active minds

CHAPTER FOUNDATIONS

workbook

ABOUT

active minds

Active Minds is the nation's leading 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 *activeminds.org*.

CONTENTS

When you see a ⬜ that means there will be a supplemental guide

When you see a 🔷 that means you can get more ideas on slack

Dear Student Leader

Over the years, Active Minds National Staff has been listening to and learning from the phenomenal student leaders from around the country who are making change and creating positive conversations about mental health on their campuses every day. We listen to the profound successes that ripple through the network, and we hear about the common challenges that students are facing.

Our goal is to elevate and amplify the stellar work that you are doing, and to support you in overcoming and preventing challenges in every way that we can.

With that in mind, welcome to the Active Minds Foundations Workbook! We're happy you're here!

This book offers context, information, and ideas based on what we've learned are best practices in changing the conversation around mental health. We've incorporated student feedback, real-life examples of programs and chapter activities, and our own lived and learned public health expertise to bring you a comprehensive workbook that will help guide you towards an effective and sustainable chapter. It is designed to support new, developing, and established chapters, and new and seasoned leaders, alike.

At more than 600 high schools and colleges, Active Minds chapters and the dedicated student leaders are doing lifesaving work of changing the conversation around mental health by raising awareness, promoting supportive resources, and advocating for health equity. Leading a student organization dedicated to mental health can be rewarding and challenging; know that you are never alone in that work. You and your chapter are part of a national movement of more than 17,000 student leaders in all 50 states, Canada, Puerto Rico. You all organize thousands of programs each year that reach millions of young adults with stories of hope, help, and action. We are honored that you've chosen to spend your time and energy working with us.

Be sure to keep this book handy, and pass it along to your chapter leaders to come! And, remember that we are here for you. We anticipate that this workbook will help to answer a lot of questions that you may have (and even some that you may not have thought of yet), and, you can always reach out to us at *chapters@activeminds.org* or on Slack.

With love and solidarity,
Active Minds National Staff

P.S. Keep in mind, you are enough and you are not alone. Any conversation you start, no matter how big or small, is profoundly important

Chapters will ebb and flow, depending on student leaders' time, energy, level of support, and campus climate. And, that's ok! It's totally expected that there will be times that are stronger and times that are more challenging. See the below graphic for a general sense of the lifecycle of an Active Minds chapter.

LAUNCHING, EVOLVING & SUSTAINING ON YOUR CAMPUS

active minds

1 GET STARTED

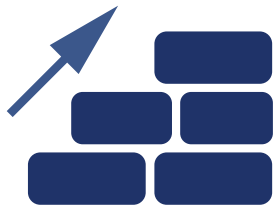Students who are passionate about mental health

With 3 or more students and an advisor, you are eligible to register as a chapter and gain access to Active Minds' resources and materials for best practices to change the conversation about mental health on campus.

2 FOUNDATIONS

Focus on the Foundations

Using Active Minds' comprehensive Chapter Foundations Workbook, students focus on five areas that are essential to being an effective chapter: Membership, Leadership, Collaboration, Programming & Fundraising.

3 SUPPORT

There are tons of resources to help you accomplish your goals

Learn from Active Minds National Staff and from fellow student leaders around the country who are doing similar work to change the conversation about mental health on their campuses.

4 CHECK-IN

Stay in touch with National!

There are many benefits to staying in touch with National. Through your Chapter Hub and quarterly inventories, let us know what you're up to so that we can tailor support and acknowledge your great work.

5 RESTART

Life Cycle of a Chapter

As students come and go, it's common for a chapter to experience lulls in activity. Don't be discouraged! Start and end every year with your Foundation workbook, and seek support where you need it.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE AND FIND SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT?

SLACK

Join the Active Minds Slack Community to connect with Active Minds National Staff and your fellow student leaders around the country! Ask questions, get ideas, connect with local schools or schools like yours, learn about special opportunities for Active Minds student leaders, and be the first to hear about new resources, campaigns, and initiatives directly from the Active Minds National Staff!

