

# **IMY300:**

## Written Deliverable 2



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# Important definitions

Word	Description
Activity	Term to describe chores and tasks as a combination.
Character	The in game character that the player is controlling
Chore	A daily household task, such as laundry or dishes. List of chores*: 1. Laundry (garage) 2. Dishes (kitchen) 3. Tidying (study) 4. Making the bed (bedroom) 5. Eating (tv/ dining room) 6. Self care (bathroom) 7. Watering plants (balcony)
Exercise	An activity that gives a permanent energy boost as long as it is being done by the player. List of exercise*: 1. Yoga 2. Workout
Passive task	A task that does not use any energy and is done automatically through animation. List of passive tasks*: 1. Doom scrolling 2. Watching TV 3. Sleeping
Player	Person playing the game
Task	Hobby adjacent activities. List of tasks*: 1. Painting 2. Gaming 3. Reading 4. Dancing 5. Make over 6. Watching Wedding video 7. Baking 8. Feeding cat

\*Note these activities are not finalised

# 1. Section 1 – Gameplay Overview

## 1.1. Explaining the game

### Plot

The player controls a character coping with the loss of her partner. To heal, she must complete daily chores, symbolising how life continues and growth happens through consistency. As new rooms and activities unlock, more of the story is revealed. Progress mirrors real life—day-to-day change feels slow, but looking back shows growth. The game ends once all rooms are unlocked and all activities completed.

### Gameplay

The game presents a 2D doll's house where days are divided into 12 segments. Clicking a room transports the player there, with camera zoom controlled by the scroll wheel. Rooms are designed to appear 3D (see section 2.1). Players interact with objects to complete tasks, consuming energy and advancing time. Each day, energy levels vary, shown through world saturation and a dial. Players must manage activities like laundry, with repeated activities becoming easier over time.

Completing certain activities rewards keys to unlock new rooms, triggering memories that expand the narrative. Negative events are more likely to occur early on to reflect the non-linear healing process, impacting future energy levels. A daily stats screen tracks progress, with arrows showing whether tasks have improved or declined, helping players plan future actions.

### Additional information

#### Narrative

Two children grew up together, inseparable—until one had to move away. Distance stretched between them, turning closeness into silence. Years passed. Then, in university, they found each other again.

They graduated side by side, married, and built a life: a shared home, late-night games, a cat curled at their feet. They dreamed of a child and felt pure joy when the dream took shape. But at seven months, they lost the baby. The nursery was already set up.

Grief settled in the walls. They fought, hurt, unraveled. One morning, he left for work and never came back. At his funeral, she would have given anything for one more day.

Now, in the present, she faces the impossible task of moving forward. She starts small—making the bed, getting up, breathing. Step by step, through quiet persistence, she will find her way forward. She will forgive herself.

## 1.2. The core mechanic

The game revolves around resource management, requiring players to allocate limited daily energy to activities. Consistent effort makes activities easier, while completed chores influence future energy levels. Events—good or bad—occur based on chore upkeep and game progression, impacting the next day's energy (e.g., encountering a spider while dusting reduces energy).

## Mechanic Variants

### Resource management

The main mechanic of the game is resource management dressed up as energy. The player has a certain amount of energy during the day, and they need to manage it wisely to be able to complete the activities they want. Energy levels are indicated by the energy bar as well as the saturation of the world. The more saturated the world is, the higher the level of energy, and closer to grayscale means less energy.

It is important that the player manage and complete these activities to:

1. Get better at it so that it uses less energy
2. Further the narrative
3. Determine if an event will be bad or good

Doing an activity for consecutive days, means that the activity takes less energy as the days progress. This means that as the game goes on, the player can manage multiple activities in a day.

### Interacting with activities

Doing an activity means that the player clicks on the activity. Using laundry as an example, the laundry pile will be in the foreground of the game to show that it is interactable. Once the player clicks on the laundry three things happen:

1. A short animation plays
2. The laundry pile decreases
3. The energy level is decreased

At the end of each day, a stats screen tracks the player's progress. Chores are measured on a 0%–100% scale:

- 100% = Bad (chores neglected).
- 0% = Good (chores completed).

Consistently completed chores gradually reduce in segments, encouraging routine.

### Passive upgrades

As the player keeps playing the game and continuously does an activity, it will give passive upgrades. What that means is that the number of consecutive days that the player does a chore, will reduce the amount of energy that it uses. Using laundry as an example again:

- **Day 1:** Laundry costs 3 energy segments.
- **Day 2:** Laundry costs 3 energy segments.
- **Day 3:** Laundry costs 2 energy segments.
- **Day 4:** Laundry costs 2 energy segments.
- **Day 5+:** Laundry costs 1 energy segment.

