

“Helping Our Children Thrive!”

Suggestions for a Challenge Success Educational Program for your Community

(Guide updated 7/20/2010)

“I watched a video of a recent Stressed Out Students conference at Stanford, and I recommend it to any parent, whether your kid is in preschool, or college.”

*Patty Fisher
San Jose Mercury News Columnist
Oct. 20, 2008*

“The best parent education program I’ve ever been to at our school... I was so inspired the other night and I have started a new dialogue with my kids.”

*Kathleen Hughes, Past PTA President
Walter Hays Elementary School, Palo Alto
April, 2009*

This guide will help you plan a low-cost, high-impact educational event for your community. This event includes showing Challenge Success video highlights, followed by small group discussions. The Challenge Success DVD features leading national experts on child and adolescent development:

- **David Elkind**, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Tufts University; author of The Hurried Child and The Power of Play
- **Dr. Ken Ginsburg**, Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; author of A Parent’s Guide to Building Resilience in Children & Teens
- **Denise Clark Pope**, Stanford University School of Education, Co-Founder of Challenge Success; author of Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students
- **Dr. Madeline Levine**, psychologist, Co-Founder of Challenge Success; author of The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids

A project of Stanford University, Challenge Success is a pioneering research, intervention and advocacy non-profit group. Rather than defining student success strictly in terms of grades, college admissions and Advanced Placement classes, this educational program challenges each one of us to consider expanding our definition of success to include such themes as character, integrity, health, connection, creativity, enthusiasm, and engagement, as well as academic achievement. You can read more about the work Challenge Success is doing at www.challengesuccess.org.

This educational event is designed to bring together parents, teachers, administrators, and interested community members to shine a light on the current status of the emotional and mental well-being of our children and adolescents, and to encourage each event participant to think deeply about what specific changes he or she can make to reduce stress and make positive changes in their children’s lives.

This step-by-step guide covers:

- A) Things to Consider before Getting Started
- B) Pre-Event: Key Steps to Set up your Event
- C) Event Promotion
- D) Event Set-Up
- E) Technical Requirements
- F) Event Program
- G) Suggested Time-line
- H) Post Event Follow-up
- I) Thank You
- J) California PTA Babysitting Guidelines

**Throughout this guide, you will see items that have asterisks. These ** elements (fliers, posters, surveys, etc.) are available for you in a generic format, which you can customize for your community. Please email Challenge Success volunteer Carrie Manley to request these additional generic support materials for your event. Carrie_manley@yahoo.com

A) Before you start, two important things to consider:

1) Single Event or Series?

This program can be offered as a single event, or as a series, with different dates/locations. Creating a series gives parents and teachers more options for attending. Offering a series also helps build broader community awareness and momentum.

2) Picking Your Dates and Times

Parent education programs are typically held on weeknights. If you plan a series of programs, you might want to consider offering some alternatives, to reach more parents. For example, in Palo Alto, California, the local PTA Council recently arranged a series of presentations at different schools. All the programs were open to anyone in the school district and the surrounding community. In selecting dates and times, one school principal and parent education PTA leader, together, elected to host their event on Super Bowl Sunday, starting two hours before the game. Organizers provided free childcare and live Spanish translation. Surprisingly, 40 parents attended, including several couples who said they appreciated the childcare because it meant they could come together. Another single mother, who works weeknights as a nurse at a local hospital, was grateful for the childcare which enabled her to attend her first ever parent education event. Five parents benefited from having a live Spanish translator. Providing childcare, translators, as needed, and a variety of dates and times gives parents more options to participate.

B) Pre-Event:

Done

- 1) Order a 2008 Conference DVD from the Challenge Success website. The DVD has been revised to break Dr. Ken Ginsburg's talk into 7 sections. These "chapters" give you more flexibility in showing all or parts of his talk at your event. If you have an "older" DVD, in which Dr. Ginsburg's presentation in the highlights section is not presented in section, you might consider ordering the revised format DVD for your event.
- 2) Meet with as many stakeholders as possible in planning this event. The more collaboration the better. At a school, whenever possible, engage your principal. Encourage the principal to review the DVD Video Highlights and the "How Are Our Kids Doing?" Power-Point.** This power-point only takes about 7 minutes, and is an integral part of this program.
- 3) Select date, reserve space. Check to make sure your date doesn't conflict with other key school or district event dates. For example, in Palo Alto, California, check www.info.paloaltopta.org for possible date conflicts.
- 4) Hire Spanish Translator, if appropriate for your community. Reserve translation equipment.

