funny mental illness

Anti stigma campaign, the risk of reinforcing the stigmatisation with humor

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship of a campaign video aimed to prevent stigmatisation of mental illness, and the possible risk of reproducing a stigmatising portrayal in using humor to convey the campaigns message. The focus of this study is the anti stigma campaign video called the Stand Up Kid, which is viewable on Youtube. The study uses a method of textual analysis, in combination of the strategies presented as a detailed description and analytical questions directed to the material. The theoretical basis origins from Goffman's definition of stigma, and other theories derived from Goffman are applied, to relate more accurately to the media's role in presenting stigma and mental health. The results indicate that there is a strong connection between the portrayal of stigmatised mental health, and the difficulties that stigma presents to a campaign video. The study also shows how humor can be perceived contribute to the outcome of an anti stigma campaign.

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1 Introduction

Imagine a boy in school, this boy might seem like any other, laughing and talking among his peers. The boy might be considered popular, and most definitely not someone you consider having issues finding himself socially. The peers surrounding the boy, know little of his private life, as he doesn't talk much of personal matters. He will instead talk of common subjects, and when it comes to taking initiative or beginning a new activity, he might await the support or acceptance of his peers. At this point it might seem like the boy is unsure of himself, or that he might not have a lot to offer among his peers. Actually the boy has a lot of feelings and initiatives - he would like to be able to talk about. For example he feels he's all alone in feeling low at times, he feels there's something wrong with him. In fact the boy has avoided going to school for periods of time, feeling so low he couldn't manage to. He also found it hard to talk to anyone else like his parents, and if anyone asked what was going on, he would lie. The boy might come up with a story for his parents, of feeling physically ill or sick enough, not to go to school. Either way he would avoid talking about how badly he really feels about himself.

The boy has learned from social awareness or various media sources, that people suffering mental illness are perceived differently. One who speaks of it openly might also be treated differently, they might be treated badly.

This scenario is derived from a campaign video called The Stand Up Kid, which is the focus of this study. Through the campaign video the study might show, how stigma and mental illness can be represented alternatively in a media text. The campaign video was developed and introduced by the organisation Time to Change, in pursuit of fighting the stigma of mental illness. Time to Change is an organisation aimed to help people of mental illness, through their internet based platform, they let people affected tell their own stories. Apart from the personal stories Time to Change informs of the media's role concerning stigma, how much the media's portrayal contributes to the perception of mental illness, and how the media has power to change the perception and stigma (2018).

2 Purpose

This study aims to investigate how a campaign video aimed to prevent stigmatisation of mental illness, deals with the risk of reinforcing the mark of stigma by using humor. For the purpose of this study the following thesis questions have been used;

- What risk does humor present to the campaign video in focus?
- How is stigma and mental illness portrayed in the campaign video?

3 Related work

This section serves to show how related work has treated the subject of media influencing stigma and mental illness, and gives an example of how it can be researched. The article by Holland is vital to this study, as it shows how an anti-stigma campaign has been studied, and presents pitfalls of working against stigma. The terminology of representation and humor will also be introduced in context to the related work.

The research article *The unintended consequences of campaigns designed to challenge stigmatising representations of mental illness in the media* is about the media's representation of stigma, and restates the fact of media contributing to the stigmatised perception of mental illness. The author Kate Holland argues that an Australian anti stigma campaign, represented stigma in a contrary and harmless way, through commonality that wounds up reinforcing a portrayal that embraces stigma. Holland claims that there are pitfalls in making mental health campaigns, which can be avoided through deconstructionist strategies and the help of mental health activists (2012).

