



RescueStation: advanced use prototype: Overview

RescueStation

RescueStation as a concept has been around for some time. The system is a method for connecting people in crisis with people they know, who can support them.

The premise is simple: a mobile phone app with 3 buttons; a green button, an amber button and a red button. When the need arises, press the one which is most appropriate.

The message

Pressing a button sends a message, to a person you're connected with.

The connection

You connect your app to another by showing the screen on your phone to the camera of the other. The screen shows a QR code, which provides all the necessary connection information.

If you initiate the connection, it means you're looking for support - you're the rescuee.

If you're connecting to provide support, you're the rescuer.

The buttons

If you send a *green* message it means different things, depending on your role:

if you're a **rescuer** it means - hey; I'm thinking about you. Hope you're OK. Sending love.

if you're a **rescuer** it means - hi; I'm OK, I just needed to know you're there.

If you send an *amber* message, it means something more:

if you're a **rescuer** it means - hello; Are you OK? Let's talk. Can I ring you at our pre-arranged time?

if you're a **rescuee** it means - hey; I'm feeling a bit wobbly. Can you ring me at our pre-arranged time?

If you send a *red* message, it means something more:

if you're a **rescuer** it means - hello; I'm worried about you - please let me know you're OK

if you're a **rescuee** it means - hey; I need your help, right now.

Friends and supporters

The app allows you to switch between the roles of rescuer and rescuee really easily. When you switch to being a rescuer, the app will change colour - green - and show you only the connections you made to rescuees. When you switch to being a rescuee, the app colour is orange, and it will show you only the connections you made to rescuers.

Where's the app?

Not here yet! We need to make sure the concept is safe before we release it to the public.

When we pitch the app, it always gets a favourable response. But because we want to use it to help people who are vulnerable, it would be really irresponsible for us to simply build and release it. There are many apps and services which have done just this, and we see the their - often unintended - effects every day.

We want to make sure that we design and build the app to have only a positive effect. Anything else is simply unacceptable.

That means we need do the development very carefully, using lots of controlled user testing along the way, to guide us.

We're just past square one.

The initial design and wireframes have been evaluated by NHS practitioners with very positive results.

Our next step is to provide our first prototype, which will help us quantitatively evaluate its effect.

The Prototype

The prototype will comprise the following features for evaluation:

- a cut down UI, with only **one** button
- a method of switching roles
- a method of making a connection in a particular role
- a method of listing connections made by that role
- a method of sending a message to a nominated connection
- a method of showing a received message, immediately
- a method of listing all received messages

The prototype will comprise the following evaluation tools:

- a physiological method for evaluating stress:
 - pulse / heart rate variability
 - GSR (galvanic skin response)
- a method for recording message events, both incoming and outgoing
- a method for logging measurements and events
- a medium for uploading the logged data

Thanks to a student summer project (Yusof Bandar, graduating class of 2019, we salute you!) we already have a method of visualising this time-series data and annotations.

The Analysis

What we're hoping the prototype will show us, is that our users feel calmer knowing they have reached out to someone, and that the person has responded.

When we gather our usage data, we expect it to show:

A rise in stress levels as indicated by a change in the readings from pulse and GSR.

An outgoing message event, as the rescuee calls on a contact.

We may see an indication of calming, because that call for help has gone out, or we may see an increase in stress as the rescuee anticipates the response, or lack of one.

We're definitely hoping to see an indication of calming in the next event, indicating a message has been received.