



ACTIVE MINDS

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2022

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## Introduction

It's been a challenging and demanding—yet rewarding—year for the Active Minds team. In 2021/22, we were quick to respond to the fresh challenges the pandemic enforced on the mental health of our community. Always led by people's experiences, we ramped up our work with people from neglected communities, young people, and people living in poverty. They all face a disproportionate struggle to get support and respect.

In 2022, we kept dealing with the fallout from the pandemic. We were there as waiting lists for mental health care kept growing, and we were there as the cost-of-living crisis started to bite. Always motivated by improving people's well-being, we kept fighting for the accessibility of mental health support.

We have also taken action to address the mental health repercussions of financial struggles. With the escalating cost of living, we have developed novel services and advocated for enhanced support for individuals experiencing mental health problems.

**Yasmin Bhukari**  
CEO, Active Minds

# 2022 – A Year in Numbers



### Lailani Diop – Young People Project Manager

What can I say? It's been a watershed year for Active Minds. Our focus on young people and the obstacles they face ultimately affect us all, so a redoubling of efforts targeting schools and colleges within the context of mental health, was an imperative shift of focus. Ordinary people have shared their time and resources to create an environment that is both nourishing and empowering to countless young people who previously had nowhere else to turn. My gratitude goes to all our volunteers and investors for such a wonderful 2021-2022. Here's to continued success in 2023.



### Sally Greaver – Counselling Manager

In the year just gone, we've seen a dramatic uptick in demand for our services. But the year has shown that our dedicated team of counsellors was more than up to the challenge. Given the amazing feedback from countless individuals, I am proud of our team of counsellors who made a huge difference to the mental health of all the individuals involved.



### Darren Keegan – Advocacy Manager

My first year at Active Minds has been a revelation. Heading the Advocacy team throughout 2021-2022 has been a deeply gratifying experience. Listening to the concerns of people regarding mental health has widened my understanding of the difficulties experienced and the remedies available to combat them. For example, seeing how effective our pop-up chat sessions have been for people fills me with tremendous optimism for what I know will be a very exciting future for our organisation.



**2,100**

support queries



**1,500**

copies of our printed mental health and well-being info



**700**

people shared their lived experiences with us to help fight for mental health



**985**

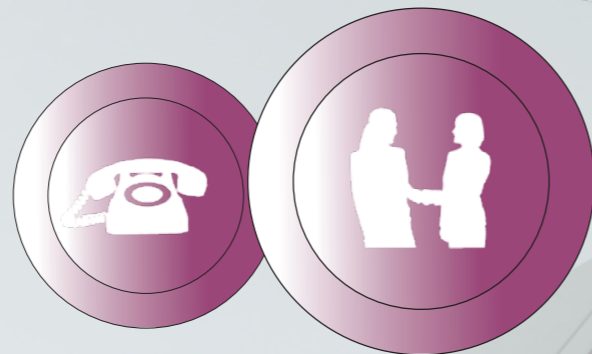
people helped us campaign to improve services and push for justice

# Counselling Service

The Active Minds Counselling Service offers assistance to those who are struggling with mental health problems. The pandemic significantly altered the way in which we offer counselling. From the outset of the lockdown in March 2020, we quickly responded to the needs of our clients and commissioners by shifting from face-to-face to remote support, with the majority of counselling services provided online or over the telephone.

Over the course of 2022, there was a notable increase in demand for our counselling support and services. We received over 500 calls from individuals seeking someone to talk to and conducted assessments for counselling with 120 individuals. We provided 450 new and existing clients with 12 weekly counselling sessions. A significant number of clients sought help for generalized anxiety, with some attributing their mental health struggles to the effects of the pandemic and ongoing lockdowns.

Although we trained our 16 counsellors to offer remote counselling sessions via telephone and Zoom, this option was not preferred by everyone. While we were able to support hundreds of clients remotely, many expressed a preference to wait for face-to-face counselling. As such, we have offered in-person counselling in our carefully managed building, with detailed measures in place to ensure social distancing and compliance with health and safety guidelines.



