

Valid & Valued

Emphasizing Empathy
& Mental Health



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY
ART GALLERY



Kirkoff Wall Gallery
Allendale Campus
July 8 - Oct 28, 2022

Eberhard Wall Gallery
Robert C. Pew
Grand Rapids Camps
March 24 - Oct 6, 2023

About this Guide

The information below can be used as a launch pad into learning about the themes of the exhibition. The questions and prompts can be used to start a deep-dive discussion about the artwork on view.



EMPATHY

Talking openly about mental health and mental illness can help normalize and destigmatize an often-taboo topic. As an expression of the human condition, [art can help us](#) gain insight into the perspectives and experiences of others. It can help build [empathy](#) for those who process the world through a [neurodivergent](#) or [psychopathological](#) lens.

- Spend some time looking at the artwork titled *Disorder: Obsession* by Manuel Diaz. What do you see? What ideas come to mind as you view the overlapping figures? How does this image make you feel?



HEALING

In healthcare settings, [recovering](#) from or managing a mental illness is a different journey for everyone that often requires support from family, friends, and the community. Together, we can help breakdown the [negative stigmas](#) associated with mental health, which often contribute to misdiagnosis or treatment avoidance. Here are a few things you can do to [combat the stigma of mental health treatment](#):

- Be conscious of language;
- Encourage equality between physical and mental illness;
- Show compassion for those with mental illness;
- Choose empowerment over shame.



THE POWER (AND HURDLES) OF DIAGNOSIS

In today's media, there are many [first-person accounts](#) of finding relief in receiving a [diagnosis](#) for a mental health condition. The impact of a diagnosis may also come with feelings of relief, validation, and hope for a path forward along with access to treatment. In the midst of this happy revelation, it's important to acknowledge the lack of access to care for underserved populations and the increased challenge of receiving a diagnosis for some individuals.

- Take time to research and consider how [identity and cultural dimensions](#) impact mental health diagnoses and treatment.
- Students, to start your own healing journey visit the [Counseling Center online](#) or call 616-331-3266 to schedule a free screening.
- GVSU faculty and staff can access emotional and mental health support services through [Benefits and Wellness](#).

To learn more about this exhibition along with the symptoms of mental illness, diagnosis, treatment, and the impact of mental health on different identities and cultures visit gvsu.edu/artgallery/valid.