

# Effective Student Engagement

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GLCA Presidential Summit  
on Mental Health and Wellness

December 12, 2019



800+  
CAMPUSES

17,000  
STUDENT MEMBERS

591,000  
STUDENTS REACHED IN-PERSON

5 million+  
TOTAL STUDENTS REACHED

*"Without Active Minds, I honestly don't know that I'd be here today. I don't know that I would've felt like I mattered, or that I could make a change – as I have."*



# Student engagement is also on the rise

*Campus Activists Are Demanding Mental Health Resources, UCPD Transparency*

**We can't afford food, much less medical copays on campus, college students say at protest**

**Students protest U of T mental health policy**

**UW students plan to protest lack of mental health services on campus**

**Students question UNC's role with mental health services**





## NEW RESEARCH

# Strengthening College Students' Mental Health Knowledge, Awareness, and Helping Behaviors: The Impact of Active Minds, a Peer Mental Health Organization

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**Objective:** To examine the relationship between college students' familiarity with and involvement in Active Minds, a student peer organization focused on increasing mental health awareness, decreasing stigma, and affecting mental health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

**Method:** Students ( $N = 1,129$ ) across 12 California colleges completed three waves of a web-based survey during the 2016–2017 academic year to assess familiarity with and involvement in Active Minds and mental health attitudes, behaviors, and perceived knowledge. Fixed-effects models assessed relations between changes in organization familiarity and involvement and changes in mental health-related outcomes over time overall and stratified by students' baseline engagement (ie, familiarity/involvement) with Active Minds.

**Results:** Overall, increased familiarity with Active Minds was associated with increases in perceived knowledge ( $0.40$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and decreases in stigma over time ( $-0.33$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Increased involvement was associated with increases in perceived knowledge ( $0.40$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and a range of helping behaviors. Associations differed by students' baseline engagement with Active Minds. For students with low engagement, increased familiarity with Active Minds was associated with decreased stigma and improved perceived knowledge. For students with moderate baseline engagement, increasing involvement with Active Minds was associated with increases in helping behaviors (eg, providing emotional support, connecting others to services) over time.

**Conclusion:** Student peer organizations' activities can improve college student mental health attitudes and perceived knowledge and significantly

Active Minds'  
Framework  
for Student  
Mobilization  
(SEATS):

Student-informed

Equitable

Actionable

Transparent

Sustainable

# Student-informed

- Collect student data broadly through campus-wide surveys
- Elevate the voices and mental health stories of students among their peers
- Institutionalize a process for receiving feedback and input from students on an ongoing basis
- Provide formal speaking and voting rights on relevant boards and committees.



# Equitable

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- Engage in strategic partnerships and community-based participatory research from the very beginning.
- Support student-to-student programming to ensure diverse representation and perspectives.
- Provide cultural competency training for faculty, staff, and students.
- Address gaps in opportunity for health among populations that are historically marginalized.





#### OPINION

Commentary: This institution is for you and your mental health



Opinion piece written by  
a student!

# Actionable

- View students as equal partners, not just end-users, in the work.
- Give students more responsibility. Allow them to deliver messaging, programming, and leadership to the student body.
- Involve students in all stages of the process, not just in the research or planning stage.
- Activate and coordinate efforts among student leadership campus-wide.



# Effective student/administrator partnerships have:

- Ensured the addition of more counselors and case managers.
- Successfully integrated mental health to be integrated into first-year experience.
- Ensured that 24/7 crisis call lines were available to all students on their student IDs and in every dormitory.
- Improved their campus' tuition insurance plan for mental health leaves of absence.



# Transparent

- Share research findings and evaluation data with students.
- Provide two-way communication channels through town hall meetings, focus groups, and other methods.
- Provide an open door for student leaders to university leadership.
- Tackle difficult challenges together.





- Invest in student leadership through funding, training, and mentorship.
- Become student organization advisors.
- Embed peer-to-peer approaches into departments, classes, and/or job descriptions.
- Connect student mental health advocates to Active Minds and other resources for support in sustaining efforts year-to-year.



# Why partner with students?

- Increases awareness and usage of campus health services
- Generates new solutions and favorable long-term results
- Increases student academic performance and retention
- Assists students with gaining leadership and critical-thinking skills, self-identity, purpose, and motivation

\* Citations available in Active Minds' position statement on student voice empowerment.

For more  
information:

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