

Presentation Speaker Notes

Slide 1: “I Need Help”: Storyboard Presentation

Presenter: Anna Kuehnast

Slide 2: Goal and Message

The story's communication goal is to promote the organization's new 24/7 crisis text line and recruit volunteers to serve as crisis counselors.

The message of the story is that LGBTQIA+ youth struggle significantly with mental health and would benefit greatly from the 24/7 crisis text line service provided by the non-profit organization. The story is also meant to communicate the need for more volunteers to work as crisis counselors.

Slide 3: Target Audience: Description

The target audiences I hope to reach are people who want to support LGBTQIA+ youth through crisis counseling and LGBTQIA+ youth who would benefit from a text crisis line service.

For the first target audience, some important demographics include gender, age, and ethnicity. A majority (69.3%) of crisis counselors are women (*Crisis Intervention Counselor Demographics and Statistics [2025]: Number of Crisis Intervention Counselors in the US*, 2021). A majority of crisis counselors are also white (67%), and the average age is 40 (*Crisis Intervention Counselor Demographics and Statistics [2025]: Number of Crisis Intervention Counselors in the US*, 2021).

For the second target audience, finding data proves to be more difficult, particularly in the gender category, as binary gender assignments are not typically accepted in the LGBTQIA+ framework. Younger generations are particularly more likely to identify as LGBTQIA+, as seen in how 22.3 % of Gen Z identified as LGBTQIA+, more than double Millennials (Tierney, 2024). “The HRC 2023 LGBTQ Youth Report features responses from 12,615 young people aged 13-18 who identify broadly as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or other non-heterosexual sexual identities or non-cisgender gender identities” (HRC Foundation, 2023). Of the 12,615 surveyed, 64% identified as white, 4.8% as black, and 17.8% as Hispanic/Latinx (HRC Foundation, 2023). The average age of the survey respondents was 15.8 years (HRC Foundation, 2023). Additionally, 35.4% of respondents identified as having a physical, learning, or mental disability (HRC Foundation, 2023).

For crisis counselors, the state with the largest job openings is California (1,175), followed by Massachusetts (1,073) and Florida (759) (*Crisis Intervention Counselor Demographics and Statistics [2025]: Number of Crisis Intervention Counselors in the US*, 2021).

For LGBTQIA+ youth of the HRC 2023 Youth Report, 32.6% of respondents lived in the Southern United States (HRC Foundation, 2023). California (244,000), Texas (195,000), Florida (114,000), and New York (113,000) have the highest rates of LGBT youth population (Conron, 2020).

The desired psychographics for a crisis counselor include nonjudgmental, nonreactive, a high tolerance for high-emotion situations, and at least some formal training for crisis counseling (*CHARACTERISTICS of a CRISIS COUNSELOR – Institute of Counseling*, n.d.). Those who aspire to be crisis counselors must be emotionally intelligent, able to separate themselves from the situation enough to keep a calm head under pressure, and have firm emotional boundaries.

Their aspirations are often like those of mental health professionals, to help others in times of emotional crisis. For this situation, being knowledgeable about LGBTQIA+ is an important factor.

For LGBTQIA+ youth, a significant trend is mental health. Of all the youth surveyed in the HRC 2023 Youth Report, 55.1% screened positive for depression, 63.5% for anxiety, 30.9% for psychological distress, and 64.7% rated stress management as fair or poor (HRC Foundation, 2023). Another alarming factor is that 81.7% who did not receive therapy wanted to get therapy but were unable to do so (HRC Foundation, 2023). The majority of LGBTQIA+ youth want to go to college, but 29.2% fear their sexual/gender identity will negatively affect their education opportunities (HRC Foundation, 2023). So, LGBTQIA+ youth surveyed had many educational and career aspirations, yet feared their identity would prohibit them from experiencing their aspirations and dreams.

Slide 4: Target Audience: Cultural Relationship

My story will involve an LGBTQIA+ individual and their struggle to find adequate mental health services, and the importance of getting those services with the specific qualifications mentioned for crisis counselors. This relates to the experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth who know the importance of mental health services but struggle to find adequate services.

