

Involving Students to Enhance Suicide Prevention Efforts on Campus

**June, 2013
SAMHSA Grantee Meeting
Baltimore, MD**

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The Campus Suicide Prevention Center of Virginia**

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Peer Involvement in Campus Based Suicide Prevention: An Overview



The Campus Suicide
Prevention Center
of Virginia

April, 2012
SAMHSA Grantee Meeting
Baltimore, MD

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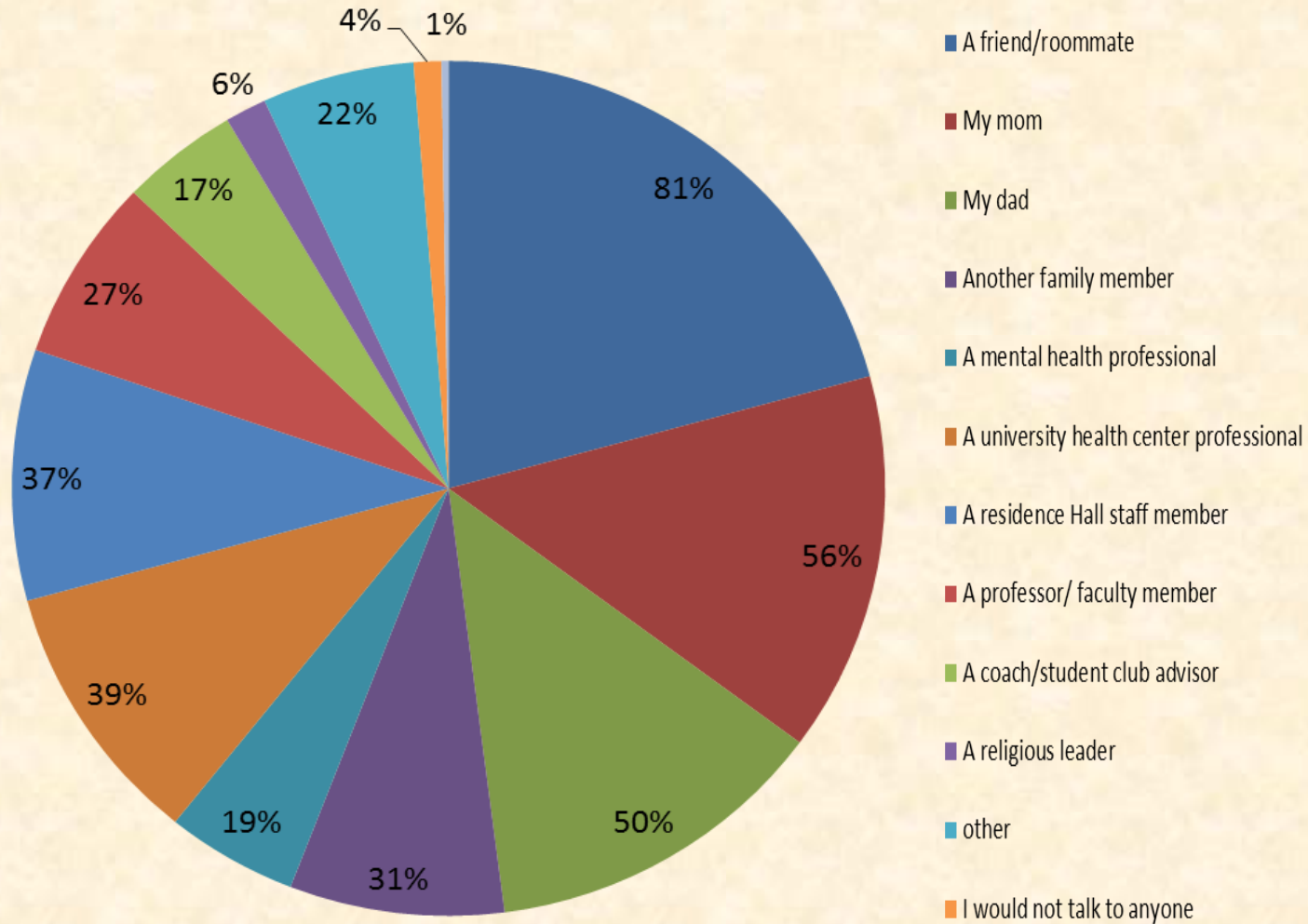
We'll consider:

