Introduction

This Toolkit was developed by the CalMHSA Los Angeles College Consortium to assist colleges as they strive to offer sensitive educational climates and services to students with mental health challenges. The Los Angeles College Consortium membership includes six community colleges in the Southern area: Los Angeles Harbor College (LAHC), Los Angeles Southwest College (LASWC), Los Angeles City College (LACC), Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC), Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) and Los Angeles Trade Tech College (LATTC). Los Angeles Harbor College has been the Project Headquarters.

The Project has expanded the Consortium’s capacity to effectively address the increasing rates of mental health concerns among Community College students. Prevention and Early Intervention strategies included extensive faculty/staff mental health sensitivity and awareness training, evidence-based suicide prevention training, peer-to-peer in-reach and outreach to support the integration of Active Minds and NAMI on Campus at each college, website development and a strong emphasis on leveraging resources and collaboration within the Consortium and with community partners.

The Project was developed as a part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programs supported by CalMHSA Proposition 63 funds aimed at preventing suicides, reducing stigma and discrimination and improving student mental health. The Project purpose has been to develop campus climates which support mental health wellness, safety, and timely identification and referral of at-risk students for help.

A priority outcome for the Project has been to work towards the integration of Active Minds and NAMI to support students with mental health challenges as they matriculate onto our campuses.

What are Active Minds and NAMI and how can they benefit the colleges?

Active Minds and NAMI on Campus are peer-run mental health organizations designed to assist students on college campuses. Both organizations seek to enhance and promote college students’ mental health and well-being by reducing stigma and increasing help-seeking
behaviors. The organizations provide support to students through the formation of on-campus Active Minds and NAMI clubs.

Active Minds

*Active Minds* focuses on empowering students to educate peers, faculty, and staff in an effort to reduce stigma about mental health challenges. Active Minds provides forums for students to speak about their mental health issues in order to reduce fear, discrimination and ignorance on campus. See more at: [www.activeminds.com](http://www.activeminds.com)

NAMI on Campus

*NAMI on Campus* chapters focus on providing safe environments for students to support each other and to build camaraderie with other students dealing with mental health challenges. NAMI recognizes that some of the best support a student can receive is from peers. See more at: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**Why These Clubs Are Needed:**

- College is a high-stress environment which can intensify or trigger mental health struggles.
- Mental health issues are prevalent on college campuses and many mental illnesses first present in college age.
- The demand for mental health services and supports on colleges is expected to increase in the next several years.
- One in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness and more than 25% of college students have been diagnosed or treated by a professional for a mental health condition within the past year.
• The American College Health Association reported that nearly 50% of college students reported having felt so depressed in the past year that they couldn’t function.
• Mental health issues are a leading impediment to academic success.
• The American College Health Association reported that students cited depression and anxiety as among the top barriers to their academic performance and a NAMI survey cited that 64% of young adults who are no longer in college are not attending because of a mental health related reason.
• Despite having to endure many obstacles and repercussions, many college students with mental health related needs are not seeking help due mainly to the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
• Additionally, it is not always clear to students that it is safe to talk about their issues or that resources are available for them.

Starting an Active Minds and/or NAMI On Campus Club on campus can offer unique peer support for students, reduce the stigma of mental health struggles and increase awareness of mental health resources, thereby better meeting college students’ needs and significantly improving their college experiences and academic successes.

What Can an Active Minds or NAMI On Campus Club Add to Your Campus?

A NAMI on Campus or Active Minds Club can….

• Create peer-to-peer support for students dealing with mental health issues
• Provide psycho-education and mental health resources across your campus
• Reduce stigma against students who are challenged by mental health concerns
• Increase help-seeking behavior in students who would otherwise suffer alone
• Reduce negative outcomes of students’ mental health challenges due to increased education and resources on campus
• Help students gain an understanding of what they are going through and know they are not alone
• Help concerned students learn how to talk to friends about mental health issues and learn how to refer them for services
• Increase systemic support for students challenged by mental health issues
• Empower students through increased knowledge and awareness about ways to cope with mental health issues
• Send the message to students that it is safe to talk about their issues and that resources are available
• Promote an atmosphere of greater tolerance, respect and camaraderie

Examples of Programming and Resources by NAMI on Campus and Active Minds:

