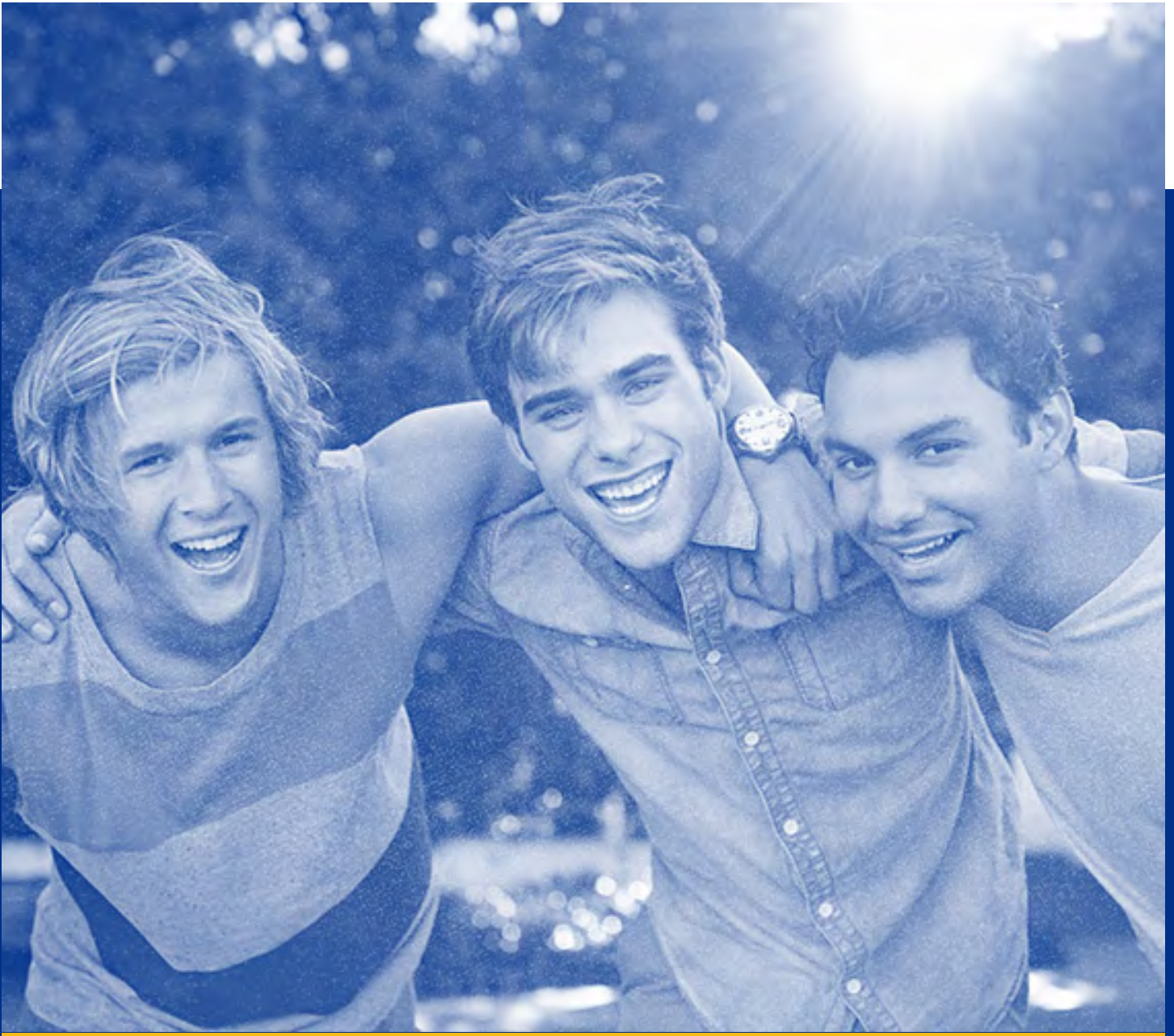


# **Fraternities and Mental Health: Supporting Emotional Well-Being Among Members and Across Campus**



The Jed Foundation

# Table of Contents

- 03** About The Jed Foundation
- 04** Executive Summary
- 07** Introduction
- 08** Methodology
- 09** Research Scope and Context
- 10** Summary of Findings
- 20** Recommendations
- 33** Conclusion
- 33** Acknowledgments
- 34** Appendix A: Literature Review Summary
- 34** Appendix B: Additional Information  
About the Concept-Mapping Project
- 35** References

# About The Jed Foundation (JED)

The Jed Foundation is a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults. We're partnering with high schools and colleges to strengthen their mental health, substance misuse, and suicide prevention programs and systems. We're equipping teens and young adults with the skills and knowledge to help themselves and each other. We're encouraging community awareness, understanding, and action for young adult mental health.

## Suggested Citation

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## Executive Summary

Fraternities have a substantial influence — both positive and negative — on college culture in the United States. Greek life has been part of higher education and the student experience since the 1800s. There are an [estimated 750,000](#) fraternity and sorority members in college and more than 9 million alumni in the U.S. Even in places where membership is lower, the perceived centrality and influence of fraternities on student social life on campus is substantial.

That influence comes with benefits and challenges for members and the larger campus community. Social fraternities include community-service requirements that benefit the communities they are part of and offer social and career benefits, but fraternity culture can also promote heavy drinking, sexual assault, and hazing — issues that can harm the mental health and well-being of both fraternity members and other students on campus.

Since the [National Panhellenic Conference](#), which oversees 26 women-only member organizations, strongly recommends that [events hosted by sororities](#) be alcohol-free — and in some cases prohibits alcohol from being present — campus party culture and the resulting climate are largely shaped by fraternity houses. This report, therefore, focuses specifically on fraternities and their impact on campus. We recognize that the behavior of fraternity members outlined in the research can negatively affect sorority members and other students across campus, so addressing these behaviors and the culture that permits them could have benefits well beyond the fraternity house.

To investigate the relationship between fraternity membership and both member and nonmember mental health, The Jed Foundation (JED) utilized a multipronged approach: a review of established literature, secondary analysis of data from the [Healthy Minds Study \(HMS\)](#) and the American College Health Association's annual [National College Health Assessment \(NCHA\)](#), and two novel studies conducted from 2019 to 2021 — before and during the COVID-19 pandemic — in partnership with a large national fraternity organization. One study surveyed 1,478 students about fraternity and sorority life's benefits, challenges, and mental health impacts. Interviews with students and thought leaders added depth to the findings. The second study was a concept-mapping project with 445 participants, which identified strategies to enhance college men's mental and emotional well-being, culminating in actionable approaches to campus mental health improvement.

An update to the review of the literature was conducted in 2024 to include any new studies since the partnership was established, including relevant research that pertains to Black and Latiné fraternities and sororities, multiracial fraternities and sororities, and participation of LGBTQIA+ students and students of color in historically white, heteronormative fraternities and sororities.

The resulting report sheds light on how fraternities impact mental health on college campuses and offers recommendations to national fraternity leadership, administrators, and student leaders for enhancing mental health on college campuses, both inside and outside of fraternities.

There is a complex relationship between fraternities and the mental health of their members, as membership offers both advantages and risks.