- A. A. Why peer involvement?
- B. Overview of a comprehensive campus suicide prevention plan
- C. Options for safe and effective peer involvement

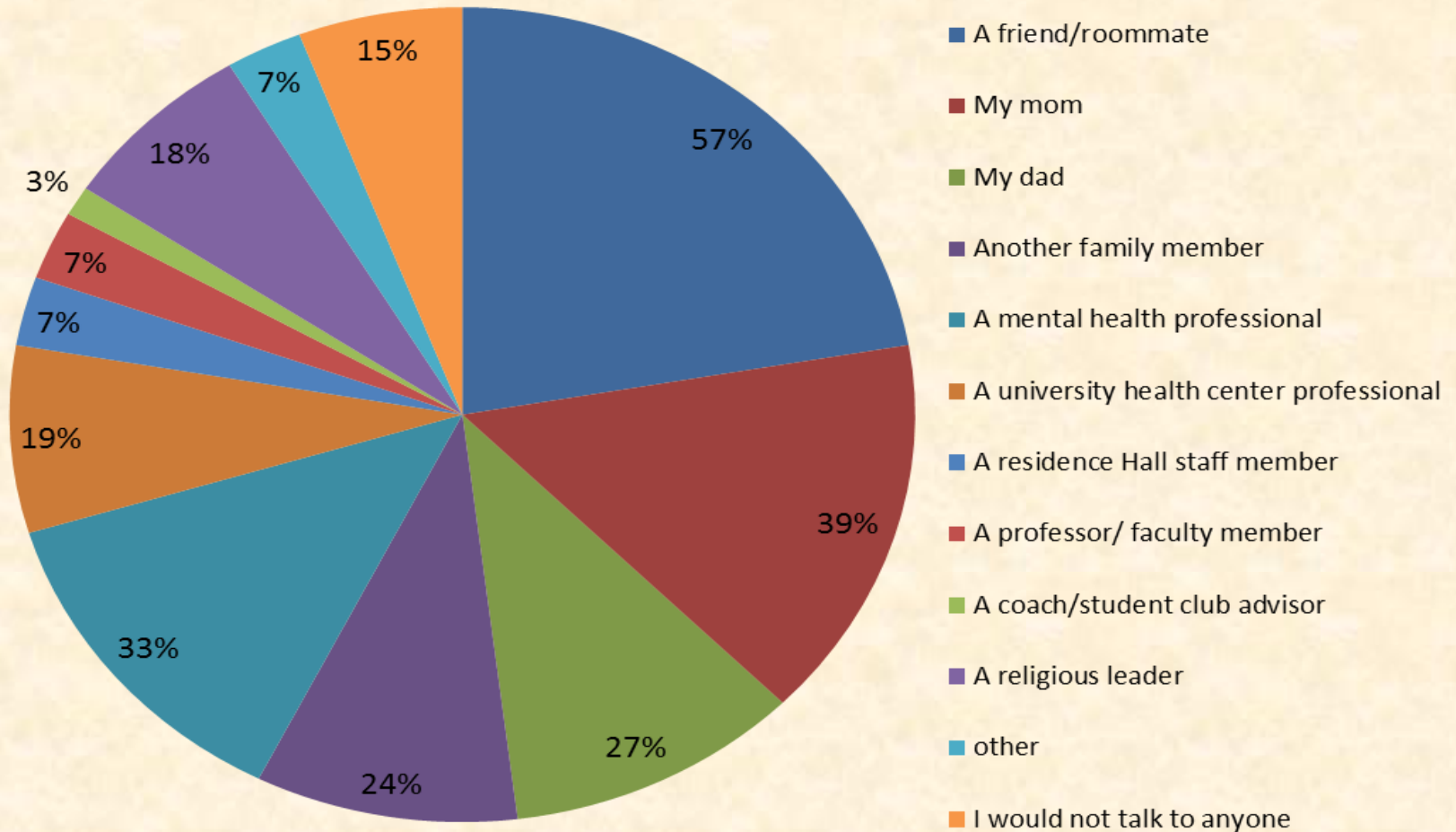
We'll consider:

1. *Why* peer involvement?

Who would you talk to if you were worried that a friend might be having serious thoughts of suicide?



Who would you talk to if YOU were having serious thoughts of suicide?