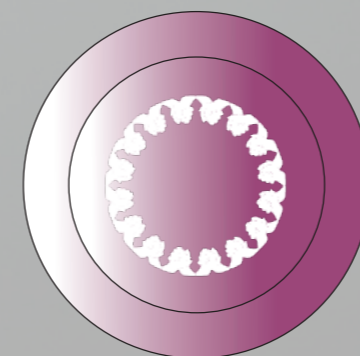
In the previous year, our trained counsellors organized two closed, in-person anger management groups for a total of 16 participants. Feedback from the participants showed a highly positive impact in group sessions, with many individuals reporting positive changes. One participant commented, “It has been a good programme, and I realize that I am not alone in my struggles.”

To help our volunteer counsellors stay emotionally well during the pandemic and cope with change and isolation, we created and delivered online training and support on self-care and well-being.

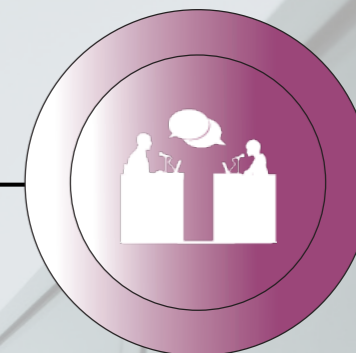
Active Minds Counselling Service continued to operate during the pandemic, offering support to individuals caring for friends and family members with enduring mental health issues. To provide more people with a space to talk, a new drop-in group was launched, and monthly psycho-educational workshops were held. Throughout the year, the service supported 120 individuals, with 113 attendees in the groups and 99 carers receiving one-to-one support. The Counselling Team is grateful to all colleagues, counsellors, and other service providers for their support during these difficult times.

Active Minds has been advocating for a functional welfare system for several years. In 2021/22, Active Minds engaged with numerous individuals through in-person and online channels. We also established new support services based on people’s personal experiences. Early in 2021, we completed research to understand the experiences of 30 people with mental health problems and financial worries. We found that the stigma around poverty invariably led people to hold off seeking financial support until they were absolutely desperate. Investing time and resources in mental health tackled many of the problems we encountered. As part of this work, we employed a dedicated benefits specialist at our Infoline.

We conducted a targeted campaign to encourage individuals to seek financial assistance sooner. The campaign’s central message was “We can take the stress out of your financial worries”. We directed people to our updated resources on the correlation between money and mental health. Between January and December 2022, the updated content reached 1,300 people—a fantastic signal that the campaign was achieving tangible, meaningful results.



# Advocacy



We also organized monthly discussions on “One and All”, our online peer support community, on the topic of money. These sessions allowed individuals to share their concerns, experiences, and suggestions. Furthermore, we collaborated with the local police, small businesses, and volunteer groups to expedite the process of directing individuals to the best available support.

We offered funding and provided assistance to volunteers who were willing to organize workshops and discover the issues that individuals required assistance with the most. Among the most pressing concerns were feeling overwhelmed and struggling to talk about money.

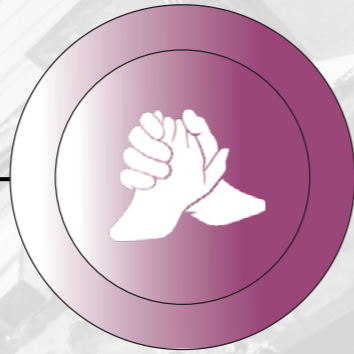
Based on their findings, the Active Minds volunteers designed a novel 8-week support programme called “Money Matters”, which provides tailored one-on-one support. The Money Matters programme has been trialed with 14 people. This has furnished us with valuable knowledge as we expand our financial support services to the wider community.

# Young People Project

In 2017, one out of ten young individuals experienced a mental health issue. By 2020, the figure had increased to one out of six. Last year, we collaborated more extensively with young people than ever before. We focused our support on local schools and areas where young people usually convene. Additionally, we ensured that young people's opinions and concerns were given the attention they deserve. A significant portion of this undertaking is in its nascent stages and will continue to develop for several years.

