



2001 S Street NW, Suite 630
Washington, DC 20009

changing the conversation
about mental health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 12, 2022

Contact: Amanda Horn, Active Minds
amandahorn@activeminds.org, 202-332-9595 X103

Active Minds Receives \$4 Million Gift from MacKenzie Scott

Funds received at a critical moment for mental health due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Washington, D.C. - Active Minds, the nation's leading nonprofit organization working to change the culture around mental health, is a recipient of MacKenzie Scott's latest round of funding. The \$4 million dollar gift, the largest unrestricted donation in the organization's history, comes amid a global mental health crisis due to the ongoing pandemic. The gift will allow Active Minds to significantly expedite growth plans that include doubling its volunteer base, broadening efforts to expand the next generation mental health workforce, and creating new and tailored mental health content for high-risk and high-need populations including Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), parents, LGBTQ+ students, and more.

Active Minds occupies a unique place among organizations focused on mental health by using a peer-based approach that brings mental health issues out of the shadows and empowers young adults to reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health, create communities of support, and ultimately, save lives.

In the US, 50% of the population will [experience](#) a mental health struggle in their lifetime, and most of those struggles start by the age of 24. In addition, 67% of young adults are more likely to first talk to a friend about a struggle before turning to anyone else.

"I started Active Minds nineteen years ago following the death of my only brother, Brian, by suicide. Active Minds started off as a simple idea on my college campus to normalize conversations around mental health and to let others know that they are not alone," said Alison Malmon, executive director and founder of Active Minds. "Since our first group at Penn, Active Minds has grown to have a presence in more than 1,000 communities nationwide - spreading the message that it's okay to have a bad day, it's normal to not be okay, and that your mental illness does not define you."

The MacKenzie Scott gift builds upon Active Minds' already solid foundation, growing capacity at a critical juncture as COVID continues to have a major impact on mental health. "MacKenzie Scott's

generous gift will be fully invested in necessary growth to meet existing and emerging needs and in testing new and compelling programs with the potential to measurably change the way the nation talks about, cares for, and values mental health,” Malmon added.

The donation joins recent investments by The Upswing Fund, Snap, Inc., and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation in resourcing and reinforcing the importance of Active Minds’ social norm-changing mental health model. According to a [landmark study](#) by the RAND Corporation, Active Minds’ use of individual, small-group, and large-scale education programs meaningfully influences not only knowledge and attitudes toward mental health, but also help-seeking behaviors, all within a single year. The study showed that the model and structure are sound - and this latest investment will propel the Active Minds movement to include a larger and even broader audience.

“This country needs to keep improving the way we talk about, value, and care for our mental health. My generation cares deeply about this and about the intersectional issues that affect mental health like racial justice, poverty, and LGBTQ+ rights. Active Minds has given me the tools to engage in conversations about mental health with the people around me, whether family, friends, or co-workers. I know I can play a role in changing the culture around mental health for good,” said Jaiden Singh, University of Arizona student and member of the Active Minds Student Advisory Committee.

To learn more about Active Minds, visit [activeminds.org](https://www.activeminds.org).

###

About Active Minds: Active Minds is the nation’s leading nonprofit organization promoting mental health awareness and education for young adults. Active Minds has a presence at more than 1,000 campuses, schools, communities, and workplaces nationwide, and is powered by a robust Chapter Network, the nationally acclaimed Send Silence Packing® exhibit, inspiring Active Minds Speakers, and our tailored Active Minds @Work initiative. The organization is dedicated to ending the silence and changing the culture around mental health for everyone. To learn more, visit www.activeminds.org.