

stigma

Designmatters



Art Center College of Design

stigma

Los Angeles County
Department of
Mental Health

Designmatters
at Art Center
College of Design

The Agency
@ Art Center
College of Design

2005 – 2006

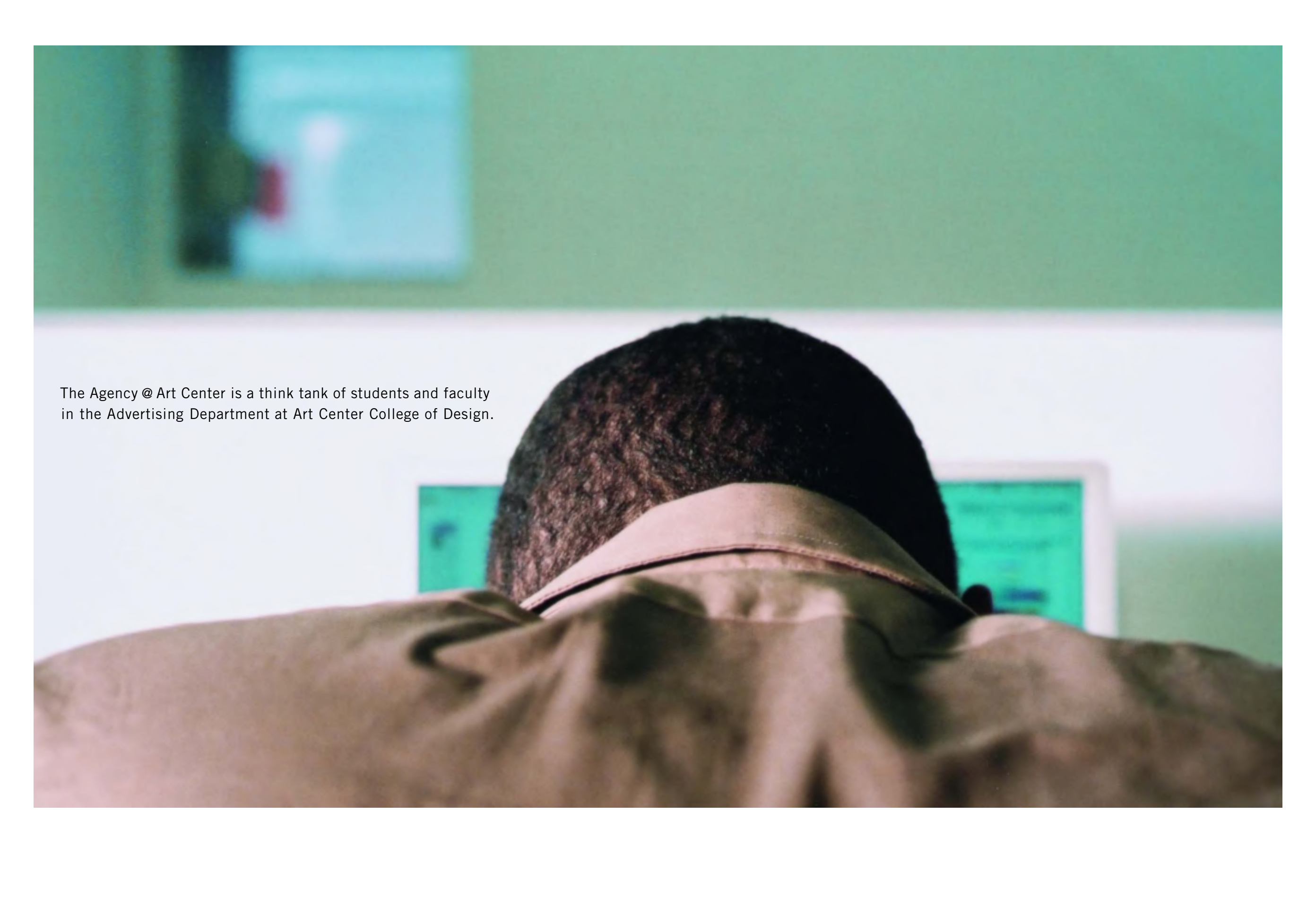
This volume is dedicated to **Mikio Osaki**, whose creative leadership has been felt across the world of advertising for more than 40 years. As Advertising Department Chair at Art Center College of Design since 1995, Mikio's vision gave rise to the Agency at Art Center, whose student professionals developed this project. Mikio has been a teacher, mentor and friend to all of us, and to generations of students at Art Center.



THE AGENCY @ ART CENTER



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A photograph showing the back of a person's head and shoulders. The person has short, dark hair and is wearing a brown jacket. They are sitting at a desk, and a computer monitor is visible in the background, displaying a blue screen. The background wall is light-colored. The overall scene suggests a professional or academic setting.

The Agency @ Art Center is a think tank of students and faculty in the Advertising Department at Art Center College of Design.

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The communications project chronicled in the following pages is the result of a singular collaboration between a remarkable group of individuals and institutions brought together by a common objective: to address from a broad educational perspective the complex issue of stigma surrounding mental health. Specifically, the intention was to deter stigma and counteract the vicious cycle of hurtful behaviors that harbor prejudice and can result in various types of discrimination throughout our society. The task at hand: conceive a series of outreach campaigns with an overarching message of hope and understanding.

The target audience for the project was first identified by the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Their vision was for a campaign that would reach children four to six years of age, and be disseminated in the environment where children grow into full social beings—preschool and elementary school—before prejudice is ingrained. While children this age can be a vulnerable group, prone to be affected by the intricate web of social patterns that surround stigmatizing behaviors, they are also at a critical stage to acquire lifelong tools for establishing self-worth and wellbeing. In the fall of 2006, a team of 12 senior advertising students from Art Center College of Design's communications "think tank," the Agency, accepted the challenge of turning the Mental Health Commission's initial vision into a series of campaign proposals. With the facilitation of Designmatters at Art Center, the College-wide initiative exploring social and humanitarian applications of design, the multidisciplinary research and design exploration that ensued allowed for an in-depth examination of many of the key questions related to mental health, diversity and difference across communities.

I am most grateful to commissioners Ilean Rabens and Lana Ayeroff Brody for their unwavering dedication in advancing the Mental Health Commission's cause and for providing us with the foundational inspiration to embrace the project at Art Center. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of former Deputy Director John S. Hatakeyama, and current District Chief Sam Chan, of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health for championing the design and creative process of our students and allowing us the privilege to work collaboratively with their knowledgeable team. I would like to particularly underscore the contributions of Ilda Rueda De Leon, Prenatal to Five Program Coordinator; Trish Donahue, Project Consultant; and Bowen Chung, M.D., UCLA Health Services Research Center.

Education is recognized as a social experience through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills and acquire knowledge. It begins in early childhood, in different forms depending on the situation, but always with the involvement of families and local communities. The research phase of this project benefited from the partnership and expertise of a few of the most stellar institutions and programs focused on early childhood education in our Pasadena community: Pacific Oaks College, Pacific Oaks

Children's School and Head Start. Thank you to Judy Cashell, Education Specialist, Center for Community and Family Services, Headstart; Corrine McGuigan, Provost, Pacific Oaks College, and faculty members Connie Destito and Barbra Fletcher-Stephens for their expert counsel; as well as to Jane E. Rosenberg, Director, Pacific Oaks Children's School, for opening the magical yards of the school and making possible the field research that represented such a boost to the project. Finally, I would like to mention how much we appreciate the early endorsement of the project by the Pasadena Unified School District.

Many individuals at Art Center lent their support at key stages of this collaboration. Thank you to Paula Goodman, Director, Art Center for Kids; David Walker, Dean, Public Programs; Mark Breitenberg, Dean of Undergraduate Education; Jane McFadden, Acting Chair, Liberal Arts and Sciences; Kim Miller, Director, Foundation Relations; Michael Berman, Senior Vice-President, Chief Technology Officer; Iris Gelt, Senior Vice-President, Marketing and Communications; Nate Young, Executive Vice-President and Chief Academic Officer; and Art Center President Richard Koshalek. Their participation in this complex undertaking was essential to its positive outcome. The project and this publication also represent the culmination of an outstanding creative team effort that relied on the detailed archiving of Royal Jackson and Kerry Gallagher, the photography of the great Roland Young, whose work stands out on the pages ahead, the excellent design of Meryl Pollen, the sustained counsel of Erica Clark, Senior Vice-President, International Initiatives, and the tireless and essential contributions of my colleague Elisa Ruffino, Senior Associate Director and Producer, Designmatters.

As the following pages of compelling testimonials attest, at many times this project proved difficult. Drawing extensively from individual experience, students immersed themselves in a highly introspective and reflective journey that ultimately produced a very personal takeaway. I salute the exceptional energy and commitment of instructor Elena Salij and Agency founder and Advertising Department Chair Mikio Osaki. Their confidence, intellectual curiosity and engagement were uniquely inspiring to all of us, at every step of the way.

Lastly, our collective admiration and thanks to the Agency team of students: Paola Carpintero, William Esparza, Gail Gonzales, Jonathan Huang, Royal Jackson, Jacqueline Jung, Nicolas Kamei, Maryam Mohseni, John Nguyen, Shannon Pert, Pearl Suh, Denise Zurilgen and filmmaker Michael Freund.

