



HBCU - CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE WEBINAR SERIES

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changing the conversation  
about mental health

# Changing the Conversation

## Identifying and Addressing Mental Health Issues Among College Students

**Presented By**  
**Robyn Suchy, Chapter Coordinator, Active Minds**

March 22, 2018



# OVERVIEW

Through a Cooperative Agreement with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, (CSAT) and Center for Mental Health Services, (CMHS) Morehouse School of Medicine established the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Center for Excellence in Behavioral Health (HBCU-CFE), funded as Grant No. TI-080315.



# Goals of the HBCU-CFE

- Promote student behavioral health to positively impact student retention
- Expand campus service capacity, including the provision of culturally appropriate behavioral health resources
- Facilitate best practices dissemination and behavioral health workforce development

## **Robyn Suchy, Chapter Coordinator, Active Minds**

Robyn is the Senior Chapter Coordinator at Active Minds, working to support a network of more than 400 student-led chapters across the country in grassroots mental health programming and leadership development. Robyn graduated in 2014 from Cabrini College with a dual degree in Philosophy and English, and concentrations in Social Justice and Women's Studies. Robyn has been immersed in intersectional mental health advocacy on his campus, in the community, and on a statewide and national level. Robyn served as the president of Active Minds at Cabrini College through his undergraduate career as well as served as president of the Active Minds National Student Advisory Committee and as a programming intern at the Active Minds national office. Robyn also sat on a SAMSHA committee in Pennsylvania representing transitioning age youth and young adults and is currently an observing member of the National Mental Health Liaison Group.



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# About Active Minds

Active Minds is the nation's premier nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for students.

Through award-winning programs and services, Active Minds is empowering a new generation to change the conversation about mental health.



# Student Mental Health Trends

## Mental health issues are prevalent among college students:

- 36% of students report having at least one mental health diagnosis.
- Half of cases of mental health issues begin by age 14; three-quarters begin by age 24.
- Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health problems among students – yet only one-third of those students seek treatment.

# Student Mental Health Trends

Mental illness is **treatable**. Suicide is **preventable**:

- Suicide is a leading cause of death among students.
- More than half of college students have had suicidal thoughts and 1 in 10 students seriously consider attempting suicide.
- 56% of college students tell a friend they are feeling suicidal.
- 63% of students with suicidal thoughts in the past year received treatment. Of those, 49% sought help from a counseling center and 32% sought help from a provider in their local community.

# Supporting Students At Risk

- High levels of perceived competition in one's classes are associated with increased risk, especially among queer, first-generation, Black, and Latinx students.
- A higher prevalence of mental health problems among students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and among students with minority sexual orientation or gender identities.

## **Barriers to help-seeking:**

- See no need for service
- Feel there is no time for it
- Prefer to deal with it on their own
- Perceive help-seeking as admittance of being weak, or not being able to cut it
- Perceive stigma (though actual stigma among college students is low)

# How to Help Students in Distress

## Notice warning signs of distress:

- Difficulty concentrating or completing assignments
- Trouble making it to class
- Difficulty controlling worry
- Persistent restlessness

## Common triggers of distress:

- Stress, trauma, racism, discrimination
- Other underlying mental health issues
- Sometimes there are no specific triggers

# How to Help Students in Distress

## Five Steps to Helping a Student:

- 1. Pick a safe space for a one-on-one conversation.**
- 2. Allow plenty of open-ended time when possible.**
- 3. Use “I” statements:**
  - “I feel concerned (or other emotion)
  - **when** you miss class (or other specific observation),
  - **because** I care about you (or other reason why).
  - **I’m wondering** if it would help to talk to a counselor (or other suggestion).
- 4. Be prepared with local, national, or campus resources to share, such as the Crisis Text Line (text BRAVE to 741741) or National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).**
- 5. Emphasize your openness and leave the conversation open-ended.**

