HCIN POE – PART 3 Submission

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Introduction

The Male-Anonymous Meet & Talk (M.A.M.T) website was developed as a supportive social platform designed to allow men worldwide to talk openly and anonymously about their mental health, confidence, and personal struggles. The final prototype is built upon the original concept presented in Part 2, addressing the feedback received by improving usability, accessibility, and emotional engagement.

The revised version implemented all planned features, including responsive layouts, interactive chat experiences, accessibility improvements, and emotional design enhancements. Each design decision was guided by usability goals, desirable aspects of user experience, design principles, interaction types, social and emotional interaction considerations, and compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Question 1.1 – The Functionality of the Website (User Journey)

Step 1: Landing on the Homepage

When users first arrived on the M.A.M.T homepage, they were greeted by a clean hero section that clearly communicated the purpose of the platform: “Anonymous support, genuine connections”. The top of the page included two primary call-to-action buttons: “Join Now – It’s Free” and “Browse Resources”.

- The headline and subheading explained that the site was an anonymous safe space for men.
- A “Why Choose M.A.M.T?” section further down highlighted key value points such as Anonymous & Safe, Supportive Community, Available 24/7, and Compassionate Space.

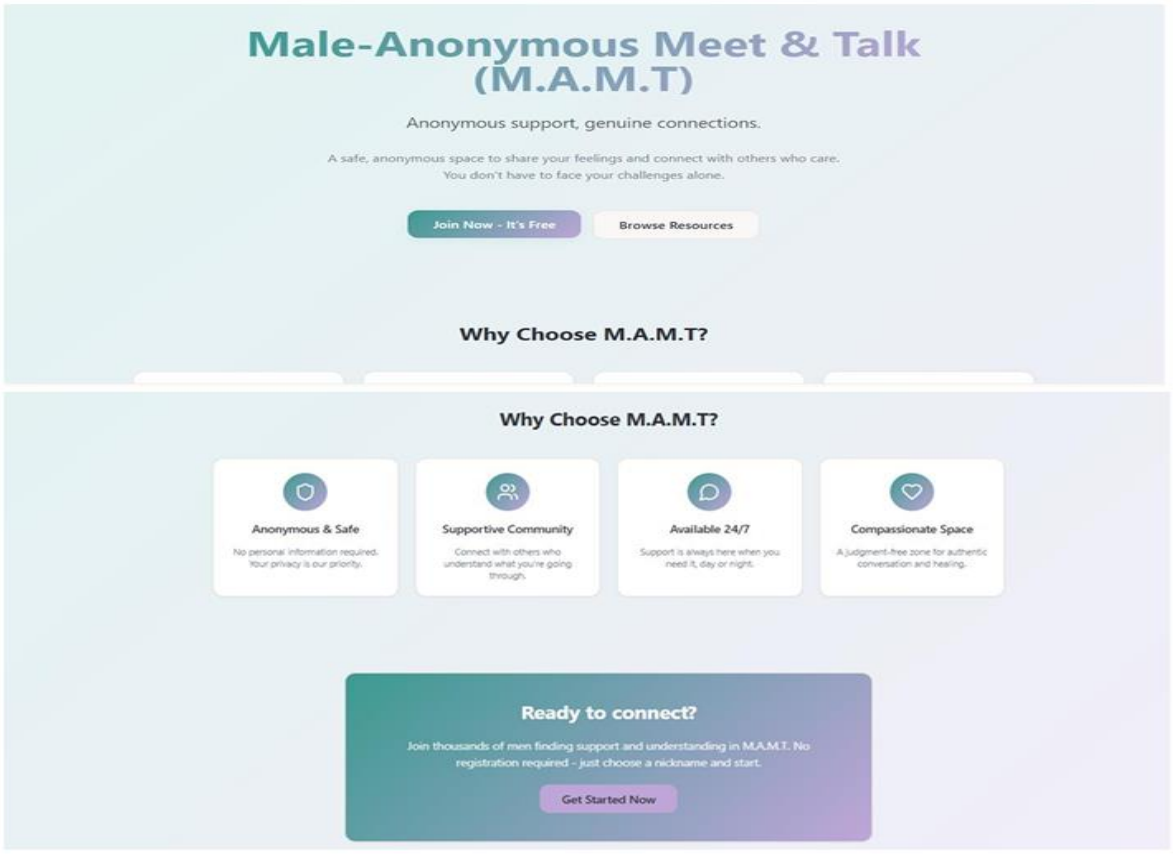

Figure 1: Homepage with hero section and “Why Choose M.A.M.T?” Information cards. This design ensured that users immediately understood what the platform offered and how it related to their needs, supporting both effectiveness and trust.

