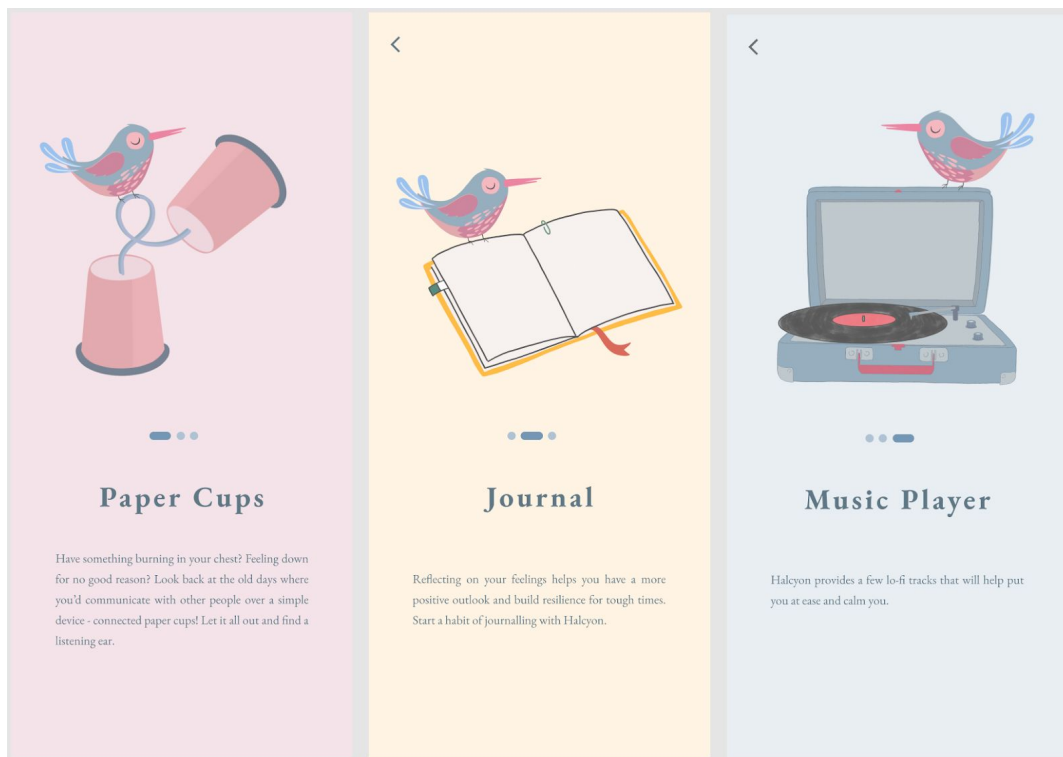




Imagine the start of 2020 with all of the exciting activities you had planned with your friends and family. It was the start of a new decade, and you were going to make the best of it! Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and we had to get used to a new normal. Mental health has never been more crucial as we look to new avenues to destress. Well, fret not because Halcyon is here to give you some peace of mind.

Depending on which definition you go by, a halcyon could either be a mythical bird or a tropical kingfisher. Sure, having an avian mascot is cool and all (like Twitter), but ours goes a step further. As an adjective, the word also denotes “a period of time in the past that was idyllically happy and peaceful”. We hope that our application will be able to recapture the magic of better times and ultimately improve our users’ self-care routines.



The main features of our app are all on one page, which we designed to look like a room where users can relax. Warm pastel colours and a distinctive art style give the app a more homely feel. Our very talented team member, Xin Yue, drew all of our assets in-house. The pleasant visuals provide a comforting environment that is optimal for self-reflection and other self-care activities. We wanted to create an immersive experience for users which would stand out among today's abundance of mobile apps, especially since ours runs in a web browser.

There are three core features that we would like to highlight.

We're sure that you've seen television shows or cartoons where characters converse with each other across small distances through cups connected by a string. The aptly named paper cups feature allows you to experience this without any geographical limitations. Users can choose between recording voice messages or listening to a randomly selected voice message. The use of a microphone increases the level of immersion as compared to text messages. Users can take it one step further by choosing to initiate a conversation after listening to someone else's recording. Interactions are fully anonymous with interesting aliases given to each party to distinguish between different ones. Of course, we are unable to police free speech, and people might send inappropriate voice messages through the cloud. In this case, users can choose not to initiate or to block the other party and end an existing conversation. Thus, we hope to provide a safe space for users to speak their minds without fear of judgment.

Our fast-paced lives often leave no room for self-reflection. The journaling feature helps users to stop and think. Such reflection provides more introspection of one's thoughts and feelings. Users choose an emotion (each represented with a unique icon) and consider a thought-provoking prompt before they pen down journal entries. These prompts streamline the journal writing process. We chose to display past entries in multiple ways. For one, a calendar shows emotion icons and gives a general overview of one's mood over some time. The list view is slightly more detailed and includes the prompts related to individual entries. Halcyon thus provides outlets for external (paper cups) and internal (journaling) self-care.

Perhaps the most unadorned feature of all is the vinyl player. Users can listen to relaxing music with vintage-style art on each record. The records even spin as the music plays! This level of simplicity adds a nice touch to the app with no frills attached. After all, self-care is about taking time to unwind and reflect instead of partaking in overly stimulating activities.

Ultimately, we feel that the app should speak for itself. We hope that the teaching team has as much fun using the app as we did while creating it!