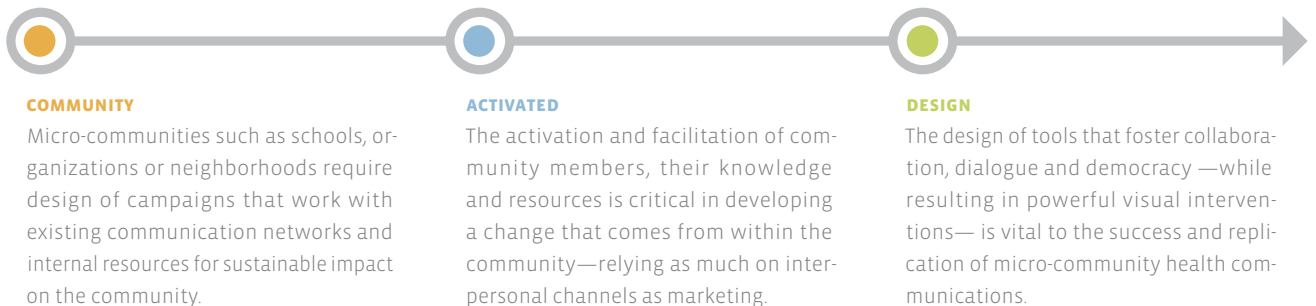




## community activated design

This project is designed to engage community members in small communities such as highschools in the process of design. Giving community members an active roll in the outcome. The use of collaborative methods allows for greater community ownership, dialogue and cross-cultural learning for the participants. The methods have been used both in the classroom and in community-based settings. The methods have been used to address critical topics such as suicide prevention, mental health, substance abuse, and inequality.





## project overview

This project engages participants in the design process through a poster design workshop that utilizes simple stenciling techniques and introduces basic design concepts such as cropping, contrast, repetition, and balance. The project simplifies the use of color through an analogous or monochromatic color palette.

### PROJECT SETTING AND TOPIC

This project can be done as a classroom activity to engage design students in the value of collaboration. Helping them consider the value of human interaction, reflect on their role in the design process, and raise their awareness of the complexities of communicating and impacting cultural issues.

The project can also be done as a larger initiative that involves local community organizations or populations that faced with a difficult issue they are wanting to engage. Even being developed into a toolkit that can be distributed through a network of communities such as a school district.

Ideally a topic and community present themselves through a request for assistance. Often time these requests are for pro-bono work or participation in a design competition. The best setting for sustained impact is through an existing organization that is already engaged in community development efforts. If this is not possible or the project is being done through as a class project, the topic can be determined by the students themselves.

### INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » Are there community partners that you have easy access to for collaboration such as University Health, a local children's hospital, art educators, or other faculty considering health communications.
- » How do you want to involve students in the project; as participants, as collaborators, or even initiators? Should the class do the project together or in small groups to facilitate multiple workshops?
- » What topics may be of greater interest to your University or setting (e.g. mental health, substance abuse, energy use)? This may be beneficial for funding of the project as a larger community effort.



### PREPARATION

Once a topic is determined, 3-5 messages addressing the issue should be developed. These are best developed in collaboration with community or healthcare workers dealing with the issue on a daily basis, but can also be determined by community members prior to the workshop. Messages may reinforce positive/alternative behaviors, community norms/myths about the issue, negative outcomes of the issue, statistics about the issue, or information about community resources such as mental health organizations or contact information.

In addition you'll need to consider the following:

- » *Obtain a location that fits the minimum requirements.*
- » *Recruitment of participants (if you are involving the community).*
- » *Partner with a local expert on the issue being addressed to lead discussion during the workshop.*
- » *Prepare a demonstration of stenciling technique and design concepts that will be discussed.*

### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

---

- » Coated posterboard sheets.
- » Exacto knives.
- » 100-lb text weight uncoated paper, inexpensive printmaking paper or drawing paper (at least 11x17", but optimally 18x24" or larger sheets).
- » 3-5 gallons of inexpensive flat acrylic house paint in an analogous or monochromatic color palette.
- » 4" foam paint rollers (probably at least 2 rollers for each color of paint, depending on number of participants).
- » Paint trays (can be disposable paper or aluminum dishes/pans).
- » A studio or room setting that paint can be used in. Drop clothes can be used on and under tables if this is not available.
- » Easy access to a sink.
- » Room to hang or lay out finished posters for drying.
- » Large garbage bin.



### POSTERS

A series of 3-5 posters based on the messages determined previously should be preprinted on the paper using laser printing, screen printing, commercial printing, or other accessible techniques. The message should not cover more than 25% of the paper. Reproduce enough of the posters for each workshop participant to produce 8-10 posters.



A series of four posters that convey four different messages addressing the dangers of Meth. These messages are printed across the bottom of large 18 x 24" posters. The top 75% of the posters are left blank for workshop participants to stencil.

