

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH**

Announcement of Requirements and Registration for *Speaking Up About Mental Health!*

*This is My Story* Challenge

**AUTHORITY:** 15 U.S.C. 3719

**SUMMARY:** The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), in collaboration with the Calvin J. Li Memorial Foundation (CJL Foundation) and the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), announces the requirements and registration for the *Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story* Challenge (Challenge) that invites U.S. high school students, aged 16 – 18, to write and submit an essay addressing ways to eliminate and/or reduce mental health stigma and the cultural barriers young people may need to overcome when seeking mental health treatment, especially in diverse communities.

Suicide was the second leading cause of death for youths aged 15 to 24, in 2016 with 5,723 deaths (17.6%). Suicide for Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) youths in this age group had the largest percentage, 30.8%, with 316 deaths in 2016. This data was developed by the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the Department of Health and Human Services and is available on the WISQARS system <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcause.html>

Based on diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A) the lifetime prevalence of any mental disorders among U.S. adolescents aged 15-16 and 17-18 is 49.3% and 56.7% respectively and an estimated 49.5% of adolescents had some type of mental disorder, with 22.2% having severe impairment. Pairing this data with the relatively low percentage (51.5%) of young adults, aged 18 -25, who received mental health treatment--compared to adults aged 26-49, 66.1%, and older adults aged 50 and above, 71.5%-- it is clear we need to understand and be able to address mental health stigma and cultural barriers faced by adolescents from all cultures when seeking mental health treatment.

[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml#part\\_155771](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml#part_155771)

Building off the work of the Healthy Mind Initiative,

<https://nimhd.blogs.govdelivery.com/2018/07/16/healthy-mind-initiative-an-innovative-model-to-address-emerging-mental-health-needs-among-asian-american-and-pacific-islander-youth/> the

*Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story* Challenge is soliciting essays from U.S. high school students, aged 16 – 18, that raise the awareness of psychologic health among the American youth and families, promote communication and understanding among teens, parents, guardians, and other caregivers, and provide students the opportunity for self-expression about mental health concerns.

**DATES:**

Submission period opens: April 29, 2019

Submission period ends: May 31, 2019, 11:59 p.m. ET

Judging Period: June 1, 2019, to August 2, 2019

Winners and other Finalists Announced: September 30, 2019

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

[MHHighSchoolEssay@mail.nih.gov](mailto:MHHighSchoolEssay@mail.nih.gov)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Statutory Authority to Conduct the Challenge:**

This Challenge is being conducted under the America COMPETES Act, as amended, codified at 15 U.S.C. 3719, to advance the mission of the National Institute of Mental Health, and collaboratively with the partners, to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses in adolescents.

**Background:**

The Challenge builds from the Health Mind Initiative. The Healthy Mind Initiative was established to create a collaboration across the federal, state, county, and community sectors with two intents. The first aim is to improve mental health literacy in AAPI communities. The second aim is to address the mental health stigma and cultural barriers to seeking mental health treatment faced by AAPI youth and communities.

The founding members of the Healthy Mind Initiative include the U.S. Public Health Service Asian Pacific American Officers Committee as lead, working with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Montgomery County, Maryland, Department of Health and Human Service's Asian American Health Initiative, and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD).

The NIMH and the CJL Foundation have joined some of the original partners in the Healthy Mind Initiative to promote the Challenge and are not limiting the Challenge to AAPI communities but are opening the Challenge to all high school youths nationwide.

The NIMH is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the United States Government, and is authorized and established to conduct and support biomedical and behavioral research, health services research, research training, and health information dissemination with respect to the cause, diagnosis, treatment, control and prevention of mental illness.

The NIMHD is also a component of the NIH and is authorized and established to conduct and support research, training, dissemination of information, and other programs with respect to minority health conditions and other populations with health disparities.

The Calvin J. Li Memorial Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization and was established and funded by the Li family on September 16, 2015, to honor their beloved son, to support the welfare of Asian American children growing up in first generation immigrant families. The Foundation's mission is to promote the welfare of Asian American children and help create supportive social and family environments that empower children to define their own identities and pursue their own dreams.

**Subject of Challenge:**

In this Challenge, we are seeking insightful essays from U.S. high school students, aged 16 – 18, that describe a teen's understanding of a specific mental health issue and ideas that can promote better health and well-being in their communities with a

particular emphasis on communicating with parents, peers, school leaders, policy makers, and health professionals. Based on diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A) the lifetime prevalence of any mental disorders among U.S. adolescents aged 15-16 and 17-18 is 49.3% and 56.7% respectively and an estimated 49.5% of adolescents had some type of mental disorder, with 22.2% having severe impairment. Pairing this data with the relatively low percentage (51.5%) of young adults aged 18 -25, with any mental disorder who received treatment---compared to adults aged 26-49, 66.1%, and older adults aged 50 and older, 71.5%---it is clear we need to understand mental health stigma and the cultural barriers adolescents from different cultures face when seeking mental health treatment.

