

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

An illustrated poster and accompanying microsite illustrate the burden of mental illness and suicide in American adolescents and young adults.

Artist

Toyosi Egbebi (2023)


Caption

The mental health crisis and suicide epidemic in America is a major public health challenge in our country and has substantial impacts, especially among adolescents and young adults. Close to 50 percent of American adolescents aged 13-18 have had a mental health disorder in their lifetime, and suicide is the second leading cause of death in American youth ages 10-24. This multimedia campaign uses an illustrated poster and a microsite to raise awareness about the youth mental health crisis in America and encourage candid conversations about mental health.

Artist Lens

My multimedia campaign product is an illustrated poster/flyer accompanied by a microsite (scannable with a QR code). My intended target demographic is adolescents and college students. I envisioned the flyer to be displayed on bulletin boards on college campuses like those found in many Harvard buildings so that more people can interact with the poster and access the microsite. However, the microsite could also stand alone as its own resource to be shared online.

John Singer Sargent’s 1925 painting, *Atlas and the Hesperides*, inspired the poster artwork, which depicts the Greek mythological figure, Atlas. In the myth, Atlas was forced to hold up the sky as a punishment from Zeus. In my adaptation, I replaced the “heavens” with the Earth itself, in reference to the idiom “carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders.” I also replaced the figure of Atlas with a teenage girl. The subject does not resemble anyone in particular, but I chose to make her a Black teen to match the background of Arlana Miller, as well as subtly reference the intersectionality of race and gender when it comes to mental health in American adolescents and young adults. Observed closely, you can see a tear coming down her face, further emphasizing her anguish. The art features darker, muted colors to match Sargent’s style while conveying a solemn mood.



The text on the poster reads, “CHECK ON YOUR ‘STRONG’ FRIENDS - ARLANA MILLER, FOREVER 19.” I took this quote from the suicide note of Arlana Miller, a college freshman who died just over a year ago by suicide. It is a striking message and call to action by someone who endured mental health struggles and unfortunately lost her battle. In addition, “Forever 19” invokes a strong emotional response because it makes it apparent how young Arlana was when she passed away and that she will not get to experience any more years of life. The poster is particularly eye-catching because it is illustration-based, contrasting the many text-heavy, minimalist flyers I see on campus. It also enables people to take quick note of the messaging by scanning the QR code to read more. The microsite briefly extends the messages on the poster by providing shocking statistics about the mental health crisis in American adolescents and young adults, featuring real stories, and listing online mental health resources for young people. Overall, both my multimedia products aim to foster candid conversations about mental health in young people today and call attention to a serious issue in our country.

[Watch Toyosi Egbebi Reflection](#)

Media

Digital

[View The Invisible Burden Website](#)



CHECK ON YOUR
"STRONG" FRIENDS

~ ARLANA MILLER, FOREVER 19