Can Opy Freflection to connection

the team



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the brief

context

Partnering with the hosts of WashU Mindfulness Week 2024. An event series that seeks to foster experiences of "community and conversation, insight, rest and reflection."

problem statement

How could the Mindfulness Group better support students, faculty, staff, and other St. Louis community members to learn about and experience mindfulness and to take insights into their study, work, or lives?

research goals

1

Allow busy WashU students to engage in small but meaningful mindfulness activities.

2

Incentivize participation in mindfulness activities through intrinsic reward systems and a sense of community.

3

Foster greater
accessibility to
mindfulness through a
clear understanding and
practical engagement.

through websites, articles, reports, q&a

1

General
Mindfulness
Research

2

Broader Community Integration 3

University/
College
Specific

4

WashU Mindfulness Week 5

Competitor Analysis

key insights

General Mindfulness Research

https://mpfi.org/how-does-mindfulness-change-the-brain-a-neurobiologists-perspective-on-mindfulness-meditation/? psafe_param=1&gad_source=1&gclid=cjwkcajwgfm3bhbeeiwaffxrg8qxsvu8tgmnjocc15-alywxu8lhlw1noyohppuzgbsysi5yrkme4hoc4rsqavd_bwe

https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/stress/benefits-of-mindfulness

mindfulness and related factors among undergraduate students atefeh ahmadia*, mohamed sharif mustaffab, ali akbar haghdoostc, masoumeh alavi

Mindfulness improves well-being, physical and mental health, and stress management, but its practice is influenced by factors like age, gender, and environment, suggesting that Mindfulness Week at WashU should be tailored to address these diverse influences and provide accessible resources for consistent practice.

key insights

Broader Community Integration

 $\underline{https://ijmhs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13033-021-00456-0}$

 $\label{lem:https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/spirituality-and-community-building/mindfulness-community-building/main} \\ https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/spirituality-and-community-building/mindfulness-community-building/main} \\ https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/spirituality-and-community-building/mindfulness-community-$

https://www.communitymindfulnessproject.org/

https://ivychild.org/mindfulness-community/

Tailoring mindfulness programs to cultural and community needs enhances participation and effectiveness, as seen in a community-based program for Arabic and Bangla-speaking participants, which incorporated culturally relevant practices and fostered social connectedness.

key insights

University/
College
Specific

https://psych.wustl.edu/first-year-opportunity-mindfulness-science-practice

mobile-delivered mindfulness intervention on anxiety level among college athletes: randomized controlled trial doi: 10.2196/40406

Offering mindfulness education early in the college experience, such as through WashU's first-year seminar on Mindfulness Science & Practice, can help students manage the stress of their transition, while low-barrier interventions, as shown in studies with college athletes, are crucial for ensuring participation in programs like Mindfulness Week.

key insights

WashU Mindfulness Week

mindfulness week website https://mindfulness.wustl.edu/events

q&a with client

interview questions:

- what is your primary goal with this event? what do you want people to gain out of this experience?
- $\bullet\,$ what is your ideal target demographic vs. who actually shows up to these events?
- what are your biggest challenges do you face when organizing this event, facilitating your themes, keeping engagement?
- what are your long and short term goals?
- what do you think about mindfulness in the greater field of mental health?
- in what ways have you seen the participation in mindfulness week grow or evolve over the years?
- what specific challenges do you see students, faculty, and staff facing when it comes to integrating mindfulness into their daily lives?
- how do you measure the success of mindfulness week?
- are there any overlooked groups in the university or the st. louis community that you'd like to see more involved in mindfulness week?
- how do you currently gather feedback from participants, and what types of feedback have led to changes in the event?

WashU's Mindfulness Week offers diverse events but suffers from a confusing website schedule and lack of advertising, suggesting that improving awareness and event accessibility, especially for offerings throughout the year, would better align with students' schedules and encourage greater participation.

competitor analysis

indirect



Strengths

Student discount and "Back to School Essentials" tailored to college stress, with an Al chatbot (Ebb) supporting self-reflection.

Weaknesses

Focused on individual meditation, lacking community engagement for students.

Opportunities

Adding group meditations or campus-wide mindfulness challenges to foster social connections and collective mindfulness.

direct



Strengths

Free student plan with university communities for screen-time accountability and peer support.