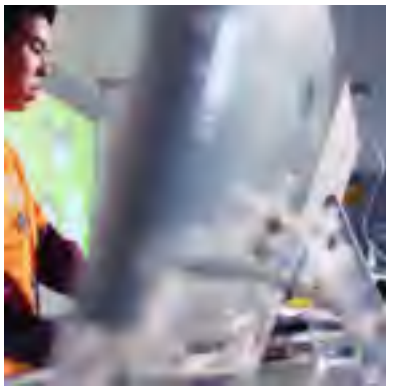
The intrinsic optimism and empathy of their proposed campaigns remind us to look beyond our differences and find acceptance for others and ourselves. As the narrative of the campaign's short film concludes, the underlying message we are left to ponder and embrace is:

"I am happy being me and
I want you to be happy being you."

Mariana Amatullo

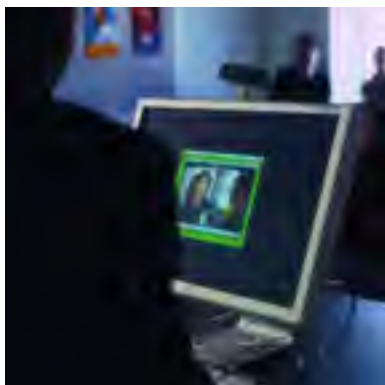
Director, International
Initiatives

Director, Designmatters
at Art Center College
of Design





Perspectives



Lana Ayeroff Brody M.A.
Educational Consultant

A Collaboration is Born

Commissioner Ilean Rabens had come to the Mental Health Commission with an idea. She felt that because the stigma of mental health issues was crippling to families, a campaign to reduce this stigma would be helpful—particularly to children in our city and state. I am a great believer in collaboration and the building of community, so I began to brainstorm with Ilean about potential partners for this project. My work as an educational consultant (following my years of service as a teacher, counselor and principal in the Los Angeles Unified School District) led me to Paula Goodman, director of K–12 programs for Art Center College of Design’s Public Programs, and whose leadership in art education outreach is well known. Paula and I enjoy a rich professional relationship, and she has spent hours informing me of the exciting work going on at Art Center. Ultimately, after a planning meeting about our vision for the stigma campaign, we identified the College’s Designmatters initiative as the perfect conduit to flesh out and develop the project.

Entrusted thereafter to a group of dedicated advertising students and faculty comprising the Agency at Art Center, the campaign quickly took shape. When the final plan was revealed, I was thrilled. The capacity of these talented and creative student professionals for taking our thoughts and translating them into various projects benefiting children was remarkable. The inspired results of everyone’s hard work convinced us all that in partnering with Art Center, we had come to the right place.

The Dynamics of Difference

According to the master plan developed by the California Department of Mental Health “and priorities identified in the more recent Mental Health Services Act, the mental health community must work to eliminate the societal stigma associated with having a mental illness or a serious emotional disturbance.” Anti-stigma campaigns have thus become increasingly important in promoting public awareness and education. However, if they are to effect lasting change, such campaigns need to address a developmental continuum and the critical ages at which stigma, prejudice and attitudes about difference are formed.

The author Robert Fulghum famously contended that all he really needed to know he learned in kindergarten. In fact, preschool and kindergarten-aged children are at the formative stage in their lives—when they are growing into, and acquiring an enduring sense of, their unique identities. Positive self-identity is a core foundation of school readiness and related social skills that will guide children into adulthood and enable them to successfully pursue their interests and express their talents. Parents, caretakers, family members, key adults, peers and friends contribute to and profoundly influence a child’s emerging identity. They can ultimately nurture in a child the greatest gift an individual can give to others—discovering the essence of who they are, and helping them to fulfill their destiny of living out the truth that is within them.

Unfortunately, children of diverse backgrounds still experience a world where stigma and prejudice are alive, but not “well,” in that they potentially damage one’s identity and sense of self-worth. As a biracial child growing up in the 1950s, I recall my first day in kindergarten, when I was taunted by a classmate who seemed fascinated by my ambiguous racial characteristics and last name. He pursued me on the playground chanting “Charlie Chan” and “ching-chong Chinaman.” Later that evening, when my dad asked me how school went, I told him about this incident. He paused, reflected, and then said: “The next time that kid or anyone else calls you a Chinaman, you kick his ass!” Later that same year, I became more aware that our family often encountered curious if not hostile stares whenever we were all together in various public places. One day, when eating at a new restaurant, I finally asked my mom “Why do people look at us that way?” She immediately replied, “It’s because we’re such a good-looking family.” Each of my parents, in their own way,

was shaping my identity in response to critical incidents. One was essentially saying, “The song of your people is in your heart; sing it with pride” (and defend your race and your people with courage and honor). The other was saying, “You are a child of many songs and your family is beautiful,” regardless of what society may do to create a sense of shame and stigma (including anti-miscegenation laws) that challenge interracial relationships.

The anti-stigma program is designed to promote parent/caregiver and child interaction as well as educational experiences that invite such communication and further teach children that it’s not only “OK to be different”—it’s actually *great* to be different. The “dynamics of difference” will be addressed by promoting “culturally competent” children and families. This entails activities designed to: **1** enhance awareness of one’s culture and values, as well as biases that affect interactions with others; **2** build relationships and increase not only comfort with differences, but also the will to embrace them; and **3** develop skills to mediate cross-cultural conflicts and the need to ally with individuals who are different from oneself. The program will both support and challenge parents and their children to explore difficult subjects, such as racial difference and disability, which are often perceived as “the first thing we notice about others, but the last thing we talk about.”

While difference and stigma reduction are areas of focus, the program’s larger goal is to enhance the socio-emotional wellbeing of young children and to ensure that they are healthy and ready to learn. Parents and early education specialists are viewed as key providers of **SED** (“**S**upport for **E**motional **D**evelopment”). This campaign is an example of reframing current clinical terminology, whereby SED becomes an acronym for Serious Emotional Disturbance.

Thus, asset- and strength-based principles will guide the development and implementation of this prevention and early intervention program. It will represent the collective gifts and collaborative work of mental health professionals and advocates, early care and education providers, artists, media specialists and families. The ultimate goal is to foster healthy communities in which members are nurtured and valued, there is positive interaction and rich relationships among diverse groups, and where institutions support the growth and development of all members—particularly young children.

Sam Chan Ph.D.
District Chief, Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health

Stereotypes: A Window into our Society

Children are born into the world free of inhibitions and biases. The use of stereotypes soon introduces children to a world that devalues their essence solely on the basis of someone looking or behaving differently. Stereotypes continue to represent challenges in the overwhelming complexity of understanding the nuances and differences that distinguish ourselves from others. Rather than encouraging the opportunity to pursue new knowledge and experiences, individual and societal use of stereotypes undermines the very essence of personal and cultural differences, their attachments to rituals, behaviors, traditions and values. Stereotypes serve the lowest common denominator to draw out laughter—and more often than not harbor humiliation, shame and fear. Understanding the negative impact of the perpetuation of stereotypes is critical to developing a multicultural society that embraces uniqueness, the integrity of the individual and the beauty of the human landscape that gives texture to our experiences and hope to our children.

Connie Destito LCSW

Program Director, Latina Family Studies Specialization, Marriage, Family and Child Counseling Department, Pacific Oaks College

John S. Hatakeyama M.S.

Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

A Shared Commitment

Working with the Agency at Art Center, students and faculty brought an exciting perspective to the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's Stigma Project for young children. The student work put faces and expressions to the pain caused when children are stigmatized because they are different in appearance, race, ability, family composition, the languages they speak or in other ways. Moreover, the concepts and images developed by the Agency communicate hope and the real possibility of schools and communities where all children can imagine healthy, happy futures and believe that they are valued.

From the very beginning, the students understood the challenges facing the Stigma Project and the importance of meeting those challenges. Their commitment to the project and conviction that damaging stigmas can be replaced with the message that "difference is good" impressed and inspired us, as did their energy, creativity and technical skills. It is certainly our expectation that the students' design work, and the continuing work of Designmatters at Art Center, will benefit generations of Los Angeles County children. It is also our hope that this experience helps shape the students' careers as leaders in the arts, media and Los Angeles County communities.

Building a Culture of Acceptance

Every human being, each one of us, claims an identity and some sense of our worth or value to others.

From the moment we are born until the moment we die, we grow into ourselves. We grow into our identity and into an understanding of ourselves as a person who has something important to contribute to the world. We come to understand, whether early on or later in life, that we are a person who is worthy of respect because of *who we are*. Somewhere along the line, we are able to say, “This is who I am.” In that simple statement we are able to find our meaning, our purpose for existing and even some peace.

Our identity—our ability to say “This is who I am”—is affected by so many things: our parent-child relationships, our relationships with our siblings, the affection we receive or don’t receive from relatives, neighbors and friends, the schools we are able to attend and how we are treated in those schools, even the work we do with our hands and minds.

As we grow into ourselves, we make judgments about ourselves, the value of our endeavors and our worth. If that wasn’t enough of a burden, *other people* also make judgments—some accurate, but many of them not—about us. But in all cases, what we think of ourselves and what others think of us, frame—and later in life solidify—our own sense of who we are and what we should be doing with our lives.

Who we are, how we perceive ourselves and the identity we come to claim has a lot to do with *how well we are able to live the lives we were born to live*. And our ability to do that has a lot to do with what others *allow us* to do and be.

