



BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

COMPANION GUIDE

REVISED: JULY 2022





Introduction

Bonds of Brotherhood

Since its inception on February 26, 1897, at Vincennes University in Indiana, Sigma Pi has grown into an international Fraternity which prides itself on brotherhood, scholarship, chivalry, and leadership. Our men strive for excellence by living our core values to promote fellowship, develop character, advance heightened moral awareness, enable academic achievement, and inspire service.

In 2018, Sigma Pi acknowledged that an important element of the Organization that needed to be addressed on a larger scale was the mental health of it's membership. That in turn would go on to drive initial partnerships with non-profit organizations who focused on mental health. This began an important period for the organization as both mental health and suicide prevention and awareness became pivotal pieces of both the philanthropic and altruistic mission of Sigma Pi.

In 2019, Sigma Pi Fraternity's Director of Chapter Management Sonny Age (Alabama '08) took his own life. This - alongside many student and alumni members affected by similar situations - led to a period of grieving and overcoming many obstacles, both emotionally and operationally at the national level. However, it also increased the drive and determination of the organization to move forward with a Fraternity-wide mental health program .

In 2020, the conception of the Bonds of Brotherhood Companion Guide became the manifestation of years of desire and motivation for Sigma Pi to provide its membership with a comprehensive piece that would allow for all who accessed it to be able to both better advocate for mental health awareness and assist them in their personal trials in addressing the topic, whether that be with their peers or themselves.

This is the Bonds of Brotherhood.

Mission

To inspire, promote, and support the lifelong development of our brothers.

Vision

Our men will strive for excellence by living our core values.

Our Core Values

Promote fellowship

Develop character and leadership

Advance heightened moral awareness

Enable academic achievement

Inspire service

Ideals of Sigma Pi

These constitute the underlying reason for the Fraternity's rise, development, and continued existence, are plainly set forth in the Constitution, and are in essence as follows:

- To establish a brotherhood.
- To establish and maintain an aristocracy of learning.
- To raise the standards of morality and develop character.
- To diffuse culture and encourage chivalry.
- To promote the spirit of civic righteousness and quicken the national conscience.

Creed

I believe in Sigma Pi, a Fellowship of kindred minds, united in Brotherhood to advance Truth and Justice, to promote Scholarship, to encourage Chivalry, to diffuse Culture, and to develop Character, in the Service of God and Man; and I will strive to make real the Fraternity's ideals in my own daily life.

Table of Contents

Mental Health & Safety Initiative	4
Strategy	5
Development Roadmap	6
Strategic Partnerships	6
Procedural Updates	7
Resources - My Mental Health	8
Resources - Help a Friend	11
Resources - Topic Specific Content	14

