

The Stronger Together Campaign

Alyssa Barber

Full Sail University

Abstract

Despite the vast research completed in the field of behavioral and mental health, the everyday citizen knows little to nothing about the severity, regularity, and effects of mental disorders or about the organizations put in place to aid those who suffer from such illnesses. This research paper will expound upon the idea that mental illness plays a role in the lives of all people; not just the 60 million plus who are diagnosed with a mental disorder. This paper will also set forth a proposal for *The Stronger Together Campaign*, a national, college campaign for The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation that will use print, social, and guerilla media to entice those individuals on college campuses to get excited about behavioral health awareness and understanding their role in helping to alleviate the symptoms thereof. Through the use of celebrity icons and familiar movies to create a show theme, The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation can target the very population that has the most influence over and access to other generational cohorts; ideally reaching the highest number of potential enthusiasts. This campaign will convey statistics, inspirational stories, trivia, and foundation breakthroughs in the form of rallies, panel discussions, flash mobs, soap box lectures and town hall meetings that will gain momentum cross country and help to expel the notion that mental illness is not tolerated amongst different communities around the nation. *The Stronger Together Campaign* will also act as a fundraiser to fund the foundation's NARSAD grants, as it highlights the existence of every day behavioral disorders and challenges young minds to be more accepting of what they may not understand. Public approval for mental health will create a generation of free speaking individuals who will help to cure these disorders in ways other than conducting scientific research. *The Stronger Together Campaign* will exist primarily to begin this revolution because the foundation believes that "Our Minds Are Stronger Together."

The Stronger Together Campaign

The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, formerly The National Association for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression, is a non profit organization that is "committed to alleviating the suffering caused by mental illness by awarding grants that will lead to advances and breakthroughs in scientific research" (The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, 2016). The organization primarily functions to provide NARSAD grants, one of the highest distinctions in the field of mental health. The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation is looking to raise awareness about the severity of mental disorders and to explain they they do not only affect those that suffer from the illnesses, but friends, family and other loved ones as well. Despite public opinion, mental diseases are extremely common and they naturally affect the world and all of the people living within it.

Nevenka Podgornik (2014) advocates that mental health is to be understood as a “general state of mind, suggesting that mental illness can be defined as any disorder that alters a person’s mood or feelings, and has the potential to affect an individual in the ways that they relate to or function with other people” (pg. 52). According to the National Alliance on Mental Health (2013), “One in four adults—approximately 61.5 million Americans—experiences mental illness in a given year.” These disorders include, but are not limited to, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, borderline personality disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

This paper will examine the way by which The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation’s “The Stronger Together Campaign,” can and will successfully elicit awareness of and encourage development in the field of mental health in a way that will not only positively benefit those living with the disorders, but those living amongst the disorders too. The campaign

will offer educational workshops and events on college and university campuses that will serve as cross country fundraisers to help fund the NARSAD grants while influencing younger communities to apprehend and accept their roles in alleviating the negative affects of mental illness. The objective is to spread awareness about the foundation and what it works towards while getting people excited to help in ways other than scientific research.

About The Client

The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation began in 1981 as a small effort of family and friends of the mentally ill called The American Schizophrenia Association. Their idea was to speed up the process of mental health research and breakthroughs to hopefully find cures or improvements that could help their loved ones from suffering. The family group was joined and aided by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, National Mental Health Association and National Depressive and Manic Depressive Association. In 1985, the organization became known as NARSAD and by 1987, the group had donated its first NARSAD grant. After a rebranding in 2011, the non profit became The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation that is known today. Since then, this foundation has granted over 4,000 deserving scientists a whopping sum of over \$346 million spread amongst over 5,000 grants (The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, 2016).

The foundation awards the most promising researchers with the most hopeful discoveries, and the grant recipients are selected by an elite scientific panel called “The Scientific Council.” This council is comprised of 165 neuroscientists and Nobel Prize winners who have proven successful in the fields of brain development and mental health. The award recipients are judged by specific research criteria and the initial grant funds research that is typically funded by larger

federal grants in the future. Grants are dispersed amongst different categories including basic research, new technologies, diagnostic tools/ early intervention, and next generation therapies.

Differentiation

Many people wonder why The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation is substantially different from their competitors, and the answer is this: they are successful because they are founded by love, dedication, and hope. Most other non profit organizations in the mental health world are founded on the idea of research and science. Although this is what the foundation does in a nut shell, their drive is different from that of others. Jeffrey Borenstein, M.D, President and CEO of The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation (2014) writes that “One of the saddest aspects of mental illness is that it often strikes people at a very young age. Psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and chemical dependence all begin to surface in adolescence and young adulthood.” The foundation is so proficient and meticulous because the members truly understand recovery is not imperative alone, but every miniscule discovery along the way means just as much to the mentally ill as a final cure.

