

# GDD (Game Design Document) Template: Transformative Fun

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# **1 Title & Basic Info**

## **Title:**

- Caring connections

**Players: 3-6**

**Length: 45min +**

**Age: Teen +**

## **2 Razor**

- An uplifting therapy where players connect deeply, sharing their journeys and strengthening each other through empathy, encouragement, and shared resilience.

## **3 Slogan**

- Mindful Connections, Meaningful Lives

## **4 Vision Statement & Top level summary of your game idea**

**Caring Connections** is a collaborative board game where players role-play as individuals in group therapy sessions, fostering meaningful interactions to support one another in overcoming mental health challenges. Each player has a unique occupation and mental health issues, utilizing support cards and resources to assist each other in solving tasks. If any player's mental health deteriorates significantly past a certain threshold, they "die" from suicide, causing a significant setback to the remaining players' mental health as well. This dynamic emphasizes the importance of resource management and the well-being of others, promoting the significance of support within the team.

## **5 Player experience goal(s) + atmosphere users should experience**

### **a) Targeted aesthetics and desired player experience goals**

#### **What (desired emotion and player experience goals)**

- We want the players to feel **empathy** towards others
- We want the players to feel **more understanding** towards a mental disorder
- We want the player to feel **less inferior** if they have a mental disorder and or not able to "fix" it by themselves
- We want the player to feel like they are in a **safe space** and are able to communicate about their problems (fictional or not) in the game

#### **Why**

We want the players to understand that each disorder comes with its own disability/disadvantages so that they don't shun or encourage these people in the wrong way. Additionally, the idea of being inferior would usually discourage the person from seeking help, as they believe that they have a problem, but in the game, we are striving for the opposite effect, by encouraging teamwork and seeking help from others to get yourselves out of the ditch.

#### **How**

By utilizing game mechanics to portray how certain actions that are usually less stressful for the majority are more stressful to these types of people. The communication aspect provides support for the players to be more talkative of the problems from the perspective of a mental conditioned person, providing a safe space to talk about the problems regarding a certain mental condition that they might or might not have as well.

### **b) Analyze your desired and actual UX using the below rating matrix**

Items from Lazarro's 4 Keys 2 Fun (2014):

<b>Hard Fun</b> : mastery, achievement, “fiero”:	not at all  --xo-----  highly so
<b>Easy Fun</b> : Exploring, Imagination, Curiosity, Absorption	not at all  -----xo-----  highly so
<b>Altered States (Purposeful/Serious Fun)</b> : Values & Meaning	not at all  -----xo---  highly so
<b>People Fun</b> : Relationships, social bonding etc.	not at all  -----xo-----  highly so

### Items from Yee's Gamer Motivation taxonomy (2021):

<b>Action</b> — Appeals to players seeking an adrenaline rush and excitement. Players who find fast-paced play thrilling	not at all  ---xo-----  highly so
<b>Social</b> —Appeals to players who want to interact with each other, whether in a competitive or collaborative fashion. Players who enjoy talking, engaging, watching others and being seen.	not at all  -----x-o-----  highly so
<b>Mastery</b> —Appeals to players who are seeking a strategic thinking and challenge. Player who want test their skills and make difficult decisions.	not at all  -----o---x-----  highly so
<b>Achievement</b> —Appeals to players who try to collect all the items or amass power and prestige in the game. Players who like completion and winning.	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so
<b>Immersion</b> — Appeals to players who seek storytelling and fantasy, who imagine themselves as part of the game world and/or enjoy watching a story unfold.	not at all  -----x-----o-----  highly so
<b>Creativity</b> —Appeals to players who like exploring possibilities or finding ways to express themselves in the game. Players who see the game as a creative outlet.	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so

### 8 items from Hunnicke et al's taxonomy of “fun”:

1. <b>Sensation</b> : Game as sense-pleasure	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so
2. <b>Fantasy</b> : Game as make-believe	not at all  ---o-x-----  highly so
3. <b>Narrative</b> : Game as drama	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so
4. <b>Challenge</b> : Game as obstacle course	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so
5. <b>Fellowship</b> : Game as social framework	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so
6. <b>Discovery</b> : Game as uncharted territory	not at all  -----o---x-----  highly so
7. <b>Expression</b> : Game as self-discovery	not at all  -----o---x-----  highly so
8. <b>Submission</b> : Game as pastime/go-to leisure activity	not at all  -----x---o-----  highly so

## 6 How does it address the design challenge of a Transformative Game?

- a) **What's the underlying challenge/problem your game aims to tackle, and how could addressing this help make this world a better place to live?**

The challenge our game tackles is to increase **awareness and understanding of mental health** while reducing **stigma and misunderstanding**. Symptoms of this challenge include **stigma, isolation, and a lack of empathy**, but the **underlying problem** lies in a **lack of knowledge and understanding about mental health**.

Our game aims to foster **empathy** by immersing players in experiences that allow them to face various mental health challenges. It also emphasizes the importance of **supporting one another** through **cooperation** and seeking **help from others**.

By addressing these issues, the game seeks to reduce misunderstandings about mental health and promote a **more inclusive and compassionate society**. We believe that spreading empathy and fostering support for mental health will not only improve individual well-being but also **strengthen societal resilience** and contribute to a world where everyone feels valued and understood.

- b) **Background research on underlying problem/challenge that your game aims to tackle**

## The Role of Group Therapy

Group therapy, as opposed to individual therapy, provides a communal support structure, allowing participants to connect, share experiences, and offer mutual support. Research highlights that group therapy is particularly beneficial for conditions like anxiety, depression, PTSD, substance abuse, and more. Studies show that group therapy can foster a sense of belonging and help individuals develop healthier coping mechanisms through shared experiences (American Psychological Association, 2019). In this environment, individuals gain social support and find it easier to break down the barriers of stigma.

However, many people remain unaware of the benefits of group therapy and hold misconceptions about it. Some believe that sharing their struggles with others is a sign of weakness, while others doubt the efficacy of communal support in tackling personal mental health issues. These misconceptions further isolate individuals and hinder access to effective mental health support networks (Hoy, 2024).

## Stigma and Barriers to Seeking Support

Stigma remains one of the biggest challenges in mental health. Studies show that people with mental health issues often face societal stigma and discrimination, which prevents them from seeking help. Negative societal perceptions make it harder for individuals to engage in support networks, especially group settings, as they may feel judged or misunderstood. This issue is so pervasive that even those aware of the potential benefits of support groups can be hesitant to join due to fear of being seen as "weak" or of their struggles being dismissed as unimportant (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2022).

## Existing Approaches in Mental Health Games

Several games have tackled mental health themes, aiming to reduce stigma and increase awareness. Games like *Celeste*, *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*, and *Omori* provide intimate, individual narratives where players experience the mental health journey of the protagonist. These games effectively convey mental health struggles but often focus on solo experiences, which reinforce the introspective and isolated nature of mental health challenges. While they offer an immersive view into personal struggles, these games lack the community or cooperative element that highlights shared experiences and mutual support.

### c) Team motivation

Our team conducted discussions and voting to select a topic. We considered three topics: women's safety, mental health, and climate change. We discussed which topic would resonate most with all team members and serve as a source of motivation. While each topic had elements that some members could relate to more than others, mental health was the only topic that the majority of the team found truly transformative.

In today's society, we recognize that mental pain can have as significant an impact as physical pain. When someone's mental health deteriorates, it can lead to extreme outcomes, including drastic decisions. Humans are inherently social beings and cannot thrive in isolation. Mental health struggles inevitably affect relationships and can create ripple effects within communities and families.

Our team is motivated by the desire to emphasize the importance of mental health. By creating a game that explores mental health issues and addictive behaviors, and fosters mutual support in recovery, we aim to raise awareness about the significance of mental well-being.

### d) Why would a game be a suitable approach to tackling this challenge/problem?

This game offers players a unique opportunity to deeply understand various mental health issues through role-playing as characters with different mental conditions. By embodying these roles, players experience the difficulties of navigating society with mental health challenges and the transformative impact of group support.

Unlike traditional board games, this game requires all players to work together to succeed. If even one player "fails" (or "dies"), the entire group loses. This cooperative win condition fosters a strong sense of group cohesion and emphasizes that addressing mental health challenges requires more than individual effort—mutual support is essential for improving mental well-being.

The unique affordances of games—such as interactive decision-making and immersive role-play—allow players to experience the limitations and burdens imposed by mental health conditions. This interactive medium provides an experiential understanding of these

challenges, encouraging players to feel the emotional weight of these struggles firsthand. Unlike other forms of media, games actively engage players in scenarios that foster empathy and understanding.

By gaining insight into these challenges, players develop a more compassionate perspective that they can carry into real-life interactions, contributing to a more inclusive and understanding society.

In this game, we specifically utilize:

1. Role-playing mechanics: To cultivate empathy by allowing players to embody the experiences of those with mental health conditions.
2. Cooperative mechanics: Where all players must collaborate to achieve a shared goal, underscoring the importance of supporting one another in both the game and real-life contexts.

Through these unique properties, the game provides an immersive and transformative approach to tackling the stigma and misunderstandings surrounding mental health.

#### **e) Desired “transformation” and impact of game on players**

Through the game, we want the players to change their thinking about mental health support; specifically, we want to destigmatize the discussion of mental health as well as the topic of seeking out mental health support from their community. After playing, players should feel safer and more confident talking about their own mental health problems to their friends, family, and/or community. They should also learn to feel the need to be more sensitive and attentive to other people’s mental health, either by giving advice or helping other people if they have any problem. We want to impart the message that mental health problem shouldn’t be an individual burden for a single person to handle on their own, but a problem that can be alleviated and mediated with the help of a social group and community.

#### **f) How would you assess the game’s impact?**

To win the game, players must vote on the person they think was the most impactful/supportive throughout the game. We can base our judgment on their conversations, especially around character needs and crisis impacts, which will reveal their level of engagement and understanding. Additionally, there will be a post-game reflection, which includes a “most supportive player” vote. This vote is intended to encourage players to recognize and reward actions that demonstrate empathy, patience, and active support, reinforcing the game’s goal of fostering an environment in supporting others. The game successfully addresses our Transformative Fun Goal when players are able to understand the complexity of understanding mental health and empathy for others facing such challenges.

## **7 Inspiration Analysis**

### **A) Background research on the underlying problem/challenge that your game aims to tackle**

#### **Summarized**

Mental health issues have become more prevalent in society, with mental illness affecting over 450 million people globally, according to the World Health Organization. Societal expectations often discourage individuals from discussing their struggles, especially among men, who have higher suicide rates despite being less likely to seek help (NIHM, 2024). Group-based support systems, both in real life and in gamified formats, have proven effective in building resilience, fostering empathy, and improving coping skills (APA, 2020). Role-playing and decision-making exercises, common in serious games, help players develop emotional resilience by simulating real-world challenges and consequences. These games allow players to experience mental health struggles and social issues from different perspectives, creating a safe space to explore difficult topics and learn from mistakes. The goal of the game is to raise awareness about mental illness, encourage open conversations, and teach players to recognize early signs of mental health issues, particularly during adolescence, when many mental disorders emerge (CAMH, n.d.). While the game simplifies the complexity of mental health, it aims to create an engaging and educational experience that encourages cooperation, empathy, and self-reflection, ultimately helping players understand the impact of mental health and the importance of support systems.

Our game will be set in a therapy or support group environment, which usually incorporates a wide range of mental health issues such as ADHD, depression, PTSD, and anxiety (Cherry, 2024). Group therapy typically involves individuals with diverse backgrounds and struggles, making it an ideal setting for educating players about different mental health conditions (“Psychotherapy: Understanding

Group Therapy," 2019). The goal is to challenge the stigma surrounding mental health support by promoting mutual support and cooperation among players. The game will simulate activities common in group therapy, such as storytelling, affirmations, and role-playing, to encourage communication, emotional expression, and empathy (Madeson, 2023). Players will engage in character-driven backstories and collaborate to address various mental health challenges, highlighting the importance of community and shared experiences in the healing process. The game will avoid a gamemaster, opting instead for a "mutual support group" format (as told by Hoy (2024)), where players actively support one another. This approach blurs the lines between the real world and game world, helping familiarize players with therapeutic practices in a supportive, non-judgmental space. Ultimately, the game seeks to transform players' perspectives on mental health, build stronger relationships, and provide a therapeutic experience that fosters personal growth and understanding, while promoting positive attitudes toward seeking help and overcoming mental health struggles.

The game aims to address the challenge of balancing personal responsibilities with supporting others' mental health, especially under stress. This issue is particularly relevant in today's society, where mental health struggles are often sidelined due to career pressures, academic demands, and social obligations. Mental health stigma, limited resources, and emotional isolation exacerbate these problems, and the game emphasizes the importance of mutual support. It highlights how small acts of empathy can significantly improve someone's well-being and prevent a cycle of worsening mental health. The game incorporates mental health management practices, such as the need for professional help and staying connected with loved ones. Through "support cards" (like "see a psychologist"), the game encourages players to prioritize mental health and seek help when needed. Dewhirst et al. (2022) suggest that serious games can be effective tools for reinforcing coping strategies and providing supportive environments. By offering a relaxed, online platform for discussing mental health, the game aims to reduce stigma, help players confront early-stage issues, and foster open conversations about mental health in a safe and engaging way.

