

Shirt Design Toolkit

everything you need to know
to create promotional shirts and gear

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This guide was created by the LA Trust to provide Student Advisory Groups with messaging, visual elements, and production resources that can be used in the creation of shirts and promotional items. We hope that you will be able to use your insight as students to develop designs that are popular with your peers and embody your community's personal identity.



THE PROJECT

Although it may be used for any promotional project, this toolkit will focus on the creation of promotional shirts for the 13 new Wellness Centers. These progressive variations on traditional School Based Health Centers will also serve the community surrounding the school with a separate entrance for students coming from the campus and a street entrance for the public. The LA Trust in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District designed these new forms of school-based clinics to focus on a holistic positive approach to Wellness rather than just health.

The challenge is to define what is important and meaningful to you about these new Wellness Centers and find a way to express that in a few words, an image, and eventually a t-shirt. The LA Trust and the Wellness clinics will be used as examples throughout this toolkit.

EXPERT ADVICE

RENEE BELL

FASHION TREND EXPERT

Start by thinking about what health and wellness mean to you. It may also help to brainstorm what health and wellness look like as you are working to describe them. Develop a tagline or slogan and use that to inspire the image for the shirt. Once you've got some ideas, research how other people are making graphic tees and look on the websites of stores you and your peers like. Be careful not to get stuck on one design too early because it may make it harder to move forward.

ADVICE FROM DESIGNERS

- ✘ “The nature of process, to one degree or another, involves failure. You have at it. It doesn't work. You keep pushing. It gets better. But it's not good. It gets worse. You go at it again. Then you desperately stab at it, believing 'this isn't going to work.' And it does!”

Saul Bass

- ✘ “I read once about the concepts of a lateral idea and the vertical idea. If you dig a hole and it's in the wrong place, digging it deeper isn't going to help. The lateral idea is when you skip over and dig someplace else.”

Seymour Chwast

- ✘ “It is important to use your hands. This is what distinguishes you from a cow or a computer operator.”

Paul Rand

- ✘ “Imitate. Don't be shy about it. Try to get as close as you can. You'll never get all the way, and the separation might be truly remarkable.”

Bruce Mau

Your Message

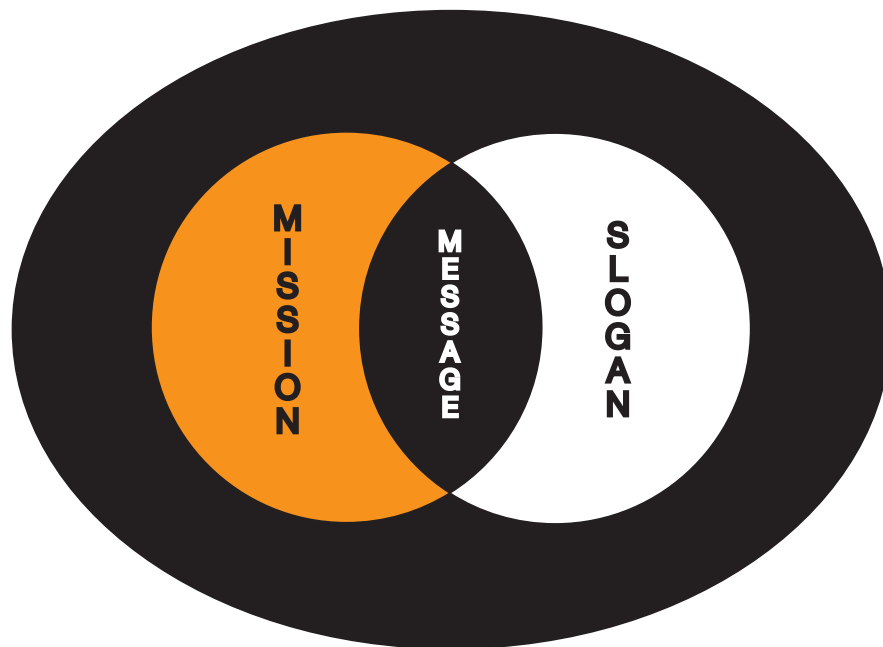
WHAT IS A MESSAGE

mission statement: A summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual.

slogan: A short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising.

message: A usually short communication transmitted by words, signals, or other means from one person, station, or group to another or a short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising.