Holland explains her analysis to be grounded in portrayals, which post psychiatrically can be explained as oversimplifying the problem of media stigma, and they could lead a viewer to believe there is only one or two ways to perceive a mentally ill person. With this ground Holland argues that a wide range is lost, for example there are numerous kinds of mental illnesses. The campaign StigmaWatch is organised by the Australian organisation SANE

(2012) and the analysis is drawn from archived files wharerof; 126 are so called Good News Files and 169 called Stigma Files required between 2005 and 2010, they are research files Holland got from SANE's webpage. SANE as an organisation works in a similar way to the mentioned british program Time to Change, with the motivation of trying to change media stigma, concerning mental health. They differ in means and methods, as SANE concludes from files, while Time to Change works with activists, ongoing studies and people affected by mental illness. Drawing on Hollands claim of pitfalls associated to how the campaign material is developed, Time to Change should be able to apply deconstructionist strategies towards the development of a campaign. What also can be helpful in understanding the purpose and outcome of this study, is that Holland already has raised the question of the complexities in anti stigma campaigns.

Further Holland's research shows that some of the results indicates that SANE's campaign StigmaWatch was having a counterintuitive effect, which could be drawn from how the advertising agency had generalised the audience. The conclusion was that most people would find the comedic representation of mental illness, as encouraging to open up and talk about it. While the consideration of mentally ill people actually got lost, since they by this humerus portrayal might feel ashamed by their illness (2012).

3.1 Representation and humor

In concern to representation of mental illness, Holland discusses the mentioned versions reflecting mental illness in media. The representations can be introduced by how Hall defines them, by talking about language and environmental circumstances. For example Hall uses a train of thought process, that the room one exist in, contain objects that one perceives in a certain way - even before reflecting upon a specific object. Perhaps you sit on a chair, and don't consider this specific chair, but the perceived concept of a chair that might lead you to stumble. This could easily be translated into perceived versions of mental illness as, when one hears of mental illness, one probably has a predefined meaning of the words (1997:16).

In understanding the complex role of humor, a further understanding can be reached by Doona's description of how humor is contradictory. Doona explains that humor is universal, and can have various effects of both negative and positive nature. Humor is also known to reinforce stereotypes, which can be related to Holland's mentioned argument of how mental illness might be perceived in two ways and generalised (2016:13.) A generalisation that Holland's research shows is a connection of mental illness and criminal behaviour. It is when SANE's campaign plays on this generalisation using humor that the stereotype might be reinforced (2012).

4 Focus

This section serves to show how the study came upon material for analysis, why it was selected and where the main focus lies for the purpose of this study.

The program Time to Change has lifted the issue of stigma and mental illness with statistics from the West Midlands, Great Britain. The statistics are based on research conducted by interviews and surveys that show a negative attitude, from nearly one in ten towards sharing schools with someone suffering mental illness. The research also showed that nine out of ten youths with mental illness had experienced stigma and difficulties talking to those closest to them about their illness. The research was performed in the West Midlands directed to both youth and adults, and was organised by Time to Change (2018.) Statistics has also been used in this study from UK National Statistics in reference to the West Midlands as a population and target group community (2018).

4.1 Campaign video

Time to Change used the research to develop a anti stigma campaign in 2012, angled towards the target group of youth, and teachers in the West Midlands. The campaign is ongoing and uses a combination of resources to inform about the issue. The resources use different methods of informing and teaching the target group about the issues of stigma in school environments (2018).

Time to Change has expressed these aims of the program on their webpage:

- *"Improve public attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental health problems.*
- *Reduce the amount of discrimination that people with mental health problems report in their personal relationships, their social lives and at work.*
- *Make sure even more people with mental health problems can take action to challenge stigma and discrimination in their communities, in workplaces, in schools and online.*
- *Create a sustainable campaign that will continue long into the future."*

<div align="right">Time to Change (2018)</div>

One of the methods they used to open up the campaign of 2012 was through campaign videos, shown in schools and shared virally on Youtube. The first video that was used to startup the campaign was The Stand Up Kid, which was also angled towards the target group youth and teachers in the West Midlands. Time to Change describes and motivates the campaign video on their website like this: *"Our pilot campaign featuring The Stand Up Kid film is aimed at stamping out stigma faced by young people affected by mental health problems in the West Midlands."* Time to Change (2018).