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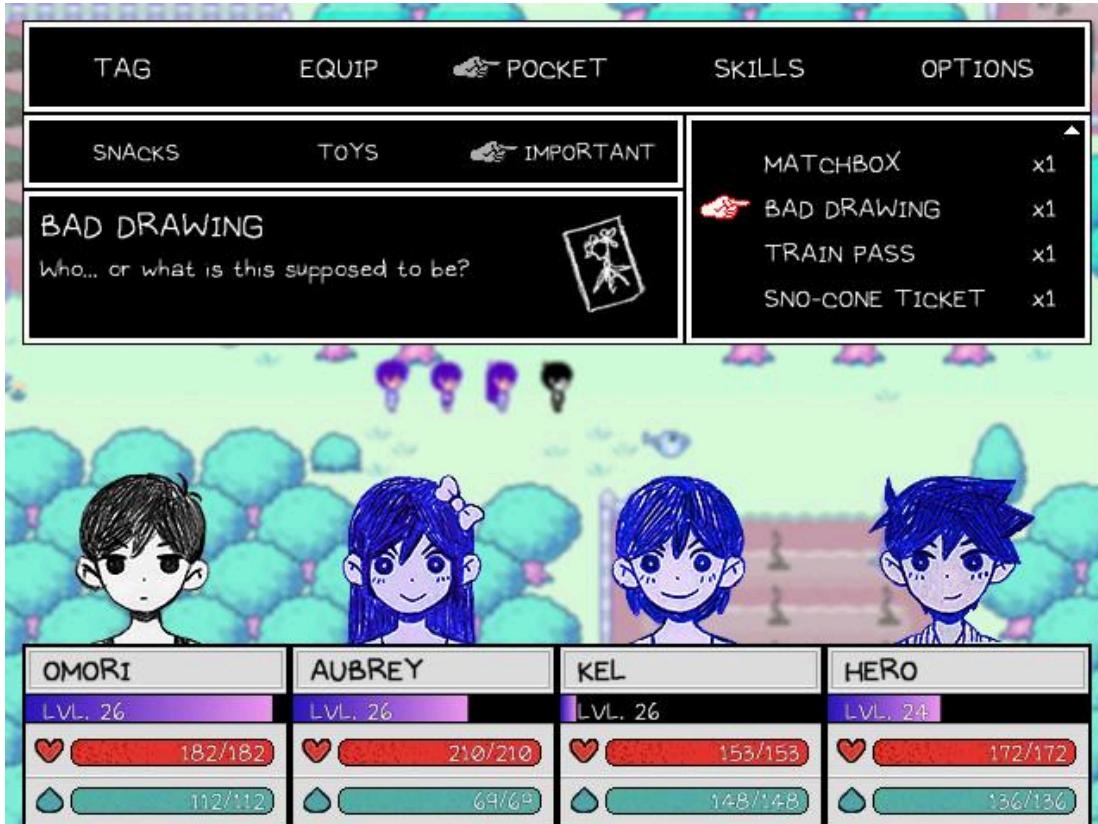
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## B) Inspiration analysis of media related to your topic

### 1. *Omori (PC game)*

*Omori* is a unique game that incorporates an emotion-based battle mechanism alongside a narrative focused on mental health. The developers have provided a content warning stating, "This game contains depictions of depression, anxiety, and suicide, and may not be suitable for all audiences. It also contains bright flashing imagery that may cause discomfort and/or seizures for those with photosensitive epilepsy" (Steam, n.d.). This game serves as a strong reference for our board game on mental health due to its thematic similarities. By analyzing *Omori*, our team aim to explore how emotions and mental illness influence player interactions. Tim Rattray notes that while film effectively visualizes character traits, games like *Omori* can depict the inner conflicts associated with mental illness, allowing players to indirectly experience these challenges (Rattray, 2024). Our goal is to help players recognize mental health issues and experience the difficulties faced by those who struggle, even if they have not personally encountered such challenges.

- **Link:** [Omori on Steam](#)
- **Reference:** Rattray, T. (2024). What *Omori* teaches us about mental illness. *RPGFan*.  
<https://www.rpgfan.com/feature/what-omori-teaches-us-about-mental-illness/>



## 2. Group Therapy (Board Game)

Another notable inspiration is the board game *Group Therapy*, which focuses on mental health discussions. Although I have not played it, research indicated that it is frequently mentioned in discussions about games addressing mental health. Juli Weiner highlights that while board game enthusiasts may learn about each other through competition, the appeal of *Group Therapy* lies in how players react to questions posed by the cards, rather than merely competing (Weiner, 2020). This perspective reinforces that competition is not always necessary in board games. My experience with *The Crew*, where the winning condition involves collaboration rather than individual success, further supports the idea that our Transformative Fun game should focus on collective efforts for mutual well-being rather than survival of the fittest.

- **Link:** [Group Therapy board game](#)
- **Reference:** Weiner, J. (2020). Therapy as a party game? Yes, with fewer fights than Monopoly. *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/style/group-therapy-board-game-party.html>



### 3. Kind Words (*lo fi chill beats to write to*) (PC Game)

Kind Words (*lo fi chill beats to write to*) one of the main mechanics of the game is providing kind words to other people, and we are implementing this mechanics in our game in a form of support card that will grant additional mental health to the person the words are directed towards (Kind Words (*lo fi chill beats to write to*), 2019). We believe this mechanic makes sense in the problem we are tackling as each person with mental health is dealing with different scenarios and crises and even just a little bit of a push to the positive with kind words can go a long way to help them. This mechanic also elevates the aspect of people fun as it encourages a player to talk to another one and provides a transformative effect in the person receiving the kind word potentially feeling better on their day just hearing the kind words towards them. This is relevant in the aspect of support within our problem topic and project.

- **Link:** [Kind Words \(\*lo fi chill beats to write to\*\) on Steam](#)
- **Reference:** Reference: *Kind Words (*lo fi chill beats to write to*)*. (2019). Popcannibal.



#### 4. The Grizzled (Board Game)

The Grizzled this game provide a sense of feeling, where we are all in this together (losing and winning) and collaboration is needed to survive until the end as threats are looming in each round, with the “Hard Knocks” mechanic representing the toll of battle on mental resilience (Riffaud, Rodriguez, & Verlhac, 2015). We wanted to grasp the feeling of we are all in this together and the effect of stressors racking up due to portrayal of mental health going critical (low) or certain weakness (mental issue) result in harsher effect on certain crisis (similar to threat looming in every round) which increases the chance of death if every players are at low mental health point, which could cause a chain event of negative mental health due to death as well (this is the part where we are introducing how every player could potentially die due to a single death and is essentially how the players lose). We are reinforcing the effect of how each player is interconnected between each other through the usage of mental health and their death, and we want the players to support each other with a similar utility of mental resilience in our mental health system.

- **Link:** [The Grizzled board game](#)
- **Reference:** Riffaud F., Rodriguez J., Verlhac B. (2015). *The Grizzled*. Sweet Games



#### 5. That Dragon, Cancer (PC game)

That Dragon, Cancer is a game that depicts the developer's family's experience of a child's battle with cancer, and is structured to draw out empathy and sympathy by having players face deep emotions such as sadness, hope, and disappointment as parents. In this game, players can feel emotions of patients with cancer through the narrative which brings deeper experience. The structure of this game, where players can feel the character's suffering and sadness to develop empathy, helps to shape our connection towards the character in a more emotional and immersive way. We wanted to include the narrative in this game as our character introduction in the setup stage to make the players feel connected and immersed to their character and other characters in the game. Reinforcing this feeling of empathy and need for support among the group members.

- **Link:** [That Dragon, Cancer on Steam](#)
- **Reference:** *That Dragon, Cancer*. (2016). Numinous Games.



## 8 Why Your Project is Innovative?

### (a) Innovation

Our game is similar to a simulation game that requires people to cooperate rather than competing with each other. We base this game on the concept of therapy and/or support groups, which is rather rare in the board game/party game landscape. Communication is a necessary skill to have in the game, prompting people to talk and roleplay freely.

### (b) Relevance

Mental health is an important aspect of our lives but we don't really talk much about it since it can be considered a taboo topic in many cultures. The burden of overcoming hardships related to mental health is always on the shoulders of the person suffering from it, which is not a healthy opinion to hold. Therefore, we hope that our game, with the focus on the importance of community in helping each other with struggles, can convey the message that it is okay to seek out help when you are in a difficult place. There are many communities, groups, and services that are designed to help people. Community and society is important to individuals' happiness and well-being, and our game highlights this by its cooperative features where players are incentivized to help each other. When one person falls, everyone falls behind too - it's necessary for people to help each other to overcome challenges.

### (c) Selling points

The game is about empathizing with people with mental health issues as you play as them for seven virtual days. The game is part-educational, part-humourous, and full-entertainment. We don't want the game to be too dry and/or preachy so there are many humorous aspects to it but still hopefully gets the message across. It is a fun game to play with your friends and families and also a fun conversation starter for mental health talks among the group.

## 9 Introduction

### Premise & Theme

We wanted more people to provide support for mentally conditioned people, we also wanted to emphasize on emotional support as a form of a helping hand.

### Setting

The players are different individuals with a certain mental condition that hinders their everyday live. Somehow each player was put in the same support group together and are there to provide support to each other and accomplish team goals set within the assigned group. However everyday is not as smooth sailing as everybody hopes for, certain days worse than the other, hence why the need for emotional support is required among groupmates to essentially stay alive. The only goal is to persevere as a group and keep everyone alive and friends you make along the way.

## **Game Objective**

Each player must try to support each other with the usage of support cards and keep them away from harm in the form of losing a significant amount of mental health points. Accomplishing objectives (team/personal goals) in game works like a conditioned support card.

## **Core Gameplay**

Each players start off with 3 support cards 3 mental health point

Each player's turn they have to pay rent money (2\$) and take an event card out of a deck, which will affect the player in mental health or money.

## **Unique Elements**

The support cards that each player starts off are only usable on other players and not on themselves, forcing the support aspect of the game.

Mental health board (just to keep track of mental health and shows conditions to get out of certain stage) and mental health points, which have conditions to get out of it, if it drops down by a certain amount.

## **10 Narrative/Story**

A bus arrives at Caring Connections, where group therapy is being conducted. People are tired from the hustle of the city and the pressures of daily life. They have been emotionally wounded because of years of pressure, anxiety, the pain of failure, and more. Each of them has had a difficult time, but they step into this place hoping to find resolution.

When you pass through the door of the facility, the room is comfortably warm and has a gentle scent. You see chairs for group therapy arranged in a circle in the center of the room. Everyone still looks a little nervous, and they sit in silence, occasionally exchanging glances with each other. They seem to have an issue that they do not want to be touched.

"As long as we are here, no one will be left alone. The rule of this group therapy is that everyone supports each other. We will survive until the end and not have a mental breakdown," the leader of this group therapy guided. With these words, the participants slowly begin to introduce themselves. One participant suffers from chronic anxiety, while another struggles with stopping drinking alcohol. Everyone silently listens, yet with empathy.

The therapist gently guides them forward. Each participants works on their own personal goal but also raises the team goal to cooperatively improve each team member's mental state. However, as the sessions progress, some participants begin to lose their peace of mind. The crises they encounter in each round put a lot of mental burdens on them. If someone's mental state drops, others are also influenced by the negative effects. When someone is close to "collapsing," the other participants must step in to help, which can turn it into a crisis for the whole group.

Participants help each other with support cards and appropriate advice, but sometimes helping others means losing their own resources. Still, each participant prioritizes making sure their friends survive together while facing their own issues. With each round, participants encounter crises and overcome them together. Success can strengthen the bonds between them, but failure can make the entire group unstable. However, by the time the final session comes, all the participants become precious comrades who have grown together, no longer strangers.

Then, finally, it is the last day of the sessions. Some of the participants have achieved their goals, while others still need time to deal with their own conflicts. By the end of the final round, one question remains. Will they all be able to complete the session safely and overcome their respective difficulties? Or will one or more participants be unable to endure and reach a breaking point which leads the group to defeat? Only by supporting each other to the very end can they hope to survive together. In the end, however, they come together to admire and honor those who contributed the most to helping others.

## **11 Game mechanics**

**Amount of players: 3-6 players (Recommend 4)**

**Target Audience:**

- Age: 16+
- Gender: Inclusive for all genders.
- Location: Suitable for players in any location, particularly those interested in cooperative games and mental health themes.

## Gameplay Procedure

### Setup stage

1. Each player draws **1 Character, 1 Mental Condition, 1 Personal Goal, and 3 Support Cards**.
2. Players start with resources, including money and medication, determined by their Character and Mental Condition cards.
3. A **Team Goal card** is selected for all players to collaborate on.
4. Pawns are placed on the **Mental Health Board** at **2 mental health points**, and the Event deck is shuffled.
5. Players will have to introduce themselves (RP) based on the personal/weakness cards (Day1)

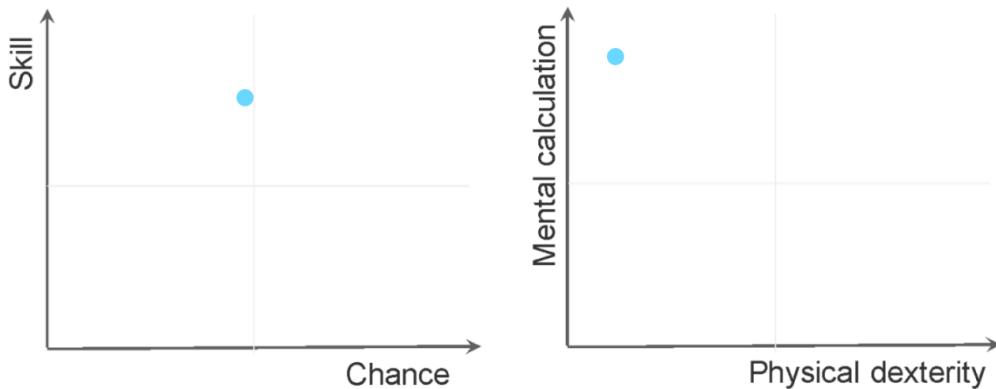
## Core Mechanics

1. **Role-Playing & Character Dynamics:**
  - Players role-play characters with unique **Mental Conditions, Occupations, and Personal Goals**, creating narratives for their actions.
2. **Cooperative Gameplay:**
  - Players work together to accomplish the **Team Goal** while managing their **Personal Goals**.
  - **Support Cards** can only be used to assist others, emphasizing teamwork.
3. **Mental Health Management:**
  - Players' **mental health points** fluctuate based on actions, Event cards, and game decisions.
  - Falling below **-5 mental health** eliminates a player, negatively impacting the team.
4. **Turn Structure:**
  - Each turn consists of three phases:
    - **Phase 1: Financial & Resources** – Pay rent (\$2), manage resources, and resolve Mental Condition effects.
    - **Phase 2: Event** – Draw and resolve an Event card.
    - **Phase 3: Actions** – Choose one action (Work, Rest, Attend Social Event, Gamble) and decide to use a Support Card.
5. **Event Cards:**
  - Players draw and resolve **Boon, Crisis, or Uneventful Day** cards, introducing variability and challenges.

## Secondary Mechanics

1. **Frugal Lifestyle Penalty:**
  - Players with **\$4 or less** lose **-1 mental health** at the start of their turn.
2. **Team Goals & Buffs:**
  - Completing the **Team Goal** provides a shared buff for all players, enhancing the group's survival.
3. **Voting for MVP:**
  - Players vote for the **Most Valuable Player (MVP)** at the end of the game based on who contributed the most.

## 12 Play matrix



Skill comes into play through strategic choices, such as deciding when and on whom to use support cards, as players cannot use them on themselves. This forces players to carefully consider each team member's needs, the timing of support, and the potential future impact of these decisions on the entire group. Mental calculation is essential, as players need to balance resources, anticipate the needs of others, and plan to meet both team and personal goals under variable conditions. The game's core challenge lies in the players' ability to collaboratively manage resources, maintain mental health points, and collectively make decisions that prevent anyone from reaching a crisis stage.

## 13 Rule Sheet

[CaringConnectionRuleBook.pdf](#)

## 14 Playtesting script including testing goals, questions, and assumptions/ hypotheses

### Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Playtesting session
3. Feedback from playtesters (interview questions - group) & survey (self)

### Introduction

Hello! We're team 1-2, and our game is Caring Connections. This is a game where you play as individuals in a therapy support group with different mental health problems. You have seven rounds to go through the game, and you have to support each other through crises and problems. So, good luck!

### The objective for this playtest (Goals/Assumptions):

- Did the dilemma of resource management tied to the other aspects of our game, did it make it more meaningful/elevated it?
- Rules
  - Are the players able to clearly understand the rules and objectives of the game?
- Goal
  - Did we achieve the goal of supporting people?
- Player Emotion
  - What are the emotional responses of players during key moments of the game, such as when other players' mental health are at risk?
  - Are the players being engaged in each round?

