

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 video animation explaining anxiety and how to deal with it, aimed at adolescents in the United States.

Artist

Hala Ajjawi (2024)

Caption

Anxiety is one of the growing mental health challenges in the United States. It involves a persistent state of worry and nervousness that can worsen over time, often interfering with daily life. Approximately 31.9% of adolescents in the United States, aged 13-18, have been diagnosed with some form of anxiety disorder, with a higher prevalence among females (38%) compared to males (26.1%). Anxiety in adolescence is often overlooked, but it is a serious problem that can manifest in various anxiety disorders such as social anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and others. Adolescents with anxiety may display behavioral signs like isolation, withdrawal, school refusal, and substance use, or physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches, insomnia, and muscle tension. Despite anxiety being a serious issue among adolescents in the United States, almost 80% of teens with a diagnosable anxiety disorder do not receive treatment for it. Raising awareness is a key approach to addressing adolescent anxiety. This project aims to reach children and parents with a lighthearted, quick video to inform them about anxiety and ways to cope.

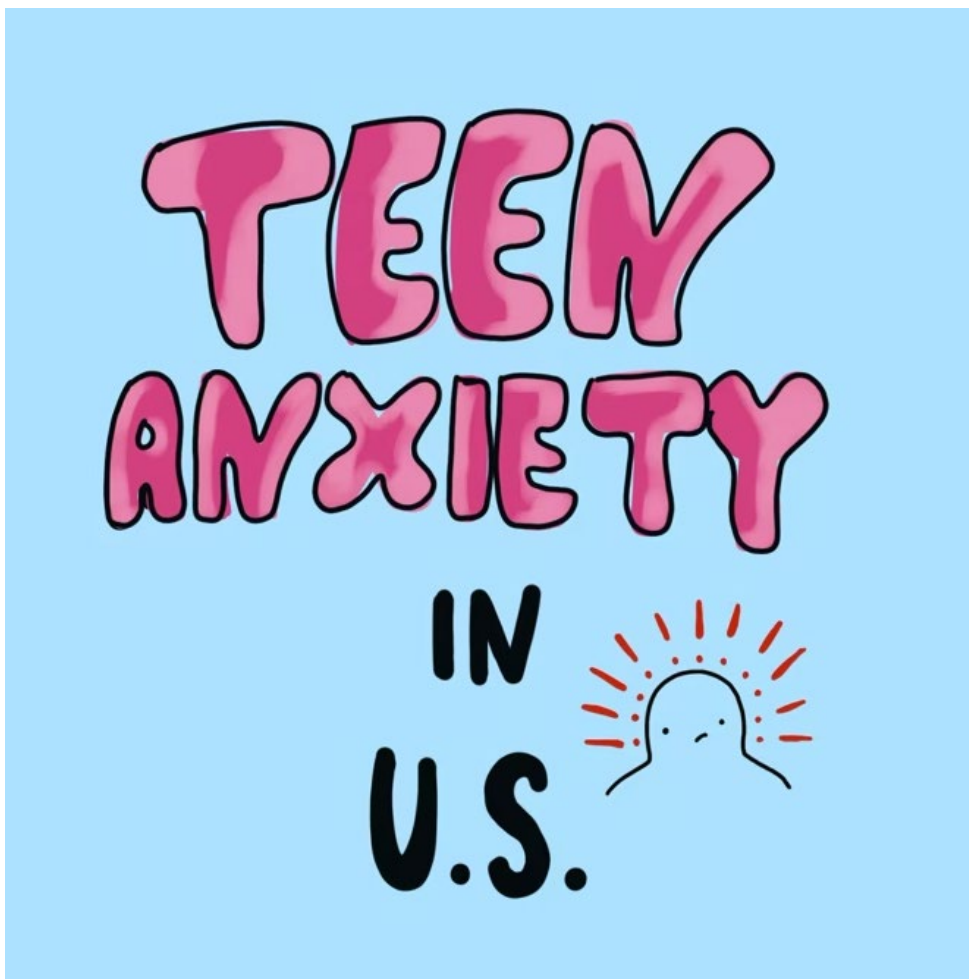
Artist Lens

Anxiety is a serious issue that many people experience during adolescence, especially in the United States. I have struggled with anxiety myself, as have many of my peers, so I understand how challenging it can be, especially for those who are afraid to share their experiences. My multimedia product is a video designed to raise awareness about this problem, educate teens and their families about common signs and triggers, and offer practical strategies for managing anxiety. I decided to create a short, visually appealing video in a format similar to those on TikTok or YouTube Reels. This video could be shared on these platforms because many teenagers today use social media like TikTok and often follow its trends, making this format likely to resonate with them.

The design choices, such as fast-paced transitions and concise, impactful messaging, are intended to keep the viewer engaged and encourage them to share the content with others. The mood of the video is complemented by chill, uplifting music, as I aim to inspire a change in behavior by encouraging open conversations about mental health, reducing stigma around seeking help, and providing practical tools for managing anxiety. To provide additional support, I included a hotline number at the end of the video for children to call if they need immediate help. This resource can be a crucial lifeline for those struggling with anxiety and in need of professional assistance. Ultimately, my goal is to create a resource that is both informative and empowering, designed for this generation, and that promotes positive mental health practices among teens.

Media

Video



[Watch Addressing Teenage Anxiety in the United States](#)