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Active Minds 2025 Mental Health Conference Ignites a National Movement for Student Mental Health Advocacy

Washington, D.C. — Over the course of a powerful two-day event, the [2025 Active Minds Mental Health Conference](#) brought together nearly 400 student leaders, mental health advocates, artists, and policy experts for a weekend of learning, connection, and action. The conference served as a national call to mobilize the mental health movement — and the response was electric.

The event opened with remarks from Active Minds **Founder and Executive Director** [Alison Malmou](#), who set a powerful tone: *“Your story matters. And it can be the spark that lights the way for others.”* From that moment, youth and young adults were energized to map out strategies for change and commit to creating systems that better support mental health for all.

Highlights from the Weekend:

Inspiring Panels and Keynotes

- The opening session, moderated by [Dr. Judith Joseph](#), featured mental health champions **Ayaan Moledina**, **Lashanda Parker**, **Dr. Claudia Fernandes**, and **Maddie Geschu**, who encouraged students to use their lived experiences as a driving force in shaping mental health policy.
- Artist and mental health advocate [Justine Skye](#) joined **Naomi Hines** from **Bowie State University** for a raw, intergenerational conversation on the lifelong journey of healing, therapy, and self-compassion.
- Day two featured an emotional and empowering conversation with independent artist and singer-songwriter [Alexander Stewart](#), who shared his mental health journey through music and treated attendees to a special performance.

Breakout Sessions That Sparked Action

Workshops buzzed with energy as students tackled real-life challenges, shared resources, and turned vulnerability into strategy. From storytelling techniques to student mental health legislation, attendees left equipped to lead change on their campuses and in their communities.

Notably, policy consultant **Maddie Geschu** celebrated a major federal win: Active Minds' recommendations on the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** and **the Garrett Lee Smith Campus**

Suicide Prevention Grant were included in the Senate's appropriations report — a significant milestone for student-centered mental health advocacy.

Celebrating Changemakers

This year's conference also recognized exceptional leaders and chapters making an impact on their campuses and beyond:

- **Chapter of the Year:** Athens State University
- **Adam Carlson Student Leader of the Year:** Jessica Toney, Athens State University
- **Health Equity Award:** University of California, Los Angeles
- **Young Mental Health Champion:** Jacob Wolmetz
- *Additional awards celebrated innovation in advocacy, storytelling, and connection.*

Building the Future of Mental Health

Throughout both days, students explored topics ranging from mental health storytelling and inclusive policy to equity-centered programming and excused absences for mental health days. The resounding theme was clear: Mental health advocacy starts with the power of your own story — and together, we are unstoppable.

As the weekend closed, attendees were reminded that while the conference may be over, the movement is only gaining momentum.

"You showed up. You shared your stories. You found community. And this is just the beginning."

To relive the weekend, follow **#ActiveMindsCon25** on Instagram and X, and check out highlights from the event.

For more information about Active Minds and how to get involved, visit www.activeminds.org.

About Active Minds:

Active Minds is the largest nonprofit in the United States mobilizing youth and young adults to transform mental health norms across society. For more than 20 years, we have equipped the next generation of peer mental health advocates through a variety of programs, including the Active Minds Chapter Network, A.S.K., and Send Silence Packing. Our advocacy, initiatives, and campaigns foster lasting change in how youth view and discuss mental health, encouraging them to use their voices to influence broader conversations and inform mental health supports

within their communities. Together, we are building a diverse movement of champions committed to improving mental health for all. To learn more about Active Minds, visit activeminds.org