

Keeping the conversation going about mental health

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On Sunday (Sept. 27), students crowd into the Kendall Cram Lecture Hall at the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane University uptown campus to hear Kevin Breel talk about how mental health issues affect him and hundreds of millions of others around the world. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Stand-up comedian and activist [Kevin Breel](#) didn't lecture to the crowd of Tulane University students sitting before him. Rather, he walked around the audience and had a conversation with them.

"It's my first time in New Orleans," he admitted. "I've never felt less knowledgeable about food. What's a po'boy?"

While Breel might have more to learn about local dining, he had a lot to share about his knowledge of mental health and why it is an important issue to discuss.

"I see mental health as a spectrum, and as a human, everyone falls somewhere along that spectrum," explained Breel, talking about how mental health needs to be viewed as something that affects everyone.

Breel became well-known after the release of his TEDx talk, "[Confessions of a Depressed Comic](#)," which discusses how it is actually healthy to admit when you are depressed.

"People began using my TED talk as a way to talk about their life," Breel explained as he discussed the influx of messages he received and social media shares of his video after it went viral.

After his TED talk, Breel became the national spokesperson for the [Bell LET'S TALK](#) campaign. His book, [Boy Meets Depression](#), discusses his own experiences with mental health, in the hope young people will relate to his experiences and be motivated to speak out as well.

"Mental health issues are well-documented but rarely discussed," Breel said. "We are finally starting to change this problem and see that these things matter."

Breel encouraged students to continue to talk about mental health and wellness and to get rid of any stigmas surrounding mental health problems.

"Everyone has a story; you can either share it or stay silent. I chose to share."

Breel's appearance was sponsored by [theWELL](#), Student Resources and Support Services, and Counseling and Psychological Services. He was presented by [Active Minds Tulane](#), a student organization focused on raising campus awareness of mental health issues and destigmatizing help-seeking behaviors.

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