

# Lifecycle of a Chapter

As you start planning how your chapter can grow or improve, it may help to think about chapter membership as a cycle.

*Here are 5 stages to consider while leading your chapter and planning its future.*

## STAGE ONE

*You Are Leading Your Chapter*

**Congratulations!** We are excited for the journey you will take as leader of a club focused on mental health advocacy.

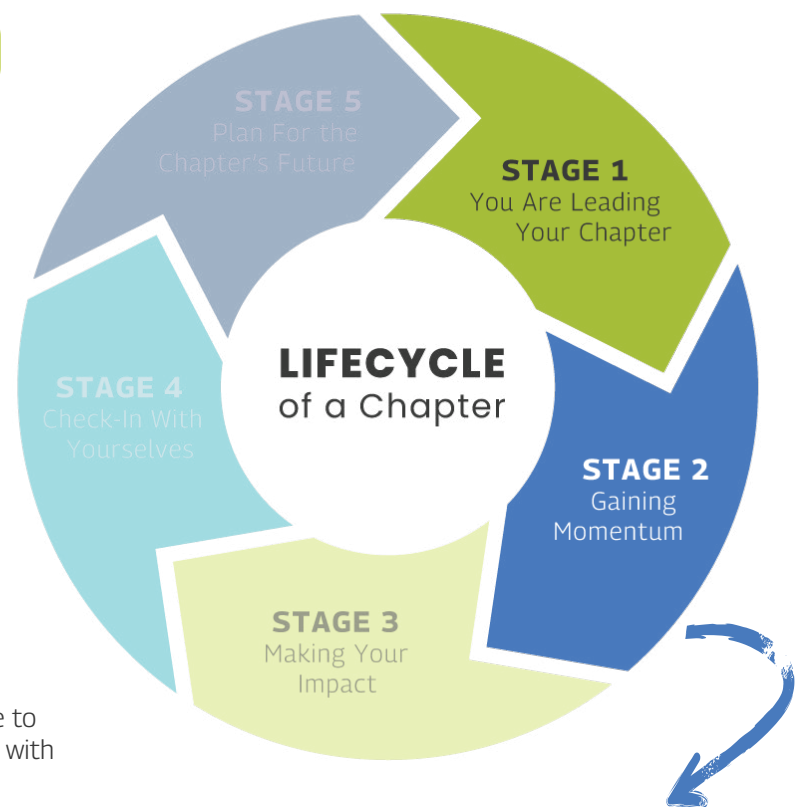
- **At this stage, you should have at least 3 students and one advisor** to help you manage your chapter and should have already been registered with both your school and Active Minds!
- **Start thinking about the kinds of impacts you want to have.** What changes do you want to make at your school? What do you want people to say about the incredible work you all will do?
- **Create an organizational system that can be passed to future chapter leaders.** Keep account of information, school paperwork, agendas for planning meetings, and other documentation in a place that is easily transferable to new student leadership in the future. Make sure to share with your advisor too!

## STAGE TWO

*Gaining Momentum*

**Here are some quick tips to help get set up:**

- **Utilize your school and Active Minds resources** to begin planning meetings, programs, and getting yourself established at your school. Active Minds has lots of great resources focused on Operations, Activities & Programming, and Community & Policy Work.



***Gaining momentum can take time!*** Don't get discouraged if this step takes longer than others!

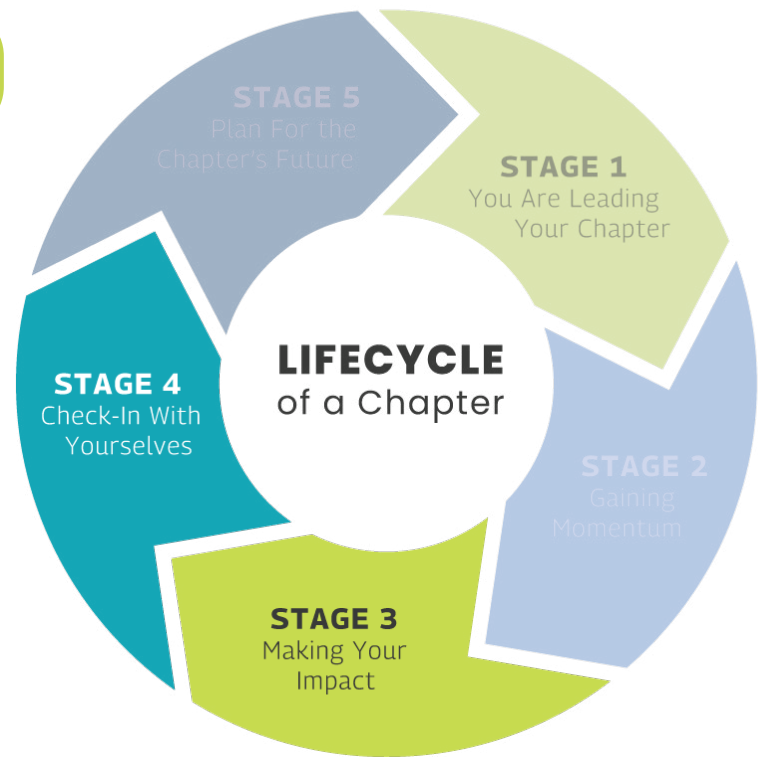
- **Build and engage your community.** Understand what your members are interested in, what your school and broader community are passionate about, and who else should you be engaging with.
- **Ask Active Minds National Staff** and your advisor to help you navigate your school and community, and help you all program, plan, and budget.