Bottom line?

College students are
ALREADY INVOLVED in suicide prevention.....

So the question really is...

How can we make their involvement

SAFE

and

EFFECTIVE?

We'll consider:

B. Overview of a
comprehensive campus
suicide prevention plan

A comprehensive campus suicide prevention plan



So where can students be involved?

We'll consider:

**C. Options for
safe and effective
student involvement...**

Three general categories.....

1. Enhancing *natural* peer involvement
2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”
3. Peers advising the process

1. Enhancing *natural* peer involvement

a. Changing the conversation

- about mental health and illness
- about getting help
- about risk for suicide

b. Being trained as a “Natural Helper”

1. Enhancing natural peer involvement.....

a. Peers helping to “change the conversation”

Examples: “Active Minds” Program

Creates/supports student-run chapters to:

- Use student voices to change the conversation about mental health
- Increase students’ awareness of mental health issues,
- Encourage students to seek help when needed
- Serve as liaison between students and the mental health community.
- Reduce stigma that surrounds mental health issues,
- Enhance open conversation about mental health issues.

www.activeminds.org

1. Enhancing *natural* peer involvement.....

b. “Natural Helper” training

Programs teach students to *identify, talk to* and *refer* someone who may be at risk.

Examples:

- safeTALK- (Livingworks.org)
- At-Risk student version (Kognito.org)
- The Student Support Network Program (WPI)
- Campus Connect

1. Natural peer involvement

Pros:

- s Students build strengths, learn basic skills, understand limits and promote resources.
- s Students can reach one another more easily

Cons:

- s Staff time needed to teach
- s Little data on longer term effectiveness.

So far, we've been talking about

students helping

people they already know...

2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”

a. Peer educators

b. Peer counselors/mentors

2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”

a. Peer educators- Students teaching sessions on:

- Personal wellness
- Relationship safety
- Healthy eating/body image
- Stress management
- Time management
- Campus resources
- Drug/alcohol use and abuse

2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”

a. Peer educators- Students telling their own stories of distress, getting help and recovery...

REALSTORIES

During my first semester at Mizzou, my father died of a heart attack. Looking back on college, I can't believe I made it - and I did it in 4 years. But I had a lot of support from my family and friends... and a great therapist. I saw my world change in an instant, so deciding to get help from a professional was a no-brainer. Life can be rough, and counseling services at MU are free and confidential. Through therapy, I was able to keep myself together during one of life's most difficult events.

