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Validation of A Proposed Mobile Phone Application (APP) for My Time CIC.

Evaluation Report

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Contents

1. Introduction

The turn of the 21st century, saw the emergence of digital communication (phatic) technologies and digital social networking media, such as MSN messenger (1999), Myspace (2003), facebook (2004), Bebo (2005) and text messaging. With the emergence of these communication technologies and digital social networking media, new opportunities to create and maintain interpersonal relationships, particularly amongst young people, have become available. More recently, these opportunities have become increasingly accessible on young peoples' mobile phones, through a range of applications (APPs), such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Tinder. Although providing opportunities to explore establish and build new relationships, these emerging social networking sites and communication technologies have inevitably also been implicated as an e-risky environment for bullying, intimidation and grooming. Cyberbullying is now increasingly seen as an online social problem, which is linked to offline relationships that originate in the school (Paul, Smith & Blumberg 2010). Not only that, cyberbullying, as with physical forms of bullying, can also have long term mental health implications (Copeland et al, 2013; Wolke, 2014).

This project is an evaluation commissioned by MyTime, to revitalise and validate an Android APP(entitled YoHelp) that they initially developed, with a specific focus on key issues that young people have highlighted in relation to depression, low self-esteem and anxiety, as well as bullying and cyber-bullying. The purpose of this evaluation was to engage young people in discussions regarding the current App, especially in relation to its functionality, and ways of improving this. This report presents findings, and makes recommendations based on these findings.

2. Aims and outcomes

Aims
To provide an overview of the current APP from young peoples' perspectives, in order to provide MyTime with feedback on how to make the APP more accessible and appealing.

To provide information on how to develop effective pathways of help suitable for use by young people.

Outcome
This information will be used by MyTime and their developers to construct a new and updated APP material.

3. Research methods

Data was collected from students attending schools in Portsmouth and Birmingham. A total of 10 focus group discussions took place; six were undertaken in the Portsmouth area, and four were undertaken in the Birmingham area. The data from the Portsmouth area was gathered from students at two schools in Portsmouth and one on the Isle of Wight. Focus group interviews in Portsmouth and on the Isle of Wight were facilitated by staff from the School of Education and Continuing Studies at the University of Portsmouth (Dr Wendy Sims-Schouten

and Dr Simon Edwards); the focus group discussions in Birmingham were led by Kyra Robbins (Young Peoples' Champion for MyTime CIC). Participants were mixed gender and a mix of white and BME participants; there were 4-7 participants in each focus group, and participants in the focus groups were aged between 12-17 years old.

The value of focus group data is found when analysing the interaction between the participants; that is, when they talk to one another about the questions raised or the topic presented to them. This is where focus groups differ from semi-structured or structured interviews, because in focus groups it is not the interviewer's role to ask questions directly to all participants, but rather to present a topic or question for group discussion. All focus group facilitators were therefore provided with a focus group brief (see below) which had key questions and topics to be posed. Care was taken to engage all participants equally and to avoid leaders in a group dominating the conversation.

4. <u>Focus group structure and discussion topics</u>

<u>Structure</u>

- The study was introduced to the participants;
- Participants were provided with the APP. This was downloaded onto the researcher's phone and presented to the participants;
- Following this, the participants were given an opportunity to play around with the APP;
- This was followed by a discussion around the APP.

<u>Discussion topics</u>

- What sort of social media do you use and why?
- How do you choose your apps?
- What is it that makes an app attractive?
- How does the YoHelp app compare to the apps that you normally use?
- What is good/bad about the APP?
- What facilities/activities etc could be added/used to improve the APP?
- Will the following features be of interest to you; case study – mood meter – games?

Additional questions were asked with a focus on what the participants felt they need in relation to supporting them with issues to do with cyberbullying, anxiety etc. These included questions around what makes them happy and what makes them sad.

As well as participating in the focus group interviews the participants were also presented with print-outs of the APP pages. Participants were asked to provide written feedback on the print outs.

