

Uplift

By the homeless, for the homeless

Inspiring and connecting people

The Team



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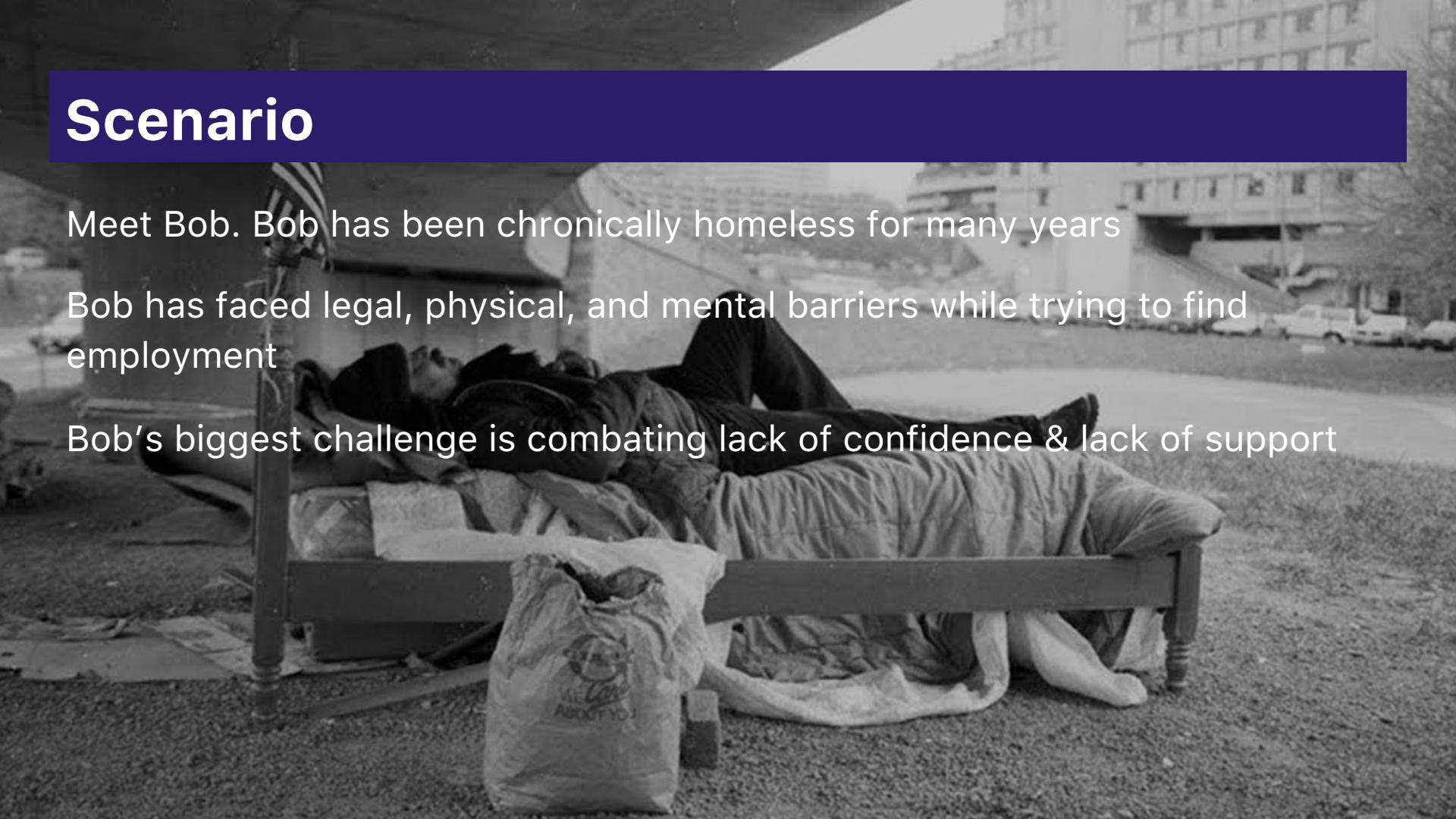
Lead Designer & Writer

Scenario

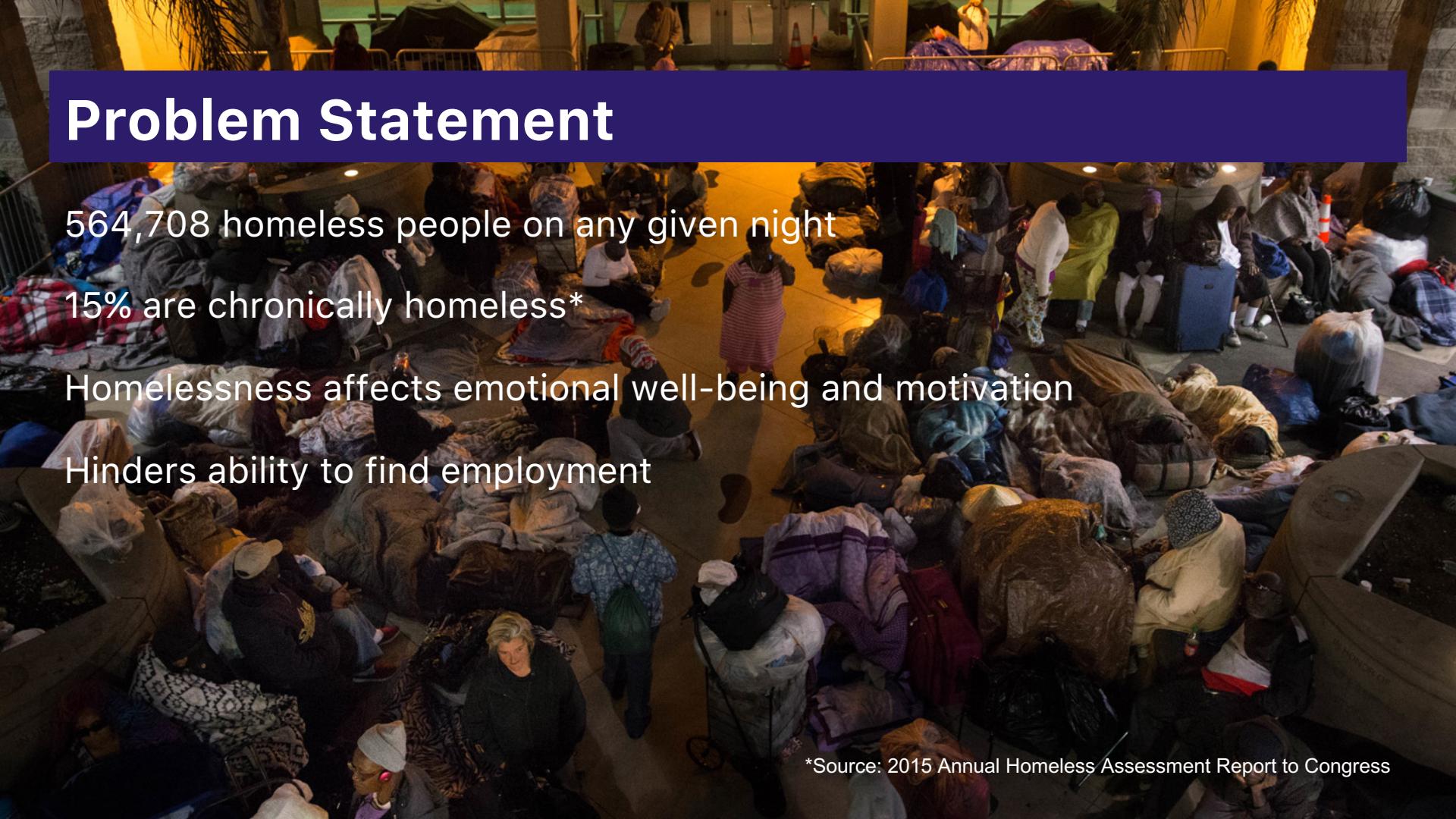
Meet Bob. Bob has been chronically homeless for many years

Bob has faced legal, physical, and mental barriers while trying to find employment

Bob's biggest challenge is combating lack of confidence & lack of support



Problem Statement

A wide-angle, nighttime photograph capturing a large, dense crowd of homeless individuals sleeping on a city sidewalk. The scene is filled with people of various ages, many wearing dark clothing and head coverings. Numerous sleeping bags and personal belongings are scattered across the concrete ground. In the background, a metal fence and some buildings are visible under a dark sky.