Mental Health & Safety Initiative

Objective of the Program

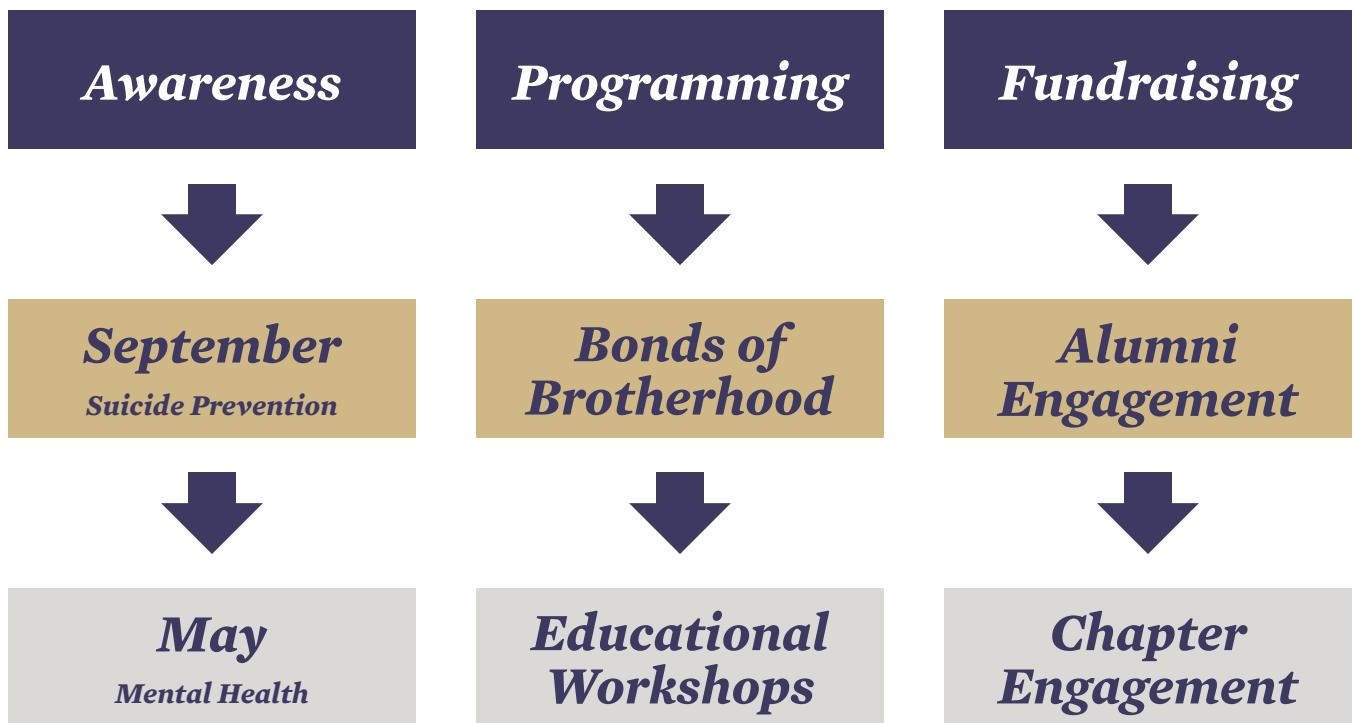
The objective of Sigma Pi Fraternity's Bonds of Brotherhood Initiative is to inspire and engage the members of Sigma Pi Fraternity in creating a multi-prong Mental Health and Safety (MH&S) experience to educate its community and encourage monetary donations.

The program will help to highlight the organization's MH&S strategy, ensuring that its peers, members, and alumni understand the impact that MH&S has not only on individuals, but the greater community we live in.

In addition to educating the brotherhood and those who are part of the Sigma Pi community about MH&S, the program will also serve as a grant opportunity for educational programming. Members will gain greater knowledge about MH&S, will develop local awareness in their communities, while also engaging the alumni and their community for fundraising support.

Funds raised will be endowed to create grant funding for internal and external enterprise.

There will be three (3) fundamental approaches to this initiative:



Strategy

Awareness

We will drive awareness with social media and campus community engagement:

- September – Suicide Prevention Week
- May – Mental Health Awareness Month
- Storytelling – Develop real life testimonials :30 clips “What’s YOUR Story...” to share, and drive emotions
- Sigma Pi website – logo and branding; fact based information; sharing of stories/testimonials; links to where to find professional help
- Email – Share the Story and program . Drive awareness with fact based information. Solicit funds



Programming

The Bonds of Brotherhood program is one that in each of its phases will seek to promote and educate a culture within Sigma Pi of positive mental health across all members and their respective communities.

