



OUT OF THE FOG

The monthly newsletter of NAMI San Francisco
www.namif.org

Stressed Out?

New Social Networking Site for College-Age Adults: Mental Health, Music and More
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Freshman year. Final exams. Life after graduation. The pressures of college transitions involve many competing demands, including in some cases, mental health concerns.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has launched StrengthofUs.org, a new online community where young adults, ages 18-25, can provide mutual support in navigating challenges and opportunities before, during and after the college years.

“Young adulthood is an exciting challenge, but also a confusing and stressful time for anyone,” said Michael Fitzpatrick, NAMI executive director. “Life can throw things at you fast.”

Developed by college students and other young adults, StrengthofUs.org is a user-driven social networking community where a person can connect with peers, share personal stories, creativity and helpful resources by writing and responding to blog entries, engaging in discussion groups and sharing videos, photos and other news. It offers resources on:

- Mental health issues
- Healthy relationships
- Family and friends
- Campus life
- Independent living
- Finances
- Employment
- Housing

“StrengthofUs.org is about helping and inspiring each other,” said Alex White, age 23, a member of the advisory group who helped develop the site. “I would not be alive today if it had not been for the love, care and support I received from family, friends and loved ones.”

A Montana State University graduate, White was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 13. He attempted

suicide before gaining control of the illness, but now leads a happy, productive life in New York City . He has made an award-winning short film, *Une Vignette de Melancolie*, about depression that has played internationally.

On April 21, the site will host a “launch party” featuring a remix of the song “Goodmorning” from the upcoming *Derivatives* album by William Fitzsimmons, who worked helping people with mental illness before turning a passion for music into his profession. He was named an iTunes Best Singer-Songwriter for his album *The Sparrow and the Crow* and his music has been featured on the television show *Grey’s Anatomy*.

The launch coincides with the recent deaths of three students from suicides at Cornell University and reports of increasing cases of depression and anxiety on college campuses nationwide. “I think that depression and suicide are the largest health issues facing college students at this time,” said Alan Glass, director of St. Louis ‘s Washington University student health services and American College Health Association board member, in an interview with the school’s independent student newspaper.

NAMI created the StrengthofUs community through the support of the Rodwell Dart Memorial Foundation, established by Hailey Dart, in loving memory of her son, Roddy, who lost his life at age 22.