**Anxiety Minotaur - Development Summary**

**Overview**

**Anxiety Minotaur** is a compassionate social puzzle adventure that explores anxiety management through the metaphor of a socially anxious minotaur in their labyrinth home. The game inverts the traditional "monster in a labyrinth" trope - you ARE the minotaur, and social interaction is a challenge to manage rather than conquer.

**Core Concept & Theme**

The game brilliantly flips expectations: instead of being a fearsome monster, you play as a gentle, anxious minotaur who finds social interaction challenging but necessary. The game focuses on a simple, relatable scenario - helping your gardener neighbor identify some mystery seeds.

**Narrative Framework**

**Three Locations:**

1. **Bedroom** - Tutorial starting point
   * Player starts feeling anxious about their gardener neighbor waiting in the living room
   * Safe space with duck companion for energy restoration
   * Personal items for worldbuilding and context
2. **Living Room** - Main challenge location
   * Meet the pig who needs help identifying seeds that came in the mail
   * Pig has poor eyesight and can't find/identify the seeds themselves
   * Suggests player look in the garden for clues
3. **Garden** - Discovery and solution location
   * Contains the key seed packet item with randomized plant keyword
   * Pig can be seen digging (as item, not interactive)
   * Duck companion available for energy restoration

**Key Game Mechanics**

**Social Energy System**

* **Energy Cost**: Every message sent to non-duck characters costs 1 social energy. Opening and closing the chat doesn’t cost any energy, but sending the message does. Giving players the feeling that they want to say something but are too drained to do so.
* **Energy Restoration**: Each message to duck companions restores 1 social energy.
* **Strategic Resource**: Forces players to plan conversations and seek comfort when needed.

**Discovery & Exploration System**

* **Persistent Discovery Journal**: Tracks all characters and items found across sessions.
* **Achievement System**: Positive reinforcement for actions and exploration.
* **Clue-Based Gameplay**: Items contain hints about NPC needs and personalities.

**Keyword-Based Interaction System**

* **Single Keyword Per Character**: Each NPC has exactly ONE randomly generated keyword they're looking for.
* **Randomized Replay Value**: Keywords selected from lists at game start.
* **Discovery Mechanic**: Players must find keyword in specific items descriptions.
* **Achievement Unlock**: The player mentioning the correct keyword unlocks the related achievement – with no reliance on the character to mention the key in their response.
* **Visual Feedback**: Checkmarks appear above NPCs when achievement unlocked.

**Mental Health Integration**

The game thoughtfully integrates anxiety management concepts:

* **Safe Spaces**: Home environment and duck companion provide comfort.
* **Preparation & Planning**: Reduces anxiety through understanding mechanics.
* **Tangible Resource Management**: Social energy as visible, manageable resource.
* **Positive Reinforcement**: Achievement system celebrates progress.
* **Manageable Challenges**: Clear, achievable objectives.
* **Support Systems**: Duck companion always available for comfort.

**Technical Architecture**

**Core Systems:**

* Modular level system with clean transitions.
* Comprehensive UI (energy display, achievement panels, discovery journal).
* Audio integration (background music, sound effects).
* Responsive positioning for multiple screen sizes.
* Save/load functionality with persistent discoveries.
* AI-powered conversations with fallback responses.

**Tutorial-Specific Implementation:**

* Single keyword generation system.
* Three-location navigation.
* Achievement-based victory condition.
* Tutorial-focused start screen

**Flow**

1. **Start**: Player in bedroom, learns about duck energy system.
2. **Challenge**: Meet pig in living room who needs help with seeds.
3. **Exploration**: Find seed packet in garden with randomized plant keyword.
4. **Solution**: Return to pig and mention correct plant type.
5. **Victory**: Achievement unlocks, victory screen appears with options.

**Victory Condition**

* **Trigger**: TUTORIAL\_COMPLETE achievement unlocked when correct keyword mentioned to the pig.
* **Victory Screen Options**:
  + "Complete Game" (placeholder/credits screen)
  + "Keep Exploring " (close victory screen, continue playing)
* **Replayable**: Victory button remains available after first completion.

**What Makes This Special**

1. **Emotional Authenticity**: Anxiety theme deeply integrated into every mechanic.
2. **Inverted Power Fantasy**: Not conquering but helping.
3. **Accessibility**: Built-in mental health breaks through duck companion.
4. **Persistent Progress**: Discovery system encourages exploration without punishment.

**🎯 Core Loop:**

**Bedroom** → **Living Room** (meet pig) → **Garden** (find seeds) → **Living Room** (solve puzzle) → **Victory**

This game creates a focused, meaningful introduction to the world of Anxiety Minotaur while teaching all core mechanics in a supportive, low-pressure environment.