5. **Focus group findings**

Key findings from the focus group interviews are presented below. Findings are presented following the discussion topics laid out above.

N.b. Note that analysis of the data showed no difference between the responses from the participants from Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Birmingham and as such the data is treated as a whole.

What sort of social media do you use and why?

Participants from all sites (Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Birmingham) referred to using the following sources and facilities: Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Music Apps and Youtube. In addition to this, games were also mentioned in all focus groups. Specific examples were provided here as well, namely Jungle games and Kik, as well as Flappy Bird.

Note that some participants (both in the Portsmouth and Birmingham areas) indicated that they didn't use social media saying that they thought it unsafe or too addictive.

How do you choose your apps?

It was clear that peers and friends play a key role in the participants' app choices. Below are some quotes from the focus group discussions:

Most people have them, so you want to be on them because other people are, if you see what I mean.

You want to be involved and talk to people and stuff so you can contact people and communicate with people.

I would probably say most of my friends are on it.

It's recommended to me normally.

Other reasons for choosing an app that were highlighted were the opportunities and facilities offered within the app, such as communication, games and being able to personalise the app;

Generally, it's something you can personalise. It's something you make it your own and there's lots of things that interests you on it.

Games are my favourite, so I always look out for game apps.

I think communication is one of the big reasons people have apps and things like that.

What makes an app attractive?

The participants referred to three specific aspects in relation to this question 1) that an app is attractive if it is popular amongst peers, 2) the importance of how the app is presented and

promoted, and 3) the facilities offered within the app, e.g. notifications, content and being able to customise the app;

If it's popular amongst your generation then you tend to use it a bit more. You tend to be more attracted to the app

I think also when you go onto the app Store as well, like when you scroll through

Apps, it's usually like the ones that have a bright colour and it's just like one colour or something and it's not like loads of colours and stands out.

I think it's the notifications, they will tell you your new content, the updated content and all that's new.

How does the YoHelp app compare to the apps that you normally use?

There was a clear sense in all of the focus group discussions that an app like this is certainly needed, and is quite different to what is currently available:

It's a bit different because obviously we have never really got it before because it's new but it's not something people would use on a daily basis, if you know what I mean. Like Face Book is more addictive.

It explores a lot of things that Social Media Apps and other Apps don't really cover, so obviously it's into more things like emotions and personal statuses and things like that but it's not as personal as other Apps would be. I think that people are more interested in things depending on how personal it is to them and I wouldn't use something that's not personal can express myself on because I think that makes it more appealing to an audience

What is good/bad about the APP?

Presented below is a summary of positive and negative aspects of the app:

Positive
- *It gives you advice without you actually having to go and talk to someone because that can be embarrassing if you are not completely comfortable with what you want to talk about.*
- *I like it. It looks like a good App. It's good because there are a lot of scenarios that people get into. I feel that there could be a bit more scenarios. I know that's not everything that people will be worrying about*
- *I think it could help in a way. With the bullying App, a lot of people don't speak out about it. When you have an App there, it is something you can do independently so you don't really have to say to everyone "I am being bullied". It can just help the problem.*
- *I think with the way you log into I like the way they don't want to use your name so it is quite a private thing to yourself and when it's got the emotions and such it's good because some people are confused about the way they feel and they can tell it through that.*

Negative

- *Once you have read it all then there is nothing new to read*
- *There could be more variants like with the fact that there are a massive, massive range of different emotions and each one can be slightly different or have a massive difference and it should be less direct feelings like that and more descriptions of feelings and then it's kind of easy to express*
- *I think labelling someone with a feeling doesn't always help because you don't always know what you are feeling. You don't always know what to do with yourself and how to label yourself you might feel distant from everyone else.*
- *I thought some of the photos and videos might be a bit fake and a bit patronising. With the actors, if there are any actors in it gives a false feeling. If it was a video based on a real true story about how they coped with it and how they dealt with bullying and top tips or advice on how to cope with it. Then maybe that would give a lot more reassurance to the user.*
- *It didn't have a very good design. It would be better if the App was more flashy then people would want to go on it a bit more and it just makes it feel a bit better.*
- *The photos are staged. It's more appealing if it's maybe cartoon drawings or sketches or something like that.*
- *It's quite a dark background, if you are trying to reflect that these people are happy or these people are getting through problems or something like that. I don't think having such a dark background would be the greatest idea. Maybe a more lighter environment to represent that. I think it very much resembles like a school website or something and people don't necessarily feel safe in school.*

What facilities/activities could be added/used to improve the APP?