Step 2: Registration/Login

To lower the barrier to entry and address privacy concerns, I implemented an anonymous nickname login instead of a traditional registration form. When a user clicked “Join Now – It’s Free”, they were directed to a simple login panel where they could either type their own nickname or click “Generate Random Nickname”.

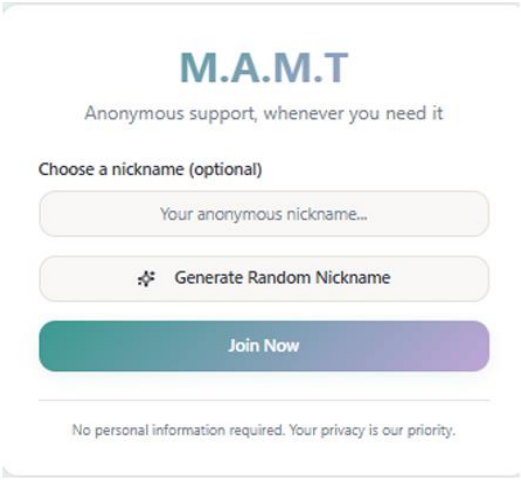

Figure 2: Nickname login interface with manual input and random nickname generation. This approach avoided collecting personal data and improved efficiency. It also directly responded to the project goal of allowing men to seek support without exposing their identity.

Step 2: Dashboard and First-Time Welcome Tour

After a nickname was chosen, the user was logged in and redirected to the dashboard. Based on the feedback from Part 2 that the user experience should be easier to understand, I introduced a first-time welcome tour overlay.

- The welcome tour appeared as a modal that introduced the platform and guided users through a short step-by-step explanation of key features.
- The modal included navigation controls (“Skip Tour” and “Next”) so that users could control the pace of the tour.

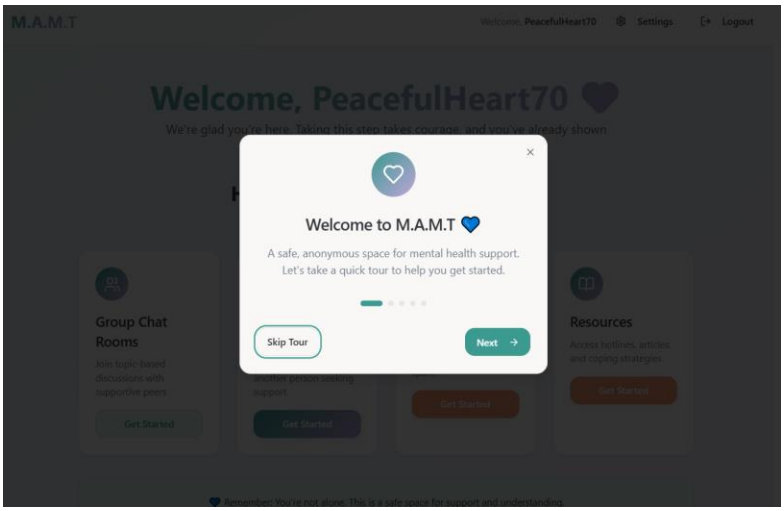

Figure 3: Welcome tour modal presented to first-time users.

Once the tour was completed (or skipped), users saw the full dashboard layout. The dashboard greeting used the chosen nickname (e.g. “Welcome, PeacefulHeart70”) and presented four main options:

Group Chat Rooms – join topic-based discussions.

One-on-One Chat – connect privately with another user.

Private Journal – write personal notes and reflections.

Resources – access to hotlines, articles, videos, and coping strategies.

