



Summary

TherapyNow is an anonymous online messaging platform for peer counseling. Students can talk to others with similar backgrounds, as well as participate in weekly mental health events with volunteered counselors.

Who are we?

We are a team of creative and driven students who are building the initial prototype of the platform within the Rensselaer Center for Open Source, also known as RCOS.

Features

- Private & Anonymous Peer-Counseling
- Mental health events with live Q&As with volunteered counselors who are students that are trained by the RPI Counseling Center
 - The live Q&A can be seen and posted by any user currently within the event
 - Events have themes and a set time period (Ex: Social Anxiety Event, Wednesday 4/1/2020 from 12PM to 9PM)
 - During events, students can have one-on-one counselor sessions with the volunteered counselors on a first come first serve basis
- Private sessions with professional counselors from the RPI Counseling Center

Why is it helpful?

- Students find it difficult setting up in-person counseling sessions when they need immediate help
- Some students have a stigma towards traditional counseling
- Everything is online and is accessible to almost every student
- Students tend to connect better with other students who share similar backgrounds
- Students are likely to be more honest and open while anonymous

Concerns & Solutions

- Toxic Behavior -> Solutions: Users can flag messages from other users as being toxic, obscene, threat, insult, and/or identity hate. In addition, an automatic notification will appear next to messages that appear to match the previous categories by using a text prediction algorithm. A user with enough flags will be blocked from further usage through the discretion of the TherapyNow team and RPI Counseling Center.
- Suicidal Ideation -> Solution: An automatic notification with the suicide hotline number will appear next to the message from the sent user and another notification for a potential flagging option for the user who received the message
- General Safety -> Solution: Every user must sign an agreement that they understand the rules of the platform: there will be no toxic behavior and every user has the obligation to flag every message that is indicative of an intention to either physically hurt others or themselves