The answers to this question can be summarised under the following headings:

Logo/Name:
- *I think people, especially on their phone. Some people are not very comfortable about having certain things on their phones because of family or friends seeing it. So I think especially the App logo should be a really simple one like Snapchat or a really generic logo probably and then a really simple title so it doesn't exactly disclose what the App's about.*
- *I wouldn't have something like help in the title because I am not sure because sometimes saying help in the title could be a bit too forward about things but then again if you don't have that then you won't necessarily know what it's about*

Updates
- *Yes, so it should be updated. I think it would be good if it could be connected to the internet and anonymously like people could write their stories about how it helped them, like if they had a friendship problem then wrote what they did.*
- *I think they should be a bit more in depth. It seems like I've had an argument with someone that could be with a girlfriend or with a mate or with a family member. Go into a bit more detail*

- *If you want to get a wider response you have to go on Apple and if you want to get a wider range of what the apps going to be like Apples going to be your best choice*

Feelings/Emotions
- *I think anxious could be added. Or worried.*
- *Something about insecurity as well*
- *Exam stress*
- *Embarrassment and confidence*

Getting help
- *I would probably want to be able to input like anonymously to the world, well not the world as such but you would be able to input something people could anonymously reply and say you could do this or this. I think to anonymously socialise in such a way that you wouldn't be able to get bullied or anything from doing it because nobody would know where it is from or anything. You could give your feelings, say "I'm not feeling safe on-line" and people could share thoughts with that as well. I think that's something I would like to have if I were to have an App like this.*
- *There could possibly be a system like Ask.com or Yahoo where people search questions and people leave their answers. The questions could be purely anonymous but other people leave their solutions for it. That would be really helpful, especially if its people purely there for the serious topic and obviously not messing about and their offering genuine advice and they are really trying to help.*
- *Or you could have a bit where you can talk to a person or someone and chat about it. Like talk it out.*
- *You could have like, people like how to explain, that help people with the certain kind of things they could be able to access it and like Snapchat stories they could be able to like make a like six second video or a how many second video of how to calm down or something*
- *You could have like a help line, not a help line but you could be able to write an email that would get back to you in at least a week or something where you could like explain properly what's happening and then you've got it all out your system then you'd get like help back and if you need to go and tell someone they'll say*
- *There should be links so that they can direct it to the web site they that would find useful*

Additional Material
- *I think vines would be good because I think it would showcase how awkward things can be.*
- *There could be more of a range of age of people, if you wanted to do a cartoon or if you still wanted to do the picture then I think that if you have a range of age, some younger people, some older people all getting along together. I think it would make you feel, whatever your age, more compelled to go and look at the site because you feel like, it has my age group in there so maybe they could help me, instead of just thinking I'm not 16 or I'm way past 16 so they can't obviously help me.*
- *You could have some quotes on the website, some motivational quotes that you can get. Not too cheesy and not too formal about it. Maybe under pictures you could have mini*

quotes. Something about the picture. Like quotes we have around the school, that sort of thing. Like quotes we have of the artist who drew the picture or something like that.

