Restor

Restoring Vitality, Hope, and Community Through Radical Healing

Brenda Lau
Anisa Anuar

Project overview

Radical healing is a holistic response to the intergenerational trauma inflicted by systemic violence rooted in capitalism, colonialism, sexism, racism, etc.

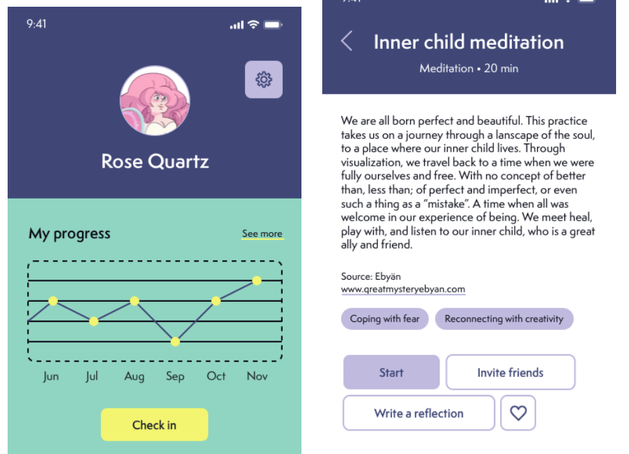
Such trauma is proven to have harmful effects on our mind, body, and connection to community.

Historically, healing work has been done by marginalized communities as a practice of resistance and resilience.

In the context of social movements, this work is crucial for preventing burnout as well as building collective capacities to dismantle those damaging structures and reimagine a transformed world.

There are many reasons we decided to create a solution for some of these issues but our main motivations for this app experience are:

- To shift away from the commercialized, individualistic co-optation of self-care to recenter collective wellness;
- To make healing more accessible for marginalized communities who experience the most barriers to mental health services;
- And to safely introduce and facilitate users through a healing journey.



Screens from left to right: Profile page, exercise overview page, in-progress exercise page

Meet the team

Get to know the people behind the app a little better! Learn about who we are and what inspired us to create Restor.

Brenda Lau *(left)*
She/Her/Hers
Fifth Year
Computer Science and Design

"I'm inspired to make radical healing practices more accessible for marginalized folks after reading works by Black and Indigenous feminist theorists who greatly stress the importance of healing as **crucial resistance, restoration of hope, and strengthening of community to achieve liberation.**"

Anisa Anuar *(right)*
She/Her/Hers
Fifth Year
Computer Science and Design

"The impact that privilege has on one's accessibility to mental wellness resources has always been an issue that I'm passionate to change. That and the eurocentric influences deeply rooted in psychological practices are **two of many barriers for people of color that I believe our app will help break.**"

Proposal presentations

At the beginning of the semester, we all gave proposal presentations to share what we were passionate about.

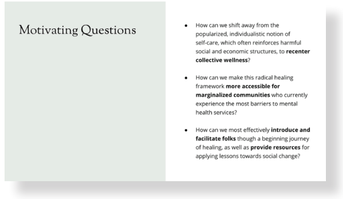
Brenda presented about the radical healing tool and gave background on the origins of the concept and the importance it plays in marginalized communities.

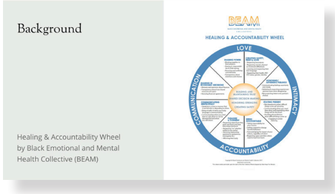
Anisa presented about a virtual social justice toolkit to use to unite the online activism community and prevent burnout amongst community organizers.

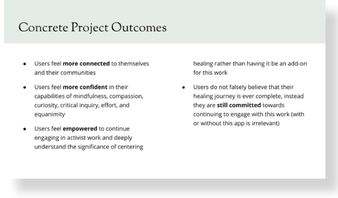
Critique and feedback

Our peers offered constructive feedback, asking questions about how we will moderate our online communities given our sensitive topic areas and how we plan to create an inclusive environment within them.

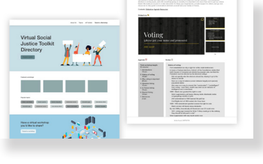
Overall, our feedback was positive and encouraging, and mostly required that we conduct more thorough research.







Brenda's project proposal presentation on a radical healing tool (top) and Anisa's presentation on a virtual social justice toolkit directory (right)



Preliminary logistics

Once we had our team finalized, we defined our roles and responsibilities, established a method of organization and scheduled a time to meet and check-in weekly.

Roles

Brenda

UI/UX Designer
Project Manager
Researcher

Anisa

Programmer
Project Manager
Researcher

Documentation

Google Drive

Weekly updates
Assets kept in folders

Meeting Time

Zoom

Weekly meetings
Thursdays 12 PM - 1 PM EST

Motivating questions

How can we **shift away from the popularized, individualistic notion of self-care**, which often reinforces harmful social and economic structures, to recenter collective wellness?

How can we make this radical healing framework **more accessible for marginalized communities** who currently experience the most barriers to mental health services?

How can we most effectively introduce and facilitate folks though **a beginning journey of healing**, as well as provide resources for **applying lessons towards social change**?

How can we most effectively design a radical healing tool that is informed and capable of **addressing the specific intersections of users' identities**?

JOURNAL CHECK-IN

In journal #3, we shared our goals for the upcoming year. Take a look at a snippet of what we each wrote!

BRENDA

"Ideally, I would like my project to be social justice focused since activism is something I am passionate about and try to align all of my personal, professional, and school work with because liberation movements need all the support they can get."

ANISA

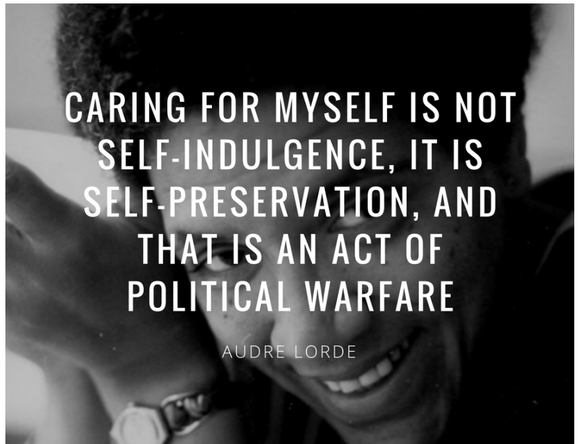
"I feel that technology often doesn't favor activism, and a lot of communication is done in person. The pandemic has caused a great shift in how protests and discussions are operated, and can cause a lot of strain on organizers. Anything I can do to help alleviate those burdens would make for a very important project."

Annotated bibliography

For more of an understanding on radical healing and its applications, we created an annotated bibliography looking at 20 different sources to answer the following:

- What is radical healing and why is it important for collective liberation and wellness?
- How is radical healing being practiced now (and how has it been practiced) by marginalized individuals, healers, and communities?