This is not an upgrade given by collecting or activating something, but rather by consistency. Meaning that this upgrade will always be there as long as the player keeps up with the chores.

Chore consistency can trigger positive events, like finding a key after listening to the radio for five days in a row. Keys unlock new rooms, which introduce:

- New memories
- New activities

- Story progression

The completeness of chores can also determine the outcome of events. Events are triggered at specific points throughout the game to advance the narrative. These events can either provide the player with helpful boosts or cause them to lose all their energy.

If the player neglects activities, the likelihood of experiencing a negative event increases.

Negative events can include things like receiving more bad news, slipping on dirty floors, experiencing low moods (resulting in less energy the next day), and more events that will be introduced as the game progresses.

On the other hand, positive events occur when the player keeps up with their chores and the story progresses. These events can include finding money in a pocket, receiving a surprise gift, or having a good cup of tea. Positive events also grant temporary boosts of energy (the next day).

A boost will also be given to the player if they choose to do exercise consistently. An example will be if the player does yoga 5 days in a row, they get an energy boost for 5 days afterwards.

### 1.2.1. What

Each morning around 9 AM, the character wakes with a seemingly random amount of energy. If an event occurred the previous day, its effects—positive or negative—are applied on top of the base energy. This randomness mirrors the unpredictable nature of depression, where motivation fluctuates without clear cause.

With limited energy, players must prioritise activities, sometimes abandoning tasks to maintain consistency. For example, clicking the laundry pile triggers an animation and reduces its size. Initially, laundry costs 3 energy segments, but regular completion lowers the cost to 1 energy segment, making it easier over time.

If energy remains after a chore, players can explore unlocked rooms and complete additional activities. Repetition is key: consistent completion reduces energy costs and unlocks keys to new rooms. For instance, reducing the laundry pile to 30% might spawn a key, leading to a flashback and a new area to explore. Each new room adds fresh activities and deepens the story.

Temporary tasks, like painting, are completed after a set number of days and then become inaccessible. Throughout the game, players encounter both positive and negative events. Filling a pet's bowl five days in a row, for example, causes the cat to return, offering a permanent energy boost. Negative events, such as slipping on dirty floors or receiving bad news, lowers the next day's energy.

If energy runs out early, passive activities like doom-scrolling or watching TV automatically occur, ending the day smoothly to prevent frustration. Each day concludes with a stats screen summarising completed chores and progress, similar to Stardew Valley. The cycle continues until all rooms are unlocked and all activities completed.

## 1.2.2. Why

The game aims to create deep empathy and sadness for the character, highlighting the tension between everyday tasks and emotional turmoil. Each chore symbolises an emotional burden, with the energy meter and environmental saturation visually reflecting the character's mental state.

As chores pile up, the house becomes messier, representing emotional decay and the overwhelming weight of grief. Neglected tasks grow harder and trigger more negative events, further mirroring the character's declining mental health.

### **Evoking Empathy and Sadness:**

Chores are not simple obstacles; they embody the character's internal struggles. When neglected, they create setbacks that reinforce the emotional stagnation and despair of depression, deepening the player's emotional connection to the character's journey.

### **The Mundanity of Routine Tasks:**

Simple chores like laundry or feeding a pet symbolise the ongoing battle to maintain life during emotional collapse. As tasks grow easier with repetition, players experience slow, meaningful progress, mirroring the real-life healing process.

### **Consistency as a Path to Healing:**

Progress is earned through daily consistency. Completing chores unlocks memories, rooms, and events, illustrating that emotional recovery is slow but achievable. Over time, players feel satisfaction and relief as the character's life slowly rebuilds through persistent effort.

## 1.3. Supporting the idea

### 1.3.1. Objectives and Outcomes

#### **Activities at 0%**

All activities start at 100% (either at the beginning of the game or when unlocked). The player must consistently engage in activities throughout the day, but due to limited energy, only a certain number of activities can be completed at a time.

The goal is to gradually reduce the progress of these activities to 0% by performing them regularly. As the player continues to complete the same tasks on consecutive days, less energy will be required to finish them.

The challenge is to manage energy efficiently, ensuring that the player can prioritise and complete the activities they wish to focus on, steadily lowering their completion percentage.

#### **Unlocking all rooms**

At the start of the game, only the bedroom will be unlocked. It is up to the player to figure out how to unlock the other rooms. Unlocking these rooms is essential to the story, as it allows the narrative to progress and more activities to be unlocked.

The goal is to unlock all the rooms, giving the player access to all 8 chores to complete each day, while also uncovering more of the narrative. The challenge is to balance unlocking rooms and completing chores. The player must manage their time and energy wisely to succeed.