Positive Impacts of Fraternity Membership	Risks Related to Fraternity Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social advantages, including fostering community and belonging</li> <li>• Networking opportunities that can provide direction and purpose, building members’ individual identities and professional connections</li> <li>• Buffers against stress and loneliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of alcohol misuse, contributing to higher rates of alcohol overconsumption after graduation</li> <li>• Exposure to hazing, which can involve humiliation, binge drinking, social isolation, and sleep deprivation</li> <li>• Pressure to conform to social norms of masculinity, potentially leading to feelings of inadequacy or failure</li> </ul>

In addition to the concrete impacts on fraternity members listed above, the influence of fraternity culture extends to the broader campus, affecting the overall climate. Because the mental health implications of fraternity membership are multifaceted, providing fraternity members, nonmembers, and university administrators with clear, actionable research can support them in fostering a healthier and more inclusive campus environment.

Our research highlights the complex effects of fraternity membership on mental health, informed by pandemic conditions. Findings encompassed six key themes:

1. Being part of a fraternity can create a sense of belonging and help members establish stronger social networks.
2. The benefits fraternities offer may buffer mental health challenges for their members.
3. Alcohol and other substance misuse is common in some fraternity settings and poses significant threats to well-being — for both members and nonmembers.
4. Fraternity members are more likely to commit sexual harassment and assault, harming the mental health of victims and campus safety overall.
5. Students who are not part of fraternity life see fraternities as central to campus social life, but also see them as posing important risks to the well-being of the larger campus community.
6. Fraternity members indicate that key factors in improving their mental health are increased awareness of their own and others’ needs and a greater ability to respond positively and respectfully.

The findings, coupled with JED's experience in this area, yielded several key recommendations, primarily aimed at national fraternity organizations:

1. Make mental health a priority and set up systems for assessment and tracking.
2. Affirm and improve on what is working by acknowledging and building upon fraternities' strengths: creating connectedness and belonging.
3. Address clear challenges to mental health, particularly substance misuse, hazing, and norms related to exploitative sexual behavior.
4. Work to reduce shame and secrecy around help-seeking.
5. Enhance self-awareness, capacity for vulnerability, and opportunities for self-care.
6. Conduct regular screenings to identify students at risk.
7. Develop and follow crisis-management procedures.
8. Make it easy to access resources.
9. Educate and enable alumni to support current member needs.



## Introduction

Fraternalities have clear social benefits for members, including connection to community and a sense of belonging. Fraternity membership offers unique networking opportunities, which can positively impact mental well-being by providing a sense of direction and purpose for college students navigating career and academic pressures, as well as [provide social capital and increase future income levels](#). This is particularly significant given that [the college years are a critical period](#) for the development of personal identity and social networks. The positive aspects of fraternity membership have the potential to contribute to better mental health outcomes by providing a supportive social network that can buffer against stress and loneliness, factors often [associated with poor mental health](#) among college students.

However, the existence of fraternities comes with challenges for both members and nonmembers. A [robust body of research](#) highlights the prevalence of risky behaviors, including alcohol misuse and hazing, within some fraternity environments, likely affecting the mental health of members. In addition, the pressure to conform to social norms of masculinity within fraternities has the potential to lead to feelings of inadequacy or failure. The influence of fraternity culture also affects nonmembers, shaping the overall campus environment and impacting the mental health and safety of the wider student body.

The ways fraternity culture can influence nonmember students is an often underexamined element of Greek life's impact. Research suggests the presence of fraternities on college campuses can significantly shape the social environment and norms, [often extending beyond their immediate membership](#). Fraternities can have a significant impact on women's college experiences, in particular, since some fraternity norms can perpetuate gender stereotypes, influence attitudes toward women, and contribute to the [elevated rates of sexual assault](#) and [sexual harassment](#) associated with fraternity events and culture.

Overall, fraternities' impact on members' and nonmembers' mental health isn't simple. It's influenced by various factors. Understanding the effects is important not just for fraternities and their members, but also for nonmembers and university leaders who want to create a healthy and inclusive campus environment.

# Methodology

We took a multipronged approach to exploring the complex mental health impacts of fraternity membership, sharing clear, practical insights to help fraternity members, nonmembers, and university staff create a healthier, more inclusive campus for all. Notably, our study started a few months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and concluded in the spring of 2021. All of the primary data was collected after pandemic restrictions were put in place.

In addition to an extensive literature review, the data shared in this report was collected in three ways:

1. We conducted an analysis of two national datasets to provide deeper insights that enhance the literature review. We reviewed data from the 2018-19 American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment (NCHA), which included behavioral and attitudinal indicators related to health and substance use from a sample of 67,226 undergraduate students — 9.5% of whom identified as Greek affiliated — across diverse four-year universities. We also assessed the Healthy Minds Study (HMS) data from academic years 2016-17 and 2018-19. HMS is a web-based survey focusing on demographics, mental health outcomes, substance use, and mental health service awareness that encompasses 85,458 undergraduate students from both two- and four-year institutions, 9,930 — approximately 11.6% — of whom were Greek affiliated. The participants were all over 18 years old and enrolled at least part time in a degree program at one of the participating institutions across the United States.
2. We conducted an original quantitative research study using a nationally representative survey designed to examine perceptions of fraternity and sorority life among undergraduate students (referred to in this report as the JED Greek Life Perceptions Study). The survey was rolled out in the fall of 2020. A total of 1,478 undergraduate students, including 112 fraternity members, 245 sorority members, and 58 co-ed fraternity members were surveyed. The study was designed to assess perceptions of the benefits and challenges of fraternity and sorority (F/S) life on college campuses, motivations for joining fraternities and sororities, perceptions of concerning or uncomfortable incidents at college parties (including but not limited to fraternity parties), and student mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the survey, six students and six thought leaders were interviewed about their experiences with fraternities on college campuses and the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. We completed a comprehensive concept-mapping project in the spring of 2021. Concept mapping blends quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate actionable findings that can be used to guide planning and evaluation. The study involved 445 participants and aimed to identify what members of Greek-letter organizations, nonmember students, school administrators, and members of other fraternity-affiliated groups (such as alumni, chapter presidents, and parents) see as the best strategies for enhancing a sense of mental and emotional well-being among men on college campuses.



# Research Scope and Context

This report draws on a review of existing research, analysis of two national datasets, and JED's original research, offering a detailed and nuanced look at how fraternity life relates to mental health for fraternity members and, more broadly, for students on campuses with fraternities. JED's survey, conducted in partnership with a large majority-white national fraternity, was intended to gauge perceptions of Greek life among undergraduates and was not designed to compare different types of Greek-letter organizations. Additionally, most of the secondary data reflects majority-white, well-established fraternities. Although much of what we found was consistent with existing literature, results are not meant to be generalized to all fraternities or all college campuses. Historically Black fraternities, for example, are likely to face a different set of opportunities and challenges than those detailed in this research. Similarly, smaller, co-ed, and more specialized fraternities (service, cultural, or honorary fraternities, for example) may not be well represented by these composite findings.