### What are assumptions/hypotheses worth testing?

- People would support each other, when a person is down the ditch ( low amount of resources)

## **Discussion/Interview Questions—What will you ask playtesters (before and after testing)?**

- What part did you think enforced the cooperation aspect?
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
- Do you think the game reflects the transformative goal and how well you understand the issues after playing the game?
- Within a turn, are there enough actions for players to choose from?
- Does the removal of agency on oneself hinders the game?

## **Quantitative Questions**

- How well-paced was the game? (1=Too slow, 5 = Too Fast)
- How is the balance of the support cards and crisis cards? (1=bad, 5 = good)
- Were the procedures and rules easy to understand? (1=very easy, 5 = very hard)
- How long did it take you to understand the basic mechanics (learning curve)? (x mins)
- How would you rate the game's difficulty? (1= very easy, 5 = very hard)
- How likely are you to replay this game after the first playthrough? (1 = never, 5 = play again)
- Did you feel frustrated during the game? (1 = never, 5 = constantly)

## **In-game observations during playtesting**

1. Rulebook:
  - Setup Time: Measure setup time for setup to determine if revising the rulebook can be minimized the setup time.
  - Player Confusion: Record questions or clarifications that players need about drug usage, character introductions, and team goal details.
  - Rulebook Confusion: Track the moments where players look back at the rulebook.
2. Cards and Goals:
  - Card Usage Frequency: Track how often players use support cards to know if the number of the support cards is adequate.
  - Completion Rate of Team Goals: Record whether players achieved team goal and the completion rate differs by the number of players.
3. Emotional Reactions:
  - Fun elements: Observe how players react to character backstory and any other unique element. Note if these elements can make them more engaging.
  - Frustration: Record any moments where players looks frustrated or not engaged to identify which elements creates frustration.

## **Revision Idea (Solutions, Improvements, Redesign)**

1. Rulebook and Setup
  - Set up time was around 12 minutes so we should simplify and clarify the rulebook to reduce setup time.
  - We should include more detailed explanations, especially about initial money to have and drug usage, the cards, and the winning condition.
  - Clarify how the support cards are used to help improve the mental conditions.
  - The rule book should clearly state students and unemployed don't contribute to the team goals that focus on money
2. Cards and Strategy
  - For the drug condition, the description of the personal goal should also mention that government-approved medications do not affect drug-free status.
  - We should add more game elements that cause financial risk to increase the game's difficulty and make it more challenging.
  - The timing of using support card should be restricted to a player's turn only to add more strategy.
  - Some people hold onto their support cards and choose not to use them so we should make sure if the number of the support cards is adequate to create strategy and engaging.
  - We should reduce the number of support cards in the deck because the game can be too easy to win with many support cards.
3. Goals
  - We should balance the team goal depending on the number of players.

## **Outstanding Questions**

## **Issues/Bugs**

## Change Log (changes you made during)

- Playtesting 2
  - Removed support cards from players' hand and put it into event card deck.
  - Add personal goal to the game (personal are related to the mental health condition)
- Playtesting 3
  - give 3 support cards to each players
  - Add more team goals to the game (increase collaboration)
  - Changed some mental condition cards description

## New Ideas

# 15 Insights and results from playtesting: Test for foundation/fun and structure, then later for functionality, completeness, loopholes, balance, and dominant strategies

We provided the wrong game version, when the players were playtesting and it was too late to go back. making half of the feedback more like a confirmation of what we already had in mind, but at least it confirmed some of our suspicion about the game

## Playtesting Direct Feedback:

### The game was too easy

### Game Version 1

Playtest #1: Playtester(s)/Playing Team 1-2 (self testing) <Oct 29>

- 1st playtest note: Oct 29 - ver1
- Photo of game prototype being played
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Member Vincent
    - The game did encourage the players to think and come up with creative ways to give advice.
  - Member Hao
    - It prompted people to talk to one another and immerse everyone in a pretty fun environment.
  - Member Winnie
    - The collaboration in the game allows people to feel a sense of facing obstacles together which reflect the transformative aspect of the game and the message we want to send to the players.
  - Member Sayaka
    - The game provided a unique collaboration method so it was very new and innovative. The game was not extremely difficult, the gameplay was very relieving and relaxing.
  - Member Sooda
    - It was good to give time to think about mental health
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Member Sayaka
    - The game seemed too easy to win, so we should consider adding a damage count to make it more challenging. Adding more damage count to event cards can enhance the game's engagement as we focus more on not letting anyone die. It also increases the strategic elements in the game to consider the good timing of using support cards and deciding to either work or not.
  - Member Vincent
    - The game was a bit unbalanced and lacked a bit of fun to it, maybe add a few extra cards that have different purposes
  - Member Hao
    - The game was challenging, not sure if it was the good kind or the bad kind.
  - Member Winnie
    - There is a lack of purpose when playing the game, where players are just trying to survive to the end of the game. The end goal of the game feels too linear, as it does not reflect the mental health issues in society.
  - Member Sooda

- Playtime was too long. And some rules were unclear and it was hard to check the details of the card. Also, character cards and mental status cards were hard to read... If I use Alt in Tabletop Simulator, it magnifies, but the cards were horizontal, so I felt a lot of inconvenience because I should have read it by bending my head 90 degrees.
- link to video-recording of playtesting session: <https://youtu.be/7fnT0vepXfQ>

## Playtest #2: Playtester(s)/Playing Team 1-2 (self testing) <Oct 31>

- 2nd playtest: Oct 31 (in lab) - ver1
- Photo of game prototype being played
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Member Sayaka
    - The game became better as it had less support cards on the deck so the game was adjusted to be a bit more challenging than before. I also thought we should adjust the initial mental states as they are placed in neutral right now and it is more realistic to place in lower states. If the game starts at difficult states, it can bring more empathetic feelings to players.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Member Sayaka
    - The game lacks choices to make meaningful dilemmas so we should add more mechanics such as resources that we could buy and use during the rounds.
  - Member Winnie
    - There is limited action during a player's turn. The players did not have meaningful interaction between them (removed the support card from players). The players could not help each other out of crisis. Also, most of the time players just change their mental health state based on the event cards. This did not reflect the transformative aspect of the game, which made it hard for players to understand the meaning behind each action.
  - Member Sooa
    - After each of us draws a support card to set up, we combine the remaining support and crisis cards into the same main deck, and I think it takes some of the tension out of the process by knowing what kind of event card I'm drawing on my turn because I can see the back of the card before I shuffle and draw. Also, We noticed that the back of the Event card deck revealed whether the card was a **Support** or **Crisis** card. This made it obvious what type of card the next player would draw, reducing the element of surprise and making the game less engaging.
- link to video-recording of playtesting session

## Game Version 2

### Playtest #3: Playtester(s)/ Team 1-2 (self testing) <Nov 4>

- 3rd playtest: Nov 4 (TTS, discord, recorded) - ver2
- Photo of game prototype being played
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Member Sayaka
    - Achieving the team goal brought a sense of reward and significantly eased the pressure we felt before. We should
  - Member Winnie
    - The interaction between players really fostered the transformative aspect of the game, where players were supporting each other and giving real advice based on the cards. This allows the players to look at the problems from a new perspective and build empathy with people who have mental health issues.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Member Hao
    - The game was too easy after the first four rounds. There were no major challenges after the team goal was finished as it gave a boost to everyone. There needed to be some more challenging (crisis events)

happening throughout the game, or else everything would not have that “hard” edge that we were looking for in a game about mental health struggles.

- Member Winnie
  - The game's setup requires players to complete several extra steps, such as flipping over the card decks to locate the support card deck and later combining all the card decks together. These steps can easily confuse players, causing them to reset the game if they mishandle the cards. Also, the team goal did not present a sufficient challenge for the group, as larger teams were able to complete it effortlessly. This failed to enhance the *People Fun* aspect of the game and did not effectively foster collaboration and interaction among players.
- Member Sooa
  - Day Counter:  
There was no dedicated Day Counter, so we had to use the drawing feature in Tabletop Simulator to track rounds. This highlighted the need for a proper Day Counter to streamline gameplay and avoid confusion.
  - Token Graphics:  
The tokens used for money (yellow) and medication (white) lacked distinct graphics, which made them visually unappealing and less engaging.
  - Support Card Identification During Setup:  
When combining all cards into the main deck during setup, it was unclear which cards were Support Cards, leading to confusion when distributing them to players.

- link to video-recording of playtesting session: <https://youtu.be/53Lcw7L7jRg>

#### Playtest #4: Playtester(s)/ Playtest with Team 1-3 <Nov 7>

-  4th, Nov 7: Playtesting Notes and Script
- Photo of game prototype being played
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Winnie
    - Playtesters responded positively to the collaborative elements of the game, especially enjoying moments when they could support one another and strategize as a group. They found the introduction of their characters particularly engaging, with many taking the opportunity to bring their characters to life through storytelling. This character introduction phase allowed players to bond and connect over their characters' unique traits and challenges.
  - Vincent
    - The players showed positive responses to the game and were cooperatively engaged with each other. They were creative in both their character background and their advice which had a more comedic aspect.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Winnie
    - Playtesters observed that maintaining high mental health levels was relatively easy due to the available resources, such as support cards and event outcomes that offered consistent boosts. This allowed players to avoid significant crises, which reduced the urgency and challenge in managing mental health points. Some players felt that the abundance of resources lessened the strategic tension, as they could frequently help each other without worrying about resource scarcity or difficult trade-offs. This feedback suggests that balancing resource availability could add more depth and challenge to the gameplay.
  - Vincent
    - The playtesters felt there were too many actions to do or maybe it wasn't clear enough within the rulebook. They suggested changing the wording and formatting so it's more clear.

- link to video-recording of playtesting session: X

#### Playtest #5: Playtester(s)/ Playing with Classmates - Lecture <Nov 14>

-  5th, Nov 14: Playtesting Notes and Script
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Member Winnie

- The playtesters were able to clearly understand the message behind the game. The role-playing elements allow players to experience a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration, which helps them bond quickly. By stepping into their roles, players not only engage with the narrative but also build connections through shared problem-solving and decision-making. This aspect enhances the social dynamic of the game, making the experience more immersive and enjoyable.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Member Winnie
    - The rulebook was not clear enough for new playtesters, leading to questions about what actions they needed to take and about various elements within the game. Also, some of the descriptions on the cards were unclear, which caused confusion among the players. There are also bugs in the team goals that need to be fixed. Since the testers were very lucky during gameplay, the game failed to evoke significant emotional shifts or create a sense of urgency to save someone.
- link to video-recording of playtesting session: X

## Game Version 3

### Playtest #6: Playtester(s)/ Self-testing - Lab <Nov 14>

-  6th Nov14 Playtesting Notes and Script
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - Member Sooda
    - Graphically, I feel like the token or board has been upgraded, making it easier to immerse yourself in the game.
  - Member Vincen
    - The visual update allowed gameplay to be easier and set up faster. The changes in the character cards allow a more clear understanding on how the game works without having to read the rulebook too much.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Member Sooda
    - **Card Imagery Interference:**  
The newly added images on the cards made it harder to read the text, causing inconvenience during gameplay.
    - **Lack of Distinction in Personal Goals:**  
Some **Personal Goal options** felt too similar, reducing the variety and meaningfulness of player choices.
    - **Card Updates for Specific Conditions:**  
Cards for **Gambling Addiction, Alcoholism, Workaholism, Drug Addiction, Depression, and Anxiety** required updates. The explanations were unclear, leading to confusion and difficulty in gameplay.
  - Member Winnie
    - The mental health board needs more positive and negative effects for players when they land on it. Currently, it only has three effects. Adding more effects could make the game more engaging and encourage greater interaction among players. For example, if players reach 4 on the mental health board, they could be considered in good mental health, requiring fewer mental health points to go to work.
    - Some of the explanations on the event cards are unclear, leading to confusion. For instance, the *Overtime Crisis* cards force players to go to work this turn, preventing them from taking other actions, but this could be communicated more clearly.
    - The chain reaction triggered when a character dies is too powerful, sometimes causing all players to die in the game. Introducing a cap on how many mental health points players can lose in a single turn could prevent this issue and improve the overall user experience.
- link to video-recording of playtesting session: <https://youtu.be/aEhU2XtphsE>

## Game Version 4

## Playtest #7: Playtester(s)/ Playtesting with TA - Online <Nov 17>

- Nov 17: Playtesting Notes and Script
- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - The transformative aspect of the game is present, with the usage of the mechanics and debuffs being used.
  - The roleplaying aspect allows a more immersive gameplay along with making it more engaging.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Issue: Coin and wallet condition: Cannot visually see other people's money condition without hovering on their pouch. Fixing this issue will make the game rounds more smoother, reducing movements needed within a turn.  
Suggestion: Instead of a pouch it should be coins and having different types of coins with different amounts of \$ in different coin types ( Gold -> \$5 and Silver \$1)
  - Issue: Certain Card clarity: Certain cards were hard to understand. The character card did not mention what was the idea of successful action related to the personal goal card.  
Clarifying the successful/unsuccessful result of an action towards a goal on the mental condition more clearly and straightforwards
  - **Issue:** The game currently lacks a way for players to track when they select their personal goal or which goal they have chosen. TA recommended adding a system to make this visible to all players.  
**Suggestion:** Add **Personal Goal Check Mark Tokens** and a **personal goal counter** for each player to track their choice. Additionally, update the rulebook to include a clear explanation of when personal goals are selected and how they should be tracked during gameplay.
- link to video-recording of playtesting session: <https://youtu.be/AHWuJAiiUcE>

## Game Version 5

### Playtest #8: Playtester(s)/ Showcase <Nov 21>

- What did you enjoy most about the game? Why?
  - The death chain reaction made for fun + unexpected gameplay! I liked how my role card actions made sense!
  - I know it was luck but it was pretty easy for all players. The trust in the discussion worked but will \_for everyone
  - Very good game, just one thing, the process of the team goal is confusing, it gets lost in the game.
  - Some clarity on whether event cards stop you from working would be nice. Also Really Fun! Maybe a few more good events for balancing unrelated to money.
  - Roleplaying aspect was good among us. It seemed that the game took a long time to set up and understand - learning curve was steep but nothing too much to worry about.
- What were major issues with the game? Why? Any suggestions on how the game could be improved?
  - Some clarity on whether event cards stop you from working would be nice.
  - The process of the team goal is confusing, it gets lost in the game.
  - Some of the wording on the cards does not specify who you can use them on (e.g. The Luxury Support Card, does not specify who pays for the trip).
  - Most people didn't care about finishing personal goals and team goals, since there was a lot to juggle. Maybe best to relegate them to optional/add-on content rather than a core part of the game?
- link to video-recording of playtesting session:<https://youtu.be/GU2E0i7h4M8>
- Observation and analysis table below:

Issue name & brief explanation	Issue category	Playtesting session # where the issue found	Severity rating / Priority: [options: low, medium high, critical]	Resolving mechanism
<b>Hard-to-Check Card Details</b> - The font on the cards was difficult to read.	Card Design (UI/UX)	Ver1, Playtest #1	high	Enlarged text font and ensured consistent formatting. Added a magnify-friendly vertical layout for character and mental condition cards in Tabletop Simulator.
<b>Horizontal Cards in Tabletop Simulator</b> - Cards were horizontal, requiring players to tilt their heads.	Digital Platform (Accessibility )	Ver1, Playtest #1	high	Rotated the layout of digital cards to a vertical orientation to align with Tabletop Simulator's magnification tool, improving readability and reducing physical strain.
<b>Event Card Deck Predictability</b> - Card backs revealed whether the card was Support or Crisis, reducing surprise.	Game Balance (Surprise)	Ver1, Playtest #2	medium	Redesigned the card backs to use a uniform design, so players cannot distinguish card types. This preserves the element of surprise and keeps the gameplay more engaging.
<b>Lack of Actions</b>	fun and structure	Ver1, Playtest #2	medium	As one of our core mechanics, we found it a bit boring in between turns so we decided to add more features that revolve around a player's turn.
<b>No Day Counter</b> - Lacked a proper day counter, leading to confusion when tracking rounds.	Game Tracking	Ver2, Playtest #3	medium	Added a dedicated <b>Day Counter Board</b> to clearly mark the progression of rounds, eliminating the need for external tools like Tabletop Simulator's drawing feature.
<b>Token Graphics Lack Appeal</b> - Tokens for money and medication were plain and visually unappealing.	Visual Design (Aesthetics)	Ver2, Playtest #3	low	Designed distinct, visually appealing graphics for tokens (e.g., gold coin for money and pill icons for medication) to improve player immersion and engagement.
<b>Support Card Identification During Setup</b> - Confusion about which cards were Support Cards during setup.	Setup Clarity	Ver2, Playtest #3	high	Added a <b>label or separator</b> to distinguish Support Cards during the initial setup phase, ensuring smooth distribution before combining them into the main deck.
<b>Abundance of Resources</b>	Game Balance	Playtest #4	critical	This decreases the urgency and challenge of the game, which makes it hard for players to understand the transformative aspect of the game. Also, it reduces the collaborative aspect, because everyone has high mental health points and doesn't need help from others. We reduced the number of positive resources in the game (e.g. support cards - give boost to players' mental health) and increased the amount of crisis cards in the card deck. This helps to balance the game where foster players use the resources they have in hand.
<b>Lack of Climax or Peak Moments</b>	Fun and Structure	Playtest #5	medium	Guest players noted that the rounds feel repetitive, and it lacks a variation in challenges or events to create excitement or tension. After receiving this feedback, we adjusted the game's difficulty and added more choices for joining the event.
<b>Card Imagery Interference</b> - Images made it difficult to read the text on cards.	Card Design (UI/UX)	Ver3, Playtest #6	medium	Adjusted the placement and size of card images to ensure they don't interfere with the readability of text, prioritizing clarity while maintaining aesthetics.

<b>Lack of Distinction in Personal Goals</b> - Some Personal Goal options were too similar, reducing meaningful choice.	Game Balance (Player Choice)	Ver3, Playtest #6	high	Redesigned Personal Goal options to create greater variety and ensure each option offers unique challenges or rewards, enhancing player engagement and decision-making.
<b>Unclear Condition Cards</b> - Cards for certain conditions (e.g., Gambling Addiction, Alcoholism) were unclear, causing confusion.	Card Clarity	Ver3, Playtest #6	critical	Revised and clarified descriptions for affected condition cards, ensuring clear instructions and consistency in the language to improve player understanding and gameplay fluidity.
<b>Coin and Wallet Visibility</b> - Players couldn't easily see others' money without hovering, slowing gameplay.	Game Tracking	Ver 4, Playtest #7	high	Replaced pouch system with <b>visible coins</b> of varying denominations (e.g., <b>Gold = \$5</b> , <b>Silver = \$1</b> ) to make tracking easier and reduce unnecessary movements.
<b>Card Clarity (Character and Goals)</b> - Confusion about the connection between character actions and personal goals.	Card Design (Clarity)	Ver3, Playtest #7	critical	Updated character and personal goal cards with explicit descriptions of <b>successful</b> and <b>unsuccessful actions</b> related to personal goals, ensuring clarity
<b>Tracking Personal Goals</b> - No system to track personal goal selection or progress.	Player Progress Tracking	Ver3, Playtest #7	high	Added <b>Personal Goal Check Mark Tokens</b> and a <b>personal goal counter</b> for tracking choices. Updated the rulebook with clear guidelines for selecting and tracking personal goals.
<b>Unclear information on cards</b>	Foundation	Ver 5, Playtest #8	medium	We received some feedback from guest players asking how a player with insomnia successfully sleeps, so we updated a card to clarify on the insomnia card to say unsuccessful rolls would result in poor sleep.
<b>Unclear Instructions on Rulebook</b> - The winning condition and action phase instructions was confused	Foundation	Playtest #2,4,5,7	critical	We updated the instructions on the rulebook to make it more clear for players and added important information like winning conditions and an explanation of the elements in the game to the beginning of the rulebook.
<b>Cap on Mental Health Points Lost in One Round</b> - The chain reaction of one person dying is too powerful, and can easily end the game which is not balanced.	Game Balance	Ver 3, Playtest #6	critical	We add a cap where each player can only lose a maximum 5 mental health points per round. Players will all die due to the chain reaction.

- Key Changes/Revisions After Playtest (based on the above observations & reflection):

## 16 Analyze your game in terms of decision types, dilemmas, rewards, surprises, and endings

### (a) Decision Types

#### Analyze for hollow, obvious, or uninformed decisions

- Players can choose who to use their support cards on
  - we could have players be allowed to keep the cards in hand
- Players decide how to use their money within their turn, should they risk their own safety and some to another player, should they spend some to buy some medicine, or should they not spend anything, believing a crisis card might affect their income?

- maybe have the money decisions be made before they draw an event card to increase the risk of being generous
- Each player also has their own unique characters who have different interactions with the round, an example is the gambling addict, they could choose whether to gamble and give in or they could try for their personal goal and resist.

### Analyze for desirable decisions

1. Support cards and giving money - informed and weighted decisions

Support cards and the option to give money involve carefully considering other players' needs, states, and the team's overall progress. These decisions become strategic, as players must evaluate who will benefit most, and they also encourage cooperation or negotiation between players. For instance, giving money to a struggling player may help the team long-term by keeping that player from falling into a critical mental health state. The thought process here creates meaningful engagement among players as they weigh the benefits of immediate assistance against the risks of their own future needs.

2. Giving a word of advice - a dramatic decision

Offering advice to another player requires a balance of logic and empathy. Players need to consider not only what is strategically sound but also how their words may impact the recipient's mental health and choices.

3. Buying a pill is an immediate decision

Buying a pill to regain mental health represents a quick, decisive action, almost like a survival instinct. Players know they can stabilize their mental health quickly but at a monetary cost, which could affect their ability to make other long-term investments or help others.

- The same goes for working but reversed

4. Working towards the team goal is a long-term decision

Achieving the team goal requires everyone's contribution within the timeframe of multiple turns. This decision stands out because it emphasizes teamwork, trust, and the challenge of delayed gratification. Unlike immediate decisions, the team goal encourages players to think beyond their own survival, urging them to consider the cumulative effects of cooperation and patience. Everyone benefits upon completion

### (b) Dilemmas

1. The Trolley Problem

1.1) In our game, each player faces a dilemma between pursuing personal goals or contributing to the team's collective goals. The choices are designed to be part of the core gameplay and arise naturally through the game's mechanics. Players must decide whether to act in their own self-interest or prioritize the team's well-being. For instance, a Workaholic player may want to rest to achieve their personal goal of taking a break, but this choice could jeopardize the team's goal of accumulating \$40, especially if their contribution is crucial for success. This decision-making process is central to the game, as it continuously forces players to evaluate their actions based on the context of both individual and group needs.

1.2) This dilemma is directly tied to the overall game objective, which emphasizes cooperation, empathy, and shared responsibility. It forces players to make tough decisions that reflect the inherent conflict between personal desires and the well-being of the group. These choices create interesting and meaningful dynamics by challenging players to balance their own needs with the collective needs of others. As players navigate these decisions, they are prompted to consider not just what's best for them personally, but also the broader impact on the team.

This dynamic supports the transformative aspect of the game by encouraging players to experience the complexities of mental health struggles and the ripple effects of their decisions on others. It creates an immersive environment where the player is constantly weighing personal goals against team goals, offering opportunities for growth in emotional intelligence and decision-making. It reflects real-life scenarios where individual needs may conflict with those of a community, providing a deeper, more relatable gameplay experience. By highlighting these tensions, the game helps players understand the importance of collaboration and the consequences of neglecting the collective good.

This choice, like the Trolley Problem, encourages players to reflect on moral dilemmas and the broader impact of their actions in both personal and communal contexts, deepening the connection to real-world ethical struggles.

2. Resource Management (Scarcity Trap Dilemma)

2.1) In our game, resource management creates a Scarcity Trap dilemma, where players must manage limited resources like money, mental health, and support cards. This forms a critical part of the core gameplay. Players are challenged to decide when and how to use their support cards—Key resources that can boost either their own mental health or other player's mental health. For example, using a support card early can help stabilize a struggling teammate, preventing their mental health from dropping to -5, which would result in a -3 penalty to the entire team's mental health. However, using too many support cards too soon can leave the team without vital resources for dealing with crises in later stages. Thus, players must balance the immediate benefit of using a resource with the long-term need to conserve it for future challenges.

2.2) This dilemma emphasizes the importance of teamwork. Our goal is not to have a single winner but to encourage players to use limited resources strategically while helping each other maintain healthy mental health levels. To do so, players must carefully plan their actions, considering potential risks and making decisions that will benefit both themselves and the group. By managing limited resources, players experience the challenge of balancing self-interest with the needs of others, prompting them to ask how their individual actions affect the group as a whole. This reflection on personal responsibility is central to the game, allowing players to better understand the impact of their choices and how they contribute to group stability.

Additionally, this dilemma simulates the experience of supporting others, offering players a chance to reflect on real-world values such as altruism, volunteerism, and charitable giving. The game provides an opportunity to consider how working together towards a collective goal mirrors the effort of individuals in real life who contribute to community welfare.

This ties directly to the transformative goal of the game by encouraging empathy, cooperation, and the prioritization of collective well-being over individual gain. Players are not just competing; they are actively building connections and learning the value of supporting each other. This focus on collaboration, while managing limited resources, enhances the overall gameplay by making decisions feel meaningful and tied to real-world challenges. By incorporating these elements, the game encourages social awareness and teamwork, helping players internalize these lessons in a fun and immersive way.

### 3. The Emotional Rollercoaster

3.1) In our game, players frequently encounter emotional highs and lows as they navigate the mental health challenges of their characters. This emotional rollercoaster is represented by fluctuating mental health levels that are influenced by actions, events, and interactions within the game. Players face decisions that may trigger an emotional reaction, such as whether to engage in a difficult task that risks draining their mental health or to take a break to restore their well-being. The core gameplay revolves around managing these emotional fluctuations, requiring players to balance emotional stability with progress toward their personal and team goals.

3.2) The emotional rollercoaster mirrors the real-world impact that emotions have on mental health, and the players' ability to navigate this rollercoaster affects both their personal progress and the success of the group. As players encounter these emotional challenges, they are forced to make meaningful choices about how to prioritize their well-being in the context of a shared objective.

The dilemma is both interesting and meaningful because it emphasizes the importance of emotional regulation and resilience. In the context of a transformative game, this dilemma encourages players to reflect on their own emotional responses and how they affect others, fostering empathy and emotional intelligence. This dynamic also aligns with the game's theme of cooperation, as emotional turmoil can affect the team's overall success, further highlighting the interdependence between individuals in a group.

By incorporating this emotional rollercoaster, the game enhances the gameplay experience by offering players a deeper, more immersive connection to the theme of mental health struggles. Players gain a better understanding of the complexity of emotional challenges and are given opportunities to develop strategies for managing their emotions, ultimately enriching the transformative experience of the game.

## (c) Rewards

- **Individual Goal Achievement:** Each character has a unique personal goal (e.g., overcoming a gambling addiction, avoiding specific behaviours), which provides a reward of **+4 mental health** upon completion. These personal goals are tied to the character's backstory and mental health challenges, helping to deepen the emotional engagement of the game. The reward is useful because the +3 boost to mental health helps players maintain their well-being, aligning with the overall game objective of sustaining good mental health. Additionally, achieving these personal goals can enhance player immersion, as they become more invested in their character's narrative. This is because each personal goal is directly linked to the player's **current mental condition**, and completing a goal feels like role-playing through real-life struggles and achieving personal growth.
  - **Timing of Individual Rewards:** Personal goals can only be achieved after a minimum of 3 rounds. This timing is strategic because mental health tends to decline as the game progresses, especially in the later rounds. Thus, achieving a personal goal at this stage provides a much-needed boost, increasing player satisfaction and reinforcing the theme of overcoming adversity.
- **Team Success Rewards:** When the group collectively achieves certain milestones (e.g., raising a certain amount of money or maintaining a minimum level of mental health), the entire team receives ongoing positive rewards. For example, if the team collectively raises **\$40**, every player gains **+1 mental health each round**. This reinforces the importance of working together toward shared goals, emphasizing the cooperative nature of the game. These rewards are tied to the theme of collaboration and help foster a sense of community and shared achievement among players.
  - **Timing and Impact:** Team rewards are typically earned in the mid to late stages of the game, when mental health resources are dwindling, and the need for support is greatest. This well-timed reinforcement not only keeps players motivated but also highlights the impact of collective effort, making the rewards feel meaningful and satisfying. The

anticipation of these rewards encourages players to strategize and prioritize the team's well-being, creating a dynamic and cooperative gameplay experience.

## (d) Surprise

### Surprises in the Game

- **Crisis Cards:**

In the later stages of the game, drawing a **Crisis Card** can introduce significant surprises, such as a major drop in mental health points. These unexpected events can drastically shift the game's progress, forcing players to adapt quickly and rethink their strategies. For example:

- A sudden **-3 mental health penalty** may push a player dangerously close to collapse, requiring immediate group intervention.

- **Support Card Limitations:**

The inability to use **Support Cards** on oneself creates surprise moments when players unexpectedly require assistance from others. This dynamic reinforces the cooperative nature of the game, as players cannot solely rely on their own resources.

- **Unpredictable Event Outcomes:**

Event cards introduce a mix of **Boon**, **Crisis**, and **Uneventful Day** cards, which are drawn randomly. This unpredictability keeps players on edge, as they cannot fully anticipate whether their turn will bring relief, additional challenges, or no change at all.