[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml#part\\_155771](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml#part_155771)

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the Department of Health and Human Services, in 2016 suicide was the second leading cause of death for youths aged 15 to 24, with 5,723 deaths (17.6%). Suicide for Asian American/Pacific Islander youths in this age group had the largest percentage, 30.8%, with 316 deaths in 2016. This data, and other statistics, can be found at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcause.html>

The challenge of raising mental health awareness among AAPI communities is multifaceted but includes two key barriers: language issues and cultural barriers. To address these barriers, the Healthy Mind Initiative was established to create a collaboration across the federal, state, county, and community sectors with two intents. The first aim is to improve mental health literacy in AAPI communities. The second aim

is to address the mental health stigma and cultural barriers to seeking mental health treatment faced by AAPI youth and communities.

The *Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story* Challenge was initiated to address this second aim and then further expanded to include any youth from any culture that may view mental health negatively or not at all due to stigma, lack of awareness and education, and differences in cultural conceptualization of mental health.

Solutions submitted to this Challenge could include:

- Creative ideas to start a conversation
- Innovative ideas to remove/reduce/lower barriers
- Suggested changes in school policies
- Other areas of concern to individuals and their community

### **Eligibility Rules for the Challenge**

1. To be eligible to win a prize under this Challenge, the essay author –
  - a. At the time of submission, shall be aged 16 to 18, enrolled in a high school within the U.S. or its territories;
  - b. Shall have registered to participate in the Challenge under the rules and process set forth in this [Announcement](#);
  - c. Shall have complied with all the requirements set forth in this [Announcement](#);
  - d. Shall be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, for purposes of winning an NIMH cash prize. Non-U.S. citizens or permanent residents may also participate; however, they may not receive a NIMH cash prize

but may be eligible for a cash prize from the CJL Foundation or non-cash recognition.

- e. May not be a Federal employee acting within the scope of the employee's employment;
  - f. May not be a Federal employee of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (or any other component of HHS) acting in their personal capacity;
  - g. Who is employed by a federal agency or entity other than HHS (or any component of HHS), should consult with an agency Ethics Official to determine whether the federal ethics rules will limit or prohibit the acceptance of a prize under this Challenge;
  - h. May not be currently listed on the Excluded Parties List;
  - i. May not be a member or employee of one of the partners (i.e. NIMH, NIMHD, and CLJ Foundation), a judge or evaluation panel member of the Challenge, or any other party involved with the design, production, execution, or distribution of the Challenge or the immediate family of such a party (i.e., spouse, parent, step-parent, child, or step-child).
2. All participants under age 18 are required to submit a signed copy of the parent/legal guardian consent form. The form can be found at [Challenge.gov](https://www.challenge.gov). We also encourage all students to work with a sponsoring adult. The sponsoring adult should be in a position to advise the essay author as necessary to facilitate the submission of their essay. Examples of a sponsoring adult is a parent or other family member, community leader, teacher, school counselor, principal, other

school official, minister, priest, or other religious leader, or person with a similar standing in the community.

3. Participants are allowed to only submit one (1) essay. If multiple submissions are received from one student, only the first essay will be considered.
4. Federal grantees may not use federal funds to develop Challenge submissions unless use of such funds is consistent with the purpose of their grant award and specifically requested to do so due to the Challenge design, and as announced in the Federal Register.
5. Federal contractors may not use federal funds from a contract to develop Challenge submissions or to fund efforts in support of a Challenge submission.
6. Each participant warrants that he or she is the sole author of the submitted essay, and that the works are wholly original with the participant. Essays must not infringe upon any copyright or any other rights of any third party. Essays will be screened, using a plagiarism software package, to validate originality of the work.
7. By participating in this Challenge, each individual agrees to assume any and all risks and waive claims against the Federal government and its related entities (as defined in the America COMPETES Act, as amended), except in the case of willful misconduct, for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from participation in this Challenge, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise.
8. Based on the subject matter of the Challenge, the type of work that it will possibly require, as well as an analysis of the likelihood of any claims for death, bodily



injury, property damage, or loss potentially resulting from Challenge participation, no individual participating in the Challenge is required to obtain liability insurance or demonstrate financial responsibility in order to participate in this Challenge.

9. By participating in this Challenge, each individual agrees to indemnify the Federal government against third party claims for damages arising from or related to Challenge activities.
10. An individual shall not be deemed ineligible to win because the individual used federal facilities or consulted with federal employees during the Challenge provided that such facilities and/or employees, as applicable, are made available on an equitable basis to all individuals participating in the Challenge.
11. NIMH and partners reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to (a) cancel, suspend, or modify the Challenge through amendment to this notice on Challenge.gov, and/or (b) not award any prizes if no entries are deemed worthy.
12. Each individual participating in the Challenge agrees to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.
13. Each individual participating in this Challenge must comply with all terms and conditions of the rules set forth in this Announcement, and participation in this Challenge constitutes each such participant's full and unconditional agreement to abide by these rules. Winning is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements herein.
14. All prize winners and finalists will agree to allow their essays, along with their first name and state of residence, to be posted on the Healthy Mind Initiative

website. Additionally, NIH may publish, post, link to, share, and display publicly the submission on the web or elsewhere.