Our research suggests that among diverse populations in Greek-letter organizations, only half of all Black (51%) and Latiné (51%) members reported feeling supported in their identities within their fraternities or sororities, while 78% of white members said they felt supported (JED Greek Life Perceptions Study). Literature and data on the experience of diverse groups of students within largely white and heteronormative social fraternities is largely unavailable. This is an area in strong need of future research.

Examination of the mental health effects of fraternities on nonmembers is another missing element of the current literature on the relationship between fraternity membership and mental health. Fraternity social events significantly influence campus life, with 75% of students at schools with strong Greek life saying their social life depends on it (JED Greek Life Perceptions Study). Thus, understanding the experiences of nonmembers and their connections to fraternity life is crucial, especially regarding mental health. One of the goals of this study was to begin to address that gap.

Likewise, despite significant media coverage of negative outcomes of hazing, limited academic research exists on hazing in the Greek system. The NCHA and HMS data does not allow for an examination of hazing practices, so the following summary is based solely on the review of empirical work and conversations with domain-area experts. Hazing is often seen by fraternity members as a way to develop group unity, but hazing practices usually involve some combination of humiliation, alcohol consumption, social isolation, and sleep deprivation. The levels of alcohol consumption at Greek events — particularly initiation events — is especially concerning and should be a focus of intervention and prevention efforts.

Few studies have looked at the mental health impact of these practices on pledges or fraternity members who are involved in them, but it is likely that elements of hazing have negative effects on health and well-being. Notably, members of fraternities with climates that reflect certain traditional masculine norms are [more likely to endorse hazing](#).

What follows is an overview of findings that emerged consistently across the various studies. We conclude with a set of actionable recommendations for national fraternity organizations, as well as for college campuses more broadly.

# Summary of Findings

## Theme 1

### Being part of a fraternity can create a sense of belonging and help members establish stronger social networks.



A sense of belonging is essential for college students, helping them feel valued and accepted within their campus communities. Research underscores its importance, showing that students who participate in activities outside the classroom and develop a strong sense of belonging [are more likely to thrive](#). Belonging is [closely tied to academic success](#), increasing motivation and enjoyment in studies while reducing students' likelihood of dropping out. Through opportunities for connection, leadership, and personal development, Greek life plays a significant role in cultivating this sense of belonging for hundreds of thousands of students nationwide.

One set of researchers examining the benefits of Black Greek-letter fraternities showed that students experience [mentorship, vulnerability in friendship, and racial identity affirmation](#), creating mutually beneficial spaces for support in friendship, academics, and working toward professional goals. Another study found that culturally based sororities within the National Pan-Hellenic Council [serve students of color in important ways](#), including providing a source of community, affirming students' racial identities, and connecting students to resources that support their academic success and career development. A study of [Latino fraternities and Latina sororities](#) showed that membership in Greek-letter organizations provides a sense of family that is central to Latiné culture, offers shared cultural connection, addresses the importance of giving back to the community, and creates a sense of belonging. Research that explored LGBTQIA+ experiences in heteronormative fraternities indicated that being embedded in a group setting has the potential to provide supportive [interpersonal relationships](#) and opportunities for [leadership and personal growth](#), despite exposure to discrimination in many fraternity and sorority settings. Finally, a study that examined Jewish fraternities as [buffers against antisemitism](#) suggested that these organizations can serve as spaces from which to engage in combating antisemitism on campus.

Our research aligned with these findings and suggested that a sense of belonging and the expansion of social and professional networks is one of the primary reasons students join fraternities. Fraternity membership has been linked to:

- [Increased engagement in activities](#) such as volunteering and participation in student government
- An increase in the [likelihood of pursuing a graduate degree](#)
- [Positive outcomes after college](#), including gaining hands-on learning experiences and finding good jobs

## Theme 2

### The benefits fraternities offer may buffer mental health challenges for their members.

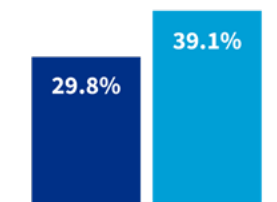
Given the clear benefits of fraternity membership, it is reasonable to assume that the strong social connections within fraternities help protect members' emotional well-being. While there is not a lot of research on this topic, one study suggests that students in the fraternity and sorority community report [higher levels of positive mental health](#).

These findings, however, are not consistent across all of the research examined. Another study looked at the relationship between fraternity and sorority membership and [depression, self-esteem, and suicidal ideation](#). The authors found no difference between members and nonmembers on any of these measures, and suggested that the advantages and disadvantages of membership in a Greek-letter organization may balance each other out.

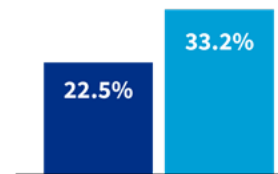
To explore the relationship between fraternity membership and mental health, we conducted a secondary analysis of two large college datasets: the Healthy Minds Study (HMS) and the National College Health Assessment (NCHA).

- According to HMS data, fraternity members were less likely than the general student population to report:

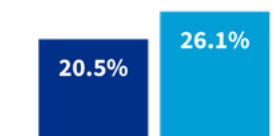
Depression (PHQ-9) (29.8% vs. 39.1%)



Anxiety (GAD-7) (22.5% vs. 33.2%)



Nonsuicidal self-injury (past year)  
(20.5% vs. 26.1%)



Serious thoughts of suicide (past year)  
(11.8 vs. 15.5%)

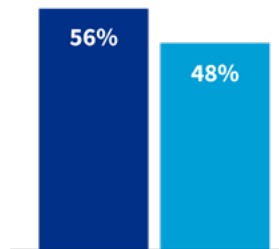


Fraternity Members Nonmembers

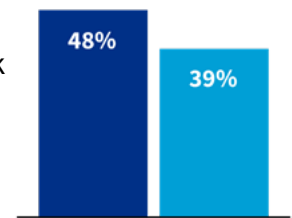


- Similarly, NCHA data suggests that when compared to nonmembers, F/S members were significantly less likely to report feeling hopeless, lonely, sad, or depressed in the last year.
- According to HMS data, members of fraternities and sororities were more likely than other students to report flourishing (reported by 36.5% of fraternity members, 35.9% of sorority members, and 28.9% of all students independent of F/S status).
- HMS data also suggests that both fraternity and sorority members report greater awareness of mental health services on their campus compared to nonmembers. However, while sorority members were more likely to use therapy services, fraternity members were not.
- According to the JED Greek Life Perceptions Study, fraternity and sorority members are more likely than nonmembers to agree that:

◦ There is something admirable in coping with conflicts without resorting to professional help (56% vs. 48%)



◦ Personal/emotional troubles tend to work out by themselves (48% vs. 39%)



◦ A person should work out their own problems (34% vs. 25%)



■ F/S Members  
■ Nonmembers

It's important to note that our data doesn't necessarily reflect the experiences of students of color. A recent study of multiracial fraternity and sorority members suggested that more racially diverse chapters of majority-white sororities and fraternities are [possible places of belonging](#) for multiracial students. Nevertheless, those students often face "cultural taxation," meaning they take on extra stress and responsibility to fit in and build community, which can negatively affect their mental health. Participants explained that they often had to educate other members about their intersectional identities to foster understanding and sometimes felt they were used as a "diversity defense" to show racial diversity within the organization.