We consulted dozens of young individuals last year to gain insights into their experiences of mental health assistance and how we can offer the most effective aid. This research informed our strategy to support young people.

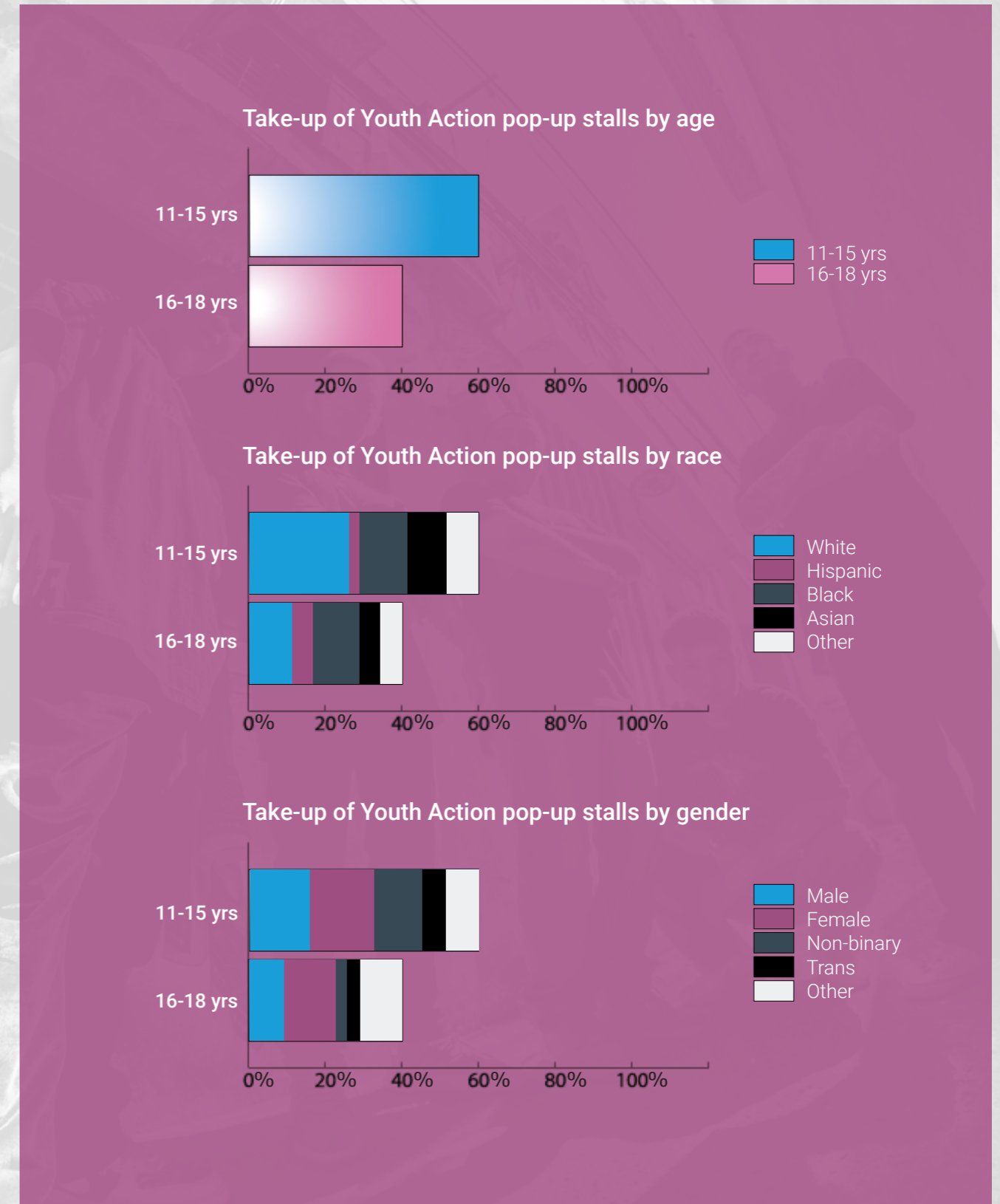
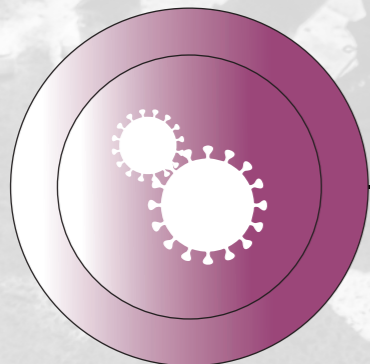
Active Minds was particularly focused on the effects of COVID-19 on mental health within schools and developed an initiative that could alleviate some of the pressure brought on young people throughout the pandemic.