564,708 homeless people on any given night

15% are chronically homeless*

Homelessness affects emotional well-being and motivation

Hinders ability to find employment

*Source: 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

Opportunities

Participants explained that the burden of keeping their situation a secret was an isolating experience

Our research revealed that homeless people find encouragement by reading inspirational stories

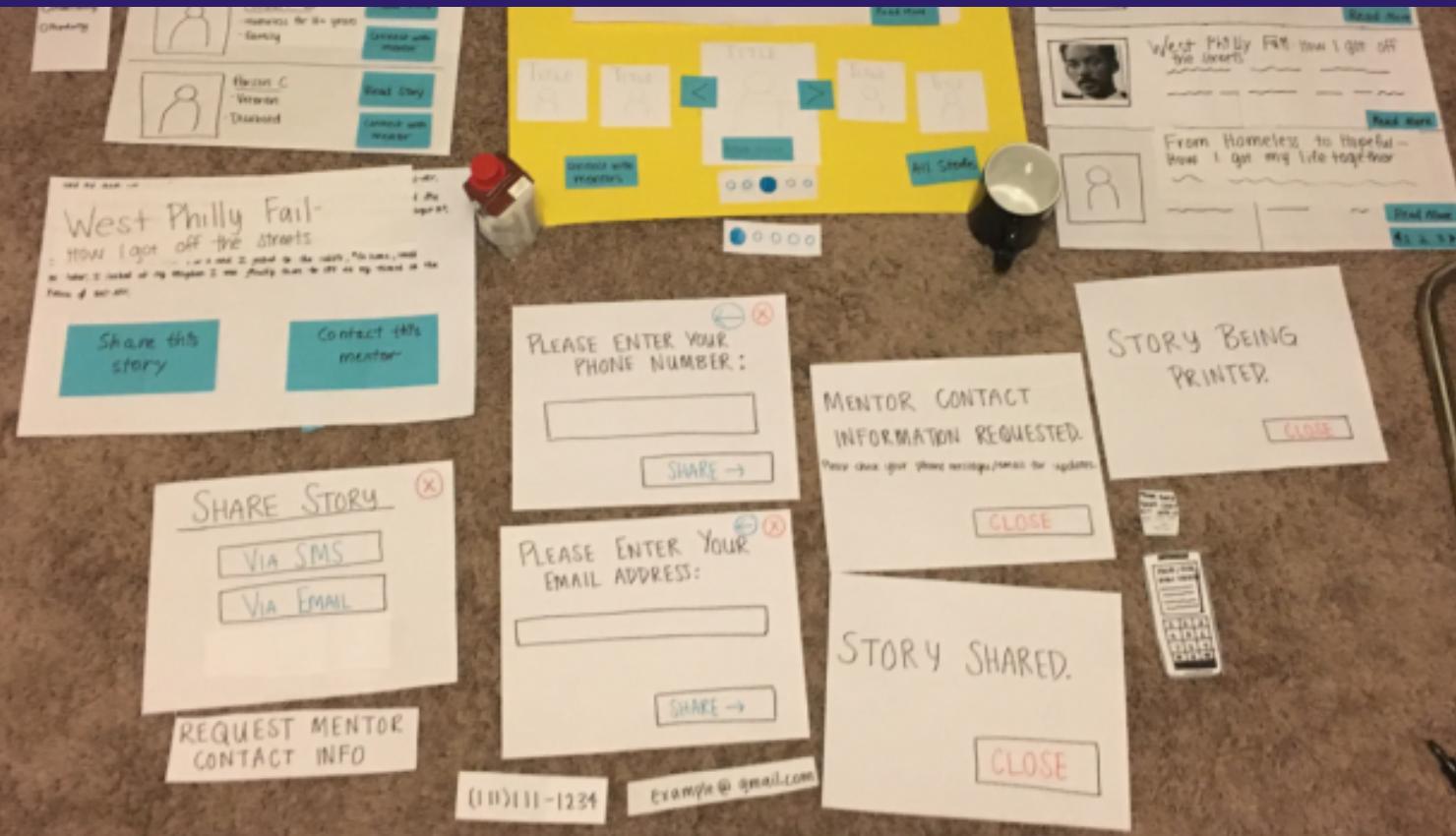
Homeless people seeking employment also desire a support system

Our Solution

Uplift allows homeless users seeking employment to:

1. Read success stories of other employed homeless people
2. Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness

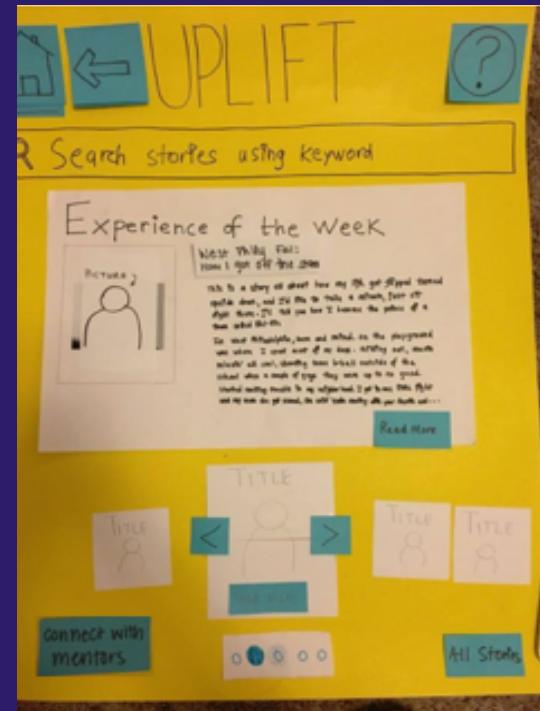
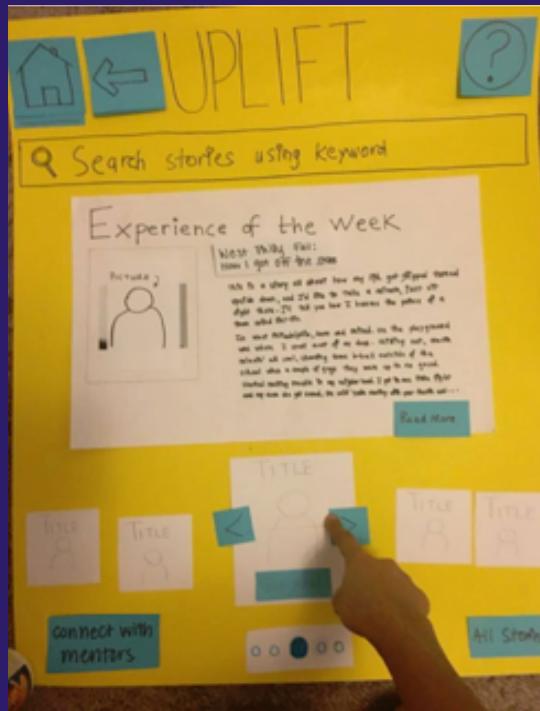
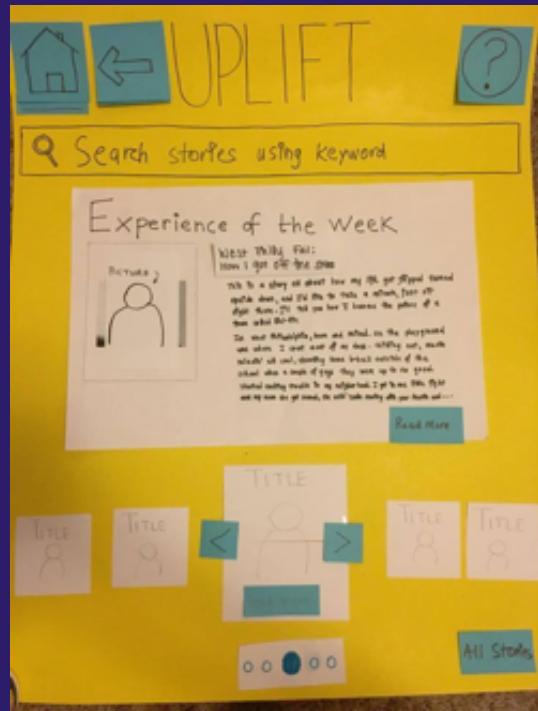
Initial Paper Prototype



