

## CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

*One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors.*

*Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.***

*To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)*

**Date** 12/4/24

### **Contact Information**

Organization Name: Minding Your Mind  
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Year Incorporated: 2007  
FEIN: 20-8448707

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Board Chair Name: Steven Erlbaum  
Board Chair Approval Yes  
Primary Contact Name: Trish Larsen  
Primary E-mail: [trish@mindingyourmind.org](mailto:trish@mindingyourmind.org)

### **Organization Information:**

#### **Field/s of Interest:**

Arts, Culture & Humanities       Environment/Animal Welfare       Education  
 Health       Human Services       Religion

**Mission:** Minding Your Mind's objective is to provide mental health and suicide prevention education to youth and the adults in their lives. Our goal is to reduce stigma and promote help-seeking behaviors in youth before they reach a point of crisis.

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Chester County

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** students (K-college), parents and caregivers, school personnel, and the community at large. 214,595 individuals.

Annual Budget \$ <u>2,015,800</u>	<u>11</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>75</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>9</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>20</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>100</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>25</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<i>100 % total</i>	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Annual Appeal, Jack Satter Foundation, Jersey Mike's Subs

**Is this grant proposal for:** Capacity Building  or General Operating

#### **If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

Mission, Vision & Strategy     Governance & Leadership     Partnerships & Collaborations  
 Fundraising, Development & Marketing     Technology    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:**      \$7,500 \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposal Summary:** A grant of \$7,500 underwrites the cost of 15 in-school mental health education and suicide prevention programs for students K-12 in Chester County.



## **CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

### **Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements, and distinctiveness**

Minding Your Mind is a mental health education and suicide prevention nonprofit headquartered in Pennsylvania and working in all states throughout the country. MYM was incorporated in 2007 in response to the void of mental health education available to teachers and students in Pennsylvania. We have grown from providing fewer than 30 programs in the greater Philadelphia region in our first year to delivering 1,965 presentations reaching 214,595 individuals in FY24. Of our presentations in FY 2024, 551 took place in Pennsylvania, and 45 in Chester County. In Chester County, we connected over 5,900 individuals with our programs. Our programs have now reached close to two million individuals and counting.

Minding Your Mind's goal is to reduce the stigma and destructive behaviors often associated with mental health challenges and to promote help-seeking behaviors in youth before reaching a point of crisis. Minding Your Mind offers a comprehensive approach of mental health education programs for students (K-college), parents and caregivers, school personnel, and the community. We use the power of storytelling to provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate education about mental health challenges. We encourage youth to seek help, and we ensure that those around them are effectively prepared to provide that help.

Dedicated mental health practitioners, clinicians, nonprofit stalwarts, licensed therapists, and members of our community lead Minding Your Mind. Key participation in our organization comes from team members who are also young adult speakers and representatives of our youth community. Minding Your Mind's team has formed countless connections within our communities, maintains flourishing relationships with schools and partners, and trains young speakers to harness the power of their lived experience to share their stories of hope, resilience and healing. We are inundated with requests for our live presentations, as school officials and community members are eager for mental health education. Our signature program, Changing Minds-Stories Over Stigma, highlights our near-peer speakers. The program is statistically proven to reduce stigma around mental health issues and increase help-seeking behavior in youth. Educators indicate that Minding Your Mind programs provide tools to reach students in new and effective ways. Young people often share that they felt hopeful and as if they were not alone, sometimes for the first time. Since 2015, we've received over 2,300 responses to formal feedback surveys and scored a 4.9 (out of 5) average rating showcasing the valuable program information.



## **Funding Request**

### **Description of key initiatives**

Funds from this proposal will help to underwrite up to 15 in-school mental health programs in Chester County Schools. We have established countless long-term relationships with schools and youth-focused organizations throughout Chester County. Schools have come to rely on us to provide their students, teachers, and parents with mental health education and support. The only barrier is adequate funding.

A key component of our school presentations includes our youth program, Changing Minds: Stories Over Stigma. For students, grades 5-12, Changing Minds features our speakers – dynamic young adults, typically in their early twenties, who have successfully and productively coped with their mental health challenges. Our evidence-based program’s success is largely based upon the fact that attendees hear real and relatable stories of hope and recovery that challenge stereotypes. Minding Your Mind programs provide students with language they need to open up about their thoughts and emotions, and most importantly, how to ask for help from a trusted adult. Students that experience a strong sense of overall wellness are less likely to use or abuse substances, stay in unhealthy relationships, engage in self-harming behaviors, and less likely to attempt or complete suicide.

In addition, we’ve seen a distinct increase in presentations for younger students. Our Kind Minds program creates awareness about mental wellness as early as Kindergarten through 4th grade. This interactive presentation teaches children how to identify their emotions, build empathy and resilience, develop coping skills, and increase their understanding of how their emotions impact their thoughts and behaviors. Kind Minds lays the foundation for emotional wellness. Changing Minds builds on these skills for older students. Both programs aim to support mental wellness for youth of all ages.

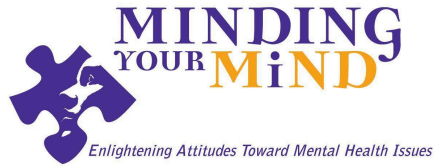
Each school program costs Minding Your Mind approximately \$500 plus overhead. The programs will be offered free of charge to all elementary, middle, and high schools within Chester County. Minding Your Mind is committed to ensuring access to mental health and suicide prevention education, and our student programs are offered without a required fee.

### **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

The CDC recommends in-school mental health education as one avenue to target the youth mental health crisis, yet schools often do not have the physical, financial, or human resources to adequately meet this need. MYM offers a comprehensive menu of mental health and suicide prevention programs for youth and the adults in their lives. The foundation of all of our programs is consistent—provide accurate mental health information, showcase diverse lived experiences, and teach effective methods to ask for help before reaching a point of crisis.

We believe everyone is entitled to mental health education and actively recruit diverse groups of speakers from various backgrounds and ethnic groups for our signature programs, including bilingual presenters. We work to ensure that many diverse voices are heard and that every participant feels welcomed and included. Minding Your Mind employs presenters from ethnic and cultural populations where perceptions about mental health have been heavily stigmatized, under-discussed, and under-acknowledged.

Minding Your Mind creates affordable, high-impact programs. We are able to reach



under-resourced, vulnerable communities who experience higher rates of stress, anxiety, and depression, yet often have minimal access to mental health programming.

**Why it is important to fund this now**

The need for mental health education and suicide prevention is greater than ever before for youth. Schools often request our programs, yet do not have the funds to support them. Minding Your Mind is committed to providing our programs free of charge, and we must continuously seek out new and increased funding in order to support demand. A grant of \$7,500 would underwrite the cost of 15 in-school presentations in Chester County and has the potential to reach 1,500 individuals who may not receive mental health education otherwise.

**How impact & results will be demonstrated**

Minding Your Mind elicits comments from key stakeholders, most often from teachers, school administrators, and parents, after every program. We also gather secondhand feedback from students through school contacts and coordinators. These feedback surveys help us identify trending issues and frequent comments. They are used to inform and improve our program content and implementation. We continuously solicit feedback from participants (students, parents, educational community partners) to obtain data on changes in attitudes and behaviors as they relate to stigma reduction and help-seeking behavior. Program participants also complete satisfaction surveys. Our goal is to average a 4.9 out of 5 rating, indicating a very strong and positive response.