• National Day Without Stigma  
  http://www.activeminds.org/our-programming/awareness-campaigns/national-day-without-stigma
• Stress Less Week  
  http://www.activeminds.org/our-programming/awareness-campaigns/732
• Eating Disorders Awareness Week  
• Veterans Programming  
  http://www.activeminds.org/our-programming/awareness-campaigns/veterans-and-mental-health
• Resources for Students who Identify as LGBTQ  
  http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/LGBTQ
• Resources for Living with a Mental Health Condition  
  www.nami.org/Find-Support/Living-with-a-Mental-Health-Condition
• Peer-to-Peer recovery-focused educational program  
  http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Peer-to-Peer
• Trained guest speakers living with mental health struggles lead discussions in the NAMI In Our Own Voice program  
  http://www2.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Find_Support/Education_and_Training/Education_Training_and_Peer_Support_Center/In_Our_Own_Voice/In_Our_Own_Voice1.htm
• NAMI walks to raise mental health awareness  
  http://namiwalks.org/
• NAMI Out of the Darkness Suicide Awareness Campaign
  
  http://notalone.nami.org/submit

Get Started!

How To Get Started:

Look at each organizations website and decide if you think one or the other will better suit your campus and its needs.

You can have both clubs on your campus!

Active Minds: http://www.activeminds.org/get-involved/student-chapters

NAMI on Campus: http://www.nami.org/namioncampus

For either club, first speak to your Associated Student Organization (ASO) and let them know your desire to start a Mental Health Club on Campus.

Clubs are typically started through the ASO and are governed by each college’s ASO policies. Clubs usually have at least 8 members with at least one faculty advisor. Student members must have paid their ASO fees. A Charter Application must be completed and must contain the Club’s
Constitution and roster of members. Check with your local ASO Office for deadlines.

**Creating an Active Minds Club:**

Start by Reviewing Their Webpage:
https://magic.piktochart.com/output/4157388-how-to-start-an-am-chapter

1. Let Active Minds know about your interest, they will send a new club packet:
   http://active.convio.net/site/Survey?ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&SURVEY_ID=1401
2. Fill out a the new club packet they send you
3. Find student charter members and a faculty sponsor
4. Write a club constitution
5. Present your club to ASO for approval
6. Attend club rush and give out materials to increase membership
7. Set up social media to increase communication between members
8. Set a weekly or bi-weekly meeting time and place
9. Continue to put up fliers to increase membership
10. Ask to give a two minute “pitch” in psychology classes to increase membership
11. Have your first meeting!
12. Plan your first event!
13. Continue gathering members and organizing events!

Active Minds has some great pre-set resources for setting up your club:
http://www.activeminds.org/our-programming/chapters/chapter-resources

Active Minds Chapter FAQ:
Creating a NAMI On Campus Club:

Start by Reviewing Their Website:  
http://www.nami.org/namioncampus#sthash.vvl7DU1f.dpuf

1. Fill out an interest form:  
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=3mIUFwiwSpiT8guoWlQ%3d%3d
2. You’ll receive a Startup Packet and get access to a NAMI on Campus Leaders Only Web section that will provide you with resources to help start your club
3. Contact your NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate to let them know your interest in starting a club
4. Find student charter members and a faculty sponsor
5. Write a club constitution
6. Present your club to ASO for approval
7. Attend club rush and give out materials to increase membership
8. Set up social media to increase communication between members
9. Set a weekly or bi-weekly meeting time and place
10. Continue to put up fliers to increase membership
11. Ask to give a two minute “pitch” in psychology classes to increase membership
12. Have your first meeting!
13. Plan your first event!
14. Continue gathering members and organizing events!

NAMI On Campus FAQ:  
http://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-on-Campus/NAMI-on-Campus-FAQs

Some of the Challenges of Starting a NAMI On Campus or Active Minds Club Include:

- It can be difficult to start any club on a commuter campus given the complexities of students’ lives and the responsibilities many of them have outside of the classroom.
- We've had the greatest success starting Active Minds and NAMI on Campus Clubs with a few dedicated students who ask teachers of classes such as Psychology, Sociology (or related courses) to speak about the Clubs and about their own mental health experiences.
• Connecting to students in their classrooms is a great way to increase contact and membership. Another way to increase success is to initially work with students and faculty who are passionate about the topic and are willing to invest their time and energy into its success. While there can be some roadblocks to getting a NAMI on Campus or Active Minds Club started, its positive impact on a college campus can really be tremendous. And, as seen from the research, there is a powerful need on college campuses for mental health education and awareness.

• Starting a NAMI on Campus or Active Minds Club on your campus can be a significant and important step in meeting those needs!