This led to our Youth Action pop-up stalls in the city centre every Saturday afternoon throughout the summer of 2022. Young people could come and sit and have a chat with our dedicated volunteer staff. Young people and their parents could freely talk about their thoughts and concerns without the cold stiffness that would be experienced in a more formal setting. The pop-ups were enormously successful, attracting a wide range of age groups: 60% comprised individuals aged between 11 and 15, while the 16–18-year-olds accounted for the remaining 40%.

Their primary concerns were isolation, anxiety, lack of purpose, and a lack of money.

With over 300 individuals participating in the pop-up chats, the feedback collected throughout the July–August period yielded tremendous results. Many reported feeling empowered, and several individuals reported a sense of regained purpose and initiative.

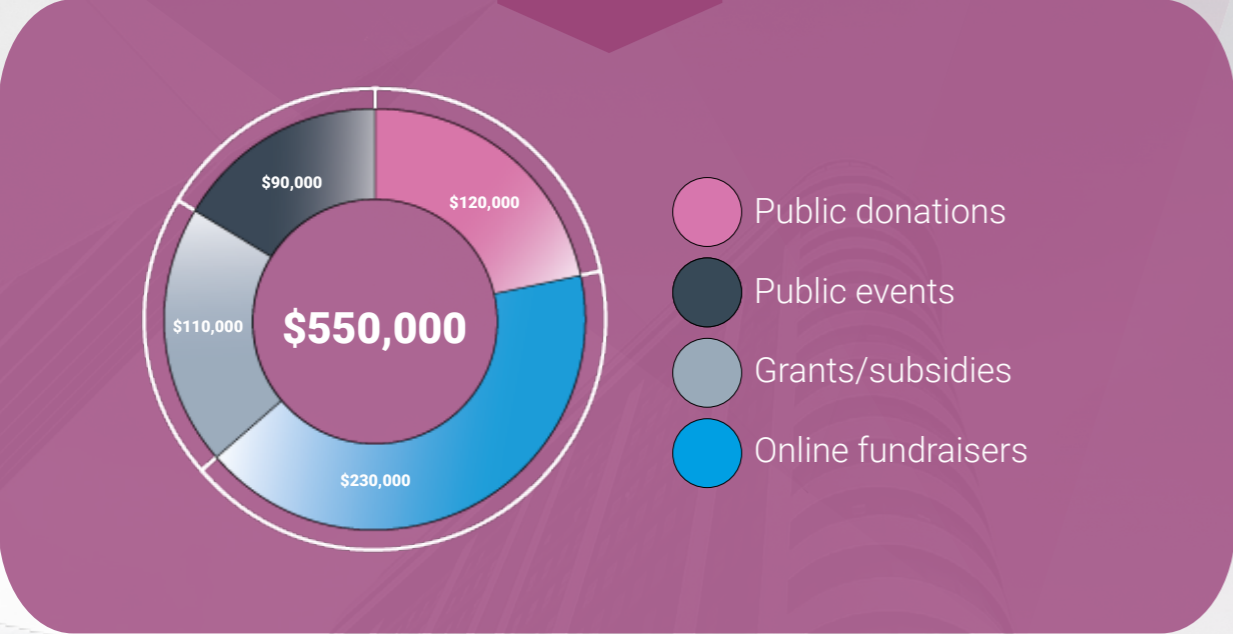


# How We Raise Our Funds

Despite the challenging times, we have received remarkable support from our amazing fundraisers and supporters, who helped us raise \$550,000. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you!