### 1.3.2. Uncertainty

#### **Hidden information | Locked rooms (micro uncertainty)**

Locked rooms introduce hidden information. The locked doors create intrigue, as players do not know what lies behind them or how to unlock them. As progress is made, discovering how to unlock the first door reveals additional narrative content and activities. However, with other rooms still locked, there remains a constant drive to uncover the secrets behind each door, maintaining a sense of mystery and encouraging continued play.

#### **Narrative uncertainty | Story Progression (marco uncertainty)**

The unfolding narrative introduces narrative uncertainty, as players remain engaged, eager to discover how the story will progress. The player is tasked with uncovering the complete story through completing activities which will unlock rooms and as a result, also new memories. Through this the player might be motivated to unlock all of the rooms to get the full picture.

### 1.3.3. Feedback loop

#### **Positive feedback loop**

A positive feedback loop is created by the energy system. Due to the limited energy available each day, players can only complete a certain number of activities. However, if a player consistently performs the same activity over consecutive days, the energy required for that activity gradually decreases. This encourages players to continue doing the same tasks regularly, allowing them to eventually manage all 8 chores. The loop rewards consistency, making it easier to progress as more tasks are completed.

#### **Negative feedback loop**

A negative feedback loop is triggered if the chores are neglected. If tasks are not completed, their progress will not decrease, and they will continue to pile up, negatively impacting the narrative outcome. Initially the character will have thought bubbles to indicate to the user that some activities are being disregarded.

The game continuously reminds the player of these unfinished tasks, encouraging them to balance their energy and activities. Bad events are also triggered when chores are neglected. Meaning that it impacts the energy level of the next day.

This system ensures that if the player falls behind, the difficulty of managing chores increases, which pushes the player back toward equilibrium and encourages them to stay on track with the story progression.

Failing to do any tasks, leads to the character ending her life, which brings the player back to day one for them to restart and try again.

### 1.3.4. Emergence

The game is designed to foster emergent behaviour by creating a system where simple mechanics and rules interact to produce complex, unpredictable, and meaningful outcomes. This is achieved through the interplay of resource management, chore consistency, and narrative progression, which together encourage players to explore and experiment within the game's systems.

At its core, the game uses a resource management system where the player allocates limited daily energy to various chores and tasks. This system introduces meaningful decision-making, as players must prioritise which activities to complete each day. The energy system is dynamic, influenced by both player actions and external events, such as positive or negative occurrences. For example, neglecting chores increases the likelihood of negative events, which in turn reduces energy for the next day. Conversely, consistent effort rewards players with reduced energy costs for tasks, unlocking new rooms, and triggering positive events. These interconnected mechanics create a feedback loop that encourages players to experiment with different strategies to optimise their progress.

Emergence arises from the interaction between the player's choices and the game's systems. For instance, consistently completing a chore like feeding the pet not only reduces its energy cost but also triggers a positive event, such as the return of the cat, which provides a permanent energy boost. This emergent outcome is not explicitly dictated by the game but arises naturally from the player's actions within the system. Similarly, the introduction of negative events, such as slipping on dirty floors, adds unpredictability and reinforces the importance of maintaining consistency, further deepening the player's engagement with the game's mechanics.

The game also encourages emergent behaviour through its narrative progression and exploration mechanics. Unlocking new rooms and memories is tied to the player's ability to manage their energy and complete tasks. The locked rooms introduce hidden information and narrative uncertainty, motivating players to uncover the story piece by piece. This design choice allows players to create their own unique experiences as they decide how to balance chores, unlock rooms, and progress through the narrative. The variability in daily energy levels, influenced by both internal (player actions) and external (game events) factors, ensures that no two playthroughs are identical, further enhancing the emergent nature of the gameplay.

Finally, the game's visual and mechanical feedback systems—such as the saturation of the world reflecting energy levels and the stats screen tracking progress—provide players with clear indicators of their impact on the game world. This reinforces the connection between their actions and the outcomes, creating a sense of meaningful play. The gradual reduction in energy costs for consistent tasks mirrors the real-life process of building habits, adding a layer of emotional resonance to the emergent behaviours.

By combining simple mechanics, dynamic systems, and a deeply personal narrative, the game creates a rich space for emergent behaviour. Players are encouraged to explore, adapt, and find meaning in their interactions, making each playthrough a unique and emotionally impactful experience.