The fund will allow the Fraternity to:

- Educate members of Sigma Pi on key mental health statistics
- Incorporate professional speakers on the subject into future programming
- Support the mission of Sigma Pi by improving and increasing awareness of a topic that impacts everyone: mental health

Fundraising

We will solicit funds to support grant funding via the SPU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization:

- **Alumni** – One-on-one fundraising
- **Chapter** – Local driven fundraising campaigns to campus driving awareness and efforts
- **Giving Months** – Month long campaigns raising funds to support grant funding
- **Execution** – All efforts are tracked internally, and funds submitted through a professional foundation. Allows Sigma Pi to create their story, forward press releases, monitor donations, and measure.
- **Goal** – \$500,000 principle with 4% annual interest income used for programming support



Campaign Goal:
\$500,000

Development Roadmap

Launch Goals

- **Bonds of Brotherhood Companion Guide** - Provides internal resource for chapters and members
- **Bonds of Brotherhood Handout Cards** - Provides quick access to important information regarding mental health and safety; chapters can distribute on campus and within their community
- **Identify Speakers for Mental Health & Safety** - Incorporate MH&S content into events engaging members outside of their chapter solely

Future Goals

- **Target National Suicide Prevention Week for Fundraising Campaign** - This time will serve as an opportunity for Sigma Pi to create awareness, provide education, and raise funding for the Program and cause
- **Target Mental Health Awareness Month for Fundraising Campaign** - This time will serve as an opportunity for Sigma Pi to create awareness, provide education, and raise funding for the Program and cause

Major Goals

- **Train the Trainer** - Implement programming in conjunction with the Companion Guide allowing members to continue the conversation
- **Launch National Philanthropy** - Provide national image for Sigma Pi to continue its mission, spreading awareness for mental health & safety / Bonds of Brotherhood, and competing nationally with other organizations in philanthropic causes

Strategic Partnerships

JED Foundation

In May 2020, Sigma Pi officially partnered with the JED Foundation for the launch of Sigma Pi Lifeline, an online mental health resource center. This tool:

- Provides college students with information about emotional health issues and the specific resources available on their campus
- Offers a confidential mental health self-screening tool

The Jed Foundation (JED) is a leading nonprofit that exists to protect emotional health and prevent suicide for our nation's teens and young adults.

For more information, please visit our website at sigmapi.org/bonds.



Procedural Updates

What

Sigma Pi Fraternity is updating its expectations as far as the processes and policies go surrounding philanthropic and fundraising procedures. However, this can not be done without the support from all of the chapters across the Land of Sigma Pi. This update in the process of fundraising and raising dollars for philanthropy will allow chapters to continue operating on their respective campuses as they have in the past but will involve the national organization as it better tracks where funds are being allocated.

How

Philanthropy: As chapters raise funds for the philanthropy of their choice they will be expected to send a check to Sigma Pi specifying the organization they would like to donate to. From there the Fraternity will write that check, in the same amount, to that organization acknowledging the chapter itself for contributing those funds.

Fundraising: For the Bonds of Brotherhood program chapters can send the funds raised to the Sigma Pi Educational Foundation (SPEF). This can be done by mailing a check or making the donation online. To donate to a specific fund, members/chapters will need to indicate the specific one they are looking to contribute to (i.e. Bonds of Brotherhood).

Why

This process will better allow the Fraternity to more accurately demonstrate where the funds, raised by chapters across all of Sigma Pi, are going by philanthropic causes, organization, etc. Aside from improving and maintaining records of chapter activity at the local level this process will also allow for the Fraternity to be more competitive nationally when it comes to the Greek community as a whole. By updating these procedural expectations our fraternity will be able to accurately report where it stands in relation to other organizations when it comes to funds raised and causes supported.

When

Beginning in the fall 2022 semester, chapters will be expected to follow these procedures

Resources - My Mental Health



Create a Plan to Take Care of Your Mental Health

Most of us have strategies for taking care of our physical health (whether we are conscious about it or not). For example, most of us brush our teeth, feed ourselves, and sleep regularly. Many of us are mindful about getting regular exercise and do our best to eat healthfully, and many of us schedule regular annual physicals and check-ups. We reach out to our doctor about pains or concerns, and we manage treatment or preventive measures related to any ongoing problems with prescriptions, over the counter treatments or through daily activities like stretching.