Weaknesses

Primarily focused on screen-time, lacking broader mindfulness practices.

Opportunities

Expanding group mindfulness activities or campus events to strengthen student connections and engagement.

primary research

6 interviews

mindfulness week attendees

mindfulness week non-attendees

quotes

"I personally would not have gone to Mindfulness Week because mindfulness to me is very personal. I like to rewind my own way instead of having to go to an event."

"Accessibility matters a lot because even if I wanted to go to an event, if it's too far away or inconvenient, I wouldn't think it was worth it." "There are a lot of misconceptions about mindfulness, it's not about clearing your mind of thoughts but rather identifying distracting thoughts and refocusing your attention."

"I think mindfulness has to be self-led in order to not just be one more stressful thing, especially for students involved in a lot of other extracurriculars"

primary research

insights

1

Personalization of Mindfulness

Many students prefer a self-directed approach to mindfulness rather than group events, indicating that personalized, flexible mindfulness practices may be more appealing than structured sessions.

2

Accessibility and Convenience

The accessibility of mindfulness activities, including their location and scheduling, is crucial—if an event is too inconvenient, students are less likely to participate, even if they are interested.

(3

Misconceptions and Education

There's a need for greater education around mindfulness, as many students cannot define it or attribute mindfulness practices to common misconceptions without understanding its core values.

synthesis

positive goal statement

We want busy WashU students to engage in small but meaningful mindfulness activities.

how
might
we...

make mindfulness
practices accessible
in small,
manageable chunks
throughout the day?

reshape perceptions
of meditation to
highlight that
refocusing attention
is an effective part of
the process?

create approachable opportunities for students to connect over shared mindfulness experiences?

ideation

Using the previous information, we did a group content dump and accumulated

30+ concept ideas

Based on feasibility, accessibility, distinction, and desirability, we combined everything into **5 concepts**

Canopy

QR code scavenger hunt with community mobile app that grows a digital tree

Mindfulness Walkway

immersive walkway filled with prompts that can be kept

Mindful Magic 8 Ball

20 prompts inside promote the practice of mindfulness

Let-Go Lantern

lantern would have a sensor that responds to gentle breath

Quiet Pod

soundproof pods for students that are needing a moment of mindfulness

ideation

Out of these concepts, we chose three to use for **prototype testing**

We emphasized on

concept testing

and

feature testing

before we started making

any wireframes or

mockups

Canopy

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prototype testing

concept testing through guided questions

we tested...

8

potential users

3

clients

3

guest designers

prototype testing

key feedback themes

1

Community and Contribution

Students appreciate
the idea of
contributing to a
community digital
tree through activities
like journaling and
drawing. They prefer
adding to the
community rather
than just receiving
information.

2

Long-Term **Engagement**

Users value long-term engagement beyond Mindfulness Week.

They suggest integrating the app with ongoing mindfulness activities and making it a year-round initiative.

3

Incentives and Motivation

Tangible goals and incentives, such as donations or tree planting for each digital leaf added, are highly motivating.

Visual progress and community achievements drive engagement.

prototype testing

evolution/implementation

1

Community and Contribution

Enhance the community aspect by allowing users to contribute personal reflections, drawings, or photos. Introduce a feature where users can see contributions, fostering a sense of shared growth.

2

Long-Term Engagement

Plan for year-round activities and promotions, integrating the product with other campus events and mindfulness initiatives. Highlight how participation during Mindfulness Week contributes to long-term goals.

3

Incentives and Motivation

Implement a tangible goal, like a donation to a charity or planting a tree for every milestone reached.

Add visual elements to show the growth of the digital tree and celebrate community achievements with periodic updates.

concepts

Mindfulness Walkway



Canopy



We decided these two concepts work well together, and we chose them to continue evolving to higher fidelity prototypes.

description

During Mindfulness Week, a Mindfulness Walkway with slips of paper tied to trees offers students calming prompts and activities, integrating mindfulness into their natural campus circulation. This initiative provides a serene environment and positive messaging, encouraging breaks for mental wellness throughout the day.

logistics

location

the row of ginkgo trees outside of Olin Library on WashU's Campus

duration

one or two weeks,
ideally during
November when the
ginkgo leaves turn
yellow and attract
more students

alignment

provides tangible and accessible way for students to spontaneously incorporate mindfulness into their day

storyboard



Lou was stressed about her upcoming final exams and was in a mental fog coming out of College Writing class.



