



HARVARD ALUMNI FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
SIG OF HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SEPT 2020



# Annual Report 2019-2020

A REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S  
AGENDA & ACTIVITIES

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# President's Message

When Mark Albanese handed me the reins to lead HAMH last year, little did I imagine what awaited me this year. Having been advised and guided in the months preceding elections in August 2019 by Mark, Maureen Rezendes, and Paul Barreira, I stepped into a role that opened my eyes to the endless possibilities and myriad of directions this SIG could take in the name of mental health. This report is an account of the course of action followed after consulting the HAMH community via surveys in early 2019 on what you envision for the SIG. It also contains your feedback of our performance last year. In order to bring your brilliant ideas to life, HAMH Board divided its operations into the following streams: Communications, Outreach, and Finance. Esme Trahair, Emma Smith, and Daniel Foti served these roles respectively as we worked to establish structures and processes that would allow us to realize our goal of raising mental health awareness within the Harvard Alumni network.

As an Officer's term is two years on our Board, I look forward to continuing to serve the HAMH community as President in 2020-2021. While HAMH Board 2020-2021 will continue to expand its community and advocacy work, I urge you all to consider getting involved at a most exciting time in the SIG's development (and meet the incredibly accomplished individuals of this group while you're at it!).

**SREEJA KALAPURAKKEL**

PRESIDENT



in photo: Science Center Plaza at Harvard University

## Raising mental health awareness within the alumni network

Our goal for HAMH 2019-2020 was to elevate the profile of mental health within the Harvard Alumni Association. Here is a glance at our work by the numbers:

**850** members on mailing list  
**579** members joined this year  
**~50** active members  
**174** Facebook followers  
**170** Instagram followers  
**3** events (live + virtual)  
**2** regional groups begun  
**8** newsletters produced  
**5-10** virtual social attendees

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# Community Feedback

This year we sent out an End of Year Survey to gather useful feedback from the HAMH community. Here are some highlights:

Respondent Characteristics	
Total number of respondents	46
Year joined (range)	2014-2020

# 81.8%

of respondents report engagement with HAMH at the following levels: read the newsletter and respond to activities of interest.

# 71.4%

of respondents felt that HAMH reached its goal of raising mental health awareness in the Harvard alumni network.

# Community Feedback: Common Themes & Asks

## Networking

1. Increased engagement with fellow members via events, activities, idea sharing, career sharing, LinkedIn;
2. Open conversations on diverse approaches and fields of work

## Supporting Students

1. Connecting, partnering with, and supporting undergraduate and graduate students;
2. Fundraising for CAMHS and engaging with task force report

## Membership Directory

Open access directory of members' profiles and work

## Career advice

For Harvard graduates

## Coping Skills

Psychoeducation, self-care and coping skills for alumni and for supporting Harvard leaders and students

## Policy level engagement

Opportunities to engage at policy level, learn creative public and private solutions, engage internationally

## Older alumni support

"It is important to keep in mind that older alumni face different challenges than younger alumni."

## Goals

Make goals more transparent to members

## Startup seminars

For international mental health start-ups, especially in China

## Involvement

Provide more opportunities for greater involvement in larger projects

## Mental health advocacy

Supporting students in mental health advocacy on campus; Discussion on current events in mental health advocacy

## Local chapters

More widespread outreach and dissemination to alumni via local alumni chapters

## Topic-Based Forums

To connect those interested in the same topics

## Public Leadership

Become thought leaders that news and media turn to for advice or perspectives.

## Intersectionality

Important to remember that mental health is particularly critical for historically marginalized communities.



The results above from a sample of our perhaps most active members highlight the diverse backgrounds and interests within the community when it comes to addressing and advocating for mental health. From this feedback, the Harvard Alumni for Mental Health Board aims to take forward the following recommendations into the new year:

Recommendations. 1) Create a Facebook community to increase opportunities for membership engagement with each other. 2) Create surveys to solicit new ideas for events of interest. 3) Investigate opportunities to increase membership involvement in higher level policy and advocacy work. For those of you who wrote about engaging in policy level work, kindly reach out to us and let us know what you are thinking regarding this work. 4) Foster engagement with undergraduate students particularly around the theme of pandemic-related off-campus learning. For those interested in connecting with undergrads: there is a special need at this

***"I'm passionate about mental health and I'm happy that this group exists." —Respondent***

time to support students taking a leave of absence and moving off campus to new cities pursue other activities. They may be moving to your city. If you are free to connect with undergraduates in your area, please reach out and let us know. 5) Develop programming around members' interest which include topic-based forums and seminars on themes such as mental health startups, intersectionality and mental health, leadership and mental health, coping skills and self-care.

The Harvard Alumni for Mental Health Board looks forward to continuing the development of our foundational structures with guidance from the feedback the community has provided on the 2020 End of Year Survey.

# 2019-2020 Board of Directors



**Esme Trahair ('19)**  
Communications Director



**Emma Smith ('15)**  
Outreach Director | Clerk



**Daniel Foti ('06)**  
Treasurer



**Sreeja Kalapurakkal ('16)**  
President

## Advisory Board

**Mark Albanese**

**Maureen Rezendes**

**Annie Douglas**

**Paul Barreira**



in photo: Gate at entrance to Harvard Stadium

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