Student Mental Health Chatbot Personas and Scenarios

Main Pain Point

A key challenge faced by students is the overwhelming anxiety and stress caused by academic pressures, financial instability, and personal uncertainties. Many students experience moments when they feel isolated, unsupported, or unsure about the next steps—whether that be managing coursework, handling financial strain, or dealing with unexpected crises. The chatbot should focus on providing timely, empathetic interventions that validate these emotions while offering practical guidance, self-care techniques, and connections to campus resources. This focus is especially critical during transitional periods or crises, where immediate emotional support can make a significant difference.

Persona 1: Sarah - The Stressed College Student

Name: Sarah
Age: 20
Major: Biology
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Sarah is a second-year college student who is feeling overwhelmed with her studies, extracurricular activities, and part-time job. She often experiences anxiety, particularly during exams, and finds it hard to balance everything.

Scenario:
Late one night in her dorm, Sarah is cramming for an upcoming exam. Overwhelmed by racing thoughts and mounting anxiety, she opens the mental health chatbot on her phone and types, *"I'm feeling really anxious. I have so much to do and don't know where to start."* The chatbot responds with a calming message, offers a guided breathing exercise, and provides time management tips. It also suggests scheduling a short session with a university counselor. Feeling somewhat reassured, Sarah books an appointment for the following week.

Needs and Requirements:

- Quick response to anxiety-related queries.

- Access to time management strategies.

- Integration with university counseling services.

Persona 2: Jake - The Freshman Adjusting to College Life

Name: Jake
Age: 18
Major: Psychology
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Jake is a freshman who has recently moved to a new city. He feels homesick and struggles to adapt to the new environment, which makes socializing challenging.

In his second week at college, Jake feels isolated and misses his old friends. After a few awkward social events, he turns to the chatbot on his phone for guidance on coping with homesickness. The chatbot suggests journaling, meditation, and provides a list of student clubs. Encouraged by these ideas, Jake decides to try a meditation exercise and bookmarks several clubs to explore later. The chatbot also reminds him that professional help is available if his feelings worsen.

Needs and Requirements:

- Emotional support for homesickness.

- Practical advice for social integration.

- Suggested self-care activities.

Persona 3: Maya - The High Achiever Facing Burnout

Name: Maya
Age: 22
Major: Engineering
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Maya is a senior known for her high academic and extracurricular achievements. Recently, she has begun to feel burned out, exhausted, and detached from her previous passions.

Scenario:
Maya wakes up with dread as her to-do list looms large—thesis deadlines, job interviews, and endless projects. Despite forcing herself to work, she soon feels overwhelmed. Remembering the chatbot she installed last semester, Maya types, *"I think I'm burned out. I don't know how to keep going."* The chatbot validates her feelings, offers a burnout assessment, and provides advice on setting boundaries, taking breaks, and managing workload. Maya schedules a quick check-in for the next day and feels more empowered to care for herself.

Needs and Requirements:

- Support for managing burnout and stress.

- Personalized advice tailored to her situation.

- Reminders for self-care and realistic goal setting.

Persona 4: Liam - The International Student Experiencing Cultural Adjustment

Name: Liam
Age: 19
Major: International Relations
Location: Waterside campus (International student)
Persona Details: Liam, an international student, is adapting to a new country and culture. He often feels disconnected due to language barriers and unfamiliar social norms.

Scenario:
While working on his homework at a campus café, Liam is distracted by thoughts of missing his family and the challenges of cultural adjustment. Seeking guidance, he uses the chatbot, which provides empathetic responses and suggests joining cultural exchange events. It also offers calming techniques to ease his anxiety.

Motivated, Liam sets a goal to attend at least one international student event in the coming week and schedules regular check-ins with the chatbot.

Needs and Requirements:

- Support for overcoming homesickness and cultural adjustment.

- Resources to connect with other international students.

- Regular mental health check-ins.