## 1.4. Technology

<b>Game engine:</b>	Godot
<b>Platform:</b>	Desktop/PC
<b>Input:</b>	Keyboard and mouse
<b>Asset creation:</b>	Procreate, Illustrator, Rive, Procreate Dreams
<b>Audio:</b>	Adobe Audition, Garage Band, Ableton

## 1.5. Group member role

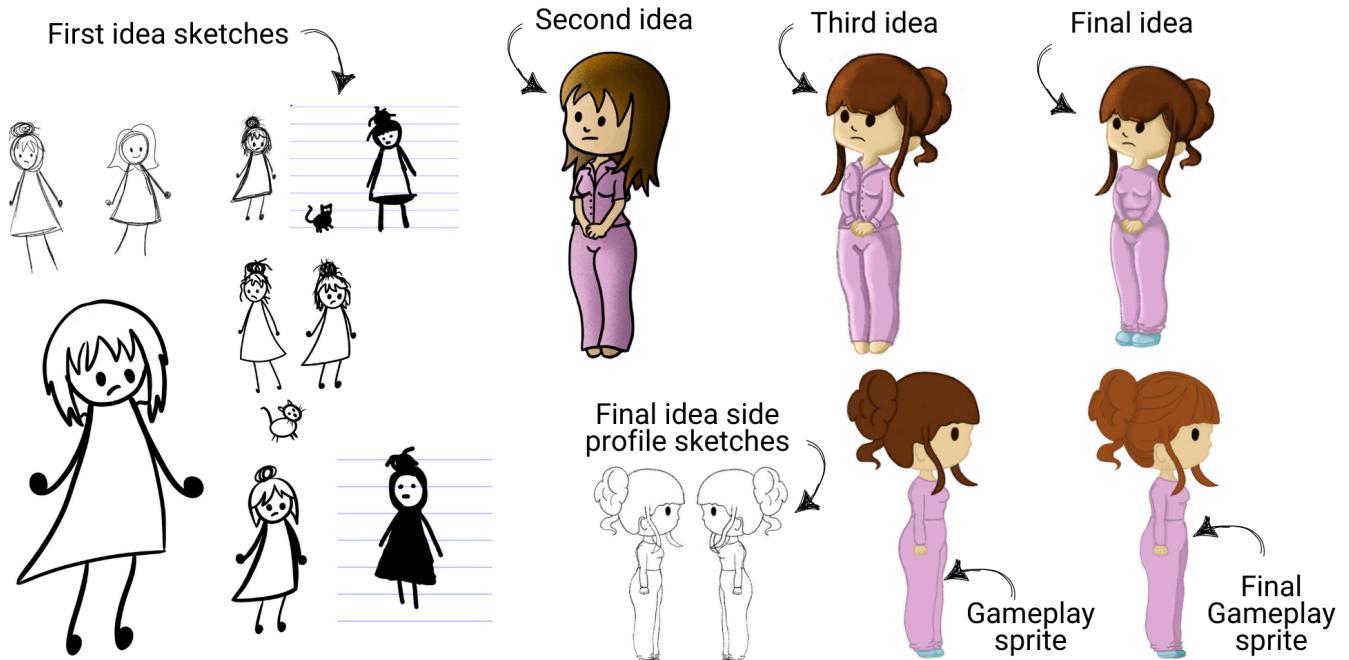
Group Member	IMY 300 Student	Duties
Saskia Steyn	Yes	Art, Design, Programming, Documentation
Mientjie Kleinhans (mother)*	No	Music composer
Jacob Steen-Stenersen (friend)*	No	Music engineer

\*Providing external support

## 2. Section 2 – Asset sample

### 2.1. Visual sample

#### Main Character



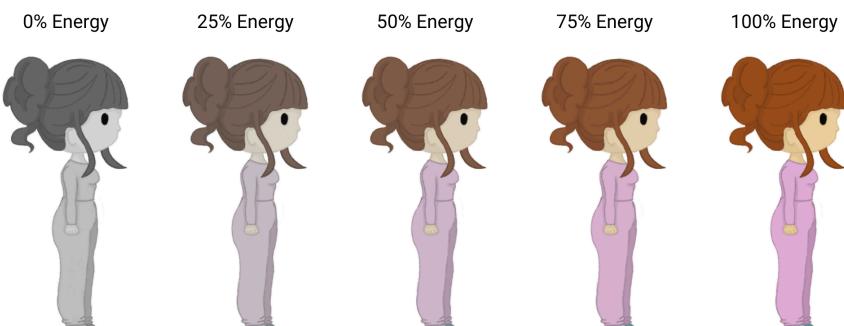
The initial concept for the main character was to keep things simple, but after further consideration, it felt too impersonal.

Playing *Old Man's Journey* inspired me to explore ideas 2 and 3, particularly because of the game's strong narrative focus. I wanted the game to evoke the feel of an indie title, and a more textured art style seemed to suit that perfectly. More importantly, I wanted players to form a deep emotional connection with the character, but a stick figure doesn't quite allow for that kind of attachment. While animating a more detailed character will be more challenging, I believe it will be worth the effort.

Given the simple and repetitive nature of the gameplay, the art and audio need to be engaging and captivating. Creating aesthetically pleasing art will play a key role in making the game feel complete and inviting, helping to create a cozy, immersive atmosphere.

