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Better Magazine: A Digital Mental Health & Wellness Publication for Women

Katherine Czeriwski

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Better Magazine: A Digital Mental Health & Wellness Publication for Women

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
Spring 2018

Honors Capstone Project in Magazine

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Abstract

Better is an online publication that explores young adult women's mental health and wellness. The publication showcases women's journeys with mental wellness and provides helpful information and resources for maintaining and improving readers' mental health. The phrase "mental health" too often carries negative connotations or is simplified to just mental illness. The purpose of the magazine is, in part, to educate people and show that mental health includes more than illness, even though treatment is a large component of mental health. Through personal accounts of mental health and service pieces to help readers, *Better* is a resource for improving mental health and wellness among young women everywhere.

Better Magazine can be found at <https://bettermagsu.com/> and on social media @bettermagsu.

Executive Summary

Better is an online publication that explores young adult women's mental health and wellness. The publication showcases women's journeys with mental wellness and provides helpful information and resources for maintaining and improving readers' mental health. The magazine seeks to fight the stigma surrounding mental health, normalize the topic, and encourage people to share their stories and seek help when needed.

The magazine's name — *Better* — reflects those goals and the need to cultivate a more positive attitude toward mental health and wellness. The phrase “mental health” too often carries negative connotations or is simplified to just mental illness. The purpose of the magazine is, in part, to educate people and show that mental health includes more than illness, even though treatment is a large component of mental health. Another goal of the publication is to encourage people to strive to become “better” rather than being the “best,” to strive for improvement rather than perfection, which is something young adult women see and experience frequently on social media and with societal pressures. Women's perfectionism levels are on the rise – whether due to society's expectations around body image, career accolades, or other lifestyle choices – which has contributed to the record number of young people with mental illness today (Curran & Hill, 2017).

Better covers a wide range of topics, including body image, eating disorders, mental illness, positivity, stress, mindfulness, and other elements that impact women's mental health. In addressing these issues, *Better* publishes varying formats of content from writers across the country. These range from service pieces – including “How to Be a Good Friend to Someone with a Mental Illness” and “3 Steps to Bouncing Back from a Depressive Episode” – to news-related stories such as “Eating Disorders Impact Over 50% of LGBTQ+ Youth, According to a

New Survey” and “Why Teen Health Week’s Emphasis on Mental Health is Needed Now More Than Ever.” The website also publishes personal essays of writers’ experiences with mental health, including “An Anorexia Survivor Shares Her Journey to Recovery” and “How I Learned to Live with Mental Illness and Love Myself.”

These topics are separated into verticals: “Talk,” “Body,” “Relationships,” and “Self.” The titles of these verticals are welcoming rather than clinical, making readers more likely to engage with each of the categories. “Talk” includes news articles and reactions to recent news or events relating to mental health. “Body” discusses mental health through the scope of physical health or body image. “Relationships” includes articles on friendships, family, and romantic relationships as they relate to mental health and wellness. “Self” includes just about everything else – from personal essays to other elements of mental health and wellness.

The publication is set in a digital format, making it accessible for a younger audience and easy to share across different platforms, especially on social media. Half of young adults age 18 to 29 receive their news and information online, as opposed to just five percent who get their news from print (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel & Shearer, 2016). *Better*’s exclusively digital approach is especially impactful considering how its primary audience is receiving its news. Digital platforms also encourage more of a collaborative atmosphere that allows for feedback and dialogue through comments and sharing, which helps satisfy *Better*’s goal of educating readers and spreading information about mental health.

