

MILESTONE

Sobriety doesn't have to be lonely; Reach your next Milestone

Brittney Nguyen, Stephen Boyle, Walker Spence, Bryan Lim, Sonia Uppal



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our user can set custom milestones and keep track of their progress towards sobriety. Users can also send a secret code to their close friends and family members to allow them to act as supporters by following progress through real-time list of their milestones and by staying up-to-date on the user's journey. There are also university-specific and anonymous slack channels that users can join to connect with nearby people with similar struggles. Our goal is not only to help those struggling with addiction feel less lonely but also to destigmatize addiction, especially among college students.

MEET THE TEAM

The Breakfast Club consists of

STEPHEN BOYLE
THE ATHLETE



YEAR:
3rd

BRYAN LIM
THE BRAIN



YEAR:
4th

BRITTNEY NGUYEN
THE BASKET CASE



YEAR:
4th

WALKER SPENCE
THE CRIMINAL



YEAR:
4th

SONIA UPPAL
THE PRINCESS



YEAR:
3rd

BRAINSTORMING PROCESS

Our initial brainstorm was focused more on physical disabilities, such as blindness, being hard of hearing, or lacking mobility. Here, we thought about ideas including:

- **Haptic Maps**: An application that uses haptics to buzz someone's arm (different buzzes based on direction) and let them know which way to turn or walk if they are blind and can't see directions. Also provides vocal directions.
- **Hear Your Fridge**: An app that interfaces with your smart fridge that the blind can use to talk to and ask for specific items (vending machine format).

A lot of these applications sounded very difficult to implement, and almost all required some kind of external hardware (e.g. a smart watch, a smart fridge, etc).

Eventually our brainstorm got more focused on mental disabilities, such as anxiety and depression. Some of our plans for apps to combat mental illness were:

- **Emotional Journey**: An app that lets you pick one emotion per day to sum up your mental state (happy, sad, angry, anxious, stressed) with journaling feature. It should also show you a calendar of your mood and allow you to draw how you are feeling.
- **Anxiety Combatant**: A biometric application that recognizes when a user is anxious - this could monitor heart rate, blood pressure, etc - and suggests quick meditation exercises to combat it.
- **Achievement Tracker**: A goal-based application to create & track small personal achievements for those with depression. This could also include preset goals that increase in difficulty as time goes on or as the user completes more tasks.

Once we started talking about journaling apps that would allow users to track progress in one way or another, it led us quickly to talking about addiction. Our final app ended up being a combination of a few ideas that we came up with regarding addiction, namely:

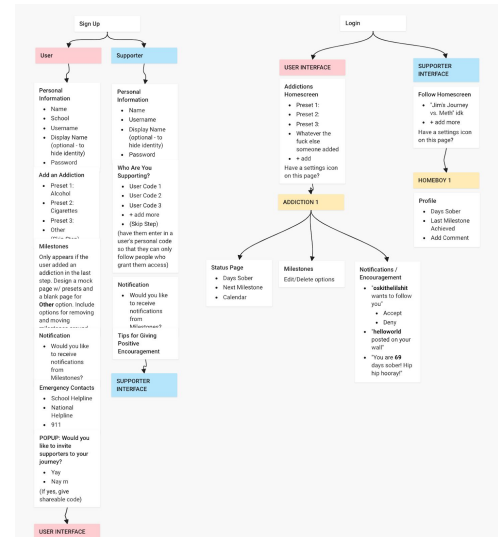
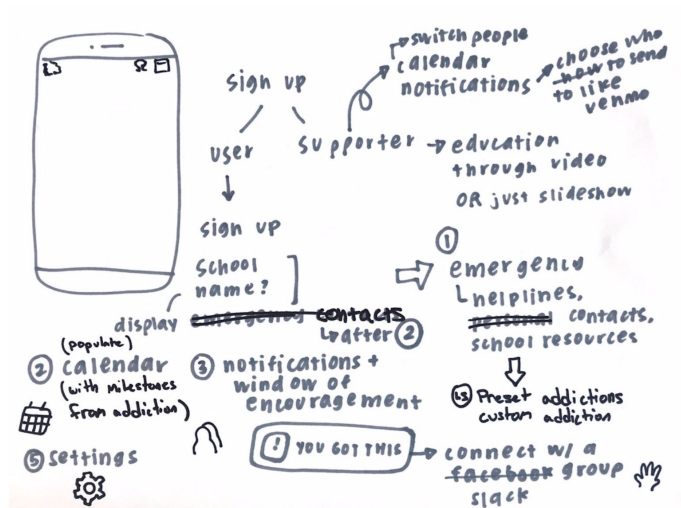
- **Encouraging Sobriety**: An application that tracks your body's recovery as you quit cigarettes/alcohol/drugs. For example, X weeks into recovery a user receives a "10% less likely to have cancer" message.
- **Sobriety Reward**: An app that helps you set small progress goals (reward system) for quitting cigarettes/alcohol/drugs and lets you add friends and turn this into a positive social experience.