We deeply appreciate the kindness of the general public, corporations, and other funding organizations who helped us in 2022. Combined with the emergency appeal funds we collected, Active Minds can offer even more assistance to individuals experiencing mental health difficulties, especially during these times of rising demand. The income breakdown is presented in the pie chart below.

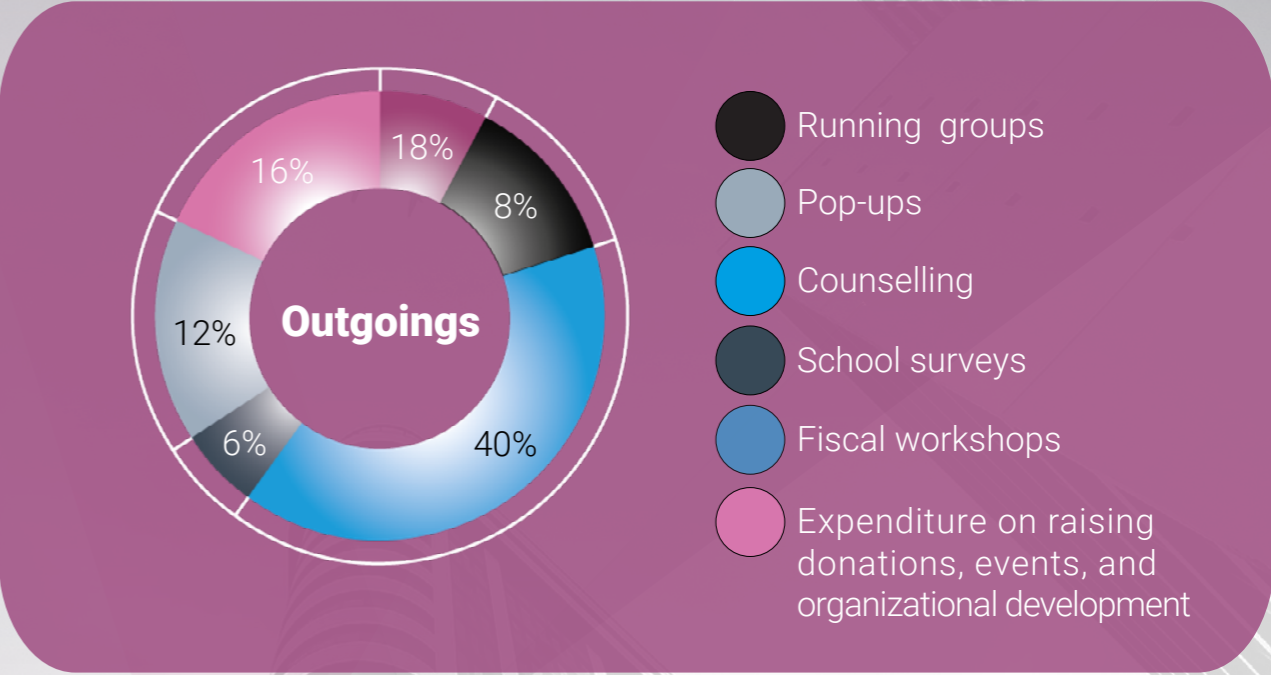
We raised



# How We Spend Our Money

In 2022, we spent \$451,000 to ensure that everyone with a mental health problem receives support and respect. We channelled funds into supporting and advocating for individuals with mental health problems. You can find more information about our work throughout this report, and some of our work, such as our workplace well-being consultancy, generates income while also achieving our charitable goals.

We use 82 cents of every dollar to support people with mental health problems, while the remainder was used to operate the organization, including raising funds and planning for the future. Our expenditure on raising donations, legacies, events, and organizational development totalled \$99,000 or 18% of the overall amount.