EMAIL

You can always connect with our Chapters Team by emailing us at **chapters@activeminds.org**

OFFICE HOURS

Schedule time to speak directly with Active Minds National Staff via phone call or video chat during our *office hours.*

RECEIVE TEXTS

You can sign up to receive texts from Active MInds for periodic updates, action items, and self-care tips by texting **"Hello" to (202) 350-0299.** *FYI: We can't text you back so if you're looking for immediate help during a mental health crisis text BRAVE to 741-741 to reach the Crisis Text Line or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255.*

LEADERSHIP

A strong leadership team is the key to a strong chapter. You have an advisor to back you up on campus and you have other students around you who are just as passionate, motivated, and excited to help lead your chapter as you are; you just need to find them and unlock your team's potential.

Each chapter will decide what leadership structure will be most effective for their goals and campus dynamics. It's up to you and your team to decide what roles and structures makes the most sense for you. You can earn more about different leadership team structures and responsibilities in the **_Leadership Guide._** No matter what your team looks like, checking in regularly and setting mutual expectations of one another is essential to ensure that you are all on the same page and feel good about what's being done and how it's being done.

When developing your leadership team, it's good to learn more about one another and each of your motivations for engaging with this work:

Why did everyone get involved in Active Minds and what kinds of goals or hopes do they have for the coming term?

What's the best way to get in touch with everyone?

What should people do if they're having trouble fulfilling their responsibilities?

Whose job is what? Making sure everyone has a clear list of their responsibilities and tasks can solve a lot of conflict or misunderstanding before it begins.

# BUT, WHAT IF IT'S JUST ME ON THE LEADERSHIP TEAM?

First, don't get discouraged. All it takes is one person, one voice, to start a conversation and we know that Active Minds chapters existing on campus are making a *measurable* impact no matter their size! Remember, you're one of over 17,000 student mental health leaders. Join the conversation on Slack to hear stories about what's worked for others who are in the same situation as you; they can, help strategize with you, and would love to cheer you on!

Leadership Transition

Leadership transition planning should start from the moment a new team takes office and always be top of mind as you move throughout the year. As student leaders, you have the power to make invaluable changes to campus culture, institutional policies, and people's lives! In order to maintain all of the great energy and engagement you have on your campus once you graduate, you need people who will be on campus in the coming years who are ready to step into leadership roles and pick up where you're leaving off.

Actively plan for your leadership transition by recruiting new members, sharing responsibilities, building a strong relationship with your advisor, and having a designated place or shared folder that contains all of the important information you need. You also don't need to wait until the spring to start your transition; think about what you would have liked to know as a new chapter leader and how you can make sure your successor has everything they need to continue your work.
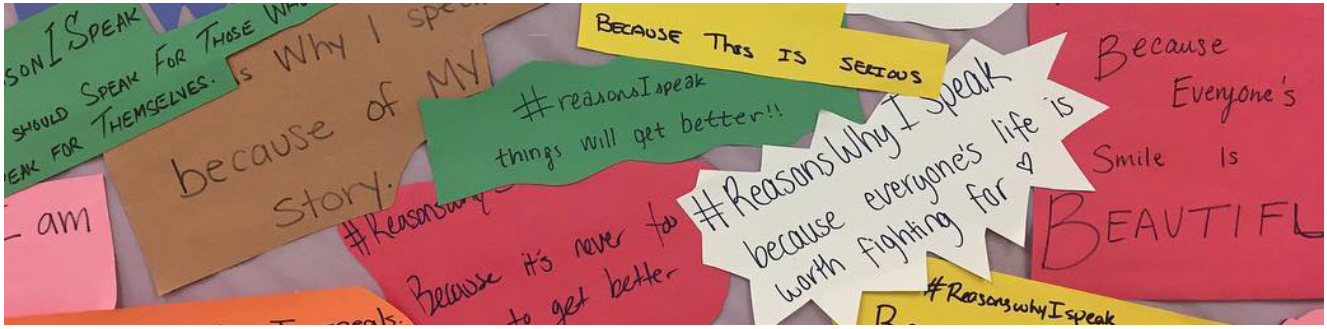
Top Tips for Leadership Transition

