

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 series of posters promote an animated series titled “Let’s Beat School!” which would focus on the journeys of Japanese students as they navigate social, emotional, and academic pressures at school. The posters aim to help prevent suicide among Japanese youth.

Artist

Jessica Zhang (2020)


Caption

Japan has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, but while national rates of suicide has declined in recent years, suicides among youth have been rising. According to a 2018 study from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 22.5 percent of youth suicides were caused by school-related factors such as academic underperformance and bullying. This poster series is intended as part of a mass media campaign to help schoolchildren navigate their emotions during turbulent academic and social times. The campaign would include informational and promotional posters accompanying an animated series called “Let’s Beat School!” following the journeys of Japanese students dealing with school-related challenges.

Artist Lens

My multimedia campaign includes two example promotional posters that are promoting the release of a new anime following the story of some schoolchildren in Japan who face academic pressure and bullying at school. The anime will be called “Let’s Beat School!” and will feature students from the same class who undergo various struggles (pressure from parents, bad grades, bullying, etc.) and hate school. These different storylines will capture both the poor and correct decisions they make while facing adversity. In the end, they “beat” school, but end up loving their classes and the community. The posters are informational on top of being promotional. The intended target audience are Japanese schoolchildren, ranging from primary to junior high, and I hope to inspire them to seek help when they face school pressures and to change their mindset that suicide is not “taking responsibility”—instead, they should view staying at home as an alternative to attempting suicide.

I chose my product to be an anime—or Japanese animation style for a cartoon—because it is a very important cultural influence in the country and is watched by youth and adults alike, so it has the reach to change mass



thinking. I decided to show the promotional posters because these would be plastered around urban areas of the country—92% of the population lives in these areas – and the promotion would occur mostly before the start of school every year as it is the period with the highest rates of youth suicides. It will contain quick information for the children in case they do not have the time to watch the entire series. The characters I draw are all schoolchildren of ambiguous age, and the issue of suicide is conveyed in a more digestible way as the intended audience includes primary and junior high students.

Media

Digital

SOMETIMES SCHOOL GETS HARD...

**IT'S
OKAY
TO
STAY
HOME**

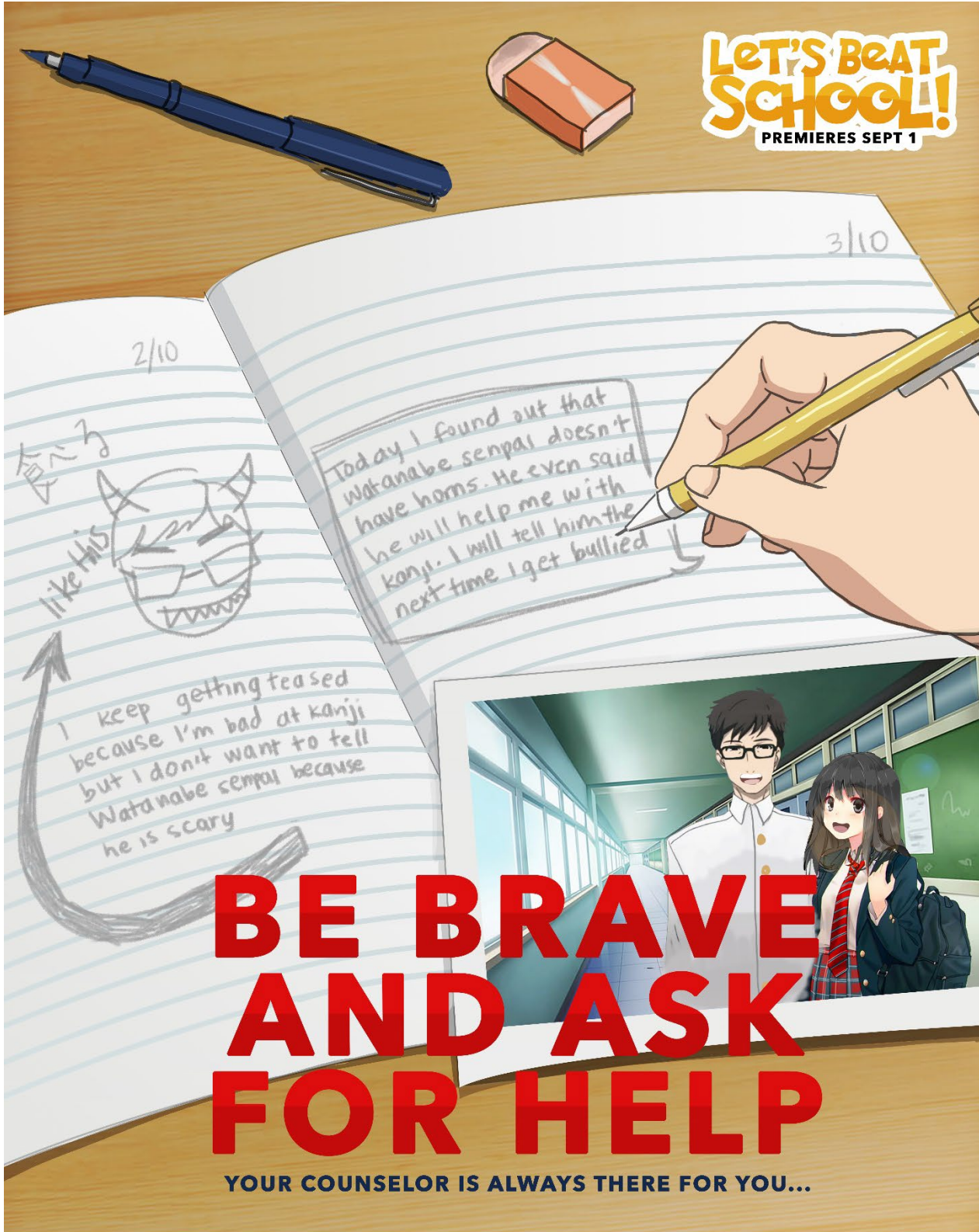


**LET'S BEAT
SCHOOL!**
PREMIERES SEPT 1

**IN 2018, WE LOST 599 OF OUR FRIENDS TO SCHOOL PRESSURE.
LET'S TAKE A BREAK WHEN WE NEED IT.**

SOURCE: JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

**LET'S BEAT
SCHOOL!**
PREMIERES SEPT 1



BE BRAVE AND ASK FOR HELP

YOUR COUNSELOR IS ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU...

**BAD GRADES AND BULLYING ARE MAKING US THE MOST STRESSED.
BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU.**

SOURCE: JAPANESE GOVERNMENT