



## Lets Bring Change to Mind to Your School

### **Our Mission:**

Bring Change 2 Mind (BC2M) is a national anti-stigma and mental health awareness organization that aims to remove the misconceptions and discrimination associated with mental illness. Founded in 2010 by the actress Glenn Close, BC2M has reached millions of people with its scientifically measured Public Service Announcements and programs. BC2M has recently taken over the management of a high school initiative, Lets Erase The Stigma (LETS.org), as we strive to provide an evidence-based resource for teens in the school environment.

By addressing the issues surrounding mental illness with youth and teens, we can change perceptions early on and demystify a topic that affects so many young individuals - either directly through their own experience with mental illness or indirectly through a family members or friends' experience. LETS BC2M is a student-led club initiative that allows all teens the opportunity to learn and explore more about mental health topics in a safe and supportive environment. As students engage and talk about mental health, we allow them to normalize the conversation and eliminate stigma within their community. This open and accessible forum is not typically an option to students.

With 50% of mental health disorders beginning before the age of 14 and 70% before the age of 25, we know that adolescent years are a critical window in which mental health can and should be promoted and mental health problems addressed.

Stigma acts as a major barrier to help-seeking behaviors. Of the 1 in 5 kids with a diagnosable disorder, only 20% of these young individuals will receive the treatment they need. By tackling this gating issue, we show teens that mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of and encourage those who are struggling to reach out for help.

### **How We Are Different:**

Communities, schools and government are recognizing the impact of mental illness on our youth, as shown by increased funding to mental health services and early intervention initiatives. However, rarely are teens being brought to the table to share their thoughts and views on the topic. In the growing efforts to improve mental health services, the most important voice, the teen voice, is often being lost.

LETS BC2M's approach works from the teen perspective up. These clubs provide a platform from which their voice, opinions and suggestions can be heard. When a teen struggles with mental illness or the indirect consequences of it, they can find comfort in the fact that a pillar of support, *their peers*, is available to them in their school setting. LETS BC2M clubs advocate and raise awareness about mental illness not only for themselves but for every student and individual in their community who may experience or be affected by mental illness at some point.

### **What Are The Goals:**

- For LETS BC2M clubs to be the nucleus of student-driven efforts to address mental health and the stigma around mental illness in your community.



- For your school and its students to incorporate its unique strengths and interests to address this topic in a way that is meaningful to both you and your community
- For your club to be part of our state pilot program. As we plan to roll this initiative nationwide, you will be recognized as part of the pioneering group for this evidence- based teen resource.
- For your students to become leaders who are sparking an educated conversation around mental illness, not only among themselves but throughout your school community.

### **Preliminary Study and Impact:**

The 2014 preliminary evaluation of LETS clubs found that LETS participation was associated with statistically significant improvements in attitudes, social distancing, anti- stigma actions and knowledge. The study concluded that youth-directed discussions and action based interventions, as found in LETS clubs, may provide a novel means of reducing mental illness stigma in adolescents.

Furthermore, the prevention of negative attitudes, which otherwise may become deeply ingrained by adulthood, can be easily initiated and achieved with this youth-club design.

Our upcoming pilot study will be conducted in a randomized experimental trial manner and aims to build on this previous research to further assess and confirm the above and additional measures of stigma and mental health awareness.

### **Research Plan**

- 20 Northern California schools will be involved in the pilot phase of the LETS BC2M study.
- Baseline data will be collected from all participating students in September prior to clubs commencing.
- 10 schools will initiate their clubs in early Fall while the other 10 schools from the study delay club commencement until January, serving as controls at this stage of the research.
- Following club initiation, participating LETS BC2M student members will complete 2 follow-up evaluation surveys at 4- month intervals to assess change in attitudes, stigma and knowledge of mental health and illness.
- Each student involved in the study will require active consent from a parent or guardian
- All information collected will be anonymous.

### **Researchers background**

**Stephen Hinshaw PhD.** is Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he served as Department Chair from 2004-2011, and is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UC San Francisco. He is the most recent recipient of the James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award for a lifetime of outstanding contributions to applied Psychological research.

In addition to directing summer research camps and conducted longitudinal studies for children with ADHD and related disorders, having received over \$14 million in NIH funding, Hinshaw has authored over 225 articles, chapters, and reviews plus 7 books. He is editor of *Psychological Bulletin*, the most cited journal in the field of general psychology, and is a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, the American



Psychological Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). He received the Distinguished Scientific Contribution in Psychology Award from the California State Psychological Association (2009) and the Distinguished Teaching Award, College of Letters and Sciences, UC Berkeley (2001).

**Bennett Leventhal M.D** is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. Dr. Leventhal is a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in both General Psychiatry and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and a Distinguished Life Fellow of both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Leventhal has been a leader in national and regional efforts to promote children's mental health research and to create comprehensive, cutting-edge systems of care for children's mental health. His efforts have led to the creation of outstanding clinical research programs that have developed and shaped scientific approaches to the study of early emerging childhood disorders.

Dr. Leventhal is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 50th Anniversary Distinguished Service Medal and the Edythe J. Levitt Award for Distinguished Service from the National Board of Medical Examiners.

### **Launching a LETS BC2M Club in Your School**

You know your school best. We want to listen to you and learn how best to launch a club that meets your school values and interests. Things that can help make your club a success include;

1. *A Passionate Advisor*

Schoolteachers and counselors have busy schedules, but identifying a member of staff that is trusted by students and passionate about mental health or student wellness is important. The club advisor is a central figure for LETS BC2M members and we hope is someone that students can confide in and have support from for their club projects.

2. *Initial Meeting with Our Headquarters*

In this meeting we can work with you to assess the strengths of your school community from which the LETS BC2M can grow and develop. We can also work with you to identify motivated students who may be interested in being the founding members of their LETS BC2M club.

3. *Participation in Club Day*

Our headquarters will provide your students with a club starter kit in which they will find all the materials they need to promote the LETS BC2M club at your club day.

4. *Support*

The majority of students joining the LETS BC2M club will have a vested interest in mental health. These students will likely be motivated to address the surrounding issues but if your school is willing to support the group's activities and goals, overwhelming progress can be made. For example, if you would consider adding 'mental health' to a section of your curriculum, your LETS BC2M club and our headquarters could assist you with this. Or, if your LETS BC2M club is hosting an event, have your school endorse and recognize this.



## How Our Headquarters Helps

Our LETS BC2M headquarters will provide each club with a variety of resources to develop their group as they move through the school year. How we plan to help your LETS BC2M club includes;

- Offering a \$500 grant to each club for the purpose of funding activities related to LETS BC2M
- Providing them with a range of educational and promotional materials
- Providing mental health trainings and educational opportunities
- Arranging a summit in which all club members from the pilot can come together to hear from leaders in the field of mental illness and share their club stories with each other
- Arranging for speakers to come to club meetings
- Informing members of upcoming events in their area.

What Are Teens Saying About The Clubs?

*“ Through LETS I wanted to make it ok to discuss mental health ”*

*“ LETS clubs not only change the perception of mental illness but they teach kids to simply be nicer to each other ”*

*“ I thought LETS could be a positive thing for me and maybe I could make a difference ”*

*“ Before LETS, stigma has hurt me a lot emotionally, because it isolated me from people and made me feel lonely ”*

*“ We are trying to build a solid foundation for the future generations to erase the stigma of not only mental illness but anything that people might stereotype or label ”*

*“ I think if this generation works to erase the stigma then people will be more comfortable talking about mental illness ”*