The media form of the The Stand Up Kid - campaign video is a audiovisual media text, and as Askanius explains, it is a media form often related to power and representation. The representation within a media text is worth questioning, on ethical grounds and as effect of social awareness (2012:29.) Youtube plays a role as a channel for the campaign video, and as Askanius explains Youtube is a transformative channel. Youtube might primarily be about one broadcasting oneself, but it might as well be used to convey serious messages by organisations, or even government - concerning politics. This is because of the great reach that the video platform has, as sharing community (2012:58).

The research that confirms discrimination towards mental health among youth in school, was surprising. The campaign video made in its purpose, is to be analysed as how stigma can be portrayed in media and contributes to how the issue is perceived.

5 Method

This section explains the method used for analysing the material in focus, the method is motivated and explained to meet the study's purpose.

5.1 Textual analysis

Østbye and Helge (2004:64,65) explains how a qualitative method for analysis, like textual analysis can be useful in a better understanding of a media text. This study doesn't aim to quantify any results nor generalise the conclusions, but to gain further understanding to the underlying or latent meanings of a media text. Therefore the method, textual analysis, is motivated as it is a qualitative method that aims to understand those underlying messages. It is also worthy to keep in mind that as this analysis method is used for a work of media text, no text is the other one alike and therefore the results only speaks for the material used here.

In the analysis of this type of media text, being a short infomercial video, inspiration could be sought from Østbye and Helge's work (2004:80-81) where the following structure was applied; the video was described in caption of the main scenes, the purpose of the analysis was brought up against the purpose of the infomercial, within the two purposes the questions to the material are developed. Østbye and Helge (2004:82) also explains that it is not wrong to follow up on some of the first interpretations that lead to the curiosity of the material. Even though the interpretations might be irrelevant by themselves, they usually open up the questions of how these interpretations were made from the text.

5.2 Deconstruction

The main interest of going about a textual analysis, is letting the material steer the study's analysis and conclusion. Ekström & Larsson (2010:160) explains it as opening doors, describing the content in answer to a question, and look at the meaning of the content in relation to the context, and then opening another door. This way the material is steering the

analysis and the conclusions can be related to the work and material, rather than any larger agenda or any one researchers opinion.

As Ekström & Larsson (2010) states it, it is contradictory to follow a certain analysis model in the purpose of analysing a text as a qualitative method, but it is a good idea to have prepared some questions in confronting the material. This study will combine the strategy earlier mentioned (Østbye, Helge 2004) of describing the video material by main scenes, and the method Ekström & Larsson (2010) describes, of deconstructing smaller entities of the material found by questions, and apply possible theories of how it can be understood.

5.3 Analytical questions

Ekström & Larsson (2010:160,161) explains that questions which permits the material to be analysed but still steered by the material can be useful to the analysis. For example, they use the following kind of questions; What does the text say, and what is it about? How is a relationship built between the audience and the text? What kind of text is it, and what are the divided functions and purposes of it? How does the text fit into a genre and how are the characters of the text being heard both implicitly and explicitly?

For this study the following questions have been developed towards analysing the textual video material - The Stand Up Kid;

- What is the message of the media text, and how is it told?
- How does the media text relate to the target group of youth and teachers?
- What kind of media media text is the analysed material and what kind of functions could it have?
- What genre could this media text be placed in, and what kind of themes are in it?
- What is being said implicitly and explicitly by the characters in the media text?

6 Theoretical basis

This section shows what and how theoretical work contributes to understanding and analysing the results of the study. The following three theory based perspectives are relevant to understand and reproduce conclusions in the analysis. The perspectives that mainly derive from Goffman's psychological theories, are necessary to understand mental illness and how stigma is generally perceived. The theories further pursue how to change mental illness and plays on media's role and importance. The terminology; needs and assessment and risk, is introduced here by explaining the terminology, in relation to working with the complexities surrounding stigma. For this study, in understanding these complexities it became necessary to introduce psychological theories and terminology.

6.1 Stigma

Erving Goffman (2011:9) explains that stigma was invented by the greek to physically declare a difference in moral status, the greek would burn, scar or mutilate those of perceived compromised moral status. The compromised moral status is told by the examples; slave, trator, criminal, an outcast or someone you just really need to stay clear of in public. In modern time the terminology stigma is used differently - more widespread, and without the physical declarations, we are left with the social unfortunate awareness. These social unfortunities people like to categories and create a reference awareness to.