Slide 5: Target Audience: Engagement

My story will grab the attention of prospective crisis counselors as it will grab the attention of those who care about providing quality mental health services to LGBTQIA+ youth, utilizing empathy and a nonjudgmental mindset to communicate the business need for more

crisis counselors. An emotional narrative will accomplish this goal by showing the concrete difference being involved can make in others' lives. It also shows the need in a concrete, practical way, making it real. This story will grab the attention of LGBTQIA+ youth as it speaks to their everyday experiences and further affirms the company's belief in the need for quality mental health services for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Slide 6: Story Outline: Delivery and Style

My narrative is a combination of fiction and non-fiction. While set in the real world, the characters and their scenarios are fictional, although based on reality. The style will be an observational documentary, revolving around three characters in specific settings. I plan to present the first scene with the first character through the climax of the story, then move on to the next story. Once the three have been told to the climax, I will go back and revisit them all, resolving them. Between the scenes, text on the screen will display relevant statistics or comments to clarify the message.

Slide 7: Narrative Elements: Main Characters

The first character is a white, trans girl named Olivia who looks to be in middle school or high school range. Her hair is a pixie cut, and she is wearing gender neutral clothing.

The second main character is a lanky high schooler named Mike.

The third character is a young black girl named Ada, and her story unfolds at her home church.

Slide 8: Narrative Elements: World of the Story

The three main characters are LGBTQ+ youth in three settings: home, church, and school. I plan to present the first scene with the first character through the climax of the story, then move on to the next story. Once the three have been told to the climax, I will go back and revisit them all, resolving them.

Slide 9: Narrative Elements: Beginning

The opening scene for Olivia is her arriving home to find her dad reading at the table and her mom doing the dishes. The inciting incident is when her father does not look up, yet pointedly welcomes her by the name Noah. She is visibly uncomfortable, and the mother in the background does not look particularly happy either, but Olivia continues up to her room without a word. The rising action continues: once she enters her room, she tosses her backpack on the ground and flops onto the bed.

The opening scene is for Mike, who is in the boys' locker room after an unspecified sport or activity. The inciting incident is that he is alone at his locker, while in the background, a group of larger boys appears to be making fun of him. The rising action happens when he simply puts his stuff away and starts walking toward the door, stopping as he passes a mirror

The opening scene for Ada is her sitting in her church pew. She watches the pastor as he passionately finishes his sermon. The inciting incident occurs when she is distracted by the light through the stained-glass window, which casts a colorful rainbow shadow on the ground. She looks at it with a distant look of grief. The rising action starts after everyone gets up and starts talking to each other, and she slowly makes her way out of the sanctuary, seemingly unnoticed.

Slide 10: Narrative Elements: Climax

Then comes the climax for all three scenes. The screen would go black with this quote on screen: “The Trevor Project estimates that more than 1.8 million LGBTQ+ young people (ages 13-24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S.- and at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds” (The Trevor Project, 2021). Then it goes to another black screen saying, “But it doesn’t have to be this way.”

Slide 11: Narrative Elements: Conclusion

The scene comes back to Olivia as she stares at her phone. It displays a text helpline page. She sighs and lies back down on the bed, initiating the falling action as she opens her text messages and sends a simple message of ‘I need help’

Flashing to Mike, we find him sitting on a bench outside of school. He leans back, closing his eyes, the camera focusing on his phone, which is open to a text message sent by him to an unknown number simply reading “I need help”, signaling the falling action of his story.

The scene then shows Ada starting to walk out of the church when an older woman approaches her and begins talking to her. As the music starts to fade out, you can hear her being told, “Are you okay?” signaling her falling action

The screen then fades to black, reads “Help is here for you,” then displays the crisis text hotline, providing an end to each of their stories. Then another screen appears, saying, “If you have a heart for LGBTQ+ youth, we would love volunteer crisis counselors. After all, they can’t get help if no one is listening.”

Slide 12: Channels

I plan on using Instagram and YouTube as the primary channels for the message. I am choosing YouTube and Instagram because they are popular among the youth and support the length of the message. According to a Pew Research Center survey, YouTube tops the 2022 list, with 95% of teens using it (Vogels et al., 2022). While Instagram was the third-most-used channel, the length of the message makes it better suited to Instagram than to the other top channels, TikTok and Snapchat. TikTok and Snapchat favor short-form videos and pictures, respectively, but neither fits my communication message.

