Group Plan

Team Members:

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Revised project description: Mind Lounge (derived from "Sanity Check")

Mind Lounge is an app designed to help people relax and destress, similar to how a lounge is a place for relaxing. People have many ways of spending their free time with their devices, but some of these ways may not be the best for mental health. One such example is social media, which has been linked to anxiety and stress. Many social media apps include news in user feeds as well, which can negatively impact the reader if the news is particularly unpleasant. We want to design an app that allows users to focus on themselves and help them control their social media and entertainment use so that they are not always worrying about what others are up to or spending too much time on one thing where it becomes an addiction. Some features include a journal to write about your day and how you are feeling, a calendar to plan times for relaxation, and entertainment options like music or reading. The app should also keep track of how much time is being spent for relaxation so that the user can adjust accordingly. If the user is spending too much or too little time (determined by the user's schedule), the app should report that in the tracking. The user will also be able to set up reminders and have them sent out to remind them to do more productive tasks or go for some relaxation time if they are spending too much time on other possibly stress-inducing apps (ex. Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, gaming).

Meeting schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-1:00 pm (after class)

Group chat and documentation: We are currently communicating through text/iMessage and we are using Google Drive to store and work together on documents.

Research plan

Interviews: One of our data collection strategies will be conducting interviews and then using the information collected to formulate a questionnaire for people to fill out. Each of us will plan on collecting data from 2 (or more) people and we will recruit from students since they tend to be tech-savvy and have both academic and work stress that they try to find ways to relieve.

Here is a list of possible questions for the interview and to adapt for the questionnaire:

- How would you describe your mental health?
- What are good days and bad days like for you?
- Do you feel stress? If so, what causes that stress?
- What do you do to relieve stress?
- Is there an overlap between what you do in your free time and what you do to relieve stress?
- What makes you happy? These could be people, hobbies, TV shows, books, music etc.
- Do you feel that you don't have self-control over certain aspects of your life? If so, what in particular?
- What social media accounts do you actively use?
- Is there a social media or entertainment app that you use more than the others? If so, please estimate how much time you spend daily/weekly on the app.
- Are you following the news or do you encounter news stories in your social media feeds?
- Do you think that following the news can make a positive or negative impact? Explain.

We will try to adjust or add any follow-up questions depending on how the students answer some of the preliminary questions.

Observation: Another data collection strategy we plan on doing is observing people and their behavior in spending their free time. Each of us will plan on and conducting about 2 (or more) hours of observation.

For this observation, we are considering locations at public places in the school such as the library, other study spaces like CSEL, and dining halls. We will observe behavior from certain individuals around us for about 10 minutes each and try to find someone who might be taking a break from studying/homework or simply relaxing. In this way, we hope to see how they spend their free time in these places and observe their expressions to rate their overall enjoyment of the activity. Any potentially useful information will be written down. Studying how people relax in physical spaces may help us translate that into a virtual context for the app.

After we collect this information, we can look at which activities they do that seem to actually help them relax and draw out any common traits. We will discuss these traits and come up with important factors that contribute to relaxing.

In addition to this direct observation, we may try some participant observation by participating in these locations as students ourselves, or conduct some unstructured interviews of the people we have observed so that we may focus on how they interact with the technological aspect of spending their free time. We will first ask permission, and if they agree, the interviewees may answer any questions at their own discretion.

A list of questions that we may pick from and ask:

- Where do you usually spend your free time at school?
- What do you usually do when you are feeling stressed at a place like this?
- Do you play any PC games or video games? If so, what are they?
- Which websites are your most visited when not studying?
- What apps/programs do you use most on your laptop in your free time?
- What apps do you use the most on your phone in your free time?
- Why do you use these apps/programs?

- Do these apps/programs make you feel happy and relaxed? Why or why not?
- Is there anything in the school environment that causes you stress? If so, what in particular?
- Do you think there are any improvements to the space that can be made so that you can feel more relaxed at school? If so, what do you have in mind?

Conducting these unstructured interviews after observing the people at these locations will give us more context behind what they were doing or what they generally do in their free time.