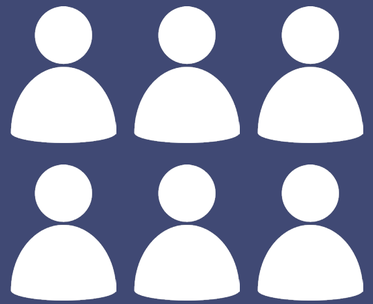
Image source:
https://theknowfresno.org/05/14/2017/self-care-radical-form-resistance/



Key audience interviews

- Learn about each user's **general attitudes** towards personal healing & self-care
- Learn about their **personal experiences** with practicing healing & self-care

6
total users interviewed



gender representation

3 non-binary
2 female
1 male

age range

21 to **38**

identity

majority **queer & BIPOC**
(Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

Field area expert interviews

Loretta's key feedback

- *Social justice lens is a valuable differentiator*
- *Healthy guidelines & moderation*
- *Be aware of cultural appropriation*
- *Involve external communities throughout the process*

Miik's key feedback

- *Community aspect adds important depth*
- *Dynamic, multidimensional personalization*
- *Support to broaden perspectives*
- *Outputs that extend beyond the screen*

Austen's key feedback

- *Expand on the community aspect*
- *Intersectionality & racial equity*
- *Ensure that we have trauma-informed language & grief literacy*
- *Detach trauma from the user*

> ***You have this unique value-added aspect of the social justice lens– it's not just meditation to help us feel better and it's not just for stress relief... Apps don't do that; I think that aspect is really cool.***

Loretta Pyles *(she/her)*

Author of Healing Justice: Holistic Self-Care for Change Makers, SUNY Albany Professor of Social Welfare, community organizer, and yoga teacher

> ***So many people have access to apps so being able to 'plug in' in an organic way... The picture that pops up in my mind is a forest and a single tree's roots reaching into the ground and sharing resources with other trees.***

Miik Wells *(he/him)*

Healer-activist who specializes in self-healing support, emotional expression support, space/story holding, and alternative sound healing

> ***Think about how there are not a lot of spaces for Black trans fems, who have a very specific issue of getting murdered and no one saying anything about it... A way to show up is to give them the space they deserve and don't have right now.***

Austen Smith *(they/them)*

Healer-activist who specializes in tarot, interactive journaling, breath work, sound baths, spiritual coaching, protection work, and plant medicine

Personas

For each persona, to fully develop their character and get an understanding of how they would interact with their app, we provided them an illustrative background including, at minimum:

- **Pronouns**
- **Identity** (age, ethnicity, sexuality, gender)
- **Occupation**
- **Activist background**
- **Experience with healing**
- **Motivations**
- **Needs**

Giving each persona their own story developed a really close connection for us that helped give us insight into how our app may play a part in a user's life.

The greatest amount of detail we considered with each persona was the struggles in their lives that may have led them to stumbling across our app (which is the experience outlined in our journey maps).

Meet Rose.

Pronouns
she/her

Identity
25 year old queer second-generation Chinese-American woman

Occupation
Freelance illustrator

Activist background
Especially involved in the racial justice, climate justice, prison abolition, and Land Back movements.
Mostly designs for and collaborates with grassroots community organizations and non-profits for advocacy campaigns.
Founded an Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) zine collective to uplift the work of fellow local AAPI artists.
Leads a Trans Queer Abolitionist chapter club.
Is a mentor for a young AAPI visual artist.

Experience with healing
Rose struggles with PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorder. She has a past history of alcohol and substance abuse. Meets with a trauma therapist every other week since this is the most affordable option for her (though weekly would be more ideal) and takes prescribed medication. The communities she's found through art and rollerskating have especially benefited her mental health. She makes an effort to check in on friends, practice verbal affirmations, and meditate on a daily basis. She also strives to be more present in her body whenever possible.

Motivations
Rose is committed to healing work because she believes that because we will be these bodies our entire lives, why not treat them kindly? She also recognizes that caring for her mental health allows her to be more empathetic and resilient in her activism. Additionally, there is a part of her that is fearful of regression after how much she's invested towards trying to heal.

Needs
She is interested in having more access to healing resources since she's not able to afford more therapy. Past therapists who didn't understand the nuances of her queer AAPI experience were uncomfortable, frustrating, and/or triggering, so it is critical that the healing spaces she joins are truly trauma-informed, intersectional, and center BIPOC. Community is also important to her so she needs to to feel like that is well integrated in the experience.

Meet Devon.

Pronouns
they/them

Identity
25 year old queer, non-binary third-generation African-American

Occupation
High school history teacher

Activist background
Devon grew up in an urban neighborhood that has had a long history of gentrification and hate crimes whose perpetrators were never prosecuted. They grew up watching the news and seeing someone from their middle and high schools getting shot or stabbed as often as daily. The community members in their hometown often held rallies and protests, but Devon rarely attended them prior to the start of 2020. Despite this, Devon is no stranger to racism and has been on the receiving end of many insults and slurs.

Experience with healing
Devon has had no experience with therapy or healing but practices self-care regularly. They have friends in their circles who practice radical healing and are interested in starting their own journey, but they are not yet super aware of how healing can relate to greater movements.

Motivations
Since the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, Devon has become more motivated to go out to events and workshops recommended to them by their friends and coworkers. They have been reflecting on their internalized oppression and how they are constantly suppressing, overlooking, or even justifying racist behavior from their peers. They are working on using their experiences and voice to inform others of the trauma that they and their family have endured. They wonder how they can support their communities, specifically their students, to heal. Since COVID caused their school to transition to online learning, Devon feels a disconnect from their students and is unable to support them as well as they were able to when they were in-person.

Needs
Devon is still a little new to the world of radical healing. They are open-minded and motivated but also overwhelmed by their recent reflections. They feel like they are juggling a lot of discoveries about themselves and don't know how to start to approach their newfound emotions. They also want to better understand how to support their community despite having to interact with them virtually.

Meet Eli.

Pronouns
he/his

Identity
22 year old heterosexual, first-generation Filipino-Mexican man

Occupation
Fourth year business major at Northeastern University

Activist background
Eli's highest level of exposure to activism and politics is through his peers. A few people in his circle attend protests and demonstrations, but he has never gone out to one. The majority of recents news and information he gets about the world is through the Instagram stories he sees on his feed. Although he was eligible to vote for the 2016 election, he actively chose not to. Because of his ethnic identity, Eli believes he should be more politically active, but has always prioritized school and work.

Experience with healing
Eli had therapy when he was little, but never returned, as he felt it didn't work for him. He has never actively seeked out alternative care, but he has wondered before if it exists. His girlfriend encourages him to practice self-care, like going on walks or taking time for himself; he doesn't practice much beyond that.

Motivations
Eli is passive with most of his life. He really only takes action when he is pressured or encouraged to do so, and enjoys having a routine that rarely changes. Due to shifts in his life caused by COVID, Eli has started to feel overwhelmed. He feels unable to take a break from school, as he has pressure from his relatives to be the first in his family to obtain a degree in America. His parents encourage him to quit his job to spend more time with them, but Eli knows they wouldn't be able to support him financially if he did.