One of these social unfortunate situations that Goffman (2011:51-53) found, was the awareness surrounding mental illness. The roles that are played by and around someone who suffers mental illness, are complexly based on accreditation. For instance say that one suffering mental illness enters a social engagement, it will be determined how others perceive oneself, based on how one is accredited. Goffman uses a more vivid example of how one suffering mental illness, is in a hospital where it is determined that everyone in the social room is aware, but act in different ways based on their previous accreditation. For instance

some might act as if the mentally ill person in fact does not have any health concerns, and this might act as a form of dismissal to the accreditation. Another act is to use a special way to treat and talk to the person suffering mental illness, which could be seen as overqualified accreditation. Meanwhile the one suffering mental illness might perceive it in another way, wherever one goes, people will now associate their accreditation to mental illness to oneself. Thus meaning one of mental illness will to the furthest extent try to overcome the associated accreditation, leading others to categorise one as normal.

What Goffman describes could be seen as some of the effects of stigma, and the roles that are acted out around stigma, the roles are simplified but serves as example of how stigma is reinforced in modern time. In aspect of this study, the surrounding roles present negative options of how to confront stigma and mental illness, and with that said there are no positive solutions presented here.

6.2 Work against stigma

In evaluating the programmatic needs for stigma of mental illness Beate Schulze (2008:86) explains how needs assessment is necessary to the evaluation. Schulze (2008:87) needs assessments are plans of how a need is defined by a certain community. For example, the program Time to Change has the needs assessment earlier mentioned, of the researched issue of stigma and mental illness in the community of young people in the West midlands. The needs assessments provide for a criteria of how to work with solutions, the needs assessments are then used by planners in creating the most effective program.

In explaining how these needs assessments can be met by planners through target groups and goals, Schulze (2008:110) describes the importance of media's role to stigma of mental health. Since people behind media rarely has first hand knowledge about mental illnesses, the representation of mentally ill people is misrepresented. The misrepresentation can take form of stereotypes connected to violence and specifically strange behavior. Schulze (2008) means that the representation is of importance in establishing and meeting the needs and assessments, so that the program will acknowledge and anticipate how the target group finds the representation of mentally ill people.

In association to this study the representation of mental illness can be questioned by how the roles are representative in the campaign video. As there has been declared needs assessments involving the program Time to Change and the campaign video *The Stand Up Kid*, the representation should indicate how stigma of mental illness in other ways could be perceived through media.

6.3 Framework of stigma and risk

In defining stigma and risk Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:14,15) draw from Goffman's earlier mentioned explanation of stigma, and builds up to how risks can be perceived. In reference to Goffman the starting point of risk is explained by the mark, the physical or visual mark of a lower social or moral status. The mark can be seen through multiple perspectives, but from the beholder's perspective it could be seen as a warning or categorisation of sorts to raise awareness. And as earlier mentioned to the possessors of stigma it might be perceived as not being accepted to a norm of normal, and being followed by this mark of other, wanting to be perceived normal.

The risk is then observed by the implications that follow by this mark, but as Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:18) explains it, in modern stigmatisation of people, places and organisations - the mark is no longer physical but takes form of social awareness and opinionated stigma, based on risk information. The risk informations can be known by media and informed through different channels of communication. Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:16-18) gives examples of how dangers or hazards are informed in ways that amplifies the danger or negative aspects, leading the audience or beholders to stigmatise the possessor of the informed risk. Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:19) defines a few measurements of how to detect and analyse risk information that could lead to a negative reinforced perspective and stigmatise people, places or organisations. These measurements are in agreement to Goffman's definition of stigma, that a mark associated to difference or other particular description could be interpreted negatively or otherwise undesirable. The mark is translated into how media characterises risk information by these measurements:

"1. The risk-related attributes receive high visibility, particularly through communication processes, leading to perception and imagery of high riskiness, a process that we refer to as the social amplification of risk;

2. Marks are placed upon the person, place, technology, or product to identify it as risky and therefore undesirable; and

3. The social amplification of risk and marking alter the identity of the person, place, technology or product, thereby producing behavioral changes in those encountering the imagery and marking as well as those to whom they are directed. "

Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:19)

These measurements contribute to this study by providing a specific way of evaluating findings of the textual material in question. As an example the first measurement could be applied to investigate the visibility of the text, and further be seen out of the perspective of amplification. They could also be used as questions and contribute to the method and deconstruction of the text.

