

Dear Stranger

A Journey of Youth Mental Health

Diana Chao

“How could someone so sad be so young?”

The FOMO Is Real: How Social Media Increases Depression and Loneliness

Social media linked to rise in mental health disorders in teens, survey finds

Young adults born after 1995 are experiencing more mental health issues. Researchers point to lack of sleep and

Social Media Linked to Increase in Depression Among Teens, Young Adults

- 🧠 **50%** of all lifetime cases of mental illness begins by age 14 and 75% by age 24
- 🧠 **20%** of youth aged 13-18 live with a mental health condition
- 🧠 **37%** of students aged 14 and up with a mental health condition drop out of school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group
- 🧠 Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death in the U.S. between ages 15-34
- 🧠 **80%** of American youths are left with no or insufficient treatment

The last ten years built a different world.

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

- ❖ In clinical practice settings, minorities are less likely than whites to receive treatment that adheres to treatment guidelines
- ❖ Ethnic minority and immigrant clients have been found to suspend trust of providers who are ethnically dissimilar from them until they are proven trustworthy
- ❖ Asian-Americans use mental health services at about 1/3 the rate of White Americans
- ❖ Past sin. Doesn't exist. Ungrateful. Spoiled. Disrespect. Herbal Tea. The pain is in the body, not the mind... *It's a White People Thing.*



In writing letters to strangers, I found comfort. In words, I began to discover the miracle of life. I realized for the first time that I never was alone.