The magazine reflects a shift in the way society discusses mental health. Millennials are much more receptive to addressing and discussing mental health than their elders (Barnes & Lorusso, 2015). Certain women’s publications – including *Teen Vogue*, *Bustle*, and *Refinery29* – have noticed this trend, and have started the conversation with articles, op-eds, and stories about

mental health. *Better* is an opportunity to continue the discussion, encourage further action, and build community. While other publications address several aspects of mental health and wellness, *Better* stands out because of its sole focus on these topics and issues, and for how it can become a destination and an authority for those looking for help, support, resources, an outlet, or reassurance that they are not alone. The content of the publication also sets a more conversational tone, making mental health less taboo and more approachable. Through personal accounts of mental health and service pieces to help readers, *Better* is a resource for improving mental health and wellness among young women everywhere.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	7
Chapter 2: Envisioning <i>Better</i>	9
Chapter 3: Influences.....	10
Chapter 4: Demographic & Mission.....	12
Chapter 5: Layout & Design.....	15
Chapter 6: Establishing a Base of Writers.....	17
Chapter 7: Editorial Content.....	20
Chapter 8: Social Media.....	23
Chapter 9: Reflection.....	27
Works Cited.....	28

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I. Introduction

During my junior year at Syracuse University, I was enrolled in a Publication Design course where I was tasked with coming up with a magazine that focused on a group or interest I felt was not being served. Plenty of ideas ran through my mind, but my background in my psychology minor kept drawing me back to the concept of a mental health and wellness magazine.

Mental health is still a taboo in everyday conversation, but normalizing these discussions can make people feel more comfortable and confident no matter what they may be facing. I wanted to create a publication that would publish people's stories as well as service pieces to help people navigate mental health and wellness in their own lives, no matter what that entailed. Through these stories, more people would be exposed to this type of content, becoming familiar with more aspects of mental health and how to improve their own well-being.

Part of the reason I wanted to develop *Better* was because of the advocacy I had seen recently by young adults around the world. Elyse Fox created Sad Girls Club to empower women with group therapy and meet-ups to discuss mental health. Gabby Frost founded the Buddy Project, a nonprofit that pairs people with a friend to give peer support online, when she was only 15 years old after she recognized how many of her friends were living with mental illness. Mental illness is not abnormal among young people, as one in five young adults and teenagers have a mental health condition, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The general public is, however, more likely to perceive this group as dangerous, shameful, and lazy – a view that is slowly transforming, but still exists nonetheless (Parcesepe & Cabassa, 2013). Young celebrities have begun sharing their own stories to help adolescents who fall under this category feel less alone. Prominent figures such as Rowan Blanchard and Adwoa Aboah have become

increasingly vocal about their own mental health, promoting self-care, encouraging people to seek help, and diminishing stigma surrounding mental illness. Each of these factors validated the creation and existence of *Better* on a national scale rather than as a campus publication.

While further developing the concept for my capstone, I drew upon what I learned in my magazine classes at Syracuse University, honing my topic and researching it to find a more niche audience. I also remembered from my psychology classes that women – especially younger women – are more apt to reach out for help, especially when it comes to mental health. This helped me give the magazine more direction, targeting young adult and college-age women who were interested in learning about mental health.

The subject is still stigmatized in today's culture, even for women, but it has become somewhat more accepted, so I hoped to produce a magazine that would be a catalyst for initiating these types of conversations.

II. Envisioning *Better*

Naming the magazine was a process in and of itself. I knew I wanted something that wasn't too somber or stern, but something that people would still take seriously. I came up with a word bank of topics I wanted to discuss, then words that I immediately associated with these phrases. Titles like *Mindful* and *Focus* didn't have enough of the personality I was looking for. I came up with *You*, but my Publication Design professor and I agreed that while it felt personal, it didn't convey my concept well enough.

Soon after, I shifted from browsing words I associated with my topic and rather focused on words I associated with what I hoped to accomplish. That was when I came up with the title *Better*. The word "better," as defined by Merriam-Webster, means "improved in health or mental attitude" or "improved in accuracy or performance." There was no emphasis on being the greatest; rather, it focused on improvement. Culminating the search for my title, "better" was the word that encompassed my vision for the publication: in a society where there is constant pressure to be the best, we can instead strive to always be better versions of ourselves, even one small step at a time.