## (e) Endings

There are two possible outcomes in the ending. Either all players overcome their mental challenges and return to their lives, or one of the players fails which leads to everyone losing the game. Ensuring everyone survives the game is relatively easy as there are enough support cards and opportunities to maintain mental stability. For example, working toward the team goal during the game increases mental points, and pursuing and achieving personal goals does as well. Therefore, the game usually ends on a positive note most of the time. However, sometimes, one decision made during the rounds can cause a significant drop in mental points, leading to a game loss, so we have to carefully consider each decision in every turn. Additionally, there is also a second phase upon winning the game which would be the voting system. Players are encouraged to be supportive throughout the game and here is where their time shines. Based on their contribution, players vote on the person they believe was the MVP (the most supportive person). People would be dead may also vote and be voted for.

## 17 Overall Reflection

- Certain playtests provided an insightful addition to the game. One of which was regarding the removal of the purse and making the player board components more visual, so that the condition can be seen from afar and not needing to waste movement to look at other players' condition.
- At certain points, it felt like we were piling on more actions within a turn and were doubting whether adding more would add or ruin the fun aspect of the game. We were kind of stuck in limbo, where it felt like things needed to be done in a single turn to not have enough aspect that makes the game fun.
- We did spend about 2 weeks testing out the event cards percentage as originally we only had support and crisis events, which were both used in the event cards, and we were testing out the percentage there. However later on it would be better to separate the support cards into different types ( one for the ones that you start with in your hands ( more powerful effect, as there is only a limit of 3 per player) and the other one has lesser effect in the event deck).
- We did have card clarity problems from the start, and it continued later on as well as there are a lot of words within all the cards, and we would sometimes miss the problem, due to us already having the concept down in our heads, hence why we thought the playtest from other player provides a better result in noticing this problem.
- One of the most valuable insights from our game design process was the importance of playtesting. When we initially created the rules and designed the cards, many aspects of the game seemed straightforward. However, playtesting revealed areas where players experienced confusion, whether it was due to unclear wording or ambiguous actions.

We also discovered that our team's self-testing had limitations. Since we were already familiar with the rules and design, it was difficult for us to identify issues that new players might encounter. Playtesting with people unfamiliar with the game provided fresh perspectives, highlighting areas in need of improvement. For example, when players had difficulty understanding the rulebook or certain mechanics, it became clear which parts required more detailed or clearer explanations.

Through these playtesting sessions, we were able to refine the game's mechanics, streamline the rulebook, and enhance player understanding, ultimately making the game more engaging and accessible. Moving forward, we plan to incorporate more iterative testing and focus on player feedback to continue improving clarity and gameplay balance.

This process underscored the value of testing with a diverse group of players and adapting designs based on real user experiences, a critical step in evolving the game into its best version.

- One of the most insightful aspects was observing how players interacted with the game during playtesting. This highlighted areas where the design succeeded, such as fostering collaboration and engagement. Also, where it fell short, such as unclear rules or overpowered mechanics. The iterative nature of the process, from brainstorming ideas to implementing changes based on player feedback, shows the importance of adaptability and continuous improvement.

Designing to foster Transformative and People Fun aspects was a constant focus. It was exciting to see players bonding through role-playing and problem-solving. However, it also became clear that certain elements, like the mental health board and event cards, needed to be more dynamic and clear to maintain player interest. Balancing challenge and fairness was another key lesson, as the team goal and chain reaction mechanics sometimes disrupted the intended player experience.

## 18 Team Communication and Processes

- **Have an open suggestion list:** we think one issue that our team has is that many people have different ideas that we bring up spontaneously in meetings that kind of derail the meetings. So, we think it might be a good idea to have an open suggestion list (in Figma, where we have our design board already) where people can express their ideas on changing, adding, or removing certain features in the game. In the meetings, the team can go through the suggestions to discuss and vote on whether to implement the ideas or not. In that way, meetings will be more time-effective and not interrupted by spontaneous ideas.
- **Implementing Structured Meetings with Clear Agendas:** Currently, our meetings are somewhat informal, with broad topics set for discussion but without detailed agendas. To increase productivity and ensure effective contributions, we propose adopting structured meetings with well-defined agendas. Before each meeting, we will establish clear objectives, distinguishing between tasks requiring group discussion and those that can be handled individually. This will allow us to focus our meeting time on collaborative tasks, while also empowering team members to work independently between meetings. As a team, we will collaborate together to determine these tasks, ensuring everyone agrees on what can be accomplished individually and what requires collective input. By implementing this structured approach, we can avoid lengthy and unfocused meetings, improve the use of everyone's time, and foster a more effective and organized workflow. This change will ensure that meetings are productive, and team members can contribute more meaningfully to the project.
- **Clear Roles:** Establishing clear positions and responsibilities for each team member. Without defined roles, our team often overlaps in tasks, leading to conflicts, confusion, and inefficiency. Assigning specific roles based on each member's strengths and relevant skills can streamline decision-making and ensure that everyone contributes effectively. Clear role definitions allow discussions to become more focused, reducing the need for extended or repeated meetings. To start by identifying each team member's strengths and preferred areas of responsibility, then assigning roles accordingly—for example, designating one person for project management, another for design, and others for development or playtesting. Having a team leader who can finalize decisions after gathering input also allows meetings to progress more efficiently, as constant alignment from everyone becomes unnecessary. Additionally, assigning a primary contact for each task reduces the need for everyone to be present for each decision, minimizing repetitive meetings and potential conflicts.
- **Agile Sprint:** Implementing agile sprints would provide a structured framework for our project, helping us stay on track with focused, time-bound goals. In each sprint, team members can independently work on their assigned roles while remaining aligned with the overall project objectives. This structure also helps prevent decision-making bottlenecks by focusing each meeting on specific sprint goals and topics, rather than revisiting broader project decisions. We could organize the project into weekly sprints with clear objectives for each. By assigning tasks based on roles and sprint goals, and limiting meetings to updates on sprint progress or blockers, we can ensure that discussions remain productive. This approach would allow team members to work independently on their parts and reduce the need for frequent group meetings.

## **Appendix A: Ideation/Conceptualization Activity Report**

**New idea**

Game Overview: This board game is centered on the women's safety theme. By writing words on the right, it gives broader understandings about these ideas and encourages players to work together to ensure everyone's safe return home.

**Social new item**

**Game Objective:** The board game is centered on the women's safety theme. By writing words on the right, it gives broader understandings about these ideas and encourages players to work together to ensure everyone's safe return home.

**Women's Safety**

**Violent Ideas**  
(overall health: 0+1 step)

**Description:** This board game focuses on health awareness, empathy, and understanding that there are different ways of tackling mental health issues. The game highlights the importance of empathy, understanding, and support networks, as players work to complete daily tasks, manage relationships, and avoid harmful habits, facing unique mental health struggles.

**Objectives:** The main objective is for the players to support each other and maintain a balanced life for their characters. Each player needs to achieve personal milestones in real-life, relationships, or career or volunteer responsibilities before the game ends. However, if any player's mental health deteriorates too much, they will leave the game, preventing the player to continue their responsibilities towards the game goals to reach.

**Content:**

- Character Cards
- Character Cards Motor Board
- Additional Challenges
- Additional Milestones
- Avatar Cards
- Avatar Cards

**Context:**

Character Cards: Players start with a randomly chosen character card that have specific characteristics to them. If it could range from depressed, anxious, empathetic, etc.

**Example of a character card**

- Name: Anna
- Age: 25
- Personality: Driven, Ambitious, Cautious
- Background: Anna is a single mom who always wants to make sure her son is safe. She is very empathetic and likes to help others. She is also very determined and likes to work hard to reach her goals.

**Personal Goals & Milestones:** Each character has personal goals that they want to achieve like the owner of the character (e.g., complete a project, improve a relationship, etc.). These goals are set by the player themselves. If a player reaches their goal, they will receive a reward. However, if a player fails to reach their goal, they will lose a step.

**Anticipated Challenges:** Along with the character cards, players must also face a variety of challenges that may happen to them. Examples include: Harassment, Robbery Attempt, Stalking, Bullying, and more. These challenges can affect a player's mental health and may require players to take action to overcome them.

**Anticipated Rewards:** Challenges that are overcome can lead to rewards. These rewards can be anything from a promotion at work, a raise, or even a vacation. These rewards can help players maintain their mental health and feel encouraged. Players can choose which three challenges above are used for helping other players. Each challenge emphasizes that small events can significantly change one's life.

**Example plan for a challenge:**

**Support Network:** Players have access to a virtual Support Network tab. This tab represents friends, family members, co-workers, and/or any other individuals that the player can rely on for support. It is important for the player to be around their network, using any resources available on the resource, as some resources may be unreliable and less effective than others.

**Each Turn:** Players would get to draw one or a few cards (e.g. work, school, therapy). Players can play 2 turns simultaneously which could be a single turn or even two consecutive turns. At the end of each turn, players could complete as many rewards as they can. There would also be within actions that could be completed during a turn.

**Every Turn:** Players would have to draw a character card which would dictate the player's mental health status or vice versa. The strength of the cards and certain card details are dependent on the character of the player, for example creating a spending activity, taking up one of the player's turn to go to the gym, or even skipping a turn if the player's mental health is low. In addition, the player's mental health would decrease if they were to leave the game. The strength of the character would determine the strength of the player's mental health.

**End Condition:**

- The game ends when the game count is after a maximum amount of points pass, everyone is out, or when everyone completes their milestones.
- Completing milestones may be either in a continuous sequence or in waves.

**We Consider:**

- How can we increase the highest amount of points possible? They can earn points by:
  - Hiring other players
  - Completing challenges
  - Completing challenges
  - Completing challenges
- Completing weekly point of the end of the game

**Pointers:**

- + 1
- 1
- The Mental Circle

**Climate change**

**Waste**

**Objective:** Players work together as city planners to develop sustainable cities within a shared world, balancing population growth, economic prosperity, and environmental health. The aim is to make informed decisions that will lead to a better future for all.

**Players and Goals:**

- Players: City Planners, trying to maintain a healthy urban geographic features
- Goals: Sustainable city development, water resources
- Montain City: Rich in minerals and fossils
- Desert City: Rich in oil and gas, but with limited water potential
- Tropical Paradise: Fertile land for agriculture

**Game Setup:**

- City Planner: Represents global resources (air quality, green space, soil, ocean health, and biodiversity), effectively using city's actions.
- Geography: Represents the geographic area, including its natural resources, accessibility, and local environment, along with unique resources tied to its geographic.
- Geography Phases:

  - Farm player chooses development cards each round that include options like Industrial Growth, Residential Growth, and Natural Resources. Such cards have benefits offering that city's resources, equities, or advantages.
  - Development: The farm player can choose right side of the board (Residential Growth, Industrial Growth) impacting the next movement point.
  - Land Allocation:

    - A river card is drawn, representing a natural disaster or environmental impact that affects one or more cities. The farm player can choose right side of the board (Residential Growth, Industrial Growth) impacting the next movement point.

  - Urban Growth:

    - In an event card is drawn, representing a natural disaster or environmental impact that affects one or more cities. The farm player can choose right side of the board (Residential Growth, Industrial Growth) impacting the next movement point.

  - Water Health Check:

    - Each player checks the shared planet Earth health indicators for quality, ocean health, and climate stability. If these indices fall below a player's own consequences, such as increased flooding, drought, or rising sea levels, the player must take action to mitigate the damage.

  - Negative Phase:

    - Players can choose to pollute and use their resources, signs to begin beneficial projects, or measures to maintain peace (e.g. the Mountain City might need a dam to generate global resources).

**Win Condition:**

  - If all players have maintained a balanced ecosystem on the board, a number of rewards, incentives, and opportunities are awarded. This includes the ability to develop global infrastructure, indicating each achievement, at player's choice, illustrating the advancement of protecting global health.

# Mental Health



Vincent's Idea

(mental health) (2+ players)

## Overview:

focuses on mental health awareness, empathy and understanding that there are different ways of tackling mental health issues. This game highlights the importance of empathy, understanding, and support networks, as players work to complete daily tasks, manage relationships, and avoid burnout while facing unique mental health struggles.

## Objective:

The primary objective is for players to support each other and maintain a balanced life for their characters. **Each player needs to achieve personal milestones in well-being, relationships, and career or school responsibilities before the game's end.** However, if any player's mental health deteriorates too much, the game ends, symbolizing the impact of unchecked mental strain on everyone. (similar to the parent game shown in class)

## Contents:

- Character cards
- Mental Health Meter Board
- Activities/Challenges
- Social Network Cards
- Action Cards
- Crisis Cards

## Context:

Character Cards: Players start with a randomly drawn character card that have specific characteristics to them. This could range from depressed, anxious, burnout, driven, sensitive, or perfectionist.

## Examples of a character card:

- Name: Alex
- Occupation: Student
- Personality: Driven, Anxious, Perfectionist
- Strength/Weaknesses: Clear/straightforward (may say what you want to hear or say the wrong things), etc.



Personal Goals and Milestones: Each character has personal goals they aim to achieve over the course of the game (e.g., complete a project, improve a relationship, or build self-confidence). Achieving milestones offers mental health boosts and brings players closer to winning. However, setbacks can temporarily interrupt progress, requiring players to adapt and support each other.

Activities/Challenges: Along with the character cards, players would also have a sanity/mental health meter that people have to manage. It represents unexpected stressors, like criticism at work or conflict with friends, which can lower their mental health meter if not managed properly. Players can choose to face these challenges alone or ask for help from other players. Each challenge emphasizes that sometimes "small" events can have significant emotional impacts.

(example: plan a birthday party,

Support Network: Players have access to a shared "Support Network" deck. These cards represent friends, family members, counsellors, and self-care techniques. Using a Support Network card can provide relief or an extra boost, but it also requires players to be mindful about not over-relying on any one resource, as some resources may be unavailable or less effective if used too frequently. Additionally, using too many may cause other players to target/shun you.

Each turn, players would get to draw up to 4 action cards (i.e. work, school, therapy). Players can place 2 per turn unless otherwise which can help regain some sanity or earn some money. At the end of the turn, players can discard as many unused action cards as they wish. There could also be selfish action cards aimed only for self-benefit such as bullying (steal 1 sanity from a player).

Every few turns, players would have to draw a crisis card which would drain the player's mental health meter or other resources. The strength of the crisis cards and action cards depends on the characteristics of their character. An example could be a gambling addiction, taking up one of the player's turns to place an action card or a panic attack, drastically decreasing the mental meter. In this example, if the person is anxious, the strength of the card is boosted and if they were to have the calm trait, the strength of the panic attack would be weakened.

## End Condition:

Still deciding but the game could end after a certain amount of rounds pass, everyone is out, or when everyone completes their milestones

- Completing milestones may be better as it encourages players to work together.