Please see here for our full idea board:

https://padlet.com/b_nguyen0281/ufemjtpif67

INTERMEDIATE DESIGN SKETCHES

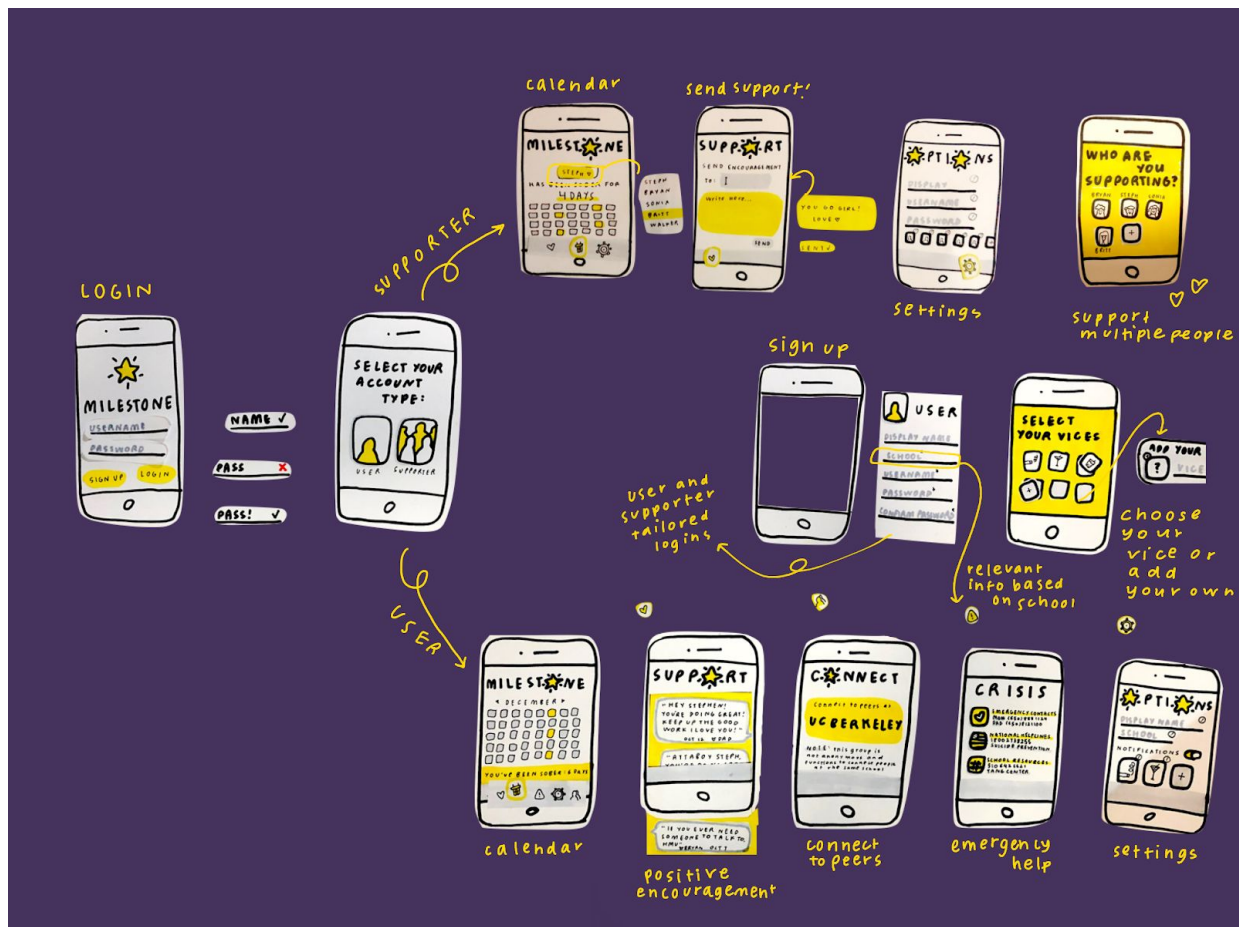
Our first design sketch kind of crashed on takeoff and turned into a list of screens that we would need and a brief overview of the flow of the application.