## Theme 3

### Alcohol and other substance misuse is common in some fraternity settings and poses significant threats to well-being — for both members and nonmembers.



Although some studies show improved mental health indicators in fraternity members vs. nonmembers, fraternity members consistently endorse higher rates of substance use, which can be linked to negative mental health effects. Both NCHA and HMS data showed significantly higher alcohol consumption among fraternity and sorority members compared to their peers. Between 80%-87% of F/S members reported binge drinking (five or more drinks), which is much higher than the 64%-65% of non-F/S members who reported binge drinking. Research on a [national sample](#) of college students found that active members of both fraternities and sororities had higher rates of binge drinking and marijuana use than nonmembers of the same gender and that members of fraternities but not sororities reported higher levels of illicit drug use than nonmembers.

Substance use behaviors are often driven by the perception that everyone else is doing it and the idea that others approve of that kind of behavior — even if, in reality, they do not. Even when compared to other male students whose friends approved of their alcohol use, fraternity members were [seven times as likely](#) to report “prepartying.”

[The data suggests](#), however, that the social benefits of fraternity membership, such as strong connections and support, may help reduce some of the negative impacts of behaviors often associated with fraternity life.

Despite those buffers, it is important to understand the role that increased substance use and risky behaviors play in both member and nonmember well-being. It is particularly vital since many of the students who drink or use drugs with fraternity members can be directly affected when substance use takes place within settings that normalize sexual harassment and assault.

Moreover, the positive effects of fraternity membership may fade after college, even as substance use habits continue. Alumni of fraternities are [more likely to report](#) alcohol overconsumption [after graduation](#). That may be one of the reasons fraternity membership is associated with [earlier ages of death](#) compared to some of their peers.

Compared to peers:

- According to NCHA data, fraternity and sorority members were over three times more likely than nonmembers to report engaging in heavy episodic drinking. They were also more likely to report experiencing alcohol-related consequences, including:
  - Regretting something they did while under the influence
  - Forgetting where they were or what they did
  - Getting in trouble with police
  - Physically injuring themselves or someone else
  - Having unprotected sex
  - Having sex without asking for consent
  - Going to the emergency room due to excessive alcohol consumption
- NCHA data also suggests that fraternity members use 8 of 11 alcohol safety measures significantly less than nonmembers. The difference in use of alcohol safety measures was greatest for approaches that restrict consumption, including:
  - Avoiding drinking games
  - Choosing not to drink
  - Pacing drinks to fewer than one per hour

Despite these findings, there are some promising signs for the future. One qualitative study that examined Greek-life students' perspectives on party culture, safety, and sexual violence indicated that many [welcome institutional support](#) for quality education on harm-reduction strategies related to substance use and sexual violence, particularly because managing member safety often falls to fraternity leaders and members.

## Theme 4

### Fraternity members are more likely to commit sexual harassment and assault, harming the mental health of victims and campus safety overall.

Sexual assault and harassment are historically and consistently linked to participation in fraternity life on college campuses. Sexual assault and harassment are [strongly associated with poor mental health outcomes for victims](#), and first-year female students are at higher risk for sexual assault. There are many risk factors when it comes to sexual assault and harassment on campus.

- Alcohol consumption is a consistent and potent risk factor for sexual assault. Research suggests that [at least 50% of sexual assaults](#) on college campuses occur when perpetrators or victims are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Fraternity men and student athletes are significantly [more likely to commit](#) alcohol-involved sexual assault than other men on campus. In general, research shows higher rates of [sexual assault perpetration](#) among fraternity members relative to nonmembers.

Since data from the JED Greek Life Perceptions Study suggests that members of fraternities and sororities are highly likely to date one another (63% of F/S respondents report dating within the F/S community), the experience of sorority members is an important proxy indicator of fraternity impact on non-fraternity student health and well-being.

According to NCHA data, in the past 12 months, sorority members were significantly more likely than female nonmembers to report:

- Emotional abuse or being in a relationship that was emotionally abusive
- Being sexually touched without consent
- Being stalked
- Being a victim of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault

These experiences, in turn, are associated with increased mental health risk for the sorority members who experience them, our data shows, especially chronic hopelessness, being overwhelmed, exhaustion, loneliness, sadness, depression, anxiety, nonsuicidal self-injury, and anger. Same-gender dating within fraternities may have similarly harmful effects.

NCHA data showed that college students, especially students of color, who report sexual harassment or assault are at significantly higher risk of suicidal thoughts and attempts (two to nine times the risk) than their peers who were not harassed or assaulted, regardless of sex.

Although alcohol and party culture contribute to sexual harassment and assault, various social and psychological factors are also at play. For example, fraternity culture has been linked to a greater endorsement of [traditional masculine norms](#) and [pressures to uphold those standards](#). Men who seek to join fraternities tend to be [more inclined toward sexual aggression](#) and more likely to endorse rape myths than their non-fraternity peers.

Because of the high rates of sexual harassment and assault in fraternities, and the close relationships between fraternities and sororities, sorority members can be at particular risk. A comparison study showed sorority women experienced [coercive and incapacitated](#) sexual assault more often than other college women. [Strategies sorority members employ](#) to protect themselves against assault include traveling in groups, using whisper networks to alert other members to danger, staying in neutral spaces, and using location sharing to let other members know where they are. Experiences vary between different groups of sorority members. A qualitative narrative study found that women of color in sororities sometimes [feel abandoned by their white sorority sisters](#), particularly when facing threats of sexual assault by fraternity men of color.



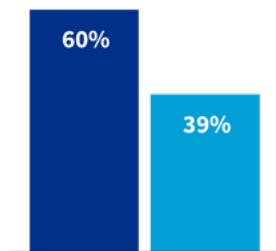
## Theme 5

Students who are not part of fraternity life see fraternities as central to campus social life, but also see them as posing important risks to the well-being of the larger campus community.

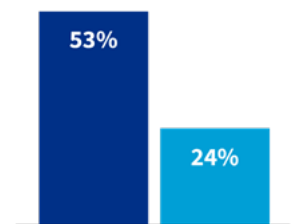


Given the powerful influence many fraternities have on campus life, one part of this project aimed to understand how non-fraternity members perceive and are impacted by fraternities on their campuses. JED's Greek Life Perceptions Study included a nationally representative sample of students on campuses with a fraternity and sorority presence. Respondents were students who were and were not affiliated with a fraternity or sorority (note that some findings were reported by Greek-life status and combined F/S data). The findings indicate that the majority of F/S students believe fraternities offer valuable opportunities to their members and the larger community. Some nonmembers also see benefits, but at significantly lower rates.

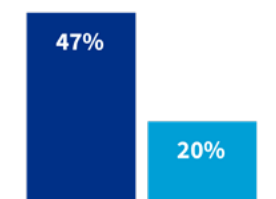
60% of F/S members and 39% of non-F/S members believe fraternities offer valuable opportunities to members.



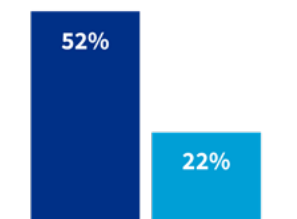
53% of F/S members and 24% of non-F/S members believe fraternities make positive contributions to the larger campus community.