7 Analytical findings

This section will introduce findings of the analysed material, and is to be explained in agreement with the theoretical basis. The following description of The Stand Up Kid has the purpose of recollecting the events, and what was said by whom throughout the campaign video, important details like camera-angles, tone of voice and sounds are not translated into this description.

7.1 The Stand Up Kid

The entrance scene begins with the main character - an adolescent male student entering a classroom. The main character enters the classroom where the teacher is already discussing his subject and the other students are already seated, the main character is late to this class and the teacher comments his lateness with irony *"The wanderer returns, that's another two weeks behind - see me after class"*. A student also comments about the main characters late entrance *"So where you been this time, somewhere warm?"* the main character responds to this comment *"Yeah your mom's bed"* the students laugh at the response. The teacher quiets them down *"Ok, ok, settle down"* and directs a comment to the main character who is now sitting down by a desk *"are we a comedian as well now Michael?"*

The teacher carries on talking about the previous subject - the class is instructed to choose a theme for their essay. The main character - Michael gets up from behind his desk and stands up on his chair in the direction facing the teacher and the whole class, he says *"Yeah I've got one for you",* he pauses briefly, *"how many teachers does it take to change a lightbulb?"*, there's a short quiet burst of laughter through the classroom, *"No, alright how many depressed people does it take to change a lightbulb?"*, a moment of quiet pause follows, *"doesn't matter, it's always dark isn't it"*, another short quiet burst of laughter spreads through the room.

Michael is standing on his chair and has the whole classrooms attention. The focus has shifted away from the teacher and now centers Michaels message and the reaction of the class. Michael raises his left arm, half way up he dangles the last arm section beyond the

elbow and says *"When you wake up you've got a dead arm, can't control it, can't make it do anything. Imagine that in your whole body, in your mind - in your whole life. Remember when I was off school, remember all the jokes, what options you choosing Michael? Getting out of bed, staying awake, coming to class. Only that's when I was so low"* Short pause *"Getting out of bed wasn't an option for me, even on facebook - I changed my status to still skyving, it's funny isn't it, it just makes it a little harder, sometimes it's already to hard"*, Michael takes a longer pause before saying *"I mean you lot my maights right"*, He says *"right"* a second time lower and more distant, before Michael sits back down.

The focus is drawn away from Michael and shows the students all moving around a little, in an unsettling way. Another student quietly stands up on her chair, right before the infotext is showed with white letters on a black background saying *"3 of your classmates will experience a mental health problem."* New text slide *"Think twice before laughing along, mental illness is no joke."* New text slide *"Make a stand and help spread the word."* In the last slide there is an exhortation saying *"it's time to talk. it's time to change, let's end mental health discrimination"* it has the Time to Change logotype. There is also a link to the Time to Change webpage, and some of the organisations that participated or contributed to the program have their logo information at the bottom of the slide.

7.2 Deconstruction

The question that early on brought attention to The Stand Up Kid video, was how humor and stand up contributed or contradicted the purpose of an anti stigma campaign. In the deconstruction this will be kept in mind and used as a perspective to the material.

7.2.1 What is the message of the media text, and how is it told?

When abstracting the message of this video, it is important to look at the entirety of the material. The last text slides might indicate the ambitions and main message for the campaign video and the rest of the material might indicate other messages, when looking at it separately as segments. In the entrance scene the teacher is commenting about a student being late, this could have been commented in many ways or not at all, although it was done with irony, a notice of time being spent away from class, and a request in front of the whole class to see the

teacher after. The student then exchanges humor with both the students and the teacher, and the student winds up standing up on his chair, to further joke and inform the class. So what is the message behind that out of a stigma perspective? Well the teacher is letting the class know there is something worthy to mention about this student, thereby the teacher is given a role as someone who accredits the student of being late, and lets the others know of his accreditation. The accreditation is of a negative kind, and is in a non physical way, a kind of stigmatising mark of which Goffman describes (2011:51-53).