- *I think because it's an App about bullying. Maybe there could be some bullying Topics. Like "I'm being bullied, what do I do"? or "I know someone who's being bullied". Those issues could be added to it*

- *I think you should have an account on there. There is like a network on there so you could chat to a friend or someone that you know or you find on the app who has the same kind of problem as you. You can chat to them and compete against them*

- *You could put it in a mini game and then say what happens in this scenario? And then choose which way to go.*

- *There could be one that has different scenarios and at the end it can tell you the outcome of what happens if you do it with them things. Say if you feel you want to hit someone or something, it could have loads of questions then at the end, it could say, "if you do this it could potentially lead to you going to jail for assault".*

- *I think you should be able to put in your problem under 'My Profile' and then the pop-ups change day-to-day and then it comes up with "how did you find it today?" and then it was easier or hard, if you press hard then the pop-ups might become personal to you but then if your friend had the same problem but they found it easy to talk to someone they press yes or easy, they would go down a different route because then the App is then reflecting on you, not everyone in general to improve but you, yourself and then progressively individual.*

- *They should do like exercises like stress relief exercises that you can do like*

- *Yeah like mini games or games that you could update every month, with new games that have come out because like a couple of months ago it was 'Flappy Bird' and now its 'Cross the Road' or whatever and you could carry on updating it.*

Customising the app

- *On the App, you could have, "what do you like about this App?" so with feedback on the application, then over time you could just update it until it's just perfect*

- *Perhaps when you open the App there would be boxes with a couple of things of what you want to look at. There would be boxes that you could make your favourites or most used or recently used for like Google when you search for a web page, it says recently used, so you might want to go back and use it.*

- *Like, what if you could choose the colour theme on there because then it's up to you what colour you want the, the display to be.*

- *I think you could include something there on how to make the App more personal by changing the background colour or the font or the colour bar at the top. Then you could add a chat network in at the bottom so you could change the username so that it could be not even your real name, can be totally made up*

Will the following features be of interest to you: case study – mood meter – games?

Mood

- *Yes, I think that the bit where it says about the mood, I think that if you really didn't know what that mood was and you wanted to know and see if that's how you were feeling, you could click on it and if it's not, then it's not and if it is then you know what actually you are*

feeling and I think also, it's got good information but, it needs more like, if you read all of it but then there was nothing else but you needed more to fall back onto, if you know what I mean.

- *I like the mood wheel because it's all like you can just click on one and all the colours are there*
- *With the mood thing. You click it and it tells you what that mood means but it could have something where there was a calendar so you could report your mood to say what your mood is and then it would record that on the calendar and you could go back and look say yesterday or last week to see what mood your feeling and see when you felt like that what you did for that mood. So you could put yourself in that situation, say yesterday or the day before, I was feeling low because…*

Videos
- *Videos are good if it is about bullying.*
- *Or it could be like an acting demonstration then it would pause and say what's wrong with this situation?" and how to improve it.*
- *And also like funny videos but also like things that would be good like videos that would give you advice about stuff*

Sleep
- *It is good, it just depends really. Quite a few people might have it. People are still going to have trouble with sleep but with it being there does help*
- *Use your own music here, so you have a choice.*

Games
- *Yes, so if you are on the bus or something and then if you come back from school and you are doing a test and then your head was going into a state where you didn't want it to go to, you could just play a game on the way home and then you would feel more refreshed in a better way.*
- *It could be genius as well, so when you have played about five skill games, it starts recommending skill games but adding the odd racing game, if you want to play a racing game to help lift you but all the skill games change so that you are not necessarily playing the same one over and over so you get bored. There are different ones, so one could be where you get a block where you jump in like the impossible game and the other one might be like Flappy Birds. It's changing and it's not necessarily the same.*

6. **Findings from additional questions**

Additional questions were asked, with a focus on what the young people feel they need in relation to supporting them with issues to do with cyberbullying, anxiety etc, including questions around what makes the participants happy and what makes them sad.

In their response to these questions the participants mostly focused on stress in relation to revision and exams, relationships and bullying at school, as well as more specific issues to do with self-harm and eating:

Exam stress and worries, not just exam stress, it is anxiety all the way around.

We all get really stressed, if there's like steps to help us like calm down like if we're doing revision and get stressed how to like kinda cope with that.

