



## #MillionsMissing Visual Ideas

“Politics is theater. It doesn't matter if you win. You make a statement. You say, "I'm here, pay attention to me.” – Harvey Milk

### Why it Matters

Protests are opportunities to grab attention, to crystallize all of the emotion (anger, rage, grief, loss, hope, love) of our everyday into a single image. To tell the story of a people demanding justice against a system that -- whether through malice or indifference -- has let generations of people with ME to suffer, languish and die.

How can we encapsulate such a strong, expansive, powerful message in such a way that those who see it can never forget it? How can we ensure that people are talking about it tomorrow at work, finding themselves recalling it hours and days later? How can it make a home in people's hearts?

Here are some ideas for how to give your protest power, visually and emotionally.

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### 1. Wear a common color

Creating a uniform visual using clothing can convey a sense of scale and organization.

[Order a #MillionsMissing t-shirt.](#)



### 2. Go for strong emotion

**The two most powerful emotions are anger and love.** Every visual should tell the story of the anger we have on behalf of ourselves and our loved ones. The love we have for each other and this incredible community. Don't be afraid to make people uncomfortable. Be memorable.

In London, a woman silenced herself, and a mother and daughter held very large signs to show their demands.





### 3. Think about the stage and the frame

The place where you hold your protest is important. Sometimes it's determined by factors out of your control – the target of your protest may not be in the busiest part of town or may not be the most photogenic location. But there are often small adjustments you can make that matter.

For example, when protesters in DC first started setting up their shoes in May, they were close to the building but on the side of a barricade which would have made photos almost impossible to take. By simply shifting the orientation of their display, it made a huge difference in the quality of the photo and video produced that day. Wherever you are protesting, think about your audience and your backdrop – small changes can make a big Difference.





## 4. Perform a dramatic, theatrical act

A single theatrical act that is theatrical can capture attention of people nearby and the imagination of viewers seeing it through video or photo.

Last year, Scotland staged a lie-down, which is very easy to do! In Berlin, they unraveled a larger banner for ME at a football match. And, in Sheffield, they wore red wings.







## 5. Visualize the missing

Several locations printed huge photos of patients in their sickbeds.

San Francisco created a clothesline of images of the missing (but be careful choosing this option if you live in a windy place!).

Find a way to make homebound and bedridden patients present at your protest, for example by having people Skype in to speak or by carrying absent patients on an iPad.





## "Morphsuits"

This is an awesome/creative option to demonstrate that patients are invisible or missing. This could also be used for the virtual protests, or by a person wanting to participate from their home or bed. The entire suit is about \$35 or you could just purchase the mask without the suit, which is \$12: <http://www.morphsuits.com/>

*Note: If participating in a public/group protest, you may want to check with your local laws to determine if they have a anti-mask law that makes it illegal to protest covering your face.*

In New York, they covered themselves with blue gauze.



## 6. Invite loved ones to tell their stories

Sometimes the most powerful images and words come from the people who love us. Our illness profoundly affects the lives of our parents, children, partners.





## 7. Make your body a canvas





## 8. Honor our dead





## 9. Chalk it up



## 10. Use big props

Balloons or inflatable letters have been used in previous protests. They are lightweight and can be held or carried easily. They may be reusable for future protests depending on the product.

In this #MillionsMissing protest, they used red balloons.





## 11. Learn from other protest movements



Gays against guns:





Read more: <http://www.meaction.net/great-ideas/>

## 12. Be yourself

When you come in your wheelchair because that is the only way you can get there, when you lay down the entire time because you can't bear to sit, your body is telling a powerful story and communicating volumes about the reality of this disease.





Have ideas on how to improve this document? Email [millionsmissing@meaction.net](mailto:millionsmissing@meaction.net)