### **Registration and Submission Process**

To participate in the *Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story* Challenge every participant must first register. Participants may access the registration and submission platform at [Challenge.gov](https://www.challenge.gov), or by searching for *Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story* on the NIMHD website.

To submit an essay on Challenge.gov you must:

1. Register at Challenge.gov with all required information
2. Upload your essay which must be typed, no longer than 2 pages, single spaced in a font size no smaller than 12 point. Photos, graphics, or other images are not allowed.
3. If the participant is under the age of 18, the participant must upload the Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form, completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian of the participant.

When submitting an essay, please note: It would be extremely helpful to the evaluation process if the name of all files you upload include your initials and the short title of the essay. So that your essay can be evaluated only on the content, please do not include any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in your essay. PII is information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as your name, social security number, date and place of birth, etc. The PII information provided during

the registration process will be linked to your essay only if it is scored high enough to be forwarded to the judging panel and award approving officials.

All participants submitting essays must agree to all the requirements set forth in this Announcement by checking the “*agree to terms & conditions*” box while submitting an essay on Challenge.gov

### **Amount of the Prize**

The total prize amount is \$7,000.

NIMH may award prizes for up to six winners from a pool of \$5,000.

CJL Foundation may award up to four winners from a pool of \$2,000.

Finalists: Up to 30 finalists may be selected to receive a letter of recognition.

The award approving officials for this Challenge are:

Director, National Institute of Mental Health, NIH, for Federal funds

Director, Calvin J. Li Memorial Foundation

The NIMH and the CJL Foundation reserve the right to not award any prizes if no essays are deemed worthy.

### **Payment of the Prize**

NIMH prizes awarded under this Challenge will be paid by electronic funds transfer (EFT) and may be subject to Federal income taxes. Winners will be required to provide financial institution information to NIMH to facilitate the EFT process. HHS/NIH will comply with the Internal Revenue Service withholding and reporting requirements, where applicable.

CJL Foundation prizes awarded under this Challenge will be paid by check directly to winning individuals.

### **Basis Upon Which Winners Will Be Evaluated**

Essays will be evaluated and judged on organization, creativity, clarity and quality of writing. Essays will be assessed by a plagiarism software program and any essays determined to be less than original work will not be referred to the judging panel.

Submissions will be evaluated in a tier process.

1. All submissions will be pre-screened for eligibility with respect to compliance with the rules of the Challenge, including age of author, within the page limitation, and signed parent/legal guardian consent form as applicable.
2. An evaluation panel composed of U.S. Public Health Service officers will evaluate eligible submissions based on the evaluation criteria identified below.

Each essay will be evaluated by a minimum of 3 officers and the average score will be the final score on the essay.

3. Up to 30 finalists from the evaluation panel will be presented to the judging panel for selection of winners. The judging panel will be comprised of 3 individuals. The Judges will identify up to 10 winners. For determining winners, the judges will consider the specific scoring and overall score, age, grade level, geographic distribution, and inclusion of diverse perspectives.
4. The judges will submit their selection of winners to the award approving officials for a final decision on prize payments.

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

1. Explanation of possible solution: To what extent did the essay provide details about where/how an individual might solve the dilemma. (6 – 30 points)
2. Original thinking relative to the topic: To what extent is original thinking relevant to the subject. (6 – 30 points)
3. Understanding of the topic: To what extent does the essay demonstrate a clear understanding of the issue. (4 – 20 points)
4. Effectiveness in expressing a point-of-view: To what extent does the essay integrate the author's experience(s) and/or belief(s) and is supported by facts and/or evidence. (3 – 15 points)

5. Literary style, grammar, and spelling. (1 – 5 points)

A total of 100 points is possible.

**Additional Information**

The National Institute of Mental Health is a research funding agency, but we provide a list of resources for informational purposes. If you or someone you know has a mental illness, there are ways to get help. Use these Resources

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml> to find help for you, a friend, or a family member.

If you are in crisis and need immediate support or intervention, call, or go the website of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255 or

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>). Your confidential and toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network, where **trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals. If the situation is potentially life-threatening, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room.

Should the essay divulge information that would require the NIMH, NIMHD, or CJL Foundation to make a report, we will comply with the child abuse reporting law, which may require reporting to law enforcement. Should the essay divulge information that reveals the potential for future harm to self or others, NIMH may contact the participant and/or law enforcement as appropriate.

**Award Approving Officials**

Director, National Institute of Mental Health, NIH, for Federal funds

Director, Calvin J. Li Memorial Foundation

**Challenge Judges**

Clinical Director, National Institute of Mental Health

Deputy Director, Office of Clinical Research, National Institute of Mental Health

Chief of Staff, National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities

**Technical Evaluation Teams**

Commissioned Officers, U.S Public Health Service

Dated:

/Joshua A. Gordon/

Joshua A. Gordon, M.D., Ph.D.

Director, National Institute of Mental Health