

Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

Abstract

A poster series promoting social connection and suicide awareness among U.S. college students.

Artist


Clare Morris (2022)

Caption

There are many social determinants of health influencing suicide risk in college students—economic stability and community support should be identified as two substantial risk factors. Studies have shown that low-income students are more likely to commit suicide than high-income peers. Additionally, first-generation college students, who may lack family support in comparison to their peers, experience higher suicide rates compared to the general U.S. college student population. College students that perceive their social support network to be lacking are also more likely to commit suicide—loneliness in college students has been found to be associated with greater suicide ideation. Furthermore, clinical studies on suicide found that loneliness was the most frequently cited cause of suicide ideation in 47% of adults with a history of suicide ideation. Notably, research has also found that excessive social media and technology use increases loneliness among college-aged individuals.

Artist Lens

As a college student myself, I feel that student mental health is not a priority for many, which can quickly lead to a mental health crisis and, eventually, suicide on college campuses. This topic is one that has become especially important to me in recent years, as I had a close friend greatly affected by the suicide of one of their college-student relatives. Ultimately, the motivation behind the posters I created is to change the culture on college campuses to prioritize interpersonal relationships and place less importance on social media presence/one's curated image that they present to the public eye. My target audience is U.S. college students, and this is reflected in my choice of creating solely posters instead of a mix of posters and billboards. College students don't often drive around and instead congregate on campus. Thus, placing posters all around campus seems a much more effective way to reach this target audience than with large highway billboards. I would envision the more serious, detailed, and somber posters I created in more private yet frequently trafficked campus places, like bathroom stall doors. In contrast, some of the more simplistic posters would function well



in areas where people spend just a few moments, like a student union building door, classroom hallway, or dining hall entryways.

Media

Digital

[View “See The Signs” Campaign](#)

#seethesigns

Sleeping too little or too much

Giving away prized possessions

Talking about ways to die

Increased drug
or alcohol use

Talking about death

Missing assignments

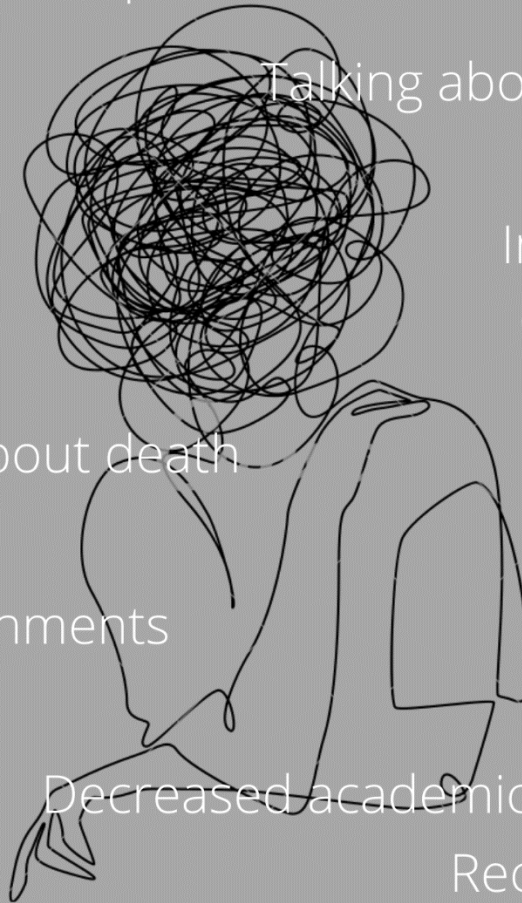
Decreased academic performance

Reckless behavior

Feeling hopeless or lacking purpose

Withdrawal from friends and family

Aggression





11:59

 **EMERGENCY ALERTS**

1 in 12 college students
have made a plan for
suicide.

 **Missing Final Assignm...**

 **Roomie <3**

how are u doing? I haven't
seen u in awhile and wanted
to check in. free for lunch?

**#SEETHESIGNS
FOLLOW UP**

An instagram post
can hide a lot.



Look for warning signs.

Ask questions.

#seethesigns

**The college student suicide rate
has tripled since the 1950s.**

**The most
powerful thing
you can do is be
there.**



#seethesigns

Concerned?



IT NEVER
HURTS
TO ASK

A smile can hide a lot.

