of an organization.

In 2025, cyber criminals are using AI to generate deepfake videos, clone voices and automate phishing attacks with high accuracy. The following are the top cyber security trends driving this change:

1. **AI-powered Threats:** Attackers now use AI to generate deepfake videos, mimic voices, and write convincing phishing emails, making deception faster and more scalable.
2. **Social Engineering Surge:** Sharp rise in phishing, vishing, smishing and quishing, all designed to exploit user trust and bypass technical controls.
3. **Human Risk Management:** Greater emphasis on tracking and improving user decisions through risk scoring, behavior analytics and continuous assessments.
4. **Simulation-based Training:** Increased deployment of phishing, smishing and quishing simulators to mirror real attack scenarios.
5. **Behavior-based Learning:** Use of adaptive security awareness training that adjusts content based on user responses and risk levels.
6. **Data-driven Defense:** Use of human risk scores to prioritize training needs, benchmark awareness, and guide strategic investments in security programs.
7. **Deepfake-driven Breaches:** Increase in breaches involving deepfake audio/video impersonations, especially in CEO fraud, payment redirection scams and internal manipulation.

Throughout Cybersecurity Awareness Month, various organizations share practical tips to help individuals and businesses improve their cyber security posture. Here are some essential practices to consider:

1. Use strong, unique passwords and a password manager.
2. Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA).
3. Keep software up to date.
4. Be wary of suspicious links.
5. Back up data.
6. Self-educate and educate others.
7. Encrypt data.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of staying vigilant in our digital lives. By adopting safe online practices and fostering a culture of cyber security awareness, we can collectively reduce the risks posed by cyber threats. As we navigate an ever-evolving digital landscape, remember cyber security is everyone's responsibility. Let's work together to create a safer online environment for all.

• SIA's free virtual trainings benefit personal and professional life

Free virtual trainings to enhance your life

SIA provides the staff of our member districts with virtual training on a variety of topics that apply to both personal and professional life. To learn more or to register for any of the training courses listed below, click the course title or contact tfranco@sia-jpa.org. You also can join our email list to learn of future events at SIA – Schools Insurance Authority (sia-jpa.org).

	NOVEMBER	
11/3	Caregiving in Multigenerational Families	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/4	How to Recognize Changes in Employee Behavior and Take Appropriate Action	noon-1 p.m.
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11/6	Boosting Energy Naturally	noon-1 p.m.
11/6	How to Work with Difficult Customers	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/12	Best Practices for Hybrid Working	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/13	Caring for Elders	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/18	How to Create a Healthy Workplace	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/19	How to Manage People Effectively	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/20	Building Resilience in Traumatic Times	5:30-6:30 p.m.
	DECEMBER	
12/1	How to Address Performance Concerns	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/3	Move to Improve Mental Health	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/8	Creating a Healthier Lifestyle	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/10	Supporting Mental Health Concerns with Friends and Family	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/11	Creating Harmony Between Generations at Work	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/15	Critical Incident Stress: Natural Disasters	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/16	Psychological Safety	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/17	Stress: Beyond the Basics	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/18	Finding Gratitude in Festive Celebrations	noon-1 p.m.
12/18	Finding Gratitude in Festive Celebrations	5:30-6:30 p.m.

Interested in scheduling a live or in-person webinar for your district?

Click the link below to explore Optum's training catalog:

Optum Global Digital Training Catalog

Please note: If your district participates in SIA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), you can request an in-person or virtual training for your staff. Contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org to make the arrangements. Visit the SIA website at Employee Assistance Program - SIA for the list of participating districts. A 30-day notice is required for all training/webinar requests.

Storms are coming

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- Have a plan to respond to roof leaks.
  - Stock any necessary repair materials.
  - Review tasks and responsibilities with staff.
- Visually check all storm drains and pipes for debris. Leaves, garbage and other materials blocking the drainage systems can back up water and destroy roofs, floors and walls.

