

Seize the Awkward – Campus Activation Brief

So – you’re ready to help people “Seize the Awkward” at your college or university. We’re excited for you to help spread the word and empower your peers to reach out and support friends who may be struggling with their mental health. The ideas below will help you get started. We encourage you to collaborate with your school’s administration, student government, Greek life, and relevant clubs, teams, etc. to maximize your reach.

- **Gallery Event**

- Print the “Seize the Awkward” artwork contained in our toolkit (linked) and commission artists on campus to create their own “Seize the Awkward” poster using the brief in our toolkit (linked). Host a “gallery opening” to highlight the art and inspire a conversation about mental health on campus
 - Find a location for your event on campus – performing arts space, student union, residence hall, etc.
 - Choose a date, time and title – don’t forget to consider holidays and popular campus events when scheduling.
 - When sending invitations, cast a wide net! Consider setting up a Facebook event and invite faculty, staff, and students – engage with the school paper to ensure the event is covered.
 - Hang the art in an awkward fashion (in corners, low to the ground, on the ceiling, in narrow hallways) to inspire a conversation about mental health on campus.
 - Reach out after the event and post information about resources and ways to seek help beyond peers.

- **PSA Screening**

- Show the longform PSA to students before or after large group gatherings and events including sports events, concerts, guest lectures, speakers, conferences, and in student unions to spur a conversation about mental health on campus
 - What are your initial reactions to this video?
 - Have you ever experienced an awkward moment or silence with a friend? Tell us about it.
 - What’s your favorite way to check in with a friend?
 - What are the benefits to reaching out to a friend or peer when they seem down or not themselves?
 - Were you ever in a situation where you felt that you should reach out to a friend? Did you? Why or why not? If you did reach out, what did you say?
 - Why do you think people don’t reach out to their friends when they sense something could be wrong?
 - What are some things you might say to continue the conversation after you’ve initially checked in with your friend?
 - Has someone ever reached out to you when you were down or not feeling your best? What did they say or do that was helpful?
 - When do you think it would be appropriate or necessary to get someone else involved (i.e., a professional on campus, trusted adult)?

- React to discussion questions on social using #SeizeTheAwkward
- Invite mental health professionals from your counseling center to be available during and after the screening, and remind peers of the campus resources and national support resources (e.g., Crisis Text Line, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) available to them should they want to discuss mental health more fully with a professional.
- **Share on Social Media**
 - Share suggested social posts and copy on personal and campus social channels (student government, clubs, sports teams, etc.) to promote the campaign within your community.
 - Follow @SeizeTheAwkward on Instagram and tag your friends and the campaign sponsors @jedfoundation @afspnational
 - Use the hashtag #SeizeTheAwkward to engage others – encourage your followers to share the PSAs and the campaign website (seizetheawkward.org).
 - Feel free to use “seize the awkward” as a phrase to denote the act of stepping up and reaching out to a friend. E.g. “Anyone can seize the awkward, just ask a friend if they’re feeling OK if you notice they aren’t acting themselves.”
- **Share IRL**
 - Collaborate with student events, campus administrators, professors, etc. to share campaign materials like campaign signage, posters, coupons, and stickers at highly trafficked areas on campus like student center, cafeterias, residence halls, or the athletic center.
 - If interested in oversized signage to install in public spaces, please contact Ad Council, JED, or AFSP to request the appropriate files.
 - Participate in a Story Slam on-campus and tell your story of supporting a friend who was down.
- **AFSP Out of the Darkness Campus Walk**
 - Reach out to your local AFSP Chapter at afsp.org/chapter to learn how you can bring an Out of the Darkness Campus Walk to your college/university. OOTD Campus walks bring education and raise awareness for mental health and suicide prevention. OOTD Campus walks are another way to spread the word about Seize the Awkward.

For more information of other ways to get involved with and/or support JED or AFSP on campus, please visit jedfoundation.org/get-involved or [AFSP.org/take-action](https://afsp.org/take-action).