- Your advisor can make all the difference in ensuring a smooth, seamless, leadership transition. Talk with them early and often to think through what kind of roles need to be filled, how you should go about filling them, and making sure that all of the important information your future chapters leaders need is written down and accessible. If you're a chapter advisor or want to share resources specifically for your advisor, you can find the *Active Minds Advisor Guide here.*

- Along with recruiting members for your chapter, identify potential leaders as early as possible and consider mentoring them to grow into a leadership role. People who come to your meetings and programs regularly, actively engage with your chapter on social media, or are from other student organizations with a vested interest in mental health could all be strong leaders with different strengths and skills to bring to your team.

- Find opportunities for delegation and shared responsibilities. It can be hard to delegate and share responsibilities with newer leaders but most people learn best by doing and it may serve your incoming leaders well to allow them to try things out while you're still there to catch any mistakes and answer any questions. Think about how you took on leadership of your chapter: what things went well and left you feeling confident ? What are things that you learned as you went and wish could have been easier? Use the answers to those questions to build your leadership transition plan.

MEMBERSHIP

Members are at the core of every student organization. Your members are students dedicated to the mission of Active Minds and you need them to help your chapter fulfill your mission. That said, students are busy people and membership recruitment and retention is a common challenge for chapters. Remember, membership growth should be a shared responsibility; your entire chapter leadership should be involved.

There are two parts to having active, engaged, reliable, members: recruitment and retention. New members bring fresh energy, ideas, backgrounds, and skills while members who you keep coming back to meetings and events provide invaluable perspective, demonstrated passion, and could be among your top candidates for new leadership roles. Remember: you're building a community within your chapter. Listen to ideas, solicit feedback regularly, and check in frequently to make sure members are getting what they want out of their involvement with Active Minds.

Top tips for recruiting and retaining members:

- Students are busy. Make Active Minds worth people's time by organizing compelling programs and only holding planning meetings when necessary. When you have a meeting, create an agenda and try to stay on time while making sure you cover everything you need.*Some chapters aim to make every meeting a balance of planning and socializing so that they are both fun and productive.

- Build-in time for building your team. Most people join clubs because they want to meet people who also care about causes they're passionate about. Think about how to balance the business you need to accomplish with time to socialize, have fun, and get to know each other.

- Think about all of the people on your campus who have a vested interest inmental health and make sure they know about Active Minds: psychology and social work students, future teachers, first responders, student-athletes, faculty and staff interacting with young adults every day, and so many more who may be invaluable supporters of your work.

Meetings

It takes practice to run effective meetings, learn how to lead brainstorming sessions, facilitate discussion, and make sure people feel heard and valued. While meetings are not the only way that members will engage with your chapter, it is usually among the most impactful. Try to keep meetings fun, relevant, and a mix of social opportunities, learning, and planning.

You can find everything you need to know to host successful chapter meetings including sample agendas, ideas for different kinds of meetings, icebreakers, and more in the ***Meetings Guide.***

One of the best ways to elevate your message, attract new members, expand your reach, and access additional funding is through collaborative partnerships with other student groups, campus offices, and community organizations.

Collaborative partnerships should be proactive, mutually beneficial, and, ideally, ongoing but they can also look like short, easy, action items like sharing postings on social media, reviewing a new resource, or mentioning upcoming opportunities at chapter meetings. Set goals around developing collaborative partnerships each term or year and consider designating a leadership role around building and maintaining these relationships.