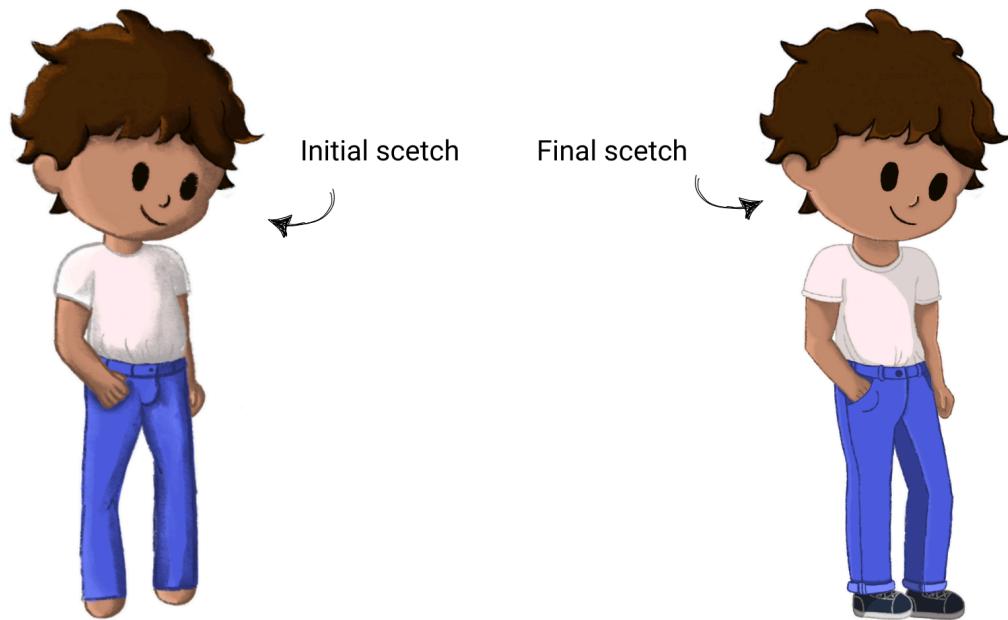
Here is how it will look with the saturation scale:

**ENERGY LEVEL BASED ON SATURATION**



After settling on the style of the main character, it inspired the rest of the world's creation.

### Partner



### Bedroom



Lighting and shadows will be added with Godot to ensure that it is dynamic and follows the sun/daylight and then when the lights come on in the house at night. The player will see small bits of the house around the room, to show them which rooms are next to the current room (see the Energy Indicator section for an example of the interface). Note: this is not the final room design, but is there to show the angle at which the rooms will be drawn.

## Laundry



Laundry 25%



Laundry 50%



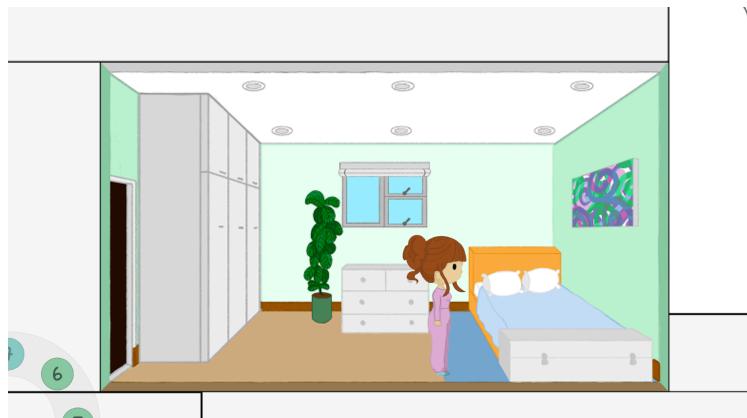
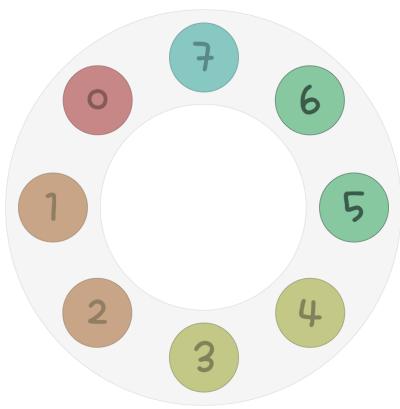
Laundry 100%



Full pile compared to character

The laundry pile will visually indicate how much of the laundry is left. Each piece is individually created, so it will make it easier to visualise the percentage of laundry in the game.

## Energy Indicator



This is an example of how it will look. The highest amount of energy that a player can have still needs to be decided, but that will happen through play testing. In the beginning a chore will take 2-3 segments (circles) of energy, and as the player keeps up with continuous play, an activity will take less segments (ie: 1 segment after day 5). The dial will be in the bottom left corner.

