



Documentation

Tranqui

Selected proposal

Problem: People do not resort to preventive self-care, they collapse and do not go to a psychologist.

Solution: An app to improve your health, playful emotional self-care to help people with preventative rather than palliative care, and tips for coping with periods of anxiety.

Related topic:

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Cheer up

Initial test to determine the best solution for game recommendations. (This could involve defining an option to allow users to choose how much free time they have when opening the app.)

Ask how you are, encourage activities that are active enough to take you away from the problem and lower your stress levels, but not so challenging that they distract you. Personalize your experience by offering customizable routes that allow you to skip certain activities.

Registration (form)

- Tips (interaction)
- Organization (deciding what to do) [this will take a moment to relax]

Initial ideas:

- Depending on your usage pattern, it may suggest you see a psychologist and indicate that the app is not a substitute for therapy with a psychologist.
- Connected to the smartwatch to notify you of a mini-task to lower anxiety levels [Check if they can be synchronized but not be conditional with the app]
- Base it on the students' schedules and give them the option to rest during their breaks.
- See if there's a way to complement this by allowing the user to restrict their phone to limit apps (it might be too much for the app)
- Encourage people to turn off their phones before going to sleep with a dynamic activity.

Mendelow matrix

Regarding Mendelow's matrix, we must monitor private psychologists, as they are an external factor with little power or influence unless the student seeks their help. We also include teachers in the "Keep Informed" section, since they deliver classes and tests (a stress factor) depending on the student's needs, maintaining an interest in the student but without significant power to modify the number of assessments.

We have the authority to satisfy the university/institute organization by having power, but not necessarily being very involved with the student.

Finally, the student, the institution's psychologist, and the family environment are involved, as they are directly involved with the student.

Actor map

The focus of the actor map was on students seeking psychological support, being directly in contact with their family environment who can affect their mental health.

Their first point of contact is the institution's organization (whether it's the student affairs office, the student services center, a professor, the department head, or via institutional email), who will assess their case.

The institution's psychologist remains uninvolved, without interacting with the student, until the institution has assessed the initial level of urgency. After this process, the psychologist decides whether to take on the case or refer the student to private psychologists.

The psychologist is in turn commissioned by a series of internal bodies of the institution and in some cases contracted through a specialized external body that provides the professionals (Gea Chile).

They, in turn, depend on the superintendency of higher education, which is the highest supervisor

Mendelow matrix

We asked a series of questions to students from universities near Duoc UC Viña del Mar, with the goal of understanding our potential users. The following questions were asked:

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. What are you studying?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. What range best defines your current income?
6. What are your hobbies?
7. How would you define your personality? (Extrovert - Introvert)
8. What is the app you use most on your phone?
9. What type of content do you consume? What kind of series, social media, movies...
10. What are you most passionate about?
11. What is the atmosphere like at the university?
12. Do you feel you have enough time to enjoy your free time?
13. Have you felt anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed lately? (List options)
14. When did you realize you had anxiety? (*)
15. Do you feel you have a safe space to talk within your family or friends?
16. Do you follow advice from people close to you?

We also inquired about elements that could help solve the problems detected:

1. Do people in your close circle talk about mental health?
2. What have you heard about emotional self-care?
3. Would you like an app that helps you improve your health and emotional self-care?
4. What songs or types of music do you find most relaxing?
5. What activities allow you to relax?
6. Do you know any breathing techniques to relax? Have you used them?
7. Do you like to meditate?
8. How do you often feel? (to know which problems to address)
9. What actions do you take to avoid losing focus?

This led us to the following results:

Arcos: The atmosphere is relaxed; the change from school was abrupt since she's now studying what she wanted. There are mental health support tools available, such as sending an email and being referred to a psychologist, and if necessary, to another specialist. The art institute influences her perception of the situation.

Problem: There is no direct contact with the psychologist, as contact must be made by email.

Santo Tomás: The environment is the most stressful of the three, with many assignments and tests. Some students indicated that the study spaces are very small, but the professors are good. Most of those interviewed state d that they did not know/did not know that there was a psychologist within the institution; those who had visited stated that the psychologist had not helped them, either because he was overwhelmed or simply did not make a difference in their situation.

Duoc UC: The atmosphere at Duoc is mostly relaxed, although its main problem is the lack of knowledge with the Duoc platform for psychologist care; if you are sent, you must go through a series of steps to be able to meet with one.

Regarding the problems, we detected that:

1. There is a lack of awareness of psychological care protocols

“...I think there’s a support psychologist here, you go, present your problem, they give you support, and that’s it.”
“No, I think there’s a psychologist, the psychologist, but you have to make an appointment.” (person 7)
“I receive emails about talks, but I haven’t seen anything physical.” (person 8)
“I don’t really know, because I know they have psychologists but I don’t know how to get guidance on that.”
(person 11)

2. Number of evaluations:

“...sometimes classes are overwhelming with so much material, maybe many hours of subjects...” (Person 2)
“...it depends much more on oneself...there is no support from the establishment because in the end one comes to study” (Person 2)
“The classes are good, but I feel like everything is rushed. I mean, there’s no time to analyze what’s happening. It’s like we have to absorb all the material, and sometimes there just isn’t enough time.” (Person 11)

3. Transportation Safety (Santo Tomás)

...“Not even with certainty, here yes, here yes, but if one is from here on out no...” (person 4)

4. Competitiveness (Santo Tomás)

Yes, it’s just that in school I was literally one of the top students, and here I have to compete with my group of classmates because they’re all just like that group of top students, so it’s a matter of seeing who’s the best. It’s very competitive. You start to doubt how good you are, and if you don’t do well on the test or you don’t understand anything, then you don’t know if you’re the bad one or who’s what.
(Kinesiology, Person 1)

5. Restrictive measures

I don't use them; now the library is even more difficult. Groups are limited to four, but if you ask for the small room, they'll give you a hard time, and if there are only four of you, they won't let you use the large room. (Person 12)

6. Lack of attention from a psychologist:

Yes, yes, but she didn't like it because the platform is complicated to use and she couldn't connect with the psychologist. (person 14)

Yes, they have resources. I mean, not at the main office, but they do have resources like psychological support and flexibility in some aspects.

Partly, I haven't wanted to use it because I know it's overloaded, and ideally, it should be used by the people who need it most. (person 15)

7. Pressure to get into university

"No, before, when I was younger, I was afraid of the NEM" (person 14)

Yes, initially it was related to my score for getting into the program I wanted, and then to the high tuition fees at universities. (person 15)

8. Limited space

I don't think so, they're always full and the study rooms available have limited time slots and are small. [person 15, spaces at Duoc]

Surveys

In addition, we conducted 12 surveys distributed among students from multiple universities and institutes in Chile, to gain a broad perspective on the topic.

1. What are your hobbies?
2. What apps do you use often?
3. How would you describe yourself (personality)?
4. What are you most passionate about?
5. What is the atmosphere like at the university?
6. What topics do you talk about with your friends?
7. What activities do you do on a daily basis?
8. How do you relax at home?
9. What type of content do you consume? What kind of series, social media, movies, etc.
10. What is the first thing you do when you wake up?
11. What is the last thing you do before going to sleep?
12. What activities help you relax, whether by staying still or moving around?

The survey was answered by 39 people who study at a higher education institution; the age of the respondents ranges from 18-30 years.

General conclusions:

- Most students are not very familiar with how the mental health resources offered by their university work, confirming what we learned from the interviews. They know that some help is available, but they don't fully understand how it works, so they don't seek it out.
- Those who have used the program mostly feel that their experience has been average, as there are things that could be improved and some cases that are not resolved.
- They take care of their mental health by socializing with friends, doing hobbies, or avoiding stressful situations.
- They believe they were affected by the pandemic, especially in academic and social areas (academic workload, concentration, unhealthy habits, and social isolation)

Interviews with professionals

We contacted a psychologist who has worked with university students, so we asked him questions which we have compiled below:

What do you think are the main causes of mental health problems today?