Top Tips for Building and Maintaining Collaborative Partnerships

- Think about what you can uniquely offer partners. Before you make an ask of another student organization, department, office, or community resource, think about the things you and your chapter are equipped to do, both tangible (like posting on social media, co-sponsoring an event, providing a training, etc.) and intangible (provide your expertise as student mental health leaders, support the development and promotion of initiatives and policies, etc.)

- Proactively think about your goals for the term and the year and what support you might want to need to undertake those initiatives and what you can offer as a part of the partnership. For example, you may want funding from Student Government to do a program and may be able to offer your chapter's support of a policy around mental health.

- Think about who's not in the room yet but who should be highly involved in any brainstorming, planning, and implementation of ideas or initiatives. A collaborative partnership can help ensure that the voices of people you're trying to reach are represented early and often in your planning process. Learn more about effective collaboration with the goal of inclusion in our *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Guide.*

Collaborating with the Counseling Center, Guidance Office, or Community Mental Health Organizations

We strongly encourage Active Minds chapters to work in close partnership with their campus counseling center or other school entity that supports student mental health such as a guidance counseling office or community mental health organizations without formal counseling services. Active Minds chapters often have a mutually beneficial relationship with their counseling and mental health service offices as they often help elevate messaging, share resources, and provide student perspectives to their work. It is also helpful to invite these staff members to certain meetings, programs, or conversations that may more deeply impact people who are or have struggled with their mental health to make sure that there is someone present who can address situations as they arise and provide important information on how to seek help.

Programs lie at the heart of what Active Minds chapters do. Programs vary from campus to campus and can look different every year. While there may be some events that your chapter does annually, this is a place to get creative and think of new ways to talk about mental health. Innovative programming can be small or large-scale, cost no money or require a lot of funding, it all varies.

Every year students continue to grow, innovate, and adapt and Slack is the perfect place to find and solicit program ideas from your peers across the country.

Top Tips for Planning Programs

- Consider the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" of every proposed or planned program. Determining your goals, audience, and scale early will help you make decisions about budget needs, logistics such as date, time, and location, and will help you make sure everyone is involved in the planning process that needs to be.

- Think about your programming through the lens of questions such as:

> Who is our primary audience and how does that affect our messaging?

> What do we want people to walk away knowing after this program?

> What's the action we want people to take after they talk to us at this table?

> What does success look like for this program?

- Debrief after each program with your members and leaders and, where possible, collect data to help you evaluate if your program helped you accomplish your goals or if there are areas of growth.

Types of Programs

After you've determined your goals, audiences, and how you plan to measure success, you'll want to consider the different types of programs you can plan. Some program types work better for some goals but all of them can be powerful ways to spread your message and grow your chapter.

- **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING:** the main goal is to delivery specific information and might include documentary screenings, trainings, and guest speakers

- **STORY-SHARING PROGRAMMING:** the main goal is to humanize mental health, show people that they are not alone, and show mental health at a personal scale. These programs might include panel discussions, monologues, and open mic nights. There are some special considerations to take before hosting story sharing programming so please consult the *Programming Guide* for additional information.

- **ACTION-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING:** the main goal is to move people to take action such as signing a petition or pledge, using a skill like *V-A-R active listening* , or programming the number for a crisis hotline in their phone. See Active Minds' *policy change programs here.*

- **AWARENESS PROGRAMMING:** the main goal is to spread awareness about mental health and support services. You might often hear someone say "did you know…" at this kind of a program and might include trivia games, playing with puppies for stress relief, or popping balloons about stigma.

- **SELF-CARE PROGRAMMING:** the main goals are to teach and practice self-care skills and might include yoga classes, mindfulness breaks, sleeping/napping workshops, and stress management skills.

- **TABLING/FLYERING:** the main goal is to reach portions of the campus community with quick-engagement activities such as writing a positive message on a post-it, posing for a picture, or following your chapter on social media.

