

Involving Students as Allies in Suicide Prevention

**GLSMA Campus Grantees Meeting
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Gaithersburg, MD**

Co-presenters

**Alison Malmon and Becca Frazee
Active Minds**

What is going on right now on
your campus to involve
students?

What is the aim of these efforts?

Learning Objectives

- Understand the burden of mental illness and suicide on college students
- Identify the advantages of working with students on mental health programs
- Learn about Active Minds, a program that involves students in mental health programming; and hear firsthand how Active Minds impacts students
- Brainstorm ways to engage young adults in mental health programs on your campus, and ways to evaluate success

Mental Illness, Suicide and College Students

- Young adults aged 18-24 have highest prevalence of mental health disorders within entire population (27% compared to 22.1% of all Americans)
- 75% of people with schizophrenia experience onset between the ages of 15-25
- Nearly ½ of all college students reported feeling so depressed they could not function, and almost 10% have seriously contemplated suicide (ACHA, 2005)
- *About 90% of students who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental illness at time of death*



Mental Illness, Suicide, College Students, and Campus Resources

- 95% of CCDs report an increase in students coming to them already in psychiatric care, but 36% of Centers have no direct access to psychiatrists*
- › 70% of CC budgets decreased or remained the same in 2005
- 90.3% of Centers believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems on campus has increased in recent years
- #1 administrative concern of CC's is "a growing demand for services without an appropriate increase in resources"

***2005 National Survey of Counseling Center Directors**

Stigma

- 1999 Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health and Suicide; 2002 President's New Freedom Commission
 - Stigma surrounding mental illness is a primary reason people do not seek the mental health services they need
- Leading stigma researchers...
 - have found that most effective way to lessen stigma is through contact with everyday people who suffer from mental health disorders (Corrigan et al, 2004)

Mental Illness, Suicide, College Students, and Campus Resources

Additional Burden:

- Can't provide the "just like me" role model for suffering students

Student involvement and leadership

Why Involve Students?

- Provides a relatable face
 - Stigma-reduction
 - Role models
- Non-threatening
- Free labor!
- Reduces burden on counseling centers
- Makes students feel invested in 'wellness' – so cross-promotion is more successful



Why Involve Students? (cont.)

- Students are the best ones to know how, and when, to most effectively reach other students
- Gives students input into issues that are important to them
- Empowers students into being proactive against stigma they have encountered
- First defenders vs. First responders
 - “When it comes to mental health, students are the main line of defense, but often the last to be heard”
(University of Pennsylvania President Judith Rodin)
- Capitalizes on the energy of young adults, and ensures a future generation of mental health advocates

Active Minds: History, Purpose, and Outcomes

Active Minds: Purpose

Active Minds on Campus: A student-run mental health awareness, education, and advocacy organization on the college campus

Active Minds, Inc.: Develops and supports chapters of Active Minds on campuses nationwide, and connects all chapters and student leaders into one movement of advocates



Active Minds' Mission

- To utilize peer outreach (“the student voice”) to increase students’ awareness of issues of mental health, symptoms of mental illness, and available resources for seeking help;
- To serve as liaison between students and the administration/mental health community, and become the major point of reference for mental illness and promotion of good mental health on campus;
- And, to empower a new generation of advocates to take care of their own mental health and that of their friends and family, and who will raise their children with respect and understanding for issues of mental health

Active Minds' Vision

- To destigmatize mental illness by promoting an open, enlightened discussion of mental health issues, and to create a better life for all who suffer;
- To capitalize on the energy and dedication of young adults in the fight against the stigma that surrounds mental illness; and,
- To educate, enlighten, and empower all young adults to ensure their own mental health before it ever reaches a tragic stage.

Active Minds on Campus: What Chapters Do

Utilize Peer Advocacy to...

- **Discuss**
 - Encourage discussion about mental health issues
- **Educate**
 - Educate students about signs, symptoms and prevalence of mental illness; and available resources
- **Expose**
 - Expose students to other people who have experienced mental illness
 - Especially young adults who have been successful while living with a mental illness
- **Plan campus-friendly events**
 - ...that reach as many members of the campus community as possible!

Active Minds Chapters: Sample Events

- **Mental Health Awareness Week**
 - Speakers, Panels, brown bag lunch sessions, movie screenings
- **Silver Ribbon/Wristband for the Brain Campaign**
- **Basic educational campaigns**
 - Flyering, handing out brochures from NIMH, Counseling Center

Talk It Out

Panel Discussion

Student Panelists from Active Minds and GUIDE will talk about their personal experiences with depression, eating disorders and other mental health issues and the importance of seeking help. RAP-Line will talk about how to help a friend with mental health problems. A representative from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) will explain the services offered at CAPS and answer questions about the counseling process. Gift certificates for massages at the Office of Health Education and "Talk It Out" t-shirts will be raffled off to attendees.