Slide 13: Cultural Representation

LGBTQIA+ youth have a diversity of perspectives and could have multiple reactions to the communication message. One possible response is interpreting the depiction of LGBTQIA+ characters as overly simplistic or relying on stereotypes, such as the hairstyle and struggle with mental health as marking their identity as Queer. This could come from a general suspicion of depictions of LGBTQIA+ characters in popular media, as it has often been handled poorly. Another potential reaction to viewing the message is the desired effect of establishing an emotional connection with the viewer, affirming their experiences, and showing them that they are not alone and that there's help for them. This will likely be the reaction if the characters reflect real life accurately, and the story beats are not cliché and overly simplified. This will be one of the guiding principles for the communication message.

Slide 14: Cultural Representation

One area that I need to be careful about in the narrative is oversimplifying or relying on stereotypes for the LGBTQIA+ characters. It's important to create well-rounded characters who

are complex and avoid stereotypes. Some biases that I encountered while creating the story were particularly in the depiction of the trans woman. I come from a Christian background, and so learning the pronouns and how to refer to trans women correctly was a learning curve for me.

One recommendation for reducing cultural misrepresentation in the narrative is researching what common stereotypes are in popular media. Knowing what these stereotypes are makes it easier to avoid them (Heather, 2024). Considering the character traits, appearances, and narratives you give LGBTQIA+ characters can help avoid stereotyping. Another way to avoid bias is to learn from Queer people. Read what they've written and how they portray themselves. Be willing to sit and learn for a while simply.

Slide 15: Story Effectiveness

Several elements of the narrative align with Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm as a communication theory. The Narrative Paradigm argues, "narratives do not just tell a story but also put forth arguments and persuade listeners to participate through some sort of action" (Stache, 2017). The Narrative Paradigm is largely influenced by the culture in which it is embedded. In the Narrative Paradigm, "characters are created to guide the audience along, simultaneously serving the purpose of enacting the plot, while also leading the audience to the final message" (Stache, 2017). The characters in my narrative guide the audience on an emotional journey, culminating in a final call to action that highlights the communication goal. The Narrative Paradigm also asserts that the value of the narrative lies in the narrative itself, as well as the values and message it implicitly and explicitly conveys. By highlighting the importance of community support and mental health resources, my narrative presents an ideal

world, motivating the audience to work toward one where those who seek help and support receive it.

The greatest strength of using a story to convey my message is the emotional connection that is possible. Using a narrative creates a connection with the audience and their emotions, helping it stick in the mind. It also has greater potential to change the beliefs and behaviors of those influenced by strong emotions and a personal connection to characters and their situations. A potential limitation of using a story in my message is that it may rely too heavily on emotional persuasion rather than rational persuasion. This can cause some to be suspicious of an emotional narrative.

Slide 16: Story Effectiveness

The call to action in the story is when the text on screen first recommends LGBTQIA+ youth who are struggling to reach out through the crisis text line advertised. The second obvious call to action is a later text on screen, which recommends contacting the non-profit if you are interested in volunteering as a crisis counselor to make a difference in young LGBTQIA+ youth. Another implicit call to action is for the family and friends of LGBTQIA+ youth to reach out, check in on them, and support them. This Call to action is demonstrated through the impact of the lack of community support shown in each story, and through the impact created when someone reaches out to support the character of Ada.

Slide 17: Story Effectiveness

The strongest persuasive strategy that I employed is Pathos. I primarily used Pathos by presenting narratives featuring LGBTQIA+ characters, a topic already thick with emotion. Each

character also faces difficult circumstances and must decide whether to reach out to a mental health professional for help. The implication of the place they will remain in if they do not is emotionally evocative, particularly if you've ever been in a similar situation. Facing friction in your support network because of your identity will always be an emotional topic. I used Pathos because it not only helps show, rather than tell, the audience the importance of the topic, but also creates an emotional connection and provides a concrete example of impact, both of which are important for a non-profit organization.

Another strategy I used was an appeal to social needs, motivated by negative motivation (Persuasive Strategies, 2023). Appealing to the need to have a socially supportive environment for thriving shows the absence that currently exists in many LGBTQIA+ youth's lives. The negative motivation is that if this socially supportive environment is not there, the mental health and ultimately the safety of LGBTQIA+ youth decrease. I used this strategy because we can all relate to needing a socially supportive environment, and showing the negative motivation is a strong motivator for the audience to take action. The suggested ethics for using fear appeals are to avoid overuse, ensure the threat is credible and supported by evidence, and empower the audience to address the threat (Persuasive Strategies, 2023). All of these are followed in my narrative. The threat is not fabricated, the danger is not overused, and the audience have concrete steps to address the threat.

Slide 18: References

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