III. Influences

I drew upon several influences and inspirations in developing *Better*. The first publication, *The Mighty*, was brought to my awareness by my advisor, Harriet Brown, during a Fat and Feminism course. The site publishes articles about disability, disease, and mental illness, emphasizing the importance of community and tackling these issues together. *The Mighty* encouraged me to pursue my capstone's topic by reminding me that people were willing to talk about mental health and share their struggles with an audience. Most stories on *The Mighty*'s website are personal accounts written as narratives or personal essays – including “Sexual Assault Jokes Aren't Funny: A Victim's Perspective,” “The Nightmares I Have as Someone With Borderline Personality Disorder,” and “To My Mom, Who Supported Me Through Anorexia Relapse.” These are all stories that showcased the content and level of honesty I hoped *Better* would share with readers, as I felt they would directly impact my target demographic.

Teen Vogue was another major influence. In November 2017, *Teen Vogue* shuttered its print edition altogether, but it thrives in the digital realm and on social media due to its ability to relay information to young women in a way that still holds their attention. Since *Teen Vogue* and *Better* share a similar intended demographic, I decided it might be best to do the same for *Better* by making it a digital publication for young women that encourages conversation about topics that aren't often discussed. *Teen Vogue* does this with certain elements of social justice, but it also educates readers about sex and mental health while its competitors typically refrain from doing so.

I also drew inspiration from *Bustle* and *Refinery29*, which are exclusively digital publications with a slightly older audience than *Teen Vogue*. They both focus on women and frame stories about mental health in ways that do not ostracize those facing mental health

challenges. Articles range from the more serious – “People with Depression & Anxiety Speak Differently, Research Shows, And Here’s Why It Matters” from *Bustle* – to more common topics that apply to a wider audience, like *Refinery29*’s “What You Need To Remember When You Get Angry.” I knew I wanted *Better* to span this range of topics while focusing on people’s personal experiences as *The Mighty* frequently does.

Better stands out from these publications with its sole focus on mental health and wellness. The publication’s strong identity allows readers to associate *Better* with the topic and the knowledge that it is a space where they can find help and support. It also targets an in-between audience (explained in the following chapter), as *Teen Vogue*’s audience is skewed slightly younger than *Better*’s and *Refinery29*’s, *Bustle*’s, and *The Mighty*’s are slightly older.

IV. Demographic & Mission

Once I knew I wanted *Better* to discuss mental health, I decide who the audience would be. Almost 75 percent of respondents in a 2015 survey claimed millennials are “much more open to addressing mental health topics than older people” and more than 80 percent agreed “that resources for mental health are better now than when their parents were young” (Barnes & Lorusso, 2015). The study also found that the majority of millennials were comfortable with being friends with, living with, dating, or voting for someone with a mental illness (Barnes & Lorusso, 2015), making these respondents more open-minded than other generations.

Millennials seem to be more open-minded regarding mental health, but stigma is still a major factor preventing them from seeking help. While more than 70 percent of millennials in the study felt comfortable visiting a counselor, less than half would feel comfortable telling people they had done so (Barnes & Lorusso, 2015). There is still stigma around mental health, however, which acts as an obstacle between millennials and Gen Z populations and the guidance they need.

Not only are young adults more open about mental health than older generations, but they are also experiencing mental health challenges at an increasing rate. In 2015, a study found that one in every six college students had been diagnosed with or treated for anxiety (American College Health Association, 2015). The same study found that depression affects more than 13.1 percent of college students, and that these mental health difficulties affected academic performance and overall mood. These heightened statistics prove a need for mental health support and resources, which *Better* aims to achieve. The findings also suggest that higher rates of mental illness might contribute to young people’s openness about mental health.

While millennials and Gen Z seemed like a receptive audience for *Better*, I wanted to narrow my demographic further since it was still such a large group. According to Nielsen data published in 2017, Generation Z makes up 26 percent of the total media audience, and millennials make up 22 percent – combined, these two groups account for almost half of the total media audience in the United States (Nielsen, 2017). This pushed me to find a more specific audience.