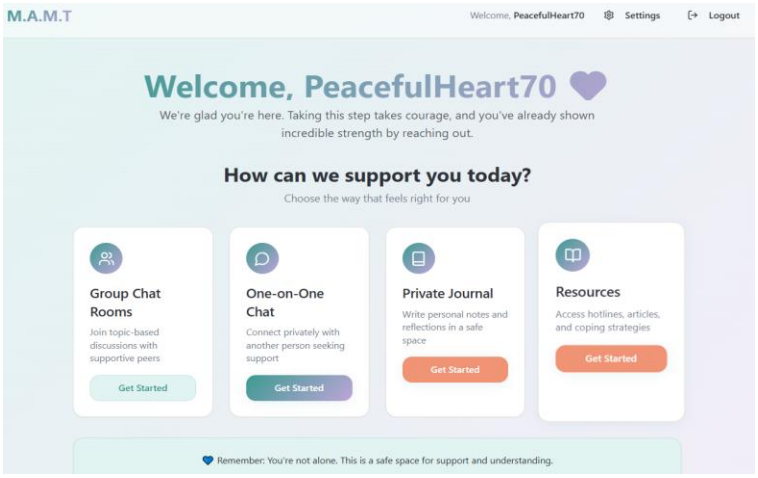

Figure 4: Dashboard showing the main support options (Group Chat, One-on-One Chat, Private Journal, Resources).

Step 3: Group Chat Rooms

When users selected Group Chat Rooms, they were taken to a page that listed available rooms such as *Stress Release*, Confidence Boost, Anxiety Support, Relationships, Daily Motivation, and General Chat.

- Each room card contains a short description, an active user count, and a “Join Room” button.
- Users could identify rooms quickly and choose the one that best matched their current needs.

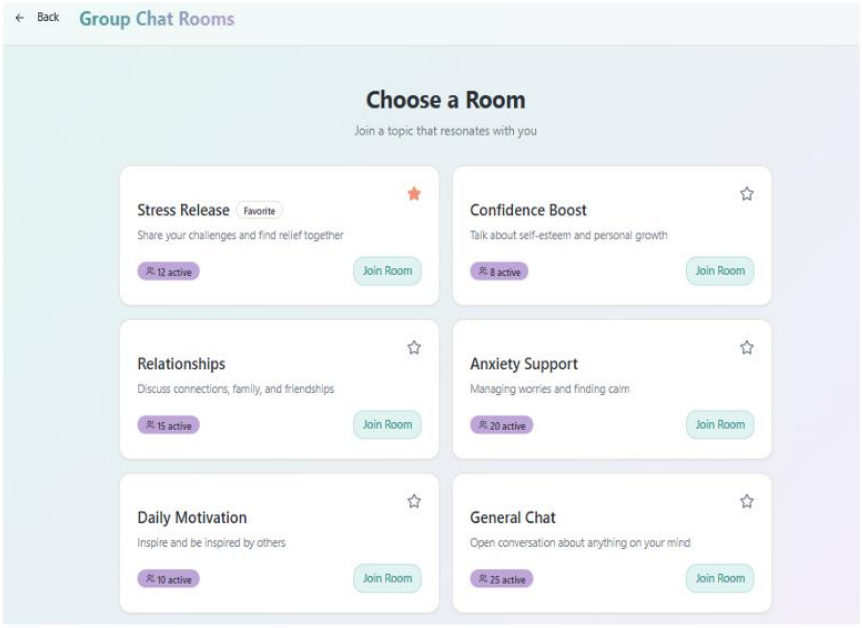

Figure 5: Group Chat Rooms screen with topic-based cards and active user counts.

Step 4: One-on-One Chat

For users who preferred private conversation, I implemented a One-on-One Chat feature. When selected from the dashboard, the user saw a “Ready to connect?” screen with a large button labeled “Find a Conversation Partner”. After clicking, a loading state appeared with the message “Finding someone to connect with... This usually takes just a few seconds”, and a supportive line: “You’re taking a brave step by reaching out”.