## Win Condition:

The player with the highest amount of points wins. They can earn points by:

- Helping other players
- Completing milestones
- Completing Challenges
- 2 points per sanity point at the end of the game

## Possible names:

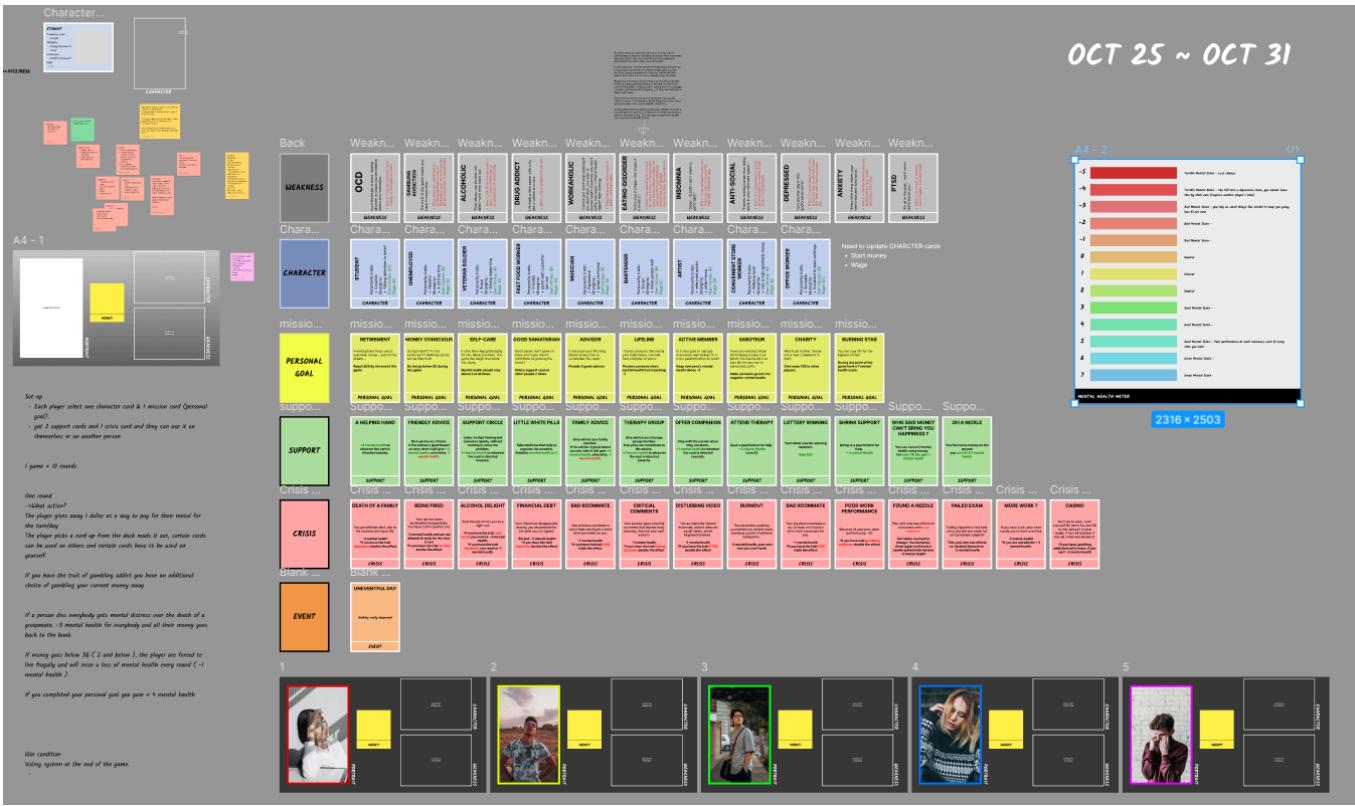
- a
- The Mental Crisis



## Game Prototype

Ver1

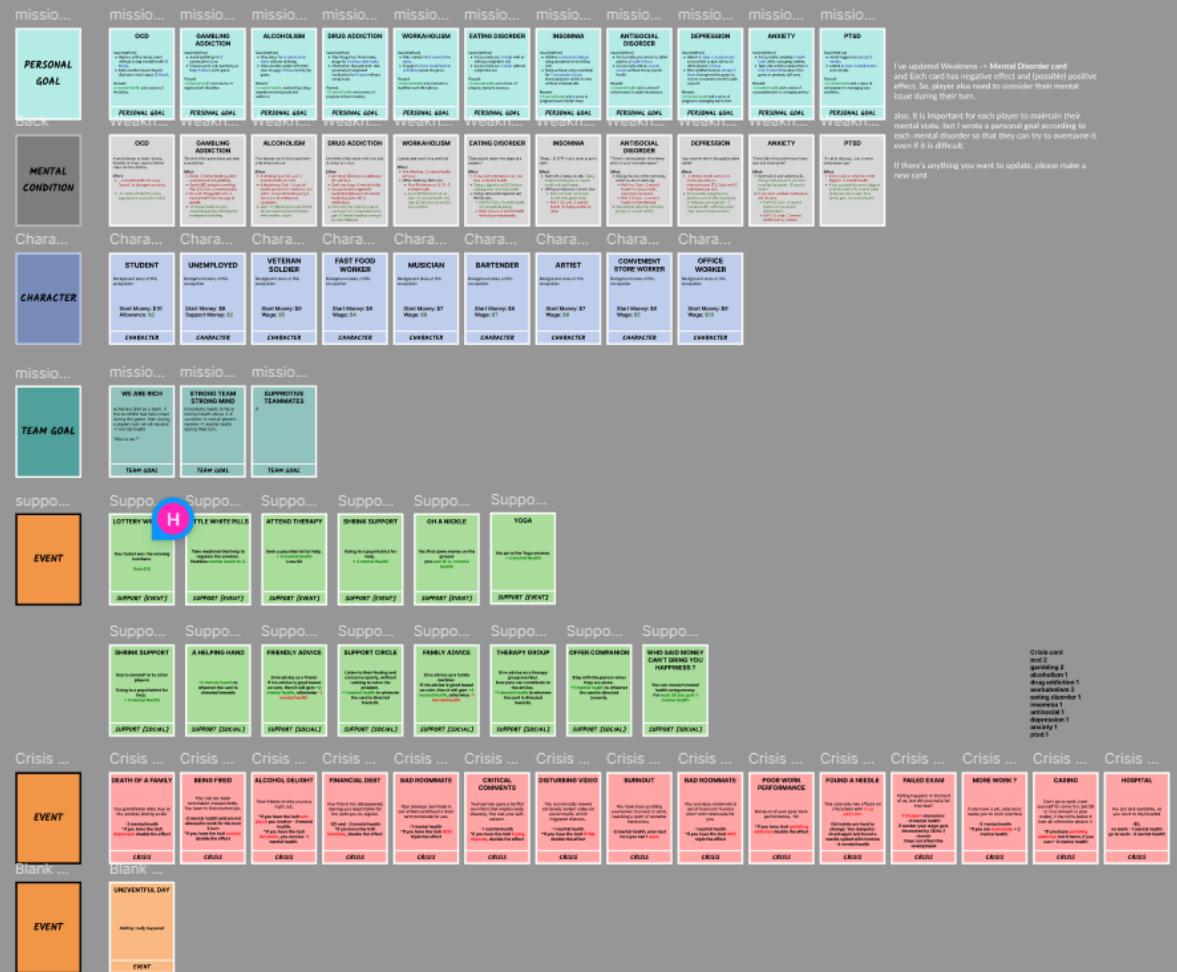




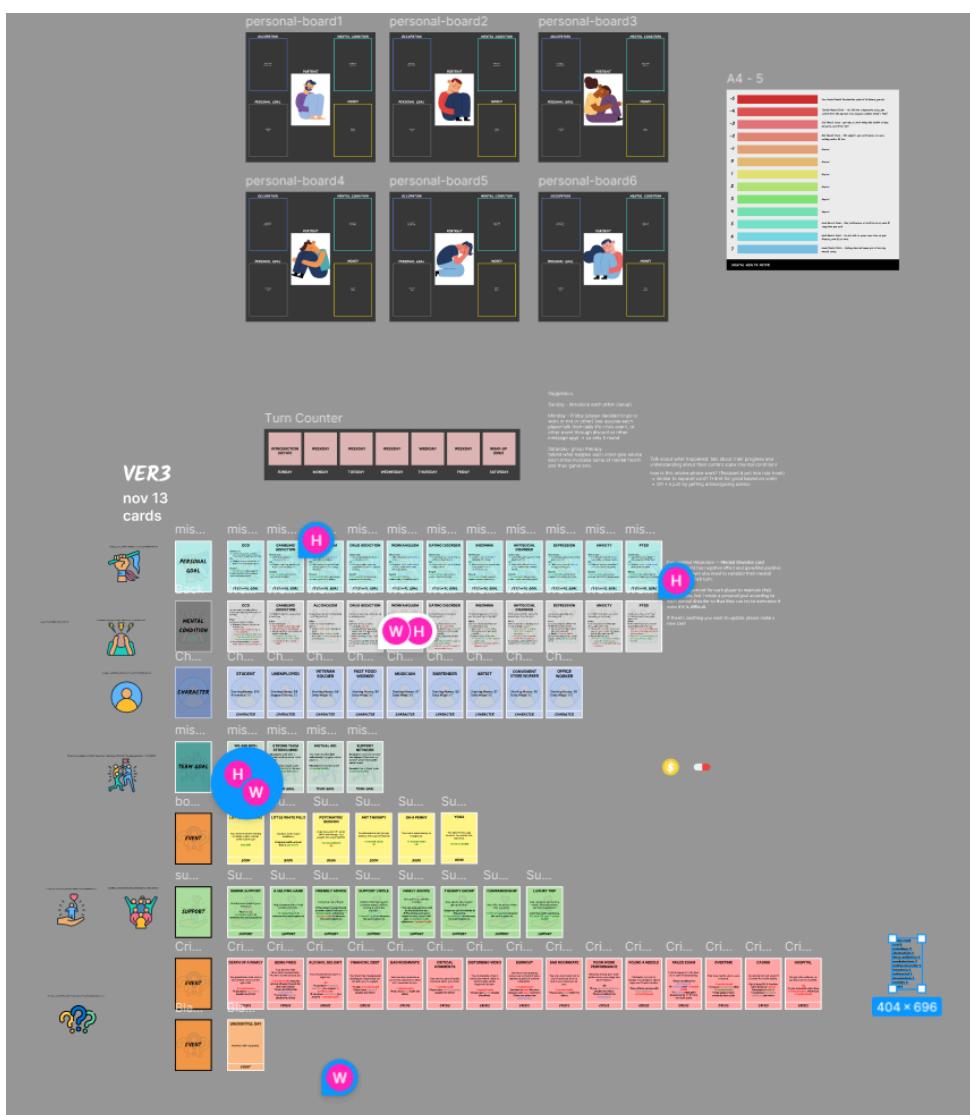
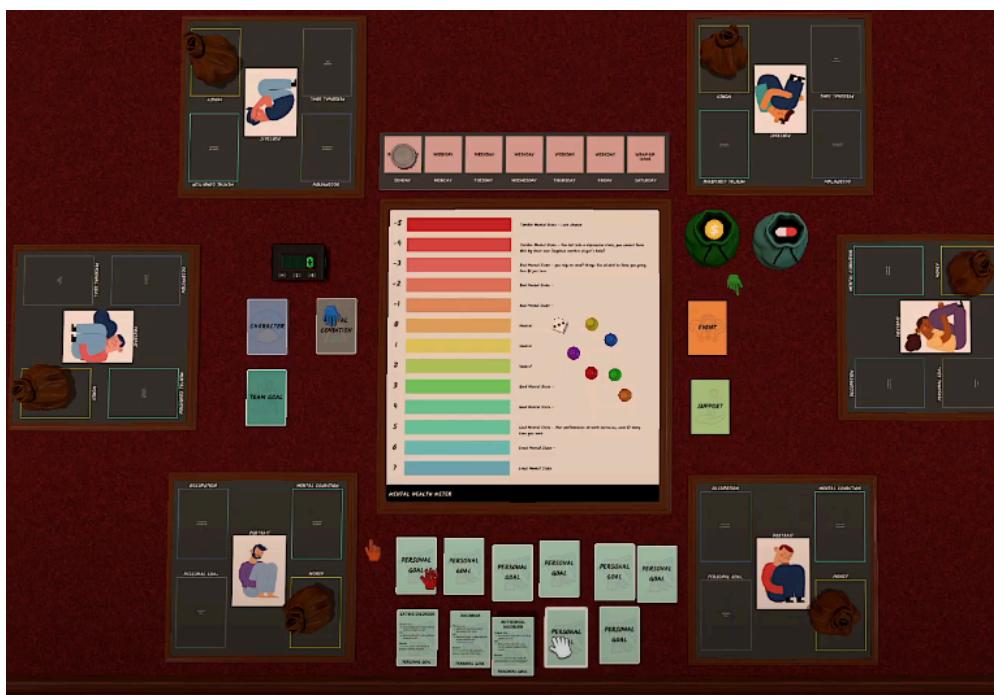
Ver2



NOV 1 - NOV 6



Ver3



Ver4



**VER4 (READY  
COMPONENTS)** Nov 16 Components For TTS

# VER4 (READY COMPONENTS)

## Nov 16 Components For TTS

mission ...

mission...

Charact...

Character...

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

CHARACTER

mission ...

mission...

support...

boon ba...

Crisis c...

Blank e...

Support...

Support...

Support...

Support...

Support...

Support...

