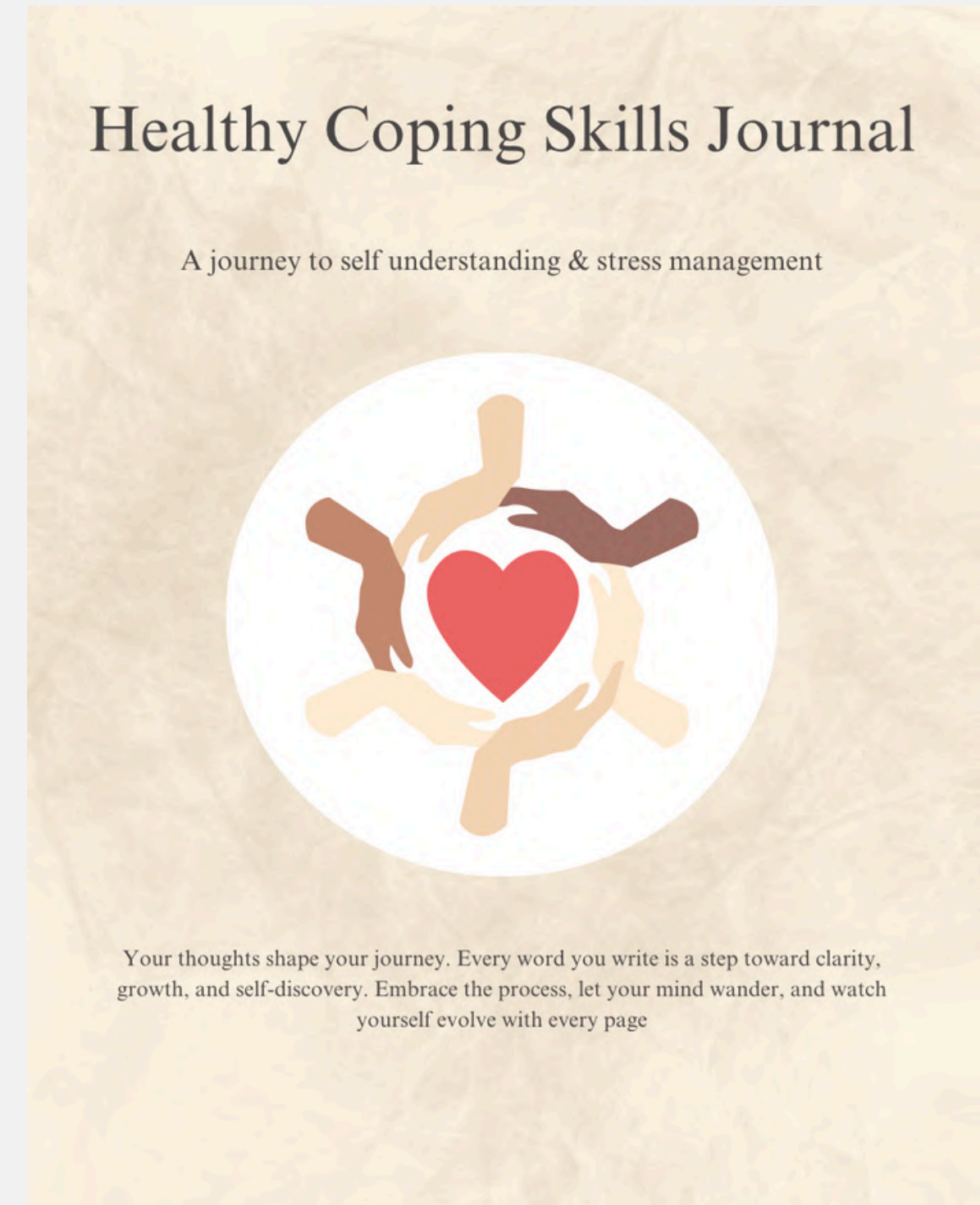


Healthy Coping Skills Journal

PRESENTED BY

Melissa Martinez

Karen Bedoya Alvarez



GEC Conference 2025

Design Narrative

About the Organization

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Youth Substance Use Prevention team (YSUP) works to prevent, delay and reduce the harms associated with youth use of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and vaping. They work towards achieving this by educating youth and adults about substance use risks, promoting healthy coping skills, and funding prevention initiatives.

What was the design problem?