A mission statement can help you develop a slogan. A slogan can be used on the t shirts or as an inspiration for images. For example: The LA Trust's mission is To increase student health and readiness to learn through access, advocacy, and programs. Their slogan is student health=student success.



A mission statement and slogan may be useful in developing your ideas and could be used on the promotional gear, but keep your specific message in mind throughout the design process. What do you want people seeing your shirts and graphics to think, ask, feel? The answer may range from “I want my audience to be curious about what the Wellness Center is” to “I want my audience to know that the Wellness Center is focused on community”.

You have to define the message you think is most important.

HOW TO DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE

Define a question. What is health? What is wellness? What is the difference between health and wellness? Find a question or a few that will help narrow what you want to focus on.

Answer the question. Get others to answer it too. Which answers are similar? Are certain words repeated? Which definitions are different or stand out? What strikes you?

Try to distill what you've learned into a single sentence. Move words around, play with alliteration or rhyming if it seems relevant. Try to come up with a slogan that could be used on the shirts. This could be as simple as a single word or number that piques your audience's curiosity.

STRATEGIES

Write things down! Information and ideas you collect throughout the process may be useful later on even if they don't seem helpful at the time. Start a collective journal, google doc or choose a secretary, just make sure all the notes from the group are being collected in one place that everyone can add to.

Work alone then come together. Giving everyone in the group time to brainstorm ideas alone is important. Research strongly suggests that people are more creative when they work in privacy and are free from interruption. After everyone has had some time to think on their own, bring the ideas back and have everyone review what they came up with, then brainstorm as a group. Designating time for personal work and teamwork allows everyone in the group to contribute, whether they are quiet or outspoken.

Interview others. Send everyone out into the hallway to interview 3 people, then come back and discuss. Or schedule an interview with a member of the Wellness Center staff. Ask your parents what they think.

Check the web. A simple google search can give you a lot of food for thought. There may already be interviews and long discussions about the questions you are asking. For example thelatrust.org has tons of Wellness Center testimonials.

Here are some quotes pulled from their site:

- ✘ "I normally like to say that if we all could just "each one teach one, we will start to make a difference for all of US". We have already seen this happening with the GREAT work through the Trust with our Children, Families and support staff."

Sandy B. Wooten, Clinic Manager/Wellness Coordinator
Northeast Community Clinic (NECC)

- ✘ "Students and parents are often burdened with the academic impact of health issues like asthma, diabetes, a toothache, or obesity. When these issues are left untreated not only do they affect the student's health but it keeps the child away from learning, sometimes for days. This year the Wellness Centers will help target those concerns and reach a larger number of students and families."

Maryjane Puffer, Executive Director of the L.A. Trust

YOUR IMAGE

CREATING GUIDELINES

You may want to decide on an image for the shirt within the group. Again, have everyone come up with ideas, and look at your old notes. Let's say everyone agrees that an ✖ is the perfect symbol for your shirt. You could hold a contest for the best ✖ drawing. Or you may prefer to let your peers come up with what health or wellness looks like to them. In this case you should provide artists with some general guidelines like the size and color the image should be, the mood you are going for, and of course, the message you want your shirt design to embody. Use all of your research to create restrictions, guidelines and suggestions for the future creator of the shirt image.

STRATEGIES

Research t-shirts from stores you like. Go to different brand websites and look under the tees or knits sections. Here are some stores with graphic tees: urban outfitters, topshop, american eagle, shop bob, mishka, hot topic. Save some images and print them out or bookmark them for reference later.

Have everyone in the group bring in one of their favorite shirts. Talk about the different style and fits, the fabrics, colors and images used. All of this information will be useful after you get your image too.

Look at the production section of this toolkit! You are not just asking for people to create artwork, you need them to design specifically for a shirt, so make sure they know what this involves. For example, you could ask for black and white pen and ink images that will be easier to clean up digitally, or specify the size you want the final image to be on the shirt.

