# Involving <u>Students</u> as Allies in Suicide Prevention

GLSMA Campus Grantees Meeting January 18, 2007 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

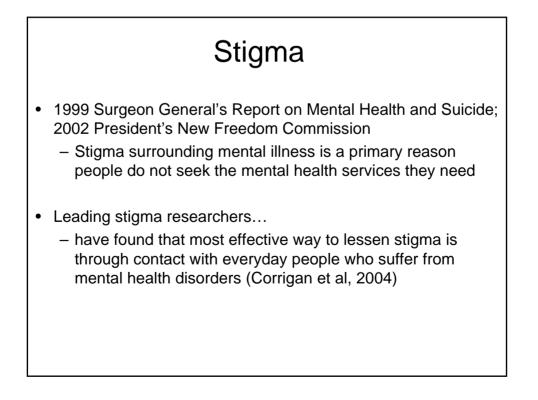
- Young adults aged 18-24 have highest prevalence of mental health disorders within entire population (27% compared to 22.1% of all Americans)
- 75% of people with schizophrenia experience onset between the ages of 15-25
- Nearly ½ of all college students reported feeling so depressed they could not 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



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

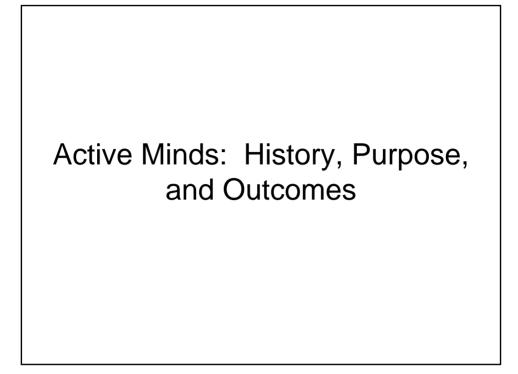
### Why Involve Students?

- 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: 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

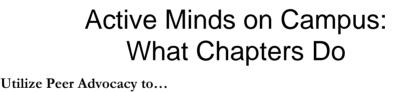


# Active Minds' Mission

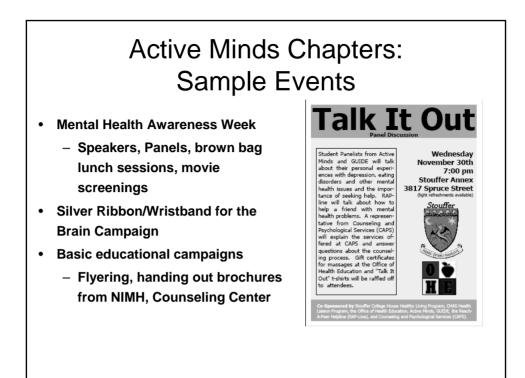
- To utilize peer outreach ("the student voice") to increase students' awareness of issues of mental health, symptoms of mental illness, and available resources for seeking help;
- To serve as liaison between students and the administration/mental health community, and become the major point of reference 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

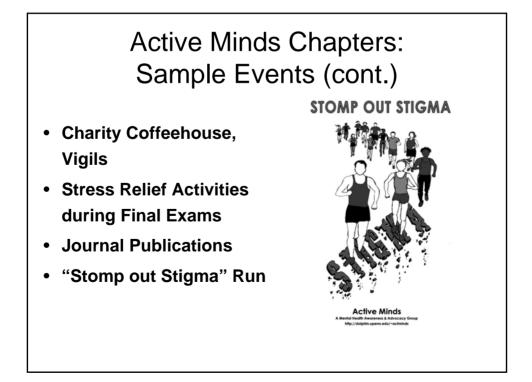
# Active Minds' Vision

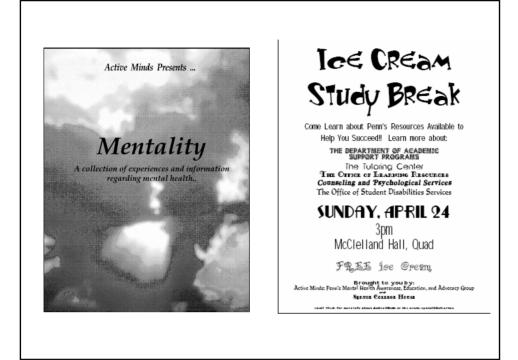
- To destigmatize mental illness by promoting an open, enlightened discussion of mental health issues, and to create a better life for all who suffer;
- To capitalize on the energy and dedication of young adults in the fight against the stigma that surrounds mental illness; and,
- To educate, enlighten,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

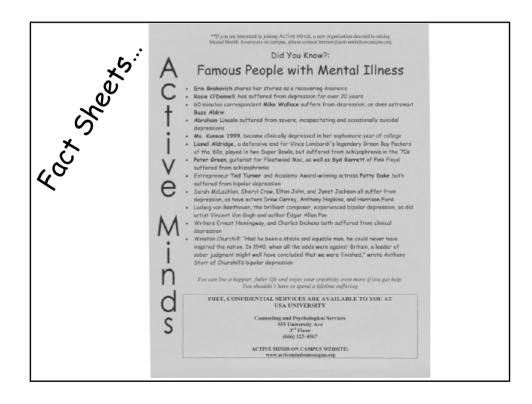


- Discuss
  - Encourage discussion about mental health issues
- Educate
  - Educate students about signs, symptoms and prevalence of mental illness; and available resources
- Expose
  - Expose students to other people who have experienced mental illness
    - Especially young adults who have been successful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









# Active Minds: Role within the University

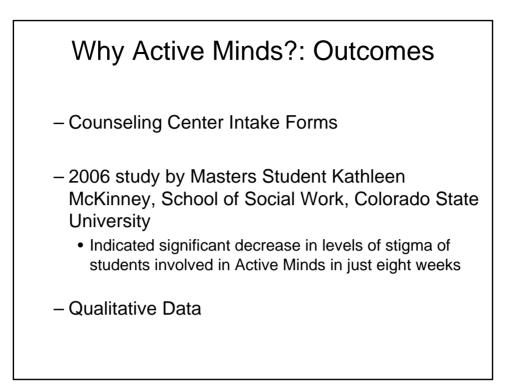
- Student-run, volunteer, organization
  - Part of Student Activities Council
  - Staff/Faculty Advisor (in Counseling Center or elsewhere)
- With support from, and affiliation with,:
  - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - Other Student Affairs Administrators
- Work to promote depression/eating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



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!



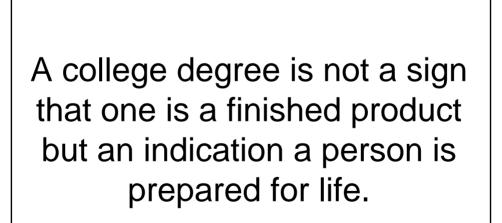


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- Reverend Edward A. Malloy, <u>Monk's</u> <u>Reflections</u>