#seethesigns



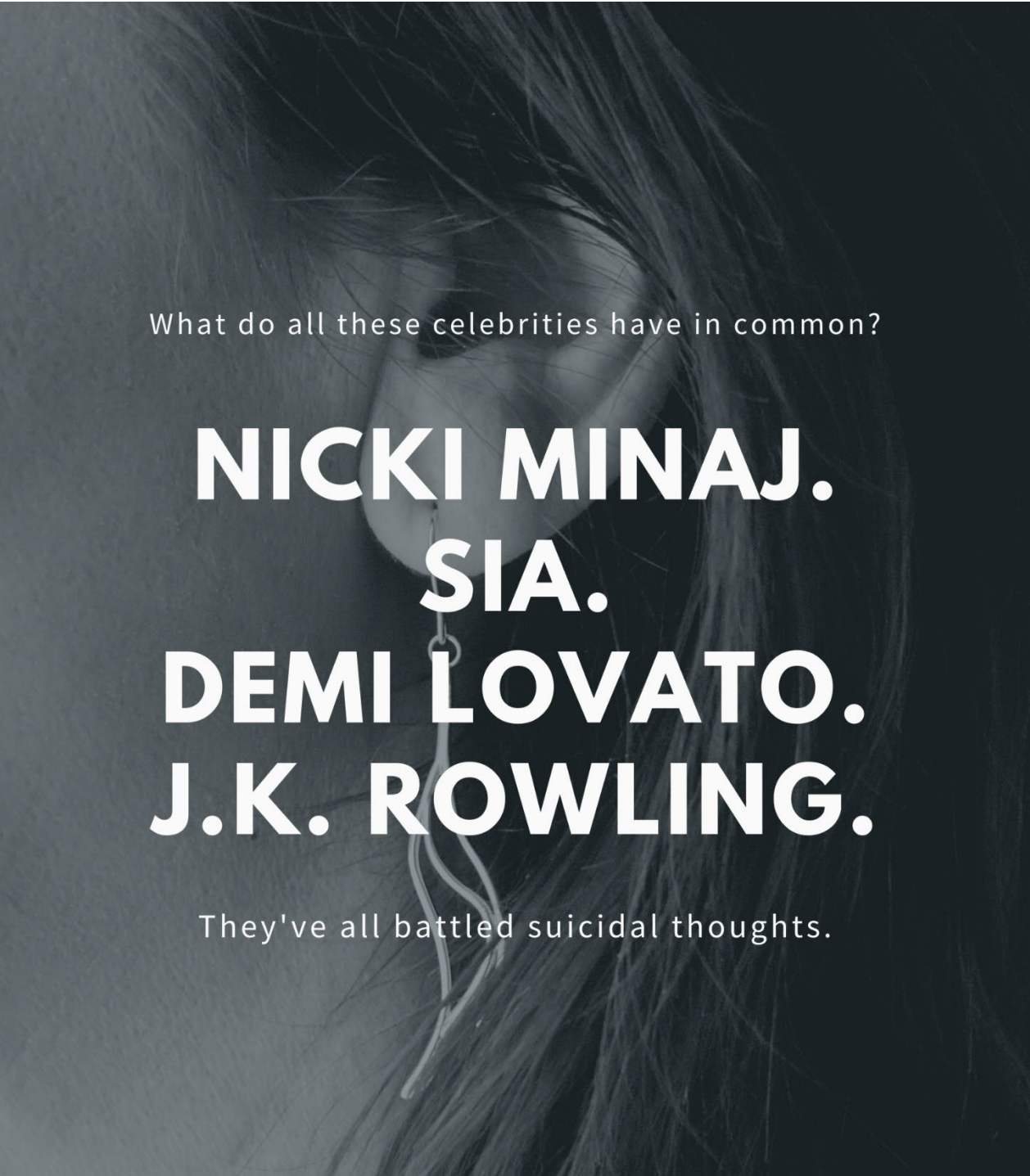
#SEETHESIGNS



**LISTEN.
BE THERE.
FOLLOW UP.**

#SEETHESIGNS

Social connection is one of the most effective ways to prevent suicide.



What do all these celebrities have in common?

**NICKI MINAJ.
SIA.
DEMI LOVATO.
J.K. ROWLING.**

They've all battled suicidal thoughts.

**ITS MORE COMMON THAN
YOU THINK. #SEETHESIGNS**