



The health and well-being of our participants are central to our goal of encouraging practices that help make speech and debate an activity that everyone wants to and can engage in, and no one wants to leave. To that end, the NSDA Wellness Committee has crafted the Wellness Lens, a resource designed to help coaches, organizations, and tournament leaders reflect on the potential effects of their decision-making processes. We hope this document encourages open and thoughtful communication before making decisions that may negatively impact someone's participation in speech and debate.

Wellness is not a one-size-fits-all concept. There is no perfect process for creating equitable outcomes, and we realize that some of the prompts in this document may need to be revised. Before using this document, please consider the needs of your school and district. An excellent first step is to assess your community's areas of weakness before working through the entire document.

The following questions encourage reflection on the various implications of decision-making and leadership practices. This four-section graphic was purposefully chosen to illustrate the interconnectedness of the prompts and how one condition may impact another.

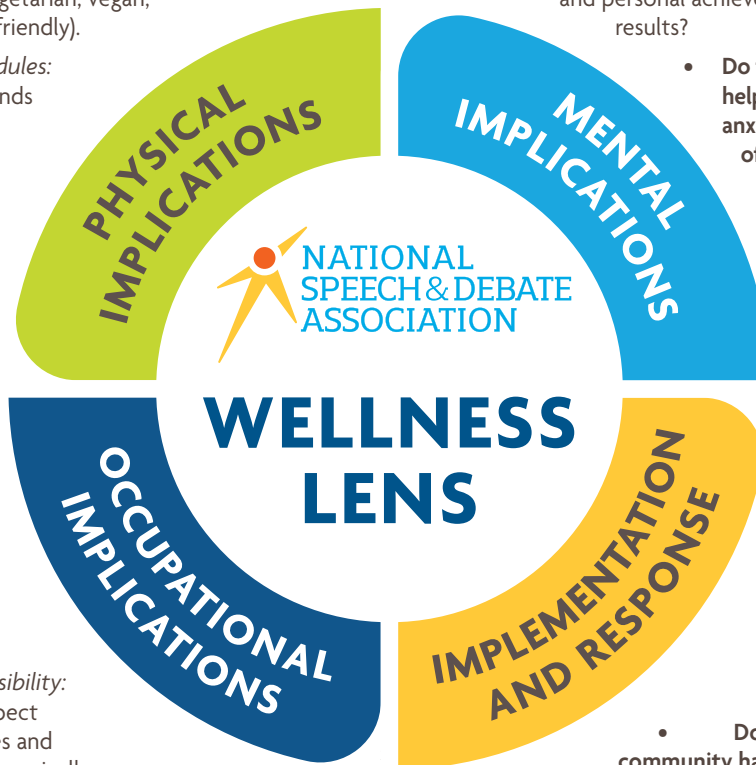
May your conversations around these questions create a healthier, more sustainable environment for participating in our activity.

PHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS

- How does the proposed action impact participants' basic human needs (e.g., hydration, nutrition, sleep) and/or ability to function as part of the activity?
- What resources do we have to ensure participants' physical security and/or safety? What (additional) resources do we need? For example:
 - » *Hydration Stations:* Strategically placed water refill stations to reduce dehydration risks.
 - » *Nutrition Planning:* Ensure meals cater to a variety of dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, allergy-friendly).
 - » *Sleep-Friendly Schedules:* Avoid late-night rounds followed by early-morning starts to promote rest.
 - » *Comfortable Spaces:* Quiet, low-stimulation areas for relaxation between rounds.

MENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- Are there systems in place to foster a positive, inclusive environment?
 - » Examples include training for judges to give constructive feedback, creating anti-bullying policies, and ensuring accessible and inclusive participation for all students.
- How does the decision contribute to participants' sense of belonging and self-confidence?
 - » Are there opportunities to recognize growth, effort, and personal achievements beyond competition results?
 - Do the proposed decision(s) help reduce the risk of anxiety, depression, or feelings of shame by addressing hypercompetitive pressures?
 - » If yes: Explain how.
 - » If no: What actions are necessary to eliminate risks?



- How will the proposed action(s) positively impact students' and coaches' desire to participate actively in speech and debate? For example:
 - » *Inclusion and Accessibility:* Does the action respect religious observances and avoid excluding economically disadvantaged participants?
 - » *Work/Life Balance:* How does the action support coaches in balancing professional and personal lives? Examples may include offering clear schedules in advance, ensuring reasonable tournament hours, and providing spaces for coaches to rest and recharge during events.
 - » *Realistic Expectations:* Are participation requirements manageable for students and coaches, ensuring sustainable involvement?
 - » *Encouraging Participation:* Will the action inspire active engagement without compromising health or well-being?

- How would the absence of the proposed action(s) impact:
 - » Participation in speech and debate?
 - » The health and well-being of participants?

- Do the members of our community have the multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to implement the proposed action(s) without causing mental, physical, or emotional harm to participants?
 - » If not, how can educational and/or professional development opportunities be provided?
- What can address adverse effects on participants' wellness resulting from the proposed action(s)? For example:
 - » Create a feedback mechanism like a Belonging and Inclusion Station to allow participants to report issues in real time.
 - » Set up wellness check-ins or debrief sessions after tournaments to reflect on what worked well and what can be improved.

OCCUPATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSE