

activeminds


Active Minds 101

Changing the Conversation about Mental Health

www.activeminds.org

What is Active Minds?

The only national, student-led organization working to engage students' voices to change the conversation about mental health on college campuses.



Active Minds aspires to remove the stigma that surrounds mental health disorders and create a comfortable environment for an open conversation about mental health.


Active Minds History

Active Minds was founded by **Alison Malmon** during her junior year at the University of Pennsylvania following the suicide of her only brother, Brian.

Brian, also a college student, had been experiencing depression and psychosis for three years but had hidden his struggle behind a fun-loving, popular and successful exterior.


A year and a half after being diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, **Brian ended his life.**

Alison started the first Active Minds chapter to turn her personal tragedy into societal change.



Goals

- Increase students' awareness of mental health issues
- Promote a **dialogue** about mental health
- **Remove the negative perceptions** that surround mental health issues
- Create campuses where students are encouraged to **speak up** about mental health
- Increase **help-seeking** behaviors
- Create a **national movement** for college student mental health



Our Chapters




19 Ohio chapters of Active Minds

- Baldwin-Wallace College
- Case-Western Reserve University
- Cedarville College
- College of Mount St. Joseph
- Cuyahoga Community College
- Denison University
- John Carroll University
- Kent State University
- Loveland High School
- Oberlin College
- Ohio Northern University
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- The Ohio State University
- Ohio State University - Newark
- University of Akron
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Cincinnati - Clermont
- University of Dayton
- Xavier University

What is a Chapter?

Active Minds chapters are

- A liaison between students, college administrators, and the mental health provider community both on and off campus
- A referral service directing students to the school's counseling services
- Open to all students!







Active Minds chapters are NOT

- Peer support groups
- Students providing clinical services/advice
- Meant only for students with a diagnosed mental health disorder

What do Chapters do?

Foster awareness by...

- Planning campus-wide events**
 - Movie screenings
 - Stress-relief activities
 - Panel discussions
 - Educational Workshops
 - Creative art projects
- Running educational campaigns**
 - Suicide awareness displays
 - Tabling with information and resources regarding mental health and mental illness
 - Fliering/posters around

National Programs

Active Minds Speakers Bureau

Emerging Scholars Fellowship

PostSecret TU

Send Silence Packing

FREE programs!!!

National Day Without Stigma

National Stress Out Day

NEDA awareness

National Mental Health on Campus Conference






Free programs

- **National Day Without Stigma**
 - during National Mental Illness Awareness Week (early October)
 - Sidewalk chalking: positive statements about mental health
 - Watch your language: no "crazy," "nuts," etc.; "people with..."
- **National Stress Out Day**
 - during April (pre-finals)
 - Stress buster tabling (balanced diet, exercise, time out to breathe)
 - Reach out to those who are struggling
 - "Laugh More" buttons

So, Why Active Minds?

- 18-24: average age of onset of most mental health disorders
- 1 in 10 have seriously contemplated suicide
- 1100 college students die by suicide each year
- 50% of college students report feeling so depressed they had trouble functioning
- 67% of students who have suicidal thoughts tell a friend before anyone else

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Contact Active Minds, Inc!

2001 S St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

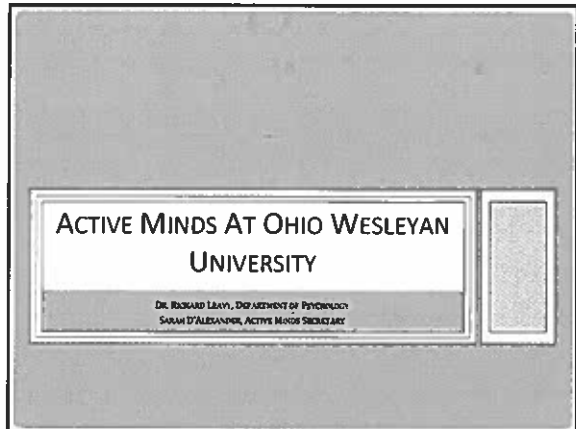
www.activeminds.org

Regional Chapter Manager: **Becky Gordon**

becky@activeminds.org





A SHORT HISTORY

- **Spring, 2009:**
 - Sophomore Andrea Hatfield approaches Dr. Leavy; educates him about Active Minds
 - First meeting on campus
- **Fall, 2009:**
 - Inaugural Rally for Mental Health Awareness
- **Spring, 2010:**
 - Student government budget approval
- **Fall, 2010:**
 - PhotoVoice
 - "Erasing the Distance" performance

CHALLENGES

- **Attendance at meetings**
 - At first, trouble getting people to join and stick with it!
 - Tabled at events, passed out cookies, sign up sheets at events
 - Got to know members with "Questions of the Day"

Attendance at Events

- Due to lack of interest, bad timing, or inadequate advertising
- Improved with free food, convenient times, and widespread advertising

SUCCESS!

- **Dedicated Members**
 - We can do a lot with only a few members
 - Tried new events, worked together on projects
 - Club had fewer struggles and became more fun!

Subcommittees

- For different projects
- Members worked on what interested them
- Got more done, got more support

5-star designation from national!

MESSAGE

- **Our Message:**
 - "Starting the conversation"
 - Reduce the stigma of mental illness and be widespread in our subject matter
 - Reduce stress, increase suicide awareness, reduce depression, anxiety, eating disorders, etc.

Awareness

- Provide pamphlets, "1 in 4" buttons, and information to resources
- Keep message consistent
- Practice "elevator speeches"

MILESTONE EVENTS

- **Rallies for Mental Health Awareness, October 2009-2012**
 - Link campus and wider community
 - Assistance with Mental Health Levy (Fall, 2011)
- **PhotoVoice art exhibit, October 2010**
 - Center on Vocational Alternatives (COVA) provided cameras and training for mental health consumers
 - Exhibit of photos and commentaries installed in student union Reception for artists, campus and Delaware community
 - <http://www.photovoice.org/galleries>

MILESTONE EVENTS

- "Alterations" fashion art exhibit: Winter, 2011
 - Protest of the thin ideal
 - Concurrent with Eating Disorders Awareness Week



AUTISM SPEAKS

- Held in Columbus: Funds research; increases awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocates for the needs of individuals with autism and their families.



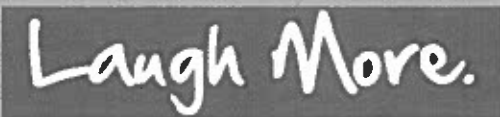
FREE EVENTS

- What a Difference a Friend Makes
 - Tabling during lunch in high-traffic areas
 - Provide resources for those needing help and those with friends that need help
 - Compliments



FREE EVENTS

- National Stress Out Day (April)
 - "Laugh More"
 - Stress balls
 - We provide buttons, tips, and resources
 - Help to answer the question: "Is it more than stress?"



OUR OWN EVENTS

- "Erasing the Distance" performance, Winter 2011
 - Chicago theatre troupe collects first-person accounts of mental illness experiences
 - Edited autobiographical remarks performed by professional actor
 - Audience invited to ask presenter questions; remark on their own experiences
- "Anthology of Survival" performance, Spring, 2012
 - OWU Active Minds invites anonymous autobiographical descriptions of mental illness experience from campus peers
 - Accounts are performed by campus actors
 - Joint program with theatre department

OUR OWN EVENTS

- PostSecret
 - Community mail/art project started by Frank Warren in 2005
 - Anonymous decorated postcards are submitted depicting a personally-held secret
 - Selected postcards are posted on PostSecret website
 - Active Minds adopted idea to increase acceptance of those with mental illness concerns
 - OWU PostSecret In fall, 2011: 1800 cards sent out; 80+ returned, compiled and displayed in student union

CONFERENCE

- Active Minds National Conference
 - University of Maryland, College Park
 - 92 other chapters were present
 - Met with and learned from other chapters
 - Tips and Tricks
 - Speakers
 - Events



OWU SUMMIT

- Active Minds Conference of Ohio Chapters at OWU
- IN
 - National Conference: Orlando, Florida
 - EXPENSIVE
 - Currently organizing Active Minds Ohio Summit for April 6, 2013
 - Theme: Breaking Down Barriers
 - Convene the 19 Ohio chapters and those in surrounding states
 - Share programs that work (and don't)
 - Build connections and "social capital"

THEMES

- Recruiting members and keeping them
- Leadership and succession
- Communications with counseling center staff
- Budgets
- Supports from regional coordinator (Becky Gordon) and national sources
- It doesn't take large numbers to make a big difference

CONSIDER STARTING A CHAPTER AT YOUR SCHOOL

- Contacts:
 - Becky Gordon, Regional Coordinator
 - (becky@activeminds.org)
 - One of us:
 - Richard Leavy (rleavy@owu.edu)
 - Sarah D'Alexander (sedalexa@owu.edu)

• Thanks for your attention.