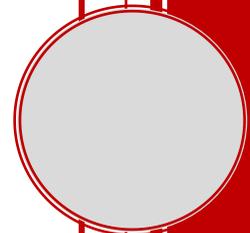


*Mental Health Across the Lifespan*

# DEPRESSION AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

*Campus Conversation Toolkit*



Thank you for taking steps to educate your campus community. This Depression and College Students toolkit includes a planning checklist and links to online resources that may assist in organizing a Campus Conversation.

## Why is it Important to Start the Conversation?

Many people experience the first symptoms of depression during their college years. Unfortunately, many college students who have depression aren't getting the help they need either because they may not know where to go for help, or they may believe that treatment won't help. Others don't get help because they think their symptoms are just part of the typical stress of college, or they worry about being judged if they seek mental health care. Depression is a common but serious mental illness and is a major risk factor for suicide.



Campus Conversations can be tailored to meet your organization's needs and opportunities. Recognizing the sensitivities associated with presentation of mental health information, the presence of a health professional is mandated at **ALL** Campus Conversations. A health professional could be a doctor, psychologist, social worker, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or other type of clinician. The health professional should have the ability to assist students in crisis or in need of immediate help. In addition, signage noting the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number **MUST** be prominently displayed at Community Conversations (see Appendix).

You have the power to assist in educating your peers about this important health condition. The planning checklist can help you make sure to remember all of the important steps.

## What is a Campus Conversation?

A Campus Conversation is a dialogue, led by a health professional, where participants discuss and share information on a selected topic. In this case, the topic is depression and college students. The National Institute of Mental Health's (NIMH) [\*Depression and College Students: Answers to College Students' Frequently Asked Questions About Depression\*](#) can serve as a resource to start the conversation. Consider partnering with the university counseling center, health service, or residence life and housing, or invite a psychologist or physician from the local community to speak about depression, how to encourage students to seek help, and what campus and local resources are available to students. Develop questions for health professional or university partner to answer about services available to students and where to go for help. A Campus Conversation is a great venue to distribute fact sheets, pamphlets, and brochures about depression and suicide prevention to participants.

## Goals and Objectives

The goal of Campus Conversations is to raise awareness about depression among college students and reinforce the importance of seeking help from a health professional. The objective of the program is to:

1. Provide students with information on depression and resources on suicide prevention.
2. Identify the signs and symptoms of depression.
3. Encourage help-seeking behavior among students.
4. Provide students with on-campus resources where they can receive assistance.
5. To help students identify electronic resources from organizations which provide support to students for a variety of mental health-related issues.

### 3 steps for a successful Campus Conversation

1. Determine the best time and location to host a Campus Conversation.
2. Partner with a health professional, clinician and/or a campus resource to host a conversation – have a health professional onsite to assist anyone in crisis.
3. Prominently display the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number and hand out materials that participants to take home and read on their own.

## Program Planning: A Checklist

The checklist below will help you make sure you remember all of the important steps in planning a Campus Conversation.

### 6 Weeks Before the Event

- △ Recruit a Mental Health Champion—the person who will conduct the on-campus session. This may be *a health professional (i.e., a doctor, psychologist, social worker, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or other type of clinician)*. Talk with your health champion or campus health partner about how he or she plans to approach the subject of depression in college students and incorporate information from resources such as the [NIMH brochure](#) and campus resources.
- △ Contact local resources or campus groups that focus on mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Potential partners include the NIMH Outreach Partnership Program – Outreach Partners (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/outreach/partnership-program/outreach-partners.shtml>); Active Minds, Inc. (<http://www.activeminds.org/>), and those organizations listed in the Appendix. Be sure to notify other groups early to ensure their members can attend the Campus Conversation.
- △ Download or order FREE educational materials from NIMH. Call 1-866-615-6464 or visit <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/index.shtml> to place your order. Request materials from partners to distribute at the session.

### 4 Weeks Before the Event

- △ Finalize the day and time for your Campus Conversation—taking into account your health champion, partners, presenters' availability.
- △ Reserve the room(s) on campus for the session.
- △ Print out and make copies of materials that you want to distribute at the session. Arrange for tables and chairs for the day of the event. In addition, be sure you have a table to display materials.
- △ Develop event signage and promotional materials.



## 2 Weeks Before the Event

- △ Include information about the Campus Conversation session in a campus bulletin, newspaper, or social media outlets (#DSTMHAL) two weeks before the session. Continue to publicize the event.
- △ Confirm that your Health Champion can participate. Confirm that your partnering organization has your event on its calendar. Make sure presenters have the directions to the event.
- △ Ensure that you have received (or copied) your materials to hand out at the session.
- △ Review the questions noted in the [\*Depression and College Students: Answers to College Students Frequently Asked Questions About Depression\*](#) brochure, and those you have developed, with your Health Champion to guide your Campus Conversation.

## 1 Week Before the Event

- △ Mention the Campus Conversation session during student gatherings and ensure the information is included in the Campus Bulletin one week before the session.
- △ Encourage faculty, staff, and students to attend.
- △ Contact your Health Champion or presenters to discuss the format of the Campus Conversation and to respond to any questions they may have.

## Day of the Event

- △ Make sure the room is set up and chairs are arranged.
- △ It is **very important** to display the educational materials on a table. **Display signage noting the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number in a prominent location. (See Appendix).**
- △ Use social media outlets to promote the event using #DSTMHAL.
- △ Complete the Depression & College Students Program Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2WDMDRR> .

Campus Conversation Planning Calendar	October						
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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	3	4	5	X	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

## Appendix

### RESOURCES:

Suicide is a major public health concern. Over 41,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States. More than twice as many people die by suicide each year than by homicide. Suicide is tragic. But it is often preventable. Knowing the risk factors for suicide and who is at risk can help reduce the suicide rate. The following resources provide helpful information on suicide risk and prevention. The NIMH provides helpful facts about suicide prevention at:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>.



This list of comprehensive list of online resources, compiled by the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC), provides a wide-range of information that can be used to raise awareness about depression and suicide prevention among college students. The SPRC provides background information, research, resources and practical examples to support campus suicide prevention and mental health promotion programs and events.

*Select the hyperlink headers below to access resources.*

#### [Scope of the Problem](#)

Efforts to promote mental health and prevent suicide on campuses should start with a thorough understanding of current data.

#### [Getting Started](#)

Effective mental health promotion and suicide prevention efforts on campus require strategic thinking, collaboration, strategies.

#### [Campus Examples](#)

Hear from other campus professionals who have used strategic planning to guide their suicide prevention programs.

#### [Resources and Research](#)

Discover additional resources and research to support your suicide prevention planning efforts.

Many organizations and agencies at the state and national levels welcome the opportunity to partner with communities, campuses, and others to prevent suicide. Information on State and National Partners and resources, which can further assist in campus efforts, can be found at <http://www.sprc.org/basics/partners>.

Learn more about the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, order bulk materials, and access toolkits at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

The [National Institute of Mental Health](#) is a National Partner of the SPRC.

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Outreach Partners (state level) - <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/outreach/partnership-program/outreach-partners.shtml>

NIMH National Partners - <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/outreach/partnership-program/national-partners.shtml>

Active Minds, Inc. - <http://www.activeminds.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - <http://www.afsp.org/>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America - <http://www.adaa.org/>

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance - <http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=home>

Mental Health America - <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness - <http://www.nami.org>

The Jed Foundation - <https://www.jedfoundation.org/students>

**Call 24/7**  
**1-800-273-8255**

**NATIONAL**

**SUICIDE**

**PREVENTION**

**LIFELINE**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**<sup>TM</sup>

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