Being part of it

Work because when you come from primary school you don't get a lot of work and when you come to high school it's such a lot of work, its pressure on you.

When you are at school there is like a status of ladder and when you try to work your way up sometimes you don't always get to the top and then it can cause you being bullied because people don't want you hanging around with them and stuff.

I find eating like a big problem but I'm really like, I don't know. You know you like see other people and you like compare yourself to them and you feel oh like. Yeah, oh so true
And their all on diets and then there's you, and you're like, that's kinda like really embarrassing

7. <u>Findings from written feedback</u>

See below for the findings from the written feedback, this is structured following the headings and sites provided within the App.

<u>My Profile</u>
- I don't think they should tell the app their postcode, because they might not want to give away details like their postcode in case of safety reasons and then they can't get into the app, also they are giving away their safe place
- They shouldn't have to give their date of birth because the might think they're signing up to something
- Boring colours
- Looks like a really old app
- Sign up with email instead as it's easier to remember
- Don't focus just on bullying/relationships, a potential focus point is not necessarily the problem and how to resolve it, but how to make the person feel better about themselves (self-confidence)
- Also you could focus on how to make the person feel better about themselves <u>after</u> the incident, to keep them out of feeling depressed or give them general confidence
- This needs to be more personal to allow the users to feel more comfortable with expressing private things on your app.
- Passwords shouldn't really be needed – it doesn't really need to take personal details – it should just remain completely anonymous

Mood Meter
- The colours are too basic
- They could remove the definition of the words or mood and replace it with advice or game to help calm you down
- They could put a search tab so you can search for your problems
- They could add cartoon clips or real life situations to give you advice. That also ensures you're not alone
- Possibly have descriptions of various moods to help user narrow down their feelings
- Add other feelings like: Anxious, Nervous, Confused, Embarrassed/Scared
- Should have a chat box if you want other children your age about your problems
- Could be more emotions
- Could be better if it had a mood calendar to record moods and find a pattern
-

Film
- I like that there is videos on there to show people with similar problems
- This film could be about someone who has overcome bullying as a true event, not acting, as it gives reassurance to the user. It's good that the person in the video is out age so we can relate to them
- This is fake, actors, it could be intimidating

Relationships
- You could have a search tab because not everyone would have the same situation, so with a search tab they could search their situation
- You should be able to have this app on all devices, even computers
- Add a (Other….) box
- The colours are plain and boring
- They're too simple, even for youngsters
- No pictures / add pictures
- Could be able to enter in your own problem, your problem may not be there in the list
- Very good to help pout with people who don't know what to do, very helpful
- Very good if the person doesn't know what to do, it needs more options

Sleep Assistant
- I think the app could be linked to helpful websites to give more support to people
- It could be an anonymous app so you don't have to log in or have a profile
- It should have more options for situations
- Include different colours
- I like that there is the different types of sleep assistant so if you are feeling upset or stressed then you can get calmer and go to sleep easier
- I'm not sure this is necessary and related to bullying
- It would be good if we could add our own music
- Very helpful for people with sleep deprivation. Needs more options such as forest sounds or a radio link

- Be good if someone couldn't sleep if they were worrying

Help Me
- Advertise app on anti-bullying websites
- Add arrows for easy selection
- Add a chat/helpline to directly help those in need
- Everyone looks older, put some photos of younger people
- Make it more welcoming
- More colours – bright/fun colours
- Make the options clearer
- Too bland – boring colours (depressing)
- Get a mixture of ages, young people as well as teens
- A little cheesy
- Could become we 'get advice' or something along those lines
- The picture looks quite fake/fake feeling
- Don't like pictures, intimidating, annoying
- Don't like white background

Help Me Now
- There are not any calming pictures/information telling you not to self-harm
- Calls shouldn't be charged
- There isn't much information about the websites.
- Can be quite patronising with the exclamation mark
- I like this page as it shows you where to get support
- Could have some advice rather than just where to go
- Could help prevent self harm
- It can help tell you actually what suicidal thoughts are

8. **Strengths and areas for improvement**

The following section summarises key themes emerging from the findings, and presents the participants' views of the strengths of the current APP, as well as their views of where the APP needs to improve.