FINDING AN ARTIST

Hold a contest and put up Call for Submissions posters with your guidelines. Offer a free shirt for the winning submission, or another prize that seems appropriate.

Approach artists at school whose work you like and ask them if they could design something for you.

Involve all artists working on a design for you to join group discussions about the shirt and the project. They can help you decide the kind of shirt their image will look best on.

PREP FOR PRINTING

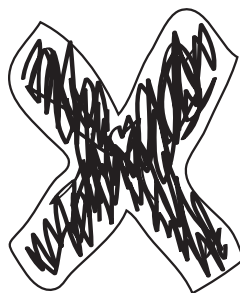
GENERAL GUIDELINES

Scan images at **300dpi**. Depending on the complexity of the image you may want to scan in black and white, but if you are losing too much detail or want to keep the color, scan in full color. Try not to stretch a small image larger unless you are able to correct the pixelation on a computer effectively. Some printing methods, like silk screening, require **high contrast single color** images. Others techniques won't need as much image prep before printing, so check with the print shop you'll be using. In any case you will want to **erase accidental marks, correct messy lines** and try to **isolate the image from the paper** on the computer. You don't want small mistakes to print on the final tee, so have someone from the print shop go over the edited image with you and suggest revisions.

Bell and Lincoln both have great print shops within LAUSD and sometimes offer free printing for district projects. You can contact these print shops or check if your own school has shirt printing facilities. Gerard Mungaray is the contact for the Bell Print shop gerardo.mungaray@lausd.net.



**Scan 300 dpi,
maybe scan in
black and white**



**delete white
and stray marks,
increase contrast**



**correct edges
and fill in color
where needed**

ASK THE PRINT SHOP

- Do you print digitally or screen print?
- How should students prep a file for printing?
- What are the file size and type of file preferred?
- Is multicolor printing an option?
- General cost of ink, printing labor, shirts?
- Should students provide their supplies or purchase them through you?
- Any recommendations on where such supplies should be purchased?
- Should artwork be made at the same size as will be printed?
- How do students initiate a print order?
- Anything else we should know?

YOUR SHIRT

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Fabric

Do you want soft thin fabric or a classic thick cotton?

Cut and Style

See the shirt style guide in the Templates and Resources section!

Image Placement

Will the design fill the front of the shirt, or be small and subtle on the bottom hem?

Do you want to print anything on the back of the shirt? Check out the image on the introduction page of this toolkit for ideas.

Color

Think about how the color of the shirt will support your message.

Will the color of the ink match or contrast with the shirt color?

Effects

Do you want the design to look like it's fading, distorted, or transparent?

Font

If you want to have text on your shirt you could download a special Typeface. There are lots of free typefaces online. Don't get carried away though, readability is important.

FINAL TESTS

Once you've made all of your image and shirt decisions, hold a final review before sending the shirt to print. Try making a prototype. You can buy fabric transfer paper, print the design and iron it onto a shirt. Even just holding up the printed image in the right size and color to the kind of shirt you want to use can help. Review with the group. Review a few options if possible.

Does the shirt design get your **message** across?

Then send it to print!

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TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES

Some more design resources:

- ✘ Here is a branding and advertising toolkit.
http://neea-marketing-toolkits.s3.amazonaws.com/Toolkit_Guide.pdf
- ✘ This site focuses on advanced computer editing techniques but may still give you some ideas.
<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/10/16/the-ultimate-round-up-of-t-shirt-design-tutorials/>
- ✘ Here are links to free font websites. Make sure to check the terms of use for any typeface you select.
<http://freebies.about.com/od/computerfreebies/tp/free-fonts.htm>
- ✘ You can find more t-shirt templates and other free templates here.
<http://www.123freevectors.com>
- ✘ Here is another guide on how to make promotional t-shirts.
<http://www.pistoncloud.com/2013/06/create-a-legendary-promotional-shirt/>
- ✘ If you want to incorporate an already existing image on your shirt, search wikimedia for free images.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Images>
- ✘ A compilation of 50 beautifully designed shirts.
<http://www.complex.com/style/2013/06/50-best-t-shirts-out-right-now-june/carhartt-wip>

The following templates may be helpful:

