

Executive Summary

A city known for its parties, celebrations, and vibrant culture, New Orleans is where people come to escape and pass a good time. The Mardi Gras season, which fell during the first two weeks of implementation, is a time where people give into the libations culture that New Orleans is infamously known for. Parade-goers often dress up in costume to hide their identity, giving them even more freedom to make careless mistakes. These costumes, which often include masks, make it difficult to recognize when someone may be in emotional suffering. In the midst of celebration, mental health is often neglected.

The Loyola Bateman Team set out to unmask the stigma around mental health, asking the New Orleans community to acknowledge the stigma around mental health and begin a conversation about it. Part of starting the conversation was educating our audience on knowledge of the Five Signs of emotional suffering, given to us by our client, the Campaign to Change Direction.

Talking about mental health isn't easy, but our campaign showed people that it's vital to leading a healthy life. Our research showed us that intimate, one-on-one conversations were the most effective way of reaching people, and we accomplished that through our events, classroom and student organization visits, social media, and traditional media outreach. Unmask the Stigma reached far and wide, reaffirming what we already knew to be true: that there is indeed a stigma around mental health, and that the only way to change that is to start a conversation around it.

Research

Situation Analysis:

As the Campaign to Change Direction states, "America is at a crossroads when it comes to how our society addresses mental health." While 1 in 5 people have a diagnosable mental health condition, there is still a large barrier that stops people from reaching out for help or treatment. This statistic is especially alarming in Louisiana, which was recently ranked 47th among the states as one of the worst to access mental health care, in a study conducted by Mental Health America. On our own campus last year, we suffered a number of losses in the community, including one from suicide and two from drug overdoses. Our university launched its own campaign, Lift Up Loyola, to promote mental health and substance abuse resources in response. However, our survey revealed that 96% of people still saw a stigma around mental health, and that only 67% of people would participate in mental health services that they knew about. With this in mind, we launched "Unmask the Stigma" not only with the goal of raising awareness--we needed to go beyond that--but create a more open conversation about mental health and educating them about the resources available to take care of themselves.

Primary Research:

Surveys

- Pre-Implementation: We collected 304 surveys before implementation to assess the awareness of our community about The Campaign to Change Direction and mental issues. We wanted to get an idea of how comfortable our audience was talking about and recognizing mental health issues in themselves and others.
- Post-Implementation: We collected 301 surveys immediately after implementation.

Focus Groups

- We conducted two focus groups with public relations professionals in the area. The first one was held immediately before we created our objectives, strategies, and tactics in order to gather information on local people or organizations that would be interested in partnering with us and

give us advice on creative ideas. This focus group gave us the idea to partner with New Orleans NAMI and center on the idea of self-care before, during, and after Mardi Gras.

- The second focus group was held after we decided on all of our objectives, strategies, tactics and key messages. We gathered advice on how best to implement events and engage our target audience in the campaign,

Executive Interviews

- We conducted 15 in-depth interviews with various mental health professionals, nurses, doctors, teachers, public relations professionals and advocates of mental health. From our interviews, it identified that:
 - Talking about mental health can be a sensitive topic, and we need watch the word choices and approach.
 - Due to the oversaturation of the markets, we need to work with what's already available by creating access points to pre-existing resources
 - Educating people on mental health is the key to creating change
 - Minorities are less likely to seek help because the conversation is seen as taboo in the household

Secondary Research

To understand the scope of mental health in our community, we conducted secondary research, looking to both local and national journals. Our secondary research informed us of many different local organizations that promote mental health awareness and offer resources to the community. One of the biggest organizations is the New Orleans NAMI Chapter, or National Alliance on Mental Illness. On campus resources that we could look to included Lift Up Loyola, which was Loyola's very own mental health campaign, University Counseling Services, and Loyola's chapter of Active Minds, a student-run organization that also works to start a campus conversation to battle the stigma of mental health.

On the state level, the Louisiana Behavioral Health Barometer for 2015 conducted by SAMHSA found that 4.2% of adults surveyed had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year. This was higher than the national statistic, which indicated to us that issues with mental health and mental illness were higher in Louisiana than other states. This could be attributed to the popularity of drinking in New Orleans. In addition, SAMHSA found that 61.8% of adults surveyed had not received mental health treatment or counseling in the past year. This correlated with our community survey that not reaching out for the help needed in relation to mental health.