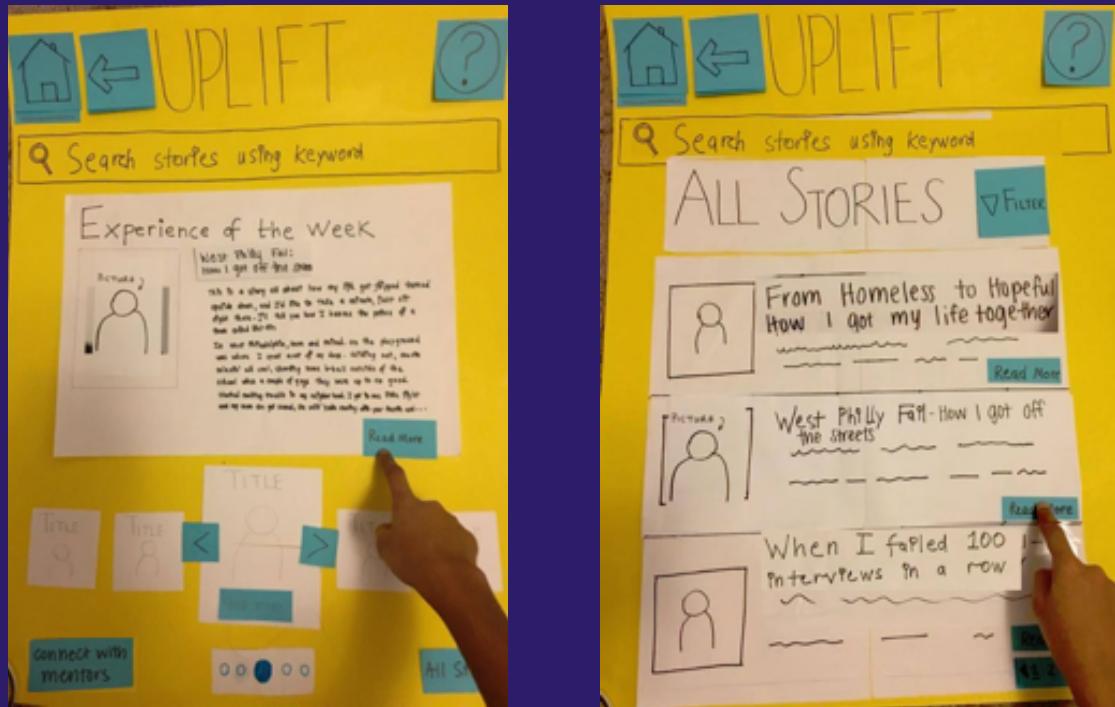
Task 1

Read success stories of other
employed homeless people

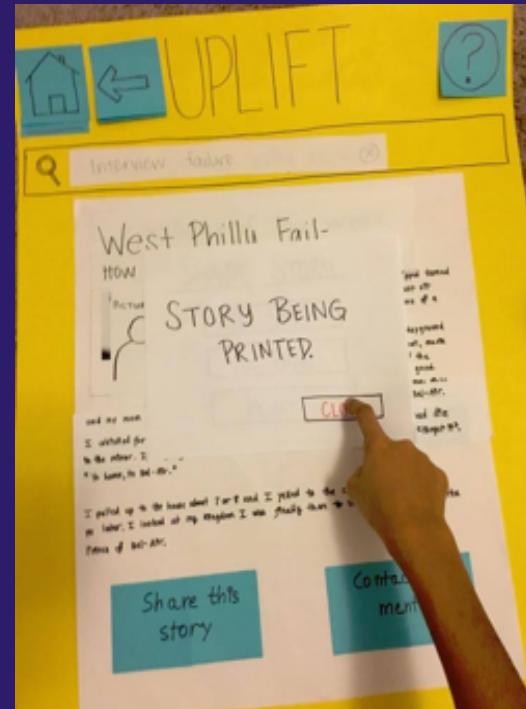
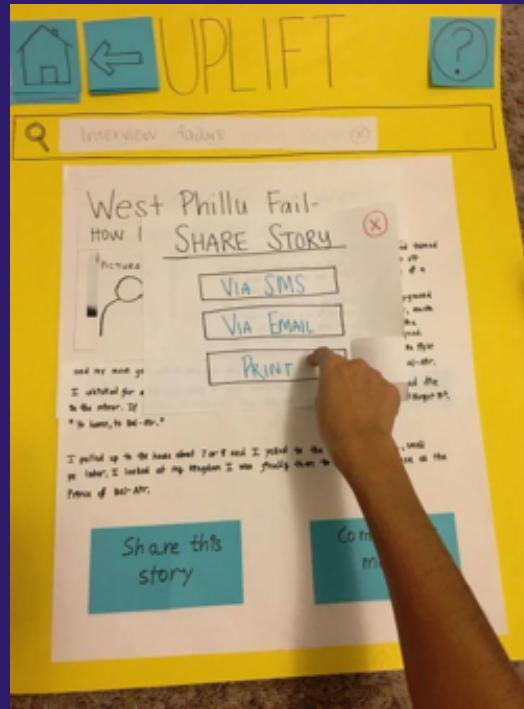
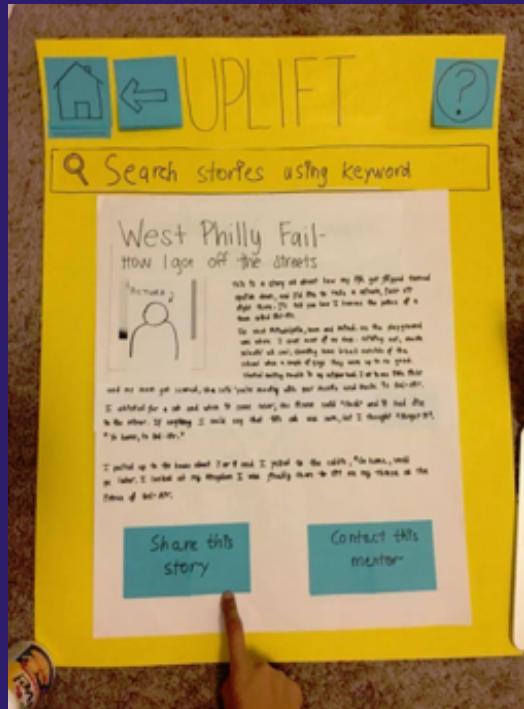
Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



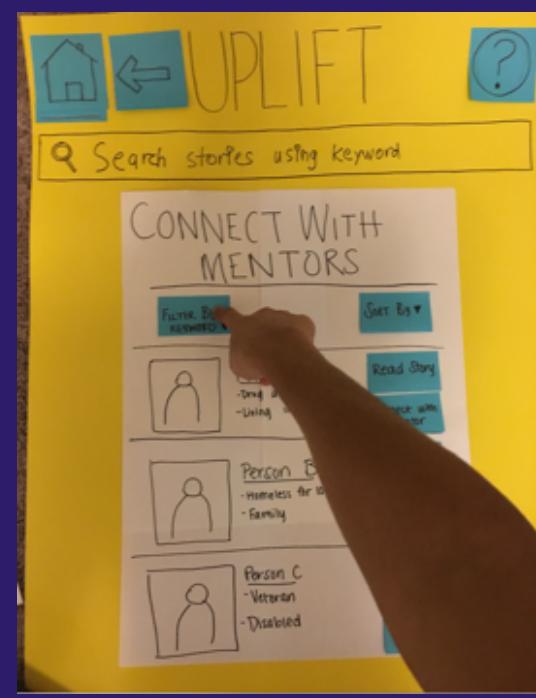
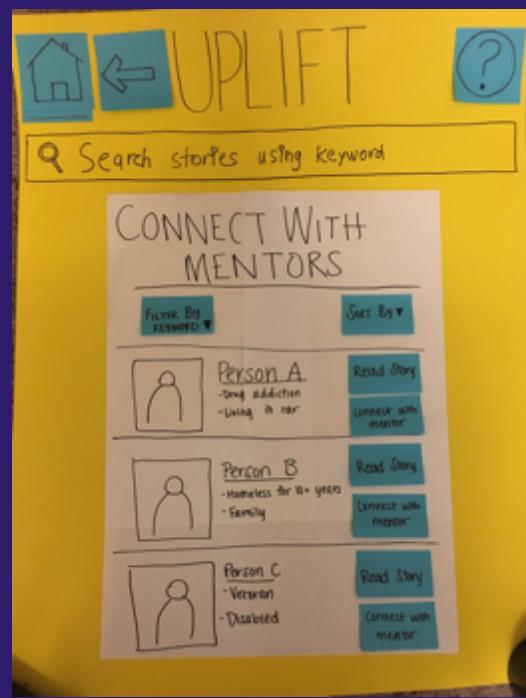
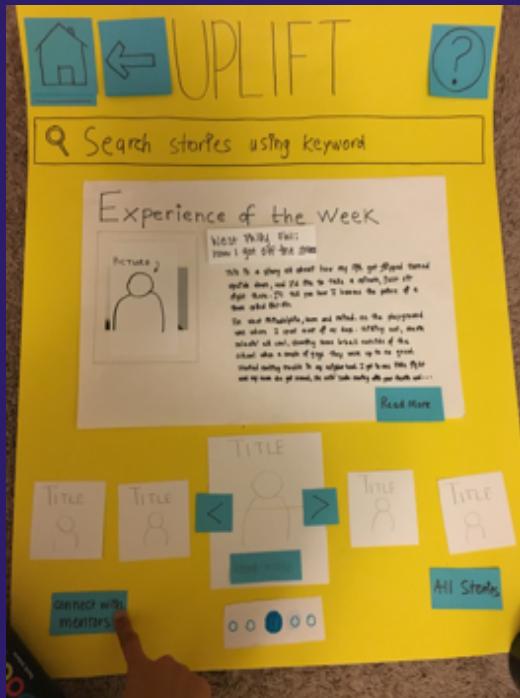
Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