Persona 5: Zoe - The Student Dealing with Exam Stress

Name: Zoe
Age: 21
Major: History
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Zoe, a third-year student, is preparing for her finals. Her perfectionism and overstudying lead to high levels of stress and sleepless nights.

Scenario:
On the night before her final exam, Zoe is overwhelmed by stress. With sleeplessness setting in, she turns to the chatbot for help. The chatbot reassures her that stress is normal during exams and offers relaxation techniques, study tips, and time management advice. Following the chatbot's suggestions, Zoe practices a mindfulness exercise and feels better prepared for the exam.

Needs and Requirements:

- Effective stress-relief techniques for exam periods.

- Practical study and time management advice.

- Relaxation and mindfulness exercises.

Persona 6: Ella - The Student Struggling with Tuition Fees

Name: Ella
Age: 22
Major: Business Administration
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Ella, a third-year student, faces financial stress from managing tuition fees and part-time jobs. Recently, she has fallen behind on payments, and the looming financial uncertainty is affecting her mental health.

Scenario:
Ella receives an email stating that her tuition payment is overdue and her account is on hold. Overwhelmed by the fear of possibly having to drop out, she consults the chatbot. The chatbot listens empathetically, validates her emotions, and suggests university financial aid resources and emergency funding options. It also offers self-care tips to help her manage her anxiety during this crisis.

Needs and Requirements:

- Emotional support related to financial stress.

- Access to financial aid and emergency funding information.

- Coping mechanisms for anxiety regarding tuition issues.

Persona 7: Tom - The Student Stressed Over Poor Results

Name: Tom
Age: 19
Major: Computer Science
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Tom, a high-achieving second-year student, has received poor exam results, leaving him disheartened and anxious about his future academic performance.

Scenario:

After checking his grades and finding that he failed a crucial midterm, Tom feels an intense pressure and doubts his abilities. He turns to the chatbot for reassurance. The chatbot reminds him that one setback does not define his career, suggests discussing the issue with a tutor, and offers practical strategies for improvement along with breathing exercises to manage his stress.

Needs and Requirements:

- Reassurance during academic setbacks.

- Practical guidance to improve academic performance.

- Stress-reduction techniques.

Persona 8: Daniel - The Student Reported for Academic Misconduct

Name: Daniel
Age: 21
Major: Law
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Daniel, a law student, is shocked to learn that his assignment has been flagged for academic misconduct. Uncertain and anxious about the implications, he feels lost about the next steps.

Scenario:

Upon receiving an email about his assignment being under review, Daniel feels panic and confusion. He reaches out to the chatbot, which explains the academic misconduct process in simple terms and reassures him that he can contact academic advisors for further clarity. The chatbot also provides resources on university policies and tips on how to prepare for the upcoming review.

Needs and Requirements:

- Emotional support during academic uncertainty.

- Clear information on academic misconduct procedures.

- Guidance to help manage panic and prepare for reviews.

Persona 9: Leo - The Student Defending His Assignment in a Misconduct Hearing

Name: Leo
Age: 23
Major: Philosophy
Location: Waterside campus

Persona Details: Leo, a mature student, has been called to defend his work in an academic misconduct hearing. Nervous about the process, he seeks support to bolster his confidence and prepare for the challenge.

Scenario:

On the day of his hearing, Leo is anxious about the questions and the process ahead. Before the meeting, he uses the chatbot to practice stress-relief techniques such as deep breathing and to receive advice on how to structure his responses. The chatbot reassures him that the hearing is an opportunity to present his case, and reminds him of available support from academic advisors and counseling services. Leo leaves the session feeling a bit more prepared and confident.

Needs and Requirements:

- Pre-hearing stress-relief and preparation tips.
- Guidance on navigating academic misconduct defenses.
- Emotional reassurance and support.

Persona 10: Sam - The Student Struggling with High Rent

Name: Sam
Age: 20
Major: Economics
Location: Northampton
Persona Details: Sam is facing financial pressure due to high rent in a competitive housing market. The constant worry about affording his accommodation is affecting his academic performance and overall mental well-being.

