

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 designed to address mental health stigma and to motivate U.S. college students to get help when overstressed or overwhelmed.

Artist

Erin Hamlin (2022)

Caption

Research has shown that the two most common reasons for not seeking mental health services among college students with depression were the belief that stress is expected in school and the lack of perceived need for help. A survey of college students during the COVID pandemic showed that students were less likely to admit to suicidal thoughts or harming themselves if they attended a college where their peers had a high stigma toward mental health problems and treatment. This survey also showed that in places where students' peers stigmatize mental health treatment, students do not even want to acknowledge their mental health struggles. Students will be more receptive to anonymous resources if a large part of why they are not seeking help is perceived stigma from their peers.

Artist Lens


I created a series of posters intended to be placed around college campuses to motivate students to get help if they are overwhelmed, overstressed, or are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, or any other mental illness. The intended audience is U.S. college and university students. I added a QR code on each poster that leads students to a curated page of anonymous resources that they can use to find multiple forms of help (the QR code works, scan it to see the resources I compiled!). The resources page includes recommendations for stress relief apps, information on anxiety and depression in college students, anonymous mental health screenings, and hotlines to call if they need more immediate help. In creating designs for the posters, I focused on anonymous treatment options and statistics because many studies have shown that a critical barrier to seeking professional help among college students is the stigma toward mental illness and treatment. I hope these posters can help change students' attitudes toward mental health treatment. I hope seeing these posters will help students realize that high levels of depression and stress are not typical, and many other college students are going through the same issues. Finding ways for students to get help despite the stigma surrounding mental illness is a critical first step in improving mental health issues on college campuses.



[Watch Erin Hamlin Reflection](#)

Media

Digital



65% of college students report having fair or poor mental health.

You are
not alone.

Your mind matters.

50% of adults will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime.

It's okay not to be okay.

SCAN FOR
RESOURCES

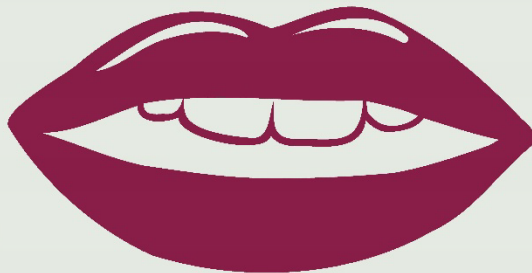


MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA SOUNDS LIKE

“Why can’t
you just be
happy?”

“I’m fine,
other people
have it worse
than me.”

**END
THE
STIGMA**



**SCAN FOR
RESOURCES**



“College
is supposed
to be this
stressful.”

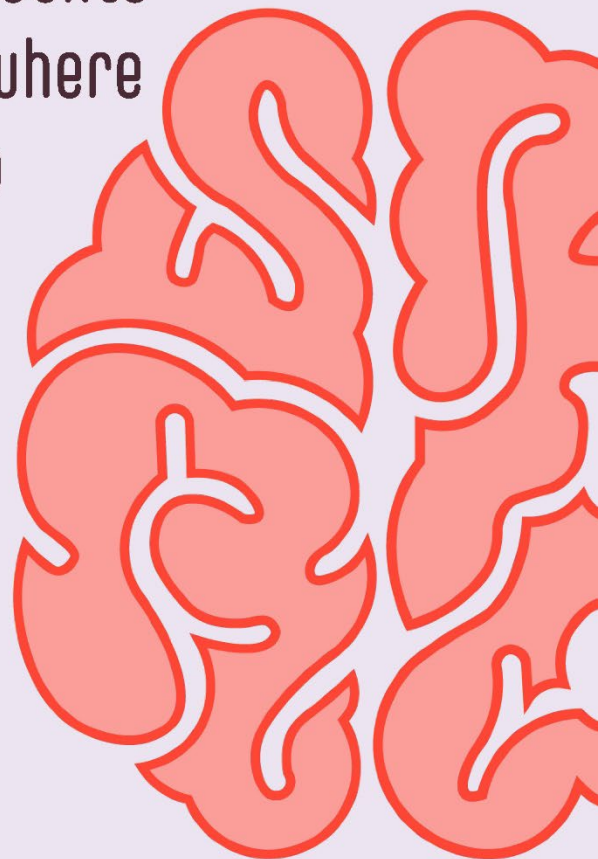
“I’d rather
handle it myself
or go talk to
my friends.”

ANONYMOUS RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH

Over half of college students
say they do not know where
to go to seek help

**HERE'S A PLACE TO
ANONYMOUSLY START:**



COVID may be almost over.
Its effects on your mental
health are not.

College students have been especially impacted by increased stress and anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and decreased social interactions in the pandemic.

May is Mental Health
Awareness Month

Scan for information and
resources



If you have been feeling increased stress, anxiety, sadness, insomnia, or have other mental health concerns,

You are not
alone.

Anonymous resources
are available.