This growing into ourselves—into our identity or into our meaning—is difficult work for every human being. It is a journey that becomes more complex with each year, with each job, with each challenge or with each relationship. But for people who have any sort of difference, the task of growing into one’s authentic self is hugely complicated.

People with disabilities, people who have emotional, mental and physical differences, people with rare or unusual behavior patterns or people who act in “non-mainstream ways” face identity hurdles that most of us can’t even imagine. More often than not, they fail to receive the support required to live the lives they *need* to live in order to be who they are.

The simplest things get in the way and distort the ability of a person with a difference to exist as a fully worthy person. You need only imagine the following common experience: Instead of entering a room where acceptance is at least a low-level moderate norm for most, a person who has some identifiable difference is most likely to be received with avoidance, suspicion, fear or

even violence. Imagine trying to figure out who you are in such an environment! Imagine trying to claim your sense of self when the world does not even know how to receive you when you enter a room! How in the world can you expect those in the room to value you? This is a scenario that, if left unchecked, leads to years of frustration, rejection and depression by persons who have unusual human attributes. It leads to an enormous loss of human energy and human potential. It is, in short, a scenario that is no longer acceptable.

The work of the Stigma Project is dedicated to educating all of us about learning to grow into a greater acceptance of uncommon behaviors, unusual looks and unknown human realities. It is dedicated to rejecting stereotypes that cause us to immediately give a negative response to the unfamiliar. The project is steadfast in its commitment to helping each of us reject attitudes that have prejudiced us against human beings who are different from the narrow norms of acceptable, unquestionable ways of being.

The project can help us unlearn attitudes and dispositions that we should never have been taught. It can help us come to understand and appreciate that there are some behaviors and reactions we should never have learned in the first place.

Last, the project is dedicated to helping us understand that a person’s worth isn’t validated because they can do something important “even though they have a disability.” The juxtaposition of this-for-that is known as the “theory of compensation,” and has been an enormous burden to those who live with non-traditional physical or mental attributes. For example, using the theory of compensation, one might believe a person who is blind is “worthy of our respect” because she has a great voice, or that a child who stutters is worthy because he is a great artist. It may be true that a non-sighted person is a great singer and that a child who stutters is magnificent designer, but the blindness and the stutter are also part of who the person is. It shapes who they are and who they become. We need to know this, understand this, and not dismiss the difference as irrelevant, or as something to be overlooked or avoided.

These are important lessons for all of us to learn as we help create and nurture a world more free from stigmas and prejudicial behaviors that limit human capacity. The project calls on us to meet people as they are, to accept them for who they are, and to be part of a society that allows them to grow into the fullness of their self-identity.

It has been an honor for those of us at Pacific Oaks College to be involved with our Designmatters colleagues at Art Center College of Design, and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health as we take up this important issue of stigma. It is our hope that this and future collaborations will help build a world where every human being can find his or her worth in a culture of acceptance.

Corrine McGuigan Ph.D.
Provost, Pacific Oaks College

It's OK to be Different

Mental Health clients are deeply affected by the stigma associated with mental illness. Although many organizations have attempted to deal with stigma, the problem remains prevalent throughout our society.

At its annual retreat in the summer of 2004, the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission adopted as a goal for 2004–05 a “Stigma Blasting” program aimed at children in preschool through second grade. Most organizations addressing stigma target teenagers and adults, but the Commission believes that by that age prejudices are already entrenched, and are much more difficult to combat.

The message the Commission wants young children to embrace is that it is OK to be different, and to be friends with someone who is not just like they are. Commissioners believe that if young children become comfortable with these concepts they will be more likely to accept people with physical or mental disabilities, to embrace those of a different color, to respect people with varied religious and ethnic backgrounds throughout their lives.

To get its message across, the Commission, along with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, established a creative partnership with mental health professionals, representatives of the Board of Supervisors, educators from Pacific Oaks College & Children's School, the Pasadena Unified School District to collaborate under the umbrella of the Designmatters initiative at Art Center College of Design.

The Department of Mental Health contracted with Art Center to turn the ideas and vision of the Commission and its partners into a practical, affordable and workable stigma-combating action plan. Under the direction of Mikio Osaki, chair of the Advertising Department, committed students from Art Center embraced what the Commission intends to accomplish, and in 14 weeks they came up with a preliminary plan that is not only creative and innovative, but is practical and doable.

We now have a workable tool that can help children learn that *it's OK to be different*.

Ilean Rabens

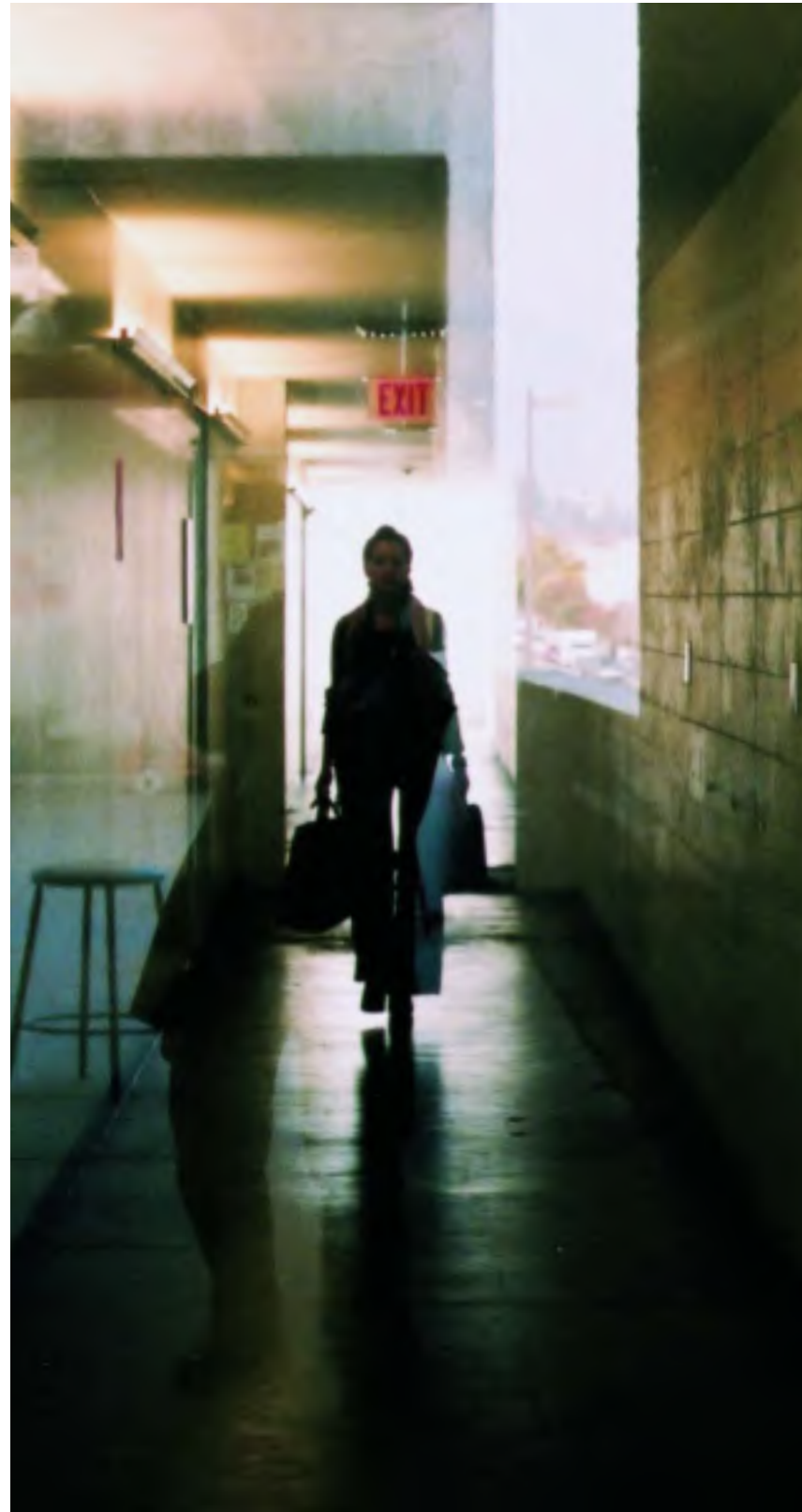
Immediate Past Chairperson,
Los Angeles County
Mental Health Commission