We need to do the same with our mental health. That's why JED is going to help you create a plan that works best for you. Below you will find a simple template to get you started in creating a customized mental health plan. There are six core elements: Circle of Care, Professional Support, Work or School Self-Care, Physical Self-Care, Emotional Self-Care and Relationship Self-Care.

Create a Circle of Care

Humans are social creatures, even if we are introverted, so having a support network is an essential part of any mental health strategy. Being conscious about identifying people you can lean on when things are hard and asking them to be part of your circle of care is a powerful tool in your mental health care toolbox. Making a care pact with a friend can be especially helpful when we are struggling and wanting to both pull inward and not burden someone else with our problems. Make a commitment to reach out to someone in your circle if you're having a hard time, and to do your best to notice and respond to a member of your circle if they're struggling. Simply knowing that someone is there for you can sometimes make all the difference.

Emotional Self-Care

Knowing how to understand and regulate emotion can be confusing for many of us. Most of us have internalized rules about when, where, and how we should and should not express certain emotions. Depending on what

your culture or family was like, you may have learned that some emotions are entirely off limits — like anger or sadness. If you grew up in a place and time that looked down on emotional displays, you may have learned to suppress your feelings altogether — meaning that not only did you show them, you may have tried to stop yourself from feeling them in the first place. Such constant suppression can have drastic consequences on emotional (and physical!) well-being. Being able to express how we're feeling and process all that comes along with it is a necessary component of a healthy life. Some ways you can start to tap into your emotions and truly feel and express them include:

- **Journaling:** Sometimes we know we are feeling something but it is not until we are writing about it that we see the full picture. Feelings that show up on the surface are rarely alone — they often have deeper stories and perhaps a rainbow of feelings that accompany them. Allowing yourself to simply start writing without an agenda is a powerful way to lean into challenging emotions and to reflect on them, learn from them, and/or accept them. All feelings have stories but if you have one or more persistently challenging emotion, chances are good that the stories attached to it need to be found and spoken. It is not uncommon for unexplored feelings, thoughts, and associations to arise once you start writing. This can help you surface the underlying stories that may be driving confusing or uncomfortable feelings or behaviors. Seeing these clearly can help you figure out how to most healthfully respond. Here's a simple structure to get you started:
 - › Sit for 5 minutes each evening and reflect on any highs and lows from your day,
 - › Write down any moments or feelings that stand out. Start simple, remembering that consistency is key, and grow your journaling practice from there.
- At the end of the week, re-read what you wrote and note themes and/or any novel information you can use to better understand yourself and your experience.
- **Maintain, expand, and deepen close friendships and relationships:** The value of long-term and close friendships can't be overstated. Knowing you have people you can trust, count on, and spend time with is so important for our emotional health. It's important to surround yourself with a diverse ecosystem of people and voices who can love and champion you. You can build on friendships you have by simply sharing more openly, reaching out a little more to check in, and doing fun activities together. As much as you need your friends and family, they also need you. Be sure to carve out time to spend with them, attend important events and functions in their life, and try to create some balance or boundaries between work/school and friends/family.
- **Practice Stillness:** In stressful moments, our minds get cluttered with all sorts of negative thoughts. Simple stillness exercises help clear out some of that junk so we can be more present and think more clearly. Here's a quick 5-step process:
 - › Find a quiet(ish) spot where you can sit or lie comfortably.
 - › Close your eyes.
 - › Breathe naturally, don't try and control it.
 - › Spend 3 to 5 minutes focusing on your breath and how your body inhales and exhales.
 - › If your mind wanders, gently return your focus back to your breath.

Professional Support

In almost every area of our lives, seeking help is seen as a sign of strength. We reach out to doctors to be proactive about our physical health, we look to financial advisors for help managing our money, and we rely on trainers and instructors to help with exercise and nutrition. Our mental health should be the same. Mental health professionals aren't just trained to help when we're in crisis or experiencing a mental health condition like depression or

anxiety disorders. They're equipped to help us strengthen our overall mental health, feel better and cope with any challenges we might face. If you're able to, consider checking in regularly with a mental health professional so that you have that support available if you need it. If you need immediate help, text START to 741741 or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for a free, confidential conversation with a trained counselor anytime.