Target Audiences

Primary Audience:

Students at Loyola University New Orleans, ages 18-22

Secondary Audience

Minority groups at Loyola, particularly African Americans

Military

Families on the parade route

Members of the Loyola community (faculty and staff)

New Orleans community

Local media

Key Messages

- Mental health is equally important to physical health
- To "unmask the stigma" around mental health, we need to start an open conversation about it
- Know the Five Signs of emotional suffering
- Become part of a more supportive community for mental health issues

- Local resources such as University Counseling Services, Loyola’s Active Minds chapter, and the New Orleans NAMI chapter are available for additional help
- The Campaign to Change Direction and Give an Hour are additional resources for those who need more information on mental health

Challenges and Opportunities

- Challenge 1: Mardi Gras festivities and a week-long school break fell right in the middle of our implementation. The entire New Orleans community was occupied with parades from March 22-28th, and Loyola University had an entire week off of school afterwards. This meant that 12 days out of the 29 days of the campaign, the community was at risk of being disengaged and unaware of us. Not only that, a large portion of our university audience was out of town for at least six of those days.
- Opportunity 1: Because of the timing of implementation, we had to fully embrace Mardi Gras as an opportunity for our campaign rather than an obstacle. The vibrant culture and imagery of Mardi Gras became an asset to the look and messaging of our campaign. It was the reason for our theme of “unmasking” the stigma around mental health and the use of the Mardi Gras mask in our logo. We were also able to take advantage of the huge audience that Mardi Gras brings to our city as well as team up with the “Krewes” that walk in the parades. Finally, we realized that the atmosphere of Mardi Gras gave us a chance to acknowledge the often-ignored, negative mental health impacts that drinking and partying can have on a community.
- Challenge 2: Mental health and mental illness were already a prominent conversation on our campus as we had recently had many losses to drug overdoses and suicide in our community. Our university’s “Lift Up Loyola” campaign, the Active Minds chapter on campus, and the Tulane and New Orleans NAMI are just some examples of campaigns and organizations in the community spreading a similar message to ours.
- Opportunity 2: We saw this as an opportunity because the community was receptive to this message. Rather than see these local efforts as competition, we found ways to either team up with them or use them as resources. In this way, our message to promote mental health awareness was amplified, rather than diluted.
- Challenge 3: Our survey told us that awareness about the stigma around mental health was already high at 92%.
- Opportunity 3: We saw it as an advantage that awareness about the stigma around mental health was already high. This eliminated our task of educating people about mental health and the fact that people are wary of talking about it. Instead, we could directly focus on creating and normalizing the conversation around mental health.
- Challenge 4: While we found a number of Give an Hour volunteers in our area, those volunteers were unresponsive to our attempts to reach out to them and/or willing to be involved in our campaign.
- Opportunity: We worked harder to team up with other local organizations and people that were more responsive to our campaign. One way this extremely benefitted us was our partnership with New Orleans NAMI, which led us to meet our spokesperson, Alfred Banks.

Statement of goal:

Based on the client brief and charge from the campaign, our goal was to create an open conversation about mental health in our community and place mental health care as a priority in their daily lives.

Objectives with Strategies, Rationales, and Tactics

OBJECTIVE ONE: Increase our audience’s awareness of Campaign to Change Direction by 20% from February 15-March 15th.

Strategy 1: Produce a culturally unique yet replicable campaign.

Rationale: With the oversaturation of mental health organizations, and the distraction of Mardi Gras in the middle of our campaign, we decided that to make our campaign most effective to our audience we needed to connect it to our culture. This would catch people’s attention and help us become more relatable. Only 5% of people surveyed prior to implementation were aware of the Campaign to Change Direction as a resource for information on mental health.