## 2.2. Audio Sample

I want the game to evoke strong emotions in the player. A combination of piano and violin will help create the desired emotional depth. The main background track is especially meaningful, as it was composed by my mum when I was born, making it a unique and personal addition to the game. The tracks below are simply samples of free music, serving as references for the intended sound. Jacob will assist with engineering and digitising the final version.

### Main sound track

This should ideally loop, and play softly so that the user does not get annoyed with it.

 main-sound-track.mp3

### Flashback

Each flashback will have a unique sound to them to accompany the tone of the flashback. Some sample sounds:

 flashback-music.mp3

 also-flashback.mp3

 another-flashback.mp3

### Bad event

The same sound will be used for all bad events, that way a user can hear, without even reading, that the event that occurred is bad and will affect the next day's energy level. Here is a sample sound:

 bad-event.mp3

### Good event

The same sound will be used for all good events, that way a user can hear, without even reading, that the event that occurred is good and will affect the next day's energy level. Here is a sample sound:

 good-event.mp3

### Menu sounds

Main menu

 main-menu.mp3

Selecting

 select.mp3

### Door unlocking

 door-unlocking-101333.mp3

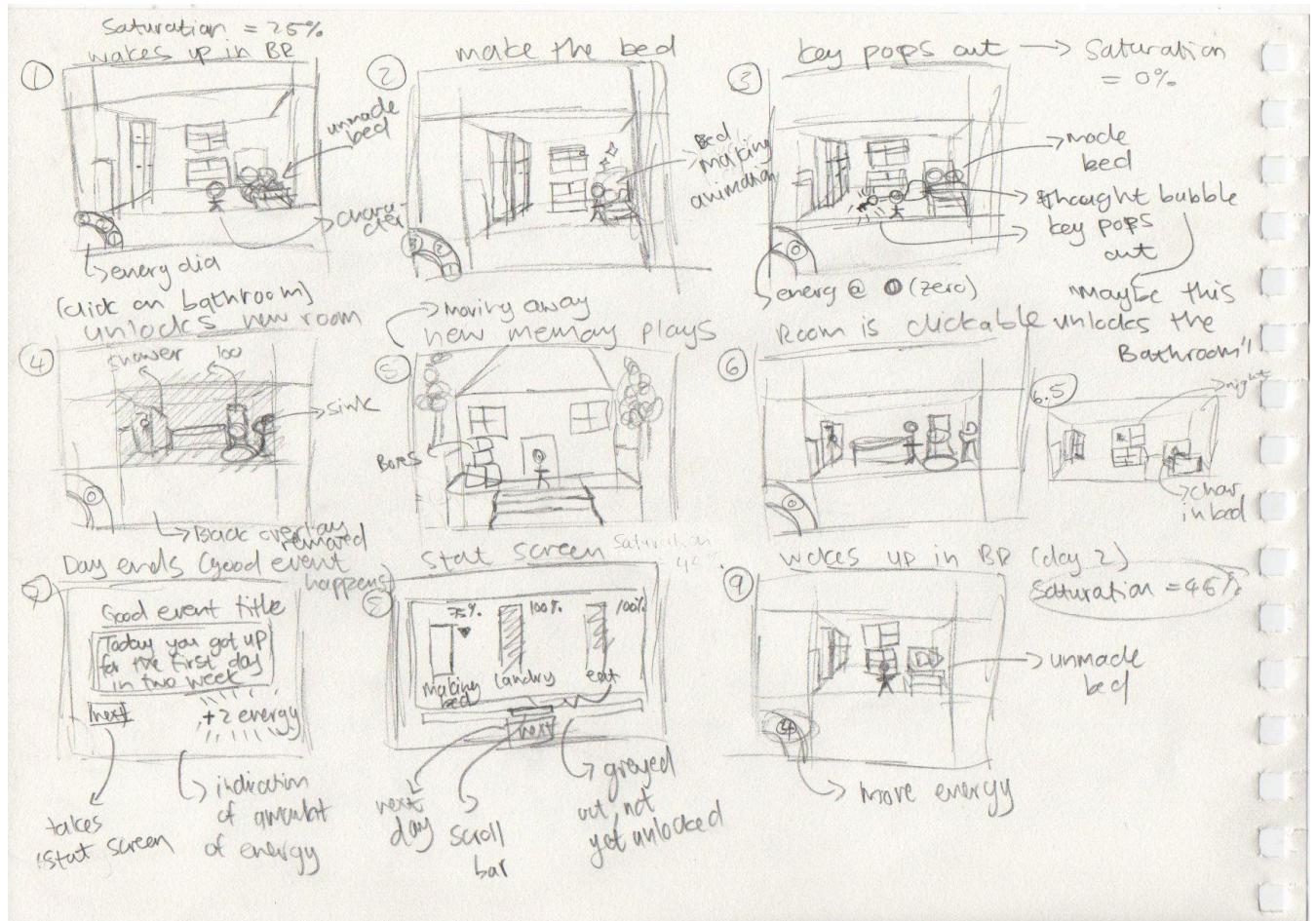
### Getting a key

A sample of a sound that indicates to the user that they have gotten another key:

