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NM2207 Final Writeup

**Introduction**

My project aims to explore the importance of mental health and the need to raise awareness for it due to its significant impact on our lives. Although there has been increasing focus on mental health, I think it is still not talked about enough. This avoidance of this topic contributes to the stigma surrounding mental health, which causes people to find it difficult to speak up about their personal experiences or problems (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). I thought that one way to raise awareness for mental health would be to encourage people to seek help when they need to, so that such behaviour would be normalized. This way, others would also be more comfortable and be brave enough to seek professional help for their mental health issues. This topic is something I hold quite close to my heart, as I have friends who are struggling with their mental health, and I really hope they get better eventually.

**Data**

I chose to present two datasets – data on total deaths by self-inflicted injuries in various countries, taken from Gapminder, and data showing the annual number of unique Singapore residents aged 30 years and below who sought care in a public or private healthcare institution for a psychiatric condition between 2013 and 2019, taken from the MOH website. There has been a general decrease in the number of deaths by self-inflicted injuries, which is a good sign. This led me to think about why this happened, and whether we could make use of this reason to maintain the decrease in number of deaths. After doing some research, I saw the MOH dataset which showed an increasing trend in the number of people seeking help for their mental health issues. This suggests a correlation between increase in number of people seeking help, and decrease in total deaths. Hence, it becomes even more important for us to encourage people suffering from mental health struggles to seek help.

**Highlights of project and challenges faced**

The two interactive buttons I added to the webpage is something cool to me! I wanted the users to feel more involved in the journey of showing concern for others and spreading kindness, especially to those who are going through a tough time. Hence, I created the buttons for users to virtually send well wishes to others. Although these “well wishes” are not actually real, and it only takes one click of a button to send one, I think the act of even bothering to click the button can kickstart a cycle of being kind to those around us. To integrate what we learnt in tutorials, I made two buttons – one which triggers a window alert when clicked, and one which has a click counter. At first, I only had one button, and wanted to add both functions to the same button when clicked. However, I realised that that code broke, and my button could only trigger the window alert, but the clicks were not being counted. I was a bit frustrated and confused over this, but I later realised that we could only input one function to each button. This was something I learnt while trying to figure out my mistake. Since I still wanted to include both functions, I decided to add another button to input the click counter. I thought that the click counter was important to the project, as it shows the user the impact that they could make in quantifiable terms. This may encourage them to do more to spread kindness to the people around them.

I was inspired to include the click counter function by this large standing board I saw at the Singapore Zoo which was promoting environmental wellness to save the animals. They had physical buttons on the board that we could press, which will contribute to a growing number on a big screen, showing how many people have pledged to be environmentally responsible. The number was huge (probably around 200 thousand), which meant it was accumulated from many visitors over a long period of time. I thought it was meaningful and heartening to see that so many people care about the environment and animals. I wanted to do something similar for my webpage, but wasn’t sure of how to save the number of clicks, without them refreshing each time the webpage reloads. In the end, I settled for the number restarting from 0 each time the page reloads. I hope this click counter I added still has an effect on showing others how their kind actions can have an impact, no matter how big or small.

**Reflection**

Coding has taught me many skills, and my biggest takeaway is that I should always just give things a try, and never be afraid to make mistakes. Since this is my first time coding, I was pretty daunted by everything in the beginning, and wasn’t very sure where to start. I was also afraid of messing up, which made me less willing to try out new methods of coding. However, Prof Kokil has continuously assured us that making mistakes was part of the learning process. I also realised that the more mistakes I make, the closer I will be to the right answer. Hence, I became more willing to try out new ways of solving the problem. This also encouraged me to be curious, and to explore new things independently outside of class. Being curious and eager to learn is definitely an important trait to have in life. Coding has also taught me to be patient, as it is never easy to figure out the correct codes. It takes time and a lot of patience to slowly work out a solution. Collaboration is also important in coding. Talking to others in class and sharing our methods of working allows us to learn from each other, and also helps us find a solution together more quickly. My experience in NM2207 has been a fulfilling one, and I am grateful that I got to experience this module!

References

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