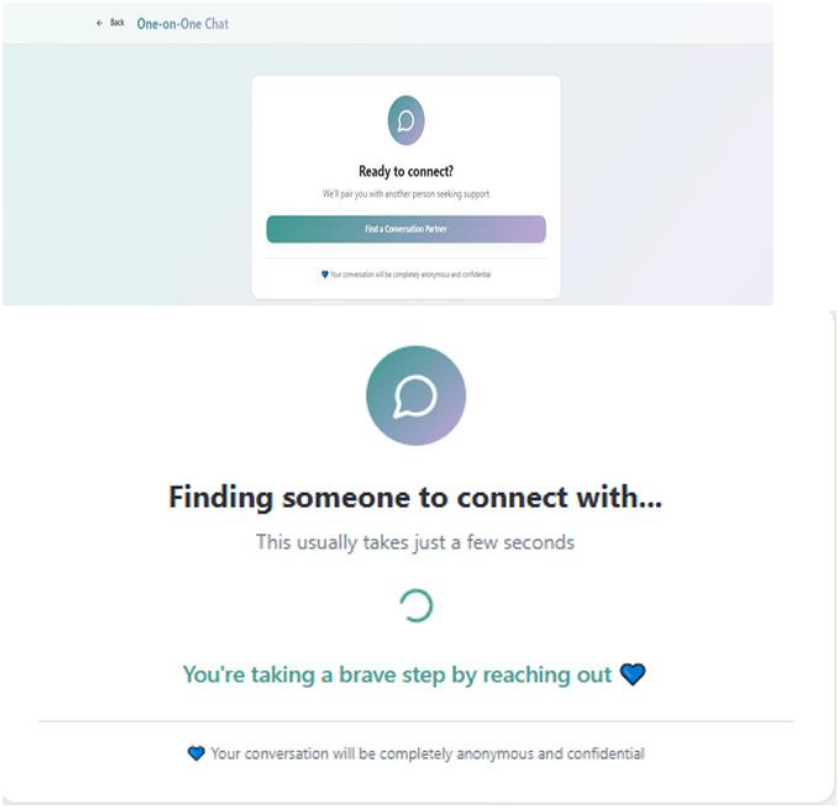

Figure 6: One-on-One matching screen showing reassuring loading messages.

When a connection was established, the interface was updated to show a voice call panel with options to Mute, End Call, and Report. A timer indicated call duration and a message at the bottom reminded users: “Remember: You’re not alone. Take your time and speak freely.”

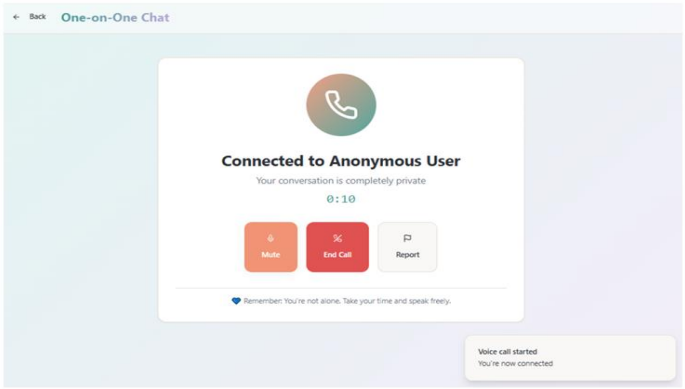

Figure 7: Active one-on-one voice call screen with Mute, End Call, and Report controls.

Step 5: Interaction and Messaging

In group rooms such as “Anxiety Support”, messages were displayed in clean chat bubbles with clear timestamps. Users could type replies in a text box and send them using a prominent send icon. Under the message area I implemented quick reaction buttons (Support, Agree, Inspire) so that users could show empathy even if they did not have the words to type a long message.

