# Dorm Despair

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# Overview

**Research Question:** How can we implement a program that helps increase students living in residence halls' access to student-led casual conversation about mental health?

**Problem Statement:** Students, especially new students, living in residence halls frequently experience loneliness and feel overwhelmed. Within residence halls there are very few options/spaces that allow students to deal with these feelings.

**Rationale:** We will discuss the effects that the dorming transition has on students. Welcome week is all fun and games until it isn't all that welcoming. Students face feeling left out and lonely, not having anyone to go to with these feelings. In order to increase connection and reduce loneliness, we must build an environment where residents can feel comfortable amongst familiar faces.

# Problem Justification

Statistics

- 1 in 4 students reported being lonely most of the time according to The Higher Education Policy Institute survey of over 10,000 students in the UK
- According to a 2023 gallup poll, 39% of students felt lonely on the current or previous day

Our team's personal experiences

- The first week/month can be overwhelming
- Did not know people on campus and had a hard time meeting them
- Few people in residence halls who you feel you can talk to

# CRITERIA AND CONSTRAINTS

## Criteria

- Easily accessible
- Low pressure
- Welcoming environment

## Constraints

- Space
- Budget

# Solution

## Chill Room Features

- Activities including coloring, origami, books, fidget toys, or board games
- Spaces for small groups to have "chill talks" about college, mental health, life, and experiences
- Located in residence hall lounges for accessibility
- Seating areas and comfy chairs

## Chill Talks

- Talks led by students or available residence hall staff
- Discussions about general feelings and adjusting to dorm life
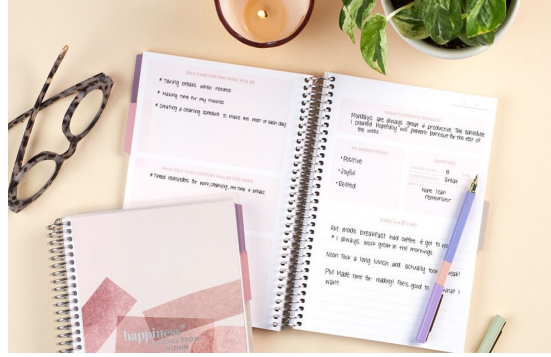    - Ex: "How do you feel about…", "What do you miss about..", etc.

# Room Plans
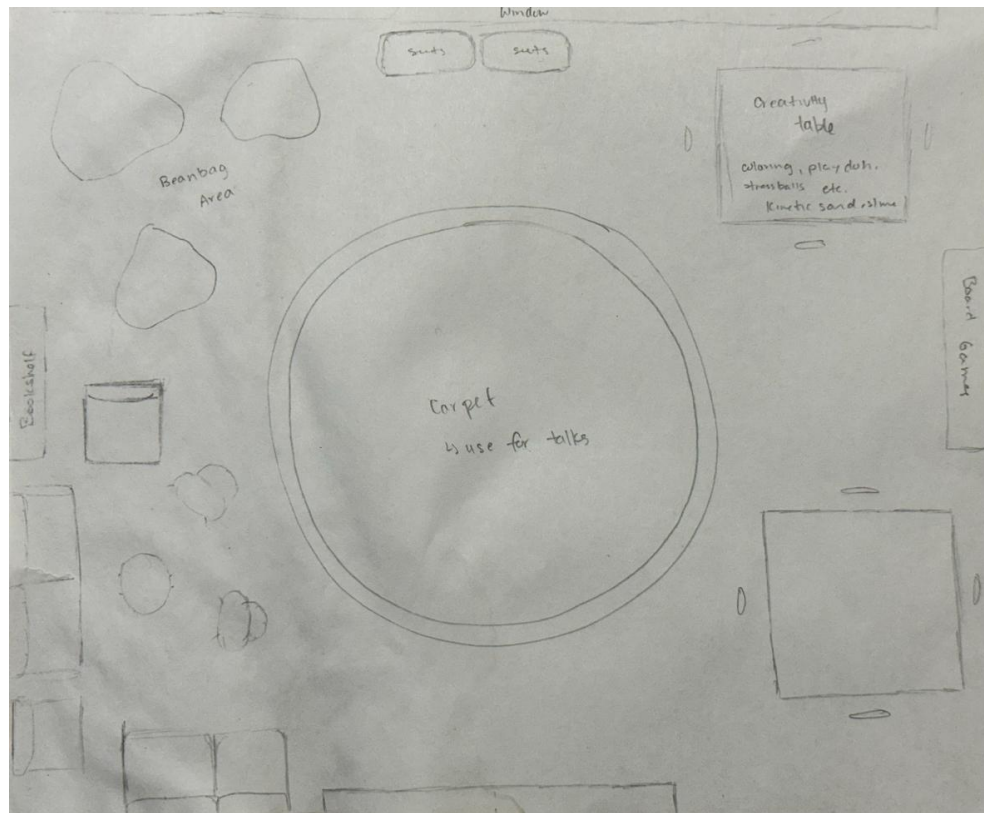
# THE IMPACT



**Community building**

**Heightened usage of pro-mental health practices**

**New friendships**

# Conclusion

It is not only beneficial for individuals to have this source of support, but also the Rutgers community as a whole! The following aspects will also positively be affected:

- Community building
- Academic success
- Conflict resolution
- Retention rates
- Enhanced communication
- Promotion of campus values
- Facilitation of already existing programming

# References

- https://www.bbc.com/news/education-61735272#

- https://www.gallup.com/education/509231/college-students-experience-high-levels-worry-stress.aspx#:~:text=Story%20Highlights&text=WASHINGTON%2C%20D.C.%20%2D%2D%20During%20the,36%25%20sadness%20the%20previous%20day.

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