### PAINT

Select a color palette that is unique but simple. Analogous or monochromatic colors work well. Some participants may wish there was a more diverse color palette, but if you are engaging the general public in the workshop, the simpler palette helps them feel more successful and also creates a more distinguishable graphic element for the final posters. Cheap acrylic house paint can be tinted to any color palette, is easily cleaned up with soap and water, and dries fairly quickly.



### STENCIL LIBRARY

Creation of a stencil library can be part of the class experience or developed prior to the project initiation. Regardless, a stencil library of 10-50 different stencils is sufficient and relatively easy to produce with a group of 3-5 people to help cut them out.

Stencils should be diverse in their imagery/content. Attention should be paid to complexity of each stencil, as complex stencils can be quite time-consuming to cut out and tend to be more fragile for repeated use. Posterboard that is coated on both sides works best for repeated use and storage.



The library should include topic specific stencils. These might include relevant words, phrases or contact information. Remember to keep them simple.



Not all stencils need to be directly tied to the issue. Abstract images can encourage creativity and self expression—which lead to a greater sense of ownership.



Simple geometric shapes and patterns can be very effective in creating depth and variety in the posters.



Utilizing a 1-2 typefaces will help the posters be identifiable when installed in multiple locations.



### WORKSHOP FACILITATION

The workshop will take about an 1.5 hours and should begin with a discussion and demonstration. The discussion should introduce the topic (ideally from a health care or community partner) and overview the process. The design leader of the workshop should emphasize:

- » *Creative freedom*
- » *A fast pace of work*
- » *Collaboration or “stealing” of techniques should be encouraged*
- » *Time to observe other’s work*
- » *Not giving up*

The discussion should lead into a demonstration of techniques where participants are able to observe at least two posters being created. The posters should introduce design concepts such as contrast, cropping, repetition and balance. The demonstration should also reinforce a fast pace of work, low-pressure creativity, and experimentation. The leader should create the posters with a think-aloud approach that lets participants hear the rational and thought behind the leader’s actions.

The working time should be highly collaborative. Playing music is a good way to identify work time. Encourage production of many posters (each participant should be able to create 6-12 posters during the workshop if they don’t get too focused on a single solution).

### WORKSHOP TIMING

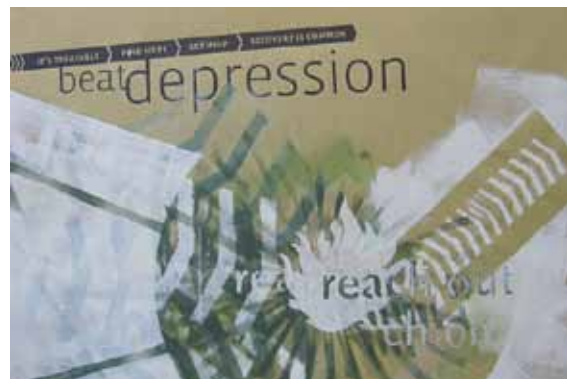
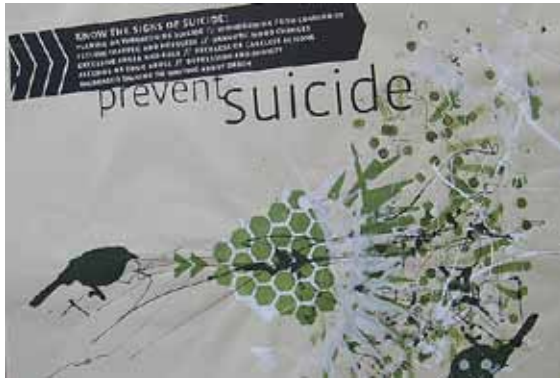
---

- » Introduction of leaders and topic (5 minutes).
- » Discussion of topic led by community worker (5-7 minutes).
- » Demonstration of stencil methods (10 minutes)
- » Participant work time (25 minutes)
- » Participant walk around, review and reflection (5 minutes)
- » Participant work time (25 minutes)
- » Closing discussion (5-10 minutes)



### WORKSHOP FACILITATION CONTINUED

Take a break after 20-25 minutes to review and reflect with the participants. It is nice to have a space to hang or layout the posters that have been produced. Point out some unique solutions or techniques and reinforce learning from each other. Leave room for participants to make observations before beginning the second working time.



Examples of participant created posters. Note the four different messages in black on the upper right corner of the posters. These were screen-printed prior to the workshop.



## INSTALLATION

Installation of posters in groups allows them to function as a whole rather than being judged on their individual merits. Their size, color and reproduction method contrast most other posters or marketing materials. Their consistent colors, type and imagery make the quickly recognizable across a school or community. The posters can be installed on existing bulletin boards, walls, or on temporary structures.



Installation of suicide prevention and awareness posters on existing walls and temporary structures on a University campus.