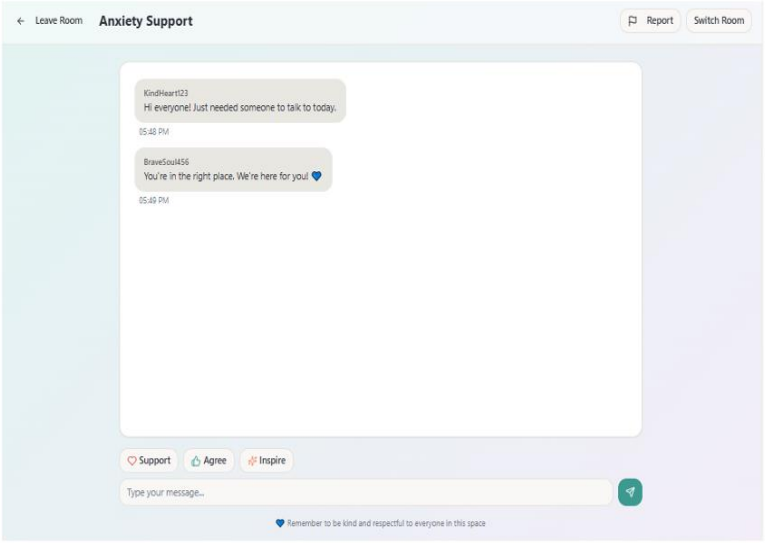

Figure 8: Group chat interface with messages and quick emotional reactions. The chat view also included “Leave Room” and “Switch Room” options in the top bar, as well as a “Report” button to maintain safety.

Step 7: Private Journal (New Feature)

Based on the importance of private reflection in mental health support, I implemented a Private Journal feature as a new component in Part 3.

- When selected from the dashboard, users were taken to a dedicated journal area with the heading “Your thoughts are safe here” and an explanation that entries were stored locally on the user’s device and not shared with the server.
- Users could search for previous entries, create new entries using the “Write First Entry” or “New Entry” buttons, and export their journal if they wished.

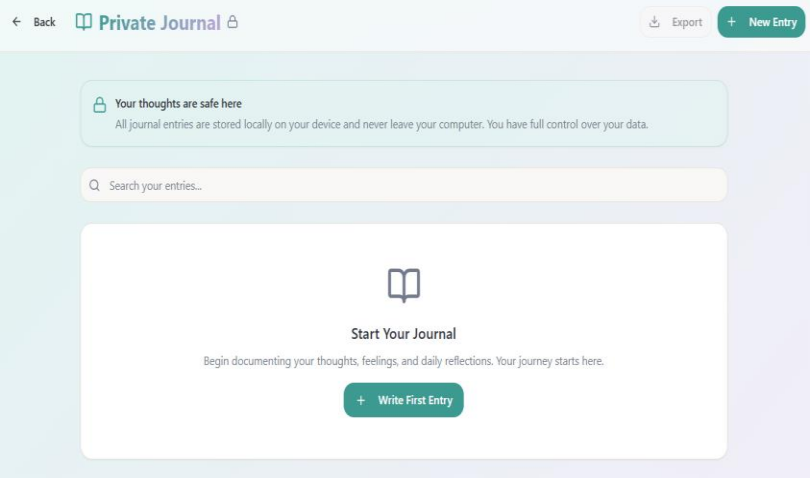

Figure 9: Private Journal interface emphasizing privacy and providing search and export options. This feature extended the platform beyond live interaction and supported long-term self-reflection and coping.

Step 8: Enhanced Support Resources Page

In response to feedback that my previous Resources section was too simple, I significantly expanded and reorganized it.

The updated Support Resources page included:

- A search bar at the top to find content quickly.
- A filter bar with tabs for “All”, “Articles”, “Videos”, “Hotlines”, and “Saved”.
- A Crisis Hotlines section showing key South African helplines with large telephone numbers and labels such as Crisis, Youth, or Suicide Crisis.
- An Articles & Guides section with topic tags (e.g. Mental Health, Personal Growth, Relationships) and “Read” links that open in new tabs.
- A Coping Strategies section with bullet-point tips such as deep breathing, journaling, and limiting caffeine.

