Schawnery Lin
MICA 5100.03
21 April 2021
Assignment 5 - Usability Study Report

Prototype Link: https://xd.adobe.com/view/49f62489-dbe9-423b-a986-179000ffed4a-1ca5/

Test Plan
Understand the behaviors and needs for undergraduate students to process self-defined experiences of failure.

Assumptions:
1. Students facing failures will outlet and reflect using similar methods and resources
2. Undergraduate students will experience similar levels of failure at some point during their undergraduate career

Method	Data Collection	Test Date	Location	Participants	End Deliverable
Remote user interviews	G-suite spreadsheets	4/18/2021	Remote zoom meetings	3 from target personas	Report and Synthesis of results

Study Participants

Participant ID	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION (Class standing)	LOCI of CONTROL (self reported, 1-5 with 5 = highest)	SENSE of COMMUNITY (self reported, 1-5 with 5 = highest)
1	23	M	4th Year Senior	3	4
2	21	F	Recent Grad	2	2
3	19	M	2nd Year Junior	4	1

Test Questions

1. Background (Previous Experiences with Failure):
   a. How would you prefer (if at all) to engage with a forum on sharing experiences of failure?

2. Experience:
   a. Onboarding Experience
      i. How do you feel about the information you provide? Anything you would omit? Include?
   b. Home, Feed, Explore Experience
      i. How do you feel about the level of anonymity: knowing who is posting what content (including your own)?
      ii. Do you feel like any interaction(s) are missing?
         1. (geared toward commenting/reacting, etc)

3. Follow up questions:
   a. If you had the ability to ask for any feature/story/product. What would you like?
   b. Do you have any feedback on this study?

Results - *Category 1* - *Does a social media-esque platform feasible as a means of building community forum for failure(s)?*

The Good: Social media can provide a sense of affirmation, of community, as well as dialogue to tackle individual responses to a negative experience such as failure. Participants from this study noted how they currently engage with their failures, and their current methodologies involve using social media to directly converse with a close collection of peers; however, often find themselves reserved as to reduce the pressure and perceived burden onto others.

"When I was dealing with my own depressive episodes, I used snapchats and just saved video and voice recorded memories… I often looked back to remind myself the pain and how I've grown from then" - Participant 2

The Bad: Concerns were raised on the accessibility and scope of engaging with other users. Participants vary in the specific method of engaging with others in discussions of failure, some citing the use of calls, text, or video chats. Participants were not definitive in their preference of communication, but mostly agreed that a text based platform would suffice for now. Also, the prototype encourages focus on individual Universities / Colleges and Geographic proximity rather than global posts.

"The onboarding process includes University email, which on one hand makes me feel safer that I'd be engaging with peers from [my university], but also makes me feel like I'd be missing out on content from around the country." - Participant 1
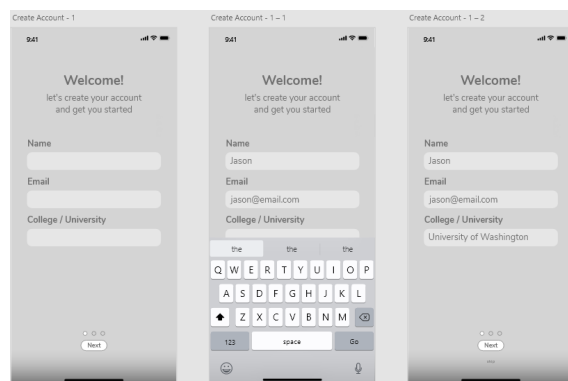
[1] Onboarding: University Email Exploration

Results - *Category 2* - *Do anonymous posts support goals of creating a digital safe space?*

The Good: Privacy can encourage users to share their own personal stories. Sharing stories and experiences on a public forum where they can be identified can lead to toxicity from other users who may respond negatively toward an original poster.

"Yeah there's definitely a lot of toxicity on platforms like reddit, twitter, or even LinkedIn. People just talk about their failures but only as a means of saying, 'oh I failed but now I'm here and so should you so just get good' which makes everyone else who isn't where they want to be feel worse…"
-   Participant 3

The Bad: Engaging with another user's post becomes more difficult. Responding or reacting to other users' stories and experiences either requires a one to one engagement in a private exchange.

