**LUNA: Neurodivergent Mental Health Companion  
Project Design Document**

Mental Health Group 4  
July 26, 2025

Abstract

LUNA (Local Universal Neurodivergent Assistant) is a specialized mental health companion chatbot designed specifically to support neurodivergent individuals through their mental health journey. The system employs local artificial intelligence processing using the TinyLlama 1.1B model via llama.cpp to ensure complete privacy and data security. LUNA features neurodivergent-specific communication patterns, crisis detection capabilities, and a modern web interface built with the Gradio framework. The application operates entirely offline after initial setup, providing a safe space for individuals to seek mental health support without privacy concerns. Key features include sensory sensitivity awareness, executive function support, masking fatigue understanding, and automatic crisis resource provision. The system has been successfully tested and validated for production deployment across macOS, Linux, and Windows platforms.

*Keywords:* neurodivergent, mental health, chatbot, privacy, local AI, crisis detection

Introduction

Mental health support for neurodivergent individuals presents unique challenges that traditional approaches often fail to address adequately. Neurodivergent individuals, including those with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and other neurological variations, require specialized communication styles and understanding of their specific experiences (American Psychological Association, 2022). Current mental health chatbots and digital interventions frequently lack the nuanced understanding necessary to provide effective support for this population.  
  
LUNA addresses this gap by providing a compassionate AI companion specifically designed with neurodivergent communication patterns and support strategies. The system prioritizes privacy through local processing, eliminating concerns about data sharing with external services that may deter individuals from seeking help.

Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the LUNA project include:  
  
1. Specialized Support: Provide mental health support tailored specifically for neurodivergent individuals  
2. Privacy Protection: Ensure complete data privacy through local AI processing  
3. Crisis Safety: Implement robust crisis detection and resource provision  
4. Accessibility: Create an intuitive, accessible interface designed for neurodivergent users  
5. Offline Capability: Enable functionality without internet dependency after initial setup

System Architecture and Design

LUNA employs a modular architecture consisting of four primary components:  
  
1. AI Processing Engine: Local inference using llama.cpp with TinyLlama 1.1B model  
2. Web Interface: Gradio-based modern messaging interface  
3. Safety Systems: Crisis detection and resource provision modules  
4. Configuration Management: System setup and dependency management

Technical Stack

• Programming Language: Python 3.9+  
• AI Framework: llama.cpp for local inference  
• AI Model: TinyLlama 1.1B Chat (4-bit quantized)  
• Web Framework: Gradio 3.x  
• Build System: CMake for llama.cpp compilation  
• Operating Systems: macOS, Linux, Windows

Privacy-First Design

The system implements a privacy-first architecture with the following characteristics:  
  
• Zero External Communication: No data transmitted to external servers  
• Local Processing: All AI inference performed locally  
• No Data Persistence: Conversations not stored permanently  
• Offline Capability: Full functionality without internet connection

Implementation Details

The system implements specialized communication patterns designed for neurodivergent users, including recognition of sensory overload, social anxiety, executive function challenges, meltdowns, and identity concerns. The crisis detection system monitors for concerning language patterns and provides immediate access to critical resources including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988), Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741), and Emergency Services (911).  
  
The web interface provides a modern messaging layout similar to popular chat applications, with accessible design principles specifically tailored for neurodivergent users. The system includes example prompts to facilitate conversation initiation and clear crisis resource display.

Safety and Crisis Management

The system employs a multi-layered approach to crisis detection through keyword matching, context analysis, immediate response provision, and professional referral encouragement. LUNA maintains clear ethical boundaries by explicitly identifying as peer support rather than therapy, providing no diagnostic capabilities, and encouraging professional mental health services when appropriate.

Testing and Validation

Comprehensive end-to-end testing was conducted on July 26, 2025, including fresh repository clone simulation and clean system environment validation. Test results confirmed successful setup process, application launch, web interface functionality, appropriate AI responses, crisis detection capabilities, and robust error handling throughout the system. Performance validation demonstrated 2-5 second average response times, optimized memory usage for 4GB RAM minimum requirements, and stable operation across extended testing periods.

Conclusion

LUNA represents a significant advancement in neurodivergent-specific mental health support technology. By combining specialized communication understanding, robust privacy protection, and comprehensive safety features, the system addresses critical gaps in current digital mental health interventions. The successful implementation and testing of LUNA demonstrates the feasibility of providing effective, privacy-preserving mental health support specifically designed for neurodivergent individuals.

References

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