


1-2019

De-stigmatizing Mental Illness through Graphic Medicine

Megumi Tsuda

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Follow this and additional works at: https://jdc.jefferson.edu/si_hum_2021_phase1

 Part of the [Illustration Commons](#), [Medical Education Commons](#), and the [Psychiatry and Psychology Commons](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Jefferson Digital Commons. The Jefferson Digital Commons is a service of Thomas Jefferson University's [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#). The Commons is a showcase for Jefferson books and journals, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, unique historical collections from the University archives, and teaching tools. The Jefferson Digital Commons allows researchers and interested readers anywhere in the world to learn about and keep up to date with Jefferson scholarship. This article has been accepted for inclusion in Phase 1 by an authorized administrator of the Jefferson Digital Commons. For more information, please contact: JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu.

De-stigmatizing Mental Illness through Graphic Medicine

Graphic medicine - or the communication of health-related narratives through images and texts, such as comics - has been increasingly recognized as a powerful educational tool. My project investigates the value of integrating graphic medicine to medical education, specifically to improve mental health literacy and de-stigmatize mental illness. As a medical student, I have encountered several instances where fellow medical students and even doctors casually throw around diagnostic terminology, especially those used to describe mental health disorders, in a colloquial and insensitive manner that seem to indicate that they do not take mental illness seriously, or even ignorant of what a particular mental illness clinically entails due to lack of exposure and influences from media portrayal (e.g. "I have PTSD from that test," "The weather is bipolar," and "I am having an ADD/OCD/Alzheimer moment"). This demonstrates a concerning lack of professionalism and sensitivity in the medical community that may be contributing to a social environment where shame and embarrassment prevent people from seeking care. As healthcare providers, it is imperative that we actively reflect on our language to avoid perpetuating mental health stigma in clinical practice. Graphic medicine provides an opportunity to expose medical students to the day-to-day experiences of people living with illness. Comics and other graphic illustrations may be suitable and cost-effective vehicles for disseminating information to medical students, and this increased understanding could play a role in improving patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes. For my deliverable, I will share a series of graphic medicine illustrations that I created as a first- and second-year medical student and I plan to summarize my experience in a case report.