Shaping Beliefs and Behavior

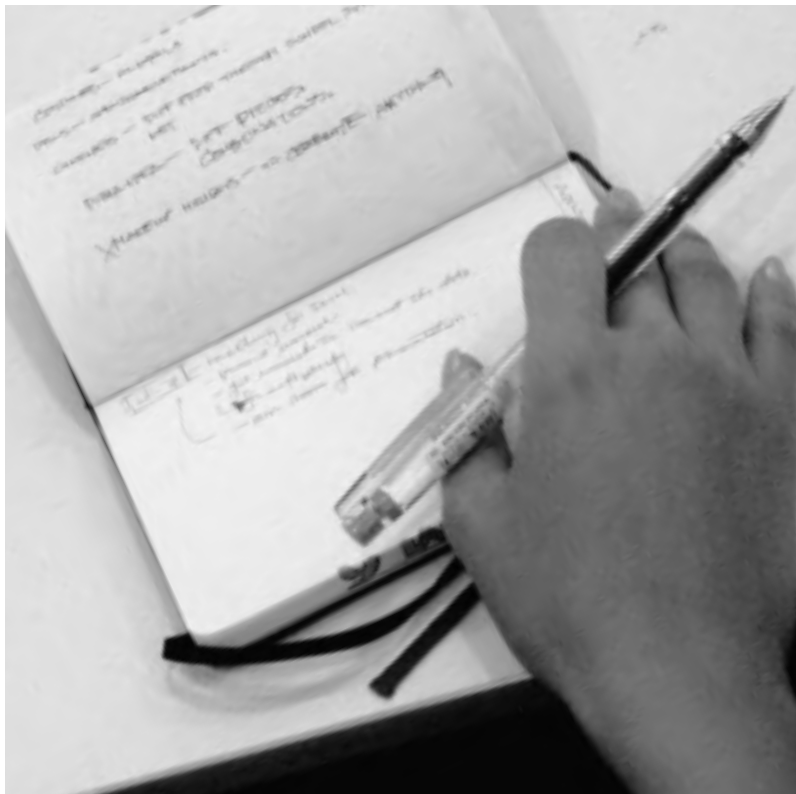
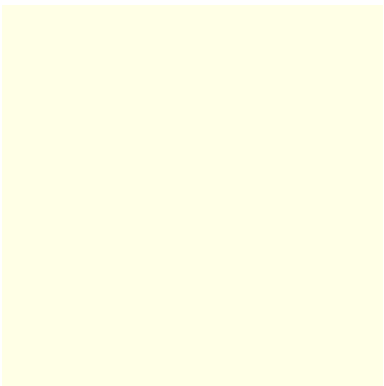
During our early years, we develop our individual self-identity. We learn to respect ourselves and others as we practice peaceful coexistence in our family, our school and our community. Educators have long known that children are able to recognize similarities and differences at a very young age. Children also learn positive and negative attitudes about these differences by observing parents, teachers and friends. External factors such as the influence of media also play an important role in shaping our beliefs and behavior. Through the joint efforts of Pacific Oaks College & Children's School and the Designmatters initiative at Art Center College of Design, children are learning to resist bias, reduce stigma and interact comfortably with people different from themselves. As likeminded organizations come together to convey the fundamental worth of each individual, the lives of all members of our community are enriched.

Jane E. Rosenberg

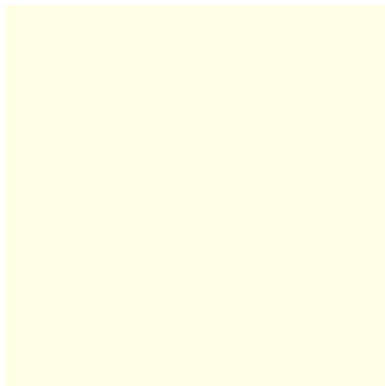
Director, Pacific Oaks Children's School



Into the Studio: The Design Process at Work



- denial
- no-time
- apathetic



- investigate technology
- identifying schools

4-6 yr old
Teachers and in
Parents and Me

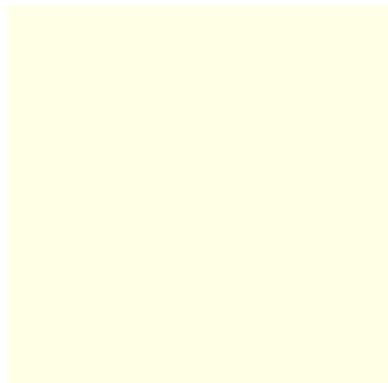
LEARN THROUGH
REPETITION,
DO-E-PLAY



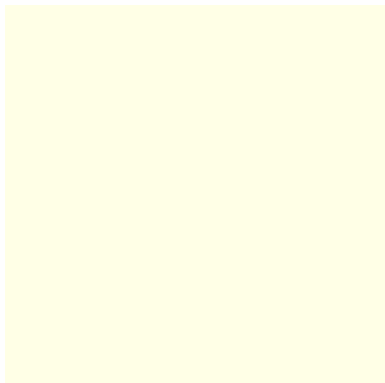
RC
11-12
10-25
4-10
TRADITIONAL
WHEN BEING
DESIGNED
CHARACTER
WRITING-RC
SUPPORT
TEXT

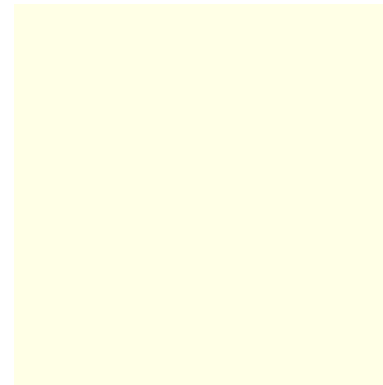
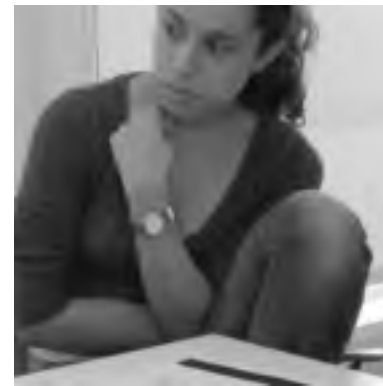


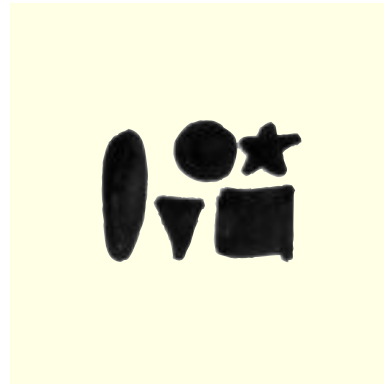
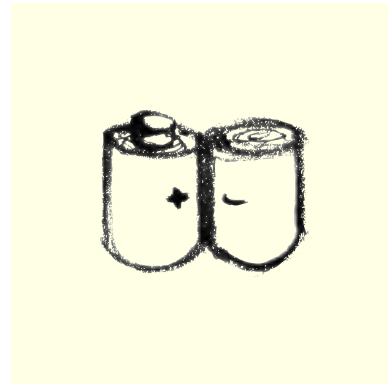
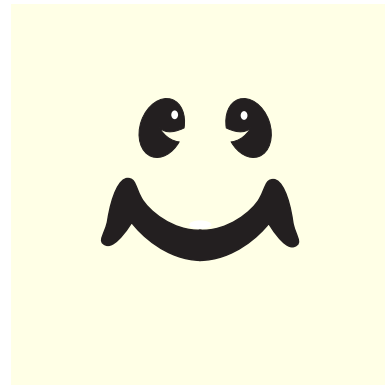
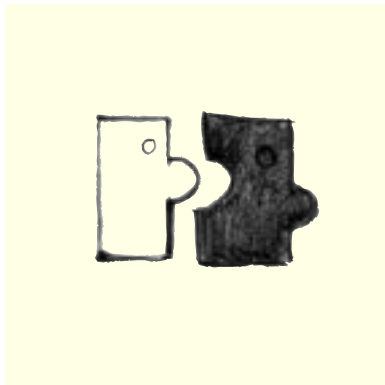
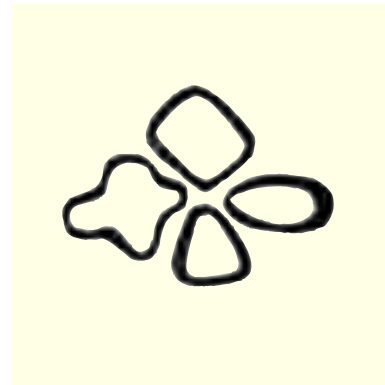
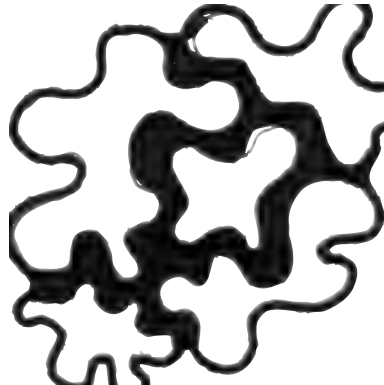
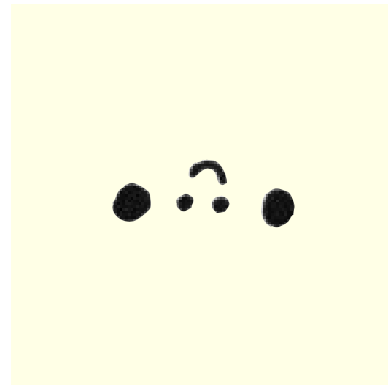
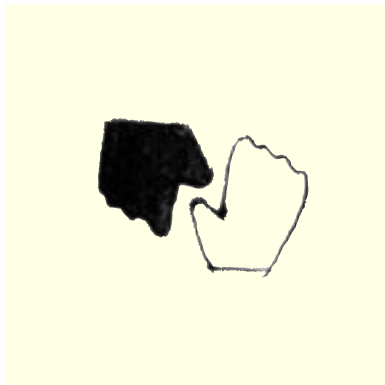
OF STIGMA-
ATTENDAL OUT THERE
WHY SEEM TO FALL
REACH THE CHILD
MUCH LARGER PART
THAN WE INITIALLY
DEFS & THEIR ACTIONS
TURNING NEUTRAL
NEGATIVE



Task of Advertising (Communication)	Target	Communication objective
<p>only affect the communication of children, the role of parents follows</p> <p>own time childhood is shared</p> <p>what is taught must be repeated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 years old • teachers and educators • parents and grandparents 	<p>AIMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create awareness of their actions • importance of their roles. <p>EXPLAN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate good handling of children by parents







How / ...
as FROM:
FAMILY by
CAREGIVER
MEDIA

How
kids } teaching
parents

Positive
being better people
Bilingual.
parenting



STUDY HOW SOMEONE
PREJUDICE
CURBS DEVELOPMENT.