47% of F/S members and 20% of non-F/S members believe fraternities are good for member mental health.



52% of F/S members and 22% of non-F/S members believe fraternities make positive contributions to the off-campus community.



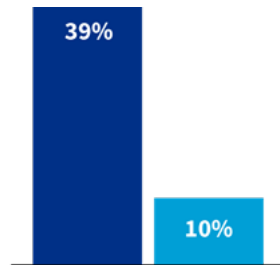
 F/S Members

 Nonmembers

Not surprisingly, the dominant association with fraternities — and the area in which there were a variety of concerning reports — revolves around fraternity parties and other social events. In particular:

- Two-thirds (66%) of students at schools with a F/S presence say their school’s social life is at least somewhat dependent on F/S life, including 33% who indicated that social life is highly dependent on F/S social life.

- F/S members are more likely than nonmembers to believe their school’s social life is dependent on F/S life a lot or a tremendous amount (39% vs. 10%).



- Women are more likely than men to say their school’s social life is dependent on F/S life a lot or a tremendous amount (21% vs. 15%).



■ F/S Members   ■ Nonmembers   ■ Women   ■ Men

- When students were asked to list the terms they most associate with fraternities, their top responses included “friendship,” as well as “hazing,” “sexual harassment or violence,” and “exclusivity.”
- Half of students believe that students at their school are frequently involved in concerning or uncomfortable incidents at fraternity-affiliated parties.
  - Women are more likely than men to associate fraternities with sexual harassment (28% vs. 18%) and racism (11% vs. 8%).
- F/S members are more likely than nonmembers to report witnessing a concerning incident at a college party (59% vs. 42%).
  - Students who witnessed concerning incidents at F/S-affiliated parties are more likely than those who witnessed incidents at other types of parties to say the incident was sexual harassment (49% vs. 34%), a fight (47% vs. 38%), hazing-related (27% vs. 9%), sexual assault (26% vs. 10%), racial bias-related (22% vs. 12%), nonconsensual drug-related (20% vs. 8%), or requiring hospitalization (18% vs. 10%).
  - Students who witnessed incidents at F/S-affiliated parties are more likely than those who witnessed incidents at other types of parties to say the use of drugs or alcohol contributed to the incident (84% vs. 75%).
  - More women (60%) than men (37%) say they witnessed a concerning incident at F/S-linked parties.
- One-third of F/S members (33%) say they have been directly involved in a concerning incident at a college party, compared to 16% of nonmembers.

## Theme 6

### **Fraternity members indicate that key factors in improving their mental health are increased awareness of their own and others' needs and a greater ability to respond positively and respectfully.**

One part of our research focused on understanding and supporting fraternity members' mental health. Themes that emerged from this research include learning how to manage strong emotions, how to allow and express vulnerability, and how to relate to others who may be different from them. Those themes suggested that many fraternity men see expansion of their relational and self-care capacities as a primary part of improving their mental health.

In JED's concept-mapping project, which blended qualitative and quantitative data from students, campus mental health professionals, and other fraternity-affiliated individuals, participants were given the following prompt: "For men on college campuses to have a sense of mental and emotional well-being, it is important that..." The responses were reduced to eliminate redundancy, and participants were asked to rate the resulting list. Among fraternity-member participants, the top statements rated as both highly important and feasible are telling, and they link improved fraternity mental health with enhanced social, emotional, and relational awareness. In order of ranking, fraternity members identified the following statements:

1. They understand the dangers of thrill-seeking behaviors such as fighting, reckless driving, unsafe sexual practices, substance misuse, and other risky activities that may "make them a man."
2. They treat one another with respect and dignity, even if they are different from one another.
3. Everyone should be trained as a suicide prevention gatekeeper.
4. When they fail, they are not demonized, told they are weak, chewed out for being male or for being a male who failed, or left unsupported.
5. Men have an understanding of their own mental health situation and the factors that lead to good and bad mental health.
6. They foster inclusive environments that welcome honest discussion.
7. They recognize the privileges they have as men.
8. They try therapy during a period of hardship, just so they know how it feels to share deep stuff with a professional.
9. They help men understand that brotherhood is built not through physical challenges and drinking, but through accountability and deep conversations with one another.
10. They feel supported in taking time for themselves and promoting well-being to their peers.
11. They learn to feel anger without physical destruction or harm to others or themselves.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations, primarily aimed at national fraternity organizations, are based on the project's findings and are further supported by JED's specific guidelines for colleges and universities found in the organization's [comprehensive approach](#).

## Recommendation 1

### Make mental health a priority and set up systems for assessment and tracking.

Mental health programming and initiatives will be most successful when fully integrated into existing structures and organizational culture. Instead of establishing a freestanding idea or program, treat mental health as a core filter through which culture, initiatives, programs, and processes are viewed. That includes leadership across national organizations, local chapters, and colleges and universities.

The strategic planning process should include:

- Naming mental health as a clear priority for the organization
- Identifying a lead individual or team on the national level to develop and implement the mental health plan, which may include participation from local chapters and campus leaders
- Reviewing useful frameworks and connecting with supportive partners
- Auditing existing needs and initiatives
- Developing and executing a clear plan for surveilling, supporting, and responding to emerging needs

Specific actions for Greek organizations to take at the national level:

- **Name mental health as a clear organizational priority and designate an individual to serve as mental health lead.** To effectively assess and address the mental health needs of fraternities, it is crucial to designate at least one point person responsible for developing and implementing a clear and coordinated plan. The project lead should have familiarity with campus mental health resources, protocols, and processes, but does not need to be clinically trained. They could also serve as the designated point person for chapter-level questions about specific cases and assist in identifying local and national resources as needed. To be most effective, the person should be well integrated into the organization's leadership team.

- **Form an implementation team to work with the point person to develop and implement the mental health planning process.** Ideally, the team would include student representatives, student affairs leaders, campus fraternity liaisons, and at least one campus mental health professional positioned to inform protocols and processes for effectively preparing for responding to mental health needs.
- **Conduct a standardized assessment of all mental health guidance documents, membership materials, and intervention and prevention programs, policies, and messaging.** The audit ideally would be conducted by an external consultant with experience in the field. The goal is to ensure alignment and consistency of messaging, especially with regard to [positive and safe mental health messaging](#). An audit will also permit a review of existing programming, particularly with regard to strengths and areas in need of improvement. Consider also developing guiding principles that govern each chapter and include a focus on mental health, as well as inclusion and equity.
- **Adopt a comprehensive mental health plan, such as [JED's Comprehensive Approach](#), to identify missing subject areas.** The audit should be repeated at regular intervals to determine whether mental health programming is still effective and meeting students' needs.
- **Develop clear national protocols to support chapters in proactively addressing mental health.** The protocols should include:
  - Training chapter leadership to recognize and respond to basic mental health challenges
  - Compiling and maintaining local mental-health-related resources, which include resources on and off campus since member concerns about privacy are common and can keep members from accessing on-campus or fraternity-affiliated resources
  - Supporting chapter leadership in conferring with mental health experts about more complex situations and cases

Linking adherence to these protocols with the national accreditation process can assist in ensuring productive engagement and compliance.

