

Chapter Meetings Guide

Making meetings effective and engaging

Most Active Minds Chapters will hold regular meetings for their members. Chapter meetings serve as a regular time to gather as a group and connect with each other, though there are so many possibilities for how you use this time. As a leader of your chapter, you have the power to make meetings engaging and effective. By exploring different ideas and formats, you can find the best approach that works for your chapter. With persistence and creativity, you can create chapter meetings that inspire and motivate your members to achieve their goals.

Remember that what works for one term may not work the next, so don't be afraid and try new things!

GETTING STARTED WITH CHAPTER MEETINGS

Active Minds Chapters create a sense of belonging for mental health advocates. Chapter meetings can provide a warm and welcoming environment to plan upcoming chapter activities, learn about mental health and stress management strategies, or connect and unwind with your peers. Meetings are a core part of what most chapters do and this time can be intentionally spent to meet the needs of your community.

KEEP IN MIND

Meeting attendance fluctuates throughout the year, so we encourage you to think about other ways to engage your members and make a plan as you do for your meetings. Think about group chats, social media, virtual meetings, and other ways to stay connected.

Before planning your meetings for the month, term, or year, consider the following:

1 MOTIVATION

What motivates your peers to attend club meetings?

Some may be passionate about the organization's topic focus, while others may attend to socialize with friends due to shared interests. Consider multiple strategies to recruit members and design your meetings to be fun and engaging!

2 FEEDBACK

Get feedback from your members!

Consider asking members what they want from meetings. Maybe this includes specific topics, guest speakers, discussions, activities, or anything else they might find useful. Once you have a better sense of their needs, you can plan meetings that make the most sense for everyone.

3 SCHEDULING

Plan your meeting schedule.

Some chapters meet weekly, biweekly, or once a month depending on the needs of their members and how meetings balance with the rest of the chapter's activities. We recommend scheduling meetings at a consistent day, time, and location (as possible) so that your members know what to expect. Having a predictable schedule can make it easier for your members to keep coming back!

CHECKLISTS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



BEFORE THE MEETING

Create an agenda and allocate time for each item. If you plan the meeting with other students, delegate responsibilities for the meeting ahead of time (like who will plan and facilitate each part of the meeting). Check out the sample agenda on page four.

Find a location that is open and accessible, whether that's a classroom, Zoom, or a conference room (i.e. in your counseling center or office). You may have to follow your school's process for booking spaces, so make sure you plan accordingly. If possible, book as many meetings as you hope to hold in the same space at a consistent day and time.

Advertise your meeting and create flyers and social media posts to promote around your school and online.

Ensure the room is equipped with what you'll need (table, chairs, technology, etc.).

DURING THE MEETING

Greet everyone and make them feel welcome.

Have snacks and / or beverages if possible (free food is a great incentive!).

Include some kind of icebreaker or activity to foster connection at the beginning of your meetings.

Ask people to sign in and provide their name, anticipated graduation year, and email address. You can use either paper and pen or a digital sign in using something like a Google Form.

Stick to the agenda (mostly). You want to make sure you're sticking to your plan, but you can also allow room for the conversation to flow. Cover your most important agenda items at the beginning to make sure you get to them.

Be sure to leave the group with actionable steps, if any, and the date, time, and place for the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING

Add the attendees' email addresses to your chapter's listserv, email list, or whatever list you'll use to send updates.

Follow up! Make sure to thank everyone for their participation. Summarize key points and include details about when the next meeting will be held and any steps members can take in the meantime. Let people know who they should contact if they have any questions.

Discuss any problems or issues that came up with the other students who planned the meeting and discuss possible improvements for future meetings.

Plan your next steps before you meet again. Be sure to follow through on any plans made during the meeting.

MEETING **ACTIVITY IDEAS**



1 BREAKOUT BOXES

Break into small groups or pairs in the form of a box / square and discuss specific topics: self-care, recent news events, works of art dealing with mental health, games, trivia, etc.

2 TED TALKS AT [YOUR SCHOOL]

Host a TedTalk-style presentation on a mental health-related topic. Invite chapter members to rotate on presentations and invite other clubs related to mental health to join and present during these Ted Talks.

Example: 3-4 members can volunteer to talk about their self-care routines or ways they take care of their mental wellbeing. Each member can share for 3-5 minutes and rotate to the next person.

3 GUEST SPEAKERS / NETWORKING

Invite someone from your school or local community to speak. Many chapters have had members of the counseling center talk about self-care or mindfulness or have brought in professionals from their community to talk about their work in the mental health field.

4 CURRENT EVENTS

Share an article, study, video, song, or another piece of media related to mental health, and have a group discussion. Note: when having open discussions, it can be helpful to set some ground rules ahead of time and make sure that everyone is aware of mental health resources in case they would like support during or after the conversation.

This list is not exhaustive and the possibilities are endless!

Remember to keep meeting activities engaging and crowdsource topics from your members. Some chapters also use meetings to plan events, fundraisers, and prepare for other upcoming activities.

Use the sample agenda on the last page of this guide as a template for planning your own chapter meetings!

CONNECT WITH THE CHAPTERS TEAM!

**GET ADVICE, ASK QUESTIONS,
AND BRAINSTORM WITH OUR TEAM.**



We're here for you. Email our team to get connected at chapters@activeminds.org!

SAMPLE FIRST MEETING AGENDA

The sample agenda below is for your first chapter meeting. That could be first of the year, term, or ever! Use this as needed to craft your own first meeting agenda. For meetings beyond the first, you will likely make adjustments for different activities or sections that will make your meetings unique to your chapter. Get creative!

Fill in the fields below to delegate tasks for your first chapter meeting!

ACTIVE MINDS AT

First General Meeting,

3:45 - 4:00	<p>Set-Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snacks: • Prepare and bring sign-up sheet • Executive board to arrive early and set up the room, display snacks and materials out nicely, and greet people as they enter
4:00 - 4:15	<p>Introductions and Icebreakers Led by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone shares their name, pronouns, year, major, and a fun fact about themselves. Executive board members share their titles, responsibilities, and why they got involved with Active Minds.
4:15 - 4:30	<p>About Active Minds Led by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share a bit about Active Minds and what your chapter hopes to accomplish for the year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the Active Minds' Organization Video • Discuss what your chapter has done in the past/what your chapter is looking to do in the future • Talk about any leadership team vacancies/any potential elections
4:30 - 4:45	<p>Planned Events for this Term Led by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We plan what events we need in the coming weeks that we need logistical support on (people to bake things for the bake sale, people sit at a table for these times, people to post flyers in their dorms, etc.) • What kind of events are coming up this term (Suicide Prevention Month, World Mental Health Day, Men's Mental Health Awareness Month, Stress Less Week, and other events)?
4:45 - 5:00	<p>Open Brainstorming Time Led by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of events would you like to attend or help plan? • How can we better use our social media platforms? • What other groups can we reach out to collaborate better?
<p>Follow-up *Led by:</p> <p>*Responsible for adding new people to our email list and send out highlights/meeting minutes from today's meeting.</p>	