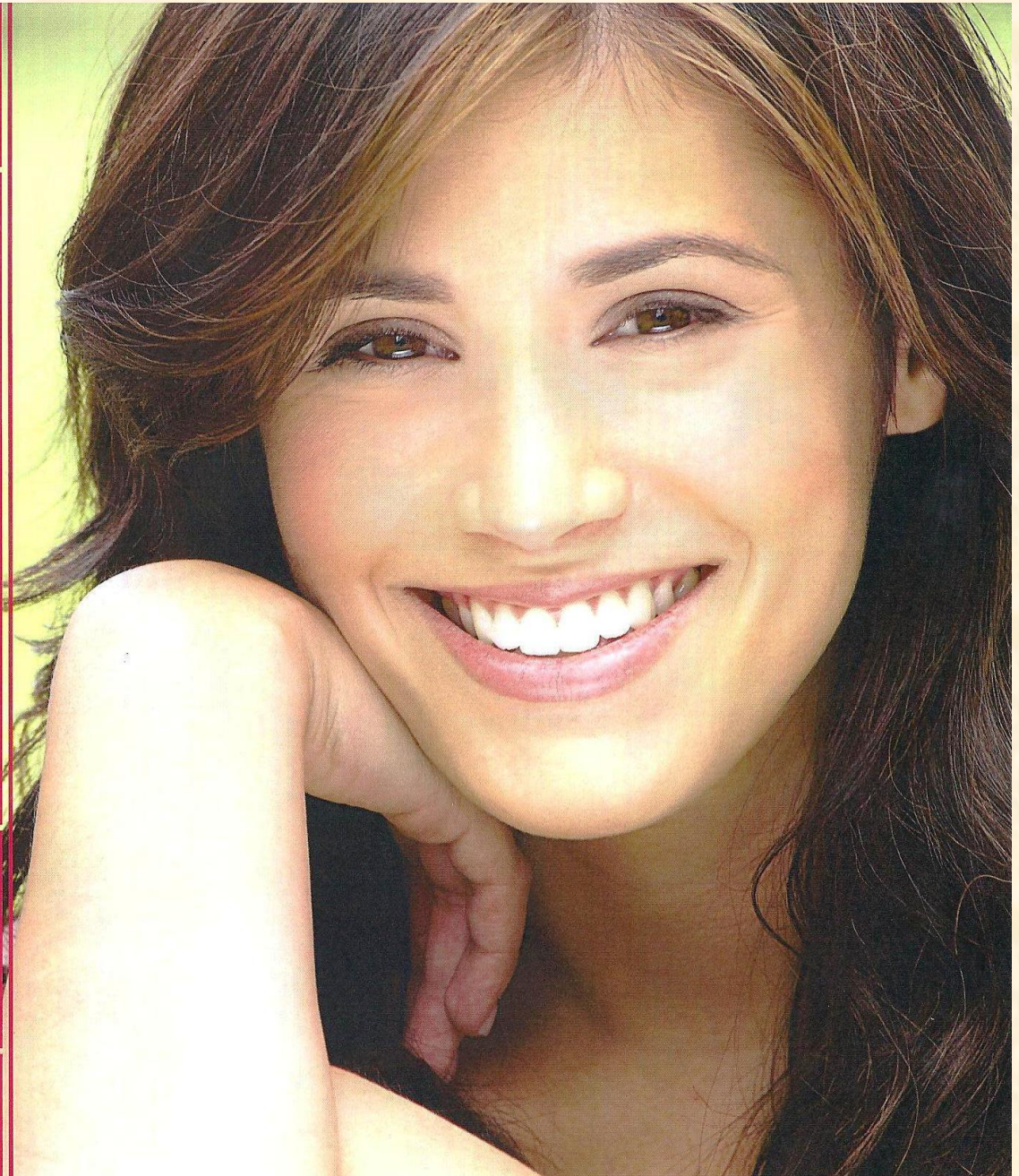
-Katie, 23

MU Counseling Center, 119 Parker Hall
Located on 6th St. (north of Engineering)
(573) 882-6601

MU Student Health Center, 1101 Hospital Dr.
Located at Hitt St. & Hospital Dr.
(573) 882-7481

Published by the Wellness Resource Center under Grant No. SM57376 from SAMHSA through the MO Department of Mental Health.

Please note, while this is a real story from a college student, the person featured does not attend the University of Missouri.



REALSTORIES

I had a friend die by suicide my first year of grad school, and after that, my own problems began to add up. I found myself thinking a lot about suicide. I told my doctor what I was going through, and he prescribed an anti-depressant and suggested I talk to a counselor. He was really cool about the whole thing, and made me feel like I wasn't a weirdo. Through therapy I found it's completely normal to sometimes feel sad, and I also discovered how helpful it is to talk about my problems.

