CONNECTING HEARTS FOR HEALTH

Understanding User Engagement and Comfort Levels

UX Research
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NYIT

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OVERVIEW

This project is to create a platform for those with health challenges, making them feel less alone by connecting users who've faced similar situations.

It offers mental support and strategies for overcoming feelings of sadness, giving patients hope and encouragement to stay positive on their healing journey.

WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH VITAL FOR OVERALL WELL-BEING?

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) NYC

- Behavioral Health Services

- Community Mental Health Programs
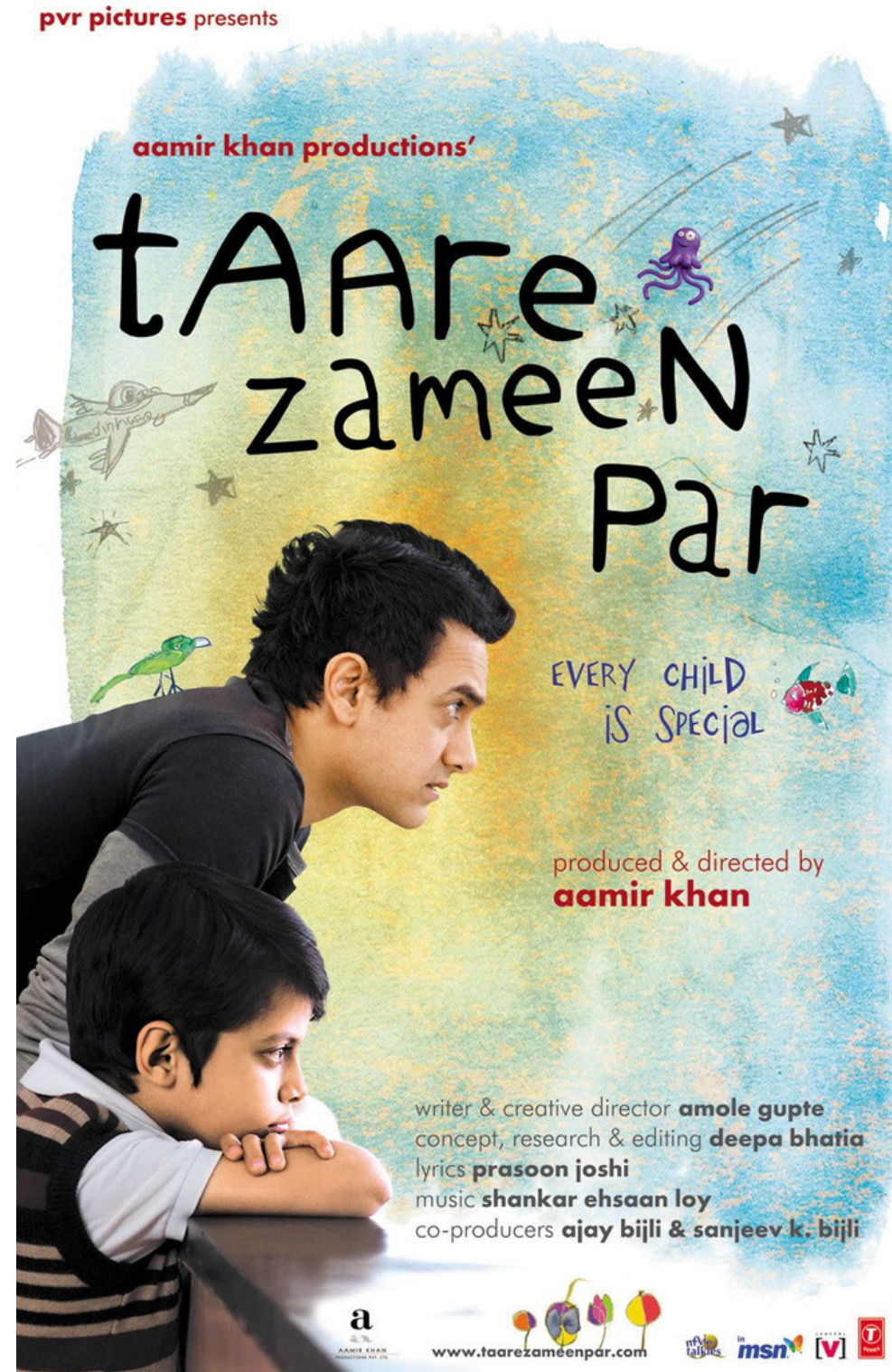
MOVIES

From the above Movies and work of organizations mentioned, impart valuable lessons on empathy, compassion, unconventional approaches to challenges, and the significance of understanding individual perspectives.

They demonstrate how understanding emotions and unique approaches can make a difference. Through their stories, they have always been spreading awareness and informing us about the significance of mental well-being.

Infographic: Positive perceptions about health

POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

PEOPLE RATE HEALTH AS GOOD DESPITE INCREASE IN CHRONIC CONDITIONS

81% rated their physical health as good or better, but **66%** said they have been told by a health care provider that they have a chronic illness

% WHO REPORT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER THEY HAVE

High blood pressure **28%**

High cholesterol **24%**

Arthritis **17%**

81% rated their mental health as good or better, but **37%** said they have been diagnosed with a mental health condition

5 percentage point increase from pre-pandemic levels (32% in 2019 vs 37% in 2023)

% WHO REPORT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER THEY HAVE

Anxiety disorder **24%**

Depression **23%**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Evaluate User Comfort Levels with Peer Connections

Identify Barriers to Patient-Empathizer Engagement

Analyze User Preferences and Needs in the Process

TARGET AUDIENCE

Patients

Healthcare Professionals

Experienced Support Group of Empathizers

Mental Health Professionals

Researchers in the Field

FRAMEWORK

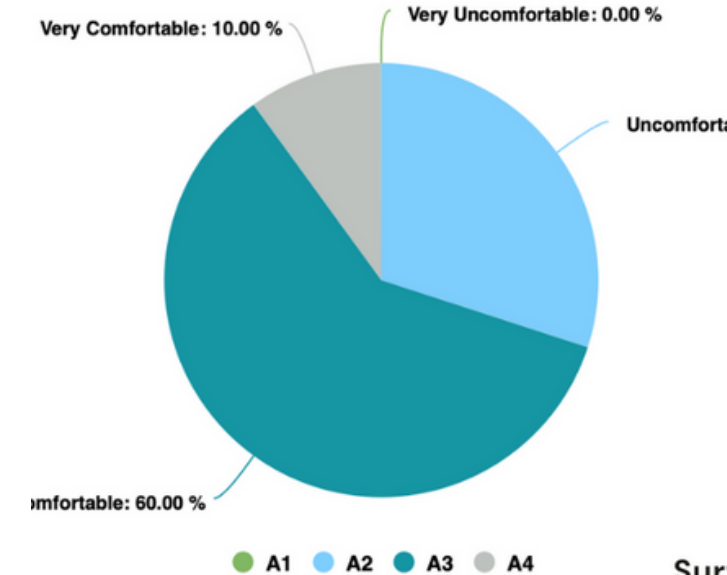| DISCOVERY	EXPLORING	TESTING	LISTENING
Field Study	Persona Buildings	Benchmark Testing	Survey
User Interviews	Competitive Analysis	Usability Testing	Analytics Review
Quantitative Surveys	Journey Mapping	Accessibility Evaluation	FAQ Review
Requirement Gatherings	Card Sorting		Search-Log Analysis
	Prototype Testing		