Work/School Self-Care

In order to perform the way we want, in the classroom or as a professional out in the world, we need to be sure that the basic supports we need for optimum performance are in place. Here are a few things you can do:

- Set up support systems at school or work that provide advice, help, accountability, and other forms of support. This might include but is not limited to co-workers, study groups, or peer groups.
- Try finding a mentor or sponsor at the office, someone older and more experienced who can provide advice, guidance and/or advocate for you.
- Reach out to teachers or TAs if you need extra help with classwork or assignments.
- Participate in professional development classes or seminars, conferences, and other events that support your professional vision – this can help you feel like you are staying on track.

Physical Self-Care

While it is critical that we make sure that we are mentally balanced and emotionally aware, it is impossible to do this without taking care of our physical body as well. Being active and being sure to assure adequate sleep, exercise, and nutrition has mental and physical benefits. Some things we should include in our physical care include:

- Getting enough quality sleep every night (most sources recommend 7-8 hours).
- Making sure that you eat healthy, nutritious foods (especially fruits and vegetables) daily. For some guidelines and suggestions, scan the QR code.
- Getting outside and being in nature or just breathing fresh air (incorporating moving more by yourself with friends or with pets).
- Not sitting (or standing, if able) endlessly by taking breaks that get us away from screens. Try setting a timer on your phone and getting up to stretch or walk away from the computer every 30 minute.



Create the Mental Health Plan That Works For You

Customizing your own plan, using ideas we have provided here, or building one entirely from scratch, is a first good step in creating a Mental Health Plan that works for you. You do not need to build anything fancy, just start with an area that you think needs the most work or help right now or with an area you are struggling with. Remember, there's no cookie-cutter plan, only the one that's right for you.

Check out the resources available from our partners at the JED Foundation by scanning the QR Code.



Resource provided by JED Foundation

Resources - Help a Friend



When you start a conversation with a friend you're worried about, the hope is that they will acknowledge they've been struggling, be honest with you about their situation, and be open to seeking help. As a supportive friend, what can you do next to help a friend in need?

Encouraging a Friend to Seek Therapy

Sometimes all we need when we are struggling is a friend to listen, some good self-care, and time. But sometimes we need more consistent support from someone trained to help us navigate challenging feelings, thoughts and/or experiences. In these cases, professional support is important and helping a friend find someone that works for them is one of the ways a friend can be most helpful.

There are a lot of misconceptions about therapy—like it's only for people with serious conditions, it's a luxury for people who can afford it, or it's a sign that we can't handle things on our own.

We all have different comfort levels with seeking therapeutic help when we are feeling overwhelmed. Each of us are influenced by the perspectives of our family and friends, our cultural background, and our personal experiences. Some people are from cultures, communities, or families where reaching out for help from a therapist or counselor is not encouraged. In some cases, seeking professional help may actually be looked down on as a sign of weakness.

The reality is that mental health professionals like counselors, therapists, and psychologists are trained to help people deal with a wide range of issues, from managing stress and anxiety to processing grief and trauma to treatment for substance misuse and addiction. Mental health professionals themselves come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and many are sensitive to issues of race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and more. There are also free or low-cost options available.