She was walking through the Gingko trees to Computer Science class in Lopata and then spotted little slips of paper in the branches?



The little slips of paper seemed to have things written on them , so she got closer to take a look.



The writing on the slips were mindfulness prompts for small de-stressing activities. The one she grabbed told her to hug a tree.



...So Lou hugged a tree and felt a little less stressed and recentered into the present moment.

mockups

environment







prompts







Paper tags featuring different art along with the prompts that can be kept by the user as personal memorabilia/ keepsake. Other iterations include paper lanterns that illuminate the prompts instead.

other integrations

The Mindfulness Walkway acts as a promotional event for Canopy, our mobile app. Because of it's physical presence and spontaneous nature, it is a good way to introduce students to a mindfulness activity without adding too much pressure or effort, then encouraging them to explore further through the Canopy.

design decisions

Prompts

We settled on making the prompts unique through highlighting a different artist/personalized design that makes each one feel more special for the user. These high-quality tags can be repurposed in many innovative ways (bookmarks, keychains, keepsake, etc.) which would encourage the long-term functionality of this event.

The location of this experience is the most important aspect because not only does it have to integrate into an established community, but also curate a sense of intimacy that only students on the WashU campus can feel. The ginkgo trees provides a perfect ephemeral setting for an annual event, naturally attracting students and being in the center of traffic.

Location

description

The Canopy app offers a unique mindfulness experience through a scavenger hunt of QR codes placed on trees around the WashU arboretum. These QR codes lead to short, engaging mindfulness activities, contributing to a community digital tree that grows with each participant's interaction.

logistics

location

QR codes all around WashU's campus

app is accessible anywhere on a mobile device

duration

year-round, app UI changes with the seasons and there are events that correlate to the calendar year

alignment

This initiative encourages students to take mindful breaks, connect with their environment, and foster a sense of community, approachable and integrated into their daily lives

storyboard



Lou was stressed about all her upcoming assignments and could not concentrate.



She remembers the app Canopy that she downloaded during WashU Mindfulness Week. Searching for a QR Code to scan motivates her to take a walk outside.



Success! Lou scans the Canopy QR code attached to a tree on WashU's campus.



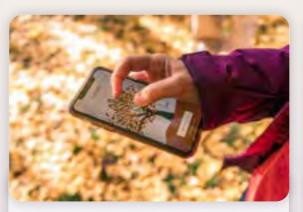
Every scan randomly generates a new mindfulness prompt. This one reads: "Look around. How many different leaf colors do you see?"



Lou looks around at the beautiful autumn leaves. She feels herself pause and start to notice more about her surroundings as she follows the prompt.



After the allotted time has elapsed, she gains a new leaf to add to the community tree. She can revisit this leaf whenever she wants.



Within the app, Lou can explore other users' leaves by panning or zooming in and out. She loves feeling connected to all the other people contributing to the Canopy tree.



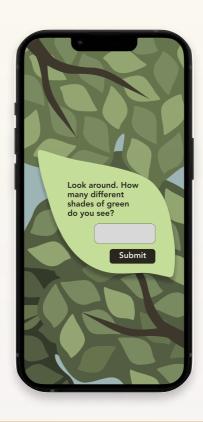
Lou now feels more calm, connected, and empowered to go through the rest of the day.

design iterations







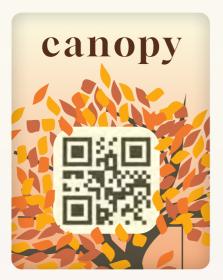




Each team member experimented individually with a design direction before coming together and analyzing the different approaches taken. We took the best features from each design and moved forward with a singular, cohesive style.

mockups

QR codes



QR code poster that would be placed around campus.



Collaboration with campus cafes to introduce easier access to codes.

UI









The main screen of our app changes based on the time of year, playing off of the four seasons. The user can access any features from this screen. It is meant to be immersive, playful, yet simple at the same time.

style guide



Using autumnal colors for our main mockup, the design we ultimately chose centered around a simple but whimsical tree. For an app centered around one feature, we didn't want to overcrowd the UI thus emphasizing our ultimate goal to promote a mindfulness community.