Please see here for our initial user flow: https://padlet.com/b_nguyen0281/eoq7cy4lmaj2

We identified what screens we would need and how we intended to divide functionality across them. Our final sketch was much more fleshed out, and included some functionality that didn't ever make it into the application.

FINAL DESIGN SKETCHES



We used this for user testing, primarily making sure the signup process was not too confusing or complicated for people once they knew the intended purpose of our application.

SCENARIOS

The primary situation we wanted people to use our application in was when they felt like they were being socially pressured to drink. Our initial pitch of the idea included the following storyboard:



This was our mission: providing a place where users could digitally receive support that they were not getting from their peers. If you have a group of people giving you affirmation in making a healthy decision in regards to your sobriety, the user can internalize that and be inclined to make the choice that would benefit their path to sobriety.

WIREFRAMES

Our wireframe went through two main iterations: The first was very dark, and maintained a lot of the original functionality from our paper sketches.



Feedback we got after presenting it was that our design looked too cluttered and depressing. We got good feedback on the yellow highlights, however, and we maintained those for iteration two:



We went with a positive color scheme this time, keeping the yellow highlights but ditching the grays in favor of purple. We also moved the “days sober” counter off the calendar screen, which helped clean up our interface and made it a lot more streamlined. We also got rid of the messaging functionality, partially due to technological limitations and partially because we realized that people already have plenty of ways to contact each other digitally.

USER STUDIES, DETAILS, AND FINDINGS

USER A

Upon completion of the first task of creating a user with an addiction, the user stated **“that was easy and straightforward.”**

During the second task of creating an account as a supporter and sending motivation, found it hard to locate the correct icon to send a message. **“The icon should have some kind of text so the user knows exactly what corresponds to what.”**

During the third task of finding the crisis hotline for a user’s school, **“that was easy.”** After being exposed to the layout of the app for the first two tasks, found the third task to be very easy.

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The main changes we made based on user studies was changing buttons from icons to labelled icons, or adjusting the icons to be more universally recognizable. We also changed the color scheme based on the anonymous feedback we got in class, which ended up making our app look a lot more interesting and accessible.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