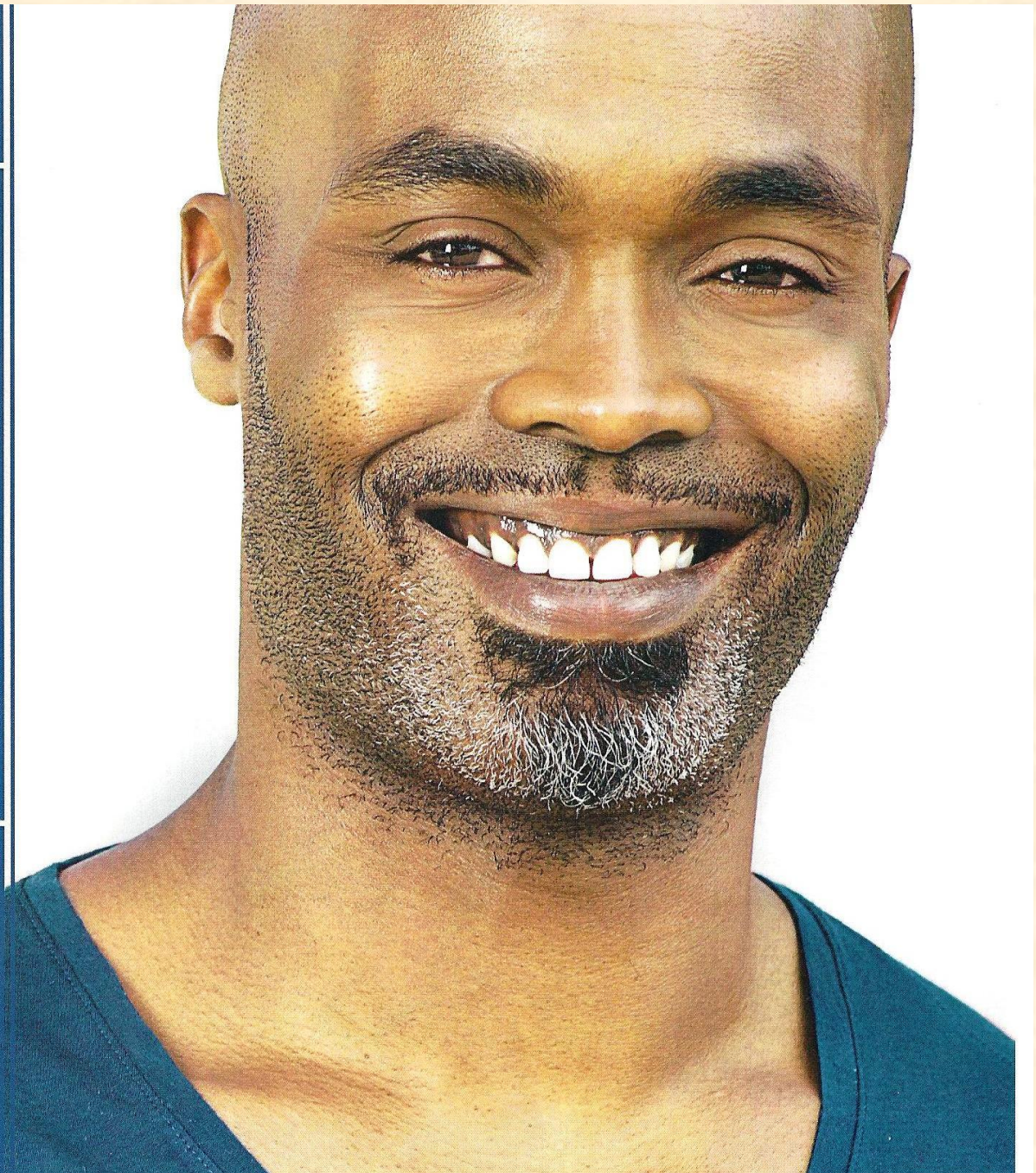
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2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”

a. Peer educators- Students teaching sessions on prevention basics, recovery, help-seeking...

Pros:

- s Can be helpful to the student educators

Cons:

- s Staff underestimate the *prep and oversight needed*
- s Screening essential
- s Students telling their own stories need LOTS of training
- s May not have any lasting effect on audience
- s With suicide prevention...how to respond to the vulnerable students in every audience?

2. Peers as “Paraprofessionals”

b. Peer counselors

Example:

CoachLink- Eastern Mennonite University

Pros: More eyes and ears on vulnerable students

Cons: Screening essential

Top notch, ongoing, professional

oversight and supervision a MUST.

3. Peers advising the process

a. Focus groups

b. Advisors on a campus team

Pros: Student role is concise, limited
Students working only with adults

Cons: ?

A plug:

**Let's get better at evaluating
peer involvement in suicide
prevention planning and
program implementation.**

Stay tuned.....

Resources:

- ◆ The Suicide Prevention Resource Center: SPRC.org
- ◆ The JED Foundation: jedfoundation.org
- ◆ The Healthy Minds Study: healthyminds.org
- ◆ LivingWorks, Inc.: livingworks.org
- ◆ At Risk : kognito.com
- ◆ Active Minds: activeminds.org
- ◆ The Healthy Minds Study: healthymindsstudy.org
- ◆ What A Difference Campaign: whatadifference.samhsa.org

Questions?

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www.CampusSuicidePrevention.org



changing the conversation
about mental health

GLSMA Grantees Meeting
June 13, 2013

*“Involving Students to
Enhance Campus
Suicide Prevention
Efforts”*

**Active Minds: 10 Years of
Impact
and Lessons Learned**

**Alison Malmon, Executive
Director and Founder**

About Active Minds, Inc.