- **Align chapter messaging and programming with existing mental health protocols on college campuses to create consistency and maximize resources.** Provide local chapters with clear contacts at each school for mental health services and ensure that members are aware of mental health services on each campus.
- **Assess the mental health of members organization-wide to identify members who may be experiencing increasing mental health stressors or who may feel isolated.** National organizations should consider utilizing a singular assessment tool, such as the [Healthy Minds Study](#), across all their chapters to collect comprehensive information on mental health. Use the data to identify subpopulations of students who are having a harder time or seeking help less, and use that information to create targeted approaches to improving student mental health.

- **Create consistency in norms and messaging across national groups and within fraternity chapters.** Interviewees consistently noted that it will be difficult to ensure the positive mental health and well-being of fraternity pledges or members when there is inconsistent action and messaging within membership and among national leadership in areas that fundamentally affect mental health and well-being. The challenge largely revolves around recognition that long-standing norms (e.g., protecting the brotherhood at all costs, hazing, misusing alcohol and other drugs, and valuing conquest mentalities) can be at odds with behaviors that protect member mental health (e.g., not engaging in activities likely to cause mental health challenges, not keeping unhealthy secrets, and seeking help when discomfort is causing anxiety or depression).

## Recommendation 2

**Affirm and improve on what is working by acknowledging and building upon fraternities' strengths: creating connectedness and belonging.**

Project findings suggest that the sense of belonging and connectedness fraternities offer their members serves as a protective factor for mental health. This is a strength that can be acknowledged and amplified at the national, chapter, and house level by taking the following actions:

- **Capitalize on fraternity connectedness by ensuring that all members feel a sense of belonging, regardless of race, sexual identity, or other forms of diversity.** Since connectedness and belonging are core fraternity strengths, leverage the natural socially connective features common to Greek life, including collaborative service projects, mentorship programs, and shared traditions, to help members build strong bonds.
- **Appoint a wellness coordinator within each chapter and provide them with advanced training and support in mental health, including connectedness and belonging.** This individual could connect with other fraternity and sorority leaders across chapters on campus and act as a liaison between the chapter and the college's senior leadership. They should also have a relationship with campus health and counseling centers.
- **Build on members' social ties to extend capacity for authenticity and vulnerability.** For example, a storytelling campaign that features fraternity alumni, fraternity leadership, or male role models may help destigmatize the kinds of conversations men need to practice to support positive mental health.

- **Normalize conversations about mental health.** Establish a structured system in which brothers who are comfortable with these responsibilities are assigned to regularly check in with specific members. This approach helps normalize the practice and ensures that all members receive support.
- **Provide annual training on recognizing struggle and supporting a brother.** Educational training, like the kind offered by JED, customized to meet the needs of fraternity members may help reduce feelings of shame and secrecy around mental health conditions by increasing awareness about mental health and providing actionable steps to help a brother who may be struggling.

## Recommendation 3

**Address clear challenges to mental health, particularly substance misuse, hazing, and norms related to exploitative sexual behavior.**

Ensuring the positive mental health and well-being of new fraternity members will be challenging — if not impossible — without confronting some of the dangerous, unspoken norms and practices that harm emotional health and physical well-being, including substance misuse, hazing, and sexual assault.

▶ **As part of a comprehensive approach to addressing substance misuse, fraternities should:**

- **Create a diverse team of students, university officials, and national staff** to guide all substance use reform efforts.
- **Survey chapters to understand the prevalence of alcohol misuse** and its related consequences, and to discover any trends that may require changes to the alcohol policy and its enforcement.
- **Conduct a thorough and regular review of both the alcohol policy and its enforcement on campuses**, as well as an audit of the aspects of being in a fraternity that promote alcohol use.
- **Implement a standard, evidence-based alcohol and substance misuse education training for members.** Choose trainings that result in behavioral change, including less problematic use of alcohol and higher rates of help-seeking, as well as those that include thorough education on the dangers of prescription medication and overdoses.

- **Create clear consequences for violations of behavioral regulations.** Establishing clear consequences for violating behavioral regulations sets firm boundaries and reinforces expectations, helping to deter substance misuse. Consistent enforcement may encourage students to seek healthier coping mechanisms, reducing reliance on substances to manage stress or social pressures.
- **Address underlying mental health issues that can contribute to infractions.** Although disciplinary action is important and needed for repeated infractions, it is important to recognize that repeated violations of behavioral expectations may also signal a student is struggling with an underlying mental health challenge that requires clinical assessment.
- **Conduct regular examinations of how codes of conduct are being enforced,** with special attention paid to whether substance misuse or traditions (e.g. hazing and secrecy) may be overlooked. The codes of conduct themselves should also be reviewed periodically to ensure they reflect current recommended practices. A diverse team, including student representatives, university or student affairs officials, and national staff, should lead these evaluations.
- **Include a provision for medical amnesty in the enforcement of substance use policies** — which would protect students from facing disciplinary action when they seek medical assistance for themselves or others — and encourage members to seek immediate help when there is an alcohol- or substance-related emergency.
- **Consider establishing substance-free or dry chapter facilities and activities.** Although some members may still seek out alcohol and other substances elsewhere, doing this can reduce the risk of substance misuse among members and challenge the overall drinking culture prevalent in many fraternities and sororities.
- **Consider a “sober buddies” program to reduce substance misuse during events.** Fraternities can create a rotating schedule for some members to remain sober during events to create a system of care that includes members watching out for one another and for nonmember attendees.

▶ **As part of a comprehensive approach to reducing hazing, fraternities should:**

- **Create and enact a clear policy on hazing.** The policy should include a clear prohibition of hazing, specific definitions and examples of hazing, and what steps will be taken if hazing occurs.
- **Change the leadership structure to reduce the power differential between new and existing members.** Existing members are often put in positions of power for which they are unprepared, and that may encourage hazing. Changing the leadership structure to include members across classes and prioritize belonging can reduce the power differential and, together with proper training, decrease hazing opportunities.
- **Provide annual education to new and existing members.** It’s important to offer comprehensive training to help members identify hazing, understand its potential negative impacts, and learn the process to report it.



- **Encourage a culture of speaking up during new-member orientation.** Set clear expectations during the orientation program, including the need to speak up when brothers see dangerous behavior and who to seek help from if a hazing incident occurs.
- **Consider implementing an anonymous hazing reporting line.** An anonymous reporting system may create a feeling of safety in reporting hazing.
- **Eliminate pledging activities that negatively affect pledge or member mental health,** such as sleep deprivation, social isolation, excessive drinking, and humiliation.