When the student Michael answers back to the other students with humor and stands up, it can be perceived as a message of the students standing up against the teacher. Teachers who in this case by this portrayal can be viewed as a source of stigma in classrooms. This underlying message might not specifically be contradicting the message aimed for the campaign video, but it does raise the questions of what kind of consequences follow the teachers, and what does it mean for the campaign videos message in its entirety?

Further on, Michael the student standing up delivers a message, using humor in a melancholic way to convey a serious message. This message becomes effective by giving examples of emotions and behavioural trades that identifies with mental illness and the stigma of talking about it. These examples show a way of dealing with the issue of mental illness and stigma representation in media, which Schulze (2008:110) problematizes with the argument of reinforcing negative stereotypes. For example Michael talks of difficulties getting out of bed because of feeling so low, indicating mental illness, he also talks of declaring a false facebook status of why he's not in school which indicates a social awareness of stigma to talk openly in social media. Now the message here seems to face the expressed purpose earlier mentioned, in the section focus with the motivation of *"stamping out stigma faced by young people"*.

In the last scene with the girl standing up and the text slides elaborating, the message becomes more clear. The girl who stands up isn't humorous, and it proves the point of mental illness actually being an issue hard to talk of in public. The text slides speak for themselves, of course the slide including *"Think twice before laughing along, mental illness is no joke."* depicts a bit conflictive to how the previous message containing humor - segment started off.

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But the last slide including the text *"it's time to talk. it's time to change, let's end mental health discrimination"* actually fits the issues described in the needs and assessments, and offers a solution of talking, which completes the message.

7.2.2 How does the media text relate to the target group of youth and teachers?

The relationship to the target group varies, depending on what part of the target group one belongs to, and what part of the video is in reference.

The target group, teachers, are related to with a passive aggressive figure, and portrayed negatively in the video. As mentioned, the teacher became the beholder of stigma so students would have a reason to stand up. The significant trades that might be related to a teacher, might not be specific to the characterisation, but to the situation of observing something that might be related to stigma and mental illness. The complexity can also be related to how teachers themselves accredit mental illness.

The student Michael relates to students in a positive way, this is someone who dares stand up and speak his mind, this could also be referred to as the videos solution to the issue. By a closer observation it seems that the character relates to students as a joker, which raises the question of Hollands (2012) results indicating that stigmatised individuals would find it hard to take humorous information about their illness seriously.

The quiet student who stands up in the end is supposed to relate to the student as a possessor of stigma, whether it is a realistic response or not is irrelevant since the video is a work of fiction, what is interesting is how it works in relationship to a possessor of stigma. As earlier mentioned by Goffman (2011:51-53) the possessor of stigma would avoid any kind of further public mark - wanting to be categorised as normal, as it might not be realistic but it does provide an example, as it defines the relationship to a young possessor of stigma.

7.2.3 What kind of media media text is the analysed material and what kind of functions could it have?

The media text is a short video about three minutes long, it is a kind of infomercial or campaign video, it was showed in schools in accordance to the program Time to Change and it was spread virally via youtube.

The campaign video could of course have the function of teaching awareness to the issues surrounding stigma in school environments, and promote the solution of standing up against the issues, this function is one of the videos main targets through the programs description. Other than that, the campaign video has served a function of icebreaking and nerve release for those work with the program Time to Change, who came to schools and informed students and staff about stigma (2018). There could also be a less obvious function in the campaign video which has to do with warning the audience, which could be related to the teacher's character of negative accredit to the student Michael, thus creating the situation of standing up against stigma. It could also be related to the text slide saying *"Think twice before laughing along, mental illness is no joke."* which in itself is a warning of certain behaviour, and can be related to a warning of risk.