- 5) Identify lead facilitator, possibly your principal. Identify and invite facilitators for small-group discussions. Recruit these people to be at the event and ready to lead small group discussions following the video highlights. (School counselors, administrators, teachers, staff, PTA leaders, other respected school resources; your principal is a good person to ask for recommendations. Check to see if your principal might like to serve as Lead Facilitator at your event.) We suggest one facilitator for every 8 attendees.

- 6) Identify and invite support agencies/mental health care professionals to provide immediate and on-going support resources at your event, as needed. You can have a table (with an identifying sign) for them at the back of the room, with resource materials, and make sure your audience knows they are available if anyone needs immediate one-on-one advice or follow-up. This is a good opportunity to showcase any non-profit services in your community that provide help to young people, such as the non-profit Adolescent Counseling Services in Palo Alto, California. Some people in your audience may be facing a crisis of some sort at home, and this event provides an important opportunity build a direct bridge to help. School nurses, counselors, psychologists and/or social workers might be included.

- 7) Create a follow-up postcard.** This is a postcard that you give attendees. On this postcard, at the end of the event, attendees write down one thing they personally want to change as a result of attending this event. They also put their own address on the postcard for mailing. At the event, organizers explain that they will not read the postcards; the cards are personal reminders that the organizers will put in the mail a week or two after the event. Buy stamps for postcards. Make one (or more) covered boxes (each with a slit) for your event, marked "Follow-Up Postcards." This way, attendees can turn in their postcards to be mailed a week or two after the event. Also prepare one or more boxes, marked "Post Event Surveys."

- 8) Hire babysitters for childcare. IMPORTANT: Check your state PTA requirements for childcare California PTA legal requirements are at the end of this document.

- 9) Determine space for childcare, reserve room, plan snack.

- 10) Review the "How Are Our Kids Doing?" PowerPoint Quiz** for specific content. It is helpful to show this to your principal in planning your event.

- 11) Recruit informal clean-up team (if needed).

- 12) Make a program of the event to hand-out, if desired.

C) Promote Event/Cause:

Done

- 1) Create and post fliers**
- 2) Submit to e-news for your school district, community**
- 3) Post on relevant websites such as local unit PTA site, Council unit website
- 4) Post event on marquee sign in front of school

- 5) Contact room parents and solicit help to get the word out
- 6) Invite staff based on principal's recommendations
- 7) Create and send out Save-the-Date postcards**
- 8) Other options:
 - Post on local newspaper calendars
 - Contact neighborhood associations via internet
 - Submit information to local, regional newspaper columnists
 - Submit guest editorial or letters for local newspapers
 - Create mini-fliers & DVD order forms to hand out at other events
 - Write and submit pre-event stories for school newsletters
 - Post fliers at local libraries, other local businesses

D) Event Setup:

Done

- 1) Submit order form for room set-up
 - a. A table set up at the entrance for sign
 - b. Tables for food, etc.
- 2) Have several tables set up in the back of your venue, to highlight any community resources: our PTA (with membership forms available), the Challenge Success DVD for sale (on-site without shipping, just \$1.25 per DVD), a table for local counseling resources. Have signage for each group so participants can quickly find help, if needed.
- 3) On each seat, place one index card/paper and pens or pencils. Also on each seat, place any material that might be of use to your audience:
 - a. Post event survey**
 - b. PTA membership form
 - c. Calendar of future Challenge Success Video Highlights presentations
 - d. Other hand-out resources**
- 4) Childcare room, appropriate games, snacks, craft and drawing items, DVD/TV and videos and DVDs available if desired.
- 5) Keys to bathroom(s) for adults and children (make sure open).
- 6) Check sound system, make sure you have fresh batteries; make sure you have at least two microphones, preferably wireless.