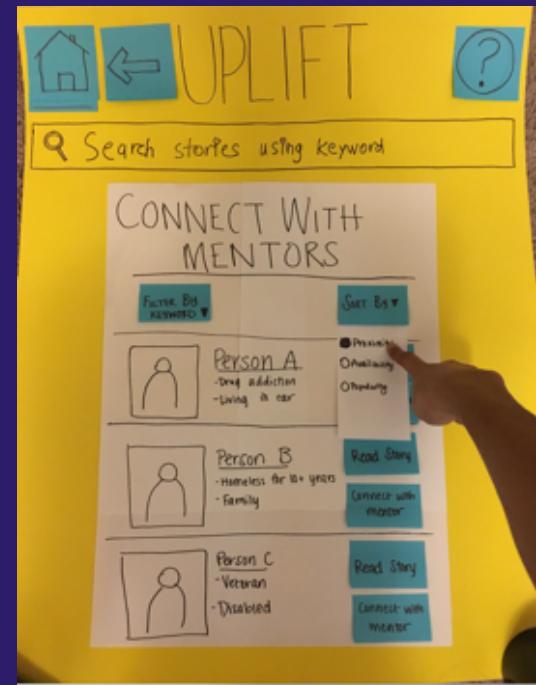
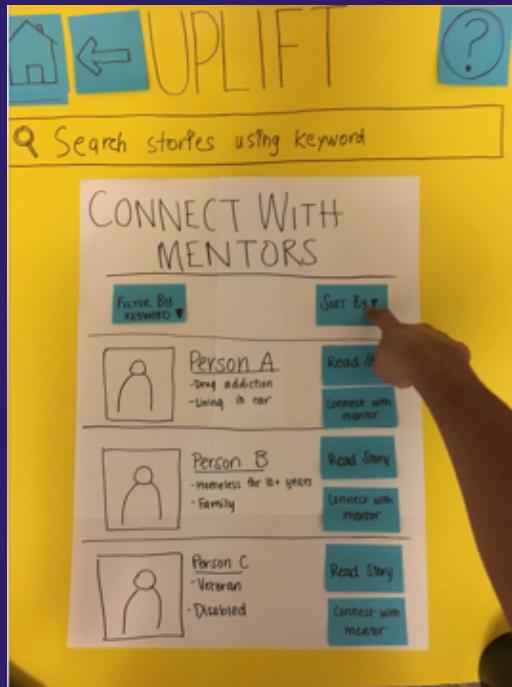
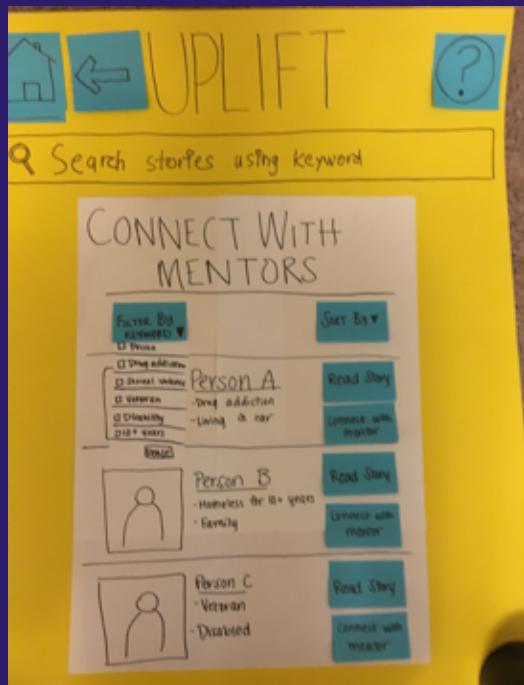
Task 2

Become connected with
mentors with similar
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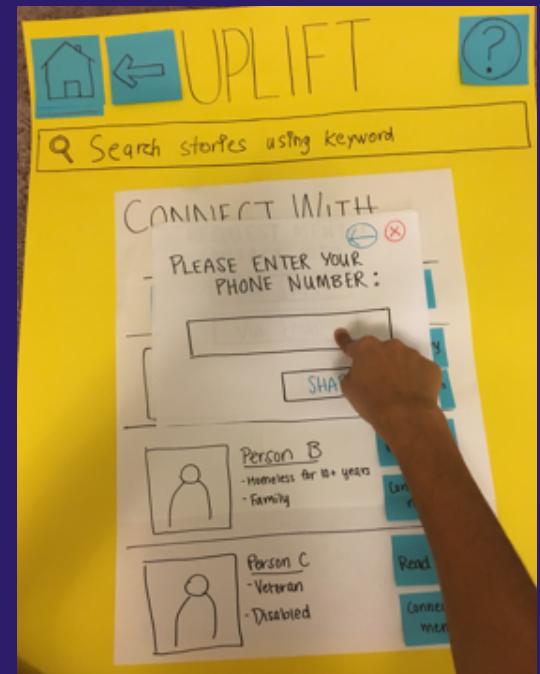
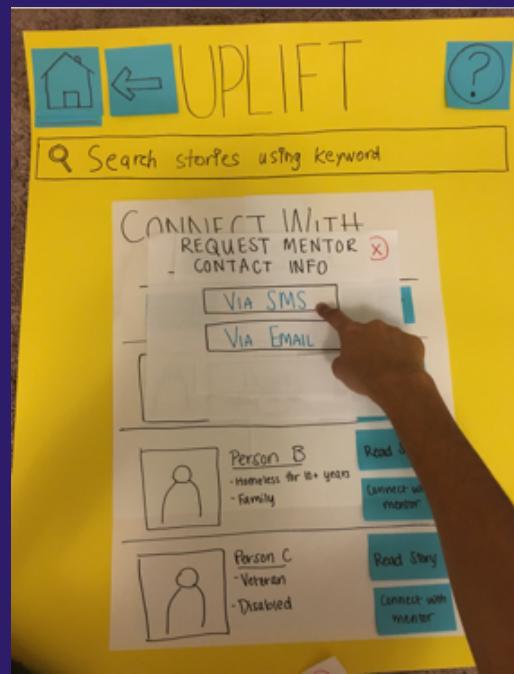
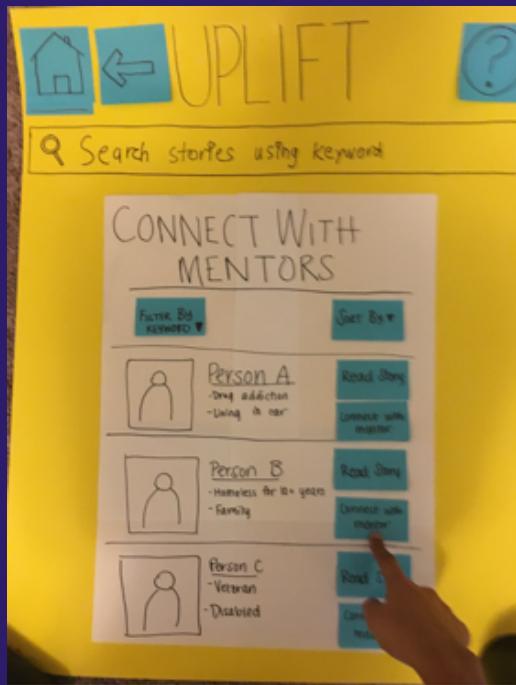
Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



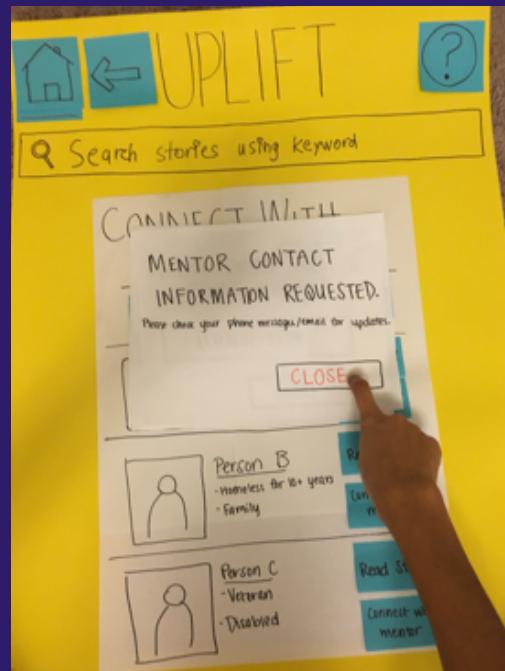
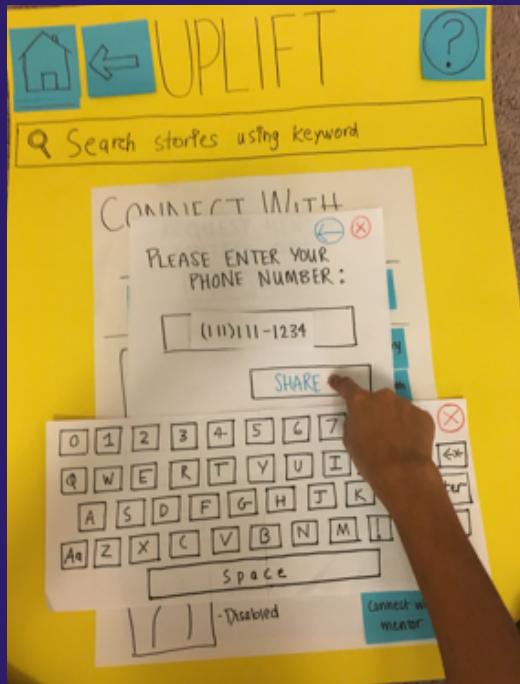
Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



Testing Overview

Conducted at Bellevue Public Library

Three participants, two homeless people and one librarian



Testing Process

Pre-screening questionnaire to ensure participant is related to target audience

Paper prototype was iterated after each user test.