The function that so far has been less expressed, is the amplification that a media text can provide. With a short campaign video like this one, showed in accurate channels, could have a great amplified function to spread both risk and awareness to the issues of stigma. Apart from the school environment the campaign video was shared on Youtube where it has had over one million views since it was uploaded in 2012, contributing to spreading the awareness (2018). In accordance to the needs and assessments it is hard to say whether this is a successful amount of views. It is of course impossible to say with Youtube material if these one million views are mainly of local origin or not, but in proportion to the statistics of the UK National Statistics (2018) the West Midlands population is estimated to 2 864 925 people, which then makes it possible to figure the over one million views as high visibility (Youtube, 2018).

With Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kaspersons' (2001:19) first definition and measurements in mind, the risk related attributes of the campaign video, could be related to the warnings of risk as earlier mentioned. However, this risk in a way is unspoken, since the consequence of the risk, resides strictly in mentioning the statistic *"3 of your classmates will experience a mental health problem"*. The mentioned risk could be perceived as a warning, and contributes to social awareness to the surrounding target groups. Since the imagery shows of multiple interpretations, the campaign video becomes a social amplification of risk.

The campaign video mainly has a promotional and encouraging position towards a solution against the issues of stigma instead of warning, which makes it function as a solution instead of just an exhortation to quit a certain behaviour of negative attributes. Although in creating this strong message of injustice to stand up against stigma in the campaign video, it also creates two sides of the stigma concerned issues, there's both an offer of solution and a warning of risk in behaviour. The two sides revealed here might be one of the complexities Holland (2012) argues finding with stigmatised mental health campaigns in media.

7.2.4 What genre could this media text be placed in, and what kind of themes are used?

The genre of this campaign video could be seen as health communication, as it really doesn't encourage to buy anything, but as mentioned promotes a way of confronting stigma with the health aspect of mental illness.

The themes that become familiar in this video are in agreement with the mentioned needs and assessments. The target group of youth and teachers are portrayed by a common classroom where the students all sit facing the teacher, who is facing them in the front closest to the classroom door. The school theme is also portrayed by the kind of relationship that the actors play to have between students and teachers. The theme of mental health is most clearly presented by the student Michael, who uses the character as example to tell of different experiences of mental health.

The quiet student who stands up by herself at the end of the video, presents the theme of stigma, as she doesn't say anything there's a clear connection to the seriousness behind the issue of stigma. The quiet student also portrays what Goffman (2011) talks of with the

possessor of stigma wanting to be accredited as normal, and out of the categories normal or not, maybe after Michael's stand a more normalised option has been presented through standing up.

Another theme presented in the campaign video is the ironic comment *"The wanderer returns, that's another two weeks behind - see me after class"* from the teacher to the student Michael. In calling Michael a wanderer, the teacher is using satire to express disappointment of Michaels late arrival. Now if the ironic comment is translated to Goffman's (2011) physical mark, it becomes a mark that stigmatises to being late. But if the comment is to be defined or measured as a mark by Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:19) it is a mark placed upon Michael, with the intention to identify his behaviour as risky, maybe to advertise non acceptance to other students, and making an example of Michael as different in a negative way.

7.2.5 What is being said implicitly and explicitly by the characters in the media text?

A lot of the findings in this analysis are interpretations of underlying meanings to the message, which was deliberate in proceeding with a qualitative text analysis. With the interpretations one can lose sight of what was explicitly said by a character and what was found as an implicit meaning to the characters actor line or behaviour.

The teacher for example explicitly said *"are we a comedian as well now Michael?"*. Now without any previous knowledge of events or implicit meaning the teacher is simply asking if Michael is also a comedian. But with the previous knowledge to Michael being late and making a joke, the implicit meaning of the question is a further comment to categorise Michael, this time as a comedian. The implicit meaning can also be related to how the comment is directed to the student Michael from the teacher - a character of authority, and it then gets a meaning of asking Michael to be quiet, to keep order in the classroom.