## STAGE THREE

### Programming & Making Your Impact

#### Here are some things to think about:

- **What impact do you want to have?** Do you want to change the conversation about a certain mental health topic? Do you want to bring awareness in a new way? Explore what your chapter members are excited about exploring.
- **What kinds of programs work best at your school?** Tables? Workshops? Meetings with discussion? Large scale programs? Partnering with other clubs and offices? Get creative with your program options and try to offer different things to your school community.
- **Are you thinking about officer transition?** Make sure your leaders are keeping a binder / digital folder of the things they are working on to make sure your next set of leaders are set up for success.
- **Start recruiting more advocates** to join your chapter and the mental health movement.
- **Ask each member to recruit two other people:** one to replace them when they graduate (start planning ahead now) and one other to help grow the chapter.
- **As you gain more advocates, start to think through roles and responsibilities** for your group, and establish a leadership or executive board; try to build a board with people from various academic years to help stagger your leadership.



## STAGE FOUR

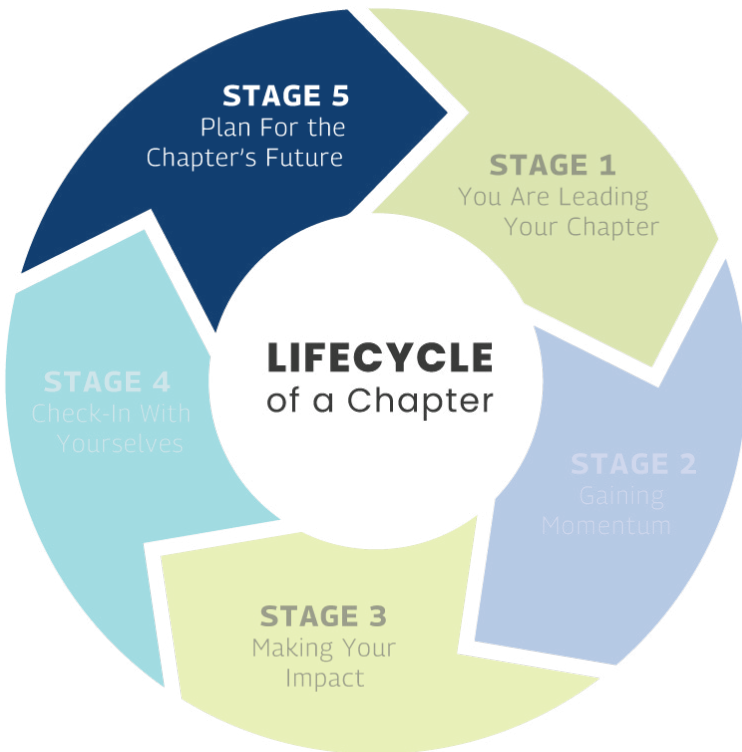
### Check in With Yourself

#### Think about what worked, what didn't and what you will do differently next time.

- **What types of programs worked best at your school?** What ones would you like to repeat? What new ones do you want to try? Check in with your leaders, members, advisor, and Active Minds staff for ideas and help.
- **How are you doing?** Is the chapter experience feeling good to you? If yes, that's wonderful! If not, work with your advisor and members to make sure you feel good about your advocacy work.

### REMEMBER!

The chapter experience will ebb and flow and that depends on the year, the leaders, and what is happening at your school and your community. **It is normal to see activities decrease and increase month over month.** The important thing to note is to start planning on how to get out of that low point. Ask Active Minds staff and your advisor for help, brainstorm with your members, and plan the next event when you feel ready.



## STAGE FIVE

### Plan For the Chapter's Future

**How are you preparing for the next season, semester, or year?**

- **How are you planning to recruit more advocates?** How many more people would you like to work with to have that much of a larger impact? Start planning for club expos, orientation, and other seasons for recruitment.
- **Transition your leaders.** Your officers / leaders will cycle out of leadership or graduate, so make sure you transition leaders before they move on. Make sure you have their binder / digital files, passwords, and other essential information for your new leaders to be successful.
- **Reserve spaces, ask for budget increases, and plan ahead.** Work closely with your advisor to plan for the future of the chapter. It is normal for there to be highs and lows in the chapter experience; but planning helps us work through them!

## LEADER TRANSITION TIPS

### Helpful Advice in Restarting the Cycle

- As noted above, **make sure your leaders are keeping track of agendas**, data, and other important documentation that can be passed on.
- **Identify new leaders early** and start gauging their interest. This could be from your current membership or from recruiting others to join the chapter.
- Once people have been identified, elect or select them for leadership depending on how you all choose to do this. **You should elect/select them as early as possible** so they can shadow current leaders.
- **Make sure you let Active Minds staff and your advisor know about the leadership change** so we can keep information current.
- **Celebrate your outgoing leaders** and thank them for all they did for the chapter.
- If new leadership takes over right before the summer months, **make sure there is a plan to keep momentum** going to prepare for the start of the next school year.

## CONNECT WITH THE CHAPTERS TEAM!

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS OR OTHER RESOURCES?**



**Reach out to the Chapters Team at [chapters@activeminds.org](mailto:chapters@activeminds.org) for support!**