 level-up-4-243762.mp3

 diamond-found-190255.mp3

## 2.3. Storyboard



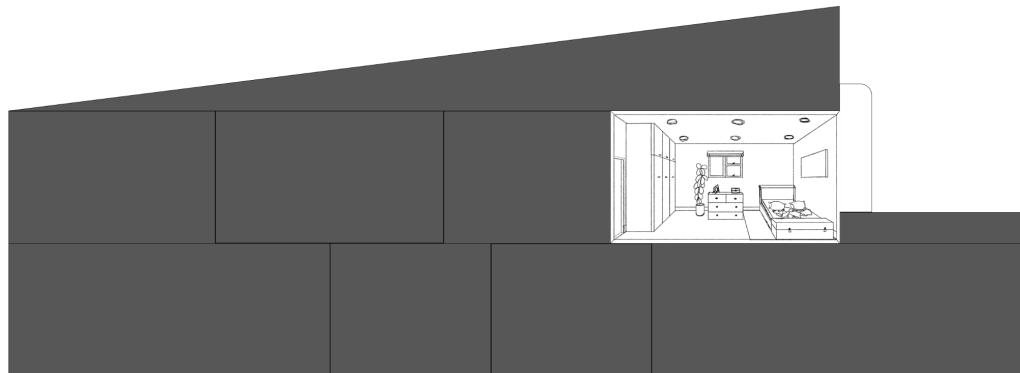
Frame	Explanation of each frame
1	<p>The character wakes up in her bedroom. This is day 1, meaning that only the bedroom is unlocked. The player can zoom in and out and see the whole house, but only the bedroom is clickable.</p> <p>There is a dial in the bottom left corner that shows 2. This is the energy dial. And saturation is at 25%.</p> <p>The bed is unmade, making that the first chore. The player can click on the bed to do the chore.</p>
2	<p>While the bed is being made. A small animation plays, inspired by <i>Sims</i>. The dial will then spin. Because it is day 1 of making the bed, it will take two sections of energy. The saturation will also be set to 0% (making it greyscale).</p>
3	<p>After making the bed, the sprite swaps to one of a made bed. A key pops out of the bed and floats in the middle of the room. The player can click on it. A thought bubble will also pop up to entice the player to click on it.</p>
4	<p>After clicking on the key, the camera will pan over to the bathroom where there is still a black overlay. The player can then click on the bathroom to unlock it.</p>
5	<p>After clicking on the bathroom. A flashback will play. This will be the flashback of when she was younger and moved away from her hometown. It will only be a still image with some slight animation.</p>

6	When the flashback is done playing, the player will be in the middle of the bathroom. But because the player does not have any energy. It signals the end of the day.
6.5	The character will walk to the bedroom and climb in bed. The day will fast forward to night (sun spins to moon). The screen will then fade to black.
7	<p>The day ends. A screen pops up to show what event happened during the day. Day 1's event will be a milestone where the character got out of bed in the morning for the first time in two weeks.</p> <p>There is a pop up to show that the player earned 2 more energy segments for the next day.</p> <p>A next button pops up to indicate the player can go to the next screen.</p>
8	<p>Some stats are presented to the player. Making the bed has now gone down to 75%. Self care is at 100%, because it was just unlocked, but hasn't been touched by the player yet.</p> <p>There are other chores as well, but they are greyed out since they haven't been unlocked yet.</p> <p>A next button pops up for the player to click to proceed to the next day.</p>
9	The player now has 4 energy segments for the day. And saturation is at 45%. The bed is unmade again. The bathroom has a new chore that the player can interact with. The cycle then continues.

### 3. Section 3 – Basic level planning

#### 3.1. Game progression

##### House Layout and Progression



At the start of the game, only the bedroom is unlocked, allowing the player to complete simple chores like bed-making. (The kitchen may also be accessible, depending on results from playtesting.) Players move freely between unlocked rooms by clicking on them. A short animation plays as the character walks through a door and appears in the selected room. Accessing the attic requires interacting with a ladder by pressing “E.”

As players progress, more rooms become available, each offering new activities and narrative developments. Unlocking rooms is key to moving forward in the story and expanding gameplay options.