- **Tactic 1:** Create a culturally relevant theme. Our theme centers around the idea of unmasking the stigma around mental health and emotional suffering. Masks are connected with Mardi Gras as they are used for costumes and masquerade balls. By focusing on the idea of “unmasking,” we brought attention to the fact that masks could be used emotionally, as well as physically, to hide suffering.
- **Tactic 2:** Create a culturally relevant logo. The mask in our logo is both culturally relevant to our audience and symbolic of our message. The masquerade half-mask is one commonly seen during Mardi Gras at parades or balls. The green color in the logo was chosen because of its association with mental health awareness as well as its connection with Mardi Gras colors. We physically created this mask for people to take pictures with in our social media, as well. People were pictured “unmasking” themselves to show that they were pledging to be more open about their mental health, rather than hiding their emotional suffering behind a mask.
- **Tactic 3:** Choosing local artist Alfred Banks as our spokesperson. In order to show that mental health issues are something we all deal with and can talk about, we chose a spokesperson that may seem unconventional. As a rapper, Alfred does not have medical or professional knowledge about mental health, but he did have a poignant experience to share with our audience. Alfred’s new album, set to release a few days after the end of our implementation, was inspired by the suicide of his schizophrenic brother. In addition to being a mental health advocate, Alfred represents a minority community, which is one of our target audiences. Alfred was highly involved with our campaign as he was our first social media testimonial, went on multiple media platforms to talk about our campaign, performed at our biggest event, Dinner En Mask, and promoted Unmask the Stigma on his social media accounts which collectively reach 13,445 people.
- **Tactic 4:** Inserting ourselves into Mardi Gras festivities. Mardi Gras is a huge part of New Orleans culture, and while on the surface it doesn’t seem like a festivity you can pair with mental health awareness, we found ways to make our message relevant to the celebrations. One way we did this was by teaming up with four of the Mardi Gras “Krewes” that walk in the parades by having them take a picture and sign pledges to unmask the stigma around mental health. We also were present on the parade routes with our “Relaxation Stations” in order to get visibility and engage people in the crowds that may be “masking” their anxiety.
- **Tactic 5:** Incorporated influential, local people in our social media campaign. We posted daily testimonials from people around New Orleans in places that were recognizable to those that have lived here. Some examples of local people we included were our University President Father Wildes, local rapper Alfred Banks, and Loyola’s SGA President.
- **Tactic 6:** Created culturally unique hashtags for our social media. #KneauxTheFiveSigns and #CareForYourKrewe were two frequently used hashtags in our social media posts. “-eaux” is an often-used suffix in New Orleans that put a local spin on the Five Signs. #CareForYourKrewe is a subtle reference to Mardi Gras Krewes while also reminding our audience to care for their “Krewe” by looking out for their mental health.



- **Tactic 7:** Create “Unmask the Stigma” Day and have our campaign be recognized through government proclamations. March 14, 2017 was declared “Unmask the Stigma” day by various different Louisiana government officials. Four proclamations were issued in recognition of our campaign from Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Senator Bill Cassidy, Representative Neil Abramson, and the New Orleans City Council on behalf of Councilmember Susan Guidry. Unmask the Stigma day was created as a day dedicated to our campaign’s key messages: to promote knowledge of the Five Signs and Campaign to Change Direction, and to start the conversation on mental health.

Strategy 2: Increase our audience’s knowledge and ability to recognize the Five Signs.

Rationale: Knowing the Five Signs of emotional suffering is a central part of The Campaign to Change Direction’s message. These signs are not only trademarked, but provide the basis of the type of open conversation Change Direction encourages. We decided that raising awareness of these signs - which was only 14% in our preliminary surveys - needed to be prioritized if this type of cultural change was to happen.