Multiple psychological studies have found that women are far more likely to seek mental health help than men, sometimes up to two-thirds more likely (Winerman, 2005). Ronald F. Levant, former president of the American Psychological Association, suggests this may be because “many boys ... learn from their parents and from other children that they are not supposed to express vulnerability or caring” until they become adults and “are genuinely unaware of their emotions and how to describe them in words” (Winerman, 2005). With this research in mind, I decided to focus on millennial and Gen Z women as my demographic, as they would be more likely to click on articles from *Better* and seek help, especially from service-type articles.

This research not only helped me formulate my demographic, but it also helped me hone *Better*'s mission. When I originally pitched the concept for *Better* as a mental health magazine, many professors questioned how I would have a publication entirely comprised of articles about bipolar disorder or depression. For many people, “mental health” equates to “mental illness,” and my hope for *Better* was to show the whole spectrum of mental health topics, from the disorders traditionally associated with it to topics applicable to everyday life, like sleep, guilt, stress, and aspects of mental health that can impact anyone, not just those with a mental illness. *Better* could

then become a destination for young women, whether struggling with mental health or not, to support one another, learn from one another, and be encouraged to become better.

V. Layout & Design

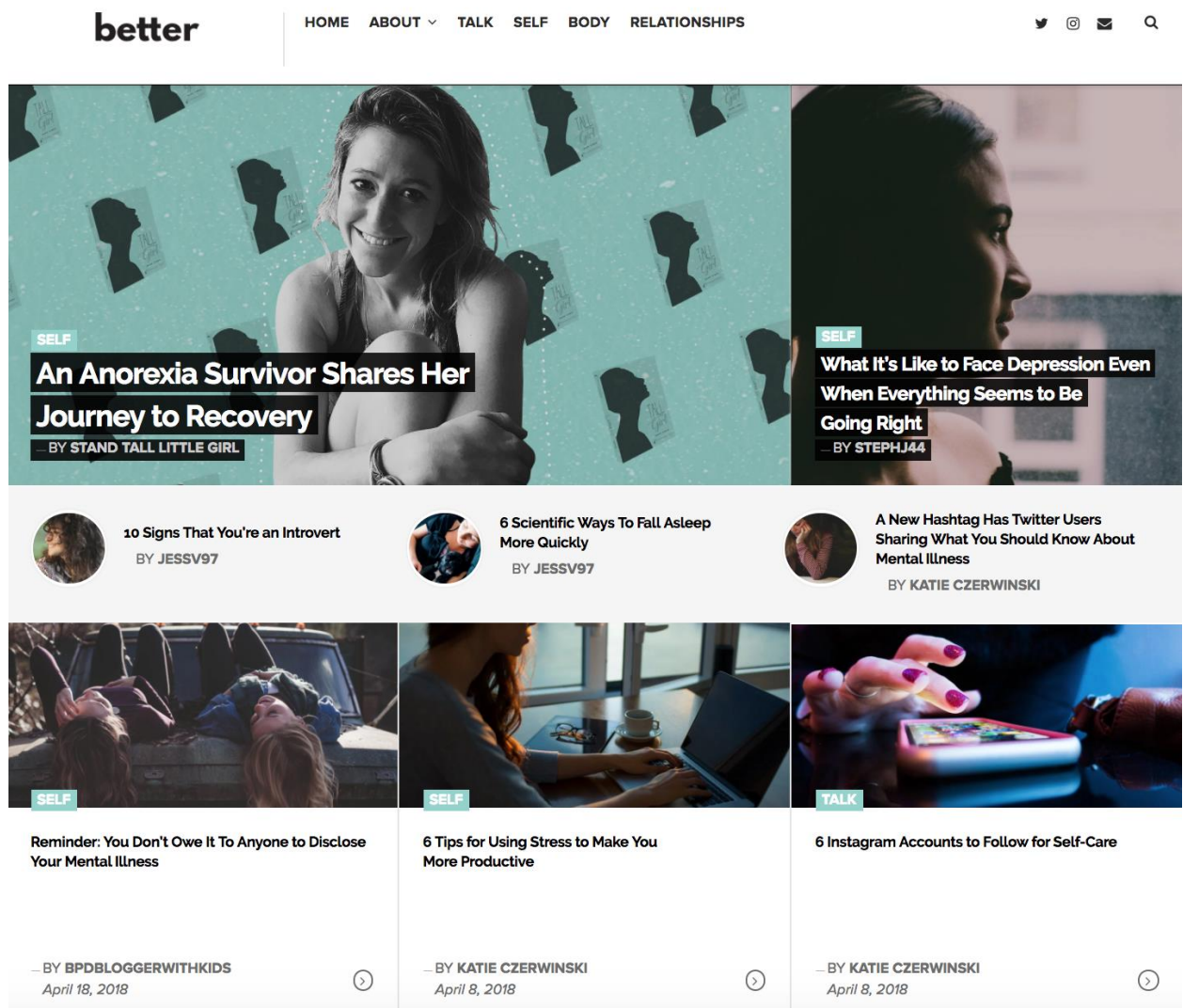
Because the idea for *Better* originated in a Publication Design course, I had already created several of the brand elements before beginning work on my capstone, including a color palette, typography standards, shape settings, and the overall look and feel of the publication. I did, however, have to translate these to digital components, since many elements that are aesthetically pleasing in a print publication may not have the same effect online.