Needs
Eli feels that he would benefit from some form of healing, but has never put in the work to find one that's appropriate for him. He faces a lot of cultural pressure from his family to constantly make the right decisions and while he has the support of his parents and girlfriend, he knows he can do more to improve himself. He believes that if he is able to better sort out his life, he can open himself up to being more active or involved in the community and causes that his friends are passionate about.

Rose, for example, struggles with PTSD, depression, and an anxiety disorder. She has taken many steps to heal from her trauma, but is ferful of regression despite all her progress. This may motivate her to find something that will keep her accountable and commited.

Devon has recently been reflecting on their internalized oppression and resulting harmful behavior and wonders how they can instead support and uplift their community.

Meanwhile, Eli does not struggle with trauma or mental illness, but he wishes to be more conscious of his identity.

Journey maps

Creating these journey maps really brought our personas to life. They allowed us to look into a potential user's day-to-day activity and see the different stages they go through with our app, and at a glance seeing the specific action they're taking, the thoughts they have during the interaction, and how they are feeling in the moment.

The different stages we looked at in our journey maps were:

1. **Consideration**, or the first time they (decide to) come across the app
2. **Onboarding**, or their initial interaction with the app itself
3. **Routine**, or how the app is integrated into their daily life afterwards
4. **Reflection**, or the ways the app impacts them beyond the screen

Rose's journey map

STAGE	1. CONSIDERATION	2. ONBOARDING	3. ROUTINE	4. REFLECTION
Actions	- Hears about the app from her therapist - Downloads it from the app store	- Creates account - Explores the different healing practices & community features	- Engages with her curation of guided meditations & verbal affirmations daily - Refers to the grounding breathwork techniques in times of crisis - Schedules weekly journaling sessions with her friends	- Returns to/continues with her freelancing, activist work, and mentoring - Keeps up with her therapy and medication - Recommends the app to everyone in her communities
Thoughts	"Wow, I can't wait to see what this app is all about!"	"This is so personalized to me and there is so much variety - looking promising!"	"I love that I can depend on this app. It hasn't gotten stagnant yet and being able to use it with friends is such a plus!"	"I'm so grateful that I have this app while my therapy is less frequent. It's definitely helping me to prevent burnout."
Feelings	- Curious - Excited	- Comforted - Enticed	- Trusting - Supported	- Committed - Reinvigorated

The most interesting journey maps to look at were actually our secondary and tertiary personas' maps.

For Rose, her experience was always going to be optimal and as expected since the app is built for people with a similar background to her.

For Devon and Eli, however, their experiences were much more nuanced and required more flexibility on the app's part. Their journey maps gave us a closer look at the ways we can make our app more intuitive, user-friendly, and welcoming to all, and not just the people we are expecting.

Devon's journey map

STAGE	1. CONSIDERATION	2. ONBOARDING	3. ROUTINE	4. REFLECTION
Actions	- Hears about the app from a friend during a conversation about racial trauma - Devon mentions that they don't have time during the day for therapy and doesn't feel comfortable taking calls from home - Friend mentions app and how it's flexible and easy to use on their own time - Downloads it from the app store	- Creates account - Explores the different healing practices & community features - Specifically notes the communities that tend to their intersectionalities of race, gender identity, and sexuality - Navigates through the app by clicking on everything, learning about what it has to offer	- Engages with their curation of guided meditations & verbal affirmations daily - Schedules chats with members of their communities - Learns new healing exercises, suited personally to them	- Returns to/continues with her freelancing, activist work, and mentoring - Keeps up with her therapy and medication - Recommends the app to everyone in her communities
Thoughts	"Hmm, this is an interesting concept. I wonder if it applies to me."	"I've never seen so many communities I can identify with in one place. I'm curious about these healing practices."	"I really appreciate the community I found on this app. The exercises have really helped me to process everything that's going on in the world and in my life."	"I'm so grateful that I have this app while my therapy is less frequent. It's definitely helping me to prevent burnout."
Feelings	- Intrigued - Apprehensive	- Eased - Curious	- Empowered - Comfortable	- Appreciative - Resolute

Eli's journey map

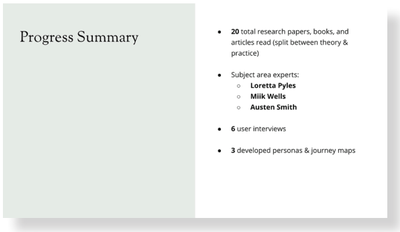
STAGE	1. CONSIDERATION	2. ONBOARDING	3. ROUTINE	4. REFLECTION
Actions	- Friends bring up the app during a conversation at lunch and mention how personal it is - Eli doubts the app is right for him, says it probably won't work for him because he doesn't know anything about radical healing - Friend downloads it onto his phone for him	- Creates account - Friend walks him through the different healing practices & community features - Friends help him join communities he identifies with (being mixed race, being newly introduced to the concept of radical healing, etc)	- Returns to app occasionally at first (once every few days when he sees his friends), then begins to use app more often - Starts by lurking on discussion threads, and finds conversations and groups he identifies with - Tries out a few exercises that were picked out for them with his girlfriend	- Engages more in conversations / with friends when they talk about politics and systemic racism - Feels more comfortable opening up to his girlfriend about the issues he found on the app that he's interested in - Wonders if he could find more exercises suited to him
Thoughts	"I doubt I'll ever even open that app again, but okay."	"Oh, I didn't realize there were so many types of healing practices." "Wow, you're right, this all seems so personal."	"I don't feel so bad for not knowing as much, it seems like there are a lot of other beginners here." "This exercise is a little out of my comfort zone, but I could see how it's supposed to feel good."	"I just read something on the app the other day about that, actually..." "I've been starting to notice
Feelings	- Skeptical - Doubtful	- Interested - Confused?	- Engaged - Intrigued	- Inspired - Excited

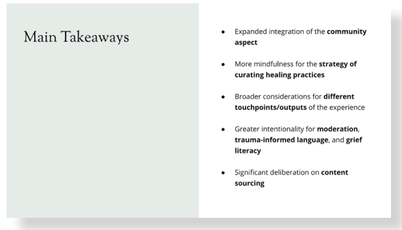
Uses & Discoveries presentation

The Uses & Discoveries presentation gave us an opportunity to reflect on the past few weeks and the progress that we'd made since the beginning of the class. We were able to receive constructive feedback from our peers and see how our peers' projects were going as well.