- Non-profit organization founded in 2003, after suicide of brother, Brian Malmon.
- First chapter at the University of Pennsylvania
- Currently more than 400 student-run chapters in 46 states, plus 12 national programs
- National office based in Washington, DC



Our Mission

Active Minds empowers students to speak openly about mental health in order to educate others and encourage help-seeking. We are changing the culture on campuses and in the community by providing information, leadership opportunities and advocacy training to the next generation.



Why involve students?

- Fewer than 2% of students go to a mental health professional first when in crisis. 67% go to a friend.
- Students will happily “work for free” (ie volunteer).
- Getting involved in advocacy work is often transformational for a student in treatment or dealing with personal experiences.
- Builds the next generation of the mental health and public health workforces.

50% of students who start Active Minds chapters report having struggled with mental health issues themselves; 52% have a friend or family member who has struggled; 65% have a professional or academic interest

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Active Minds on the Ground

- Student-run with staff advisor
- Affiliated with the student government*
- Host educational and advocacy programs (National Day Without Stigma, stress-relief programming, PostSecretU, speakers, benefit Runs) throughout year
- Webinars, toolkit resources, online program bank, regional summits through national org.



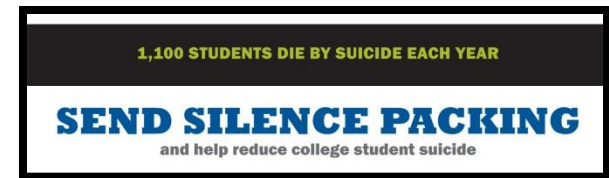
Active Minds National Programming



Active Minds Speakers Bureau

National Stress
Out Day

Emerging
Scholars
Fellowship



What have we learned from our approach?

- Students desperately want to be involved, and want this education
- The power of the student voice
- We may not all have mental illness, but we all have mental health
- Talking about one's experiences is about helping others reflect on their own experiences
- Stigma is largely generational

Working for Tomorrow

AKA, what makes for a strong chapter that will last?

- **Leadership** – student executive board with underclassmen, transition plan in place, relationship with responsive advisor
- **Communication** – partners with other groups, communicates with advisor and national office
- **Meetings/Events** – at least three meetings and one event per semester
- **Outreach** – actively seeks to promote the Active Minds mission on campus
- **Administration** – good standing with the campus administration, and AM national office

Starting a Chapter of Active Minds

Basic Requirements

- Fill out an interest form at www.activeminds.org/startachapter
- Identify and recruit an advisor
- Recruit at least 3 students to lead the chapter
- Register group as a student organization
- Fill out our Registration Packet
- At least one student must participate in our New Chapter Webinar

We Are



 **active**minds

changing the conversation
about mental health

 **active**
minds



WILLIAM & MARY

Dr. Donna Haygood-Jackson, Sr. Assistant Dean of Students
Eric Marlowe Garrison, Health Promotion Specialist



Demographics

- 53 countries, 49 states plus DC
- 6,171 undergrads and 2,087 grads
- 79 % of freshmen graduated in the top 10% of their high school class
- 400 clubs including the Counseling Center Student Advisory Board, Active Minds, and HOPE
- 360° Educational Approach in effect



Peer Outreach Highlights

- Seligman's *Flourish* as required reading in our 3-credit, peer education course
- 2 student videos (on happiness & "success")
- Depression Counts Day
- Mental Health Panel
- Tribe Tropics
- Positivi-Teas



I Screen! You Screen! We All Screen for Ice Cream!

- Alcohol screening with sundaes
- Held in high-traffic area over 3 hours
- Staffed by professionals, peer educators, and grads in Addiction Counseling
- Target = 100 (113 screened & 107 seen)



Get Back on Track (GBOT)

- Planned to occur just before midterms
- Allowed students to reflect, (re)evaluate, (re)acquaint themselves with resources, and (re)learn coping skills
- Combined with other events to destigmatize our Depression Screening
- Fall Target = 50 (47 screened & 47 seen)
- Spring Target = 50 (69 screened & 63 seen)



Tribe Rides

- Subsidized cab fare (and tip) for non-stop travel to and from appointments
- Two staff reviewed all applications
- Approved students signed a one-time MOU/waiver, before receiving 2 one-way vouchers per appointment
- Taxi drivers collected each voucher and company billed the College monthly