There is also a commenting student whom explicitly asks *"So where you been this time, somewhere warm?"*, again with no further understanding to the comments background, it's simply a question of interest in Michael's whereabouts. But with an implicit meaning and including the teachers ironic comment of Michael being a wanderer, this becomes a further

indication of Michael being different than the other students. It is a weaker link, but this could also indicate a furthering to stigmatising different behaviour as something negative. Now when Michael explicitly answers *"Yeah your mom's bed"* as a reply, there is a first evidence of standing up against stigma, and implied humor irrelevant to this paper. This would contradict Goffman's explanation of a stigma possessor only wanting to be categorised as normal. The reaction of other students laughing is explicitly just laughing at the joke, but implicitly creating an acceptance to the stand up (2011).

So when the student Michael sits down at a desk and once more receives a comment, the stand up has been accepted, and so he stands up on top of the chair. Now this action is explicitly simply a physical stand on a chair, but has an implicit meaning of standing up against something and in this context, it is stigma. There is also a further meaning of standing up, as it creates a dimension of those standing up and speaking, wanting to be heard and seen by those sitting down. When the student Michael came in to the classroom he was quiet at first, but after getting comments twice he replied, and after a third comment he physically stands up - this indicates a change in behaviour.

With Michael's change in behaviour, now standing up on a chair in the campaign video, there is a risk of amplifying the social behaviour. Kasperson, Jhaveri and Kasperson (2001:19) talks of these changes of altering the identity of a person, organisation or place with the mentioned mark. Now the identity of Michael as a person is just a character, but the character is here presenting a stand against stigma, and while doing so also creating a portrayal of who a mentally ill person is in this stand against stigma, which produces an implicit meaning of how mental illness can be encountered with humor.

8 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions drawn by the analytical findings according to the purpose of this study, that was to investigate how a campaign video aimed to prevent stigmatisation of mental illness, deals with the risk of reinforcing the mark of stigma by using humor. To be more precise of what the study investigates as indications of dealing with risks the thesis questions present the study's direction;

- What risk does humor present to the campaign video in focus?
- How is stigma and mental illness portrayed in this campaign video?

A pattern of findings indicate that the campaign video featuring the Stand Up Kid, faced the risk of reinforcing the mark of stigma through, the use of humor just as Holland's study argued. As Time to Change has another set of resources of identifying the pitfalls of using humor in an anti stigma campaign, one might expect another outcome (2012.)

When facing these pitfalls of humor, it needs to be said that the campaign video uses a language that agrees with an anti-stigma campaign and mental illness. For example, when the main character tells the jokes it is in a melancholic nature, and the negative presentation of mental illness is answered with a solution. This representation of humor and mental illness should work to encourage the audience to more easily talk about mental illness. Although in saying the humor should work for the cause, also leaves room for interpretations of other kinds. As Doona explains, humor can have various effects, whereof one negative effect would be to reinforce a negative stereotype. An example of a negative stereotype, that could be reinforced, is that the mentally ill make fools of themselves, sharing bad jokes in class. In relation to this campaign video, if the humor had a negative effect, the outcome might be that a negative stereotype is reinforced with the humor, and the whole notion of someone standing up against stigma (2016:13).

The pitfalls are mainly represented by how the issue is made up by the teachers character who provokes a situation to stand up against. Conclusively the risk that humor presents to the anti stigma campaign in focus, affects the seriousity of the message behind the campaign, but in

addition to Holland's argument the humor works to create an example and situation which also ultimately leads to the option of presenting a solution (2012).

The findings indicate multiple portrayals of both stigma and mental illness, but one of the strongest identifiers to both stigma and mental illness was portrayed by the quiet student. Now the act of the quiet student in itself might not indicate a lot, but in the context of the created stand up situation - the quiet student symbolises a person actually suffering the consequences of the mentioned issues. The portrayal of stigma and mental illness is most clearly portrayed by the characters reinterpretation to the issues and identifiers of being silenced, and wanting to belong to the normal category of groups Goffman (2011).

This study could be used as grounds for further research concerning the approach of stigma and mental health in media. This paper expresses very little of the existing portrayal of stigma and mental health in media, which also could be researched further.

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