The first decision focused on *Better*'s nameplate. In print, the nameplate appeared above a photo on a magazine cover – in a digital space, it would have to stand on its own to represent social media accounts and the brand itself. To remedy this, I drew from the color palettes I had developed when designing *Better*, especially the primary brand color – a light teal shade (hex code: #93D2CB). The colors I had chosen for the print product reflected a refreshing, welcoming, and fun tone that I wanted to carry over to *Better*'s digital presence. I also chose a white nameplate for the digital logo because of its simplicity, and because the color did not appear too harsh against the teal background.



Better's nameplate in print (left) and its digital counterpart (right)

As for the website itself, I wanted something that was easy to navigate but reflected the modern, trendy tones of the publications I was inspired by, such as *Bustle* and *Teen Vogue*. After browsing several themes from different websites, I chose the Aquene theme for WordPress because of its setup as a clean, minimalist online publication. It also allowed me the option to customize elements of the theme to incorporate *Better*'s brand assets, including the nameplate and color.



The Aquene Wordpress theme offered a dynamic layout that was easy to follow and allowed me to incorporate some of the magazine's print design elements

VI. Establishing a Base of Writers

Once I had established a basic set of pitches and decided what I wanted *Better* to focus on, I had to find writers. I knew that throughout this process, I wanted to take on an editorial position by managing writers as well as writing my own articles occasionally. I began my search for writers through word of mouth. I asked friends I had spoken with about *Better* if they would be interested and garnered some interest but no firm commitments. I attempted to reach out through the Newhouse School, but I could not send an email to student listservs as *Better* was not a registered student organization.

I decided to utilize the Honors program and sent a call for writers to Karen Hall, the Assistant Director of the Honors program, to be sent to honors students in an email. I immediately received responses from people interested in contributing to the publication, but not enough to produce a substantial amount of content over the course of my capstone.

I kept in mind that as executive editor of *Fresh U*, an online publication for high school seniors and college freshmen, I had access to more than 300 writers across the country from different universities, many of whom were college-aged women interested in writing about mental health. After sending out a call for writers to *Fresh U* contributors, I received an outpouring of interest. People were interested in writing about their own personal experiences as well as basing their articles off my original pitch ideas. These ranged from personal accounts of depression, body image problems, and anxiety to self-help service pieces about sleep or the mental impacts of physical fitness.

As *Better* grew and gained more attention, I received applications from prospective writers hoping to contribute their personal stories to the publication. This encouraged me to expand my search for writers and reach out to prominent mental health advocates on social media, including

Buddy Project founder Gabby Frost, Against Suicide founder Carrie Shade, and Help Hotline founder Kasey Chantel Lemley. Each agreed to contribute – either through personal essays or being featured in a profile – which helped *Better* gain credibility, validation, and audience growth.

