Vision 20/20 Grant: Final Report

2016—2017: IU South Bend Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health

Description of Project: Establishment of a student-led Mental Health Advocacy support group with additional emphasis on multicultural awareness.

Narrative: The goal of the IU South Bend Student peer Advocacy, Support, and Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health is two-fold: 1) To establish an IU South Bend chapter with Active Minds, the nation’s only non-profit organization dedicated to utilizing the student voice to raise mental health awareness among college students, and 2) To reach out to our IU South Bend community, where all students will have the opportunity to embrace and promote cross-cultural competencies that respect identity, diversity, ethics, equity, and social justice.

What we accomplished—and were we successful?

Goal One: Re-establish an IU South Bend chapter with Active Minds. (Highly successful)

The IU South Bend chapter with Active Minds was officially chartered on June 1, 2017. The group is completely student-led and governed. Two co-Presidents, Mark Philson and Hannah Quinn drafted a Chapter Constitution, made application for national charter, and further made application as an “official” IU South Bend Student Group.

Monthly chapter meetings were initiated in March, 2017, and have drawn a consistent following of 10-12 students at each meeting.

Marketing/Communications/Awareness materials have been secured through this 20/20 Vision Grant, with information distributed at New Student Orientation and Welcome Week (Summer/Fall 2017). All incoming IU South Bend Freshman and Transfer Students and their families received information in regard to Active Minds.

The IU South Bend Active Minds Chapter is fully—operational, sustainable, and student-led.

Faculty Advisor, Kevin Griffith, Psy.D, Director of the IU South Bend Student Counseling Center has attended all Active Minds group meetings, planning meetings, and student events.

Goal Two: Reach out to promote awareness, break down barriers, and enhance mental health support within our IU South Bend multicultural community. (Highly successful)

The IU South Bend Student Counseling Center collaborated with the IU South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center in support of Stage for Change, a student-led endeavor to promote social justice, mental health, and cross-cultural awareness through narrative expression, drama, story-telling, and poetic form.

Several performances were held at IU South Bend and within the greater South Bend Community throughout the Spring 2017 semester. The program is currently sustainable—with a series of performances/events scheduled for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Faculty Advisor, Kevin Griffith and the IU South Bend Active Minds chapter will continue in partnership with campus and community Stage for Change performances and events.
**Closing Remarks:** The IU South Bend Vision 20/20 Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery achieved two meaningful goals: student-led engagement and program sustainability. Active Minds and *Stage for Change* initiatives have reached large numbers of IU South Bend students, with strong impact concerning: student leadership and development, breaking down the stigma of mental health, and celebrating cultural diversity. The Student Counseling Center is grateful for the opportunity to serve as steward with this 20/20 grant, and equally humbled by the level of student engagement and outreach.