9.1%

14 \* 2

6\*2

A4 - 6

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

personal-board1

personal-board2

personal-board3

personal-board4

personal-board5

personal-board6

Ver5 (This version used in Showcase)



VER 5  
UPDATED ON NOV 20  
AFTER PLAYTEST  
WITH TA

Nov 20

- Vincent, Koop, Sooa, Hao updated

**mission...**

mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...
DEBT	DEBT	DEBT	ALCOHOLISM	DRUG ADDICTION	WORKAHOLISM	EATING DISORDER	INSOMNIA	ANTISOCIAL	DEPRESSION
PERSONAL GOAL	PERSONAL GOAL	PERSONAL GOAL	PERSONAL GOAL	PERSONAL GOAL	PERSONAL GOAL				
Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend

**Character...**

CHARACTER									
STUDENT	UNDERCOVER	OFFICER	ARTIST	MUSICIAN	BARTENDER	ARTIST	CONFIDENTIAL	OFFICE WORKER	OFFICE WORKER
Starting Money 10									

**mission ...**

mission...	mission...	mission...	mission...
TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL

**support...**

SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT
WINE SUPPORT	A HELPING HAND	PERFECT HOME	SUPPORT CIRCLE	FAMILY ADVOCACY	THHERAPY GROUP	COMPANIONSHIP	LUXURY TRIP	SHADE JUDGE

**boon ba...**

CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	CRISIS...	
DEATH OF A FAMILY	BENEFITS	ALCOHOLISM	FINANCIAL DEBT	BAD INVESTMENT	CITICAL COMMENT	DETERIORATING VIBES	BURNOUT	FOOD WORK PERFORMANCE	FAILED TEAM	OVERTIME	CASINO	HOSPITAL
CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS	CRISIS

**INCIDENTS DAY**

INCIDENTS DAY	INCIDENTS DAY
1+4	9.1%

**Support...**

Support...	Support...	Support...	Support...	Support...	Support...
LOTTERY WINNER	LITTLE WHITE FELLER	PSYCHOTIC PARENT	BASE ROOM	ON A PENNY	VISA

**actionsboard**

14+2

**Turn Counter**

INTRODUCTION	WEEKEND	WEEKEND	HOLIDAY	WEEKDAY	WEEKDAY	WEEKDAY	WEEKEND
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

**mental board**

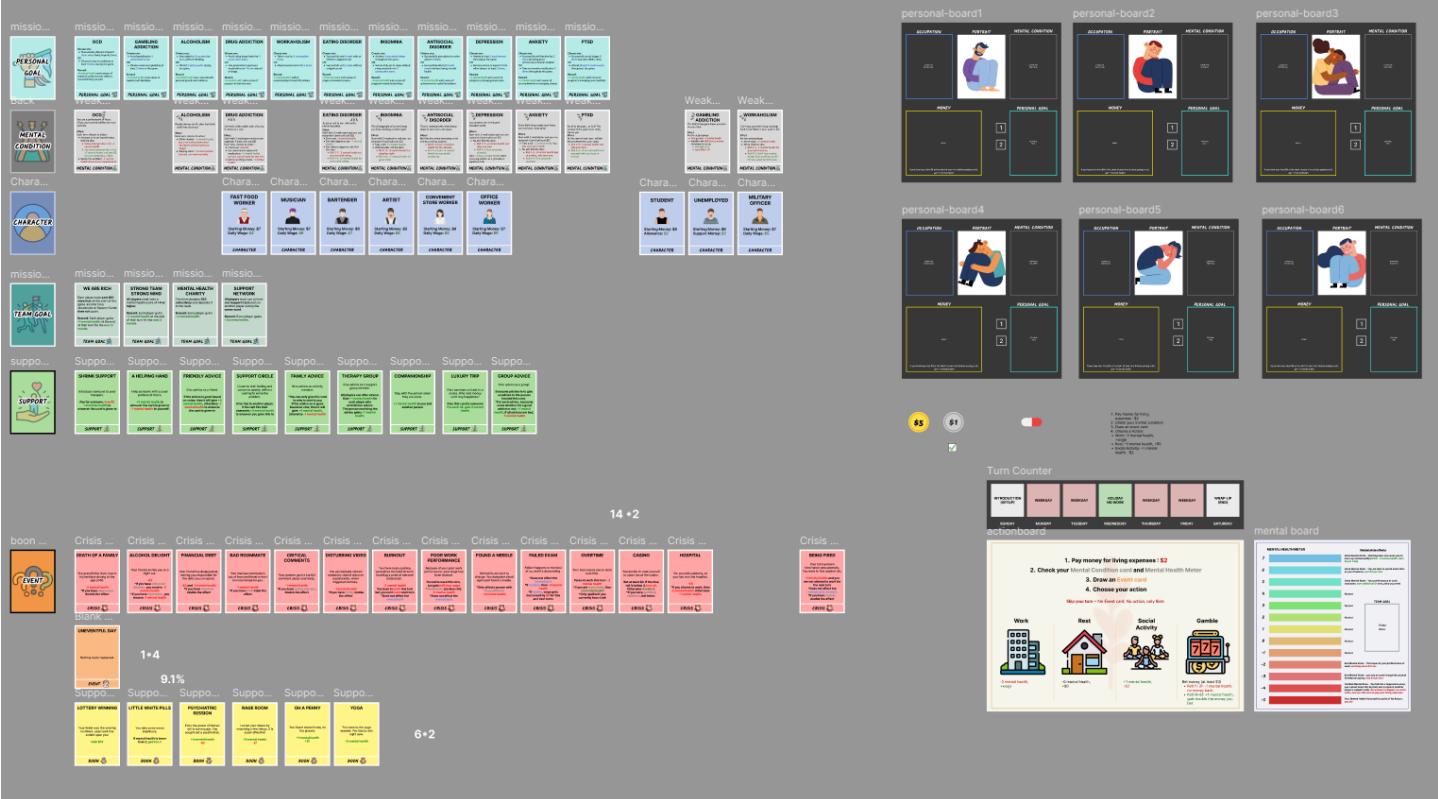
1. Pay money for living expenses: \$2  
2. Check your mental condition card and mental Health Meter board  
3. Draw an event card  
4. Choose your action

Work	Rest	Social Activity	Gamble
1. Money needs	2. Rest needs	3. Social needs	4. Gamble needs

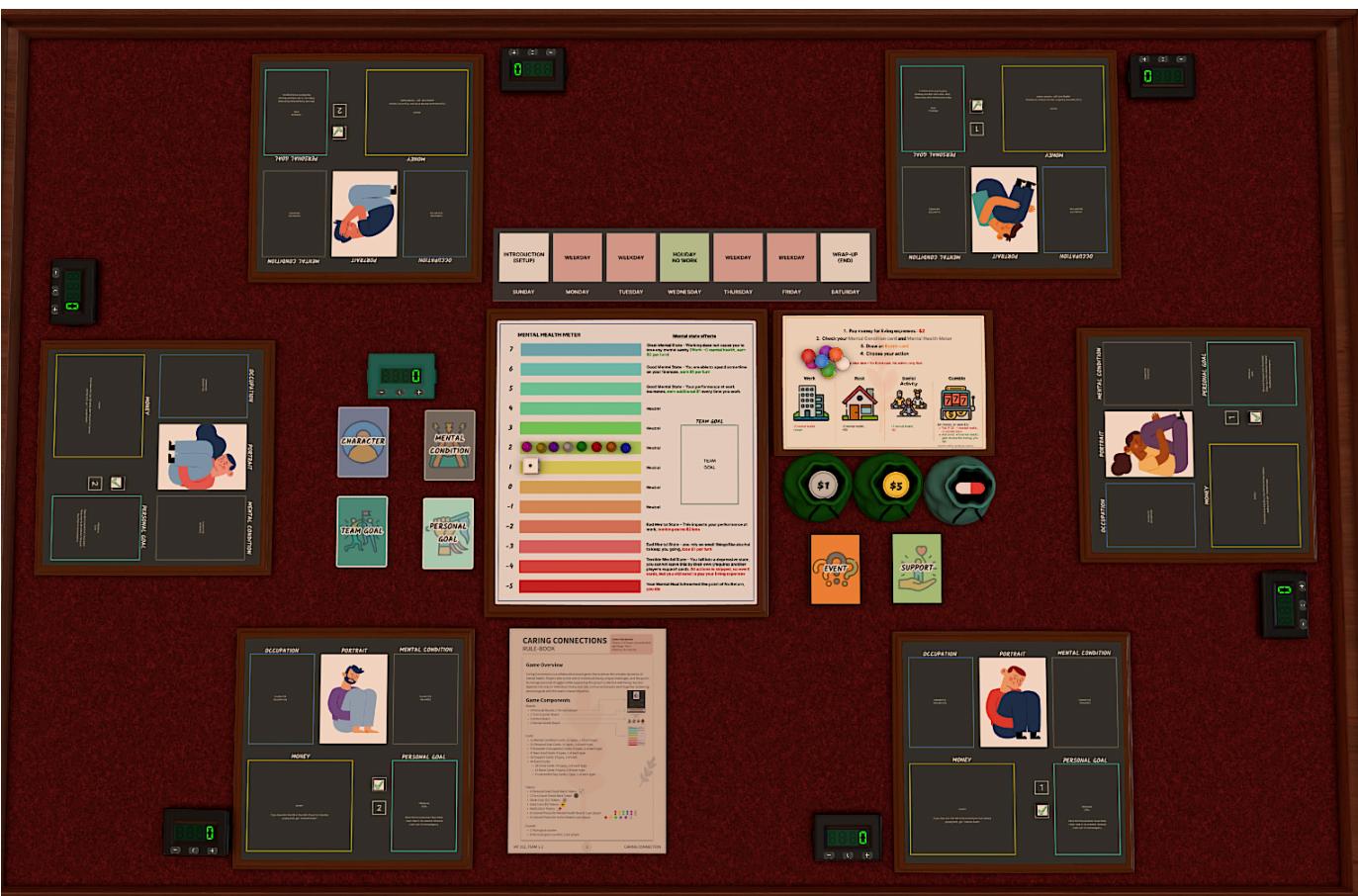
727

VER S-2

## UPDATE BEFORE SHOWCASE



Ver6 (FINAL VERSION)



LAST VERSION.

## Nov 23 Final Update

**mission ...**

**mission-t...**

ODD	GAMBLING ADDICTION	ALCOHOLISM	DRUG ADDICTION	WORKAHOLISM	EATING DISORDER	INSOMNIA	ANTROGONAL DISORDER	DEPRESSION	ANXIETY	PTSD
PERSONAL GOAL Weekness										

**MENTAL CONDITION**

**Character ...**

STUDENT	UNEMPLOYED	MILITARY OFFICER	FAST FOOD WORKER	MUSICIAN	DARTBENDER	ARTIST	CONVENIENT STORE WORKER	OFFICE WORKER
CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER	CHARACTER

**mission ...**

**mission-t...**

WE ARE RICH	STRONG TEAM	MENTAL HEALTH	SUPPORT NETWORK
TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL	TEAM GOAL

**support ...**

DRINK SUPPORT	A HELPFING HAND	FRIENDLY VOICE	SUPPORT CIRCLE	FAMILY ADVICE	THERAPY GROUP	COMMANDERSHIP	LUXURY TRIP	GROUP ADVICE
SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT

**boon back**

DEATH OF FAMILY	ALCOHOL DELIGHT	FINANCIAL DEBT	BAD ROOMMATE	Critical Condition	DISTURBING VIDEO	BURNOUT	POOR WORK PERFORMANCE	FOUND A NEEDLE	FAILED EXAM	OVERTIME	CASINO	HOSPITAL	BEING FIRED
EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT	EVENT

**Blank ev...**

**1+4**

**9.1%**

**Support ...**

LOTTERY WINNING	LITTLE WHITE PILLS	PSYCHIATRIC SESSION	RAGE ROOM	ON A PENNY	YOGA
SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT

**6\*2**

**personal-board1**

**personal-board2**

**personal-board3**

**personal-board4**

**personal-board5**

**personal-board6**

**Turn Counter**

**actionboard**

**1. Pay money for living expenses : \$2**

**2. Check your Mental Condition card and Mental Health Meter**

**3. Do an action**

**4. Choose your action**

**Spill your heart - No Event card, No action, only Rest**

**mental board**

## Rulebook ver1

Nov 13

At the end of the game, all players vote on who is the MVP.  
• Who is the most supported person in the group?

rule-1

### CARING CONNECTIONS

### RULES

#### Goal of the Game

- The goal is to simulate a week (7 days) in a support group. After the game ends, everyone votes on who was the most helpful/supportive player.

#### How to Set Up the Game

##### 1. Character Cards & Mental Condition Cards

- Each player picks a **Character card** and a Mental Condition card.
- Based on your Mental Condition card, pick a Personal Goal.



##### 2. Support Cards

- Each player picks up **3 Support cards**. These cards can only be used during your turn and on other players, not on yourself.

##### 3. Team Goal

- The group picks a **Team Goal card** (completing is optional but beneficial).

##### 4. Starting Resources

- Players take **starting money** based on their Character card and **any other resources** (e.g., **pills**) based on their Mental Condition card.

##### 5. Event Cards

- After Everyone has picked up their 3 support cards.
- shuffle the **Event cards** deck.

##### 6. Mental Health Board

- Players place their selected pawns on the **Mental Health Board**, starting at **2**.

#### Playing the Game

- Game Duration:** Turn-based, ending after **5 rounds**.
- Turn Order:** The player with the **least starting money goes first**, and turns proceed counter-clockwise.

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2

1

CARING CONNECTION

rule-2

#### Player Turn Structure

##### 1. Introduction (At the start of the game)

- Introduce your Character, Mental Condition, and Personal Goal. Be creative and role-play!



##### 2. Turn Phases

###### Phase 1: Financial

- Pay your living expenses (\$2) to the bank. (Sounds (Each round, players take one turn each.)
- If your Mental Condition card requires additional payments (money or mental health points), pay them here.
- Optionally, you can send money to other players. (Note: **Cannot trade money outside of your turn**.)

###### Phase 2: Event

- Draw an **Event card** and follow the instructions.
- Check your Mental Condition to see if there are any additional effects.

###### Phase 3: Work

- Choose one action (go to work, rest, OR attend a social event):
  - Work:** -2 **mental health**, earn your wage (not for Students/Unemployed).
  - Rest: Mental health stays the same, no wage earned.
  - Attend Social Event: +1 **mental health**, but lose \$2.
- Support Card:** Before your turn ends, you may give **one Support card** to another player. (Note: **Cards cannot be used outside of your turn**.)

#### Mental Health Points

- If a player's mental health points drop to **-5**, they die. All other players get affect, -3 **mental health** points.

#### Rules

- If you are unable to pay for an event, all unpaid amount is converted into a loss of **mental health** points.
- Based on your position on the Mental Health Board, you may have disadvantages or benefits.

#### Team Goals

- Team goals are collaborative objectives that all players can work toward. Completing a team goal grants a buff that **benefits** everyone for the rest of the game.

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2

2

CARING CONNECTION

## Ver2

Nov 16

rule-1

### " CARING CONNECTIONS "

### RULES

#### Goal of the Game

- The goal is to simulate a week (7 days) within a support group. After the game ends, everyone votes on who was the most helpful/supportive player.

#### How to Set Up the Game - Character Set Up



Character Cards  
• Each player picks up a Character card  
• This will determine your starting **money** and **Wage**



Mental Condition Cards  
• Each player picks up 4 Mental Condition card, **one per day**  
• If this card offers you anything during turn  
• If your condition requires you take pills, you have **2 starting pills**.



Personal Goal Cards  
• Each player pairs their Mental Condition card with their corresponding Personal Goal  
• Players must choose **ONE** of the ten personal goals they wish to pursue



Support Cards  
• Each player picks up 3 Support cards  
• These can be used **only during your turn** to support other players.  
• You can only get **THREE** as it is finite



Team Goal Cards  
• The team picks a Team Goal card  
• The team can then work towards this goal  
• As a team, players can contribute towards the goal  
• The team goals is **optional**, completing it will highly benefit the team

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2

1

CARING CONNECTION

rule-2

#### Playing the Game

- Game Duration: Turn-based, ending after **5 rounds**.
- Turn Order: The player with the **least starting money goes first**, and turns proceed counter-clockwise.

#### How to Set Up the Game - First Day of the Week

##### 1. Starting Cards and Resources

- Each player draws a Character, a Mental Condition, a Personal Goal, and 3 Support Cards.

##### 2. Event Cards

- After Everyone has picked up their 3 support cards and the Team Goal, shuffle the **Event cards** deck.

##### 3. Mental Health Board

- Players place their selected pawns on the **Mental Health Board**, starting at **2**.

##### 4. Introduction

- Everyone goes around and introduces a background story of their character based on their job, mental condition and personal goal. Be creative and role-play.
- Once everyone has introduced themselves, the first day finishes, moving onto Monday and the game starts.