Testing Process

Task #1 & #2:

Send story to user's cell via SMS

Filter all stories by searching for 'interview' fail, send the story via SMS

Testing Process

Task #3 & #4:

Find all available mentors, then request contact info via email

Find all mentors who have experienced drug addiction, then send story to SMS

User Feedback

Purpose of the app was not clear

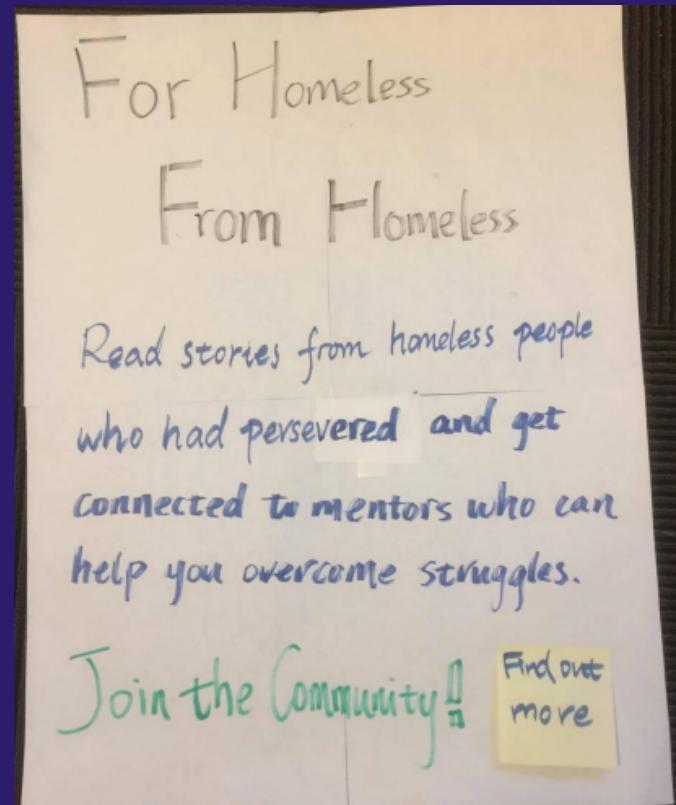
Application functions were unclear

Search needed to be clearer and more inclusive



Testing Results

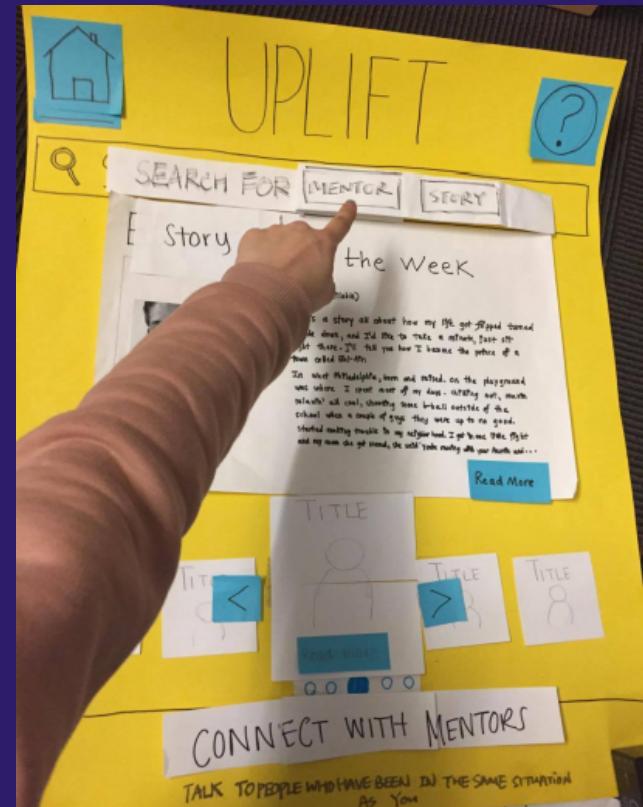
Added an intro screen with a brief synopsis. Users open the design with a 'Find out more' button



Testing Results

Added a tab to search bar that signals to users what results will appear

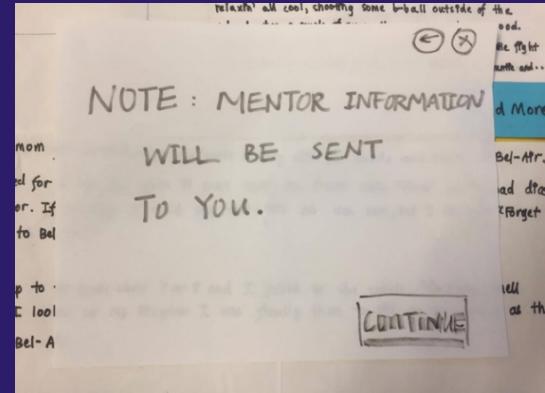
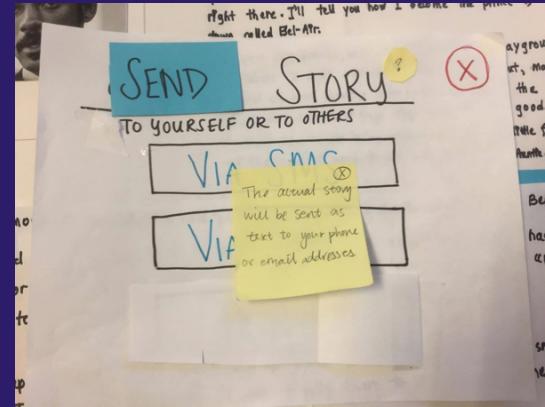
Added mentors to search bar



Testing Results

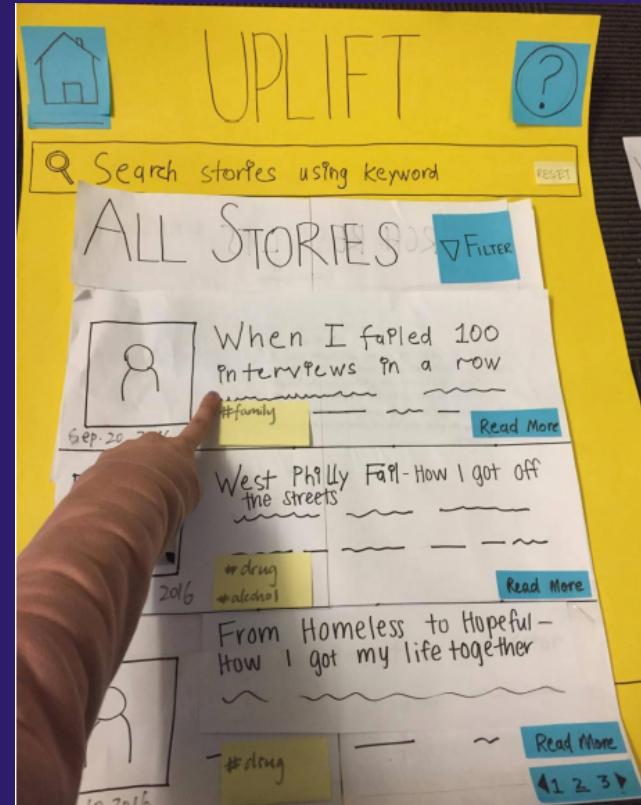
Changed terminology to better match user's mental model