##### Resource and Time Management

The core of the game revolves around managing energy and time. Each day, the player starts with a set amount of energy that must be spent wisely across various activities. Every action consumes energy and takes up a segment of the day. Players can perform up to eight activities daily, forcing them to prioritise their choices carefully.

Maintaining a consistent streak with activities is crucial. Completing activities daily not only helps conserve energy over time—since activities become less taxing with repetition—but also influences the story’s outcome. Failing to maintain a streak has two main consequences:

- the player may be unable to unlock new rooms and progress the story, and over time;
- it can lead to a fail state where the character ends her life, requiring the player to start over.

##### Activities and Events

Unlocking new rooms introduces new activities, some of which have strategic benefits. For example, exercise costs energy to do, but after 5 days of doing it consecutively, the player will get an energy boost (eg: +2 energy segments) for the following 5 days.

Events also impact gameplay. Good events provide energy boosts for the next day, while bad events drain energy. Consistently completing chores decreases the chance of bad events and increases the likelihood of positive ones, reinforcing the importance of maintaining a routine.

Certain activities are temporary but offer valuable rewards, such as energy boosts or keys to unlock new areas. Keys are essential for opening locked rooms, which in turn grant access to additional narrative

elements and new activities. This gradual expansion of the house keeps gameplay feeling fresh and encourages players to stay engaged.

### **Narrative Progression**

Beyond gameplay mechanics, the real reward is uncovering the deeper layers of the story. As players unlock more rooms and complete more activities, they learn more about the character they are taking care of. This emotional connection serves as a driving force, making each task feel meaningful and each narrative discovery impactful.

### **Decision trees**

Decision tree for the order in which the rooms will be unlocked, and what activities each room will have:

 IMY300 Decision Tree.drawio.pdf .

Decision tree of which activity unlocks which room:  IMY300 Activity Decision Tree.drawio.pdf .

Note: these trees are not final, it is simply to give an idea. More in depth trees will be made as the game progresses and is being play tested.

## **3.2. Paper Prototype**

### **3.2.1. Parts to be prototyped**

Day one of the game will be prototyped, as it makes the most sense to use it as the introduction for new players. During this day, players will be introduced to the energy component and the concept of the shifting day. They will interact with tasks and be introduced to the key component, as well as unlock a door to gain access to a new room. Players will also experience their first flashback and encounter events that occur at the end of the day. As it concludes with a positive event, the player will be rewarded with two additional energy segments for the following day. Additionally, players will be introduced to the mechanic where the character selects a passive task (in this case, sleeping), and the day fast-forwards as a result.

### **3.2.2. Group member explaining paper prototype**

Watch the video here:  Paper prototype (played by Saskia).mp4

### **3.2.3. Prototype being played**

Watch the video here:  Prototype played by Josh.mp4

### **3.2.4. Lessons**

- There needs to be a longer pause before the thought bubbles pop up. The bed (and all chores) also needs some sort of indication that it is clickable.
- There needs to be a button that fades in as the flashback is shown to the player. It might be confusing not knowing what to do next.
- It is not clear that the key needs to be clicked. More of a highlight, or animation is needed so that the player knows that they need to click on the key.
- The number dial was upside down in the paper prototype. In the implemented version of the game, the numbers will be rotated right side up, no matter on which part of the dial it is.

- The stats page is also confusing, some work is needed to show that some progress has been made. So, perhaps showing the stats before the first day is played.

### 3.3. Tutorial Level Design

The tutorial is integrated into gameplay and unfolds over the first two days. View the [paper prototype](#), as well as the [storyboard](#) section to get an idea of what the levels will look like.

Day One:

- The player sees a zoomed-out view of the house, with the bedroom highlighted. A cursor encourages the player to click the bedroom, zooming the camera in.
- The unmade bed is highlighted; if untouched after five seconds, a thought bubble appears. Clicking the bed triggers an animation of the character making it, the energy dial drops to zero, and the bed sprite updates.
- A key appears above the bed; if not clicked within five seconds, a cursor prompts the player. Clicking the key zooms the camera out and reveals the bathroom. Again, if the bathroom isn't clicked quickly, a cursor will guide the player.
- Zooming into the bathroom triggers a flashback; a 'Next' button appears after two seconds, returning the player to the bathroom.
- With energy depleted, the character returns to bed, and the day fast-forwards to night. A good event pops up, followed by the stats screen, each with a 'Next' button. The player then proceeds to day two.

Day Two:

- Thanks to the good event, the player starts with four energy points. They can now complete a second task: self-care at the bathroom sink, which is highlighted to encourage interaction.
- After completing chores, the character returns to bed.
- At day's end, a bad event occurs, reducing the next day's energy by one.
- The day concludes with the usual end screens, and from day three onwards, the player continues independently.

Introducing mechanics through the first two days ensures a gradual, natural tutorial experience without overwhelming the player.