I set realistic deadlines for each contributor that allowed him or her to mull over the topic and produce the best piece he or she could, but ensured staggered content for multiple weeks. Once writers finished their articles, I used skills from my Magazine Writing and Magazine Editing courses to copy edit and top edit. To copy edit, I followed AP Stylebook standards with exceptions made frequently within the magazine industry, such as including the Oxford comma. As for top editing, I ensured all pieces were structurally sound and that personal essays began and ended with scenes or anecdotes to better unify the piece. I provided feedback, both positive and constructive, to writers to help their perception of *Better*'s overall tone and message. If a writer was struggling with one or more of these aspects, I worked with him or her to edit the piece and help improve his or her writing in the future.

Above all, I knew I wanted *Better* to be a resource for people, even beyond the content published by my writers. To make this possible, I spoke with the founder and CEO of *Fresh U* to discuss syndication of certain *Fresh U* articles so they could also appear on *Better*'s website with credit to the writers. We had used a syndication system previously with *Teen Vogue* so that *Teen Vogue* readers could receive relevant information that pertained to each of them and their experiences, even if it was originally published on *Fresh U*. I employed the same idea to help *Better* become a destination and authority for mental health and wellness, covering a variety of topics. This system allowed me to publish more articles – such as “6 Scientific Ways to Fall

Asleep More Quickly” and “3 Steps to Bouncing Back from a Depressive Episode” – enhancing *Better*’s digital presence in addition to the original content published on the site.

VII. Editorial Content

My primary goal for *Better*'s editorial content was to publish a variety of articles on a wide range of topics to provide education and support to the mental health community. In doing this, I would be able to reach and help the maximum amount of people, reach a broad audience, and publish more content. This was not an issue, as writers immediately pitched different types of articles, from personal essays – such as “How I Learned to Live with My Mental Illness and Love Myself” – to service articles, including “How Anxiety Can Affect Your Relationships – And What You Can Do About It.” This varied content allowed me to appeal to readers who suffer from a mental illness as well as those looking to simply improve their mental health.

I came up with each headline for the site to maintain *Better*'s tone, increase the visibility of the site through search engine optimization (SEO), and make readers want to click on the article. As *Better* is an online publication, I did not want any headlines that were too abstract, but at the same time, I did not want them to give away too much of the article. I workshopped headlines with writers and my advisor to increase the quality and focus of the titles. In one instance, I received a personal essay from a woman who had struggled with anorexia as a young adult and wanted to share her story of recovery. Her headline was “Silencing That Anorexic Voice” – a headline that, in some form, may have worked in print. I knew it would not fit a digital publication, so I came up with a few headlines, resulting in “An Anorexia Survivor Shares Her Journey to Recovery.” I knew from my experience on campus publications and my Magazine Editing coursework that it was essential to use keywords – such as “anorexia,” “survivor,” and “recovery” – and make sure they were prominent in the headline, which helped me decide where to place the words in the headline. Readers often look at the first few words before they choose to click on the article or not, so I wanted to convey the primary message of the article within

these few words. I used the dek – “How one woman silenced the ‘anorexic voice’ within her” – to incorporate the writer’s suggested headline and entice the audience to keep reading. I followed a similar pattern for other headlines to maintain consistency.

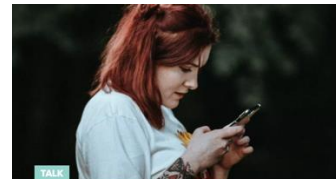
Headlines were also a way to convey *Better*’s tone. The publication’s audience would likely be passionate about mental health and already somewhat knowledgeable on the topic, so I wanted to give *Better* a friendly and welcoming voice while maintaining an edge that was fitting for the demographic. One example of this was a news story about a study that found “fitspiration” posts on Instagram hurt people’s mental health. I crafted the headline “Social Media Posts About Exercising Are Now Proven to Make You Feel Worse About Your Body, Shocking No One.” By adding personality and a conversational tone to *Better*, I hoped readers would form a stronger bond with the publication and feel they could relate to it more.



