

BEHIND HAPPY FACES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS BEHIND HAPPY FACES?

Behind Happy Faces is an Alpha Chi Omega program designed to provide members with a better understanding of their own mental health. This comprehensive mental wellness program will provide chapters and members with ways to start healthy conversations about the topic. It is a peer-facilitated program that is most successful when members open up and engage in the conversation about mental health.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE BEHIND HAPPY FACES PROGRAM?

Behind Happy Faces is comprised of nine different lessons. Each lesson can be facilitated at different times. The lesson lengths range from 17 to 25 minutes. All nine lessons total provide 3 hours and 28 minutes of engaging mental health curriculum that can be broken up over the course of the academic year. Read more about the nine-lesson program in the [Behind Happy Faces Implementation Guide](#).

HOW CAN WE INCORPORATE THE PROGRAM INTO OUR CHAPTER?

The Behind Happy Faces program was designed to fit within the current landscape of the chapter experience. The lessons could easily be broken up throughout the year and facilitated during chapter meetings. During a virtual experience, it is appropriate to email members the meeting agenda and notes so you can use the time allocated toward the chapter meeting to facilitate a lesson and to have a continuous conversation throughout the year. This program is designed to enhance your membership and provide members with the skills they need to better understand mental health and how to support a sister in need.

CAN WE FACILITATE THIS VIRTUALLY?

Yes! We have redesigned the facilitation guides to include helpful tips to facilitate each lesson over a virtual platform. Before facilitating virtually, the facilitator must review the implementation guide and [Zoom Resource: Behind Happy Faces](#) to support a virtual experience, as many of the activities will require alterations.

WHY WAS BEHIND HAPPY FACES EXPANDED TO NINE LESSONS?

Behind Happy Faces was created because members asked for help. After we rolled out the first four lessons, members asked, “Now what?” As a solution to provide continued educational experiences around mental health, we have expanded our programming to meet the unique needs and experiences our chapters are looking for. Alpha Chi Omega builds programs for members that address real issues faced by real, strong women on college campuses. These expanded lessons now help us execute that goal.

WHO SHOULD HELP OUR CHAPTER IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM?

The VP risk management should oversee the process of planning and implementing the program for the chapter. The great news is that chapters should not need to add additional meetings to the calendar. We recommend adding lessons to a regularly scheduled meeting — like at the end of an informal chapter meeting. The VP risk management does not have to serve as the program facilitator but should assist in identifying the best members to serve as facilitators for each lesson.

WHO FACILITATES BEHIND HAPPY FACES?

Every lesson will be led by members of the chapter. Anyone can volunteer to lead the facilitation of one or all of the lessons. Our best facilitators are ones who are passionate about mental health education. Members who are studying health sciences or psychology would make great facilitators, as well as leaders within the chapter and members who are interested in facilitating and engaging in these conversations.

Prepared facilitators make this program work most effectively. When your chapter sisters attend a lesson and the facilitator is prepared and engaging, it will be so much easier to support the program and increase participation.

CAN WE FACILITATE THIS WITH NEW MEMBERS?

Yes, chapters are encouraged to facilitate Behind Happy Faces with their new members! The VP new member education should work with the VP risk management to identify opportunities during the new member process to facilitate two or three lessons. Chapters should start with lessons 1-3 before facilitating other Behind Happy Faces lessons with new members. Chapters can also include new members in lessons with lifetime members.

WHAT KIND OF TOPICS DO THE LESSONS COVER?

Behind Happy Faces is intended to be a resource that encompasses understanding your own mental health and how to recognize and help a sister in need. The lessons

progressively build on one another. The beginning lessons focus on understanding what mental health is and the misperceptions associated with it, while the middle lessons have a deep focus on understanding your own mental health and how to utilize effective coping mechanisms for building positive mental health. The final lessons focus on how to recognize and help a friend who is in need.

DOES MY CHAPTER HAVE TO DO ALL THE BEHIND HAPPY FACES LESSONS?

The program is designed to facilitate all nine lessons to create the most impactful and educational experience around mental health. Chapters can explore doing two sessions back to back. It is recommended to do no more than two sessions in the same sitting.

WHAT LESSONS DO YOU RECOMMEND WE COMPLETE FIRST?

It is recommended that chapters complete lesson 1, 2, 3 and 8 each academic year. As members advance through their membership experience, chapters are encouraged to facilitate lessons later in the series. These lessons will expand on the conversation of stress, procrastination, sympathy, empathy, compassion and happiness.

WHAT ROLE DO ADVISORS PLAY IN THIS?

There are five specialized advisor workshops of Behind Happy Faces in The Heights Learning Center, available fall 2020. The workshops are available to all advisors in an online format with lessons and videos to engage in their own mental health as well as to support collegiate members. We have heard advisors need more resources on how to help members talk about mental health, and we are excited to be able to offer these virtual workshops. By participating in the five workshops, advisors will have a mutual understanding of mental health and how to support a member in need.

WHAT MATERIALS WILL WE NEED TO IMPLEMENT BEHIND HAPPY FACES?

The chapter will be able to access the necessary materials, which include a PowerPoint, video, facilitation guide and participant handouts for each lesson, in the [Alpha Chi Omega Resource Center](#). A virtual experience will require access to a video conference platform to facilitate the curriculum. An in-person experience will require flip chart paper, markers, paper or index cards.

WHAT IS THE ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR THE BEHIND HAPPY FACES PROGRAM?

Alpha Chi Omega believes that this experience is something our members want, and it will be easy to incorporate into already scheduled Alpha Chi Omega programming. There is no attendance requirement. The programming will play a vital role in the personal development of our members. We believe our chapters will elect to participate

in this because of the strength and impact of the program.

WHO CAN HELP MY CHAPTER WHEN WE HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BEHIND HAPPY FACES PROGRAM AND FACILITATION?

Your chapter has a risk management specialist who is an Alpha Chi Omega alumna who understands program logistics and the tips, tools and techniques for successful facilitation. Your chapter consultant also has an understanding of the nine collegiate lessons and can assist in the planning or implementation of the program.

Your chapter advisor and province collegiate chair can also help when you have questions. As always, you may contact the collegiate experience department at Alpha Chi Omega headquarters for support.

WHO IS ROSS SZABO?

Ross is the creator of the Behind Happy Faces curriculum and is an award-winning speaker, trainer, writer and returned Peace Corps volunteer who served in Botswana. As the former director of outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign, Ross pioneered a new genre of speaking and created a training program to empower the next generation of mental health advocates. He received the 2010 Didi Hirsch Removing the Stigma Leadership Award, the 2012 Minding Your Mind Changing Minds Award and the 2007 Campus Activities Best Male Performer Award. He has had his advocacy work entered into the Congressional Record. He has reached millions in wide-ranging media appearances and is a blogger for Huffington Post.