To Do List
Brainstorming Worksheet
Shirt Style Guide
Shirt Template



To Do List

Group Members:

Project:

Deadline:

to do	start and end dates	# of days	who will do this
complete brainstorming sheets deligate and assign tasks research Wellness Center interview students interview community members interview clinic staff define mission and message come up with a slogan (optional) research shirt designs bring in t-shirts brainstorm guidelines hold a contest or decide on artists advertise for design contest deadline for submissions: review and decision edit design and prepare for printing decide where shirts will be printed contact the printshop research printing materials and shirts purchase any needed supplies final shirt and design decisions make and review shirt prototype print shirts distribute shirts	finish date:	total:	

BRAINSTORMING WORKSHEET

How would you describe your school and your community?
What's good? What would you like to change?

How would you describe your Wellness Center?
What do you know? What would you like to know?

What do you want others to know about your Wellness Center?

Who do you want to know about your Wellness Center? Who is your audience?

What images come to mind when you think about health or wellness? Draw them or right down whatever you think of even if it seems irrelevant. What feelings come to mind?

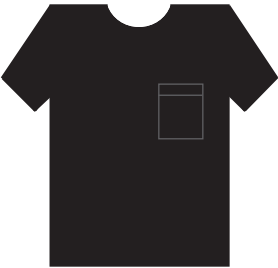
How can you contribute to this project? What skills do you have?

How would you describe your style, or what styles do you like?

Where do you shop? Where do your peers shop?