IT
A
IF
THE

DIFFERENCES IN
ORIGINAL CHARACTER

STICKS AND STONES
WILL BREAK MY
BONES BUT WORDS
WILL NEVER HURT

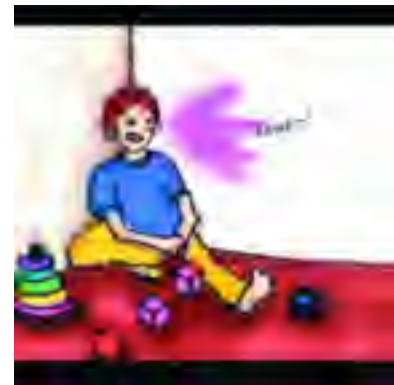
OLD SAYING IS A
DEVELOP
STORY

KIDS ENDS TO
SCHOOL AND SAYS (REPORT)
THE SAME THING
AS THE PARENT.
(SPOT)

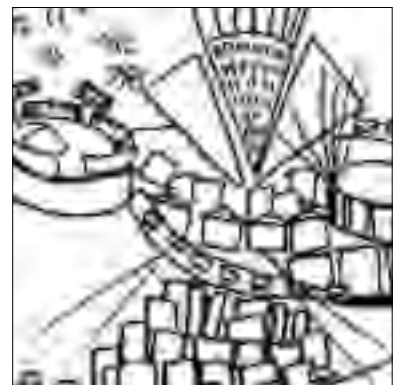
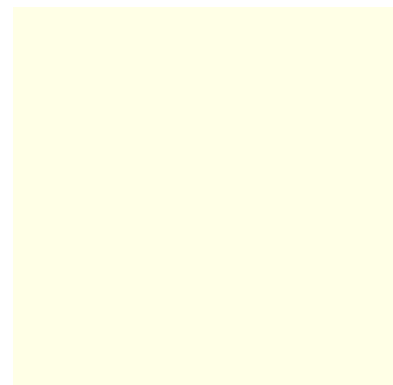
SHOWS A
KID WHO IS TRYING
TO COPY EVERYTHING (SPOT)

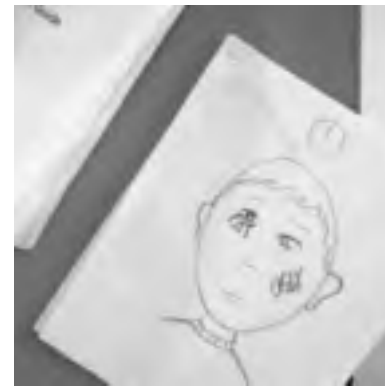


PARENTS
SURVIVE
PRIORITY
THEY'RE

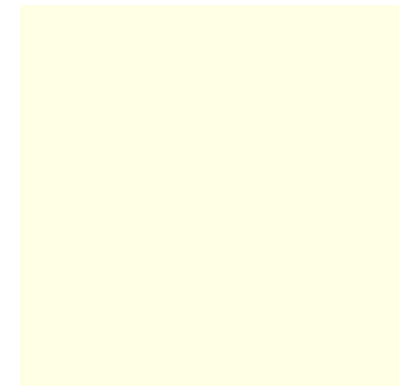


Difference is good

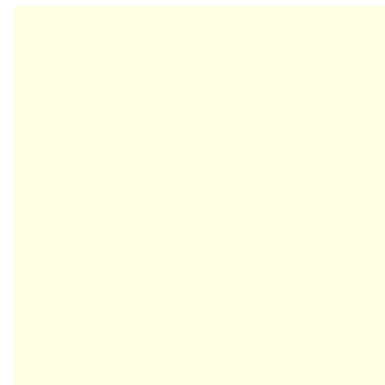




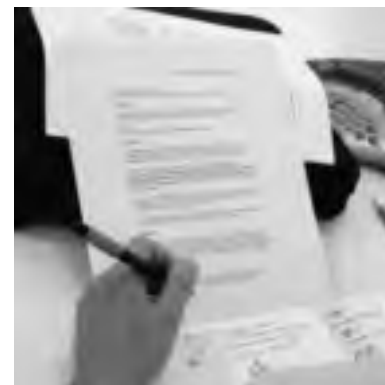
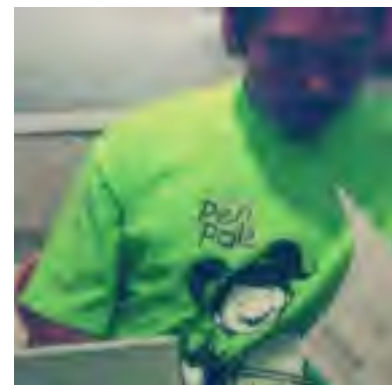
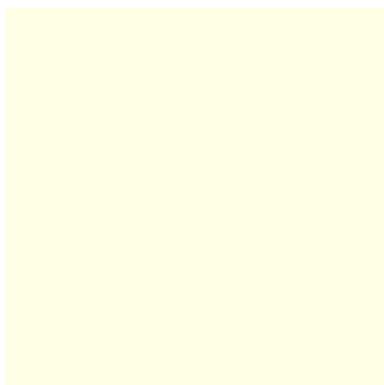
CARE A
PEACE O
VALUE.



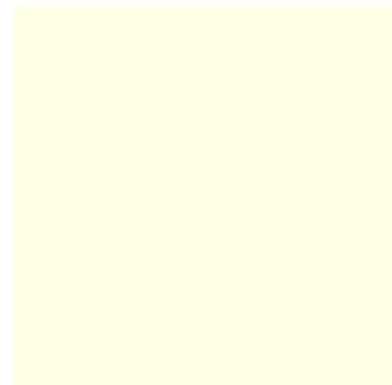
Prejudice affects
the mental wellness
of children.



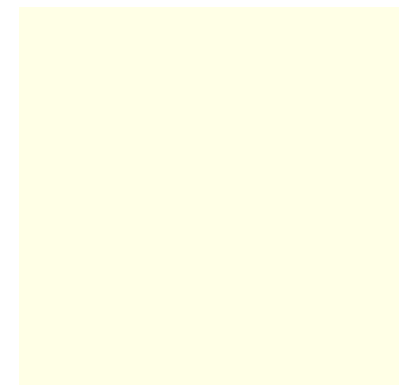
ARE A PRO
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IDEAS:
1. EXAMINE...
2. GIVE US...
3. SURVEIL...
4. SURVEIL...
5. CLIMATE...



Plan an
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The Agency Brief

The Agency @ Art Center was charged by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to develop communications programs designed to combat stigma among 4-6 year-olds and their key influencers. The Agency's recommendation, presented on December 15, 2005, includes four programs that can be deployed individually or in combination. All are designed to communicate that the differences between people that lead to stigmatization—whether in race, ethnicity, language, appearance, behavior, lifestyle or ability—should be celebrated, not derided. Put simply, "different is good."

Campaign Presentations

Super Parents

BrightSide

Virtual Pen Pals

D.I.G. [Different Is Good]



Super Parents

Parents' attitudes, behavior and language are the primary influences on children at this impressionable age: if parents harbor hostile or negative attitudes about difference, so will their kids. This campaign, designed to engage parents in the battle against intolerance, honors real-life Super Parents—real Los Angeles-area parents whose behavior and teaching combat, rather than reinforce, stigma. This campaign stresses parents' importance as role models, while underscoring the harmful effects of hostile attitudes on a child's personal development. The campaign would appear on billboards and posters, in print media and on television, radio and the Internet.

Super Parents campaign graphics

39-41.






By encouraging difference,
there are **NO** limits
to how far my son
will go.