Scenario:

Sam has been stressed for weeks as his monthly rent takes up most of his budget, leaving little for other expenses. The pressure of making ends meet distracts him from his studies and social life. He turns to the chatbot, which offers stress management tips and provides resources on budgeting, student housing options, and potential roommate matching services. Sam feels slightly relieved knowing there are options he can explore to ease his financial burden.

Needs and Requirements:

- Support for managing financial stress related to high rent.
- Information on budgeting and alternative housing options.
- Resources for roommate matching or university accommodation assistance.

Persona 11: Nina - The Student Who Cannot Find Affordable Accommodation

Name: Nina
Age: 21
Major: Sociology
Location: Northampton
Persona Details: Nina is struggling to find affordable accommodation near campus. The high cost of living in the city is causing her significant stress, and the prolonged search is affecting her academic focus.

Scenario:

After months of searching for a reasonably priced apartment, Nina is overwhelmed by the options that exceed

her budget. Feeling defeated and anxious about her living situation, she consults the chatbot. The chatbot listens empathetically, offers stress-relief exercises, and provides a list of local resources including housing support services, listings for shared accommodations, and financial aid options specifically for housing. Nina feels more hopeful and empowered to continue her search with a clearer plan.

Needs and Requirements:

- Emotional support for housing-related financial stress.

- Practical information on affordable housing and shared accommodation.

- Access to local housing support resources.

Edge Case Personas

Persona 12: Chris - The Student Parent Balancing Responsibilities

Name: Chris
Age: 24
Major: Education
Location: Waterside campus
Persona Details: Chris is a single parent studying full-time. Balancing academic demands with parenting responsibilities creates unique challenges, including stress, time management issues, and feelings of isolation.

Scenario:
Between classes, assignments, and caring for his child, Chris feels constantly overwhelmed. He turns to the chatbot for support and advice on balancing his responsibilities. The chatbot offers tailored time management strategies, self-care tips, and resources on campus for student parents (such as childcare services and peer support groups). This guidance helps Chris feel understood and better equipped to manage his dual roles.

Needs and Requirements:

- Support for balancing academic and parenting responsibilities.

- Time management and self-care strategies tailored for student parents.

- Access to campus resources for childcare and parent support.

Persona 13: Jordan - The Student Facing Unexpected Social Isolation in a Fully Online Course Setting

Name: Jordan
Age: 22
Major: Environmental Science
Location: Online course student (no physical campus)
Persona Details: Jordan is enrolled in a fully online program, where all his courses are taught remotely, and he never visits the university campus. Although he enjoys the flexibility of online learning, he often feels isolated from the rest of the student community. This lack of in-person interaction contributes to feelings of loneliness and disconnection, which begin to impact his mood and academic motivation.

Scenario:
Jordan, feeling increasingly isolated due to his fully online course structure, finds it difficult to engage with his peers and misses the social aspects of attending physical classes. As the weeks go by, his loneliness grows, and he begins to struggle with staying motivated. Seeking help, he turns to the chatbot, which offers strategies to connect with his peers through online student forums, virtual study groups, and discussion

boards. It also suggests mindfulness exercises to help alleviate his feelings of isolation. The chatbot provides guidance on accessing mental health resources and suggests online community activities that can help him build connections.

Needs and Requirements:

- Emotional support to combat loneliness and social isolation in a fully online learning environment.

- Guidance on connecting with peers through online study groups, forums, and virtual events.

- Coping mechanisms for managing feelings of isolation, such as mindfulness exercises.

- Access to resources that promote mental well-being in an online learning context.

Key Themes for These Scenarios

- **Anxiety & Stress Management**: Immediate emotional support and practical coping strategies for academic, financial, and personal crises.

- **Resource Integration**: Direct links to on-campus counseling, financial aid, housing support, and community resources.

- **Personalized Support**: Tailored advice based on individual circumstances—be it academic setbacks, financial stress, or housing issues.

- **Empathy & Reassurance**: Consistent empathetic responses that validate students' feelings and reduce feelings of isolation.