Some key feedback we received:

- *"This presentation was educational and interesting for peers who are unaware of therapy practices and healing processes"*
- *"I believe this is an extremely challenging, yet relevant and necessary topic"*
- *"I like the idea of exploring ideas that extend beyond the screen"*
- *"I agree that expanding on ideas for community interaction is a good next step"*
- *"I like the range and representation we considered in developing our personas"*





Slides from our Uses & Discoveries presentation deck

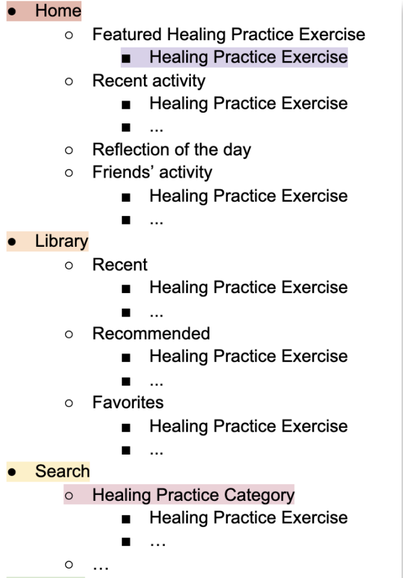
Sitemap

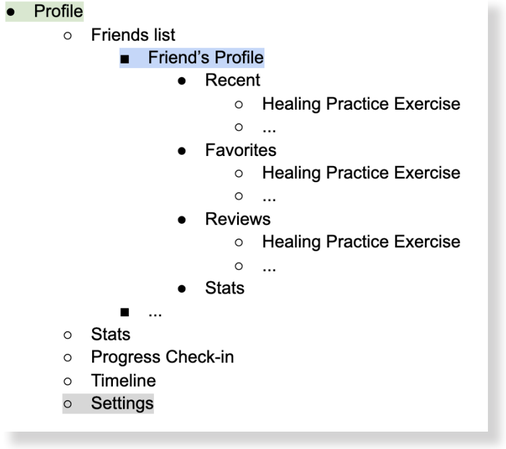
Before constructing our prototype, we outlined the different screens that we wanted to include in our minimum viable product (MVP). We then highlighted the screens to start with and have finished prior to user testing.

We also outlined requirements by screen (not pictured here). For example, for our onboarding pages, we considered

- the type of information we would collect from a user to create an account (e.g. email/phone number/Facebook)
- whether we should ask for personal identities (e.g. gender, sexuality, race, mental health diagnoses, etc.)
- how we will ask a user to input personal healing goals (types of coping skills, growth in certain capacities, etc.)

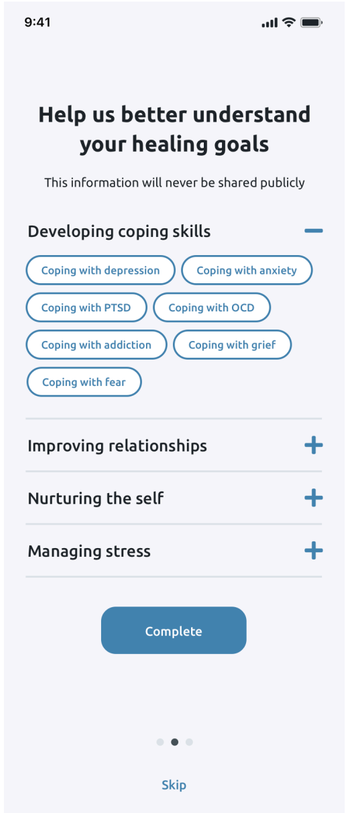
Screenshots of our sitemap, outlined and highlighted

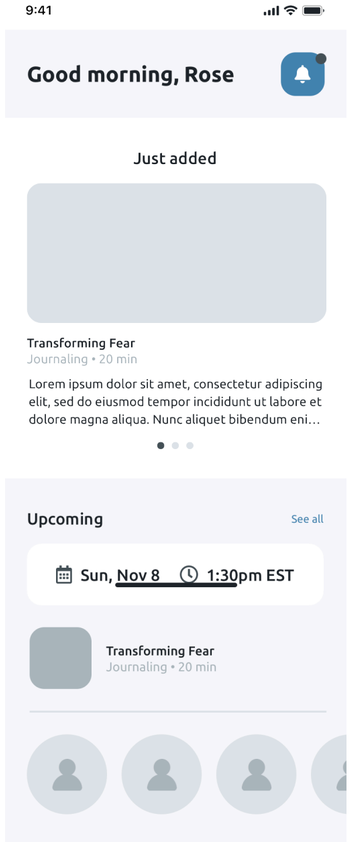


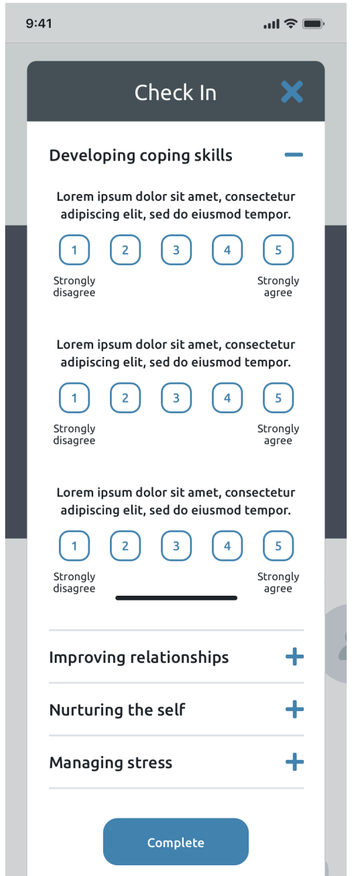


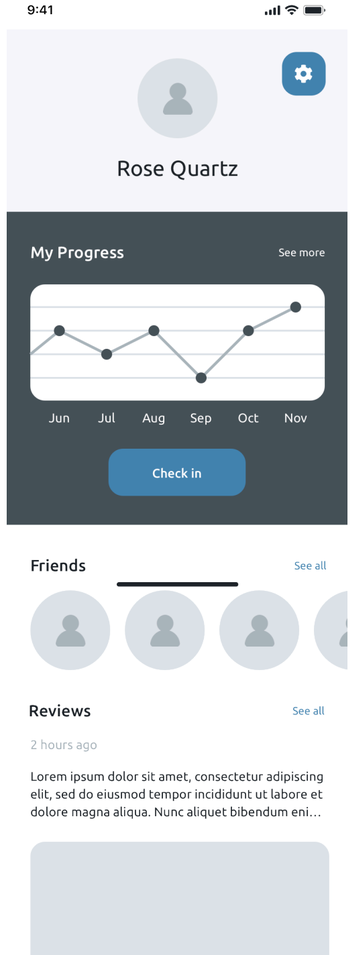
Initial wireframes

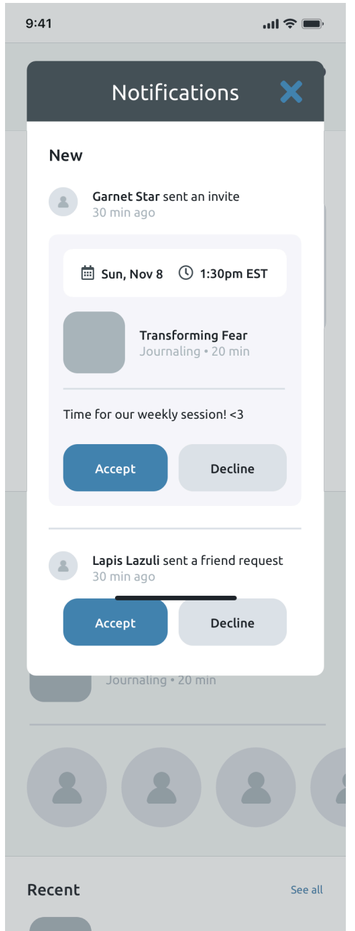
Note: these are only a select few of the initial wireframes