Needed to be engaging and it had to be effective in educating youth about substance use prevention while promoting healthier coping strategies. **Healthy coping skills guide that appealed to the youth, but also addressed the needs expressed by youth.**



Tacoma - Pierce County

Health Department

Healthy People in Healthy Communities



Design Values



Principle 5

We see the role of the designer as a facilitator rather than an expert.

Principle 6

We believe that everyone is an expert based on their own lived experience, and that we all have unique and brilliant contributions to bring to a design process.


Research

Participants: Pierce County High School students between the ages of 14-18.

Team Research:

- Karen oversaw research relating to stress management activities and journaling.
- Yesuf oversaw research relating to advice and information for peer support.
- Melissa oversaw researching data and information relating to youth substance abuse in Washington State and Pierce County.

All members researched resources to provide within the journal.



About HYS

Survey Results

HYS 2025

Resources

Contact

Login

Quick Links

?

Frequently Asked Questions

Bar chart icon

New ~ Data Dashboard

Report icon

Reports and Analysis

People icon

Family, School, & Community Resources

Data By Location

1 Select a Location

State

State Sample

ESD

ESD 101

County

Pierce County

Login to access School District and Building results.

2023 Reports for Pierce County

Grade 6

Grade 8

Grade 10

Grade 12

Multi-grade (6/8/10/12)

PowerPoint

Excel

OLDER FREQUENCY REPORTS →

☐ Report already created

☒ Report hasn't been created

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use	6th	8th	10th	12th	
Current Substance Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?
Alcohol Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?
Commercial Tobacco Product Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?
Marijuana Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?

Ideation

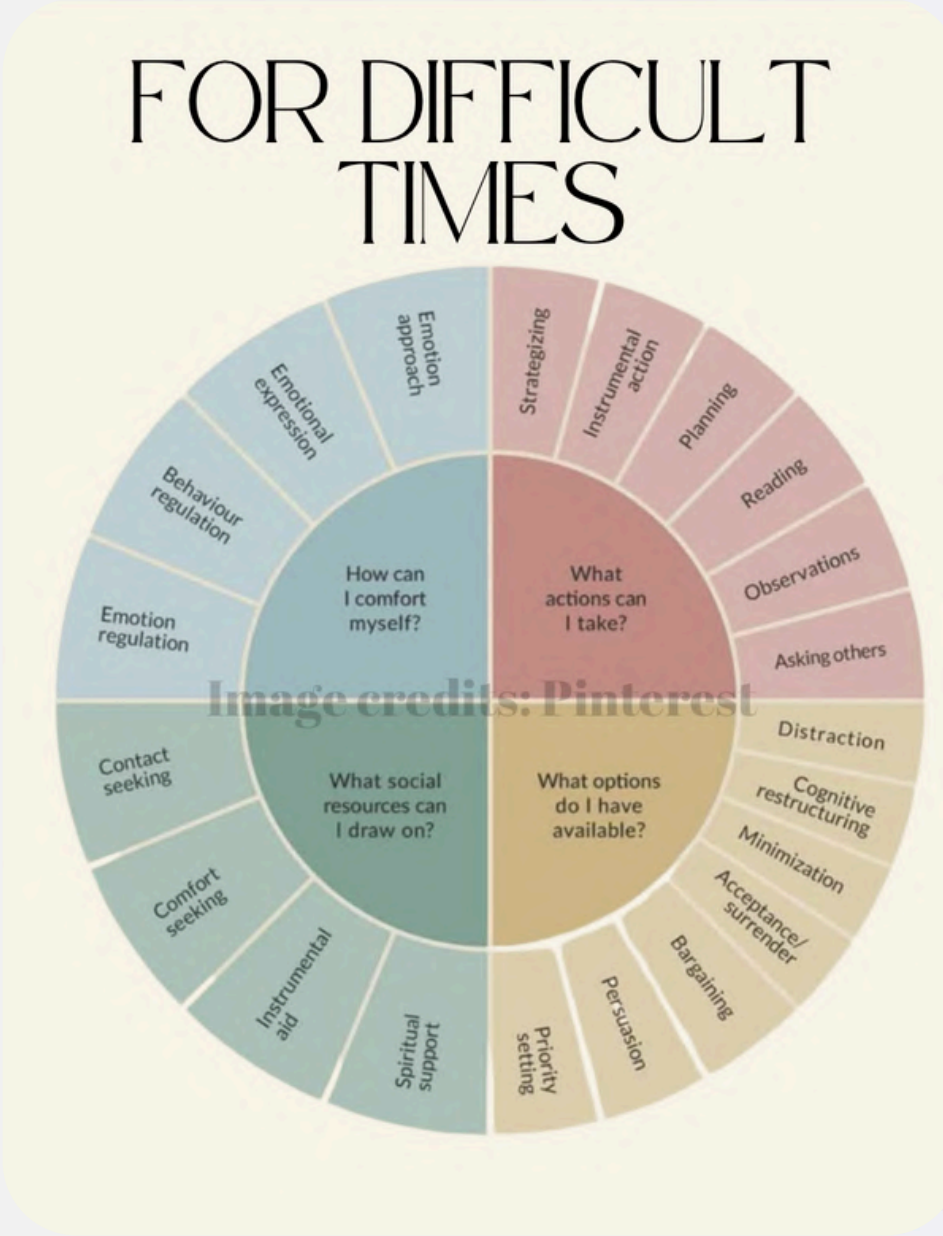
Understanding that the guide should be designed by young people for young people, we thought of relevant and engaging elements that would be useful for personal growth. To make it interactive, we developed journaling activities and looked at contemporary psychology and meditation exercises.