Added more descriptions to everything

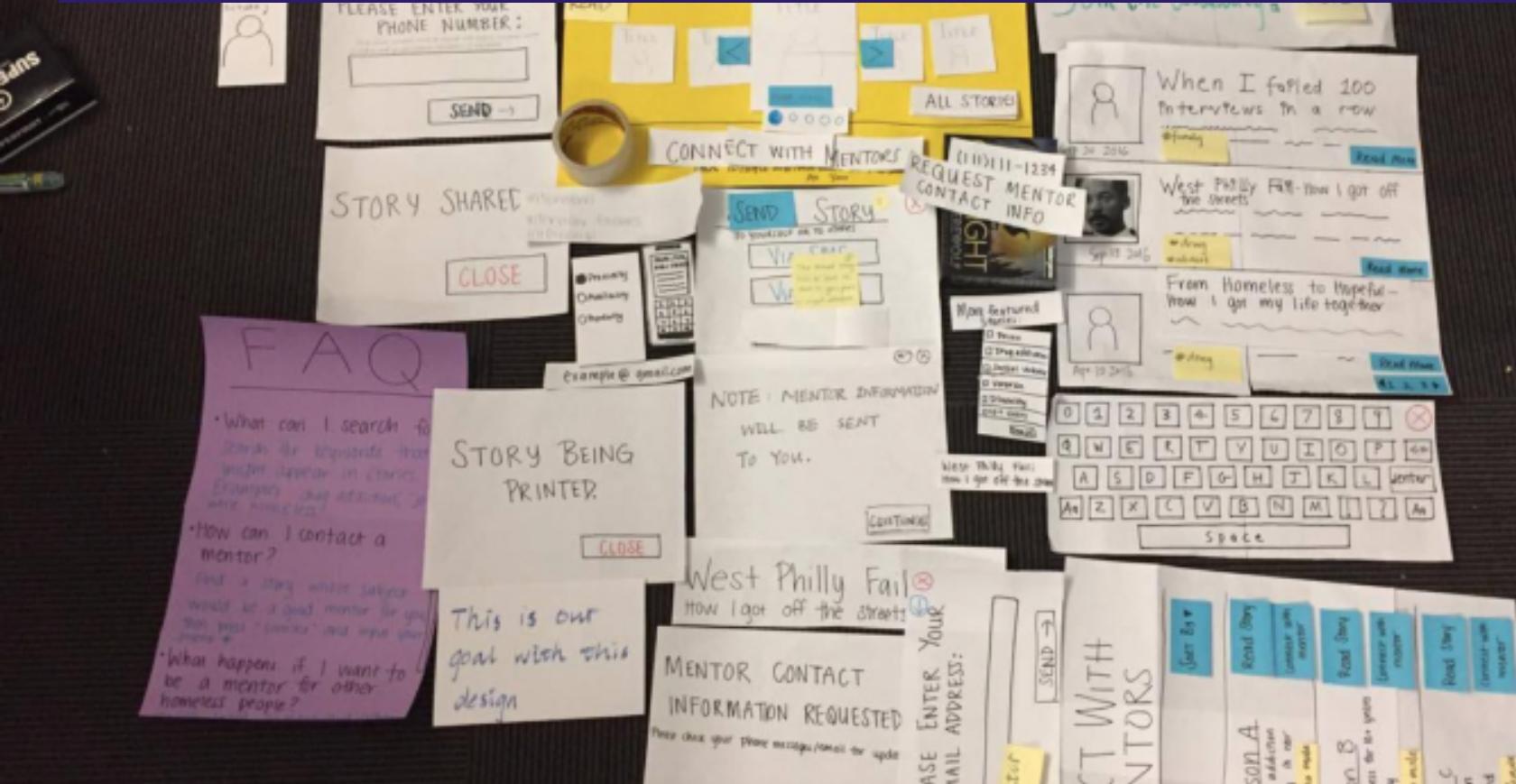


Testing Results

Displayed additional story metadata, more obvious filters, breadcrumbs.



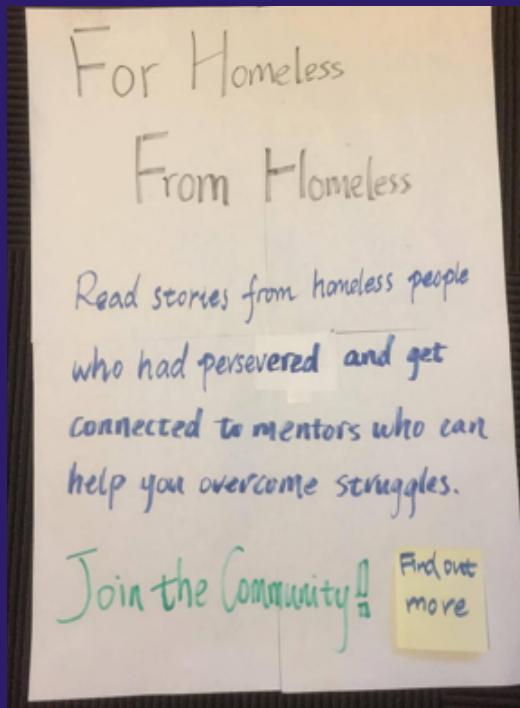
Final Paper Prototype



Task 1

Read success stories of other
employed homeless people

Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



SEARCH FOR MENTOR STORY

E Story of the Week

THIS AUTHOR OF THIS STORY

It's a story about how my life got off track again, and did the best I could, from the other stories I've seen you'll know the power of a home, and the love of a family.

The year Philadelphia born and raised, on the playground was where I spent most of my time, sitting out, mostly because it was cold, spending time with friends of the children who were a bunch of types. They took up to us great, started meeting friends in my neighborhood. I got to meet little Kyle, and we made the get around, we both took money with your friends and...

Read More

TITLE < TITLE > TITLE ALL STORIES

CONNECT WITH MENTOR

Search stories using keyword

ALL STORIES

When I failed 100 interviews in a row

Sept. 20, 2016

Read More

West Philly Fall - How I got off the streets

2016

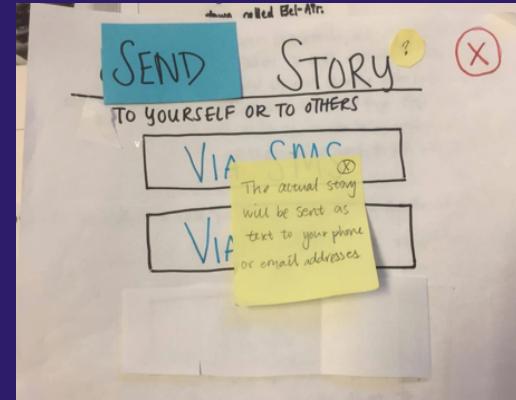
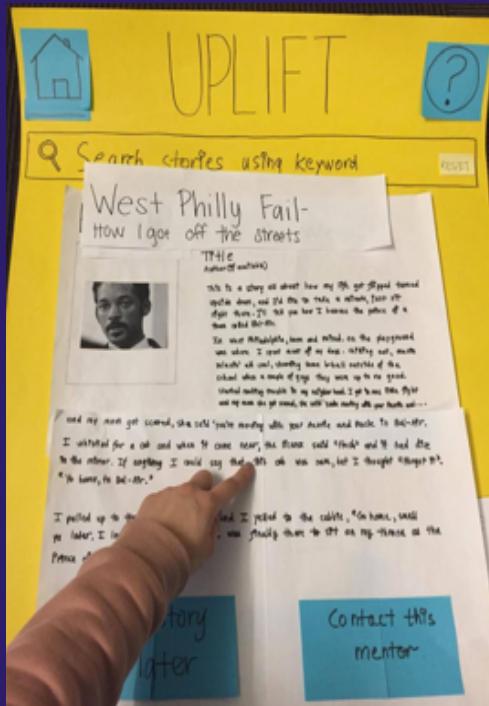
#drug #alcohol

From Homeless to Hopeful - How I got my life together

#drugs #alcohol

Read More

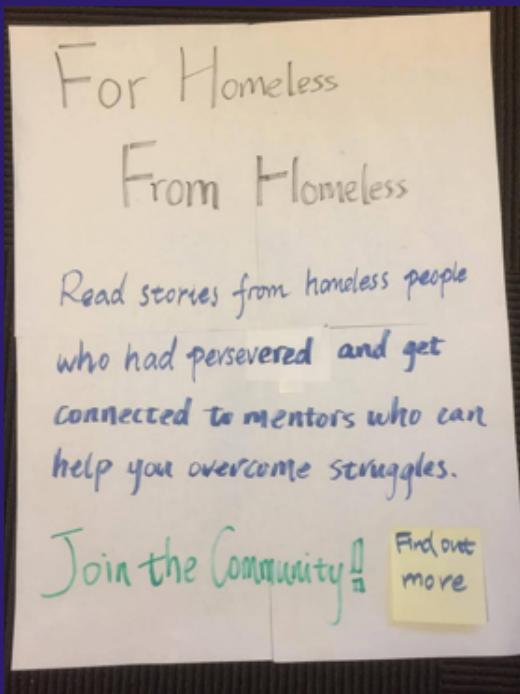
Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



Task 2

Become connected with
mentors with similar
experiences of unemployment
and homelessness

Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



SEARCH FOR [MENTOR STORY]

E Story of the Week

Read More

TITLE < > #0000

CONNECT WITH MENTORS

TALK TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE SAME SITUATION AS YOU

Search mentor using keyword

E Story of the Week

Michael (mentee)

This is a story all about how my life got flipped around one day, and I'd like to make a return from one place to another. I'll tell you how I became the person I am today.