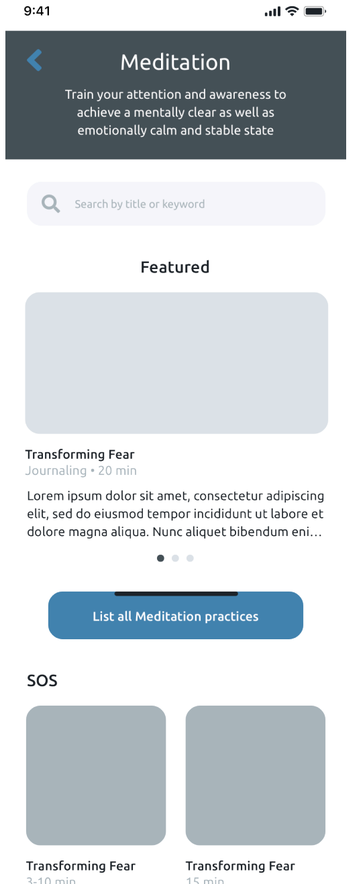






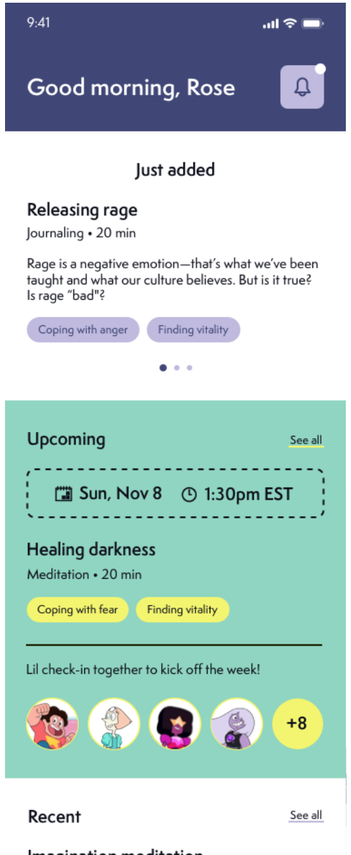




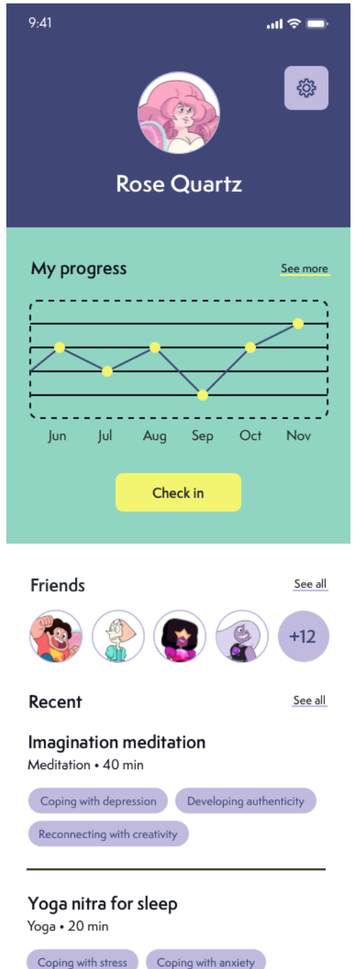


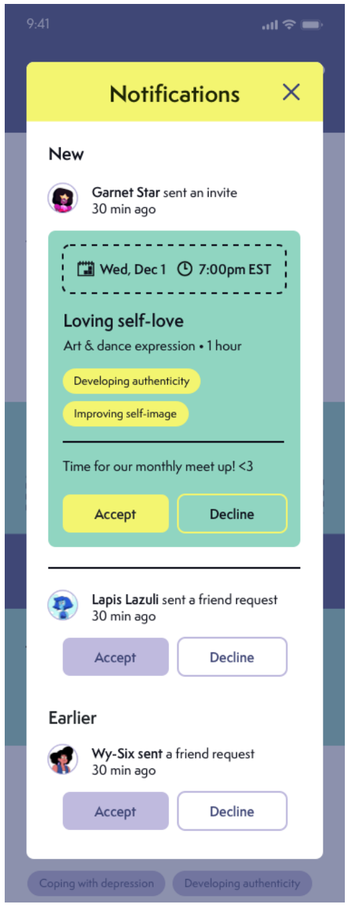
VD Specs

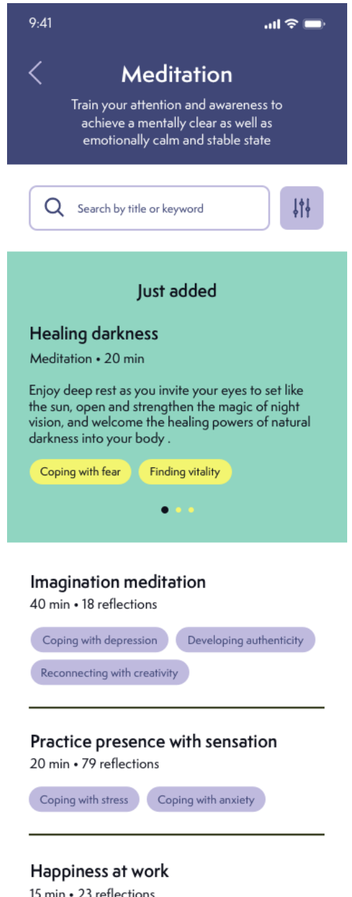
9:41
Help us better understand your healing goals
Please select at least three goals. You can always update these in the future. This information will never be shared publicly.
Gaining coping skills
Coping with depression
Coping with anxiety
Coping with addiction
Coping with grief
Coping with fear
Coping with anger
Coping with stress
Deepening relationships
Nurturing the self
Healing from oppression
Complete


9:41
Good morning, Rose
Just added
Releasing rage
Journaling • 20 min
Rage is a negative emotion—that's what we've been taught and what our culture believes. But is it true? Is rage "bad"?
Coping with anger
Finding vitality
Upcoming
See all
Sun, Nov 8
1:30pm EST
Healing darkness
Meditation • 20 min
Coping with fear
Finding vitality
Lil check-in together to kick off the week!
+8
Recent
See all

9:41
Search
Search by category, title, or keyword
Journaling
Meditation
Breathwork
Sound Therapy
Somatic Therapy
Affirmations
Mantra Work
Mindfulness Exercises
Art & Dance Expression

