

# programming guide



## Suicide Prevention Month

raise awareness about suicide  
prevention on your campus



## about

Active Minds is the nation's premier nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for students. More than 15,000 students each year join an Active Minds chapter located at more than 400 high schools, colleges, and universities nationwide. Through education, advocacy, and outreach, students are empowering a new generation to speak openly about mental health, support each other, get help when needed, and take action for suicide prevention.

**Join the Active Minds movement to change the conversation about mental health.**

 ActiveMindsInc |  @Active\_Minds |  @Active\_Minds

**activeminds.org**

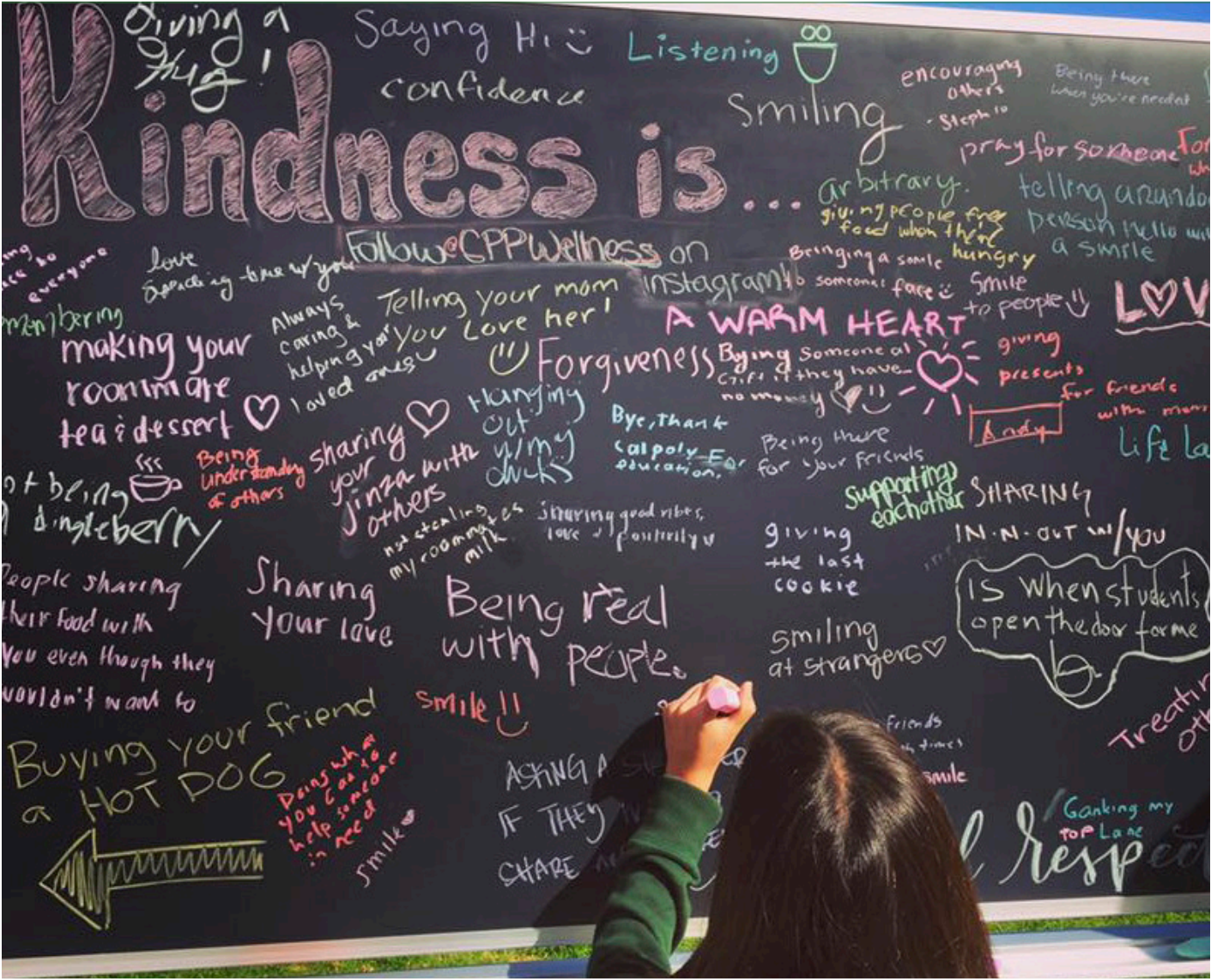
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We encourage the dissemination of this guide.  
Please provide credit to Active Minds.

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# introduction

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**Suicide Prevention Month** is dedicated to raising awareness about suicide prevention and mental health. Inside you'll find numerous resources designed to help you develop programming that makes an impact on your campus.



If you or someone you know is in crisis,  
call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**CRISIS TEXT LINE |**

Prefer texting? Text "BRAVE" to 741-741  
to reach Crisis Text Line

*"Research shows that people who are having thoughts of suicide feel relief when someone asks after them in a caring way."*  
— National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

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## Start Here:

### Featured Videos and Presentations

Video: [Active Minds Suicide Prevention Month: An Introduction and Overview](#)

Video: [Suicide Prevention Month FAQs for Chapter Leaders](#)

[Click to download a PowerPoint template for introducing SPM to Active Minds Chapter Members](#)

### Programming and Educational Resources

[Need program and event ideas? Check out this PDF for creative and impactful suggestions!](#)

### Trigger Warnings for Mental Health Events

*Just about any program addressing mental health issues has the potential to negatively trigger a participant. It is increasingly important for the hosts of these events to give appropriate, advance warning to audiences about potential triggers. Below you will find template language in both short and long forms that you can incorporate into your event messaging. If you have any questions, please email [chapters@activeminds.org](mailto:chapters@activeminds.org).*

#### Short Version

Active Minds programs address topics including, but not limited to, mental health, mental illness, non-suicidal self-injury, and suicide. We have taken great care to minimize possible triggers and promote positive and hopeful messaging. However, if you are concerned about being triggered by an Active Minds program, we encourage you to make an informed decision with your treatment provider about program participation, or consult with us at [email] before the program to talk more about the content and your concerns.