TALK
Eating Disorders Impact Over 50% of LGBTQ+ Youth, According to a New Survey



SELF
College Is More Than A GPA — So Don't Stress Too Much About Your Grades



TALK
Instagram Is Apparently Launching a “Wellbeing Team” for Users — Whatever That Means

I divided the editorial content into four verticals – “Self,” “Talk,” “Body,” and “Relationships.” I wanted to give the verticals a welcoming, engaging identity while keeping them relatively simple and easy to follow. “Talk” includes news articles, trending topics, and reactions to recent news or events relating to mental health, including “6 Instagram Accounts to Follow for Self-Care” and “This Jewelry Line Is Encouraging People to Wear Their Mental Illness Around Their Neck.” With topics such as “Why Hydration Is So Important for Your Mental and Physical Health,” the “Body” vertical discusses mental health through the scope of physical health and body image. “Relationships” includes articles about friendships, family, and

romantic relationships as they relate to mental health and wellness, such as “How to Be a Good Friend to Someone with a Mental Illness.” “Self” includes just about everything else – from personal essays to other elements of mental health and wellness. This section featured “What It’s Like to Face Depression Even When Everything Seems to Be Going Right,” “Reminder: You Don’t Owe It to Anyone to Disclose Your Mental Illness,” “6 Tips for Using Stress to Make You More Productive,” and other articles.

I took advantage of the digital nature of the publication by incorporating in-text graphics – such as graphs, charts, lists, and schedules – to provide context and increase readers’ time spent on articles. I used brand elements including color and typefaces to keep graphics consistent with the rest of the publication. Graphics also helped make articles more engaging and break up large blocks of text for readers.



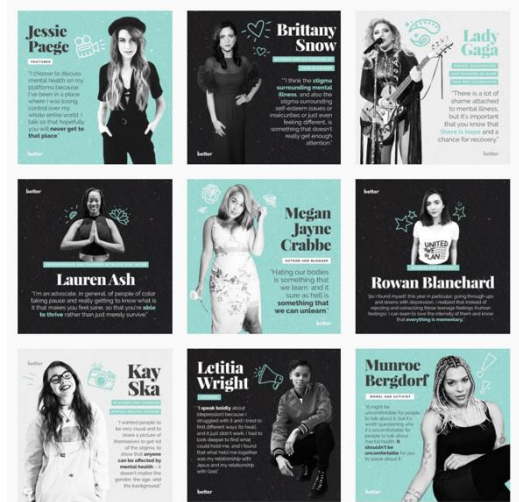
Anxiety disorders impact more than **40 million** Americans over the age of 18 each year – that’s just over 18 percent of the U.S. population.

SOURCE: ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

In-text graphics, some of which are featured above, allowed me to present additional information in a visual way.

VIII. Social Media

I knew social media would be crucial to *Better* as an exclusively digital publication. I chose to focus on Instagram and Twitter, as these social media platforms are especially popular among *Better*'s demographic. Approximately 45 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds and about 36 percent of 25-to-29-year-olds use Twitter, and about 71 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds and about 46 percent of 25-to-29-year-olds use Instagram, making up a significant portion of the audience I hoped to reach (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Facebook, although extremely popular across various age groups, has become less helpful for publications across the board in the past year by hiding content from certain news organizations and pushing posts from users instead of publishers. I decided I would probably see the most impact by using Instagram and Twitter, which helped build *Better*'s brand considerably. With more resources and funding, I would expand to Facebook to reach a wider audience.