What You Can Do to Encourage Your Friend to Get Help

- **Remind your friend that seeking help for their mental health is a sign of strength.** Addressing a problem before it gets worse takes courage and discipline. And it makes sense to seek professional help for something we do not naturally know a lot about or cannot figure out on our own. If it helps, you can liken it to visiting a doctor for a physical, seeing a financial advisor to get better at saving, working with a coach to improve their athletic ability, or getting a tutor when struggling with a subject in school.
- **If you have positive personal experience about reaching out for support, use your story to encourage your friend to do the same.**
- **Remind them that they can try it out and, if it's not the right fit, change therapists or change approaches.** The important thing is to try. Thinking of a first therapy session as an interview or testing out whether a therapist is a good fit can help your friend remember that they have choices and control over the process.
- **If you have contacts or are otherwise comfortable scouting for options, offer to help them look for a therapist and make an appointment.** When we're really overwhelmed, the task of finding help can seem daunting. Offering up options may make it more likely that they'll follow through with making an appointment.
- **If your friend is anxious about their appointment, you can offer to go with them to their first session and wait outside, or to meet them afterwards.**
- **Refer them to the JED Foundation articles,** such as What is Therapy and Will it Work? , How to Find the Right Therapist, and What to Expect From the First Therapy Session.
- **If your friend still seems resistant to the idea of therapy, check out our tips on how to talk to a friend who isn't receptive to help.**

Where and How to Look for Mental Health Support

You can help a friend find a therapist, counselor, or support group. Here are some tips about how to find a therapist:

- Ask for a referral from a friend, family member, or trusted colleague.
- Check to see if your friend's campus or workplace has a counseling service, employee assistance program, or options for referrals.
- Your friend can ask for a referral from their doctor, nurse, or other medical professional.
- If your friend is struggling with addiction and recovery, look for local chapters of support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.
- Use a treatment services locator to find mental health professionals in your area.
- Explore virtual treatment options through services like **Betterhelp** and **Talkspace**.
- Some insurance plans have directories of mental health professionals that take their plans.

Finding Affordable Mental Health Support

If your friend doesn't have insurance or can't afford certain treatment options, there are community centers and organizations that offer free counseling, government agencies that offer mental health services, as well as therapists who work on a sliding fee scale. You can use the SAMHSA treatment services locator to find free or low-cost options in your area.



What if your friend does not want help?

Sometimes we do all of the right things to support a friend that we think is struggling, but are met with resistance. In some cases, this may be because a friend already has support and does not want to confide in additional people. In these cases, it can be helpful to simply ask if this is the case. You can do this by saying something like, “It is okay if you do not feel comfortable talking to me, but can you tell me if you are talking to someone you trust?” If they say that they are not talking to someone else or if their answer is unclear, you can offer to help find someone for them to talk to by following the steps outlined above.

No matter what, the goal of any first conversation should include leaving the door open for later conversation. You can do this by saying something like, “Please know that I want to support you whenever and however would be helpful. Just let me know if you ever want a friend to listen or simply spend time with. I hope I can do the same with you.” You can also close the conversation in a way that keeps the door open by saying something like, “Is it okay if I check back in with you at some point just to see how you are doing?” Ultimately, it is up to your friend to decide when and where and with whom they share challenging experiences, but you can make it more likely that they are comfortable confiding in you by signaling your willingness, availability, and respect.

If Your Friend Needs Help Immediately

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Just dial 988

Additional Emergency Resources:

- Crisis Text Line: TEXT START to 741-741
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 24/7 Treatment Referral National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255; press 1
- Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN): 1-800-656-4673
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860
- The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ hotline): – 1-866-488-7386
- If after talking with your friend, you believe there is an immediate threat that your friend might harm themselves or someone else, call 911.

Resource provided by JED Foundation

Resources - Topic Specific Content

By going to jedfoundation.org, you can access information and resources specific to what you or a friend may currently be going through or experiencing. JED's Mental Health Resource Center helps you manage your emotional health, cope with challenges, and support the people in your life.



I Want to Take Care of my Mental Health

Overall well-being is having a healthy body and a healthy emotional state of mind. A healthy lifestyle can enhance mental health, bring a sense of well-being, and help keep your body strong. These resources can help you navigate life's challenges, feel better, and improve your state of mind.

To better understand your mental health state, you can view additional resources on jedfoundation.org such as content specific topics like those on the next page.

I'm Feeling....



I'm Going Through....



Resource provided by JED Foundation



FOLLOW US!



@sigmapi