APP 1 Sober Time

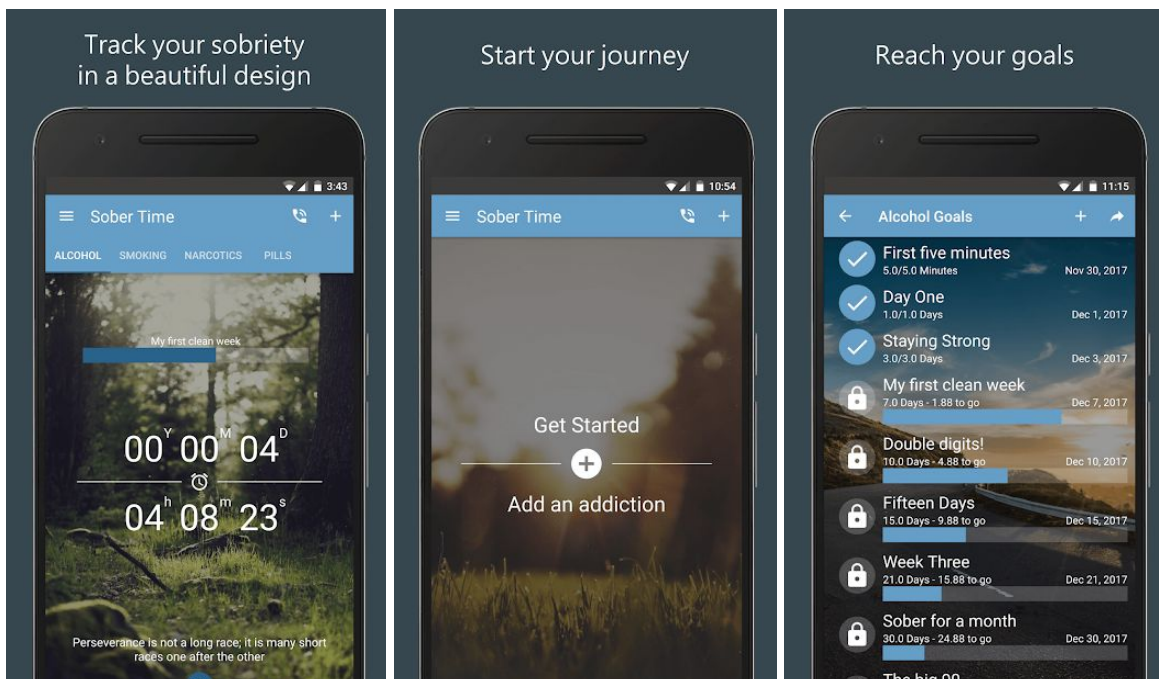
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.sociosoft.sobertime&hl=en_US

Of all the competing apps, Sober Time is the most similar to ours. Sober Time provides motivational messages, progress tracking, and the ability to share progress with friends/family. However, one way our app would differ is that friends and family would first be educated on how to talk about addiction with the user. Addiction can be a touchy subject, so making sure the conversation facilitated by our application isn't triggering is one of our top priorities.

Target User Group The target user group for Sober Time is people struggling with addiction who are also looking for a supportive community. It is not specifically targeted towards college students.

Functionality Sober Time allows users to track multiple addictions, see motivational messages, track money saved, have access to a supportive community, and share progress with others. Our application will separate itself by also educating friends and family on how to talk about addiction, preventing potentially triggering conversations.

Usability Sober Time succeeds in its generous offering of functions, but does not have a protocol for emergencies. Our app would remedy this by providing links to emergency resources and a button to call the authorities if a conversation escalates.



APP 2 | I Am Sober

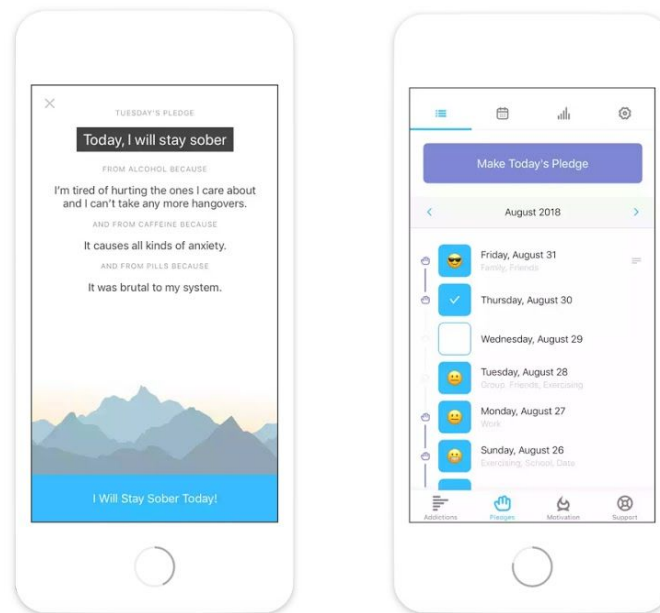
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.thehungrywasp.iamsober>

I Am Sober is an application on the Google Play store and Apple app store that helps people to track their progress towards sobriety by building new habits and counting days sober. The app also has a motivation tab that has inspirational quotes, along with a daily pledge system that requires you to create a daily goal and write about why you are pursuing this goal.