Through my magazine coursework and experience at publications, including *The Daily Orange* and *Fresh*

U, I learned that calls to action and linking to articles on Instagram often do not translate to website views. For most publications, the platform is used to enhance brand awareness and promote more visual content. Keeping this in mind, I

created a series of Instagram posts (which can be found at <https://www.instagram.com/bettermagsu/>) featuring young women changing the



A sampling of the Instagram series (top) and a sample post (bottom)

conversation around mental health, including singer Hayley Williams, blogger Megan Jayne Crabbe, and actress Abigail Breslin. I designed a consistent template I could use for each post that still offered variety through alternating colors, adjustable positioning, and copyright-free photographs from Instagram, Flickr Creative Commons, and Wikimedia Commons. Each post description provided context about how the featured women have advocated for mental health and wellness. The only way I could measure audience engagement on posts was with likes, and these posts averaged approximately 20 likes. This was satisfactory to me because I built a follower base of approximately 125 followers with more than 400 combined likes in less than a month. This showed a compelling interest in the topic and proved a publication like *Better* would be able to thrive in a real-world setting.

I used a similar approach on Twitter, posting the graphics in a thread (which can be found at <https://twitter.com/bettermagsu/status/979734184817250305>) so all the tweets would be easily accessible in one place.



The tweet that initiated the thread (left) and a sample tweet from the thread (right)

After speaking with my advisor, I decided to tag relevant figures and organizations in tweets and on Instagram as well as incorporating hashtags when possible. I immediately saw

results that increased *Better*'s reach exponentially. During the first day of posting on *Better*'s social media, Olympic gymnast Simone Biles liked *Better*'s [post](#) about her after I tagged her account in a tweet. I also attracted the attention of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) by using the #mentalhealth hashtag. This trend continued as I posted more often on social media and had a significant impact on audience engagement. Kay Ska, founder of Mental Health Stories, published a screenshot of a *Better* Instagram post on her Instagram stories after I tagged her in a post, which led to a subsequent increase in *Better*'s followers and likes. Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation – which promotes youth empowerment and wellness – retweeted a post about Lady Gaga's impact on the mental health community, garnering almost 200 retweets and over 500 likes on its post as well as over 40 retweets and 80 likes on *Better*'s original tweet. The JED Foundation, a non-profit devoted to young people's emotional health and suicide prevention, reposted an Instagram post about Brittany Snow, who co-founded the Love Is Louder campaign with the JED Foundation. The foundation's post received almost 200 likes and redirected a significant amount of traffic to *Better*'s Instagram account.



Tagging people and organizations, including the Born This Way Foundation (left), the JED Foundation (middle), and mental health advocate Kay Ska (right), led to significant boosts in audience engagement.

I also posted on Twitter in a more traditional way with links to articles as well as captions. This helped me convey *Better*'s tone and voice as well as expand its reach and encourage sharing among its followers. I also retweeted relevant articles from other sources to enforce the idea that *Better* was a resource for readers no matter where the content originated. On average, I saw less engagement on Twitter than I did on Instagram, but I was able to measure my engagement more easily with Twitter Analytics. This tool allowed me to see *Better* had approximately 25,000 impressions on Twitter, due in large part to the Twitter thread I launched of women changing the conversation around mental health. With a larger staff and more resources, I would tweet the site's content more frequently and consistently to bolster audience interactions with articles on Twitter.

IX. Reflection

There were many times when I questioned whether *Better* was a success. In the beginning, I was struggling to find writers and publish content at the rate I was expecting. This left me feeling discouraged and uneager to expand the publication in other ways, such as social media. I eventually started using these feelings to motivate me. Sometimes that meant writing three news articles in a day by myself. Other times, that meant completely rethinking social media strategies and designing graphic templates. The publication began to reap the benefits of these sudden moments of inspiration, and I watched it grow from a small website to a publication that reaches six continents with more than 29,000 overall impressions. *Better's* impact exceeded all my expectations and proved that this type of publication could exist and succeed in today's media industry, which is why I hope to continue it in the future.

As a fully functioning operation, I would hope to hire a staff of editors, ideally at least one for every section. I would also hire staff writers to publish a steady stream of content daily as well as a social media manager to share these articles across multiple platforms and a designer to create graphics. I would ideally fund salaries and website maintenance through advertising revenue and support from mental health organizations, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness or the JED Foundation.

What *Better* has shown me, however, is that it does not take a large staff or massive funding to produce a successful publication. It simply takes an idea that people are interested in discussing, and the motivation to deliver that message.

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