DISCOVERY PHASE

Objective:

Discover how comfortable people are with this idea, understand their thoughts in seeking mental support, and utilize this insight to delve deeper into identifying pain points and barriers.
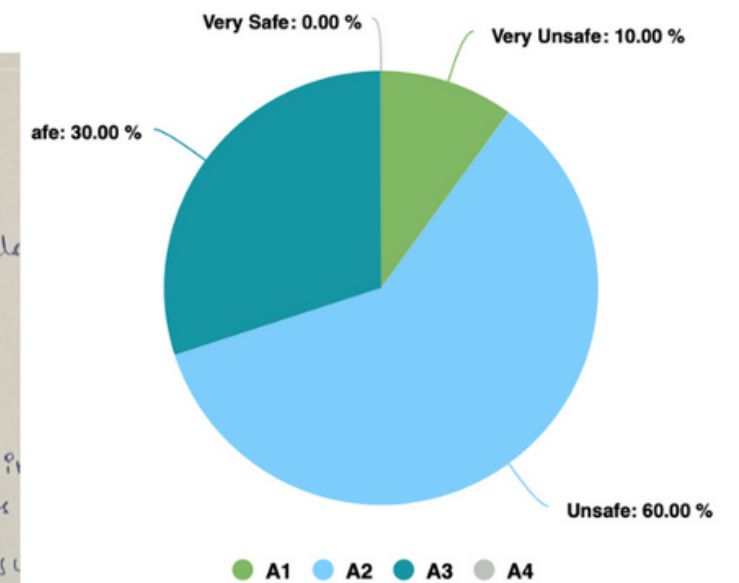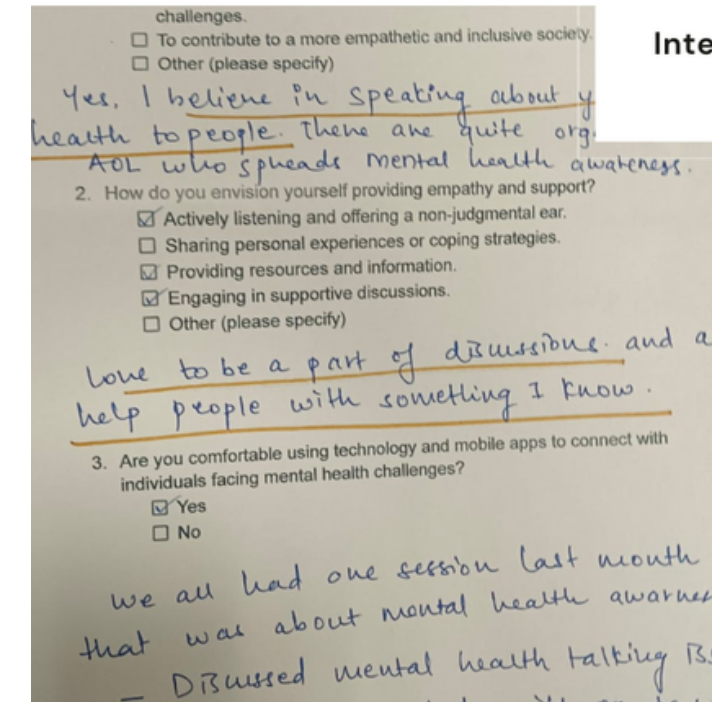
Methods used:

- Field Study
- User Interviews
- Quantitative Surveys
- Requirement Gatherings

— The person / story who has overcome the situation & how he did it.

5. How often would you be willing to engage with the app to provide empathy and support?
☐ Daily
☑ Weekly
☐ Monthly
☐ Occasionally
☐ Unsure

— Works in IT
— Willing to help people on weekends.
— Comfortable to have an online meet with the patient.

6. What do you believe are the most important qualities for someone offering empathy and support in a digital platform?
☑ Patience
☑ Compassion
☑ Active listening
☑ Non-judgmental attitude
☑ Empathetic communication
☐ Other (please specify)

— shouldn't allow digital system to act as barrier.
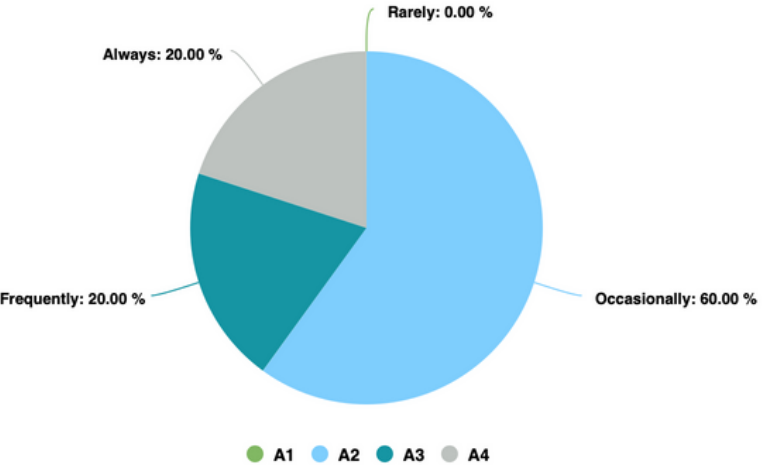— should have enough time to spent with the patient.

As a patient, how comfortable do you feel when sharing your health-related experiences with people?

Very Comfortable: 10.00 %
Very Uncomfortable: 0.00 %
Uncomfortable: 30.00 %
Comfortable: 60.00 %

A1 A2 A3 A4
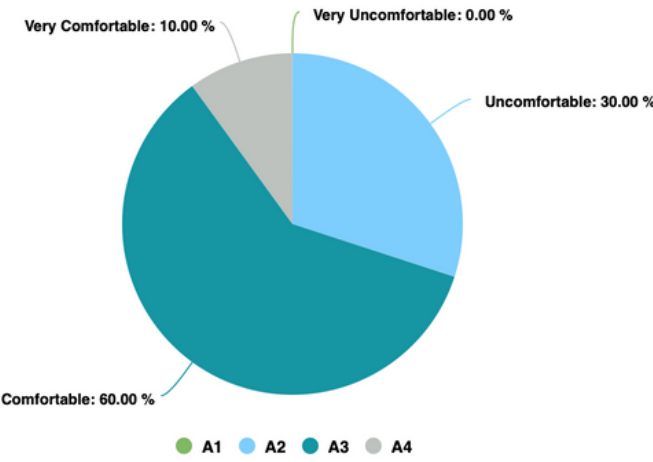
Have you ever avoided talking to people because you were worried about your privacy?