- **Tactic 1:** Handed out business cards with the Five Signs and their short definitions to more than 1,000 people. In order to assure that the people we reached out to pledge to unmask the stigma around mental health upheld that pledge, we gave them business cards to remind them of our message. We provided an example of how to recognize the signs on the front side of the card and resources for people to find more information on the Campaign to Change Direction and our own campaign on the back of the card. Recipients of this card were able to keep them in their wallet as a constant reminder of Unmask the Stigma. This not only built recognition of the Five Signs and kept us at the forefront of our audiences minds, it also helped to extend the reach of our campaign. Even to this day, when asking our friends, they are still able to look to this card as a resource.
- **Tactic 2:** Hosted a maze event in which students had to find the Five Signs within the maze. Within the life-size maze in the middle of campus, people were challenged with finding and acknowledging the Five Signs before they reached the exit. We did this by having posters with the signs and having attendees paperclip their cut-out face onto the poster. In this way, we boosted our audiences recognition and memory of the Five Signs. This event served as a metaphor for the confusion people may feel when they are suffering emotionally, but also that there is always a solution out of suffering in the end. At the exit of the maze, we distributed our campaign materials and had people take the pledge to unmask the stigma surrounding mental health.
- **Tactic 3:** Played a “Carnival of Self Care” game at our schools “Countdown to Carnival” event right before Mardi Gras. Students were challenged to find all Five Signs taped to pieces of candy in a large bucket filled with shredded newspaper. This helped students remember the signs in a fun, engaging way.
- **Tactic 4:** Hung a banner in the middle of our student center where many students pass to buy and eat food each day. On the banner, we presented the Five Signs and their definitions, as well as The Campaign to Change Direction and other resources. Our social media handles were promoted on there as well.
- **Tactic 5:** Created and passed out fliers to students living in the dorms on campus. 154 students live in the dorm the flier was distributed in. These hand-outs identified the Five Signs and different ways students could recognize them in themselves or others. We also included advice on what to do and resources of who to contact if they or a friend was exhibiting any of the Five Signs. In this way, we went beyond raising awareness of the Five Signs and further sought to educate and help our audience to take care of their mental health.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Normalize the conversation around mental health in our community by increasing audience’s willingness to use mental health resources by 10%

Strategy 1: Personally engage with as many people as possible by creating a heavy presence in the community through our events.

Rationale: 85% of people we surveyed found information about mental health online. We wanted to change the culture of mental health by starting a conversation in our community that was more engaging in person.

- **Tactic 1:** Visited Greek and student athlete meetings and classrooms. We visited five Greek organizations, one student athlete meeting, and eighteen classrooms during implementation. We were able to open up the conversation about mental health in these smaller, more intimate settings where students were comfortable to be more candid than they would in a larger group. Not only were we able to answer first-hand questions in person, we were also able to give details about larger events on or off-campus, ask people to sign pledges, and promote our social media pages.
- **Tactic 2:** Hosted an “In Our Own Voice Presentation” with New Orleans NAMI. In it, two speakers share their stories about the problems they had with mental health and how they deal with it. At the end, the audience is able to connect and share their own stories during a Q&A session. There were 24 people in attendance, which kept the session small and intimate and allowed the audience to be more candid with their questions and stories than if there was a bigger crowd.
- **Tactic 3:** Held a free yoga class with Loyola’s Yoga Club. One of our executive interviews informed us that meditation is scientifically proven to help combat anxiety and depression. We wanted to provide our audience with the opportunity to relax and take care of themselves through yoga after the chaos of Mardi Gras. This event promoted self-care during the “Mardi Gras hangover” and was meant to help students with the transition back to school after our break. Although this first class was held during the school break when many people were travelling on vacation, we still had 15 people attend. Because of this success, we planned a second yoga class for the day after Buku music festival. While our second planned yoga class had to be cancelled due to rain, we offered free “Unmask the Stigma” coloring pages that could be downloaded on our Facebook page as an alternate method of meditation.
- **Tactic 4:** Created a “Relaxation Station” on the Mardi Gras parade routes and close to Buku music festival. While Mardi Gras is known to be a giant celebration, many ignore the impact that the loud music and rowdy crowds can have on a person’s mental health. Add alcohol on top of that, and it is easy to see how someone can be overwhelmed or anxious at the parades. We placed Relaxation Stations close to a highly crowded area of the route as a haven of comfort for those who needed a place to clear their minds. We offered free water, a place to sit, relaxing music, comforting neck pillows, and coloring pages. Our initial Relaxation Station had such high engagement and positive feedback from the crowd that we decided to expand it twice - once more for another Mardi Gras parade, and one for those close to Buku music festival. Altogether, these stations helped us to engage with more than 200 people. By placing ourselves in the midst of activity and celebration, we showed our community that talking about mental health isn’t something that should be hidden, or scary - anyone can do it at any time.
- **Tactic 5:** Hosted “Dinner En Mask” event on campus. Based off of the popular dinner-party event held all over the world, Dinner En Mask was our take on Dinner En Blanc. Our research suggested that people hold important conversations over the dinner table, and with New Orleans being known for its food, we thought there was no better way to create a conversation than over a shared meal with loved ones. We created an environment for people to talk about their mental health and get resources while also being entertained through a live performance from Alfred Banks. We handed out our business cards, collected pledges, and distributed “conversation starter” tips for how to initiate a conversation about mental health. We drew our primary audience in with free

food and encouraged them to have intimate conversations over picnic blankets at sunset. We encouraged attendees to wear green for mental health awareness in our promotion for the event, and created a Snapchat filter for use during the event as well. In all, we had about 70 people attend this event.