We are grateful to the public, companies, and other donors who helped us raise nearly \$320,000 in 2022, in addition to the emergency appeal funds raised in 2020/21. This has allowed us to provide even more assistance to those with mental health issues at a time when the demand is increasing. The pie chart above shows our revenue.

# Looking Ahead

We have ambitious plans to continue focusing on our priority areas. To achieve this, we must build and maintain the trust of the communities we have already begun working with and take decisive action. Here are our goals for the coming years...

## Mental Health and Racism

Our goal at Active Minds is for everyone to feel comfortable discussing issues that affect people of colour, particularly racism. We aim to engage in open, honest, and challenging conversations about racism and how it relates to the past, present, and future.

Our organization will be diverse at every level, reflecting different racial and ethnic backgrounds. We will structure our services around anti-racism principles, collaborating with a wider range of partners and amplifying the voices of individuals from racialized communities. Our work will always be intersectional, considering how different factors like sexuality, age, gender, and others intersect with racism to cause various forms of discrimination.

### Our future initiatives include:

1

Making public policy lobbying on critical issues a priority.

3

Working with young people who have experienced racial trauma. Together, we will design blueprints for better mental health services.

2

Continuing our race equity steering group to enable people of colour with mental health challenges to contribute to shaping our approach.

4

Finally, we will continue to campaign for a new Mental Health Act that addresses the structural racism in our mental health system.

## Mental Health and Fiscal Health

We are committed to fighting for the mental health of people living in poverty. We will give priority to the experiences of those facing financial hardship in the stories we share, the campaigns we lead, and the support we provide, as well as in conversations with those with influence.

Our aim is to create a more integrated system of financial and mental health support that benefits people who are already in poverty, as well as those who are at risk of falling into it. To achieve this, we will work closely with organizations that focus on poverty, drawing on their expertise and collaborating with them to keep mental health in the spotlight.

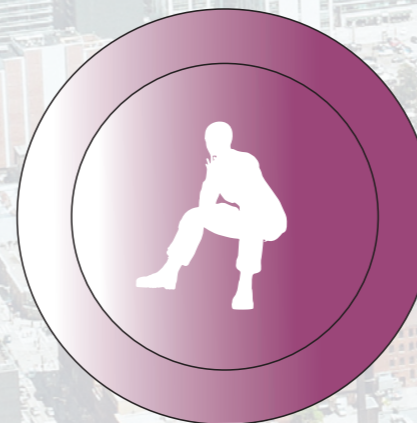
We are strengthening our partnerships with Citizens Advice to provide support to the communities most affected by poverty and the rising cost of living. We will also campaign together for change.



## Young People and Trauma

In order to support young people who have experienced trauma, we aim to remain a charity where young people feel included. Our goal is to consistently ensure that every young person feels welcome at Active Minds. We also aim to make sure that at least 25% of those using our funded programmes and services are under 18 years old. We recognize that many young people have gone through trauma, and the support they receive can often be retraumatizing. Therefore, we want to become a trauma-informed charity and ensure that our support is always mindful of what young people have experienced before.

We will strengthen our focus on offering support to young people experiencing low mood and anxiety, and we will provide free mental health support for young people aged from 11 to 18, as well as their parents/carers and staff. We will also work to ensure that our Youth Voice Network is more diverse and that we create more opportunities for young people from racialized communities to shape our work.



## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the individuals, organizations, and partners who have contributed to our efforts over the past year. We appreciate the dedication and commitment of our volunteers, who have given their time, energy, and expertise to support our mission. Their hard work and selflessness have been invaluable to our success.

We would like to thank our donors and sponsors, who have generously supported us financially. Their contributions have enabled us to provide vital services and resources to those in need. Furthermore, we appreciate the incredible work of our staff members, who have gone above and beyond in serving our clients and advocating for mental health awareness and education. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of our community partners and stakeholders, who have helped us expand our reach and impact.

Finally, we would like to thank our clients and their families for entrusting us with their mental health and well-being. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to serve them, and we are committed to continuing to provide high-quality, compassionate care.





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