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New Data Emphasizes the Correlation Between Loneliness and Student Mental Health

College students who report feeling lonely are over 4 times more likely to experience severe psychological distress.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, [Active Minds](#), in close collaboration with higher ed virtual health provider [TimelyCare](#), released [new data](#) that sheds light on the close relationship between loneliness and mental health, underscoring the profound impact of loneliness on psychological distress among students.

A survey of approximately 1,100 U.S. college and university students found that **nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of college students report they feel lonely, and the majority (51.7%) of college students are concerned about their friends' mental health, and three in 10 (28.8%) college students report severe psychological distress.** U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called loneliness a public health “epidemic” in 2023, and the new data suggest this is particularly true for LGBTQ+ college students, 70.3% of whom identified as lonely, compared to 60.6% of their non-LGBTQ+ peers.

While two-thirds (62.7%) of college students believe mental health is an important campus issue, only half (50%) believe that students actively identify mental health challenges, brainstorm shared solutions, and collaborate with other students and organizations to work together to improve mental health on their college campuses.

Active Minds and TimelyCare conducted this survey in February to understand how college students value and prioritize mental health on an individual, interpersonal, community, and national level. Student perception of mental health, for themselves and others, shapes their college experience. Caring for their mental health is necessary for student engagement, belonging, retention, and degree completion. This study yields insights into college students' sense of belonging, social connection, and shared concerns about mental health. This, in turn, strengthens Active Minds' contributions to the mental health field by bringing light to the power already within a movement of mental health advocates. By equipping these advocates, Active Minds aims to achieve a lasting shift in how society views and prioritizes mental health.

“Loneliness is a clear factor in the well-being of college students,” said **Alison Malmon, Founder & Executive Director of Active Minds**. “Our data reveals not just statistics but narratives of isolation and distress. By fostering connection, empathy, and shared concern, we

can rewrite the mental health story on campus. Together, as champions of well-being, we can transform isolation into community, and loneliness into belonging."

Additional key takeaways from the data include:

- College students who report feeling lonely are over 4 times more likely to experience severe psychological distress.
- 28.4% of students report feeling isolated from others, 23.1% report feelings of being left out, and 21% report lacking companionship.
- Black and Latino/a/e college students value having good mental health and taking care of their mental health the most compared to other racial and ethnic groups.
- LGBTQ+ students were more likely to prioritize their friends' mental health than non-LGBTQ+ students.
- Over half (53.7%) of all surveyed college students shared that taking care of their mental health informs their decisions guiding their behavior and actions.
- As compared to students attending two-year colleges, a greater percentage of students at four-year colleges and universities agree that students on their campus are concerned about mental health, talk openly about mental health, believe that mental health impacts their campus community, and work together to improve student mental health.

"Colleges and universities are heavily invested in student mental health, and these findings underscore the crucial role of nurturing their sense of belonging and ensuring they have a range of support resources at all times," emphasized Bob Booth, M.D., Chief Care Officer, TimelyCare. "Peer communities can be very effective as they allow students to provide support and encouragement to those who are struggling and let them know they are not alone. TimelyCare is proud to partner with Active Minds to change the culture around mental health and help students be well and thrive in all aspects of their lives."

To be connected with founder and Executive Director of Active Minds Alison Malmon please contact Romelo Wilson at 202-714-4178 or rwilson@westendstrategy.com. To be connected with Bob Booth, M.D. from TimelyCare, please contact Gina Katzmark at gina.katzmark@timelycare.com.

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About Active Minds

Active Minds is a leading non-profit organization dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and providing resources for mental health support, with an emphasis on mobilizing youth and young adults. With a mission to reduce stigma and encourage open conversations, Active Minds is a pivotal force in fostering a supportive mental health community. To learn more, visit www.activeminds.org.

About TimelyCare

TimelyCare is higher education's most trusted virtual health and well-being provider, with a

mission to foster student success and improve the health and well-being of campus communities. Founded in 2017, TimelyCare now serves 2.3+ million students, educators and staff at more than 350 campuses nationwide. Its comprehensive suite of services – including mental health counseling, on-demand emotional support, medical care, psychiatric care, health coaching, student success coaching, basic needs assistance, faculty and staff guidance, peer support and self-guided wellness tools – expands the breadth of school resources and empowers students, educators, and staff to be well and thrive in all aspects of their lives.