**Wednesday
November 30th
7:00 pm**

**Stouffer Annex
3817 Spruce Street**
(light refreshments available)




Co-Sponsored by Stouffer College House Healthy Living Program, OHS Health Liaison Program, the Office of Health Education, Active Minds, GUIDE, the Reach-A-Peer Helpline (RAP-Line), and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

Active Minds Chapters: Sample Events (cont.)

- **Charity Coffeehouse, Vigils**
- **Stress Relief Activities during Final Exams**
- **Journal Publications**
- **"Stomp out Stigma" Run**

STOMP OUT STIGMA



Active Minds
A Mental Health Awareness & Advocacy Group
<http://dolphiu.spsm.edu/~octsminds>

Active Minds Presents ...

Mentality
A collection of experiences and information regarding mental health.

ICE CREAM STUDY BREAK

Come Learn about Penn's Resources Available to Help You Succeed!! Learn more about:

THE DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS
The Tutoring Center
The Office of Learning Resources Counseling and Psychological Services
The Office of Student Disabilities Services

SUNDAY, APRIL 24
3pm
McClelland Hall, Quad

FREE ice cream

Brought to you by:
Active Minds: Penn's Mental Health Awareness, Education, and Advocacy Group
and
SPACE COLLEGE HONOR

Small Photo for more info about Active Minds or the event: www.active-minds.com

Fact Sheets...

**If you are interested in joining Active Minds, a new organization devoted to raising Mental Health Awareness on campus, please contact interest@activemindsonecampus.org

Did You Know?: Famous People with Mental Illness

- Erin Brokovich shares her stories as a recovering Anorexic
- Rosie O'Donnell, has suffered from depression for over 20 years
- 60 minutes correspondent Mike Wallace suffers from depression, as does astronaut Buzz Aldrin
- Abraham Lincoln suffered from severe, incapacitating and occasionally suicidal depression
- Ms. Kansas 1999, became clinically depressed in her sophomore year of college
- Lionel Aldridge, a defensive end for Vince Lombardi's legendary Green Bay Packers of the 60s, played in two Super Bowls, but suffered from schizophrenia in the 70s
- Peter Green, guitarist for Fleetwood Mac, as well as Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd suffered from schizophrenia
- Entrepreneur Ted Turner and Academy Award-winning actress Patty Duke both suffered from bipolar depression
- Sarah McLachlan, Sheryl Crow, Elton John, and Janet Jackson all suffer from depression, as have actors Drew Barry, Anthony Hopkins, and Harrison Ford
- Ludwig van Beethoven, the brilliant composer, experienced bipolar depression, as did artist Vincent Van Gogh and author Edgar Allan Poe
- Writers Ernest Hemingway, and Charles Dickens both suffered from clinical depression
- Winston Churchill: "Had he been a stable and equable man, he could never have inspired the nation. In 1940, when all the odds were against Britain, a leader of sober judgment might well have concluded that we were finished," wrote Anthony Stern of Churchill's bipolar depression

*You can live a happier, fuller life and enjoy your creativity even more if you get help.
You shouldn't have to spend a lifetime suffering.*

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU AT
USA UNIVERSITY

Counseling and Psychological Services
555 University Ave
3rd Floor
(666) 123-4567

ACTIVE MINDS ON CAMPUS WEBSITE:
www.activemindsonecampus.org

Active Minds: Role within the University

- Student-run, volunteer, organization
 - Part of Student Activities Council
 - Staff/Faculty Advisor (in Counseling Center or elsewhere)
- With support from, and affiliation with, :
 - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
 - Other Student Affairs Administrators
- Work to promote depression/eating disorders/alcohol/ etc. screenings
- Advertise on-campus and online resources

Who is in Active Minds?

Generally...

- Students with diagnosed mental health disorders
- Students with family members/friends who live with mental illness
- Suicide Survivors
- Psychology majors, Nursing students, Social Work students
- Students simply interested in learning more *

*Spans the range of college majors!

Why Active Minds?: Outcomes

- Counseling Center Intake Forms
- 2006 study by Masters Student Kathleen McKinney, School of Social Work, Colorado State University
 - Indicated significant decrease in levels of stigma of students involved in Active Minds in just eight weeks
- Qualitative Data

Active Minds on Your Campus?

- Visit www.activeminds.org for a full list of chapters
- Will be visiting Boston, MA; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA; Twin Cities, MN; Southern OR and Northern CA in spring 2007
- Contact alexis@activemindsoncampus.org

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A college degree is not a sign
that one is a finished product
but an indication a person is
prepared for life.

- Reverend Edward A. Malloy, Monk's
Reflections