“I believe that one of the main causes of mental health problems is precisely the phenomena surrounding globalization and the new social, economic, and political system that exists today. In this sense, there has been a significant decrease in social connections, which have now been largely transformed by technological networks. This has led to a decrease in social contact with others. This, in turn, may have generated feelings of sadness, anxiety, and a certain loneliness that could arise precisely because of the distance imposed by the system in which we live.”

This is not limited to emotional phenomena, so to speak, to matters of the affective order, but rather to purely political and economic events upon which states of mental health depend. Other causes are mainly relational problems within the family, problems of abandonment, domestic violence; these are common cases in the context in which he finds himself.

Have you noticed any recurring patterns in the way mental health problems present themselves?

“Yes, among the most common symptoms, which are related to depressive and anxious symptoms, generally a lot of sadness, despair about the future, and uncertainty regarding the job market, I’m speaking from my work experience. I notice that students have a lot of uncertainty about what the future holds for them and about the job opportunities that might be available, and this could be a recurring pattern that could generate a lot of discomfort.

Have you noticed an increase in cases among young people lately?

“Yes, of course, the pandemic has contributed greatly to the increase in symptoms, discomfort, and illness, as it is called in the medical field, and an increase in suicides, suicide attempts, a significant increase in depression, personality disorders. Isolation can generate these symptoms or problems, and it explains that relationships with people have changed.

In what ways have you seen young people cope with anxiety or disorders?

“The main support comes from family networks, friendship networks, and generally support from people. Then substance support begins, and there has been a significant increase in the consumption of all kinds of substances, even more so during the pandemic. There has been a massive increase, as well as increased use of mobile devices.”

Do you think some people are more predisposed to having psychological problems?

“He does not feel that there is a biological predisposition to having psychological problems, but rather that the predisposition is based on the social, economic, political and even territorial context where people live; it is not based on genetics but on the context of their environment.”

In terms of academics, have you noticed a pattern among students with mental health problems?

“Yes, at your university, which serves a very vulnerable population in Chile, INACAP in Antofagasta, there are more economic problems, housing insecurity, lack of basic resources, and more than 900 students have mental health problems. In many cases, they carry the hopes of their families to help them succeed. It’s not really about academics, but rather about an economic or social context.”

How can an educational institution help improve the mental health of its students?

“There are many multidisciplinary activities with specialists. At their university, they hold a workshop, or rather a support space, where students talk amongst themselves. Psychologists don’t intervene; it’s a space that doesn’t involve them, where they simply provide mutual support. There are mental health workshops where families are called in to address these problems, and there are also institutional interventions that provide financial funding.”

Do you believe that higher education predisposes young people to more psychological problems?

“I don’t know, it makes you think, because they have different ways of reading it, it makes it seem as if education sets it as a goal, as a cultural ideal or desire that many times is not the student’s own desire to study, or many times those people don’t want to study, they want to do other things, and those are often the minority. Education itself is not the problem for mental health, but rather something else, like the economic aspect when wanting to study.”

Conclusions

- **They exhibit sadness, anxiety, and depressive symptoms**

The main symptoms students experience are: feelings of sadness, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and job insecurity. These same problems occur in a school setting, but the cause is different.

In higher education, students are influenced by their family environment, globalization, and “anxiety about the future” regarding their future employment. In contrast, in high school, the focus is on academic futures, such as facing university or not wanting to attend classes. [In field observations and interviews, the students indicated the same thing, recalling their “fear” towards the NEM and whether they would be able to get in]

- **The pandemic has had an impact due to isolation**

There has been a change as a result of the pandemic, with an increase in these cases, due to isolation, changing people’s relationships. [It relates to what was seen in the interviews...]

- **It decreases the interaction between students and increases the use of technology**

There is a decrease in social ties, transformed under technological networks, without contacting others face to face as often, they focus on themselves to avoid anxiety and distract themselves with technology. [This coincides with what the interviewees stated; they just want to forget that stress exists.]

- **The establishments do not provide sufficient support for students**

The establishments support students by having specialists, holding workshops, but the psychologists do not act; their action is minimal. [This aligns with the lack of awareness and the absence of change observed by students who have attended sessions with psychologists at the institutions.]