No: 20.00 %
Yes: 80.00 %

A1 A2
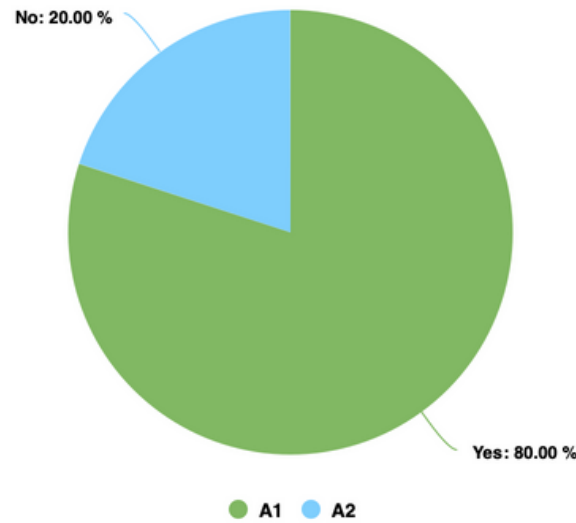
How often would you prefer to interact with people who offer support during your health challenges?

Rarely: 0.00 %
Always: 20.00 %
Frequently: 20.00 %
Occasionally: 60.00 %

A1 A2 A3 A4

Surveys & Expert interview

FINDINGS

Online Convenience

People find it hard to meet in person all the time.

Matching Preferences

Users want to connect with folks who are like them in terms of age, gender.

Willing to Help

People are happy to support others with similar health issues & want to be part of a helpful community.

Privacy Concerns

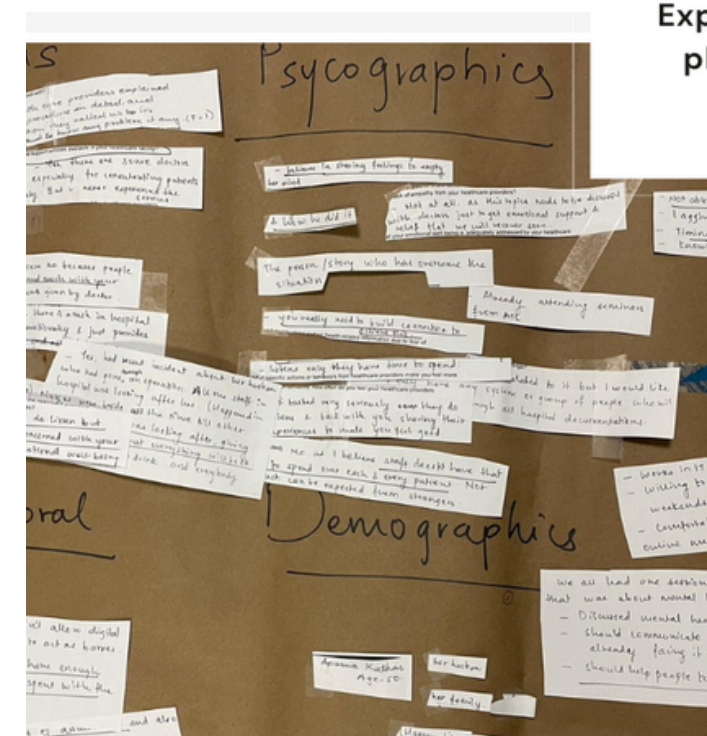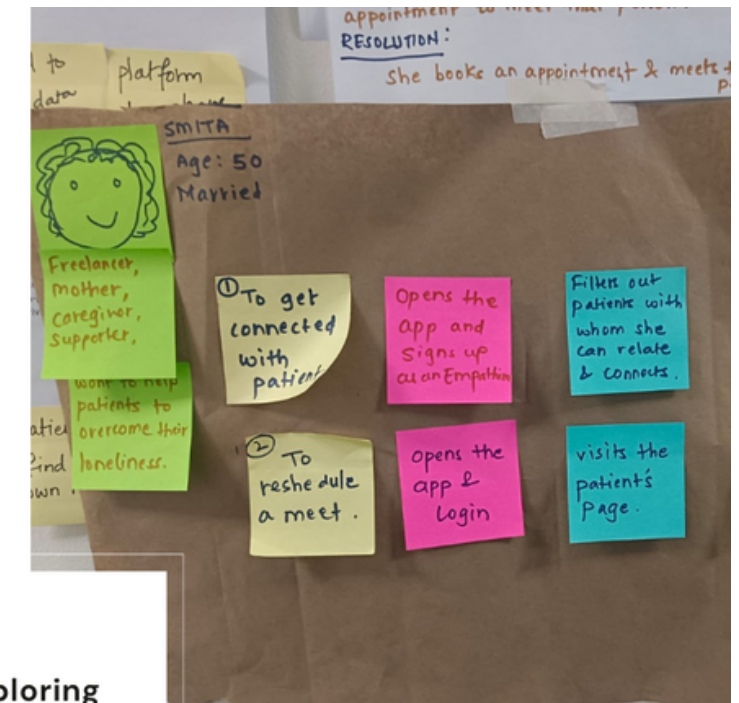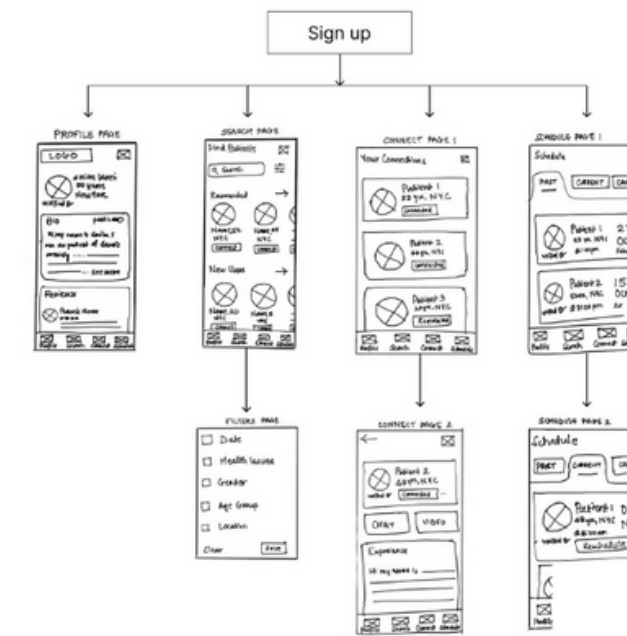Users worried due to concerns about fake identities or scams.
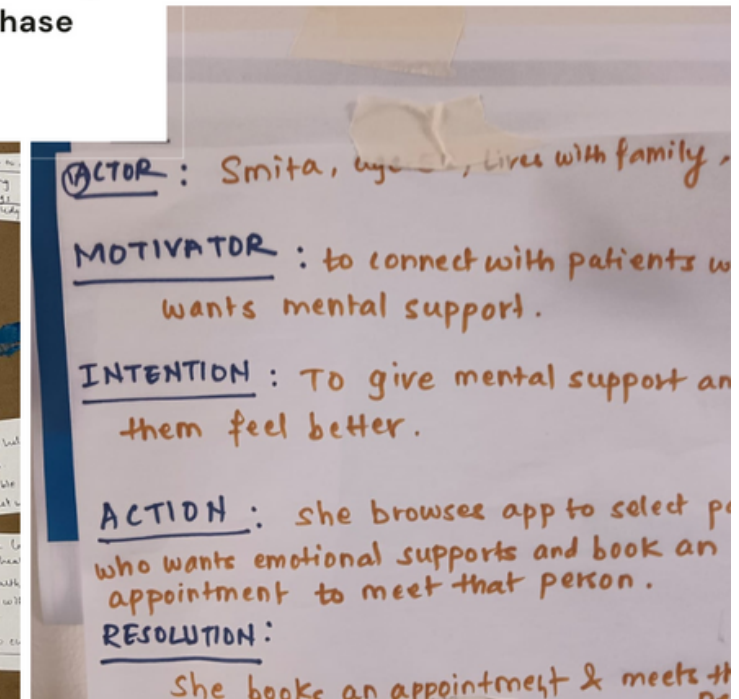
EXPLORING PHASE