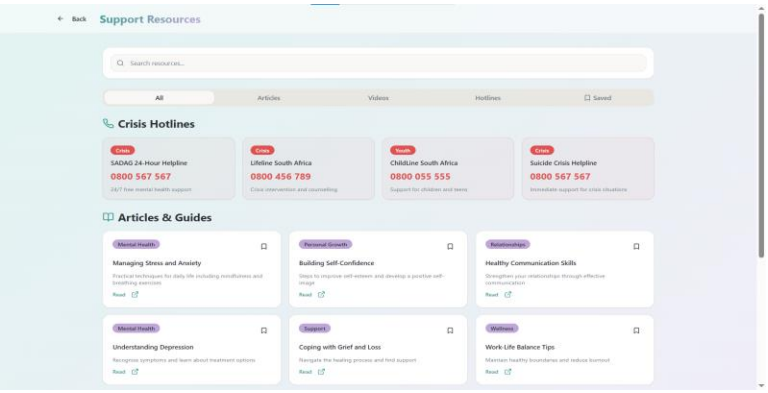

Figure 10: Enhanced Support Resources page with search, filters, hotline cards, and article sections.

Step 9: Profile & Settings (New Feature)

To support personalization and accessibility, I implemented a Profile & Settings area.

- Users could adjust font size (e.g. Small, Medium, Large) to improve readability.
- They could select a theme (for example, system default or light/dark options) and update their display name.
- Under Quick Actions, users could reset the welcome tour, allowing them to revisit the onboarding guidance if needed.

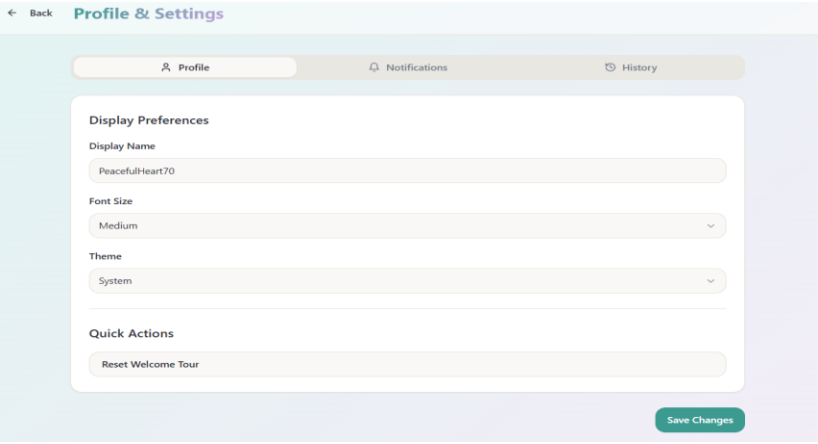

Figure 11: Profile & Settings page showing display preferences and quick actions.

Step 10: Logout Confirmation

When users logged out, a confirmation message reassured them that their session had ended safely, maintaining trust and emotional closure.

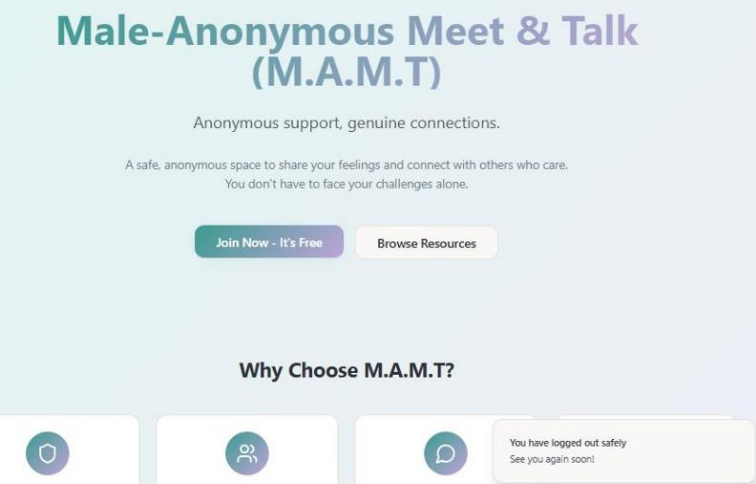

Figure 12: Logout Confirmation Screen

Question 1.2 – Revised Implementation Plan

1.2.1 Revised: Usability Goals

The system was redesigned to actively support effectiveness, efficiency, learnability, memorability, user satisfaction, and error prevention/recovery

