

## DP3: Navigating Family Connections through Distance and Neurodiversity

### empathy and observations



We began our empathy work with observations around Our journey into empathy began with keen observations of family dynamics, where communication struggles were evident among different age groups of family members. Particularly intriguing was our focus on the middle children demographic within these families. As we delved deeper into conversations with Claremont College students regarding their familial experiences, we unearthed a common thread of these communication challenges resonating among many.

However, what truly piqued our interest was the intersection of neurodivergent understanding within this context. Through this lens, we gained insight into how additional disabilities could compound the already existing difficulties in communication and understanding within family dynamics. This realization not only shed light on the complexities of interpersonal relationships but also underscored the importance of empathy in bridging these divides.

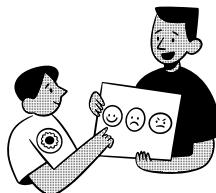


# define & synthesis



Throughout the interviewing process, our team noticed a consistent perceived gap between generations by our interviewees. Oftentimes this gap was instigated by confusion regarding technology, language, or communication styles of different generations. Another issue was that of developing vanacular such as nerodiversity's connotation of being a negative term for the time period that elders were growing up in. Our team sought to lean into the notion of the different terms, sayings, and ideas often expressed by different generations, and identify areas for learning and the breaking down of barriers. One area where this terminology barrier was prevalent within our interviews was in the discussion of mental health, ability, and identity.

# ideation



When ideating, we sought to explore the three different perspectives of student, sibling, and parent, to increase creative opportunities which could help all parties involved while still centering our user. We explored questions such as...

- How might we facilitate communication non-verbally to bridge generations?
- How might we mitigate the role of an advocate while still keeping them involved in caregiving?
- How might we work to center the user in our ideation rather than solely their parents and neurodivergent sibling?
- How might we bridge the physical gap between college and home?

Throughout the process, we practiced ideating strategies such as the flipping of assumptions, benefit baiting, and even generating ideas that seemed purposefully outlandish.



## “Good” ideas

- Online platform where family members could collaborate to create boards around their shared interests
- VR empathy experience simulator
- Emotional Notification Light Check-In System

## “Bad” Ideas

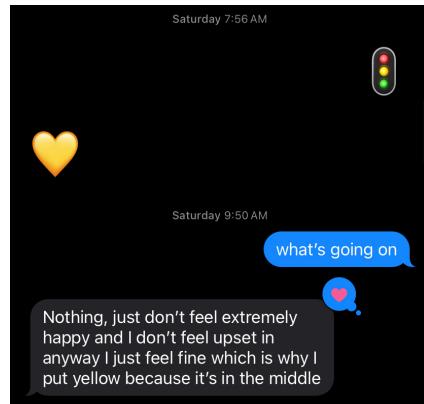
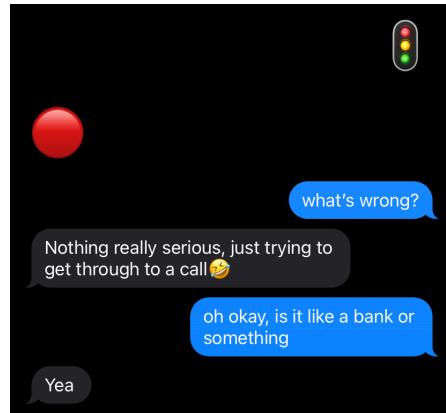
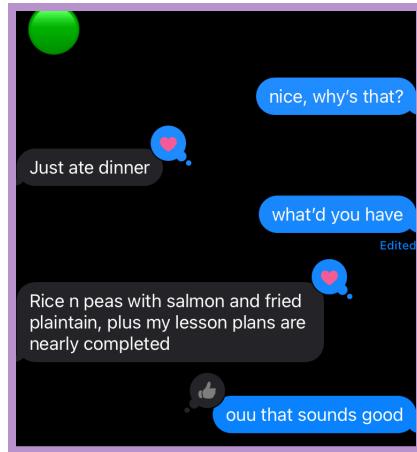
- family swap
- family roast session
- “correctness” shock collar

# let's put it to the test!

When planning our tests, our group sought to...

- a. build empathy and understanding of the experiences of siblings of people with autism who act as caregivers and advocates
- b. find and measure new avenues for non-verbal or nonconventional communication to bridge disconnect between generations.

For our first test, we sought to test a form of non-verbal communication via text. We thought to translate the colors of a traffic light to three basic emotions or states of being. Red, meaning upset, angry, or feeling poorly, yellow, feeling “OK”, a color to prompt further discussion, or green, meaning “great!” We found that through sending light signals as a simple “check in,” participants were effectively able to communicate their feelings to one another in a quick and easy manner.

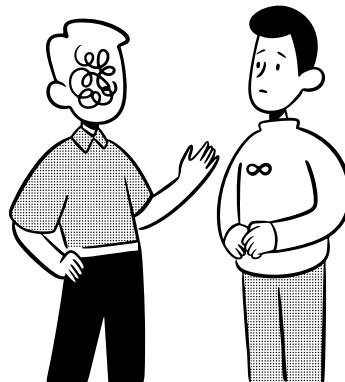


For our second test, we aimed to cultivate empathy by delving into the sources of joy for individuals with autism: their special interests. This experience revolved around the concept of sharing special interests. The format of this test was a PowerPoint night, during which each person took turns learning about and presenting on a special topic.



For our most recent test, we introduced the concept of a neuro-inclusive game, which embraced the notion of individuals stepping out of their comfort zones to explore new ideas. This concept was designed around prompts written on cards, encouraging players to engage in empathetic actions. These prompts would invite neurotypical individuals to speak and act in ways that mirror activities with which neurodivergent individuals may struggle. The aim was to foster understanding and empathy across neurodiversity by encouraging shared experiences and perspectives.

## **the next steps for the draper center**



Next steps for the draper center would be

## **pictures**

