

COCO: Caring for Caregivers Online Chat Bot

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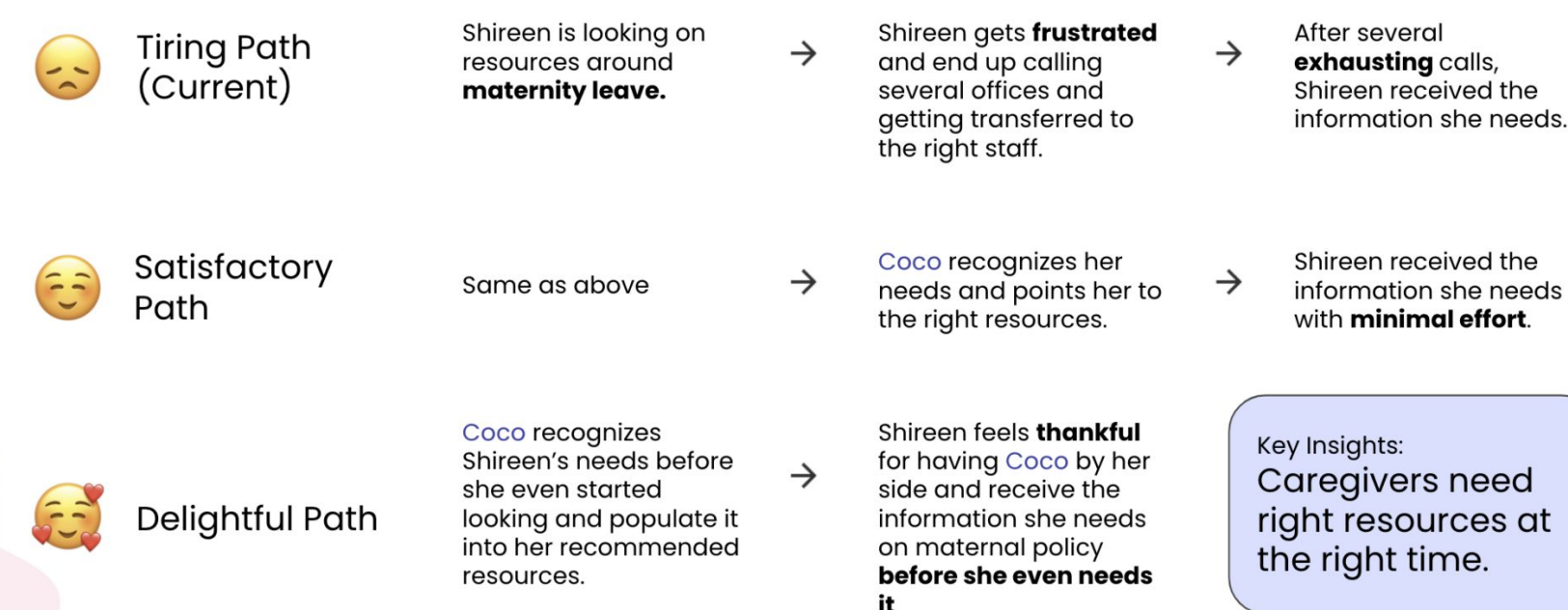
ABSTRACT

During Winter Quarter 2020, the University of Washington Tacoma Global Innovation and Design Lab collaborated with the tri-campus project, Coco (Caring for Caregivers Online) design team to collect and research information on caregiving resources available to University of Washington staff, faculty, and students that lead to conducting user interviews, usability tests and synthesizing the research results to inform the design of the Coco chatbot to better meet caregiver needs.

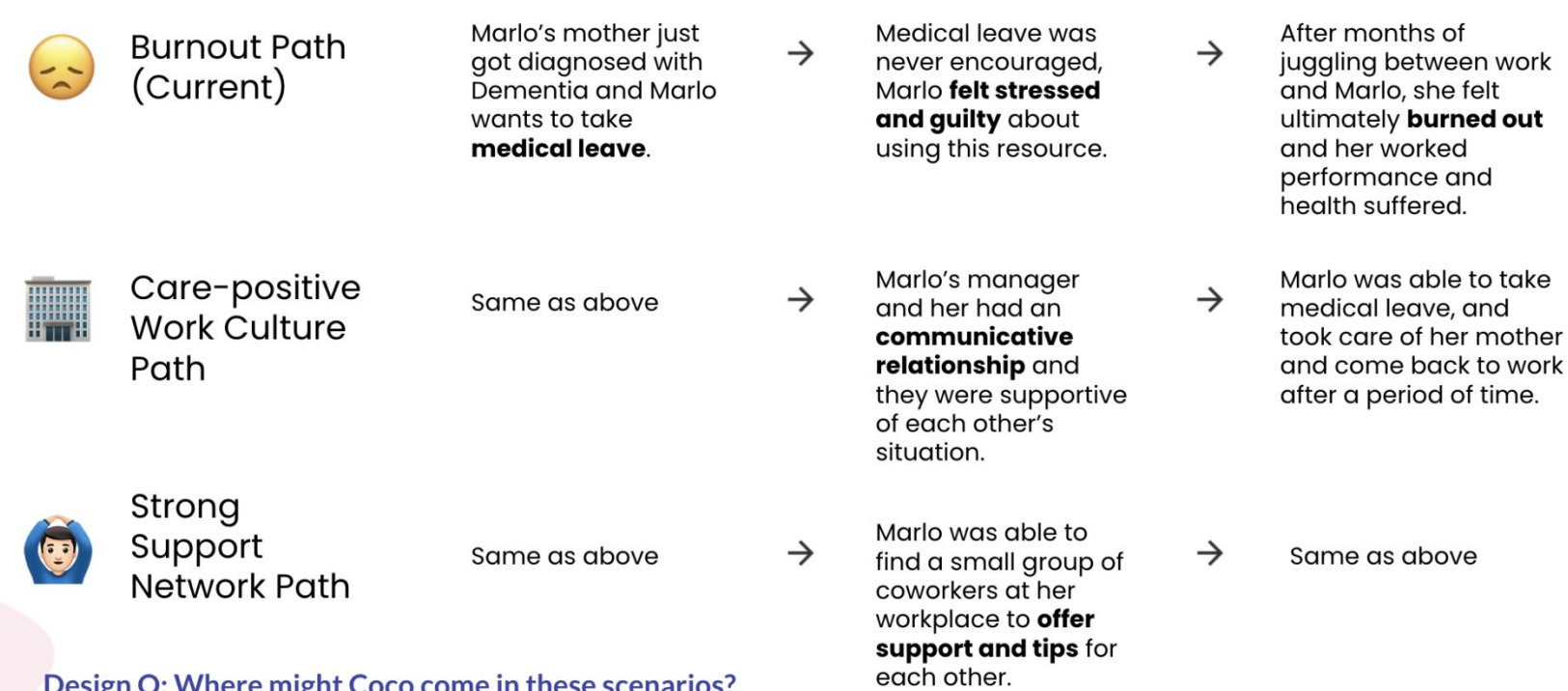
Faith and Kalyn met weekly during Winter Quarter with Professor Weichao Yuwen and the Coco design team to give weekly reports about their findings as well as the development of the study kit that would be used in the usability testing with University of Washington affiliated caregivers.