Objective:

To learn more about what users needs, brainstorm different design ideas, and test them early on to make this platform better.
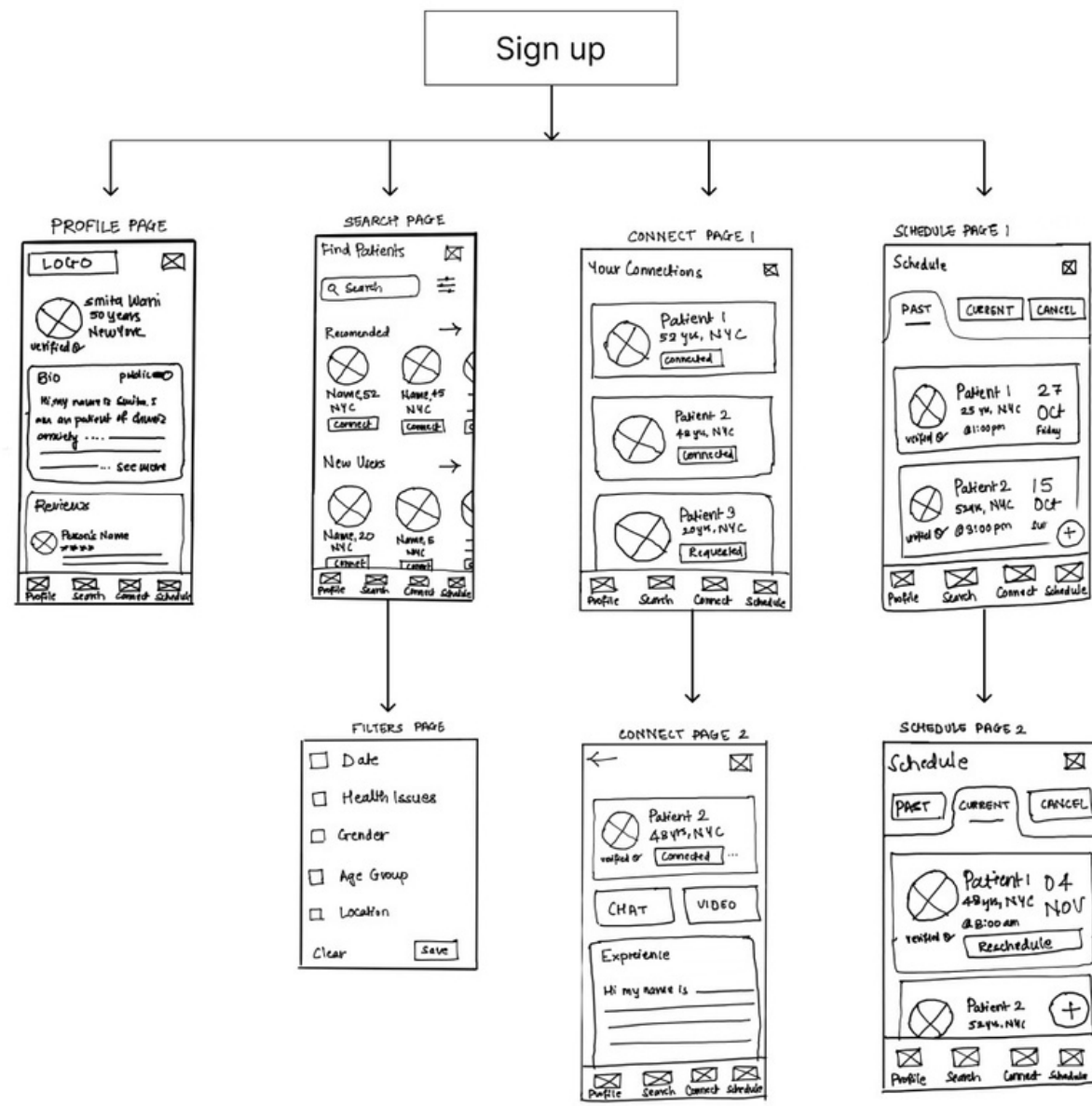
Methods used:

- Persona Buildings
- Competitive Analysis
- Journey Mapping
- Card Sorting
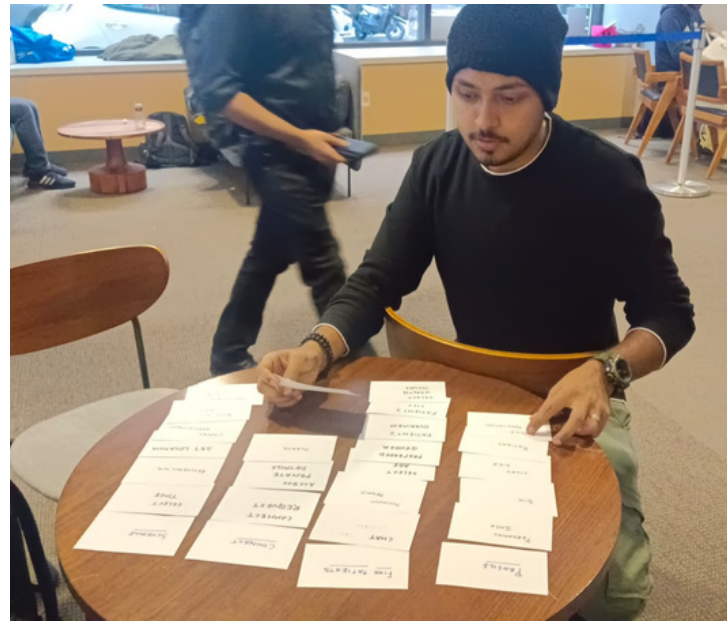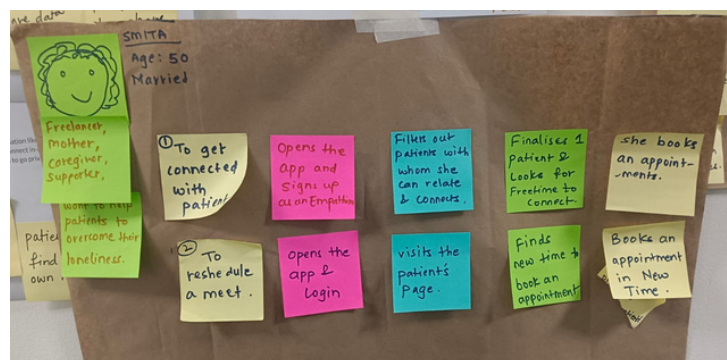- Prototype Testing

Exploring phase

Low Fidelity Wireframes

Card sorting

ACTOR : Smita, age—, lives with family, caregiver

MOTIVATOR : to connect with patients who wants mental support.

INTENTION : To give mental support and them feel better.

ACTION : she browses app to select patients who wants emotional supports and book an appointment to meet that person.

RESOLUTION : She books an appointment & meets the person.

Scenario mapping & Journey Maps

	PatientsLikeMe	Facebook Healthcare Groups
Market	U.S. healthcare market	Broader social media market, with a segment focused on health and wellness.
Brand Purpose	To provide a dedicated platform for patients to connect, share experiences, and find emotional support while managing their health conditions.	To offer a space for users to join and create groups to discuss and share health-related topics.
Target Audience	Specific health conditions, chronic illnesses, and rare diseases who seek a supportive community of peers.	Individuals of all ages who are interested in health topics, whether seeking information, support, or connection.
Key Features	Condition-specific forums, symptom tracking tools, a platform for sharing detailed health information, and research opportunities	Health-related groups
Competitive Advantage	Highly specialized and tailored to the needs of individuals dealing with specific health conditions. Fosters deep connections and provides tools for comprehensive health tracking and research participation.	Broad reach and accessibility, as it leverages Facebook's massive user base. Provides a diverse range of health-related groups, catering to a wide variety of health interests and conditions.

Competitive Analysis

FINDINGS

Privacy and Security

Ensure the platform is super secure so users feel safe sharing and connecting with others.

Customizable Preferences

Letting users choose how they connect by giving them options, making it more personal and comfortable for everyone.

Easy Navigation

Making it super easy for users to find and connect with empathizers by simplifying the platform's content and providing clear guidance.
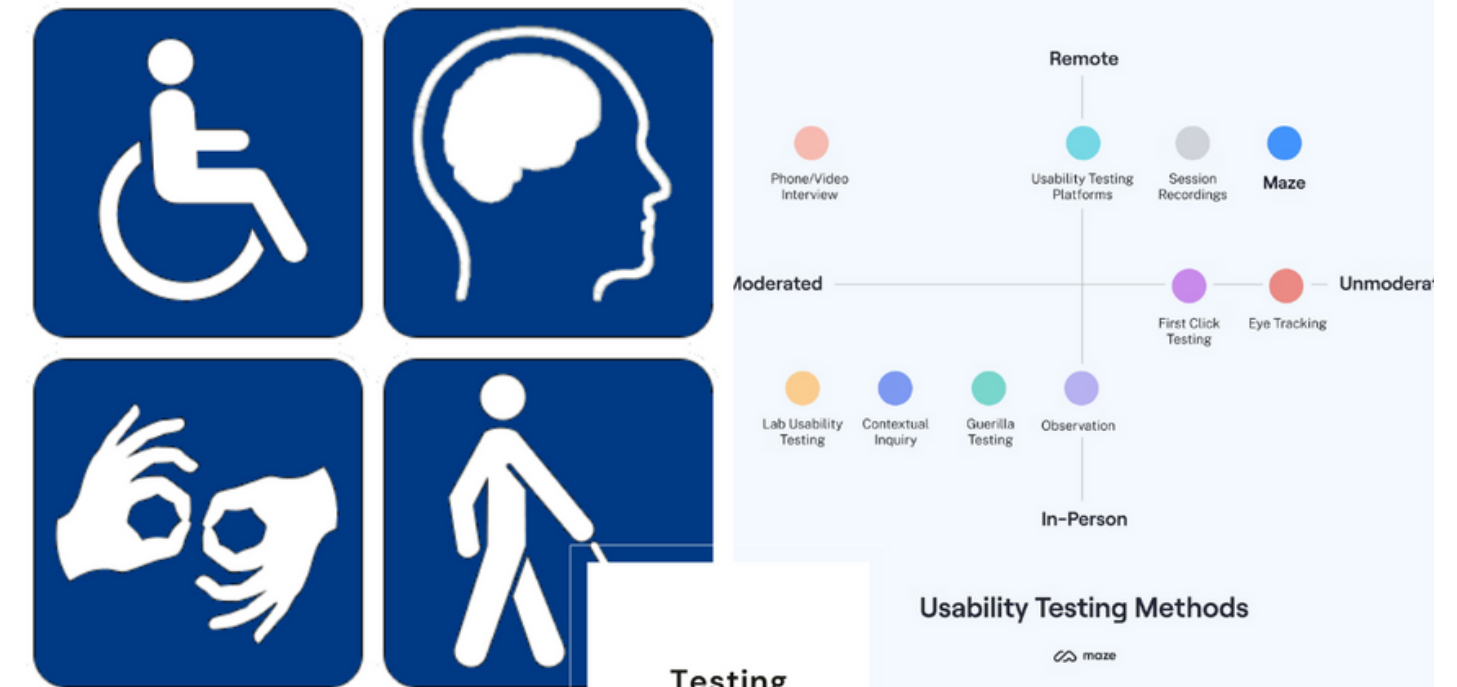
TESTING PHASE