E) Technical Needs/Event Supplies to Bring:

Done

- 1) Challenge Success Highlights DVD, available at www.challengesuccess.org
- 2) Table and lap-top computer for playing the DVD
- 3) LCD projector

- 4) Two extension cords
- 5) Large white screen
- 6) Sound system, with one microphone for the lead facilitator, and a 2nd mike (preferably wireless or one with a long cord) for the small group facilitators

Sound quality is very important for the success of this event. If your venue has a built-in sound system, you need to find out how to connect your laptop to the sound system, using an in-line microphone cord, from the laptop to the sound system. If you do not have a sound system, you need to make sure you have free-standing speakers that attach to the laptop to amplify the sound for your audience. It is strongly recommended that you have a pre-event site survey. It is wise to find someone with technical expertise at the venue to help make sure you are clear on how to connect your laptop to your sound system, either a built-in sound system, or to high-quality portable speakers.

Also, be sure to review, or do a spot-check with the DVD using your venue sound system during your site survey. The sound quality in part of the Ginsburg section is not as strong as other parts of the DVD, due to a technical difficulty that occurred the day of the original recording at Stanford. Despite the slight drop in sound quality, his content is extremely strong.

You need to check the quality of his 7 sound-bites, in your venue, before your program and then decide if you want to skip any of his seven sections during your presentation. Shortening the video presentation will give you more time for live discussion; you need to decide for your group, what will work best in terms of content, sound quality and timing. Each section is book-marked, so just hitting the advance button on your lap-top will quickly hop you to the next sound-bite, if you decide to skip any of them.

- 7) Digital camera
- 8) Large white board pens and eraser
- 9) Signs for tables
- 10) Supplies for each seat: post-event survey, ** complete list of any additional "Helping Our Children Thrive" events, pen or pencil, blank index card
- 11) Sign-in sheets for childcare (for childcare room, also have at sign-in table)
- 12) Sign-in sheets for event in English/Spanish, as appropriate**
- 13) Table signs (school PTA, other resources)
- 14) 8 clipboards, plus paper and pens, for small group facilitators
- 15) Clipboard, pen and timeline instructions for lead facilitator

F) The Event:

- 1) Consider starting with a pre-event reception with food, just to make it a nice, warm gathering. Breaking bread together helps.
- 2) Lead Facilitator welcomes attendees, introduces any special guests, explains the timing of the event: 7-minute Power-Point quiz, one hour DVD highlights video, followed by small group discussions, ending with the larger group re-convening to share challenges and solutions. Facilitator also explains childcare arrangements and live Spanish translation, if offered. In addition, facilitator briefly explains to attendees that they will be asked to fill out a survey at the conclusion of the event—to help with planning for future events, as well as a postcard, on which they will write down one thing they'd like to change, along with their home address. Organizers will not read the cards; they will be mailed out in a week or two, as a private reminder of the attendee's personal commitment for a positive change. Facilitator points out where the survey and confidential postcard boxes are located, so that attendees can drop off their materials quickly and easily as they leave.
- 3) DVD Highlights Video Introduced. Our revised DVD Highlights Video runs 1hr, 5 minutes. All you have to do is hit play once. If you want fewer highlights, you can fast forward/skip to the sections you want to include.
- 4) The highlights can be started as people eat, if you are having a potluck.
- 5) When the DVD is done, the lead facilitator quickly asks people to break up into small groups, each with a designated facilitator. Each facilitator should have a clipboard and pen for notes. Don't spend a lot of time arranging the groups, just ask people to turn their chairs toward each other to form groups of 6-10.
- 6) Event producer needs to determine the amount of time for small group discussion.
- 7) Timing this event is important. As a courtesy to everyone in attendance, start and stop on time, as promoted and scheduled.

G) Suggested Event Time-line:

6:30pm: Pre-event reception begins

Lead Facilitator welcomes participants, thanks people serving as group facilitators later in the evening, thanks support organization(s) in attendance. Tell people that if, during the course of the evening, they would like to have additional information, a professional support team (or counselor) is available at any time, simply by going to the resource table in the back. Point out this resource table in the back. Remind people to please fill out their post-event survey and their reminder postcards before they leave and drop them off in "the appropriate box" by the exit. Let people know this is an informal event, and to feel free to get food, and leave if they need to at any time.