So, when Michael first came and visited, on the playground we would sit. I went over to my dog, sitting out, and he started talking about something from break outside of the school when a bunch of dogs they were up to no good. Started making trouble in my neighborhood. I go to see this older man and my mom was yet scared, so she took me with her home and...

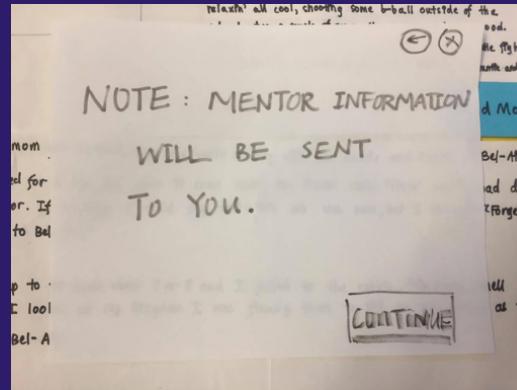
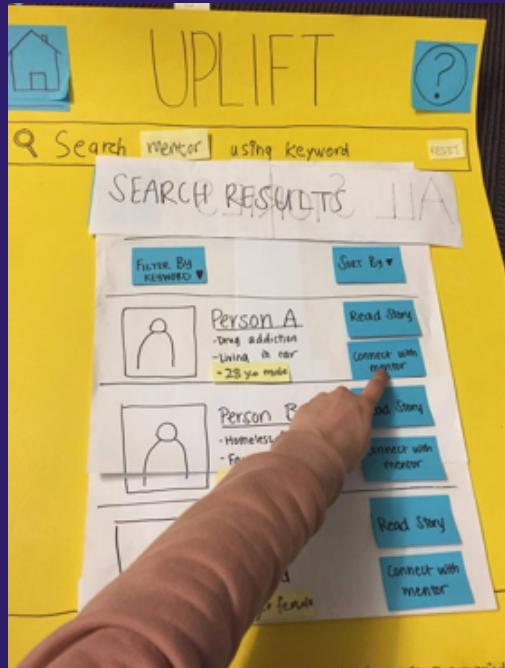
Read More

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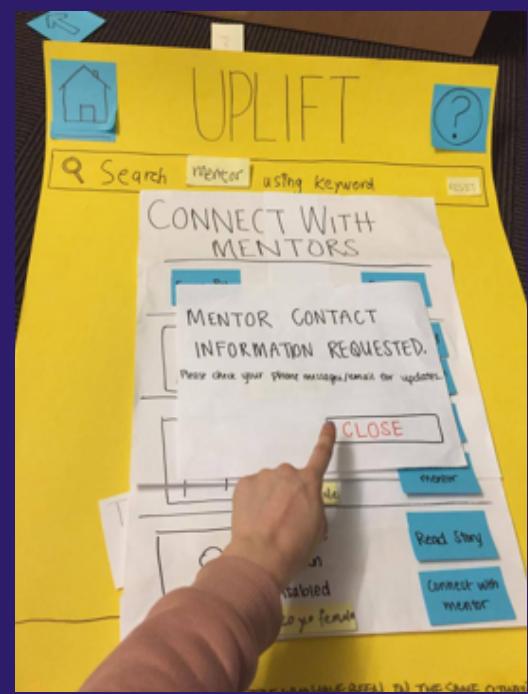
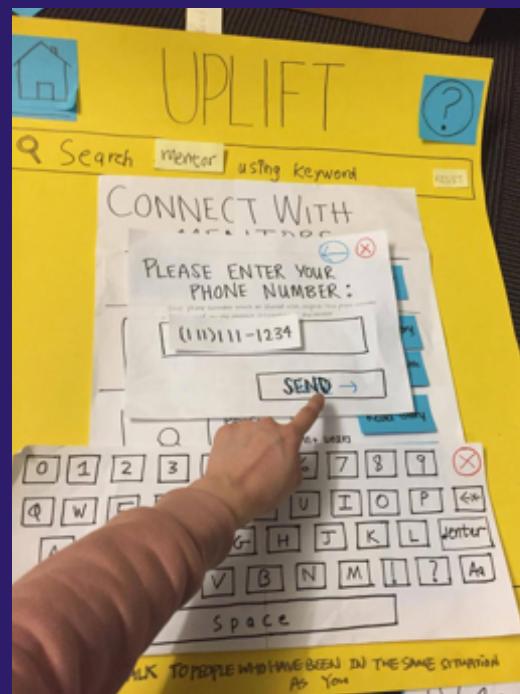
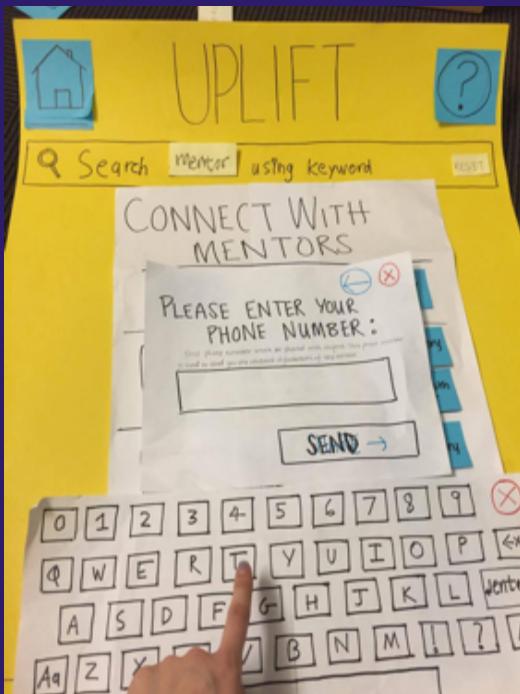
MENTORS

TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE SAME SITUATION AS YOU

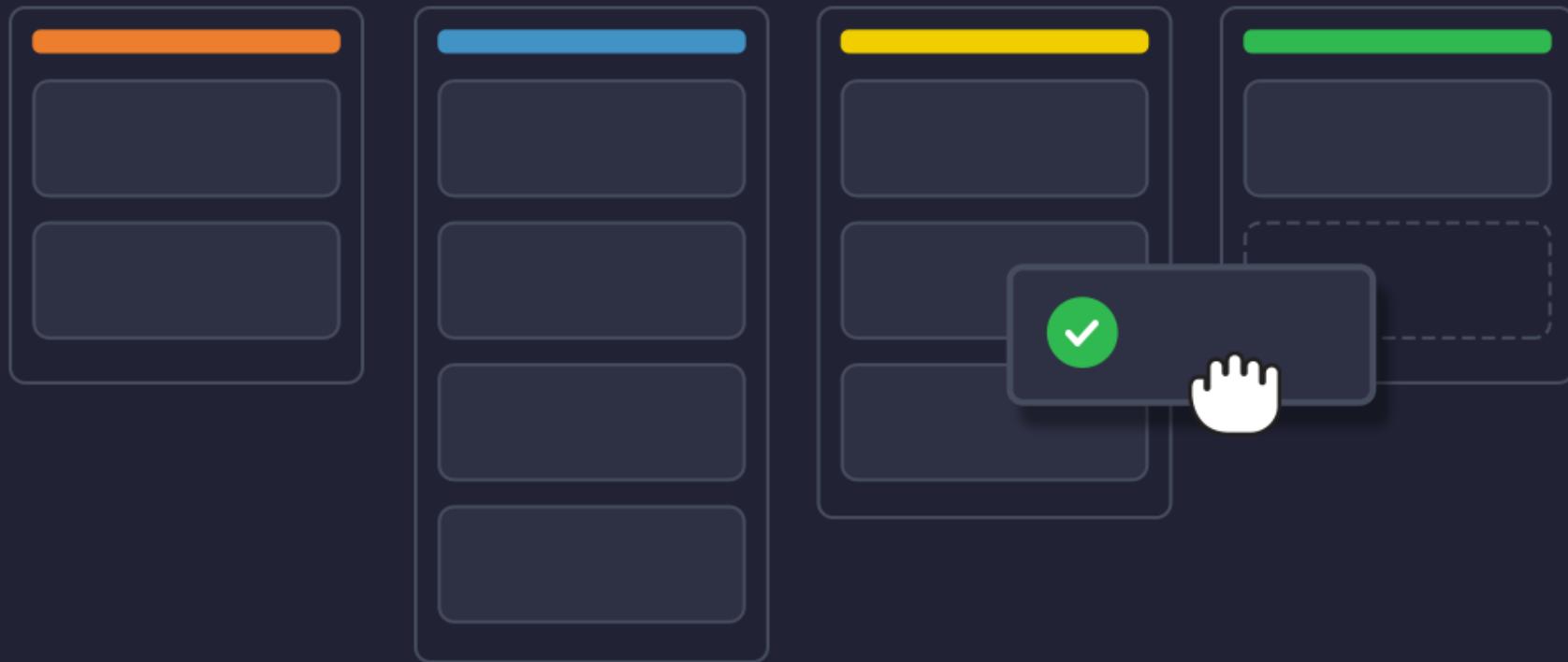
Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness



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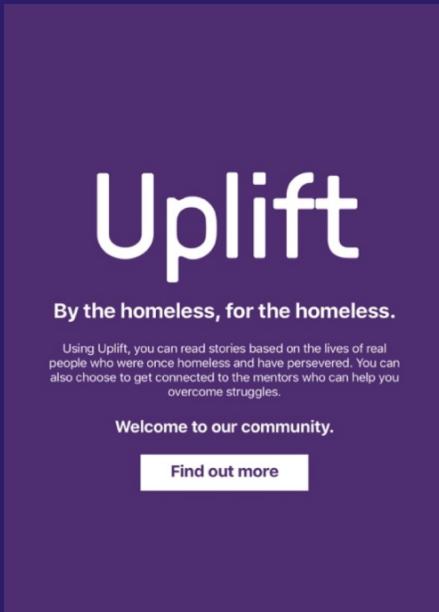
Digital Mockup



Task 1

Read success stories of other
employed homeless people

Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people



Story of the week

West Philly Fail



My story has been the typical rags to riches type. The company where I used to work shut down due to financial problems and I ended up living on the streets for almost 4 years. I somehow could not gather the strength to find a new job and got used to the homeless conditions. Yes, it also turned me lazy but I was prepared to work again after...

[Read more](#)

More stories



Tale of Pioneer



Downtown glories



Life in a truck

[All stories](#)

[Contact a Mentor](#)

Story of the week

West Philly Fail



My story has been the typical rags to riches type. The company where I used to work shut down due to financial problems and I lived a homeless life for almost 4 years. I somehow could not gather the strength to find a new job and got used to the homeless conditions. Yes, it also turned me lazy but I was prepared to work again after...

[Read more](#)

More stories



Tale of Pioneer



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Life in a truck

[All stories](#)

[Contact a Mentor](#)

Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people

The screenshot shows the Uplift mobile application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, back, and help, followed by the word "Uplift". Below the navigation bar is a search bar containing the text "Inter". Underneath the search bar is a "Suggested keywords" section with links to "Interview", "Interests", and "International". A preview image shows a person sitting on a bench. Below this is a text snippet: "problems and I lived a homeless life for almost 4 years. I somehow could not gather the strength to find a new job and got used to the homeless conditions. Yes, it also turned me lazy." A "Read more" button is at the bottom. At the very bottom is a virtual keyboard.

The screenshot shows the Uplift mobile application interface displaying search results for "Interview". At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, back, and help, followed by the word "Uplift". Below the navigation bar is a search bar containing the text "Interview". Underneath the search bar is a "Search Results" section with a "Filter : Interview" dropdown. The first result is titled "The specialist in failure" published by Nini Jiang on March 27, 2017. It includes a small image of a person's legs walking on a path. The second result is titled "The American dream" published by Adrian O'Connell on April 24, 2017. It includes an image of an American flag on a hill. The third result is titled "Interviewphobia" published by Jitesh Patel on Feb 12, 2016. It includes an image of two people walking across a crosswalk. The fourth result is titled "Believer. Believer." published by Jill McDonalds on Mar 26, 2017. It includes an image of two people silhouetted against a sunset. Each result has a "Read more" button at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the Uplift mobile application interface displaying a single story titled "West Philly Fail". At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, back, and help, followed by the word "Uplift". Below the navigation bar is a search bar containing the text "Enter a keyword to search for a story". The main content area features the title "West Philly Fail" and a small image of a man sitting on a bench. Below the image is a long text excerpt: "My story has been the typical rags to riches type. The company where I used to work shut down due to financial problems and I lived a homeless life for almost 4 years. I somehow could not gather the strength to find a new job and get used to the homeless conditions. Yes, it also turned me lazy. But, I will give you a complete account of the system, and expound the actual teachings of the great explorer of the truth, the master-builder of human happiness." At the bottom of the story are "Contact this Mentor" and "Send this story" buttons.

Task 1: Read success stories of other employed homeless people

The screenshots illustrate a user interaction on the Uplift app interface, specifically for a story titled "West Philly Fail".

- Step 1: Initial Story View**
The user is viewing a story titled "West Philly Fail". At the bottom of the screen, there are two buttons: "Contact this Mentor" and "Send this story".
- Step 2: Send Story Confirmation**
A modal dialog box titled "Send this story" appears. It contains the text "Please select how you wish to send this story" and three options: "Via SMS" (highlighted in blue), "Via Email" (dark purple), and "Cancel" (red). Below the modal, the story text is partially visible.
- Step 3: Enter Phone Number**
The user has selected "Via SMS". A new modal dialog box titled "Send this story" asks for a phone number. It includes a placeholder for a US flag icon, a text input field containing "+1 (206) - 1234 - 4321", and a "Clear" button. Below the input field is a note: "Your phone number will strictly be kept confidential and won't be used for any purpose other than sending the story to you." At the bottom are "Submit" (green) and "Cancel" (red) buttons. A virtual keyboard is visible at the bottom of the screen.
- Step 4: Success Confirmation**
The user has submitted the phone number. A confirmation message "Success" is displayed, along with a green checkmark icon. The message reads: "You have successfully sent the story via SMS. Please check your phone to see whether you have received the story." At the bottom are "Close" (dark purple) and "Send this story" (dark purple) buttons.

Task 2

Become connected with
mentors with similar
experiences of unemployment
and homelessness

Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness

The Uplift homepage features a search bar at the top with the placeholder "Enter a name to search for a mentor". Below it is a section titled "Story of the week" featuring a thumbnail for "West Philly Fail". The thumbnail shows a man sitting on a bench. A short blurb reads: "My story has been the typical rags to riches type. The company where I used to work shut down due to financial problems and I lived a homeless life for almost 4 years sometimes getting desperate to find a new job and got used to the homeless conditions. Yes, it also turned me lazy but I was prepared to work again after..." with a "Read more" button.

Below this is a "More stories" section with thumbnails for "Tale of Pioneer", "Downtown glories", and "Life in a truck", each with a "Read more" button. At the bottom is a large purple "Contact a Mentor" button.

The search results page shows a search bar with "Ap" entered. Below it is a "Suggested mentors" list: Apple McCarthy, Apex Hong, and Aparikshit Shinde. Each entry includes a thumbnail and a "Read more" button. A keyboard is overlaid on the bottom half of the screen.

The mentor profile for Apple McCarthy shows a photo of a smiling woman. Her details are: 25 years, Female. - An educated homeless person - Failed relationships and allegations - Spent a couple of years on the streets of Bellevue. Buttons for "Read story" and "Contact" are present.

The "All Mentors" page lists several profiles:

- Adrian O'Connell**: 24 years, Male. - Lives in Seattle, WA - Suffered from drug addiction - Working as a receptionist. Buttons: "Read story" and "Contact".
- Anna Garfield**: 32 years, Female. - From New York City, NY - Divorced and bankrupt - Working at a grocery store now. Buttons: "Read story" and "Contact".
- Apple McCarthy**: 25 years, Female. - An educated homeless person - Failed relationships and allegations - Spent a couple of years on the streets of Bellevue. Buttons: "Read story" and "Contact".
- Axle Jack**: 23 years, Male. - From Boston, MA - Homeless for 10 years - Leading a stable life now, thanks to me. Buttons: "Read story" and "Contact".

Task 2: Become connected with mentors with similar experiences of unemployment and homelessness

The screenshots illustrate a four-step process on the Uplift app:

- Step 1: Contact a Mentor**
A modal window titled "Contact a Mentor" displays the message: "Please note that the mentor information will be directly sent to you." It contains two buttons: "Continue" (green) and "Cancel" (red). Below the modal, a mentor profile for "Axele Jack" is partially visible.
- Step 2: Enter Phone Number**
The modal now asks for a phone number: "Please enter your cell phone number to connect with this mentor." It includes a placeholder with the American flag icon and a text input field containing "+1 (206) - 1234 - 4321". Buttons for "Submit" (grey) and "Cancel" (red) are present. The background shows the same mentor profile.
- Step 3: Success Message**
The modal displays a success message: "We have successfully received your request to contact a mentor. Please check your phone to receive the mentor information." It features a green checkmark icon and a "Close" button. The background shows the mentor profile.
- Step 4: Confirmation**
The final screen shows the same mentor profile for "Axele Jack" with the same bio and contact options. A virtual keyboard is overlaid at the bottom of the screen.

Summary

User research can be much more than just interviews and surveys

Designing features clearly and briefly is difficult

User testing is critical for a design to be effective

Feedback from users and people related to the users can be insightful

Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.

- Nelson Mandela