- **Effectiveness**
  I ensured that key tasks joining a chat room, starting a private conversation, writing in a journal, and accessing resources could be completed without unnecessary steps. For instance, from the dashboard in Figure 4 a user could join a group chat with two clicks: selecting Group Chat Rooms and then clicking “Join Room” on the chosen card in Figure 5. This direct mapping between buttons and tasks improved task success rates.
- **Efficiency**
  To improve efficiency, I avoided long forms or multi-page registration. Users only need to select or generate a nickname in Figure 2. The welcome tour was optional and could be skipped, preventing frustration for returning users in Figure 3. The resources page allows users to search and filter content quickly in Figure 10, reducing the time required to find specific information.
- **Learnability**
  I specifically addressed learnability by implementing the welcome tour for first-time users. The tour highlighted key interface areas such as the dashboard cards, navigation links, and safety features. By presenting information in a simple, step-

based overlay in Figure 3, the tour helped new users understand the site without having to explore blindly.

- **Memorability**
  Consistent layout and iconography across screens supported memorability. For example, the rounded cards used for Group Chat, One-on-One Chat, Private Journal, and Resources in Figure 4 reused the same style on the Resources and Settings pages. Users returning after a break could easily recall where the main actions were located.
- **User Satisfaction**
  User satisfaction was enhanced through:
  supportive microcopies such as “We’re glad you’re here” and “You’re taking a brave step” Figures 4 and 6. Quick reaction buttons in chat Figure 8.
  A private journal for personal reflection in Figure 9.
  These features made the platform feel caring and responsive rather than purely functional.
- **Error Prevention and Recovery**
  I designed the interface to minimize errors by:
  using clear affordances (buttons looked clickable and were labelled precisely)
  confirming potentially disruptive actions such as leaving a chat room or ending a call.
  Displaying clear status messages when connectivity issues occurred.
  Overall, these measures improved users’ ability to recover from mistakes and maintain trust in the system.

1.2.2 Revised: Desirable Aspects of User Experience

The updated prototype aimed to create a positive, trustworthy, and emotionally supportive experience.

- **Visual Appeal and Calmness**
  I used a soft gradient color palette (pale blues, purples, and greens) and rounded cards to reduce visual tension and create a calming atmosphere. This is visible on the homepage of Figure 1, dashboard Figure 4, and resources page Figure 10. The consistent color usage supported aesthetic coherence and made the site feel intentionally designed rather than generic.
- **Trust and Credibility**
  Trust was built in several ways:

The nickname login emphasized privacy and required no personal details in Figure 2.
The private journal explained that entries were stored locally and not shared in Figure 9.
Resources featured real South African helplines and structured mental health content Figure 10. These design decisions signaled that the site took both privacy and mental health seriously.

- **Engagement and Motivation**
  The platform encouraged ongoing engagement through:
  topic-based rooms that matched specific concerns Figure 5
  positive language such as “How can we support you today?” Figure 4
  reaction buttons (Support, Agree, Inspire) that allowed quick participation in Figure 8.
- **Ease of Use**
  Clear headings, grouped content, and intuitive icons (e.g. book icon for Resources, chat bubble for One-on-One Chat, book-with-lock for Private Journal) made navigation self-explanatory. Users were not required to learn complex commands; instead, they interacted through familiar patterns such as clicking cards or typing messages.

1.2.3 Revised: Design Principles

- **Consistency**
  I applied consistent typography, icon styles, button shapes, and color coding across the entire site. For example, all primary actions used rounded buttons with solid fills, while secondary actions (such as “Skip Tour”) used outline styles Figures 3, 4, 9, and 11. This consistency reduced cognitive load and helped users transfer knowledge from one screen to another.
- **Alignment and Proximity**
  Content blocks such as hotline cards and article cards were placed in aligned grids in Figure 10. Related items were grouped closely together (for example, the hotline title, number, and description) and separated from other sections with spacing. This grouping followed the principle of proximity and improved scalability.
- **Visual Hierarchy**
  I used font size, weight, and color to establish a clear visual hierarchy. Main headings such as “How can we support you today?” (Figure 4) was bold and large, while the descriptive text was smaller and lighter. Primary actions like “Get Started” were given explicit visual emphasis so that users could see where to click first.