IAT 312, TEAM 1-2

2

CARING CONNECTION

rule-3

#### Player Turn Structure

##### Phase 1: Financial & Resources

- Pay your living expenses (\$2) to the bank.
- If you have \$5 or less, you enter a **rugby life style**, -1 **mental health** as we're not working.
- If your Mental Condition card requires additional payments (money or mental health points), pay them here.
- Optionally, you can send money to other players. (Note: **Cannot trade money outside of your turn**.)
- If your character requires pills, you must buy or use them here.

##### Phase 2: Event

- Draw an **Event card** and follow the instructions.
- Check your Mental Condition to see if there are any additional effects.

##### Event Cards Will consist of 3 types:



##### Phase 3: Actions

- Choose one action (go to work, rest, OR attend a social event):
  - Work:** -2 **mental health**, earn your wage (not applicable for Students/Unemployed).
  - Rest: Mental health stays the same, no wage earned.
  - Attend Social Event: +1 **mental health**, but lose \$2.
- Support Card:** Before your turn ends, you may use one **Support card** on another player. (Note: **Cards cannot be used outside of your turn**.)

3

CARING CONNECTION

rule-4

#### Mental Health Points

- Throughout the game, players would have to move their pawns up and down the mental health board.
- If you have to pay for an event, all unpaid amount is converted into a loss of **mental health** points.
- Based on your position on the Mental Health Board, you may have disadvantages or benefits.

If a player's mental health points drop to **-5**, they die. In addition, all other players get affected and lose -3 **mental health** points.

#### Team Goals

- Team goals are collaborative objectives that all players can work toward. Completing a team goal grants a buff that **benefits** everyone for the rest of the game.

#### Role Playing

- Role playing (actions) will require you to select (e.g. Support cards). Of which, create a situation that fits yours or the other person's character. Be creative!

#### Ending

On the 5th round (Saturday), the game ends and players discuss and vote for whoever positively impacted the game the most. That person is crowned the MVP of the game.

4

CARING CONNECTION

## Ver3

Nov 29

rule-1

**CARING CONNECTIONS**

**RULES**

**Goal of the Game**

- The goal is to simulate a week (7 days) within a support group. After the game ends, everyone votes on who was the most helpful/supportive player.

**How to Set Up the Game - Character Set Up**

**Character Cards**

- Each player picks up a Character card (Randomly)
- This will determine your starting money and Wage

**Mental Condition Cards**

- Each player picks up or choose a Mental Condition card (Choice or Randomly)
- This can affect how you act during turn
- If your condition requires you take pills, you have **2 starting pills**

**Personal Goal Cards**

- Each player pairs their Mental Condition card with their corresponding Personal Goal Card
- Players must choose **ONE** of the two personal goals they wish to pursue, which would be finalized at the start of Tuesday, but can be done during introduction and Monday

**Support Cards**

- Each player picks up 3 Support cards
- These can be used **only** during your turn to support other players and cannot affect yourself.
- You only get **THREE** to use it wisely

**Team Goal Cards**

- The team picks up 1 Team Goal Card (Choice)
- There can only be **ONE** Team Goal Card within the game
- As a team, players can contribute towards the goal
- The team goal is **optional**, completing it will highly benefit the team

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 1 CARING CONNECTION

rule-2

**Playing the Game**

- Game Duration: Turn-based, ending after 5 rounds.
- Turn Order: The player with the **least** starting money goes first, and turns proceed counter-clockwise.

**How to Set Up the Game - First Day of the Week**

- Starting Cards and Resources**
  - Each player draws a Character, a Mental Condition, a Personal Goal, and 3 Support Cards.
  - Players take starting money based on their Character's information and any additional resources (e.g., pills) based on their Mental Condition card.
- Event Cards**
  - After Everyone has picked up their 3 support cards and the Team Goal, shuffle the Event cards deck.
- Mental Health Board**
  - Players place their selected pawns on the Mental Health Board, starting at **2**.
- Introduction**
  - Everyone goes around and introduces a background story of their character based on their job, mental condition and personal goal. Be creative and role-play
  - Once everyone has introduced themselves, the first day finishes, moving onto Monday and the game starts

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 2 CARING CONNECTION

rule-3

**Player Turn Structure**

**At the start of your turn**, if you have \$4 or less, you enter a frugal life style. -1 mental health.

- Phase 1: Financial & Resources**
  - Pay your living expenses (\$2) to the bank.
  - If your Mental Condition card requires additional payments (money or resources), pay them here.
  - Optionally, you can send money to other players. (Note: **Cannot trade money outside of your turn**)
  - If your character requires pills, you must buy or use them here.
- Phase 2: Event**
  - Draw an **Event card** and follow the instructions.
  - Check your Mental Condition to see if there are any additional effects.

**Event Cards Will consist of 3 types:**

**LOTTERY WINNING**: You win more than the amount you have now. Gain \$10  
**DEATH OF A FAMILY**: You experience death due to a family member. Lose \$10  
**UNEVENTFUL DAY**: Nothing really happens

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 3 CARING CONNECTION

rule-4

**Mental Health Points**

- Throughout the game, players would have to move their pawns up and down the mental health board.
- If you are unable to pay for an event, all **unpaid amount** is converted into a loss of **mental health points**.
- Based on your position on the Mental Health Board, you may have disadvantages or benefits.
- If a player's mental health points drop to -5, they die. In addition, all other players get affected and lose -3 **mental health points**.

**Team Goals**

Team goals are collaborative objectives that all players can work toward. Completing a team goal grants a buff that benefits everyone for the rest of the game.

**Role Playing**

Some card actions will require you to roleplay (e.g. support cards). Of which, create a narrative that fits yours or the other person's character. Be creative!

**Ending**

On the 6th round (Saturday), the game ends and players discuss and vote for whoever positively impacted the game the most. That person is crowned the **MVP** of the game.

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 4 CARING CONNECTION

## Ver4 (This version used for showcase)

Nov 20-after testing

rule-1

**CARING CONNECTIONS**

**RULES**

**Goal of the Game**

- The goal is to simulate a week (7 days) within a support group. After the game ends, everyone votes on who was the most helpful/supportive player.

**How to Set Up the Game - Character Set Up**

**Character Cards**

- Each player picks up a Character card (Randomly)
- This will determine your starting money and Wage

**Mental Condition Cards**

- Each player picks up or choose a Mental Condition card (Choice or Randomly)
- This can affect how you act during turn
- If your condition requires you take pills, you have **2 starting pills**

**Personal Goal Cards**

- Each player pairs their Mental Condition card with their corresponding Personal Goal Card
- Players must choose **ONE** of the two personal goals they wish to pursue, which would be finalized at the start of Tuesday, but can be done during introduction and Monday

**Support Cards**

- Each player picks up 3 Support cards
- These can be used **only** during your turn to support other players and cannot affect yourself.
- You only get **THREE** to use it wisely

**Team Goal Cards**

- The team picks up 1 Team Goal Card (Choice)
- There can only be **ONE** Team Goal Card within the game
- As a team, players can contribute towards the goal
- The team goal is **optional**, completing it will highly benefit the team

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 1 CARING CONNECTION

rule-2

**Playing the Game**

- Game Duration: Turn-based, ending after 5 rounds.
- Turn Order: The player with the **least** starting money goes first, and turns proceed counter-clockwise.

**How to Set Up the Game - First Day of the Week**

- Starting Cards and Resources**
  - Each player draws a Character, a Mental Condition, a Personal Goal, and 3 Support Cards.
  - Players take starting money based on their Character's information and any additional resources (e.g., pills) based on their Mental Condition card.
- Event Cards**
  - After Everyone has picked up their 3 support cards and the Team Goal, shuffle the Event cards deck.
- Mental Health Board**
  - Players place their selected pawns on the Mental Health Board, starting at **2**.
- Introduction**
  - Everyone goes around and introduces a background story of their character based on their job, mental condition and personal goal. Be creative and role-play
  - Once everyone has introduced themselves, the first day finishes, moving onto Monday and the game starts

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 2 CARING CONNECTION

rule-3

**Player Turn Structure**

**At the start of your turn**, if you have \$4 or less, you enter a frugal life style. -1 mental health.

- Phase 1: Financial & Resources**
  - Pay your living expenses (\$2) to the bank.
  - If your Mental Condition card requires additional payments (money or mental health points), pay them here.
  - Optionally, you can send money to other players. (Note: **Cannot trade money outside of your turn**)
  - If your character requires pills, you must buy or use them here.
- Phase 2: Event**
  - Draw an **Event card** and follow the instructions.
  - Check your Mental Condition to see if there are any additional effects.

**Event Cards Will consist of 3 types:**

**LOTTERY WINNING**: You win more than the amount you have now. Gain \$10  
**DEATH OF A FAMILY**: You experience death due to a family member. Lose \$10  
**UNEVENTFUL DAY**: Nothing really happens

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 3 CARING CONNECTION

rule-4

**Mental Health Points**

- Throughout the game, players would have to move their pawns up and down the mental health board.
- If you are unable to pay for an event, all **unpaid amount** is converted into a loss of **mental health points**.
- Based on your position on the Mental Health Board, you may have disadvantages or benefits.
- Mental health damage is capped at **5 per turn**.
- If a player's mental health points drop to -5, they die. In addition, all other players get affected and lose -3 **mental health points**.

**Team Goals**

Team goals are collaborative objectives that all players can work toward. Completing a team goal grants a buff that benefits everyone for the rest of the game.

**Role Playing**

Some card actions will require you to roleplay (e.g. support cards). Of which, create a narrative that fits yours or the other person's character. Be creative!

**Ending**

On the 6th round (Saturday), the game ends and players discuss and vote for whoever positively impacted the game the most. That person is crowned the **MVP** of the game.

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 4 CARING CONNECTION

## Ver5 (LAST VERSION)

Nov 23

rule-0

**CARING CONNECTIONS**

**RULE BOOK**

**Game Overview**

Caring Connections is a collaborative board game that explores the complex dynamics of mental health. Players take on the role of individuals facing unique challenges, and the goal is to simulate a week within a support group. The game is designed to be played with 2-4 players, and it does not rely on individual choices but also on how well players work together, and solving problems faced by each other in shared objectives.

**Game Components**

- 1 Game Board
- 4 Mental Health Boards (for each player)
- 1 Personal Goal Deck (4 types)
- 1 Action Board
- 1 Mental Health Board
- 1 Counter

**Cards**

- 22 Mental Condition Cards (11 types, 2 of each type)
- 22 Personal Goal Cards (11 types, 2 of each type)
- 10 Event Cards (5 types, 2 of each type)
- 4 Mental Health Cards (1 type)
- 4 Action Cards (1 type)
- 4 Pill Cards (1 type)
- 4 Money Cards (1 type)
- 4 Support Cards (1 type)
- 12 Team Goal Cards (2 of each type)
- 12 Counter Pawns (4 colors, 3 of each type)
- 1 Counter
- 1 Personal Goal Check Mark Token
- 1 Action Card Check Mark Token
- 1 Pill Card Check Mark Token
- 1 Money Card Check Mark Token
- 1 Support Card Check Mark Token
- 1 Team Goal Check Mark Token
- 1 Action Card for Action Board
- 1 Pill Card for Action Board
- 1 Money Card for Action Board
- 1 Support Card for Action Board

**Counters**

- 1 Personal Goal Counter
- 1 Action Counter
- 1 Pill Counter
- 1 Money Counter
- 1 Support Counter

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 1 CARING CONNECTION

rule-1

**CARING CONNECTIONS**

**RULES**

**Goal of the Game**

- The goal is to simulate a week (7 days) within a support group. After the game ends, everyone votes on who was the most helpful/supportive player.

**How to Set Up the Game - Character Set Up**

**Character Cards**

- Each player picks up a Character card (Randomly)
- This will determine your starting money and Wage

**Mental Condition Cards**

- Each player picks up or choose a Mental Condition card (Choice or Randomly)
- This can affect how you act during turn
- If your condition requires you take pills, you have **2 starting pills**

**Personal Goal Cards**

- Each player pairs their Mental Condition card with their corresponding Personal Goal Card
- Players must choose **ONE** of the two personal goals they wish to pursue, which would be finalized at the start of Tuesday, but can be done during introduction and Monday

**Support Cards**

- Each player picks up 3 Support cards
- These can be used **only** during your turn to support other players and cannot affect yourself.
- You only get **THREE** to use it wisely

**Team Goal Cards**

- The team picks up 1 Team Goal Card (Choice)
- There can only be **ONE** Team Goal Card within the game
- As a team, players can contribute towards the goal
- The team goal is **optional**, completing it will highly benefit the team

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 2 CARING CONNECTION

rule-2

**Playing the Game**

- Game Duration: Turn-based, ending after 5 rounds.
- Turn Order: The player with the **least** starting money goes first, and turns proceed counter-clockwise.

**How to Set Up the Game - First Day of the Week**

- Starting Cards and Resources**
  - Each player draws a Character, a Mental Condition, a Personal Goal, and 3 Support Cards.
  - Players take starting money based on their Character's information and any additional resources (e.g., pills) based on their Mental Condition card.
- Event Cards**
  - After Everyone has picked up their 3 support cards and the Team Goal, shuffle the Event cards deck.
- Mental Health Board**
  - Players place their selected pawns on the Mental Health Board, starting at **2**.
- Introduction**
  - Everyone goes around and introduces a background story of their character based on their job, mental condition and personal goal. Be creative and role-play
  - Once everyone has introduced themselves, the first day finishes, moving onto Monday and the game starts

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 3 CARING CONNECTION

rule-3

**Player Turn Structure**

**At the start of your turn**, if you have \$4 or less, you enter a frugal life style. -1 mental health.

- Phase 1: Financial & Resources**
  - Pay your living expenses (\$2) to the bank.
  - If your Mental Condition card requires additional payments (money or mental health points), pay them here.
  - Optionally, you can send money to other players. (Note: **Cannot trade money outside of your turn**)
  - If your character requires pills, you must buy or use them here.
- Phase 2: Event**
  - Draw an **Event card** and follow the instructions.
  - Check your Mental Condition to see if there are any additional effects.

**Event Cards Will consist of 3 types:**

**LOTTERY WINNING**: You win more than the amount you have now. Gain \$10  
**DEATH OF A FAMILY**: You experience death due to a family member. Lose \$10  
**UNEVENTFUL DAY**: Nothing really happens

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 4 CARING CONNECTION

rule-4

**Mental Health Points**

- Throughout the game, players would have to move their pawns up and down the mental health board.
- If you are unable to pay for an event, all **unpaid amount** is converted into a loss of **mental health points**.
- Based on your position on the Mental Health Board, you may have disadvantages or benefits.
- Mental health damage is capped at **5 per turn**.
- If a player's mental health points drop to -5, they die. In addition, all other players get affected and lose -3 **mental health points**.

**Team Goals**

Team goals are collaborative objectives that all players can work toward. Completing a team goal grants a buff that benefits everyone for the rest of the game.

**Role Playing**

Some card actions will require you to roleplay (e.g. support cards). Of which, create a narrative that fits yours or the other person's character. Be creative!

**Ending**

On the Saturday, the game ends and players discuss and vote for whoever positively impacted the game the most. That person is crowned the **MVP** of the game.

IAT 312, TEAM 1-2 5 CARING CONNECTION