**BE
A SUPER
PARENT**

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I answer
every curious question
in a way that allows my daughter to form
her own **opinions.**

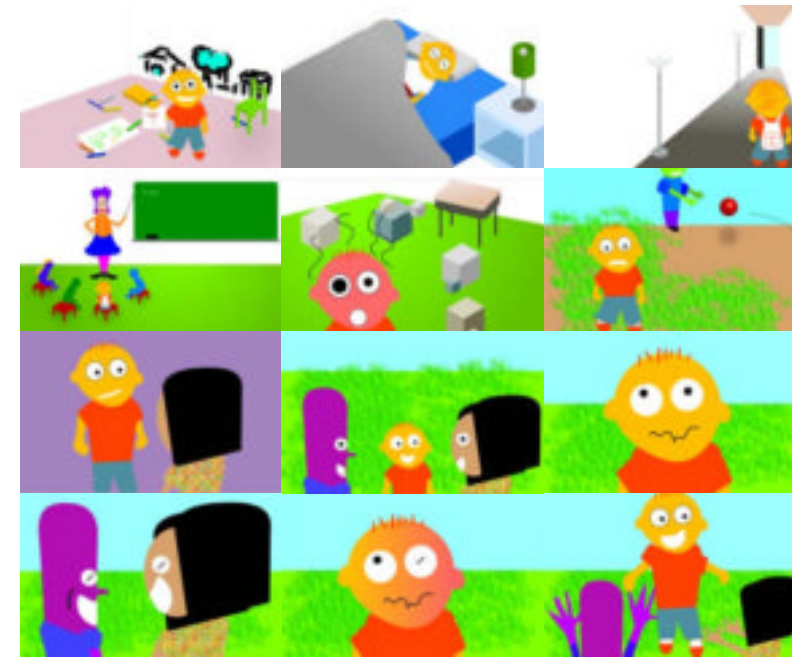
**BE
A SUPER
PARENT**

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BrightSide

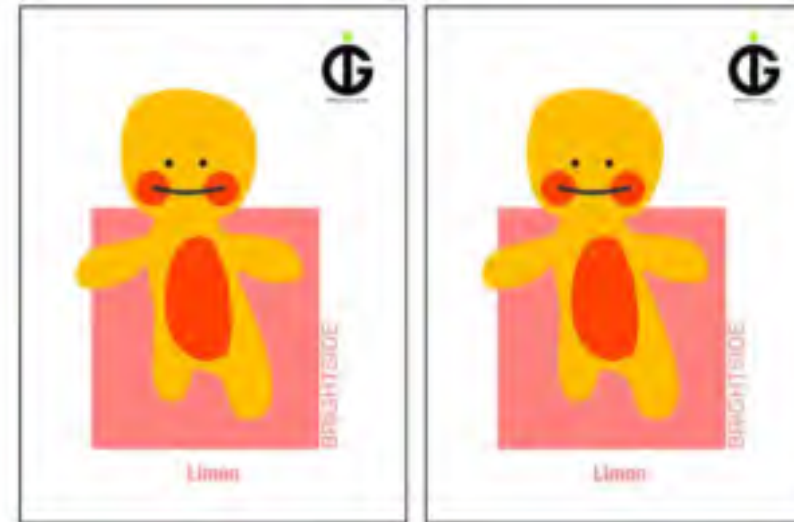
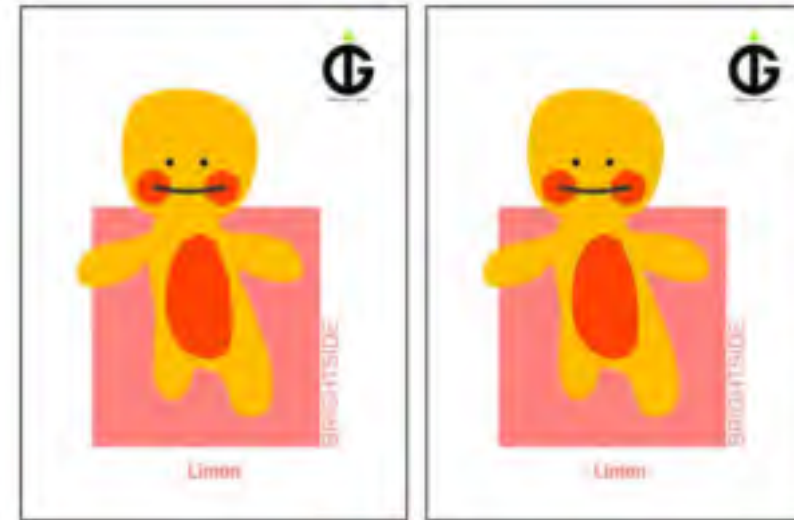
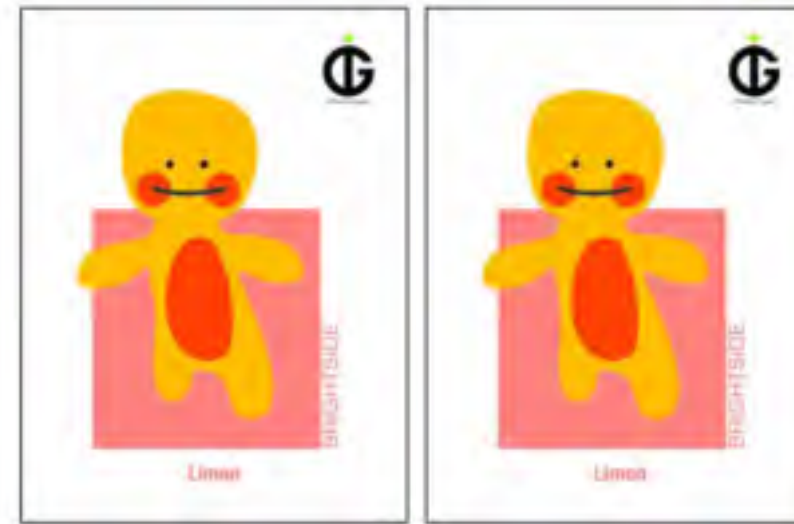
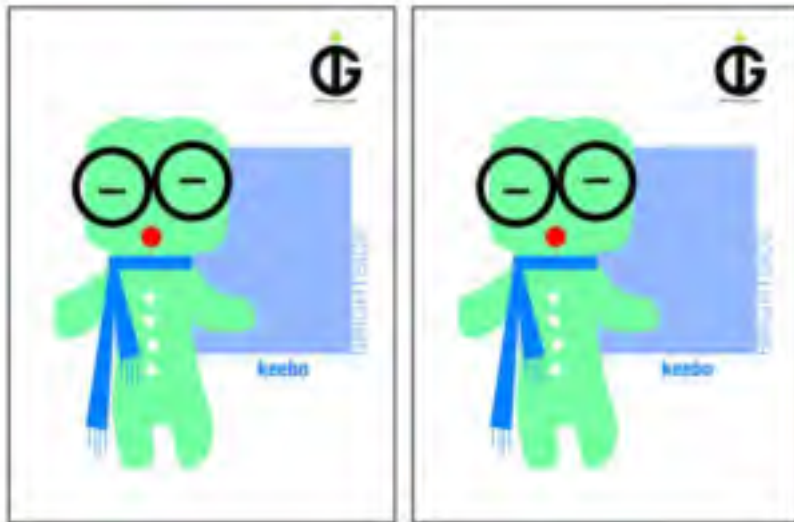
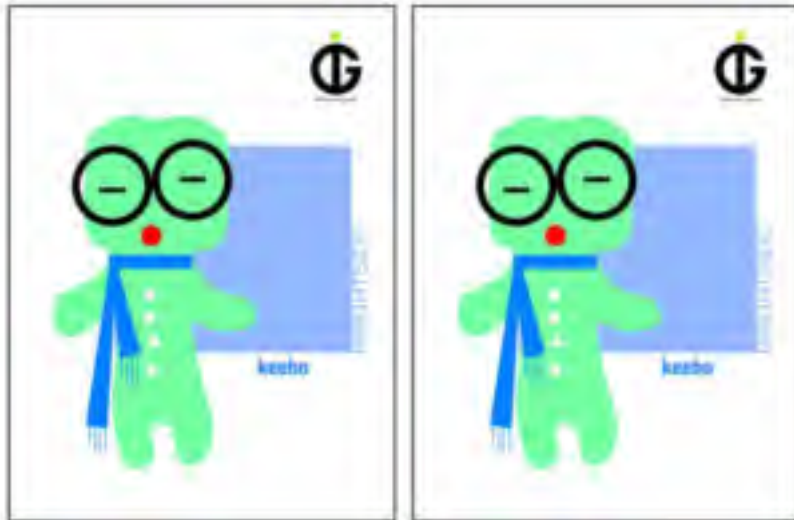
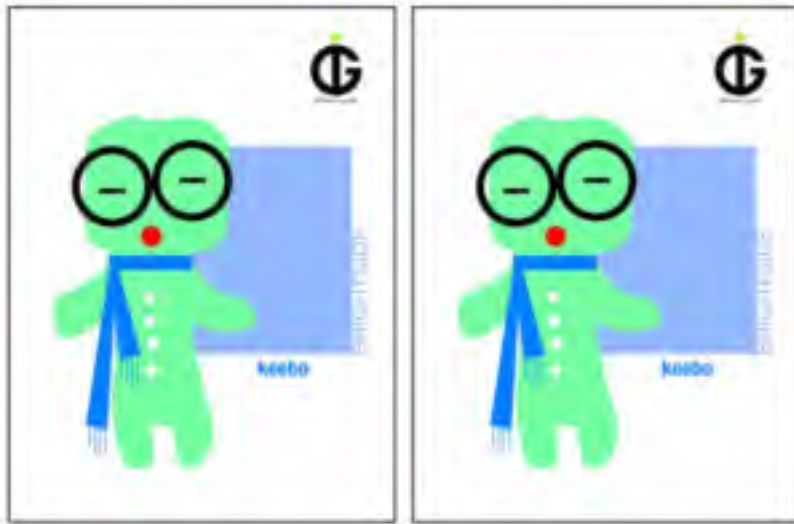
BrightSide is a series of books and inexpensive plush dolls featuring characters representing a range of differences (such as stuttering, being very short or tall, being overweight, or wearing glasses) that are often associated with teasing and stigma. The characters, each with their own differences, are designed to be integrated easily into an existing school curriculum, to help teach lessons in reading, math, art and music—and, in so doing, combat stigma.