▶ **As part of a comprehensive approach to preventing sexual assault, fraternities should:**

- **Develop a clear policy on sexual assault and sexual harassment** that includes clear definitions of both sexual assault and sexual harassment to decrease any confusion. The policy should be reviewed by existing members annually and be included as part of the orientation process for new members.
- **Avoid covering up or minimizing reports of sexual assault or sexual harassment.** Follow the protocols put in place by the fraternity's chapter or national organization.
- **Use consistent messaging about seeking consent.** Messaging can be posted in hallways, shared on social media, reiterated in emails, and discussed in monthly meetings to assess understanding and make sure members are following expectations of consent.
- **Plan carefully with sororities when collaborating on parties and other events.** Having sorority members involved in the planning could result in less dangerous parties.
- **Create safer parties.** Minimize the number of attendees, hire security to assist in managing the numbers, appoint a leader to scan for and assess potential problems throughout the event, and be willing to shut down the event if sexual assault or sexual harassment occurs. Consider using "sober brothers" to keep an eye on events and empower all members to speak up.
- **Consider a "safe walk" system for getting party attendees home at night.** Using a buddy system for walking people home in pairs or groups can enhance safety after parties.
- **Consider implementing an anonymous sexual assault reporting line.** An anonymous reporting system may create a feeling of safety in reporting sexual assault.
- **Provide annual training on sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention.** Ensure that all members are trained on how to report assault or harassment, how to support a victim, and what resources are available on campus.
- **Create a culture of respect** in which members talk openly and often about sexual assault and sexual harassment. Empower members to speak up, seek help, and help others.

## Recommendation 4

### Work to reduce shame and secrecy around help-seeking.

Although some studies show fraternity members reporting comparatively lower rates of mental health challenges, the rates are still high. Fraternity members report greater knowledge of mental health services on their campus compared to nonmembers, but they are no more likely than nonmembers to use the services. This indicates that stigma — attitudes and biases that make help-seeking a source of shame and secrecy — rather than a lack of awareness of resources may be a key barrier preventing members from seeking help when they need it.

Specific suggestions include:

- **Providing leadership training on mental health.** Ensure that fraternity leaders are trained on how to create an inclusive and supportive environment, handle disclosures of mental health issues sensitively, and guide members toward professional help when needed.
- **Promoting a culture of openness.** Do this by making it clear to members that mental health is a top fraternity priority and encouraging open discussions about mental health. Chapters can share stories from alumni or senior members who have successfully navigated mental health challenges. Taking these actions will help normalize conversations around mental health and dismantle stigma.
- **Implementing regular educational workshops and training,** like the kind offered by JED, for all members. The workshops should focus on mental health awareness, including recognizing signs of mental distress, understanding common mental health issues, and outlining the importance of seeking help. These sessions should also debunk common myths about mental health to reduce stigma.
- **Establishing peer support programs** within the fraternity, in which members can share their experiences and challenges in a safe and supportive environment. Peer supporters can receive training to offer basic guidance on accessing professional mental health resources.
- **Creating a storytelling or role model campaign** that features fraternity alumni, leadership, or other influencers authentically sharing their mental health experiences and journeys. Ideally, these would not be one-off events, but regularly occurring programming such as:
  - Presentations at national conferences or assemblies
  - Talks by role models to local chapters
  - Video spots disseminated to chapters as part of their mental health and wellness events

- **Reviewing and updating fraternity policies to ensure they are inclusive and supportive of all members**, including those with mental health concerns. Approaches could include incorporating mental health check-ins into regular meetings and granting accommodations for members undergoing mental health challenges. Students who identify with marginalized groups often are particularly hesitant to seek help. Equipping members with an understanding of what resources are available to them and working to make mental health a priority will bolster help-seeking behaviors.
- **Collaborating with mental health professionals** to provide confidential counseling services to fraternity members. Consider planning regular therapist visits to the fraternity house, coordinated with school mental health staff, or arranging for members to have a specific, knowledgeable point of contact at campus mental health services. Campuses may also want to engage fraternities in campuswide or national mental health awareness campaigns and initiatives. Participation in such events can demonstrate the fraternity's commitment to mental health and help change broader societal attitudes.

## Recommendation 5

### Enhance self-awareness, capacity for vulnerability, and opportunities for self-care.

Understanding mental health challenges and knowing how to respond is important, but good mental health involves more than just recognizing signs, symptoms, and resources. Positive mental health and prevention of mental health challenges are linked to a variety of emotional and cognitive skills, including:

- **Capacity to recognize and work with strong emotions.** This includes recognizing when you feel emotionally overwhelmed or detached, or when you're experiencing strong emotions such as anger, rage, lust, or a desire for control.
- **Capacity for vulnerability and empathy.** Both of these skills are essential for recognizing when you need support, sharing your experiences honestly, and building authentic relationships that contribute to positive mental health. Empathy also plays a crucial role in developing healthy relationships.
- **Adoption of healthy coping techniques.** Although it is common for young people — especially young men — to use substances or partake in other behaviors that numb or mute emotions, they should learn how to deal with and manage unwanted emotions in a healthy way.

- **Ability to recognize chronically negative thinking patterns.** These are typically self-critical or very judgmental of others. Such patterns, when entrenched, are a direct contributor to poor mental health. They can, however, be very difficult to recognize.
- **Ability to ask for help.** This is a critical skill when feeling emotionally overwhelmed or emotionally detached, when experiencing chronically negative thoughts, or when otherwise struggling.

The following approaches can help men develop these skills:

- **Education and training.** Men who participated in the concept-mapping phase of this study expressed the desire to learn how to manage hard emotions, to recognize that they or someone else may be struggling with mental health challenges, and to share honestly. In delivering life-skills content, it would be helpful to create materials that appeal to men. In addition to migrating from phrases such as “mental health” to “mental fitness,” utilize the growing body of resources that cater to the way men think and talk about things.
- **Enhanced opportunities to try new coping skills and practice empathy.** A major theme that emerged from the project is learning and practicing healthy coping strategies. Fraternity members need opportunities to practice exercising good judgment in areas such as party culture, drinking behavior, interactions with others, and managing stress and uncomfortable emotions. Practicing empathy can also support men in better understanding the impact their actions can have on other students and the community overall.
- **Experience with therapeutic settings.** During concept mapping, members shared interest in the idea of trying therapy as a practice exercise, even if they didn’t need the service right away. Experiencing a single session before it becomes necessary may lower the barriers to seeking mental health treatment when needed.
- **Stronger emphasis on and support for self-care.** Participants emphasized self-care as a core theme and highlighted the importance of exercise and time away from stressful activities such as work or school. They also identified particular self-care activities many men struggle with, such as healthy sleep regimens, healthy eating, and mindfulness.

Action in these areas can be folded into life skills and coping-related training, messaging, and educational initiatives. They can be combined with other linked topics, such as how to talk to professors about needing extensions on assignments (and encouraging professors to be flexible and receptive), how to navigate perceived social rejection, how to overcome hesitancy in joining new groups or other activities, how to stand up for yourself and others, and how to manage hygiene and care needs when struggling emotionally. Trainings can be delivered by fraternity staff, college counselors, student affairs staff, or through an outside organization.