"Not entirely sure what interactions I can have with others. What does connecting with another user entail, and how is that reflected on the original post?..."
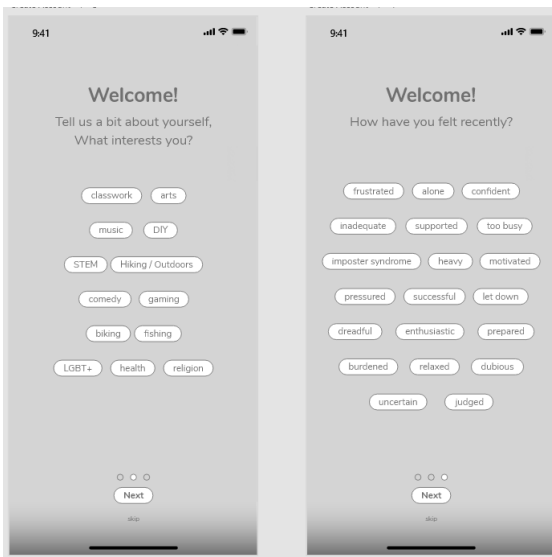-   Participant 1
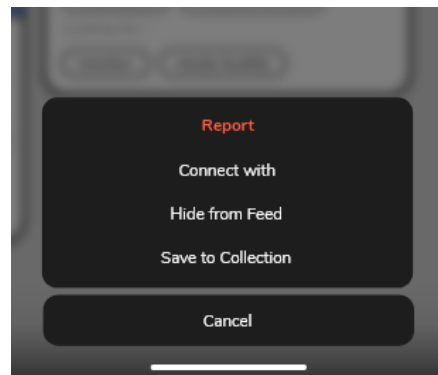
[2] more options (from post)

Results - *Category 3* - *What features would support **your** goals and needs while engaging with failure(s)?*

The Good: Participants noted the importance of different experiences and depths of failure should be better balanced as to not pressure other students in feeling like they are more or less of a "failure". The onboarding experience is not explicit on how the data inputted (interests and emotions felt) ties directly to posts, but is appreciated after explanation.

"I get the concept behind the onboarding questions, and I'm making the assumption that it somehow changes what I can view, but I'm unsure of how it actually does… "
- Participant 3

The Bad: Participants approved of the overall flow; however, encouraged changes to layout and some feature enhancement requests: namely endless scroll rather than carousels for post / feed exploration, and a clearer objective when interacting with the daily widget. Participants also showed concerns around the structure of creating new posts.

"Yeah I mean there's nothing wrong with going just text based posts, but it does feel like it's lacking. It's nice that there are share settings as well, but it's also unclear what the difference between 'public' and 'my network' is… Especially since all the posts on my feed are already supposed to be anonymous."
- Participant 2

[3] onboarding experience
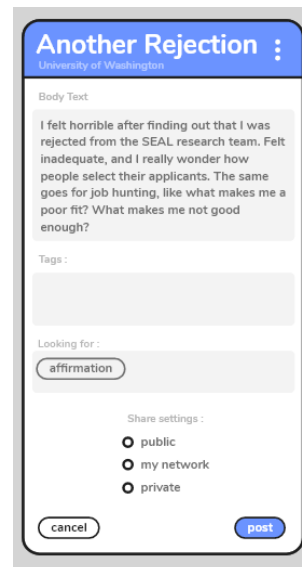
[4] create new post

Recommendations

Assumptions Validated:
1. Students facing failures will outlet and reflect using similar methods and resources
    a. Students currently use social media as a means of either direct communication to their peers, but do not feel comfortable with public posting of their experience(s) due to social stigmas around failure.

Assumptions Disproven:
2. Undergraduate students will experience similar levels of failure at some point during their undergraduate career
    a. Although somewhat true, the magnitude and shared experiences of failure are often perceived and handled differently.
    b. Students do not necessarily require community input and engagement with their own experiences, and would rather focus on the sharing experience rather than engagement experience.

Direct recommendations:
1. Explore and engage in different mediums of posting (voice / auditory input)
2. Improve tag handling on home page to filter through tags and posts
3. Improve post success validation after user creates their own posts

Next Steps:
These findings will be used to inform further ideations as the prototype development is continued.

Change Log:
1. Removed option to skip onboarding details (interests and emotions, boards: Create Account - 1 - 3, and Create Account - 1 - 4)
2. Changed carousel to endless scroll / vertical scrolling on Home pages
3. Changed text for search bar on home page from "search for tags, posts, communities" to "search for tags and posts"
4. Post Success validation improved, auto timed to reset to home after 5 seconds for prototyping sake