Writing is humanity distilled into ink



letters

To STRANGERS

MENTAL HEALTH MADE PERSONAL



Letter
Writing

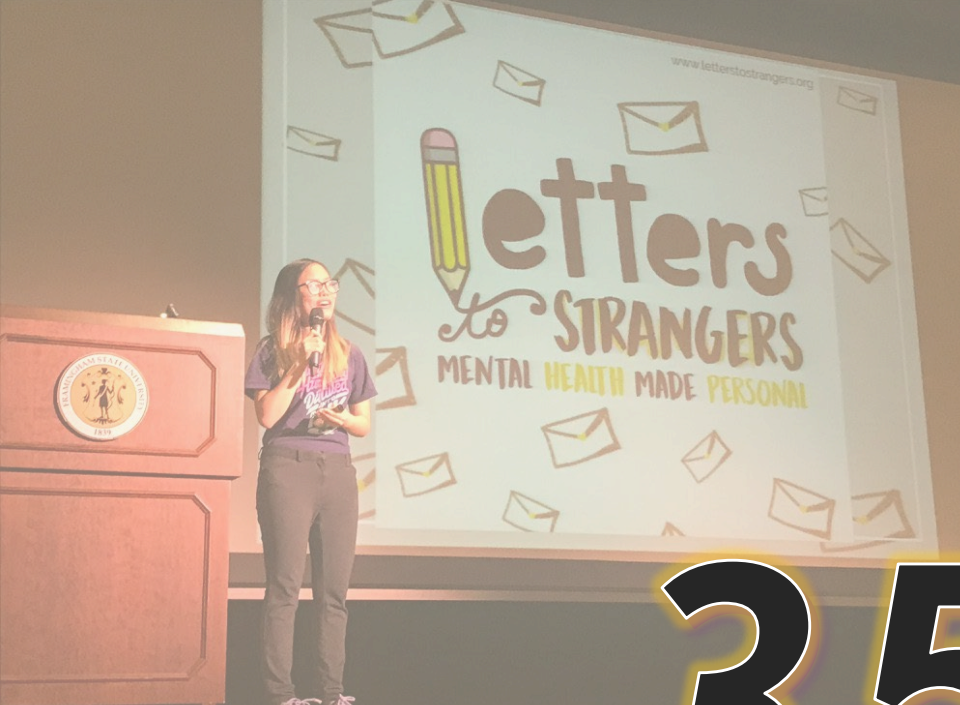


Peer
Education

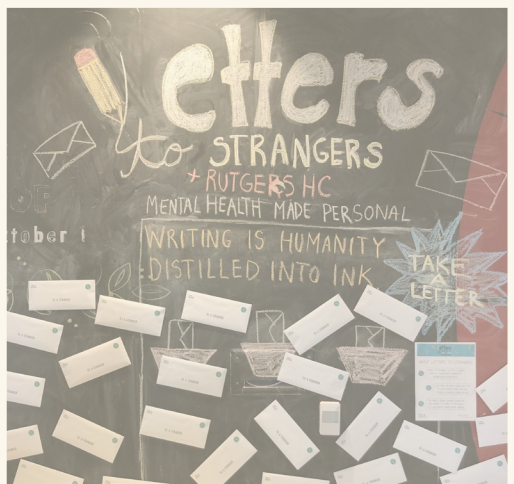


Policy-based
Advocacy





35000+



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Cotton Cold



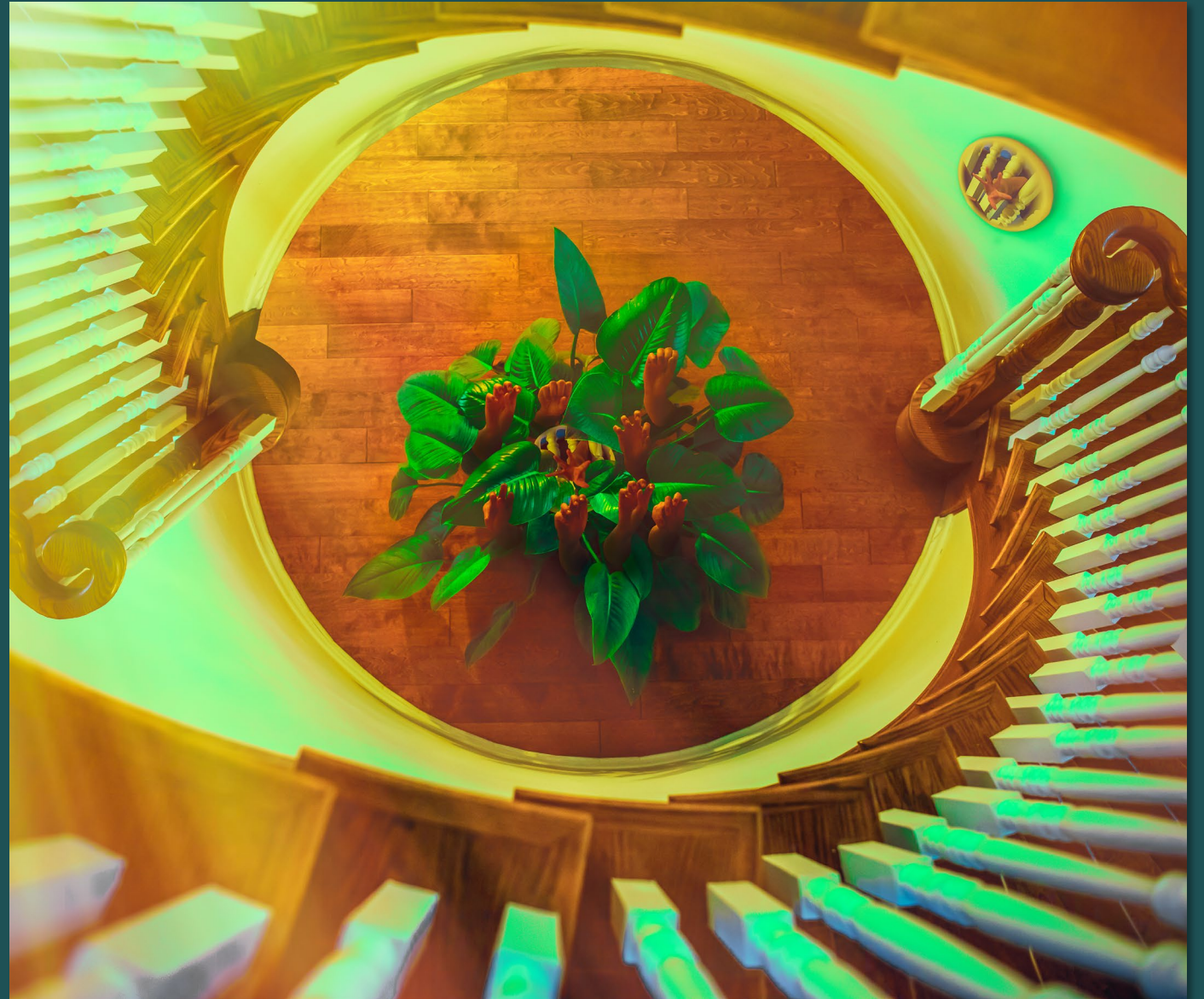
Bipolar Balloons



Rubber B@anded



Masked Malady



**“ATTENTION-
SEEKING *YELLOW*
*B*TCH*. WHAT DO
YOU KNOW ABOUT
MENTAL ILLNESS?”**

My world is not your black and white.
It is my own to lead.

*In the midst of exhaustion, medication, and
epiphanies, I internalized that*

**THE BEST WAY TO
LEARN IS THROUGH
EXPERIENCE.**

*What's
your pain
language?*

*Begin by
EMPATHIZING.*

Eat

Mind distractions (personal, social)

Pride (ego, denial, affirmation)

Anger

Tears

Hurting Self (verbal, physical)

Insomnia/Hypersomnia

Zany (humor, character, façade)

Imprudent behavior

Not present (silence, absences, drifting)

Gross productivity

*How do we
navigate the
journey
to heal?*

*It's **SIMPLE.***



Self-advocate



Increment



Meditate



Patience



Listen



Educate

My Grounding Philosophies



WORK

When your brain outpaces your heart, stop. There will be time for sacrifices, but now is not it



THINKING

Don't be afraid of daydreaming. Don't shut up your heart. You are full of wonders—don't hoard them!



EXPLORE

Feel wanderlust? Weekend hiking trips. Backpacking. Your world is your own. Mold it. Then let it go.



CHALLENGE

Find the coffee routine, then change it. Settle, sure. But you are not a kettle. You do more than boil.



CHIT-CHAT

Some people will chit-chat about you, so sing back. Louder. Prouder. You don't need wings or vibratos. Just a melody.



BODY

Move to land rumbles and ocean waves. You dance between the earth and the sky, so wave your hands, touch the clouds.



Thanks for Listening!

THANKS FOR LISTENING!

You can find me at:

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