## Recommendation 6

### Conduct regular screenings to identify students at risk.

Campuswide screening plays an important role in supporting mental health, as rates of mental health challenges have continued to climb on college campuses. Fraternities are a powerful and important place for implementing regular screenings. To effectively leverage this approach, fraternities can:

- **Coordinate with university counseling and psychological services to arrange for regular screenings of members** at intervals recommended by campus mental health staff. Chapters should make sure to annually review the data on mental health rates and trends among fraternity members, as well as the general student body. Pathways to care must be in place for students who screen positive for one or more mental health challenges.
- **Conduct screening days**, during which members are screened for mental health concerns and participate in various educational activities related to mental health and substance misuse. The activities may include training on recognizing the signs of mental health issues, learning how to have conversations about mental health with friends, and getting more in-depth information about the kinds of help available on and off campus.
- **Make resources and referrals immediately available to anyone who screens positive.** Ideally a campus mental health professional would be on-site to oversee screenings and could take immediate action to connect students to care as needed. If chapters are unable to host screening days, they should make screening tools easily accessible and remind students about the screenings during particularly high-stress times. Online screenings ideally would also include references and referrals to resources based on screening results.

## Recommendation 7

### Develop and follow crisis-management procedures.

Although the goal is to prevent crises by focusing on upstream interventions, it is important to be prepared in case a situation does escalate and become potentially life-threatening. National fraternities should ensure their chapters have crisis-intervention protocols that are reviewed and revisited regularly so they remain as relevant and effective as possible. Comprehensive crisis-management procedures should also include plans for responding to any incidents or student needs that impact safety and mental health in the campus community.

Best practices in school crisis response and management recommend a team approach. Clear, well-planned, well-communicated, and practiced responses can help lessen the impact of a crisis and reduce long-term negative effects on student mental health. With that in mind, we recommend:

- **Encouraging chapters to develop a crisis-response protocol** in collaboration with a diverse committee made up of current members, school faculty and staff, and national fraternity staff.
- **Reviewing the protocol with members regularly** to ensure awareness and understanding.
- **Ensuring there is a postvention plan if a tragedy occurs.** The postvention protocol should be aligned with recommended practices in higher education. The Higher Education Mental Health Alliance puts out a useful [postvention guide](#) for colleges.
- **Having naloxone on hand and easily accessible in case of an opioid overdose.** Hold annual trainings for all members, coordinated with campus mental health staff, on when and how to use it, and have a system in place for replacing expired naloxone.
- **Making sure members know about access to any 24/7 crisis service providers on campus** and national resources such as 988 and the Crisis Text Line (741-741). Create materials that clearly state where students can find help and post them in prominent places throughout Greek houses and on Greek-hosted websites.

## Recommendation 8

### Make it easy to access resources.

Resources are useful only if students know about them. In order to ensure that students know where and how to access resources, we recommend that fraternities:

- **Work with campus mental health professionals to identify and organize all key resources available to students across campus.** Consistently promote awareness of these national, local, and campus resources through campus campaigns and events, during relevant trainings, and as a part of member orientation. Consider using QR codes to help members book appointments. Find innovative and consistent ways to productively address the stigma that can be a barrier to help-seeking among fraternity members.
- **Invite campus and community therapists to come talk about what happens in therapy** and provide some basic information about mental health and well-being. Therapists can help demystify the process and provide fraternity members with a known resource.
- **Pair mental health education with social events when possible** to help normalize mental-health-related conversations, showcase resources, and destigmatize help-seeking.

## Recommendation 9

### Educate and enable alumni to support current member needs.

Given the interconnected nature of current fraternity members and alumni across age groups, it is important for fraternities to implement programs to keep alumni updated on the changing needs of young adults and how they can best support them. As a start, national organizations should provide trainings to increase alumni awareness about mental health and how fraternity life can impact members, including understanding the effects of hazing, substance misuse, and sexual assault.

Additionally, fraternities should consider creating specific initiatives for alumni to have a positive influence on current members, such as:

- **Facilitating alumni/student mentorship programs** that focus on life skills, resilience, and caring for mental health needs across the lifespan.
- **Encouraging alumni storytelling that focuses on sharing about mental health** to destigmatize open communication about emotional well-being.
- **Organizing wellness workshops featuring alumni speakers** to help members build coping skills and feel connected to others.
- **Training alumni in active listening practices** so they can facilitate discussions at which members can share their struggles and concerns.
- **Providing resources needed to keep alumni informed** about mental health research, recommended practices to support members of Greek organizations, and the available resources to help members thrive.





## Conclusion

Fraternalities offer valuable benefits, including community, belonging, and networking opportunities that help members build identities and cope with stress. However, these positives can be overshadowed by risks such as alcohol misuse, hazing, and pressure to conform, which can contribute to anxiety and depression and have other negative impacts on members and nonmembers alike. To truly support their members' well-being, fraternalities must address these challenges head-on. Fortunately, they already have some of the most important tools to work with: a built-in sense of connectedness and belonging on which to build, and strong national organizations and leadership to steer the necessary changes. By fostering a culture of care and accountability, fraternalities can create safer, more inclusive environments. In doing so, they can redefine their legacy, becoming leaders in mental health advocacy and positive change on campus.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Literature Review Summary

A review of the literature focused on mental health and mental-health-linked areas (substance use, sexual aggression, and hazing) from studies published between Jan. 1, 2014, and March 11, 2020. Literature prior to 2014 was reviewed via two major systematic reviews ([Scott-Sheldon et al., 2016](#); [Biddix, 2016](#)). In addition to informing the current review, the two systematic reviews helped in refining search criteria and structuring the major areas for review. Relevant literature was identified through a Boolean search of five major databases: PsycINFO, Scopus, PubMed, Cochrane, and Web of Science. For our purposes, literature reviews and systematic reviews (outside of those listed above) were not retained unless they had an empirical component (e.g., meta-analysis). Studies were excluded if they were not in English, not related to collegiate Greek membership (e.g., medical studies of fraternal twins), or if Greek status was simply controlled for in the study design. After screening, the final sample consisted of 132 studies.

An update to the review of the literature published between 2020 and October 2024 was performed using the original search terms. The update also included additional terms to account for racial and ethnic diversity, LGBTQIA+ students, and multiracial and historically Black and Latiné fraternities and sororities. That search yielded an additional 23 studies, many of which were qualitative. This update provides context on how students of color and LGBTQIA+ students engage with fraternities as both members and nonmembers, and how fraternities with primarily students of color differ from predominantly white fraternities and sororities.

## Appendix B: Additional Information About the Concept-Mapping Project

Using a concept-mapping procedure, we conducted a study that allowed for a useful blending of qualitative and quantitative data. In Phase 1, 400 participants brainstormed statements in response to the question prompt: “For men on college campuses to have a sense of mental and emotional well-being, it is important that...”. From this, 415 statements were generated and then reduced to eliminate redundancy (maximum 125 statements), after which participants sorted them into thematic groups and rated each statement on five-point Likert scales for importance and feasibility. This process occurred in two distinct phases: statement generation, followed by clustering and rating.

In Phase 2, 200 participants (most were from the same group, but there were 45 Phase 2–only participants) sorted the statements into thematic groups and rated each on importance and feasibility, with 151 providing complete data used in the final analysis. Participants were recruited through JED, our fraternity partner, and professional networks, and included students (sophomores and up), campus mental health professionals, and fraternity-affiliated individuals. The majority of respondents (82.7%) were male. The analysis used techniques that allow for close examination of how statements relate to one another based on participants’ sorting patterns. The process organized statements into meaningful groups, creating a visual representation of how participants conceptually organized the ideas.

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