BrightSide campaign storyboard and character depictions



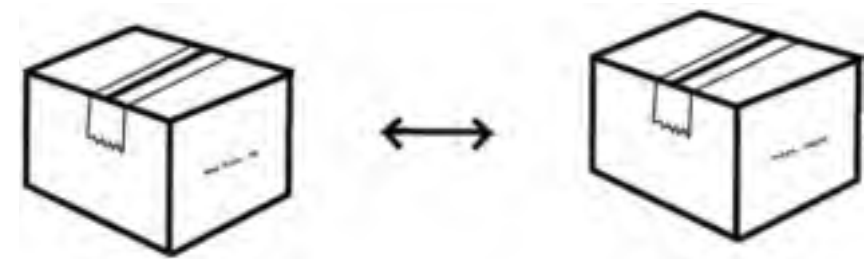
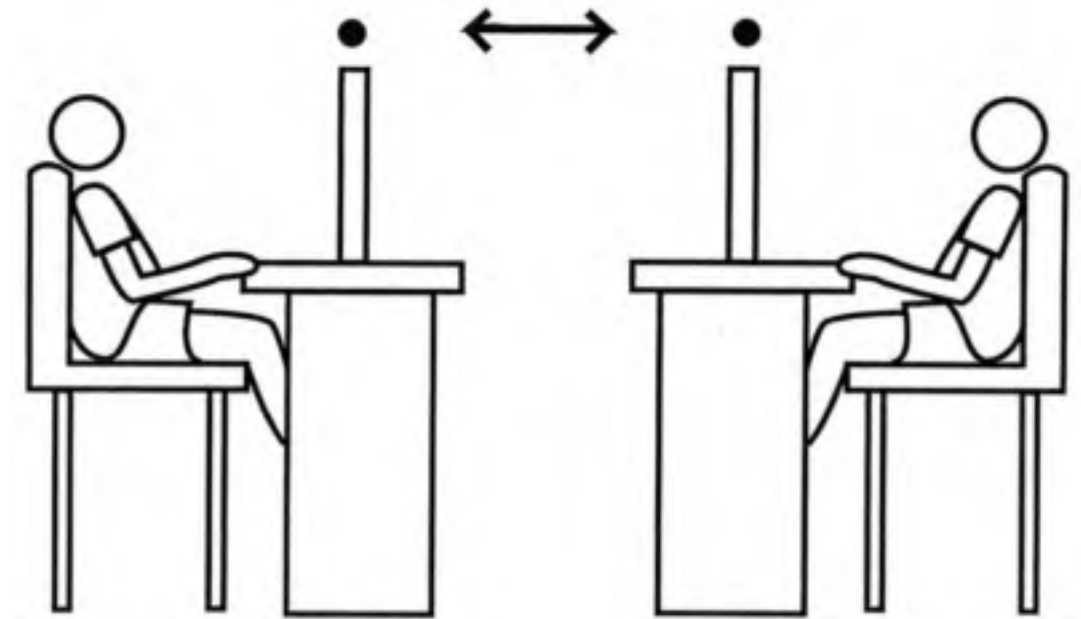
43-45.





Virtual Pen Pals

Many L.A. County schools are relatively homogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity and economic status, so children may rarely encounter others who are very different from them. This segregation can cultivate intolerance and breed stigma. Virtual Pen Pals seeks to overcome geographic boundaries, allowing children from different schools, neighborhoods and faiths to learn about each other. The program has three complementary parts: a letter-writing program, which provides stationery to allow a child to write or send drawings to another child; a gift exchange, which provides packaging to allow a child to share objects with another child; and a video conference system, which uses simple video-conferencing technology to allow a child to make a friend across the county, the country or the world.



Virtual Pen Pals uses video conferencing and the written word to encourage communication across geographic boundaries

47-49.

Hey Pen Pal!

Writing space



Student to: _____

Student from: _____

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line, repeated six times.

Drawing space

A large blank rectangular area for drawing.

Supervising Teacher's Initials:



D.I.G. [Different Is Good]

D.I.G. [Different Is Good] is an interactive and customizable programming environment, distributed via DVD, that presents a range of content—including cartoons, shows, games and guides. D.I.G. features a cast of characters representing a wide range of differences, all designed to entertain and educate children and parents about the importance of celebrating their diversity. D.I.G. would be launched with a citywide celebration, “D.I.G. Week,” that would include neighborhood events at which the DVDs are distributed and the cast of characters is brought to life.

DIG's cast of characters and interactive video content emphasize the value of diversity and difference



51-53.



What is DIG?

DIG is an online programming environment that allows students to create digital stories and presentations to share their work and to present projects.

Who Used DIG?

Who Used DIG?
 Who Used DIG?
 Who Used DIG?
 Who Used DIG?

How Does DIG work?

It works like a social media site where you can post your work and see what others have posted. It's like a social media site where you can post your work and see what others have posted.

Where DIG can work

- At Home
- At the School
- After School Programs

DIG at Home

- Kids explore on their own
- Kids explore with their siblings
- Kids explore and interact with their parents
- DIG can be a part of their projects

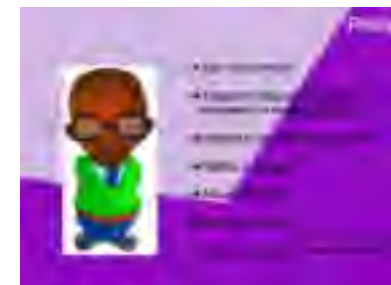
DIG at School

- Kids explore on their own
- Kids explore with their siblings
- DIG can be a part of their projects
- Used during lessons in class



Lifelong Playground

DIG is an online programming environment that allows students to create digital stories and presentations to share their work and to present projects.



DIG Wins

DIG has won several awards for its innovative design and user experience.





Elena Salij



Mikio Osaki

Mikio Osaki

Chairman, Department of Advertising,
Art Center College of Design

Elena Salij

Lead Faculty, Stigma Project,
Art Center College of Design

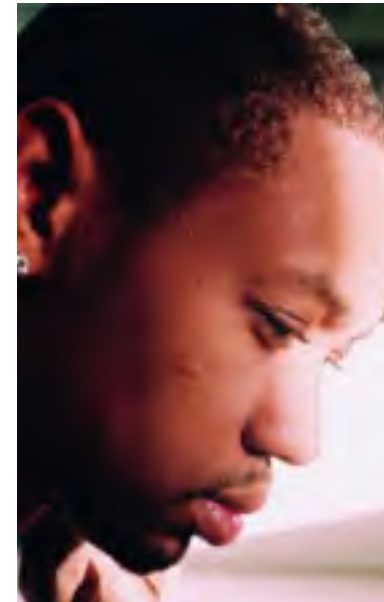
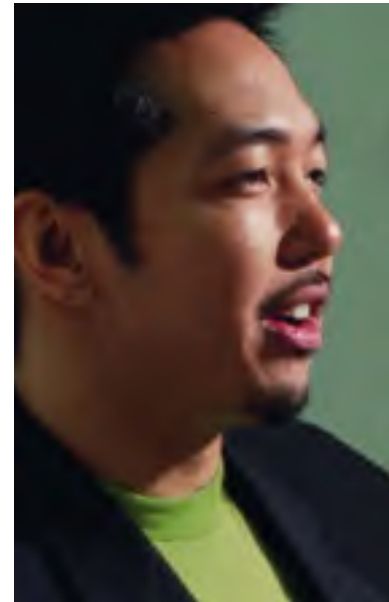
A Unique Assignment

The Agency @ Art Center is an experimental program designed to help advertising students bridge the gap between their schoolwork and professional practice. Students work on real-world assignments in order to learn to deal with real marketing problems, real deadlines, real budgets and real clients.

But the Department of Mental Health assignment was more real than we were used to. Most advertising work is fairly straightforward, tangible and measurable: get people to buy a pair of running shoes, or convince them to switch brands of beer. The DMH challenge, however, to create a communications program to combat stigma, taunting and bullying among very small children, was heavy—important, impossibly large, and daunting, with real implications for the quality of life and mental health of children and adults. How can advertising help develop a more understanding and tolerant child, when so much of the world seems bent on *mis*understanding and *int*olerance?

The students at the Agency approached this assignment with tremendous optimism and energy. They visited schools. They talked to parents and experts. They researched current best practices. They watched children play and listened to them talk. Most importantly, they drew on their own experiences as children—on the times they felt left out, or lonely or excluded for reasons they didn't understand. And from that they created a range of inventive and sensitive communications programs designed to help parents raise more tolerant children, and encourage children to be kinder and more understanding of each other.

It's too early to know if any of this will work. Maybe in 20 years the world will be a slightly more tolerant place, and maybe the work of the Agency will have played a small part. If so, well—for us—that's pretty real.



Paola Carpintero

Working with the Department of Mental Health was an interesting experience, on several levels. Professionally, it was my first time dealing with a real client, and I learned a lot about how the relationship between creatives and clients actually works. Also, the experience of working as part of a team was very positive: it helps to have other talented people to bounce ideas around with. Working on a project designed to reach impressionable children, we wanted to make sure that the message we were sending was both positive and effective. On a social level, while trying to teach children that differences are good, I confronted a few important things that I never had thought about—things such as how I would like to raise my own kids and the kind of parent I want to be. Even with the drama, the late nights and the last-minute solutions, this was a fun and meaningful project.

