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changing the conversation
about mental health

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Active Minds Launches New Virtual Interactive Suicide Prevention Exhibit

Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks Launches February 2021

Washington, D.C. - Active Minds, the nation's leading nonprofit organization promoting mental health awareness and education for young adults, announces the latest installment of the Send Silence Packing exhibit, [*Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks*](#). This immersive experience will give users a new perspective on suicide in our nation.

Active Minds' Send Silence Packing[®] exhibit has traveled the country for over a decade, reaching close to a million individuals, to end the silence that surrounds mental health and suicide and connect visitors with resources for support and action. The next iteration, *Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks*, was created to complement the existing program and to bring the exhibit to people safely in our new reality.

"Since 2003, Active Minds has worked to amplify the stories of young adults who are struggling with their mental health and to let everyone know that no matter what they are going through, they are not alone, it's not their fault, and hope is available," said Alison Malmon, founder and executive director of Active Minds. "Send Silence Packing is a crucial element in our ongoing suicide prevention education efforts. The exhibit's backpacks carry with them the stories of loved ones lost to suicide and stories of survival. With *Beyond the Backpacks*, audiences will hear directly from both people who've lost loved ones to suicide and suicide attempt survivors, and get the tools that everyone can use to support each other, in a virtual, accessible environment."

Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks will give users an immersive experience into the impact of suicide with:

- **Personal Stories Related to Suicide:** The core of Send Silence Packing is sharing stories. *Beyond the Backpacks* includes a multitude of suicide survivor stories about hope, recovery, and help-seeking experiences, from friends or family members who have survived the loss of a loved one, suicide attempt survivors, and others who have been impacted by suicide. Stories are shared through the thoughtful integration of multimedia including audio, video, photography, and written content to dive deeply into these experiences.
- **Ways to Take Action in Your Community to Reduce the Stigma of Mental Health:** Because you don't have to be an expert to help, an interactive, animated map of everyday locations introduces visitors to a multi-faceted approach to culture change in their community that involves stakeholders beyond traditional mental health services. Visitors are asked questions about their own communities and are encouraged to explore what policies and resources

currently exist for them and will walk away with a better understanding of how every facet of a community has a role to play in supporting a person's mental health and wellbeing.

- **A dynamic mural of photos, videos, and audio:** Users experience a gallery of photos, video, and text conveying the messages like, "you are not alone," "hope is available," and "we're here for you," and are prompted to add their own message or photo to the gallery.

Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks was made possible by a generous donation from the [RSM US Foundation](#).

"RSM is proud to support *Beyond the Backpacks* because we understand that by sharing stories – of hope, perseverance and of loss – we can help change perceptions around mental health and lead to a healthier, more inclusive world," [Doug Opheim](#), chief financial officer with RSM US LLP and chairman of the RSM US Foundation board.

"The pandemic has brought a renewed focus on the importance of mental health, especially for young adults. We're grateful for the generous support of RSM in helping us bring our vision of *Beyond the Backpacks* to fruition. Now is the time to share resources and information on suicide - it is more important than ever," said Malmon.

More information on *Send Silence Packing: Beyond the Backpacks* can be found on our [website](#).

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 www.activeminds.org.

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