

# Active Minds, Inc.

Suicide Prevention Grantees Orientation Meeting  
College Resources Panel  
December 14, 2005

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www.activeminds.org

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## What is Active Minds?

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

[www.activeminds.org](http://www.activeminds.org)

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## Mental Illness and College Students

- NIMH estimates that 22.1% of all Americans 18+ suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year
  - Young adults aged 18-24 have the highest prevalence of diagnosable forms of mental illness at 27% (Herrman, 2001)
- Half of all adults with depression report onset before age 20
- 75% of people with schizophrenia experience onset between the ages of 15-25
- 22% of college students were sometimes so depressed they could not function, and almost 10% have seriously contemplated suicide (ACHA)  
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## Mental Illness and College Students (cont.)

- More children and young adults die from suicide each year than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, and chronic lung disease combined
- Over 4,000 children and young adults take their lives each year, making suicide the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death among 18-24 year olds
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for college students, killing over 1,100 students on campus each year
- About 90% of students who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental illness at time of death

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## Active Minds' Mission

- To utilize peer outreach ("the student voice") to increase students' awareness of mental health issues, 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 point of reference for mental illness and promotion of good mental health

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## Active Minds on Campus: What We 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!  
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## 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**
  - FLYING, handing out brochures from NIMH, Counseling Center, ADAA
- **Charity Coffeehouse, Vigils**
- **Stress Relief Activities during Final Exams**
- **Journal Publications**
- **"Stomp out Stigma" Run**  
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## Active Minds: Role within the University and Mental Health Community

- **Student-run, volunteer, organization...**
  - 7-10 member Executive Board
  - 5-10 other dedicated members
  - Listserv of 200-300 students
  - Part of Student Activities Council
    - funding
  - Staff/Faculty Advisor
- **...With support from, and affiliation with,;**
  - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - Vice Provost of University Life, other Student Affairs Administrators  
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## Active Minds: Role within the University and Mental Health Community (cont.)

- Promote local Depression Screenings
- Participate in local Out of the Darkness Walks
- Volunteer at local mental health agencies
- Present to local high schools

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## Who is in Active Minds?

Generally...

- Students with diagnosed mental health disorders
- Students with family members or 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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## Why Peer Advocacy?

- Non-threatening
- Empowers students into being proactive against the stigma that they have encountered
- Free labor!
- Administrators respond well to students
- Friends helping friends
- Students are the best ones to know how, and when, to most effectively reach other students
  - social marketing campaigns
- First defenders vs. First responders
  - "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 of advocates

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Active Minds, Inc.'s

## Vision

To destigmatize mental illness by promoting 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.

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## Active Minds, Inc.:

Expressing the Voice, and Fostering a Movement, of Young Adult Mental Health Advocates

- Comprehensive website
  - [www.activeminds.org](http://www.activeminds.org)
- National Partnerships
- National 'Mental Health on Campus' Conference
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual held at Duke University, on October 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 2005
  - Next: October 2006 at American University, Washington DC

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## Campus Chapters

as of 12/14/05

Where We Are:

American University, Assumption College, Brandeis University, Brown University, Bryant University, Colorado State University, Columbia University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Emory University, Frostburg State University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Ithaca College, Lehman College, CUNY, Mars Hill College, Mercyhurst College, Middle Tennessee State University, Millsaps College, Niagara University, Northland College, RIT, University of Illinois at Springfield, University of Mary Washington, University of Maryland, UNC-Asheville, University of Pennsylvania, University of Sioux Falls, University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, University of Wisconsin, Washburn University, West Chester University, York University

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