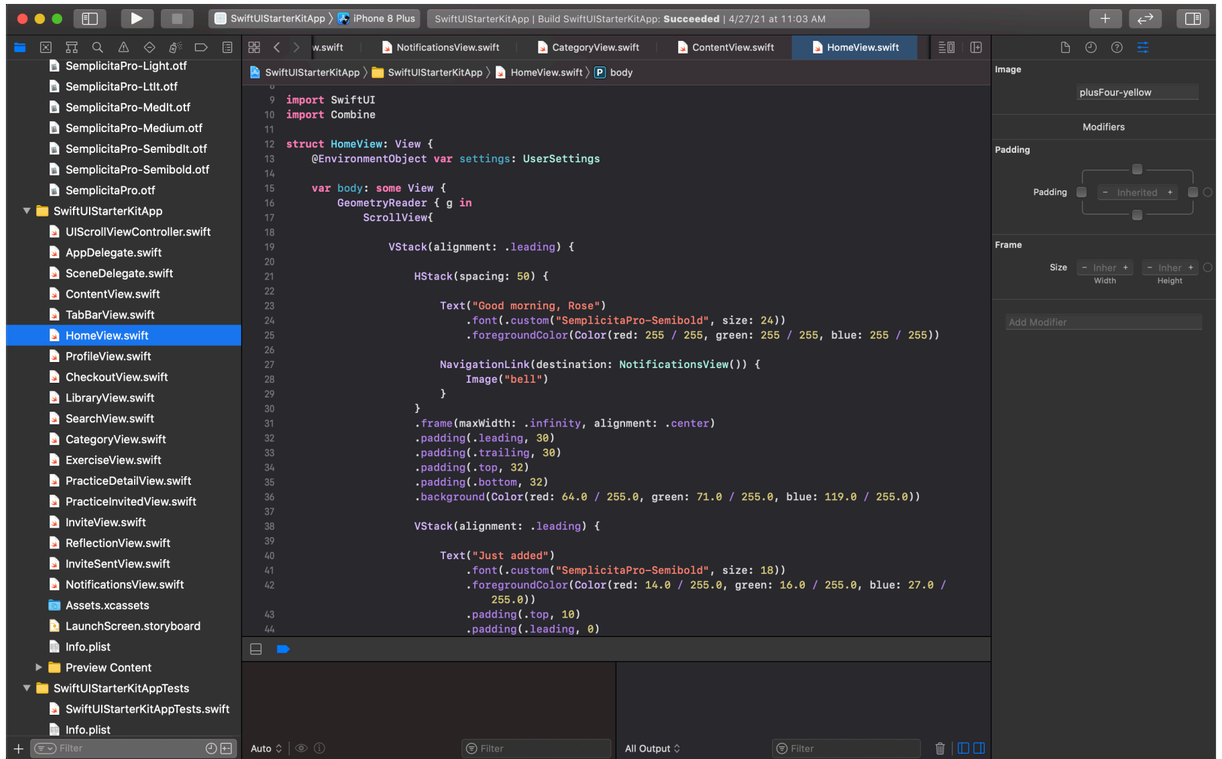

9:41
Rose Quartz
My progress
See more
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Check in
Friends
See all
+12
Recent
See all
Imagination meditation
Meditation • 40 min
Coping with depression
Developing authenticity
Reconnecting with creativity
Yoga nitra for sleep
Yoga • 20 min
Coping with stress
Coping with anxiety


9:41
Notifications
New
Garnet Star sent an invite
30 min ago
Wed, Dec 1
7:00pm EST
Loving self-love
Art & dance expression • 1 hour
Developing authenticity
Improving self-image
Time for our monthly meet up! <3
Accept
Decline
Lapis Lazuli sent a friend request
30 min ago
Accept
Decline
Earlier
Wy-Six sent a friend request
30 min ago
Accept
Decline
Coping with depression
Developing authenticity


9:41
Meditation
Train your attention and awareness to achieve a mentally clear as well as emotionally calm and stable state
Search by title or keyword
Just added
Healing darkness
Meditation • 20 min
Enjoy deep rest as you invite your eyes to set like the sun, open and strengthen the magic of night vision, and welcome the healing powers of natural darkness into your body .
Coping with fear
Finding vitality
Imagination meditation
40 min • 18 reflections
Coping with depression
Developing authenticity
Reconnecting with creativity
Practice presence with sensation
20 min • 79 reflections
Coping with stress
Coping with anxiety
Happiness at work

Development

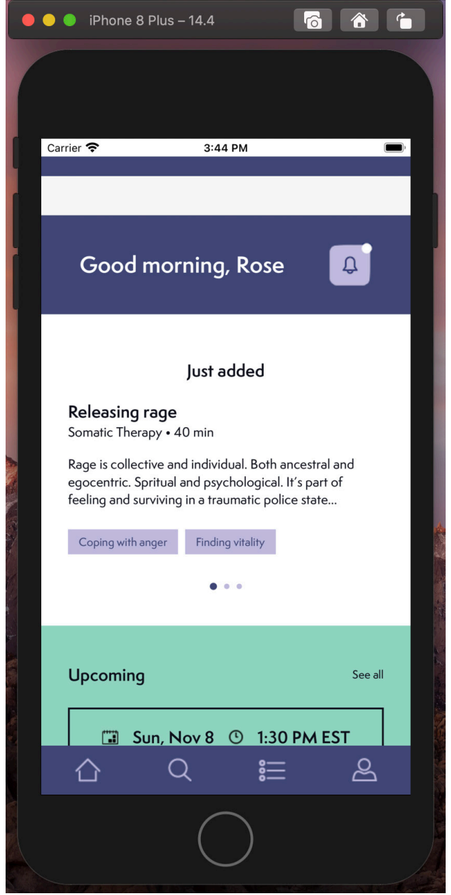
The app prototype was created using Swift in XCode.

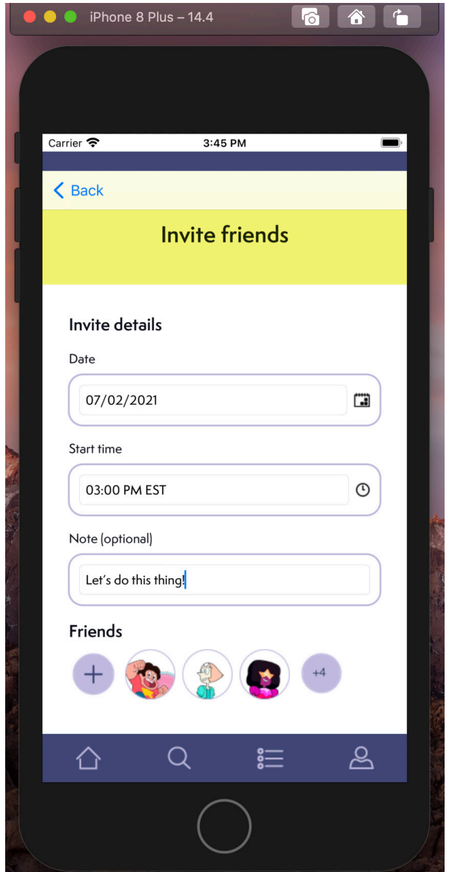


Testing

Internal testing was performed once every two sprints. This meant that once two primary sections were completely built out, they were tested thoroughly by Anisa to ensure everything worked as expected.

External testing was performed once in the middle of the semester. The screens were all shown to two other programmers familiar with Swift, who were asked to review the app as a whole as well as look over the codebase to provide feedback on structure.