“Our minds are stronger together,” the tagline for the campaign suggests that every idea matters, every suggestion counts, and every mind works in a way that can help to make an immense difference and leave an immeasurable impact on the field of mental health.

Target Audience

The Stronger Together Campaign will target colleges and universities across the nation. Individuals on college campuses have the most influence around the country. Professors and students have the ability to reach the greatest number of people. Students can positively inspire younger individuals and explain statistics and findings to those older than them. Professors have access to a wide range of information and sources. The official target audience is men and

women alike, ages 18 to 36, of all demographic backgrounds who attend or work at a college or university. Even the institutions will be diverse, ranging from primarily white institutions (PWIs), historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and community schools, all offering an array of degree programs and curriculum. Those targeted are generally more liberal in that they are more open to new concepts, philosophies and ways of thinking despite controversial views or past teachings. The target audience for this campaign all have a natural zest for life and they believe in working together to better the lives of others. They each have the ability to put differences, stereotypes and demographic separations aside. These separations include race, gender, age, socioeconomic background, religion or belief system, educational background, annual income, sexuality, etcetera. The members of the campaign's target audience strive for equality and they identify as "people persons" who identify with the idea of a greater good for all mankind.

Tone and Voice

The tone and voice conveyed in this campaign will be very direct, communicating the indication that "we are all in this together." In most cases, the voice will come from that of an expert, "somebody who stands outside the brand and has the expertise to evaluate it" (Felton 241), and celebrities, where "The key is to give your treatment of that famous person some snap" (Felton 243). The tone and voice is to be very informative and even helpful in understanding the cause. The voice will subtly, yet powerfully convey that mental disorders are common parts of every day life. However, the voice will also sound worried in that mental illnesses are only a problem when they are not addressed and alleviated. The tone will suggest to the audience "this is where you come in..."

Why This Organization Matters

This organization is both relevant and important because it allows for family and friends of the mentally ill to be a part of the solution. The world of mental health care must change. One day, the organization will be able to promise recovery, but until then, the organization works diligently to provide hope. The issue is that most people are unaware of how close to home mental disorders really are, and they do not understand their role in fighting for the cause.

William A. Anthony (1993) acknowledges that while there are no absolute cures for mental disorders, the impact thereof can be alleviated by support and a more positive view of self and the effects of these illnesses below:

Recovery in the mental health context refers to the process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, and skills in order to live a satisfying life within the limitations caused by illness. A mental health service system based on the recovery concept incorporates the services of a community support system... A recovery-based mental health system assumes that recovery can occur without professional intervention, requires support from an outside person, and can occur even though symptoms recur.

Why This Campaign Matters

The Stronger Together Campaign matters because it is time to start showing people what the foundation has been doing for the past 35 years. Yes, this cause is prominent in the lives of the mentally ill as well as their family and friends, but the foundation is ready to explain to the world that mental disorders distress everybody in some way, shape or form. The only way to surely create lasting impacts is to get everybody on board. Mental disorders can be frightening when they are not controlled, but if society was aware of the circumstances and ready to help, then there would be nothing to be afraid of. Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the director general of

the World Health Report 2001: Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope (2001), explains that we cannot excommunicate those with mental illnesses from our communities because they are different. Her thoughts are expressed below:

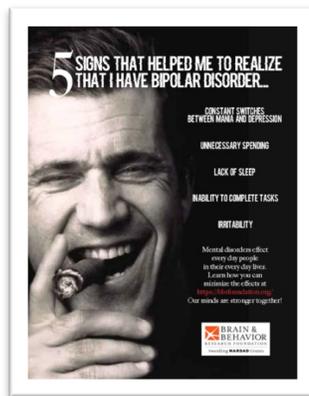
Mental Health is not a personal failure. It does not only happen to other people... There is no justification for excluding people with a mental illness or brain disorder from our communities – there is room for everyone. Yet many of us still shy away from, or feign ignorance of such individuals – as if we do not dare to understand and care... [on the theme of her 2001 report] Science and sensibility are combining to break down real and perceived barriers to care and cure in mental health.

Campaign Media

Within The Stronger Together Campaign, different types of media will be executed. The three most prominent forms of media for this campaign will be print, mobile, and guerilla media. Because the target audience is young and very technologically savvy, these types of media will best catch their attention and hold their interest. Print media and advertisements will be plastered all over the campuses of the selected colleges and universities. The advertisements will be posted to the social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, of the large and influential organizations and groups on campus. This campaign will convey statistics, inspirational stories, trivia, and foundation breakthroughs through rallies, discussion panels, soap box lectures, flash mobs and town hall meetings held to determine what is known about mental illness, explain how to help those with mental illness, and to express how collective mental illnesses are. These types of public displays will then be posted to individual social media platforms, such as Snapchat and Facebook, creating a huge campus buzz.