Strategy 2: Get 600 people to pledge to “unmask the stigma” around mental health.

Rationale: 96% of the people we surveyed agreed that there was a stigma surrounding mental health. We decided that in order to change the culture around mental health, this stigma must be addressed. Therefore, we created a pledge for people in our community to sign that would commit them to “unmask the stigma” around mental health. This meant they would pledge to be more open to talking about mental health and their emotional well-being. We made a goal to double the amount of people we reached with our preliminary surveys

- **Tactic 1:** Tabled in our student center. We took a central spot on campus to raise awareness about our campaign. Everyone that walked through our student center and passed by our table was called over to sign a pledge and given a business card to ensure the continuation of our message.
- **Tactic 2:** Gathered pledges from all of our events. Each event had a station that was meant to gather pledges and hand out business cards to our audience. The people that signed pledges at our events did so to become a part of a more supportive community around mental health.

Strategy 3: Have a heavy presence in traditional media in our community.

Rationale: Having local media show interest in the topic of being open about mental health gave our message credibility and helped us reach outside of our primary audience.

- **Tactic 1:** Pitched to traditional media outlets for coverage of our events and campaign. We received 8 different pieces of media coverage about our campaign, including video coverage of our events, newspaper articles, and a guest spot on local TV. Different media spots covered different angles about mental health - one covered how to take care of your mental health after Mardi Gras, and another focused on the importance of prioritizing mental health in the workplace. These angles were important in showing our audience the different ways mental health can affect their daily life.

Strategy 4: Have a far-reaching and highly engaging social media campaign

Rationale: 85% of people surveyed found information about mental health on the internet, and 31% of people found information from social media. Not only was social media a way for us to reach many people across geographical boundaries, it also allowed us to touch people that would otherwise be shy to look for or share this information in a real-life situation.

- **Tactic 1:** Engaged our Facebook and Instagram audience with daily testimonials from people pledging to #unmaskthestigma around mental health and sharing their personal feelings on why being open about mental health is important. We had 29 testimonials, one for every day of implementation, from people all over New Orleans, except for two from Massachusetts. We shared stories from students and community leaders of all different races and backgrounds. In this way, we were able to relate to a diverse audience and show the large community we had created in support of changing the culture around mental health.

OBJECTIVE THREE: Create a campaign with long-lasting effects

Strategy 1: Begin the roadwork for future programs to educate the community about mental health

Rationale: Because our implementation only covered a 4-week period, we believed that to truly change the culture around mental health, the conversation we started must continue beyond the 29 days we were allotted. By giving our local organizations the ideas, knowledge, and materials they would need to continue the programs we made in our campaign, we hope to make mental health a more permanent priority in our community’s minds.

- **Tactic 1:** Ensured the continuation of “Dinner En Mask.” While our masquerade dinner party was an extremely successful way of getting people to come together and openly discuss issues surrounding mental health, it was also an event that took incredible time and effort that not many organizations would be able to do. In order to help Active Minds hold the event in the future, we gave them our program strategies and contacts to help them have the same successful outcome.
- **Tactic 2:** Made materials that Active Minds could replicate in the future. We made and dispersed materials to students with helpful and educational information about how to be aware of their mental health and recognizing the Five Signs of emotional suffering during and after Mardi Gras, or in the midst of school stress. These materials were handed off to Active Minds so that they could be replicated or used as guides in the future.