Trust the user.

Allow intrinsic reward to motivate users to complete the prompt rather than requiring proof.

Vidya (she/her)
Guest Design Critic

Keep it simple.

You don't want graphics or other UI elements to get in the way of the core experience: being mindful within the beauty of nature.

Jordan (he/him)

Mindfulness Science and Practice Group

Engage the senses.

Incorporate opportunities for multi-sensory engagement within the prompts. Ask users to feel the bark of the tree, or smell the leaves, etc.

Lilli (she/her)

Mindfulness Science and Practice Group

final screens



splash screen



main screen

community view beginning stages of the tree



main screen

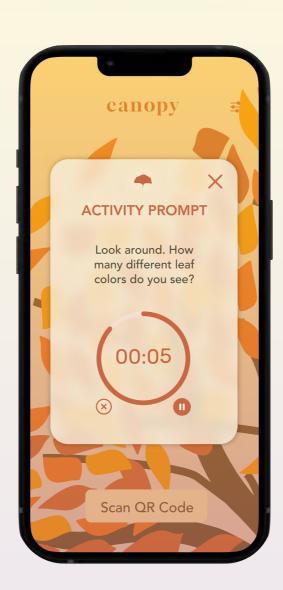
community view late stages of the tree

final screens



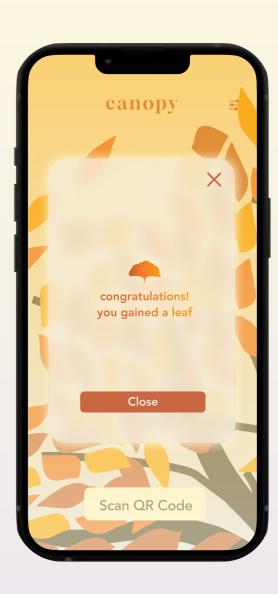
QR scanning

upon discovering a QR code, user presses button and scans the code



prompt/timer

after code is scanned, prompt pops up user is asked to do an activity or read an affirmation



completion

upon end of timer, user is verified to receive new leaf

final screens



footprint

footprints appear when any user is in the process of completing a prompt



close up view

when zoomed in details of each leaf's history is revealed



main screen

individual view highlights leaves specific user has contributed





Users can toggle between a community and individual view, highlighting all or a few leaves at a time. We felt the need to provide users with both a personal experience for those that wanted to grow in a mindfulness with themselves as well as a community relationship for those who found more value in mindfulness when they felt like they were practicing in a group.

Footprints appear near the tree base when a user is in the process of doing a prompt. We received a piece of feedback from a guest designer saying it might benefit us to have a visual indicator that someone had visited the tree and completed a mindfulness activity to add to the sense of community. These small details add to the immersion and interactive nature of an otherwise mostly digital product.



Canopy design decisions

Leaf Counter

There was a lot of initial struggle trying to come up with a primary incentive without straying too far from our overall goal statement. We felt that showing the number of leaves the community earned would be a motivator for others to keep doing mindful activities and earning leaves themselves to contribute to the larger tree. It quantifies an otherwise pretty abstract goal.

Based off feedback from a guest designer, since our goal was to help students who felt too busy to practice mindfulness do small mindful activities, we should make the activity they are doing feel more approachable by giving them the option to see it wasn't going to actually take that long—only a couple of minutes! This is opposed to a written response which could feel more like a homework assignment.

Activity Timer

takeaways

what we learned

- feels repetitive, yet each feedback session reveals a constant evolution of ideas
- the balancing of analog and digital product can elevate all aspects of engagement
- in a fast-paced society, finding motivating incentives relies heavily on tangibility

what we would change

- more attention to the individual/personalization aspect (preferences in prompts)
- developing initial wireframes and conducting more usability tests for the hi-fidelity
- not diverging from initial event partner (Mindfulness Week) but building upon it

taking it further

- develop a full prototype that gives a better sense of how the app is used
- being a local community-based app, thinking more about campus partnerships
- building the mindfulness walkway into a potential WashU annual tradition