Target User Group The target user group for this application is anyone that is struggling with addiction. However, this application has a lot of features including building habits, creating daily pledges, and tracking money, which take up more time than the average student wants to spend.

Functionality This application offers a lot of functionality to the user. The user is able to track how long they have been sober through a series of milestones, build new habits, create daily pledges, look for inspiration, and check how much money they've saved. Our app differs from I Am Sober because it will allow the user to share progress with people, allowing them to receive encouragement from close family and friends.

Usability I Am Sober successfully provides the user with the information and statistics to keep them motivated on their journey of sobriety, and also encourages them with inspirational quotes. However, the app fails to connect with the user on a personal level by tailoring their experience on factors other than the type of addiction. It also doesn't provide the user with solutions in case of emergency. We aim to save the user's emergency contacts (personal and help lines) to aid them in an emergency. In order to provide a community for the user, we use the user's school to find people around them who are struggling with similar issues, as well as user-defined contacts to connect their friends and family to their journey.



APP 3 Nomo Sobriety Clocks

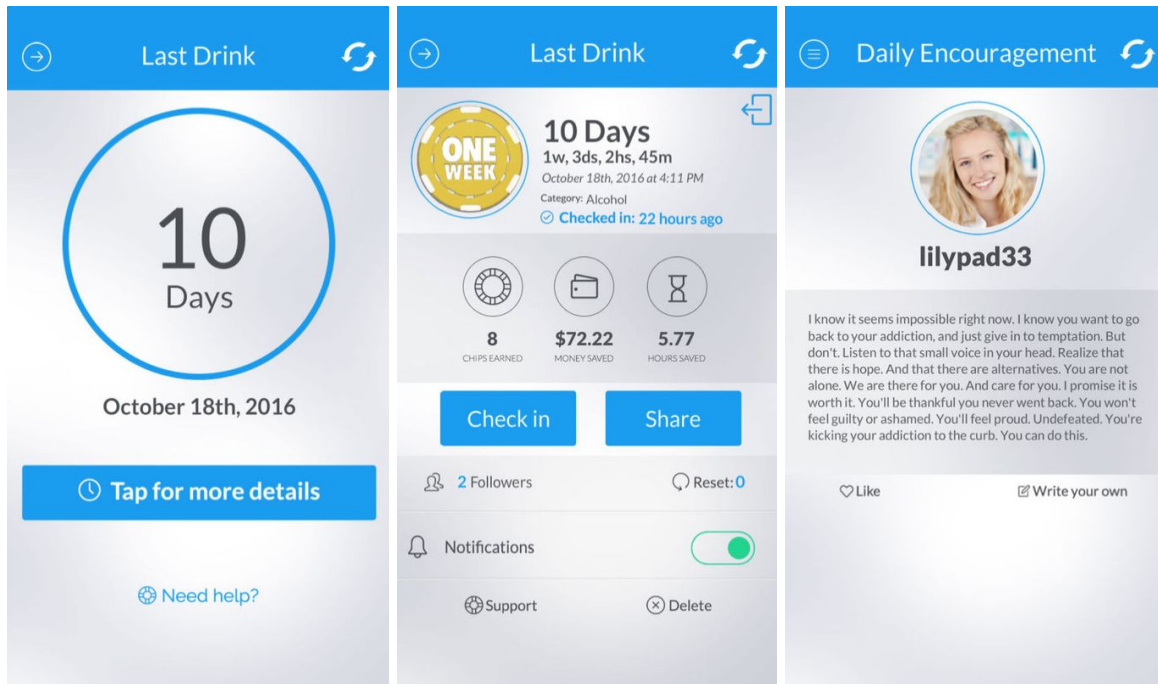
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nomo-sobriety-clocks/id566975787?mt=8>

Nomo is a sobriety counter that tracks the path to sobriety for multiple addictions down to the minute. It lets you earn “chips” along the way and share your progress to your accountability partners. Nomo includes distraction exercises in their app to help users refocus when they are feeling tempted to break their sobriety.