Strengths

1. The participants generally welcome YoHelp as an APP which aims to provide support for issues related to depression, low self-esteem and anxiety, as well as bullying and cyberbullying.
2. The participants indicated YoHelp has a unique selling point as there is not currently (as far as they are aware – see page 5) an app available which aims to support young people in this way. The participants indicated YoHelp's unique selling point is located in its ability to become a personalised self-help tool when the user experiences issues related to depression, low self-esteem and anxiety, as well as bullying and cyberbullying. However, it needs to be developed, which includes the option to personalise the app according to their own needs.

3. YoHelp currently has a focus on feelings and emotions, but this is limited.
4. YoHelp provides access to support, which is anonymous. The user does not have to put in a name (it only asks for a password), and also enables the young person to share feelings and access help without the perceived stigma / embarrassment (see page 5) of having to ask for help or admit they are being bullied.
5. The current YoHelp APP has a mood wheel feature (that they also said needs to be developed), which helps the user identify how they are feeling and what emotions they are experiencing.

Areas for development

1. YoHelp needs a wider range of emotions, which users can choose from and use to identify how they feel. This includes confidence, embarrasment, insecurity, anxious, worried and stress.
2. In addition to the emotions and mood wheel, there needs to be a selection of words to choose from that users can identify with their feelings. YoHelp would also benefit from developing a search bar where key words selected can lead to pathways for a range of specific support options.
3. Videos and photographs need to be replaced by cartoons and less 'patronising' images.
4. The word 'Help' in YoHelp engenders feelings of dependency and weakness and is embarrassing if used or accessed in front of peers. This needs to be changed to a more positive word.
5. Brighter pictures and colours need to be used.
6. A key area of development is to make YoHelp more personalised, so it can become a part of a user's everyday life in the same way Facebook and Snapchat have become. This however, would require removal of the current perceived (by the research participants) surveillance function of inserting post codes and dates of birth.
7. The cartoons and various other features of YoHelp need also to enable each user to personalise the colours and even the pictures in the same way some other apps allow.
8. Further areas to develop in order to make YoHelp personalised is a pathway enabling music to be played and stored, which represents the mood the user is in or lifts them out of it.
9. Where accessing YoHelp needs to become a part of young peoples' daily routines, a calendar and personal profile option needs to be developed, which has pop-ups which ask the user how they are today. They can log their responses and their moods and then view these on a time-line to help them see how they are doing and draw on previous responses, or to help them overcome new challenges. YoHelp also needs a pathway option for the user to contact someone to talk to face to face, if the user feels ready. Essentially YoHelp becomes a self-help tool.
10. Final areas for development require YoHelp to be regularly updated and developed by MyTime in the same way other apps have regular updates. Updates need to provide an ever expanding list and range of scenarios and pathways in order to personalise each user's pathway. A web-link would enable the user to log how YoHelp has helped them and act as an ongoing evaluation tool for YoHelp designers.

9. __Final recommendations__

As can be seen from the data above, the YoHelp app is a potentially valuable and unique resource in supporting young people with issues to do with bullying, anxiety, depression and other matters that affect their day-to-day lives. In order to fit in with the needs and desires of young people, we further recommend that the following also needs to be done to make YoHelp more accessible and appealing to young people.

- Getting help – more specific links with relevant and active websites, with an opportunity to have questions answered and/or to chat to someone. Perhaps also with an option to have the young person's school involved – although this should be optional.
- Ensure anonymity – no need to add postcode; email address could function as password (this may need thought, as email addresses may be shared.)
- Use sites that young people use regularly as an example for logo, colour and pathway design, e.g. Snapchat; WhatsApp; Instagram; Vines.
- Promote the App through relevant sites.
- Make YoHelp compatible with Apple.
- We suggest that the revised App is piloted first, before this is being launched.

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