

Welcome! I'm Heather Schulte, artist and creator of the *Stitching the Situation* project, a community created textile work documenting US COVID-19 cases and deaths through cross-stitch. "Stitch our Stories" is a smaller-scale version for groups to create a local reflection of their various pandemic experiences.

This kit contains the materials you will need to complete the "Stitch our Stories" program. We will be creating embroidered cross-stitch pieces that share our experiences of the pandemic. Each of these pieces will be returned to your organization when completed, and exhibited together as a way to share our stories of this time with each other.

I invite you to write a short paragraph about your experience, which will be part of the display. You are welcome to remain anonymous, or share only your first name or a pseudonym, if you so wish.

Below is a list of materials and tools you will need (most are included in this kit). Before you get started, make sure you read through this instruction sheet.

Materials and Tools

Included in this kit:

- Kit Instructions
- How to cross stitch sheet
- COVID Impact worksheets
- My COVID story sheet
- Graph paper
- fabric (2)
- Thread (colors listed on last page)
- Needle & Threader
- pencil

Tools you need (not included in kit):

- Scissors

Optional (not included in kit):

- Thimble
- Markers, colored pencils, or highlighters
- White out
- Paper
- Water soluble fabric marker

Instructions

This project involves 4 steps. Instructional videos are available here:
www.stitchingthesituation.com/en/how-to-videos

If you already know how to cross stitch and/or how to design a stitch pattern, that's awesome! Feel free to move on to the next step in the process. Also, if it makes more sense to you to do the steps in a different order, that's totally fine!

- 1- Learn how to cross stitch.
 - a- Watch the "How to cross stitch" video, or refer to the "How to cross stitch" sheet in your kit.
 - b- Practice each step using the materials provided in your kit.
- 2- Learn how to design a pattern for cross stitch.
 - a- Watch the "How to design a pattern for cross stitch" video, or sketch out a design on the included graph paper. (Each square is one stitch)
- 3- Reflect on your experiences during the pandemic.
 - a- Watch the "Our COVID Stories" video to guide you through the 'COVID Impact' and 'Reflection' worksheets in your kit, or simply fill out the worksheets in your kit.
- 4- Design and stitch a pattern that shares your pandemic experience in Boulder.
 - a- Watch the "Our COVID Stories" video, or simply follow the worksheet instructions to create a design based on your reflections.
 - b- Fill out your pattern on the included graph paper, or sketch directly on your fabric. I recommend using a water or heat erasable fabric marker or pencil, but you can use a regular pencil, too, if you mark lightly. For your pattern, you can stick to the colors of thread included in your kit, or purchase other colors at any craft store. I highly recommend visiting a Creative Reuse Center. They always have a LOT of embroidery thread on hand, and this will save you money and help you establish environmentally friendly making practices.
 - c- Transfer your pattern to your fabric using a water-erasable fabric marker or pencil, or you can use a regular pencil if you draw lightly.
 - d- Get stitching! If you would like to embellish your piece with sequins, beads, or other materials, feel free to do so! Please make sure it doesn't get too heavy, or so bulky that it cannot be hung on a wall. Additional materials should remain as flat as possible, and within your fabric square.

When you have completed your piece, fill out the "My COVID story" sheet. Place both in the plastic bag and drop them at organization. If you are willing to contribute your worksheets to the project archive, please include them (or a photocopy) when you return your work. You may remain anonymous, or include your name and contact info.

Stitching together

You are welcome to complete this project at home by using the above steps and/or following the videos. I also invite you to stitch with your family, friends, or form a stitching group within your organization.

If you are interested in MORE stitching, this program was inspired by a larger project I began in March 2020 in response to the pandemic, called *Stitching the Situation*. You can learn all about it, sign up to stitch, or contribute funding support, at:

www.stitchingthesituation.com

@stitchingthesituation on Instagram and FB

If you follow either of those social media accounts, you will also be notified of other stitching sessions I will be holding over the summer, which you are welcome to join.

More stitching resources:

As with learning anything in the 2020's, abundant videos about cross stitching, embroidery techniques of all kinds, designing patterns, and more, can be found with a google search.

Some of my favorite resources and web tools for stitching are:

Alphabet stitch patterns:

<https://lordlibidan.com/53-free-cross-stitch-alphabets/>

<https://stitchpoint.com/eng/tool/alph/cross-stitch-writer.php>

Free design software:

<https://www.pixel-stitch.net/> (converts digital photos/jpgs into stitch pattern)

<https://www.stitchfiddle.com/en> (interactive grid/paint by numbers)

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at:

stitchingthesituation@gmail.com

Thread colors:

The included threads are DMC brand, which is the most commonly found thread available in the US. It is a 6-strand, cotton embroidery floss. DMC has about 500 colors available, and the ones included in the kit are listed below with their color number:

Black	#310
White	#B5200
Red	#321
Orange	#741
Yellow	#444
Green	#909
Blue	#995
Purple	#553
Pink	#956