

**Title** – Greener Mind: Promoting Mental Health Through Plants

**Program of Study** – Graphic Design

**Presentation Type** – Choose one of the following: Juried Art

**Subtype** – Choose one of the following for poster or oral presentation types: Creative and Artistic

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### **Research Problem**

Although mental health awareness has been steadily growing, there still exists a great portion of the American population that remains affected by mental illness. I began research to find an affected area that could potentially be impacted by a visual campaign. In my research, I discovered that approximately 294,000 residents of Arizona (out of 6,500,000) live with severe mental illness (“Mental Health Statistics”). Along with this, I also found information on Arizona youth to better understand just how much this issue pervades through the population (Office of Adolescent Health). Because of the startling statistics I found, I posed a question to try to see how this problem could be tackled, as follows: “How can a visual argument be made to encourage residents of Arizona to seek mental help?” I found it interesting that Arizona, while having high mental illness statistics, also has a very dry and inhospitable environment for plants. The Economist Intelligence Unit conducted a study on the climate of different cities in the United States and Canada, including Phoenix, Arizona, that provided me with quantitative and qualitative data on the environmental state of the city (*US and Canada Green City Index*). I also discovered the kind of positive impact that even houseplants can have on mental health (Kusby). Using my research, I decided to create a visual solution utilizing imagery of plants to encourage those affected by mental illness in Arizona to seek help.

### **Communication Objective**

In order to make my solution more attainable, I decided to focus on the city of Phoenix within Arizona. In my research, I found that not only does mental illness pervade the population of Phoenix, but also does stigma surrounding counseling or other mental help. I decided that my visual solution must encourage residents of Phoenix to go to counseling while also pushing for normalcy and even a community of support

for those seeking help. I thought it would be interesting to explain through my final product how taking care of your mind is similar to taking care of plants or a garden. It is an active effort to take to keep your mind healthy. To make my solution even more effective, I researched the kinds of plants that thrive in the climate of Arizona (“Landscape Plants”). This gives the audience a way of relating more to my solution. I also decided that to reach a greater majority of people, I would place the graphics in areas of public transportation or high-traffic areas. This brings more audience engagement and interaction but also communicates that the journey to a healthier mental state is in fact a journey. Allowing the audience to see my solution in these transportation areas helps the audience understand this concept.

### **Visual Solution**

My final visual solution includes three large print graphics utilizing typography, illustration, and color to communicate my research to the general population of Phoenix, Arizona. I related plant care to mental health by illustrating faces as planters, showing the plants growing out from them. I utilized gardening terms such as “watering,” “pruning,” and “feeding” to explain to the audience that you must care for your mind like you care for your plants. I used more direct language at the bottom of each graphic, telling the audience to take care of themselves and go to counseling. I displayed the graphics in public transportation mockups, showing that this is where each would appear.

### **Production**

After obtaining all of my research, I created the branding for the project, solidifying the logo, colors, and typographic choices for the campaign. Creating thumbnails helped me format the graphics and decide exactly what information I needed to relay to the audience. I then created rough digital iterations. This is when I brought in reference images and worked on perfecting the illustrations as the main focus of the campaign. Then, I finalized the graphics and placed them in mockups to bring the whole campaign together.