Objective:

Conduct experiments and qualitative usability tests with users to validate and refine the proposed solutions, ensuring they effectively address the research objectives.
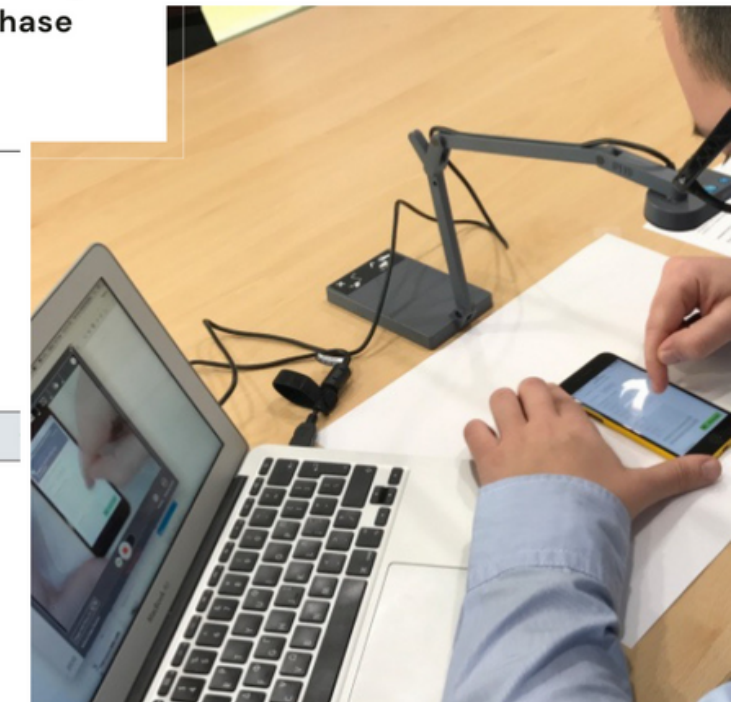
Methods used:

- Usability Testing
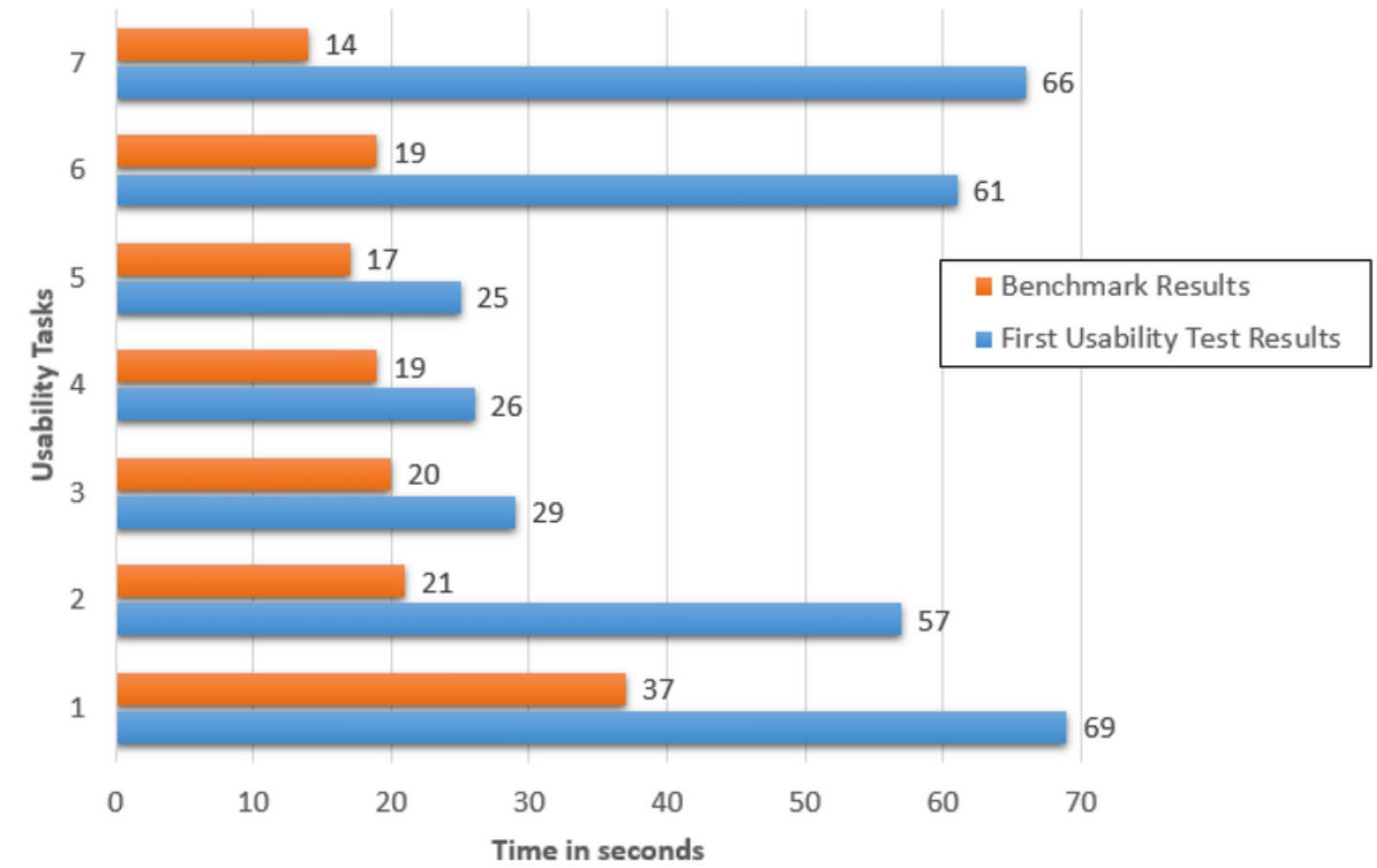- Benchmark Testing
- Accessibility Evaluation

Moderated and Remote Usability Testing

Benchmark Testing

Accessibility Conformance

Passed / Failed

Passed 60.0%
Failed 40.0%
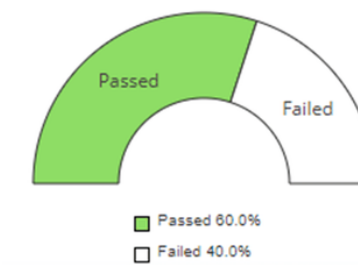
33 checkpoints out of 55 have passed