Initial gigamap

Radical Healing

Contextualizing the wicked problem of healing from oppression // Anisa A. & Brenda L.

1 2 3 4

Typologies of violence

The Violence Triangle
Johan Galtang, Norwegian sociologist

Direct violence is the most visible as well as most popular type of violence, despite being far from the worst and harming the least amount of people in comparison. It is itself not an origin, but instead a manifestation of the other types of violence.

Structural violence, also known as systemic violence, is defined as any form of passive violence wherein social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

Cultural violence is defined as any aspect of culture that can be used to justify violence in direct and structural forms.

What is radical healing?

Intergenerational trauma, also known as historical trauma, is a result of structural and cultural violence that is harbored within oppressed individuals and communities that share a common social identity and passed on to their descendants. This trauma manifests in detrimental effects on the body, mind, spirit, and connection to community that cannot be adequately described by common PTSD discourse nor adequately addressed by Western PTSD treatment models.

Radical healing is a grassroots holistic response to intergenerational trauma. Historically, this work has been done by marginalized communities, most a notably Black folks, as a vital practice of sustainable restoration, resistance, and resilience. In the context of social movements, this work is especially crucial for preventing activist burnout as well as building collective capacities to reimagine a transformed world.

This radical healing is not only for the sake of feeling good, but also for strengthening our grounds to become better activists and organizers for dismantling oppressive systems.

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare
Audre Lorde, American Black feminist & civil rights activist

Forms of invisible violence

The commodification of wellness as a result of capitalism has developed a booming self-care industry of luxury products that market an individualistic ideal of well-being. This ideal not only neglects how individual well-being co-depends on community well-being, but also promotes the capitalistic priority of wellness for the sake of increased personal productivity. By fixating on consuming superficial products and adopting that competitive scarcity mindset of productivity, people end up only fueling those very oppressive structures that harm them in the first place.

Such a neoliberal co-optation of radical healing, that outsources wellness resources, also enables political leaders to distract the public from applying pressure for real, substantial support that addresses the root of their issues.

Not only are people of marginalized races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and/or low socioeconomic status more likely to struggle from mental health issues, but they also experience the most significant barriers to accessing mental healthcare.

Neighborhoods where these populations reside in are underserved because of discrimination and therefore lack the resources needed to maintain critical community services such as hospitals and mental health centers.

For non-white populations, there are also significant cultural stigmes surrounding mental health which prevent individuals from seeking proper care.

The likelihood that someone seeks mental health care is also directly linked to higher levels of education. So for communities with poor education systems due to discrimination, lack of understanding is another primary barrier.

Finally, even when marginalized individuals do enter care, they usually receive lower quality care because the current healthcare system at-large doesn't take into account the latest research on how to treat marginalized populations.

Intergenerational trauma manifested

A study published by the National Institute of Health examined minority stress, mental health, and substance abuse among Black, Latino, and multiracial gay and bisexual men. The results indicated that racial discrimination and its interaction with gay rejection sensitivity were significantly associated with **higher levels of emotion regulation difficulties**, which predicted **higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms** at 6 months, which, in turn, predicted **higher levels of heavy drinking**, but not drug use, at 12 months. Moreover, the total indirect effect from the stigma variables to heavy drinking was statistically significant. The findings indicate that it is critical for researchers and clinicians to consider the effects of intersecting racial and sexual minority stress on emotion regulation in the persistence of psychological and behavioral health inequities facing Black, Latino, and multiracial GBM

Neurobiologists have provided data on the intergenerational transmission of trauma through epigenetics, identifying **biological risks for PTSD and greater lifetime depressive disorders**, as well as **higher levels of childhood trauma relating to emotional abuse and neglect** among descendants of Holocaust survivors and survivors of 9/11.

Historical trauma experienced by Indigenous communities such as mass genocide, the settler colonization of their land, and residential school systems continuers to plague U.S. reservations with social isolation, poverty, and lack of healthcare services that directly contribute significant harm on Indigineous people's health and spirituality. For example, research on **child sexual abuse** of Indigenous people has reported **a rate as high as 80%** with a greater likelihood of female children being victimized. Indigenous people since 1974 have consistently had the **highest substance abuse rates** compared with other U.S. racial/ethnic groups. They are also at **higher risk for mental health disorders and suicide risk** and experience **higher than average levels alcohol-related crime** in their areas compared to the national average.

With widespread war, political instability, and poverty across Asia in recent decades, many Asian immigrant parents likely have experienced potentially traumatic events before arriving in the U.S. which continue to haunt and have impacts on their families' health and communication. Communication issues as a result of parents being reluctant to discuss their pasts with their children, conveying shame, fear, and sadness, and/or inducing guilt in their non-survivor children create **a sense of lost or incomplete personal history and identity** among their descendants. Alternatively, parents who disclose traumas to their children for the purpose of seeking emotional support, which constitutes **role-reversing parenting**, also results in children experiencing **higher risks of depression and anxiety disorder**. For many traumatized parents, problems escalate to the point of **domestic violence or complete abandonment**.

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Our Intervention

A mobile app experience that guides users through a journey of transforming the consequences of oppression on their bodies, hearts, and minds. This experience will offer of an expansive variety of healing practices in an accessible format that can be personalized according to a user's specific healing goals—all while keeping the significant focus on collective liberation.

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at a glance

Updated gigamap

Restoring Vitality, Hope, and Community Through Radical Healing

Anisa Anuar & Brenda Lau

Contextualizing Healing from Oppression

Typologies of violence

The Violence Triangle
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Radical healing is a grassroots holistic response to intergenerational trauma. Historically, this work has been done by marginalized communities, most notably Black folks, as a vital practice of sustainable restoration, resistance, and resilience. In the context of social movements, this work is especially crucial for preventing activist burnout as well as building collective capacities to reimagine a transformed world.

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Such a neoliberal co-optation of radical healing, that outsources wellness resources, also enables political leaders to distract the public from applying pressure for real, substantial support that addresses the root of their issues.

Not only are people of marginalized races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and/or low socioeconomic status more likely to struggle from mental health issues, but they also experience the most significant **barriers to accessing mental healthcare.**

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Historical trauma experienced by Indigenous communities such as mass genocide, the settler colonial creation of their land, and the forced assimilation into Western ways of life via U.S. interventions with social isolation, poverty, and lack of healthcare access, have all directly contribute significant harm on Indigenous people's mental health and spirituality. For example, research on **child sexual abuse** of Indigenous people has reported **a rate as high as 80%** with a greater likelihood of female children being victimized. Indigenous people since 1974 have consistently had the **highest substance abuse rates** compared with other U.S. racial/ethnic groups. They are also at **higher risk for mental health disorders and suicide risk** and experience **higher than average levels alcohol-related crime** in their areas compared to the national average.