William Esparza

The anti-stigma campaign for the Department of Mental Health was a great learning experience where I saw many of the participants grow and come into their own. It was a project that demanded a lot from every individual involved, and at times pushed me to rethink fully developed directions. The countless hours of hard work invested brought us together, and made us one big family working toward the same goal. At times it was stressful, interesting, fun—but never old. Who doesn't want to save the world? This is why at the end of the day, no matter how long or short, I realized these children are a cause worth fighting for. I will take this experience and build on it.

Gail Gonzales

A person wouldn't normally think that advertising could help save the world, but in this situation, it certainly did take us a step in that direction. Working on the Department of Mental Health Project, my team, Virtual Pen Pals, was able to take the same thought process we use in conventional advertising and apply it to an entirely different area. Being born and raised in a multicultural city in California, I felt that we were successfully able to dissect the problem of stigma through analyzing our own childhood experiences. That I have a daughter, who at the time was five years old, brought me even closer to the project, as she would have been right in our target audience. Watching her play among children with differences, without any prejudice toward one another, gave me hope that she would not have to live her life being subjected to damaging and negative behavior. I firmly believe that the solutions that each of our teams developed could serve as global models on how to combat, and end, the stigma of difference.

Jonathan Huang

Coming from UCLA with a foundation in communication studies, advertising became a natural step in the application of theory. In the course of these eight terms at Art Center, advertising's real goal was revealed to me. It isn't about pushing products, although that's what the client might think. It's about befriending your audience and building credibility with them.

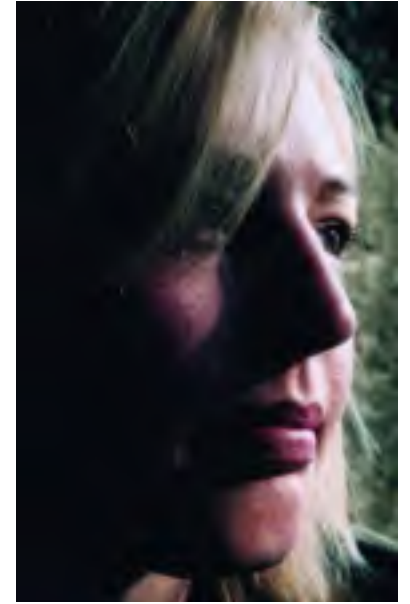
The Department of Mental Health was a client whose mission was to provide a better sense of self to those with disabilities. This was a great challenge because, obviously, a sense of self cannot be bought like other products that one might advertise. I enjoyed working with the client amidst the hardships that came up in trying to understand the people we were helping. And, ultimately, if even one person's healthy sense of self is developed from this campaign, then all the effort put into it will have been worthwhile.

Royal Jackson

Everyone knows that in a world of conformity it's not easy to be different. But this anti-stigma project allowed us to look into ourselves, see what makes us different and imagine how encouraging everyone to embrace his or her differences might impact our world. Moreover, it was inspiring to know that, thanks to projects such as this, the baton has not been dropped on issues that move us all toward equality. As we examined our own lives and developed approaches to helping shape future generations, we all become more conscious of the power (both negative and positive) of words, action and intentions.

Jacqueline Jung

This project allowed me to look back into my youth and role-play how it was to be young again. Living in Rancho Cucamonga, I was one of a few minorities growing up in a heavily Caucasian neighborhood. A lot of teasing and harassment from my classmates made it very hard for me at school. These memories allowed me to really understand the importance of this assignment, and of combating stigma among school-aged kids. It was a blood, sweat and tears project—literally: I had a car accident trying to get to my first meeting, but all the work paid off. Working in our set teams was a great and fun experience. We would meet up at Chuck E. Cheese's for inspiration, shop at Toys R Us and visit local schools. The research, along with everyone's childhood experiences, contributed a great deal to the project's strong outcome. At the final presentations, it was interesting to see how all the groups came up with such different solutions to the same problem. It would be great to see our work come to life, and hopefully help children to embrace differences.



Nicolas Kamei

The anti-stigma campaign for the Department of Mental Health was deceptively difficult—until we stopped trying to make ads and realized we needed a solution. Personally, it raised my awareness about difference, and to the common misconception of thinking about difference only as it pertains to race. With the potential to effect important social change in our hands, this project provided a classic example of how important it is to practice what you preach.

Maryam Mohseni

It was a great pleasure to work on this project, and was something that I will never forget. To get deep into the minds of these children and share some of the formative experiences of their lives was a powerful experience for me. It wasn't easy trying to solve the issues of stigma that haunt these children, but I am proud of how we got to the root of it and put our concepts to work on their behalf. Of course, it would be simpler if this problem didn't exist, but since it does, we must not ignore it. These children, like all children, represent the future of our world.

John Nguyen

Working on this anti-stigma campaign changed my outlook on life. I think it changed us all, and dramatically reinforced that prejudices of any kind are wrong. I grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood where I, being Asian, faced bigotry almost daily. Lunchtime at elementary school was the worst: it seemed that everyone else had a juice box and a ham sandwich, while I had rice and shredded squid—and was ridiculed for eating “weird” food. This type of “teasing” had a real and painful impact on my life, and the lives of those around me: it broke my mother's heart when I went into an anti-Asian rebellion because I felt I had to be more like everybody else. Working on this project forced me to once again confront my differences. This time, however, the result was a realization that I should embrace and celebrate who I am, not hide or try to change it. That's why this project was so important to each member of the Agency team, and why we worked so hard to try and spare every kid the humiliation and self-doubt that can arise from simply being “different” than everyone else in the lunchroom.

Shannon Pert

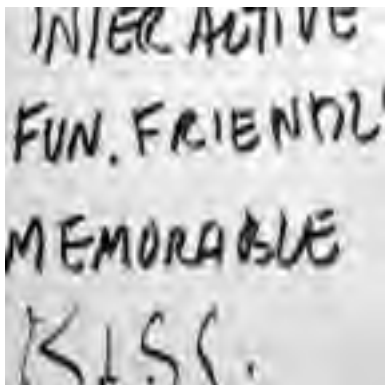
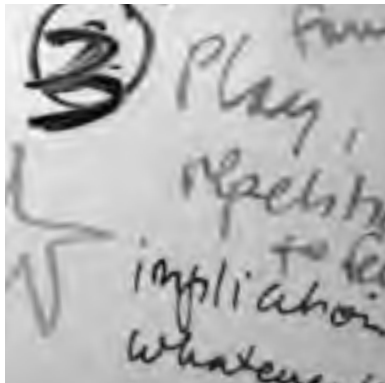
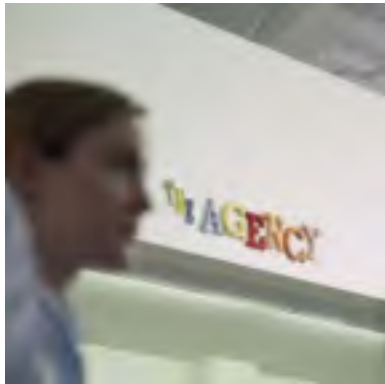
One of the most challenging aspects of the Stigma project was developing solutions that actually effected change. Our target demographic of 4–6-year-olds are highly impressionable, so we felt we had to be very direct and simple with our executions. Our project group at the Agency @ Art Center was itself very diverse, and sharing our own experiences with stigma from our childhood was inspiring. After hearing everyone's first-hand point of view, we were able to approach this project with a purity of motive, because we really believed in the ideas we pursued.

Pearl Suh

The DMH anti-stigma project was a great bonding experience for those in my group, Team D.I.G. We learned a lot about each other during our concept sessions and long days and nights together. In fact, the basis for our ideas arose from our personal life stories. Because it derived from our personal histories, the problems we experienced as kids because of our differences, I feel that this project has more validity than most of the other work I've done. It was also very rewarding to imagine contemporary versions of us (when we were in our formative years) perhaps not having to deal with, or coping better with, the negative results of stigma because of the work we were doing. All in all, this was a very rewarding experience.

Denise Zurilgen

The most valuable thing that I will take away from this project was the experience of working as part of a team. We would spend hours together every week, talking about our own experiences and how they related to the project. What we learned from each other guided our solutions, and allowed us to form terrific friendships.



In Praise of Individuality

This book represents many things to Art Center College of Design. It documents the efforts of a group of splendid students and faculty in our Advertising Department who are bringing their talent and craft into the real world as never before. It stands for a new level of collaboration between the College and prominent public agencies that are essential to civic life and wellbeing. And it adds to the remarkable achievements of the Designmatters initiative at Art Center, which since 2001 has explored social and humanitarian applications of design in all the disciplines taught at the College, and has brought these applications into practical use around the world.

First and foremost, however, this book represents a core value of Art Center itself: respect for the individual. A project dealing with stigma is, in essence, a project about the inevitable differences among individuals, young or old. These differences shine in Art Center's creative environment, which nurtures originality. What better assignment, then, than to address the issue of differences among children—our future creative leaders—and in so doing, to help make their lives a celebration of their own individuality. We thank everyone who made this opportunity possible, and who participated with such joy and commitment in fulfilling it.

Richard Koshalek

President,
Art Center College of Design

Erica Clark

Senior Vice President,
International Initiatives,
Art Center College of Design