6:45pm-7:50pm: Video Highlights presentation (1hr, 5min, but can be shorter)

Thank everyone for coming, acknowledge that some in the audience may need to leave, but that for those who can stay, we will now have small group discussion to generate ideas on how to lower student stress at home and at school, and then we will hear the ideas from each group.

7:50-8:05pm: “How Are Our Kids Doing?”

Power-point presentation: Make this interactive by encouraging the audience to answer.

8:10pm-8:40pm: Small group discussion

Event organizer circulates, reminding small group facilitators to make a summary list of challenges and solutions discussed within the group. Encourage small group facilitators to make sure to give everyone a turn to share.

8:35pm: Lead event producer gives everyone a five-minute cue.

8:45pm: Large group re-convenes.

Begin by briefly reassuring everyone that the event ends, in fifteen minutes, so each group has a few minutes to report back to the larger group. Ask each group facilitator to read aloud the list of challenges and solutions discussed in each group. Each group facilitator reports back to the large group on key findings—specific stresses/challenges experienced by members of the group and specific suggestions for lowering student stress at home or school. Have a large white board in front. Lead facilitator has two columns: challenges and solutions and logs the comments from each group facilitator on the white board.

8:55pm: Lead facilitator thanks everyone for coming

Thank small group facilitators. Tell audience their list of challenges and solutions will soon be posted on appropriate websites: local PTA unit, PTA Council. If future talks in a school-district are planned, encourage people to take a list of future dates and times to help spread the word to family and friends.

Request everyone to take a moment to do two things:

- 1) Fill out the simple post-event survey
- 2) On the stamped, postcard provided, **write down one thing that each person plans to do differently, starting now**. Remind attendees to turn in their surveys and postcards. You can also have volunteers ready at the doors with marked “Survey” and “Postcard” boxes to help collect the event surveys and postcards.

9:00pm: Post Session

Be sure, with the digital camera, to take pictures of the white board, of the specific challenges and solutions, as listed, to provide to appropriate webmasters. Clean and lock up.

H) Post Event:

- 1) Thank Facilitators
- 2) Tally and summarize surveys
- 3) Mail out event reflections post cards, one week or so after the event to attendees
- 4) Ask on-site organizers for feedback, suggestions for future programs
- 5) Write a follow-up story on lessons learned at this event, distribute to newsletters and/or local newspapers

- 6) Make a summary list of the challenges and solutions for lowering student stress offered by your attendees. Distribute to anyone you think would benefit
- 7) Post this list on school website, share in newsletters
- 8) Talk with your principal about ways to continue this community conversation
- 9) Discuss the possibility of joining the Challenge Success project. Go to www.challengesuccess.org for more info and ideas on how to help this cause in your community and nation-wide. After your event, please share with us your group's comments on challenges and solutions. Please send comments to carrie_manley@yahoo.com. Also, please share any feedback with us about how this guide could be made better. We greatly appreciate your help.

I) Thank you!

By supporting this event, you are creating an opportunity for increased understanding—and a powerful opportunity for positive change, within each family and within your community. This event gives parents and educators the chance to share experiences, ideas and solutions. Often, parents don't realize the kinds of pressure that they themselves might be putting on their children and adolescents. And for every stressed-out student, there are often stressed-out parents. With this program, parents and educators have the opportunity to move from anxiety to positive engagement.

Questions, Suggestions, requests for additional support materials:

Contact Carrie Manley, Palo Alto PTA Council and Challenge Success volunteer (650) 269-6656, carrie_manley@yahoo.com

J) California PTA Babysitting Guidelines

5.8.5a INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS Guidelines for baby-sitters:

- That there are at least two unrelated persons 18 years or older in attendance at all times.
- That children be kept in a safe environment:
 - If outdoors – in an enclosed playground.
 - If indoors – in a room with safe, age-appropriate toys.
- Bathroom facilities should be nearby.
- That the following child : adult ratios not be exceeded:
 - 0 to 5 years of age, 10 children to 2 adults; 1 additional person high school age or older for 11-15 children, and so forth.
 - 6 to 10 years of age, 14 children to 2 adults; 1 additional person high school age or older for 15-28 children, and so forth.
- Baby-sitter may not change diapers. The parent should be called to perform this task.