- **PASSIVE PROGRAMMING:** the main goal is to widely share a key message with very little direct action or interaction. Passive programs might include posting bulletin boards or flyers, chalking the campus, or leaving resources or materials on tables in a campus cafe.

Active Minds has a plethora of free programs and programs that have a fee associated with them that you can learn more about **_here_** and you can see more best practices for programs including tips for safely sharing stories, an inclusivity and accessibility checklist, and more in the **_Programming Guide._**

Fundraising is a vital skill as an organizer, advocate, and professional. While it may seem intimidating to start, it is usually easier than you may think! You and your chapter members are already deeply passionate about your work with Active Minds and commit your time, talent, and treasure to supporting student mental health on your campus and nationally. And through your work, you're already helping countless people to make small changes to their lives that benefit their mental health; practicing self-care, learning how to support friends, understanding policies, and challenging misconceptions about mental health, and more.

Top Tips for Fundraising

- Don't be afraid to ask for donations! The worst someone can say if you ask for a donation is "no" but the best-case scenario outweighs that temporary discomfort by providing you with the funds you need to be the best mental health advocates you can be.

- There are often funds that already exist through your campus to support student well-being and mental health. Counseling centers, health and wellness offices, tutoring centers, residence life offices, and more likely have access to funding for programs to support students and will probably welcome suggestions, ideas, and potential partnerships with you to have the greatest impact possible. If they don't have direct access to those funds, they may be able to point you in the right direction.

- Remember that every dollar counts. Your impact is immeasurable and even $10 raised is worth celebrating because that's $10 more you're able to put to the life-changing work you do advocating for student mental health.

Fundraising for the Active Minds National Movement

Active Minds is right alongside you in fundraising for our vital work. As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, Active Minds relies on donations from individuals, families, and through events to do the work that we do of providing education, training, and advocacy to millions of young adults each year. Chapters that contribute to the Active Minds National Movement for Mental Health through their fundraising efforts hold a special place in our hearts and help us bring our work, on average, to over 250 new schools each year. You can learn more about donating to Active Minds on behalf of your chapter *here.*

A quick note on Active Minds' nonprofit status

Active Minds is a national 501c3 organization, which means that we are a tax-exempt nonprofit recognized by the federal government. Our W9 is the document that most organizations or businesses need to make larger donations or make donations that will be associated with their taxes. Since the Tax ID number contained on the W9 is associated with the Active Minds National Office, all funds raised in reference to that number must come directly to the National Office in support of your chapter fundraising efforts. If you or a donor have questions about using Active Minds' Tax ID or need a W9, please email us at **chapters@activeminds.org** and we can get you whatever you need.

ActiveMindsInc   *@Active_Minds*   *Active Minds, Inc.*   *ActiveMindsInc*   *@Active_Minds*

While you've reached the end of the Chapter Foundations Workbook this is only the beginning of building, strengthening, and sustaining your Active Minds chapter! We hope that this workbook has given you some things to think about and try out but there are a plethora of additional resources, including all of the guides linked throughout this workbook, on your **Active Minds Chapter Hub.**

Remember, you're part of a network of hundreds or schools, thousands of students, and millions of people through Active Minds and we're here to help you every step of the way. Don't forget to **sign up for Slack** to chat with your peer student leaders around the country, **update your chapter's leadership team** with the national office whenever you have new information, and **schedule time with our team** to introduce yourself and talk about your goals, challenges, and resources available to you.

Chapter Success Guides

Below, you'll find the list of all Chapter Success Guides linked throughout the workbook. They are also available on the **Active Minds Chapter Hub.**

Chapter Success Guide: Leadership Transition
Chapter Success Guide: The Role of the Chapter Advisor
Chapter Success Guide: Chapter Meetings
Chapter Success Guide: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Chapter Success Guide: Mental Health Messaging Best Practices
Chapter Success Guide: Programming Best Practices
Chapter Success Guide: Fundraising