

Working Title: Calmer

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HCI 598 XE

Fall 2017

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M1: Idea.

Working title:

Calmer

What problem am I trying to solve?

People with anxiety an/or panic disorders often have a toolkit of techniques they use to manage anxiety and panic; however these tools are often located in a range of places, and not easily accessible when panic sets in. Since this audience would want to have those tools near at hand - or reminders to use those tools when out and about, at work- or play – how could their preferred tools be packaged into a mobile phone?

Users:

Individuals who experience anxiety attacks, panic attacks, or higher than average anxiety, and have tools they can use, though sometimes forget the tools even exist in a moment of panic.

Let's say someone was at work and had a stressful experience that for many would be brushed off. For someone with a propensity for anxiety attacks, who has been in therapy and used a number of tools to manage anxiety, they would perhaps walk away from the situation and go to the restroom to regroup. They could take their phone with them, press the calmer app, and their preferred reminder/tool would appear. For some this might be a reminder to breath, for another it might be hearing their own voice saying, "All is well, you will get through this," for another it might be reading the serenity prayer, for another it might be a photograph of her cat, for another it might be a brief, recorded meditation, and the list goes on.

The person might be in such a state of panic, that they need to make use of several tools, in a sequence. Those would have been uploaded and placed in the order they believe would be most helpful.

One person interviewed wanted to be able to start writing, which is yet another tool that is helpful in calming oneself.

The other part of the interaction is loading the tools, and putting them in the most useful

order for them.

Access to sample users:

Caroline G, Mary H., Barbara T., Elizabeth F., Geordie W.

(The sixth I may need to replace, as she is in a residency program)

[The first three have been interviewed and personae developed; they are similar in age, therefore, it may be ideal to do interviews with others in a different age range, and of different gender].

System idea:

An easy to use method of importing images, words, audio, video, the tools people use to manage anxiety. Key is ease of use – ease of importing and setting up. A user should be able to press a button and have the most useful information come up first, be that a saying, image, etc. Primary use would be mobile, however, the app would work on other devices, and on a desktop, since users may prefer to do initial set up on a desktop/laptop. [The previous instructor suggested that setup could be done on a computer, while the primary use would likely be on a phone. It may now be possible now, two years later, the setup on a mobile phone.]

Problem:

See above. Subsequent feedback would suggest that a library of “default” tools, or at least one in each category, be available.

Strategy:

Interview potential users about possible need for this application. Discover the need. (Some of this has already been accomplished).

Complete a competitive audit. Consider users’ needs in light of what is already available.

Create story board showing user with potential problem (as gleaned from interviews) and potential result of using the application. The next step be to review storyboards with several people who might potentially appreciate such a tool. Alternatively a more broad information gathering could be achieved by inquiring what might be desired in semi-structured interviews. Consider making an affinity diagram, for which a list of desired options would be derived.

Next, determine which options are the most useful, and list the options by priority. Also

list any potential challenges/dependencies to implementing specific options, and potential work-arounds. Develop work flow. Review idea with developer.

Create low-fidelity prototype (for some functionality, if not all; depends upon scope); test with users. Refine. Create high fidelity prototype; test with users; refine. Review with developer as needed. (Note: content and specific vocabulary would also be determined.).

Consider how much information will be needed in terms of user assistance. Will there be more information on a website? Write specifications.

What will the system accomplish:

To provide people who have anxiety issues, and who already have a range of tools for managing anxiety at their disposal— thanks to years of therapy, spiritual work, and other methods separate from any medications they may be using — with a way to store their tools/reminders in one place so that it is convenient to retrieve them when they are needed, especially when they are away from home.

Given people who use this application will have already chosen tools they know to be effective in helping them to manage anxiety attacks/panic attacks, the question would be as to whether this application is successful in helping them to gather the range of tools and reminders, together in one place, and whether they were easily able to access what they needed when they needed it. In other words, does aggregating the tools help? Does having their tools/tool reminders on their phone help? Is it easy for them to set the order of which reminder appears first, and if they change their mind regarding which reminder comes up first, second, third, etc, is it easy enough for them to change the order for future use?

To measure the ease of accessing tools/reminders, a survey, probably one with a Likert scale for factors such as: 1) how hard/easy was it to set up/import your tools/reminders? 2) how hard easy was it to access your tools reminders? 3) how hard or easy was it to change the order of your preferred tools? 4) how hard easy was it to add new tools reminders?