# HBCU CFE & Active Minds Partnership



- Since 2011
- Together, we have supported more than 30% of HBCU campuses through Active Minds:
  - Chapter Network
  - Speakers Bureau
  - Send Silence Packing

# Ways Campuses Can Help

## Start an Active Minds chapter.

- Student-led clubs on campus for raising awareness about mental health
- Email us at [chapters@activeminds.org](mailto:chapters@activeminds.org)



# Ways Campuses Can Help

## Bring a speaker to your campus.

- Young adults with mental health experience and high-quality training on sharing their stories and providing education.
- Email us at [speakers@activeminds.org](mailto:speakers@activeminds.org)

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J. DANEE SERGEANT

JORDAN BURNHAM

active minds  
**SPEAKERS BUREAU**

ATHLETES AND MENTAL HEALTH

*Jordan*

**OCD**  
ADVOCACY ANXIETY  
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES  
**RE-DIAGNOSIS**  
Homelessness  
LGBTQ ISSUES **KEY TOPICS**  
DEPRESSION  
RACE

# Ways Campuses Can Help

**Bring Send Silence Packing to your campus**

[sendsilencepacking@activeminds.org](mailto:sendsilencepacking@activeminds.org)



# Ways Campuses Can Help

## Put in place policies and systems that:

- Normalize help-seeking and increase accessibility to resources:
  - Add crisis numbers to course syllabi, ID cards, and dorms
  - Embed counselors in dorms, athletic centers, veterans centers, etc.
  - Equip all faculty, staff, and students with simple education for helping a student in distress.
- Ensure parity between policies for students with mental health issues and policies for students with physical health issues.
- Reduce the number of assignments during exam times.

# Additional Active Minds Resources

## **Be a Friend Resources**

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

## **Active Minds Speakers Bureau**

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

## **Send Silence Packing® suicide prevention program**

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

## **Active Minds Chapters**

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

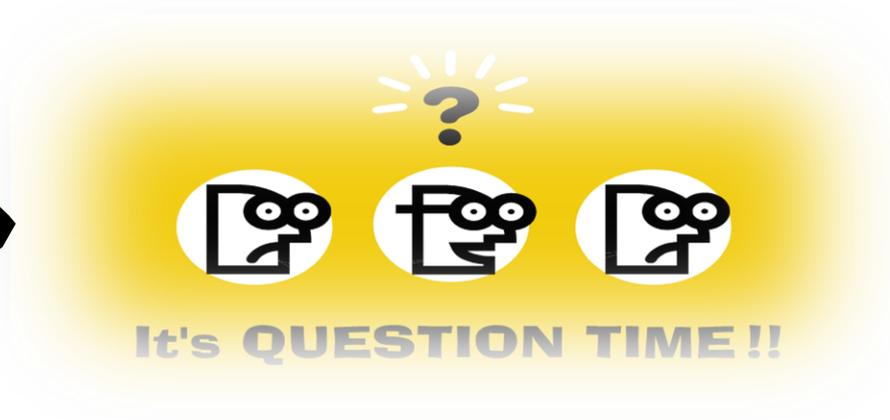
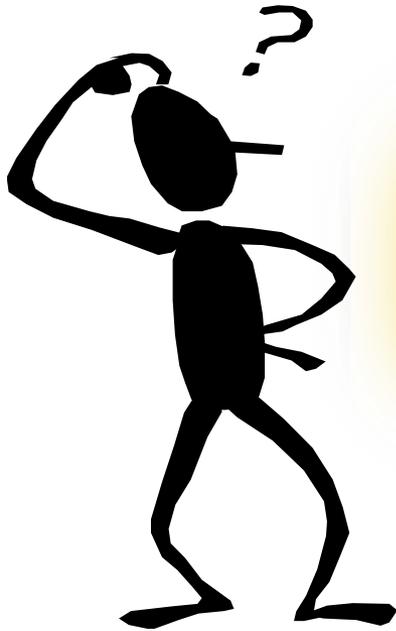
# Learn More From Us

**Active Minds**

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