Shirt Styles Guide

pocket tee
v neck
boatneck



noodle strap
thick strap
racerback



long sleeve
cap sleeve
3/4 sleeve



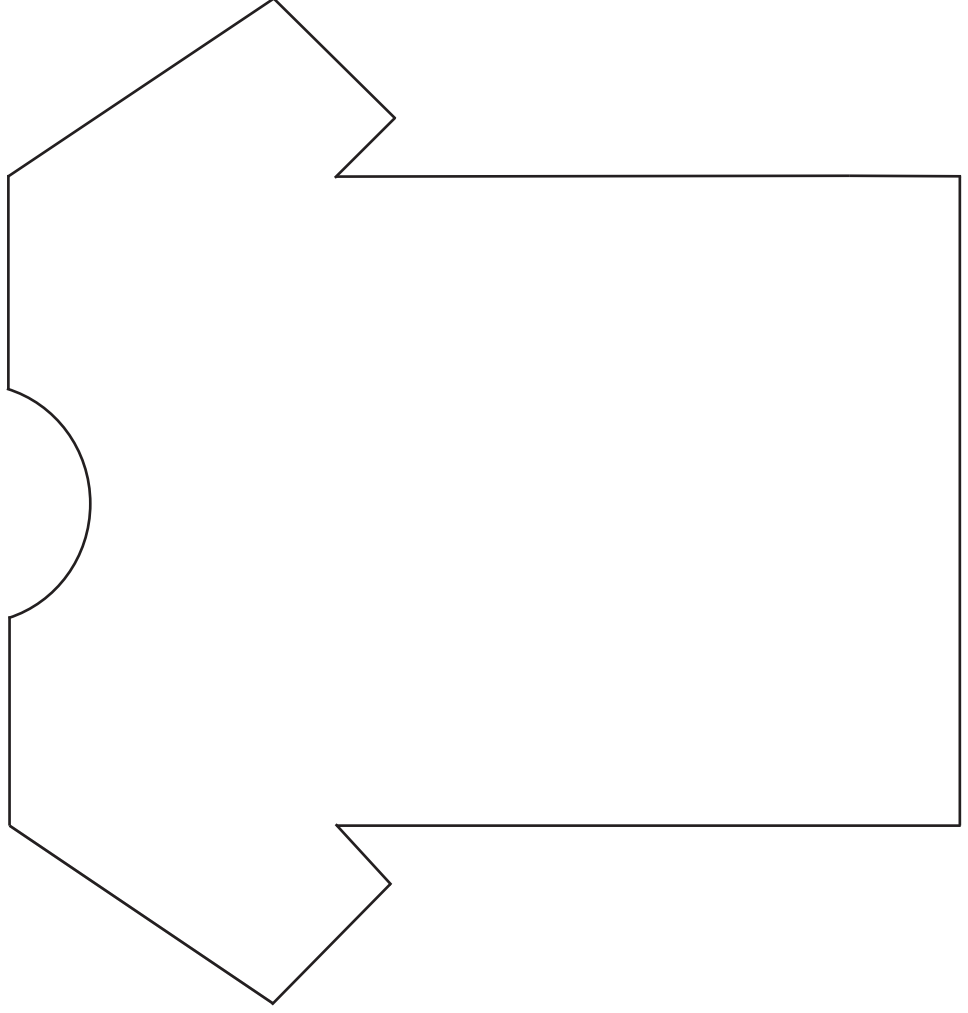
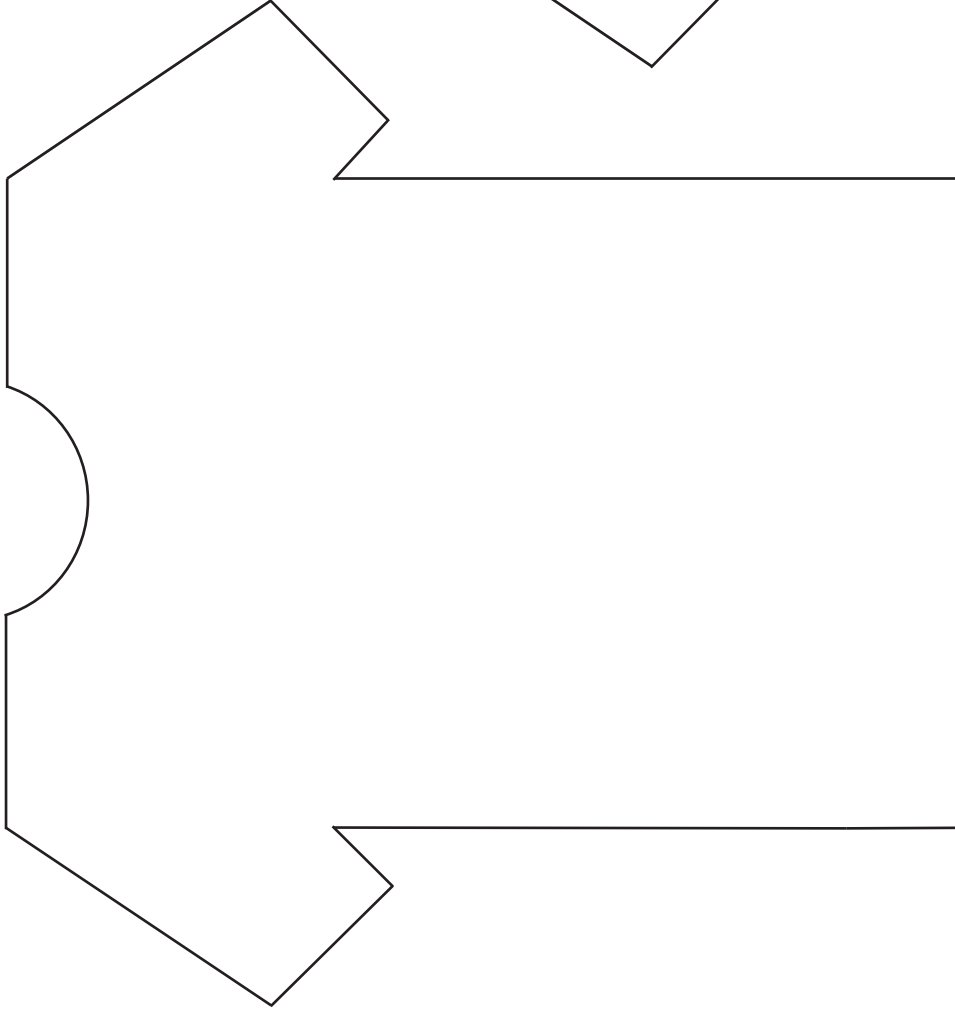
baseball tee
ringer tee
classic tee



sweatshirt
vest
hoodie



Shirt Template



Notes