Most of the campaign advertisements will have a film theme, revolving around movies, actors and actresses that have been influential in the movie scene during the majority of the lifetimes of the target audience. The selected celebrities are individuals who also suffer from mental disorders. The movie theme was inspired by the idea of Free Association as explained by Craig Smallish in his tutorial, Developing Ideas and Design Concepts (2013), where he states “When we use free association, it allows us to expand our range of ideas and covering even greater potential.” Some of the selected celebrities include Mel Gibson and Brooke Shields. They are also the celebrities whose voices and images will be used to reach the target audience. Movies are a significant part of today’s pop culture and celebrities have become a part of every day life, so this theme will help to successfully sway the opinion of the target audience.

The foundation colors are orange, blue and black; bright and engaging as well as dramatic. Therefore, the color scheme for The Stronger Together Campaign will play off of that. The color scheme will represent each color presented for awareness of a mental disorder. For example, light green for obsessive compulsive disorder, turquoise for anxiety, royal blue for depression, etcetera. While the colors are full of meaning, the fonts used within the campaign will generally be sans serif fonts because they are neat and simple. College students identify more with simplicity and things that are easy to read and to understand. Sample ads include:



Conclusion

In conclusion, “The Stronger Together Campaign” for The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation will be monumental because it will seek to entice new supporters in a way that has not yet been accomplished by other mental health foundations. The campaign will address the importance of behavioral health awareness and mitigation in the field. The campaign ultimately plans to spread the notion that behavioral disorders effect all of us as people, and explain that understanding and acceptance can help lead to alleviation for all; not just those who are mentally ill. The Stronger Together Campaign will help to fund the prestigious NARSAD grants through the implementation and facilitation of campus wide events and strong use of different media platforms. This campaign seeks to influence younger communities to apprehend and accept their roles in relieving the negative affects of mental illness. “Our minds are stronger together,” and the work of the foundation, scientists and researchers, the family and friends of people with mental disorders, and the people around the world that care will create lasting impacts on the world of mental health in the form of discoveries and breakthroughs.

References

- Anthony, W. A. (1993). Recovery from mental illness: The guiding vision of the mental health service system in the 1990s. *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal*, 16(4), 11-23.
doi:10.1037/h0095655
- Borenstein, J., M.D., Lieber, S. A., & Pardes, H., M.D. (2014). Leadership Letter. Retrieved April 16, 2016, from [https://bbrfoundation.org/sites/bbrf.civicaactions.net/files/file-downloads/2014 BBRF Annual Report - FINAL.pdf](https://bbrfoundation.org/sites/bbrf.civicaactions.net/files/file-downloads/2014%20BBRF%20Annual%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf)
- Brundtland, D. H. (n.d.). A Message From the Director-General [Letter written October, 2001]. In *The World Health Report 2001: Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope* (p. ix). The World Health Organization (WHO).
- The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved April 18, 2016, from <https://bbrfoundation.org/>
- The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved April 10, 2016, from <https://bbrfoundation.org/>
- Felton, George. *Advertising: Concept and Copy (Third Edition), 3rd Edition*. W. W. Norton & Company, 08/2013. VitalBook file.
- National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. Circa National Alliance on Mental Health (2013) *Statistics:Any Disorder Among Adults*. Retrieved from http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/1ANYDIS_ADULT.shtml
- Podgornik, N., & Kovacic, A. (2014). Can mental health be viewed as a public social problem?. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 43(2), 52-69.

Smallish, C. (2013, August 16). Developing Ideas and Design Concepts. Retrieved April 13, 2016, from <http://www.lynda.com/Design-Business-tutorials/Using-free-association-process/126121/145397-4.html?org=fullsailold.edu>

“When Panic Hits, Even the Jeans Come Off!”

-Brooke shields

When experiencing a panic attack, there are many symptoms ranging from excessive feelings of heat to tight chest pains that replicate the feeling of a heart attack. Unfortunately, panic attacks are consuming over 60 million individuals around the globe who suffer from mental and behavioral disorders including, but not limited to anxiety, bi-polar disorder, and depression. Just ask Brooke Shields, former Calvin Klein model and outspoken victim of depression.

Luckily, The Brain and Behavior Research Foundation has granted over \$300 million in grants to over 4,000 deserving researchers who dedicate their every day lives to making monumental discoveries in the growing realm of mental health.

Learn more and join the fight at:
<https://bbrfoundation.org/>



 **BRAIN &
BEHAVIOR**
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Awarding **NARSAD** Grants

Our minds are stronger together!