- **Electrical**
  - Develop a plan for an electrical failure.
  - Review the correct way to turn off electrical hazards in flooding zones.
- **Windows**
  - Visually inspect window seals and caulking.
- **Emergency equipment** (including backup generators, wet vacs and sump pumps)
  - Ensure all equipment has been serviced and is properly fueled and lubricated.
  - Test emergency lighting and battery-powered backup systems.
- **Trees**
  - Trim overhanging, loose or problem branches.
- **Pipes, Sprinklers and Miscellaneous**
  - If interior/exterior pipes are exposed to cold air, ensure they're fitted with proper insulation.
  - Be sure parking lot gates are secured in the open position to prevent winds from swinging gates into traffic.
  - Winterize sprinkler systems according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Blowing out excess water with a compressor may be the best way to prevent frozen and broken pipes.
  - Check shade structures and storage areas to ensure they're secure to prevent wind damage.
  - Ensure custodial staff have supplies for daily wet floor management to prevent slip and falls.
  - Remind staff to report leaks, icy spots or heating issues promptly.

A little preventative maintenance now can save your district thousands of dollars in deductibles and future contributions to the SIA pool.

Prevent arson during the holidays

When schools are closed for the holidays, they're more vulnerable to threats of arson. Costs to our districts extend beyond the replacement of buildings. The loss of teaching aids acquired through the years and personal items belonging to staff and students can be devastating. Schools are a home away from home for many children and a school fire can be traumatic. By taking the following steps, you can reduce the opportunity for arson at your school:

- Remove garbage cans when the campus is closed. Garbage has been used as an ignition source for arson fires or to keep an unwelcome visitor warm.
- Reduce vegetation around the campus buildings for fire risk and to remove hiding places.
- Check lighting with a night walk through your campus. Replace all burned-out bulbs. Install lighting in currently dark and secluded areas. Consider installing motion sensors.
- Check all windows and doors to ensure that they're closed securely. Keep them locked when school is out.
- Check fire, smoke and intrusion alarms monthly to be sure they're working properly and that the alarm signal is audible.

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Risk Review

SIA hosts CPSI course

SIA will host the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) course and exam December 10-12, 2025. SIA member district staff can register directly with the California Park and Recreation Society (CPRS), and upon completion of the course and exam, SIA will reimburse the district for the cost of the course and exam. Passing the exam is not necessary for reimbursement.

Outdoor play is a major component of the health and wellness of our children, and school districts are responsible for ensuring safe playgrounds. Since 1999, California has required that all public playgrounds meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines and ASTM standards for playgrounds. The CPSI course trains participants to recognize and prevent potential playground hazards. Those who pass the exam will be considered a CPSI and meet the state requirement for inspecting playgrounds.

More information and the registration link is available on our website at SIA CPSI Course. For questions, contact Lisa Konarski at lkonarski@sia-jpa.org.

DAYLIGHT-SAVING TIME IS NOVEMBER 2

TURN BACK CLOCKS 1 HOUR

Prevent arson

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- Report all suspicious fires, no matter how small, to the local fire department. Call the non-emergency number and request that they come to investigate for possible arson.
- Be aware of possible warning signs indicating someone congregating on school grounds that shouldn't be there; for example, cigarette butts, matches, graffiti, discarded bottles and garbage. Vandalism and fire go hand in hand.
- Invite your school neighbors to be partners in your fire-prevention plan. Get to know them. Ask them to keep an eye on your school after hours and provide numbers to call if they see something suspicious.
- Turn on your outside sprinklers during night hours.
- Remove ladders and equipment that provide access to roof areas.
- Secure or enclose all vents and screens to crawl space areas under buildings and portables.

Mindful musings

Clear a little space. Make a little peace.
One small shift at a time.

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 41 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Manzanita Elementary, Merced City, Modesto City, Mother Lode, Natomas, Natomas Charter, North Bay SIA, Oroville City Elementary, Oroville Union High, Palermo Union Elementary, Paradise, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, Visions in Education Charter, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Brooks Rice; President — Wendy Frederickson, El Dorado COE; Vice President — Kristen Coates, Elk Grove USD; Secretary — Ryan DiGiulio, Twin Rivers USD; Newsletter: Lyn Poll, Prevention Services; CG Communications

www.sia-jpa.org