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## **Full-Length Version**

Active Minds programs address topics including, but not limited to, mental health, mental illness, non-suicidal self-injury, and suicide. Programs may also include personal stories from individuals who have been impacted by mental illness, have survived a suicide attempt, or lost a loved one to suicide.

We take the safety of our programs and events seriously. We take great care to ensure, to the extent possible, that our programs and events minimize possible triggers to participants and promote positive, hopeful mental health messaging. We have taken precautions in the planning and execution of our campus programs and events to adhere to safety guidelines that promote positive outcomes.

However, even when precautions are taken, the discussion of suicide, losing someone to suicide, self-injurious behavior, and other mental health conditions may be triggering. Although it is never the intent of Active Minds programming to evoke distress, we caution that exposure to sensitive content may awaken trauma centers in the brain, or the recollection of challenging personal history. For this reason, we endeavor to include mental health professionals in our planning and execution of programs and events who can recognize triggers and intervene when someone is in distress, whenever possible.

If you are concerned about being triggered by some of the content featured in an Active Minds program, we recommend making an informed decision about your participation in this event with a treatment provider, ensure that you have access to appropriate care in the case that you are triggered, or consult with our organization for more information about the program. You can reach us at [contact information here].

## **Educational Resources**

If you're looking for information, facts, and statistics related to mental health and suicide prevention, we've got you covered. Simply click to download and print what you need.

[Suicide Among College Students in the US - Fact Sheet](#)

[SPRC Role of Survivors in Suicide Prevention](#)

[SPRC Role of Co-Workers in Suicide Prevention](#)

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Wallet Card](#)

[SPRC Suicide is Preventable Brochure](#)

[Veterans Affairs ACE Brochure](#)

[The Trevor Project LGBTQ Mental Health Brochure](#)

[Download all of the above resources in one PDF](#)

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## Social Media Messages and Images

Click to download images you can share on social media to promote SPM. Be sure to use the hashtag #SuicidePreventionMonth!

[Be Someone's Light](#)

[Lend a Hand](#)

[Seek Professional Help](#)

[Social Support](#)

[Protective Factors](#)

[Health Risk Factors](#)

[Environmental Risk Factors](#)

## Tips for Planning Mental Health Story-Sharing Events

### Why personal stories are important

Folks who are struggling, or know someone who is, often find comfort and education in the stories of others. Studies show that hearing the story of someone with a mental health disorder reduces held stigma in people of all backgrounds, including those who have never struggled and don't believe they know anyone who has.

### Why you need actionable items

Any event in which mental health stories are shared has the possibility of moving people to care more about mental health disorders and want to do something to help. Be prepared to give attendees a way to take action, such as coming to your next meeting or event.

### Importance of Logistics

Make sure you plan for the following:

- Venue (including audio equipment)
- Timing
- Food/beverages (if app.)
- Planning time
- Publicity
- Volunteer support

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## **Key Steps to Planning**

These steps apply whether you are bringing in an outside speaker, planning a panel, or helping to prepare students, staff or faculty to share their story.

1. Start planning and budgeting well in advance (think: 3 months)
2. Set goals for how the speaker or event will impact your chapter and campus
3. Collaborate with other organizations or departments to
4. fund the event, recruit volunteers, and attract audience members
5. Go big on publicity
6. Work with the speaker and/or panelists to prepare (this may include content, timing, tailoring to your audience, Q&A prep)
7. Gather resources for a table at the event so that if people are concerned about themselves or a friend there is something to take away
9. Think hospitality—find out what your speaker needs to be successful (Water? A lectern?)
10. Be safe! Personal stories can sometimes overwhelm attendees; make sure there is at least one counselor or other staff member present!
11. Create, distribute, and collect a short evaluation of the event
12. Thank everyone involved!

## **Coaching Your Speakers**

These steps apply whether you are bringing in an outside speaker, planning a panel, or helping to prepare students, staff or faculty to share their story.

1. Do talk about what helped you when you were struggling.
2. Don't share means or methods of self-harm when talking about suicide. Leave those details out.
3. Leave out specifics when talking about medication, whether talking about what did or did not work. Medication is different for everyone. Avoid sharing specific doses or naming specific types.
4. Work with panelists to prepare their short narratives and responses to questions.
5. Share concrete ways that friends and loved ones helped you or could have helped you so audience members learn ways they can be there for their loved ones.
6. Don't share details when talking about unhealthy coping mechanisms (e.g. methods of selfharm, specifics of substance abuse). You don't want to appear to model or promote these behaviors.
7. When addressing eating disorders, avoid naming specific weights or eating and purging rituals as these can be triggering for those who are struggling.
8. If you are talking about a loved one who died by suicide, try to avoid describing them as "in a better place" now.

## **How to Talk About Mental Health and Suicide**

[Active Minds Be A Friend Resources](#)

[MentalHealth.gov Resources for Talking to Friends and Family](#)



## Active Minds

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



changing the conversation  
about mental health