5 SIGNS THAT HELPED ME TO REALIZE THAT I HAVE BIPOLAR DISORDER...

**CONSTANT SWITCHES
BETWEEN MANIA AND DEPRESSION**

UNNECESSARY SPENDING

LACK OF SLEEP

INABILITY TO COMPLETE TASKS

IRRITABILITY

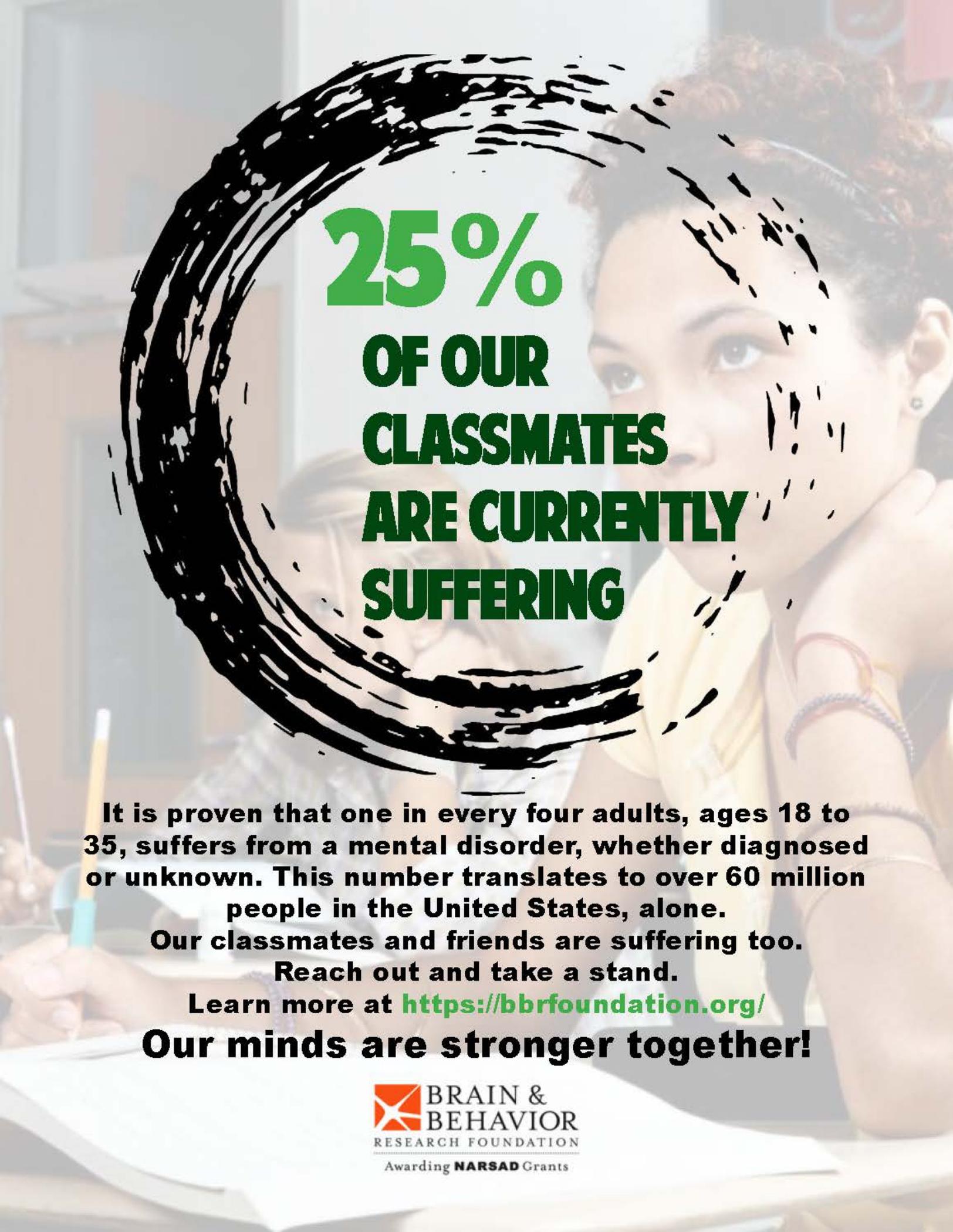
Mental disorders effect
every day people
in their every day lives.

Learn how you can
mizimize the effects at

<https://bbrfoundation.org/>

Our minds are stronger together!

 **BRAIN &
BEHAVIOR**
RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Awarding **NARSAD** Grants



25%
OF OUR
CLASSMATES
ARE CURRENTLY
SUFFERING

It is proven that one in every four adults, ages 18 to 35, suffers from a mental disorder, whether diagnosed or unknown. This number translates to over 60 million people in the United States, alone.

Our classmates and friends are suffering too.

Reach out and take a stand.

Learn more at <https://bbrfoundation.org/>

Our minds are stronger together!