User Impact

9   29   62   62   12
Blocker Critical Serious Moderate Minor

Severity
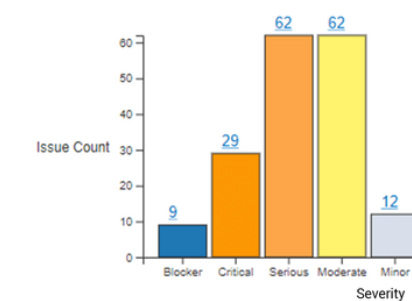
Intensity of impact on users with disabilities
number of accessibility issues with different sev

Top Issues

Color Contrast (regular text) (1.4.3.a) — 40
Name, Role, Value (4.1.2.a) — 20
Non-Text Contrast - Graphical Objects (1.4.11.c) — 18
Headings (1.3.1.e) — 16
Resize (200%) (1.4.4.a) — 14
Reading Order (1.3.2.a) — 11
Programmatic Labels (1.3.1.c) — 11
Lists (1.3.1.f) — 9
Descriptive Labels (2.4.6.b) — 7
Status Messages (4.1.3.a) — 6

Checkpoints with most accessibility issues
detected, to help with prioritization

Accessibility Evaluation

FINDINGS

Accessibility

Identification of any accessibility issues that may affect users with diverse needs and expectations.

Preference Validation

Confirmation of whether customizable preferences and communication methods align with user preferences and needs.

User Satisfaction

Insights into user satisfaction levels, gauging whether the platform changes positively impact their overall experience and comfort.
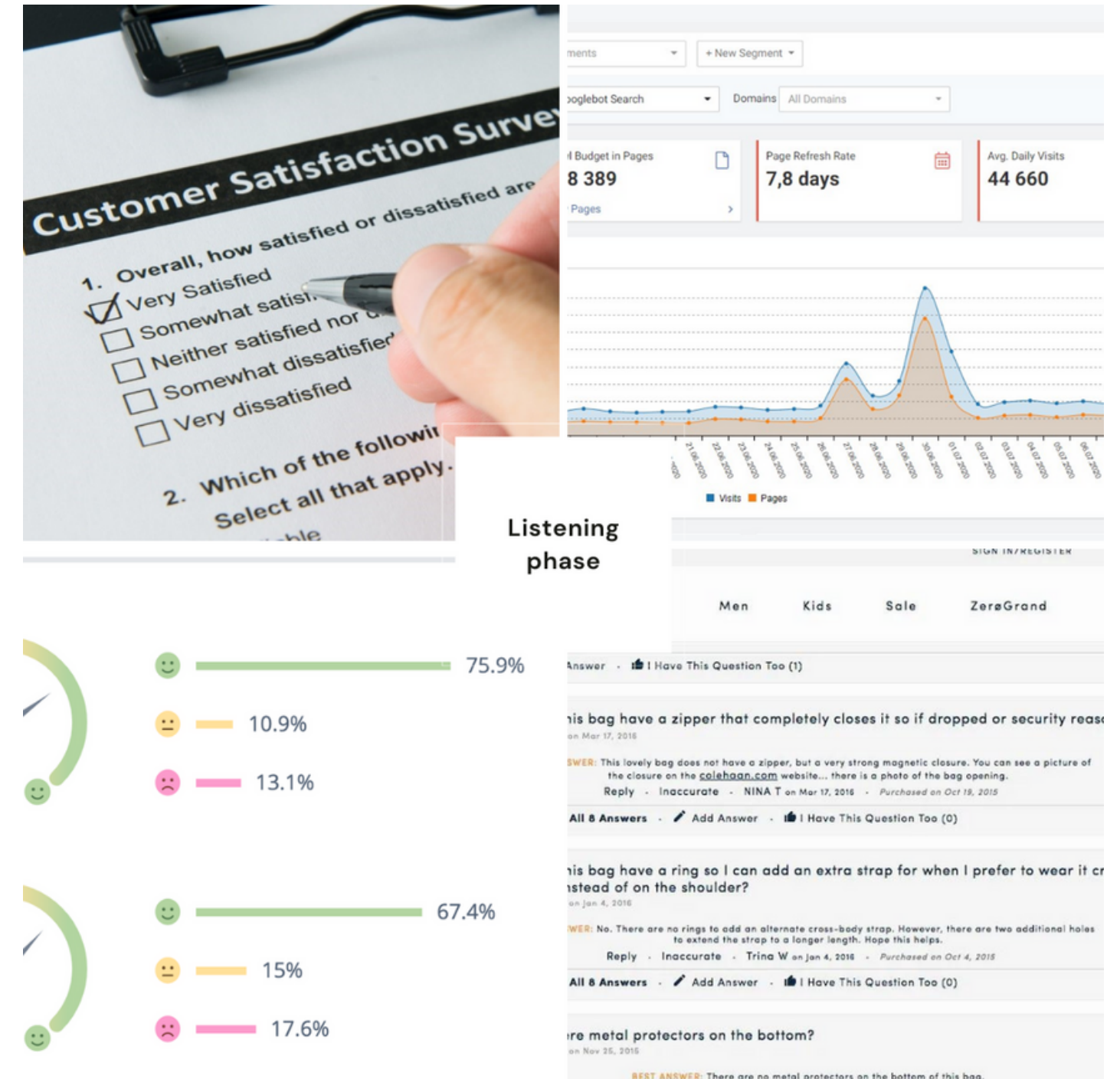
LISTENING PHASE

Objective:

To collect insights on how well the product is satisfying existing user problems. It also enables teams to discover new opportunities to further enhance the product.

Methods used:

- Surveys
- Analytics Review
- Search-log Analysis
- FAQ Reviews
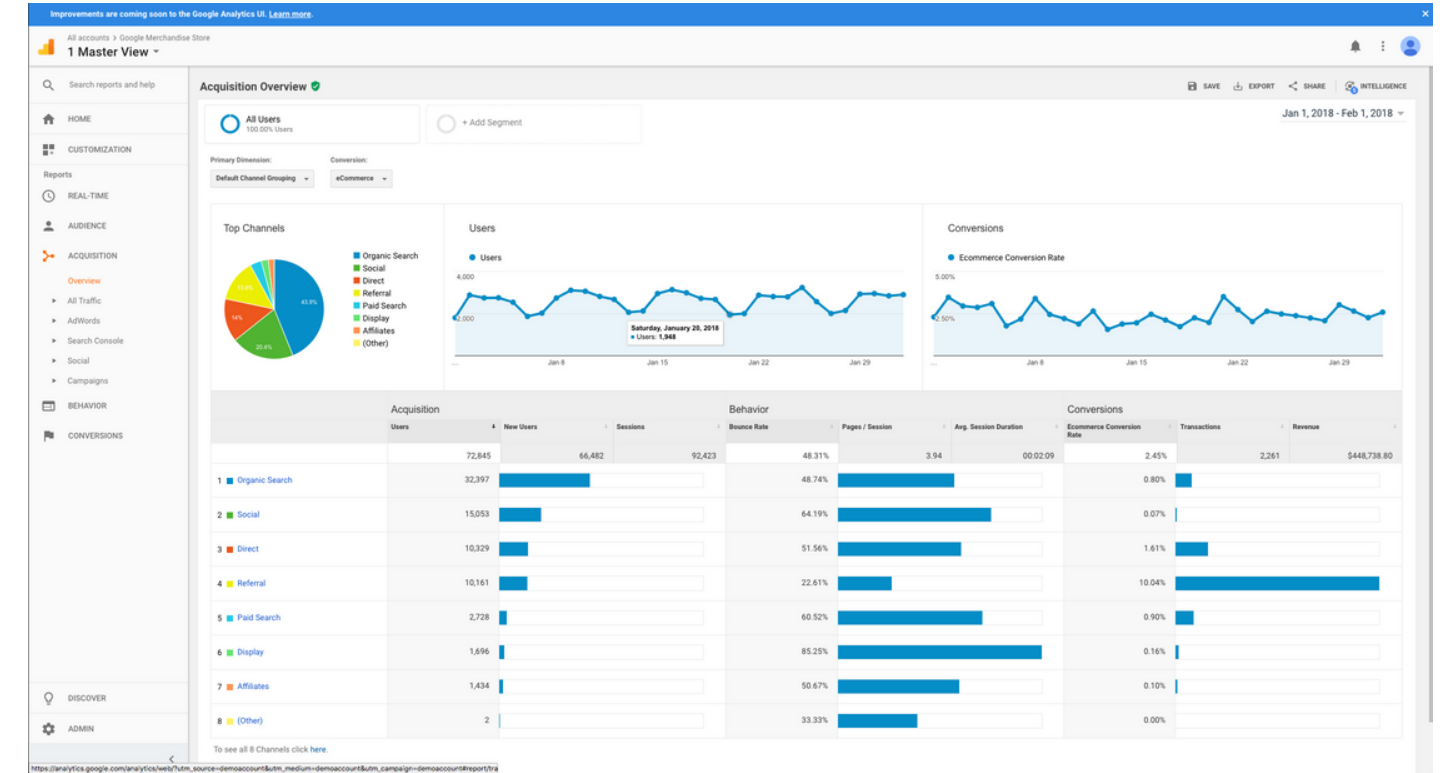
Search -log Analysis

Analytics Reviews
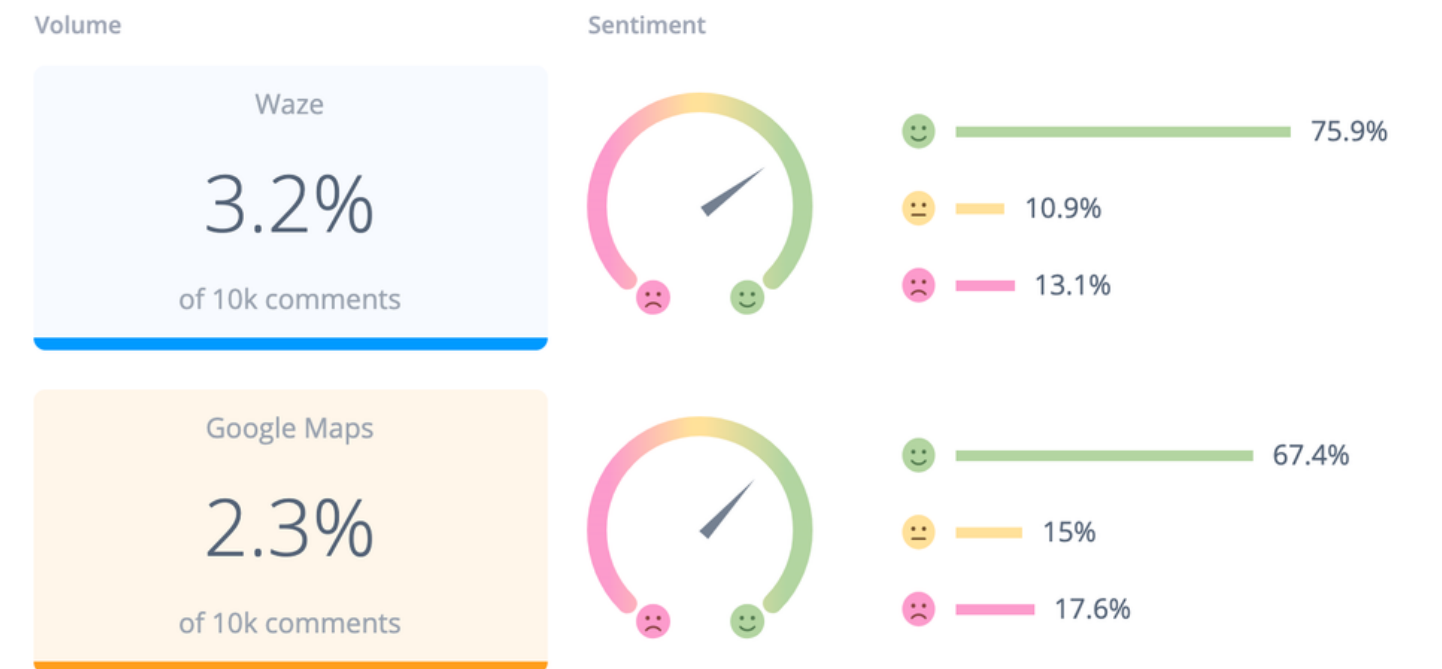
Surveys

FINDINGS

Engagement Patterns

Analyze analytics data for trends in user behavior, highlighting popular features and potential challenges.

Solution Effectiveness

Evaluating how well implemented solutions address privacy, navigation, and customization needs

Search Patterns

Identify common search queries related to mental health, peer connections, and coping strategies, providing insights into user priorities and needs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

User-Centric Design

Always focus on what makes users comfortable, secure, and happy in connecting with others facing health challenges.

Continuous Iteration

Keep making the platform better by listening to users, testing, and making changes based on what they say.

Support for Everyone

Make sure the platform is easy to use, private, and gives people the support they need when dealing with health challenges.

APPENDIX

Depression, anxiety and stress linked to poor heart health in two new studies

The State Of Mental Health In America

A Middle-Range Theory of Social Isolation in Chronic Illness

Loneliness and Chronic Illness: The Inspiring Ways 8 Patients Cope With It

Overcoming Loneliness in Chronic Illness

THANK YOU

Special thanks to Professor Danielle Thibodeau, for guiding through the world of UX research in a way that made it all clear and practical!