With widespread war, political instability, and poverty across Asia in recent decades, many Asian immigrant parents likely have experienced potentially traumatic events before arriving in the U.S. which continue to haunt and have impacts on their families' health and communication. Communication issues as a result of parents being reluctant to discuss their pasts with their children; conveying shame, fear, and sadness; and/or inducing guilt in their non-survivor children create a **sense of lost or incomplete personal history and identity** among their descendants. Alternatively, parents who disclose traumas to their children for the purpose of seeking emotional support, which constitutes **role-reversing parenting**, also results in children experiencing **higher risks of depression and anxiety disorder**. For many traumatized parents, problems escalate to the point of **domestic violence or complete abandonment**.

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Key Considerations

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Our Intervention: Restor

A mobile app experience that guides users through a journey of transforming the consequences of oppression on their bodies, hearts, and minds. This experience will offer of an expansive variety of healing practices sourced from real trained healers in an accessible format that can be personalized according to a user's specific healing goals—all while keeping the significant focus on collective liberation.

Link to view the hi-fi mockups:
tinyurl.com/restor-screens

at a glance

Exploratory research

Researched and annotated over 20 different sources to get a better understanding of the theory and practice of healing.

Target audience & field expert interviews

Interviewed target users to learn about their experiences with healing. Spoke with experts for feedback and guidance.

Design exercises

Created personas with corresponding journey maps to understand how the app might play a part in users' lives.

Visual A/B testing

Conducted testing with 2 different hi-fi mockups to determine which visual style most aligns with the project values.

Usability testing

Conducted testing with the clickable wireframes to assess its effectiveness and identity problem areas.

Sitemap & lo-fi wireframes

Planned a sitemap to determine necessary screens and their flow. Designed wireframes to organize components.

Brand development

Developed a name and visual brand for the project to convey core goals and values.

Content gathering & copywriting

Sourced content from trained healers to feature on the app. Wrote copy for the app that aligns with the brand's tone.

App development

Built out screens according to the mockups. Performed internal debugging and testing.

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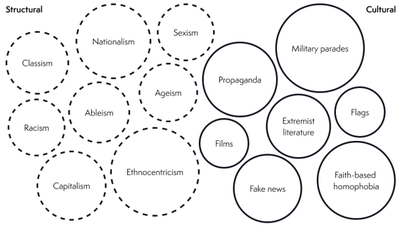

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Irresistible is a collective dedicated to celebrating the many traditions of movement leaders, cultural workers, and spiritual teachers who remind us to embody the liberation we are pursuing. They host a podcast, book club, as well as a weekly care circle to share space with those interested in social justice and movement healing.

nor adequately addressed by Western PTSD treatment models.

This radical healing is not only for the sake of feeling good, but also for strengthening our grounds to become better activists and organizers for dismantling oppressive systems.

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare
Audre Lorde, American Black feminist & civil rights activist

sake of increased personal productivity. By fixating on consuming superficial products and adopting that competitive scarcity mindset of productivity, people end up only fueling those very oppressive structures that harm them in the first place.

Such a neoliberal co-optation of radical healing, that outsources wellness resources, also enables political leaders to distract the public from applying pressure for real, substantial support that addresses the root of their issues.

reside in are underserved because of discrimination and therefore lack the resources needed to maintain critical community services such as hospitals and mental health centers.

For non-white populations, there are also significant cultural stigmas surrounding mental health which prevent individuals from seeking proper care.

The likelihood that someone seeks mental health care is also directly linked to higher levels of education. So for communities with poor education systems due to discrimination, lack of understanding is another primary barrier.

Finally, even when marginalized individuals do enter care, they usually receive lower quality care because the current healthcare system at-large doesn't take into account the latest research on how to treat marginalized populations.

disorders and suicide risk and experience **higher than average levels alcohol-related crime** in their areas compared to the national average.

With widespread war, political instability, and poverty across Asia in recent decades, many Asian immigrant parents likely have experienced potentially traumatic events before arriving in the U.S. which continue to haunt and have impacts on their families' health and communication. Communication issues as a result of parents being reluctant to discuss their pasts with their children; conveying shame, fear, and sadness; and/or inducing guilt in their non-survivor children create a **sense of lost or incomplete personal history and identity** among their descendants. Alternatively, parents who disclose traumas to their children for the purpose of seeking emotional support, which constitutes **role-reversing parenting**, also results in children experiencing **higher risks of depression and anxiety disorder**. For many traumatized parents, problems escalate to the point of **domestic violence or complete abandonment**.

NCN strives to strengthen and re-root the capacity of individuals, families, and communities to honor, rebalance, and redevelop the authentic identity, values, traditions, and indigenous practices of Chicano, Latino, Native, Raza, and other communities of color as the path to the honoring of all their relations and lifelong well-being - in order to reduce the incidence of issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, gang violence, etc.

Asian Mental Health Collective - Waves

AMHC WAVES aims to destigmatize mental health within the Asian community by providing a safe space for individuals to discuss any and all things mental wellness. They organize events such as roundtables, guest speaker panels, and other meetups to learn and spread awareness about mental health.

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Key Considerations

Because of the multitude of existing barriers that marginalized individuals already face to seeking and recieving proper mental health care, we pursued a **mobile app approach** for our intervention in order to be accessible to the large modern-day population of smartphone owners. The user experience has also been designed with **comfort and approachability as top priorities** in terms of allowing users to engage at their own pace and introducing individuals who have no prior knowledge of healing.

Because intergenerational trauma manifests in such a variety of forms, and there are endless other reasons for individuals to seek healing, our mobile app asks users to **input their personal goals** for healing so that we can share **recommendations for aligned healing practices**. This intentional personalization will also extend to **progress tracking** tailored to those specific goals.

Because there is such a **wide diverse array of healing practices** that we wanted to offer on our app, many of which recieve little attention from the mainstream wellness industry, we put great consideration into **designing to invite curiosity, encourage exploration, and provide education**.

Our Intervention: Restor

A mobile app experience that guides users through a journey of transforming the consequences of oppression on their bodies, hearts, and minds. This experience will offer of an expansive variety of healing practices sourced from real trained healers in an accessible format that can be personalized according to a user's specific healing goals—all while keeping the significant focus on collective liberation.

Link to view the hi-fi mockups:
tinyurl.com/restor-screens

Exploratory research

Researched and annotated over 20 different sources to get a better understanding of the theory and practice of healing.

Target audience & field expert interviews

Interviewed target users to learn about their experiences with healing. Spoke with experts for feedback and guidance.

Design exercises

Created personas with corresponding journey maps to understand how the app might play a part in users' lives.

Visual A/B testing

Conducted testing with 2 different hi-fi mockups to determine which visual style most aligns with the project values.

Usability testing

Conducted testing with the clickable wireframes to assess its effectiveness and identity problem areas.

Sitemap & lo-fi wireframes

Planned a sitemap to determine necessary screens and their flow. Designed wireframes to organize components.

Brand development

Developed a name and visual brand for the project to convey core goals and values.

Content gathering & copywriting

Sourced content from trained healers to feature on the app. Wrote copy for the app that aligns with the brand's tone.

App development

Built out screens according to the mockups. Performed internal debugging and testing.