Target User Group The target user group for Nomo Sobriety Clocks is anyone struggling with addiction wanting to keep track of their progress through a time tracker.

Functionality Nomo Sobriety Clocks provides as many sobriety clocks as necessary to a user, an anonymous chat room for support, a journaling function, preset motivational messages, and a reward system in the form of “chips.” Our application would build upon this by including the support of friends and family as well as emergency contact information and setting specific goals.

Usability Nomo Sobriety Clocks delivers in its simplicity of its features and ease of use, but mainly lacks support for users. Our application would build upon its functionality by also including custom goal setting and better personal support through friends and family.



HOW WE DIFFER

All three of the applications that we decided to analyze had a clock feature to help people keep a track of how long they had been sober. They also made it easy to see how much money people had saved. While they provided positive encouragement, they did not connect the user's family and friends to their progress by providing routine and consistent encouragement. We want the user to check in daily to avoid making the daily count a passive action. To offer unique value, we want to tailor this application towards college students. The student will input their school along with their emergency contacts when they sign up for the application. We will create an "Emergency" section of the application with school specific contacts, emergency contacts, and helplines. Our long term goal is to help connect people at the same school suffering with similar addictions, allowing them to support one another and create a community. By tailoring our application towards college students, involving friends and family more directly, and creating an anonymous community for users to collaborate and communicate with one another about their qualms, we will differentiate our application from the competitors.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

An issue we initially ran into was not being able to get the app on the phone because the versions of our dependencies did not match up with that of the Galaxy S9. We only had one Android phone at our use, which made us have to change the version numbers in our Gradle. It took us a while before we finally were able to get the app on the phone.

Another minor road block we ran into was the fact that running and testing the app on an android phone was highly dependent on our only Android owner being available while developing the app, which was not too big of an issue because she never missed a team meeting. The only time we ran into this issue was the day before our demo. We were not all together and one of us needed to test something on the phone, and it required the individual to Uber to her in order for him to do it.

A more technical challenges we faced with working our project on a mobile device was working with Firebase. None of us had a significant amount of experience working with it, and there was a decently steep learning curve. Luckily, the internet is an oasis of online tutorials and resources, so we were able to figure it out and use it as a tool to manage creating users, supporters, and storing information pertaining to both. The database was also really slow, even when downloaded to the phone, so that made us realize that we had to add some sort of loading signifier to indicate to the app user that the screen is currently loading.

One more issue we ran into on the actual demo day was with the Android's autocomplete. During our demo, we were using autocomplete to fill out the fields when creating a user, but for some reason, auto filling the email field made it so the account was not registered to our Firebase. We never understood why the autocomplete was causing this problem, but when we realized that was the cause to our account authorizing issue, we began typing out everything.

PROJECT SUMMARY

After all of the hours of work our group put into Milestone, we ended up with a functional android application honed towards college students struggling with addiction. Milestones allows people who use our app to create one of two different types of accounts: users (the people seeking sobriety) and supporters (people that support users along their journey).

Our app allows the users to log and track their progress towards sobriety, create their own goals and milestones to motivate themselves to continue their sobriety, and provide themselves with a community of family and friends so that they can provide positive affirmations and motivation for the user to achieve full sobriety. Our app also provides users with phone numbers to local resources and professionals so that they can seek help if needed. Additionally, the user has the ability to join an anonymous slack channel of other people trying to attain sobriety where they can share tips and stories of their addiction and sobriety, which can ultimately help the user make healthy life decisions.

Supporters are able to check in on the people they are supporting and see how they are holding up. On the app, they are also given tips on how to help their loved one on their path to sobriety, which also doubles as a goal to destigmatize addiction.

The path to sobriety can be a lonely, difficult, and unsupportive time, and our team is proud that we built an app that placates those issues. Addiction can disrupt relationships and careers, and Milestone can be an invaluable tool for those seeking sobriety to prevent such catastrophic events from occurring. [insert powerful ending]

GITHUB LINK

<https://github.com/walkerspence/milestone>

Database invitation has been emailed directly to GSI Emily.