Evaluation

Objective 1: EXCEEDED

Increase awareness of Campaign to Change Direction by 20%. Before our campaign, only 5% percent of our audience knew of Campaign to Change Direction, and 14% believed were able to identify the Five Signs of emotional suffering. We exceeded this objective by increasing our audience’s awareness of Campaign to Change Direction by 53%, exceeding our objective by 33%. In addition, we exceeded our goal of increasing knowledge of the Five Signs of emotional suffering with correct identification by 14% as 67% were able to correctly identify the signs post-implementation. In comparison to our first survey, we raised the amount of people who could correctly identify all Five Signs by 67%. We created such high awareness in our audience with the many one-on-one conversations we had with people. Our intimate on-campus meetings, as well as our events such as the Relaxation Stations or Dinner En Mask, helped us to reach people personally about the Campaign to Change Direction. In addition, our materials and games such as the business cards and the Maze of Emotions boosted our audience’s recognition and memory of the Five Signs.

Objective 2: EXCEEDED

Normalize the conversation around mental health in our community by increasing audience’s willingness to talk to others about mental health by 10%. Pre-implementation, 67% of our audience were willing to participate in or reach out to mental health resources. We exceeded this objective by increasing willingness to participate by 11%. We made the conversation about mental health normal and comfortable by being open and present in places and situations people normally wouldn’t be, such as on the parade route at Mardi Gras, near a music festival, or in classrooms and Greek meetings. Our audience was able to see how mental health affects everyone in every aspect of their daily lives because of the multiple ways we described the issues in the media - before or after Mardi Gras, in the workplace - and because of our “In Our Own Voice” presentation. We also showcased a large and diverse community of people who were supportive about talking about mental health through our social media campaign.

***Our social media helped us reinforce our key messages and allowed those who weren’t at our events to receive the messages we were sending out to our audience.

Objective 3: MET

Create a campaign with long-lasting effects. We met this goal by handing off our materials to Active Minds and making our events replicable.

***We provided logistics and contact information to Active Minds so that they can continue unmasking the stigma in our community in the future. We have additional testimonials that we’ve passed to them as well as replicable events and ongoing partnerships with other organizations.

Media Coverage:

WDSU-TV: TV spot on the local NBC affiliate featuring spokesperson Alfred Banks. This segment had an ad rate of \$2,534 and 28,052 impressions.

WWL-TV: A web story from the local CBS affiliate WWL-TV ran on the wwltv.com website on March 2, 2017. This story had an ad rate of \$2,750 with 862,764 impressions.

Biz New Orleans: Featured in a Daily Biz Minute video, which reaches 23,900 people. This spot had an ad rate of \$1,295. Additionally, the video was featured in the Biz New Orleans daily email newsletter, which reaches more than 19,000 subscribers and has an ad rate of \$1,495.

The Maroon: In print and online article about Unmask the Stigma with a value of \$450 in print and \$150 online, and a reach of 2,750 in print and 4,731 people online.

The Maroon Minute: A segment featuring live footage from the maze that happened the previous day and reached 1,350 people with a value of \$40.

The Wolf of Loyno: Spokesperson Alfred Banks was featured on Loyola's student podcast, The Wolf of Loyno.

The Hullabaloo: An in print article with a value of \$531 and reach of 4,000 people and an online article with a value of \$150 and a reach of 1,400 people.

5 Things to Know This Week at Loyola: A feature in Loyola's weekly newsblast, "5 Things to Know This Week at Loyola," reaching 3,836 university students.

Budget

Expenses total: \$232.60

In Kind total: \$991.75

Conclusion

"Unmask the Stigma"....

- Raised awareness of The Campaign to Change Direction by 53%
- Reached over 9,000 people on Facebook in 45 countries
- Collected 1,039 pledge masks from our community who pledged to unmask the stigma around mental health and know the Five Signs of emotional suffering
- Garnered \$9,395 worth of media coverage
- Reached over 951,783 people with our media coverage
- Initiated programs on campus to continue the conversation about mental health for years to come
- **Reached 963,500 people across the board with our combined social media, traditional media, and events held throughout implementation**

Our message, encouraging our audience to be more open and supportive about mental health, touched people of all communities in New Orleans. We utilized our city and culture to make our message approachable and relatable. Reaching beyond simply raising awareness for the stigma around mental health, we instead sought to educate our audience on how to move beyond it. We guided people on how to recognize Five Signs that they or their loved ones may be suffering, and gave them multiple resources for them to reach out to. Finally, the conversation about mental health we initiated is sure to continue in the years to come thanks to the partnerships we made along the way.