



2001 S Street NW, Suite 630
Washington, DC 20009

changing the conversation
about mental health

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Contact:

Amanda Horn, Active Minds

amandahorn@activeminds.org, 202-332-9595 X103

Active Minds Releases Recommendations for Prioritizing Student Mental Health as School Resumes During COVID-19

Investment and support for telehealth, student involvement, and integration of mental health into curriculum top list of recommendations

Washington, D.C. – Active Minds, a leader in the field of mental health for students and young adults, released a list of [recommendations](#) today to help colleges and universities prioritize mental health while campus communities across the country contend with the impact of COVID-19 and address the serious topics that have spurred national civil unrest.

Research from Active Minds recently found that 80% of college students have experienced a negative impact on their mental health during COVID-19, with 20% reporting that their mental health has significantly worsened during this time. It is more crucial than ever that campuses have the resources, plans, and services to support students and staff during this unprecedented time.

“The reality is, students are struggling right now and they are unsure of how to access resources,” said Laura Horne, Chief Program Officer for Active Minds. “Colleges and universities want to find ways to best support their students, but also have limited resources and capacity. We hope that our recommendations and guidelines will encourage campuses to take mental health seriously and give them a direction to help their community navigate this difficult time.”

To prioritize mental health on campuses, Active Minds recommends that colleges and universities:

- Maintain telehealth services and widely promote them.
- Avoid reducing mental health budgets or staffing.
- Include student leaders on cross-campus COVID-19 Response Task Forces.
- Adapt and innovate mental health services.
- Develop a clear, comprehensive communications plan that addresses student concerns, particularly academic and mental health needs.
- Embed courses with wellbeing practices.
- Support staff and faculty well-being.
- Inform decision-making through assessments.
- Commit to providing equal opportunities for health.
- Support student-driven programming and maintain opportunities for social connection.
- Establish a sense of routine and develop a plan in case of another outbreak.

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- Invest in a comprehensive, public health approach to mental health.

“A well-rounded campus community has to include mental health resources for students. Especially in these times those resources need to be available on-campus and through remote access. Students cannot be expected to perform and learn if their mental health is not taken care of or if they are concerned and worried about their wellbeing and safety,” said Horne. “Mental health, especially in a virtual learning environment, needs to be a top priority for campuses regardless of size and budget.”

Detailed descriptions of our latest recommendations can be found on our [website](#).

Active Minds recognizes promising mental health practices of campuses through the [Health Campus Award](#), most recently awarded in March 2020. Other resources include a [position statement](#) on empowering the student voice in campus mental health decisions; a set of [frameworks](#) for shaping a positive mental health climate with and through peer-to-peer networks; and a [guide for faculty](#) on practical steps they can take to support student mental health remotely and in person.

About Active Minds: Active Minds is the nation’s premier nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults. Active Minds has a presence on over 800 college, university, and high school campuses nationwide, and is powered by a robust Chapter Network, the nationally acclaimed Send Silence Packing® exhibit, and inspiring Active Minds Speakers. The organization is dedicated to ending the silence and changing the conversation about mental health for everyone. To learn more, visit www.activeminds.org.

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