Interviews indicate a range of preferred tools, for example, some people wanted to see a particular image to help calm them, while others wanted an audio reminder, or a written mantra. Therefore, one of the objectives would be to make it convenient to

import different types of media, including recording ones own voice or that of another person.

One question is whether to have a single default for each type of media, or a library of several options for each type of media.

Overall it would be expected that if the application were convenient and easy to use it would be effective in reducing anxiety in users. However, the objective isn't to measure by biological factors the application's effectiveness, but rather to provide easy access to a set of tools/reminders/cues that are already effective for the users.

Provides sense of calm for users who can click on the app and immediately hear, or see — or both - the first calming entity they would want in a moment of panic. A panic button, in a sense.

Description of self, and relationship to problem:

I'm an artist, graphic designer, creative director, writer who has coped with anxiety and depression; diagnosis: GAD. I'm sensitive and empathic, as are many creative types, as well as highly analytical, and business oriented, given years as a creative director, many years in business for myself, and experience in a range of industries.

I have a lot of tools, and can see that both I and others whom I know would benefit from a "toolkit" that is easily accessible. I come from a family of many physicians, surgeons, nurses and pharmacists; therefore my desire to help others is genetically determined — at least somewhat.

Are you working for a company that does related work? What role to you play at that company?

I have a background in branding and marketing , and have had a career as an art director and creative director. After working on a couple of UX projects, one was for a government contractor, and doing the coursework here at IA State, and informational interviews with qualitative researchers, I'm seeking a role in applied research. (At present freelancing.)

Healthcare/medical, education, green energy, art and education are my interests; I'd like to do some good.

Skills I bring:

A 20 year career in design thinking and problem solving, that includes interviewing stakeholders, considering the competitive landscape in which their products/services exist, and providing branding and other visually designed artifacts to enhance their business objectives. Writing proposals, background information, working on competitive visual audits, design briefs. Leading branding workshops for startup companies. Forming/leading teams that included developers, writers, designers, videographers, and managing those projects as well as serving as principal creative and problems solver.

Subsequent work as a ux generalist (Swiss army knife) for application developed for a government contractor which included wire framing in Sketch, solving an accessibility issue for red/green color blindness, building a library of wire framing components in sketch, labeling those in developer language, collaborating to build a set of ux guidelines for the client developers, taking rough concepts for actions and building wire frames indicating the user interface for the concepts.

Working on a project for a bank as content developer with a focus on writing for UX in the form of labels, interactions, error messages, help text, and writing content for other applications in transition as well as user guides for other applications.

Working as creative director and content manager for technology company, which included learning the business in order to integrate brand messaging and technological information for an audience of CTOs. Developing journey map of CTO path through website. Editing technical and marketing content, reviewing with SME. Leading team of developer, writer, videographer, photographer and other team members, all in remote locations

Skills: worked on multi-disciplinary teams, design, wire framing, writing, personae development, interviewing, user testing, Sketch, Adobe Creative Suite, Omnigraffle.

Years of studying about PTSD, anxiety, depression and ways to treat.

Will you be working with a team? If so, what skills will other members be bringing?

I am the team, with contacts in the psychotherapy world, with whom I will be communicating for feedback.

I would expect to be building prototypes/mockups. A colleague has indicated this project is viable, as have the three people already interviewed.

My background includes years of working as a creative director, designer, and morphing into user experience work, on a range of projects. Additionally, I come from a medical family, and have a strong desire to help people.

I, myself, have suffered from GAD and possibly PTSD, and have experienced the realm of therapies for this condition. In addition, I have read extensively on the subject, and where possible have integrated my concerns into course projects during my time at Iowa State University, while pursuing a master's degree in the engineering department, in human computer interaction (HCI).

Why are you choosing the project you are proposing?

Because I stayed interested in it long enough to start it in Scott Klimmer's HCI online class, and because there seems to be a need according to the people with whom this has been discussed. Further, Scott Stossel's book *My Age of Anxiety* also inspired me, as did his story, as well as the stories I hear from others.

Note of clarification: Measuring a biological result is *not the objective for this application*.

This is an aggregator for a custom set of tools, specific to each person's preferences, that is portable.

*The individuals already know which tools work best for them, so **they have already chosen them for their effectiveness.***

I have reviewed the concept with therapists, with people in therapy, and reviewed the competitive environment. There is not a tool currently that allows users to aggregate their preferred specific tools. There is an application for DBT for example, but it only covers DBT tools.