Personas based on user insights

Shireen & Caregiver Resources



Marlo & Caregiver Resources



INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

“How do we help caregivers care for themselves?” Coco Bot is an application that features mindfulness exercises, chatbots, and a list of resources available to University of Washington staff, faculty, and students. The goal of Coco is to give caregivers access to tools and resources they need to help maintain their mental health and prevent burnout.

“How do family caregivers access UW resources? What are their pain points? How frequently do they need or access these resources?” These are a few design questions that we kept in mind throughout the whole design process. We began this project by gathering many if not all of the resources that the UW offers surrounding the topic of caregiving. We organized this list of resources by categories of family caregiving, adult and elder care, mental health, self and family caregiving, etc. We then organized this list of resources to identify who can access them and who they are available for, and which campus out of the three (Seattle, Tacoma, Bothell) the resources are a part of.

After curating this list of resources, we set out to work on conducting user interviews with UW staff and faculty who are also a caregiver. We wanted to know how the employees of the UW access UW resources, their struggles while accessing them, and the frequency of which certain resources are needed and/or used.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

The purpose of this project is to apply these findings to Coco for it to feature other resources about caregiving that is offered from the University of Washington. Following the user interviews and usability studies, the design team synthesized the insights and findings.

- Caregivers need right resources at the right time
- Caregivers want a sense of community around caregiving
- Their need for resources are always changing
- Difficulty navigating and finding existing UW resources
- **Design Question: How can COCO bridge the gap between what users want and need?**

After further discussions with Casey Byrne, the Director of Academic Personnel, the design team synthesized these findings into design requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From our user testing of the Coco Bot application, we concluded that caregivers responded with needs of accessibility, personalization, and community support. We then came up with a few design ideas that could be useful for the future “Resources” feature of Coco.

Accessibility

- Categorization
 - Color coded organization
 - Drop down menu to filter resources
 - Organize by keyword
- Search Function
- Delivery of Resources from App
 - Provide curated recommended resources
 - Notification to remind users of resources

Personalization

- Ways to Identify User Needs
 - Identify through surveys and questionnaires
 - Collect information from Daily check ins and chats
 - Other considerations: collecting user data outside of app? Is that too invasive and outside of our scoop?
- Saving Resources
- DIY Resources/Sharing
 - Provide curated recommended resources
 - Notification to remind users of resources

Community Support

- Resource Sharing
 - Area to share findings and resources with other caregivers
 - Sharing COCO resources on social media platforms
 - FAQ discussion thread
- Experience Sharing
 - Caregiving newsletter
 - “Day in the Life” of a caregiver (anonymous) blogs
 - Connect with others about COCO experiences
- Chat Functionality
 - Ability to chat with other members
 - Ability to chat with Care Team

METHOD(S)

- **User interviews:** User interviews are interviews in which members of the target audience or users are asked about their views and experiences. They are great if you need to further examine your research problem to see things from your user’s point of view. It allows the researcher to learn about how their topic connects to a larger problem that may not be clear to someone who isn’t in the target audience.
- **Expert/stakeholder interviews:** These are interviews that are conducted with those knowledgeable or involved within a specific field or skill who are associated with the topic you are trying to study. This is a great option to take in complex problems that have many viewpoints. It is important to already have a basis of context knowledge when conducting expert interviews so you know what to ask.
- **Usability studies:** In a usability-testing session, a researcher (called a “facilitator” or a “moderator”) asks a participant to perform tasks, usually using one or more specific user interfaces. While the participant completes each task, the researcher observes the participant’s behavior and listens for feedback.
- **Card sorting activity:** Card sorting is a method used to help design or evaluate the information architecture of a site. In a card sorting session, participants organize topics into categories that make sense to them and they may also help you label these groups.

CONCLUSIONS

By conducting user testing, we were able to gain insight about how users would interact with Coco Bot. The information gained from the usability testing conducted by the the Coco Bot + GID team will allow the Coco Bot team to revise some of the features and optimize the organization, personalization, and community support functions of the app to make it more user friendly and set Coco Bot apart from other caregiver-centric apps.

REFERENCES

- <https://www.hcde.washington.edu/capstone/2020/bs/cocobot>
- <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/equity/community-resources>