- **Contrast and Legibility**
  The gradient backgrounds were kept light so that dark text could be read easily. Buttons used sufficient contrast between text and background to remain legible for users with visual impairments. The settings page allowed users to increase font size if needed in Figure 11, which further supported readability.
- **Feedback**
  Interactive elements provided immediate visual or textual feedback:
  Clicking "Find a Conversation Partner" triggered the loading state in Figure 6.
  Joining rooms and logging out triggered toast messages or status information Figures 8 and 12.
  Saving settings triggered a confirmation, ensuring users knew their changes had been applied.

1.2.4 Revised: Interaction Types

I implemented several interaction types as described in the HCI literature and demonstrated them within the prototype.

- **Instructing (Clicking and Selecting):**
  Users clicked buttons and cards to execute commands, such as joining a room in Figure 5, starting the journal in Figure 9, or saving settings in Figure 11.
- **Conversing (Text and Voice):**
  Users engaged in text-based conversations within group chat and could participate in voice calls through the one-on-one interface Figures 7 and 8. The interface supported natural conversation flows with timestamps and message order.
- **Manipulating (Adjusting and Searching):**
  Users manipulated their environment by changing font size, theme, and display name in the Settings page, and by using search fields in the Resources and Journal sections Figures 9, 10, and 11.
- **Exploring (Navigation and Browsing):**
  Users explored different areas through the dashboard and top navigation. The tabs in the Resources page encouraged exploration of different resource categories in Figure 10, while the Back links allowed users to return without confusion.

1.2.5 Revised: Social Interactions

Social interaction is central to M.A.M.T.'s purpose. I implemented several mechanisms to support it:

- **Group Chat Rooms** allowed multiple users to share experiences, offer advice, and normalize their feelings in Figure 8.
- **One-on-One Chat** provided private support, which is particularly important for users who might feel intimidated by group discussions in Figures 6 and 7.
- **Reaction Buttons** such as Support, Agree, and Inspire allowed users to show emotional responses with a single click, making engagement possible even during moments when typing felt difficult in Figure 8.
- **Reporting Tools** enabled users to flag harmful behavior, supporting safety and community norms.

1.2.6 Revised: Emotional Interaction

Because the platform deals directly with mental health, emotional interaction was intentionally designed into the prototype.

- The color scheme was chosen to be soft and non-threatening. The gradients and rounded shapes reduced harshness and supported a gentle tone of Figures 1, 4, and 10.
- The language used throughout the site was empathetic. Messages such as “We’re glad you’re here”, “This step takes courage”, “You’re taking a brave step by reaching out”, and “Your thoughts are safe here” validated user feelings Figures 3, 4, 6, and 9.
- The welcome tour played a role in reducing anxiety for first-time users by explaining the environment before they engaged in Figure 3.
- The private journal gave users a safe space for catharsis and reflection, reinforcing a sense of control over their story in Figure 9.
- Even the logout confirmation message was framed positively, thanking users and inviting them to return to Figure 12.

1.2.7 Revised: Implementation of WCAG 2.0 Accessibility

In Part 3 I implemented concrete accessibility features guided by the WCAG 2.0 principles: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

1.Perceivable

- Content used clear text labels and meaningful icons (book for Resources, chat bubble for conversations).
- Color contrast between text and background was improved to support readability.

- The Resources and Journal pages used larger cards and sufficient spacing, so that content remained visible even when zoomed in Figure 10.

2.Operable

- The layout supported keyboard navigation so that users could tab through interactive elements like buttons and links.
- Buttons were large enough to be selected easily on both desktop and touch devices.
- The “Back” links at the top left of pages provide a consistent way to navigate without relying on browser controls.

3.Understandable

- Instructions and error messages used plain English and avoided technical jargon.
- The welcome tour explained the main features in a structured way in Figure 3.
- Forms, such as those in the settings and journal, included clear placeholder text and labels in Figures 9 and 11.

4.Robust

- The prototype used semantic HTML structures and standard elements to ensure compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen readers.
- The responsive design ensured that content remained accessible across a variety of devices and browsers.

References

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