The journal would focus on three sections:

- Stress Management
- Peer Support
- Data/Facts



Prototyping



Journal

YOU CAN WRITE ANYTHING YOU WANT IN HERE. LET GO ANYTHING YOU NEED TO AND EXPRESS YOURSELF FREELY

(Day) (Week) (Year)

RECORD YOUR WORRIES, PROBLEMS, HAPPY MOMENTS, ANYTHING YOU WANT THAT CAN HELP YOU ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS

Mood Tracker

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Angry ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐

Frustrated ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐

(Emotions Felt)

What can you do? And What is not going to change?

COPING SKILLS

DISTRACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Clean or organize your environment<input type="checkbox"/> Dance<input type="checkbox"/> Doodle on a paper<input type="checkbox"/> Draw<input type="checkbox"/> Garden<input type="checkbox"/> Go for a drive<input type="checkbox"/> Go for a walk<input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping<input type="checkbox"/> Hug a stuffed animal<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music<input type="checkbox"/> Paint<input type="checkbox"/> Photography<input type="checkbox"/> Play a game<input type="checkbox"/> Play an instrument<input type="checkbox"/> Put a puzzle together<input type="checkbox"/> Read<input type="checkbox"/> Sing<input type="checkbox"/> Take a break<input type="checkbox"/> Take a shower or a bath<input type="checkbox"/> Watch pets videos on Youtube<input type="checkbox"/> Watch a movie<input type="checkbox"/> Write	COGNITIVE COPING <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Act opposite of negative feelings<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm solutions<input type="checkbox"/> Make a gratitude list<input type="checkbox"/> Read an inspirational quote<input type="checkbox"/> Reward yourself when successful<input type="checkbox"/> Slowly count to ten<input type="checkbox"/> Take a class<input type="checkbox"/> Think about someone you love<input type="checkbox"/> Think of something funny<input type="checkbox"/> Use positive self-talk<input type="checkbox"/> Visualize your favorite place<input type="checkbox"/> Write a list of goals<input type="checkbox"/> Write a list of pros and cons for decisions<input type="checkbox"/> Write a list of strengths<input type="checkbox"/> Write a positive note TENSION RELEASES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Chew gum<input type="checkbox"/> Cry<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise or play sports<input type="checkbox"/> Laugh<input type="checkbox"/> stretch<input type="checkbox"/> Use a stress ball
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Usability Testing

Overview: We visited Bonny Lake High School, who had previously participated in past YSUP research studies, but were first time users of a “for youth by youth” healthy coping skills guide.

Method:

Asked students to share aloud their comments or questions. Once we went over the overview of the journal we went over every individual page to get feedback. Additionally, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire for more personal responses or comments.



Findings from Questionnaire:

- Found that youth tend to keep their struggles to themselves, and only rely on others when they feel genuine connections.
- Qualities of people they confide in are, active listeners, caring, relatable and respectful, and based on trust.
- A student expressed that amongst boys mental health and peer support are stigmatized.
- A third of the participants preferred not sharing their struggles with others at all.
- Half of the students that do confide in their peers were divided between either fully confiding in others, and not if the circumstances were too personal.

“When I'm feeling common stressors with a friend, I feel much more comfortable talking with them and often will have a conversation. But, if I feel like we don't relate on the topic I won't usually.” -Student questionnaire response

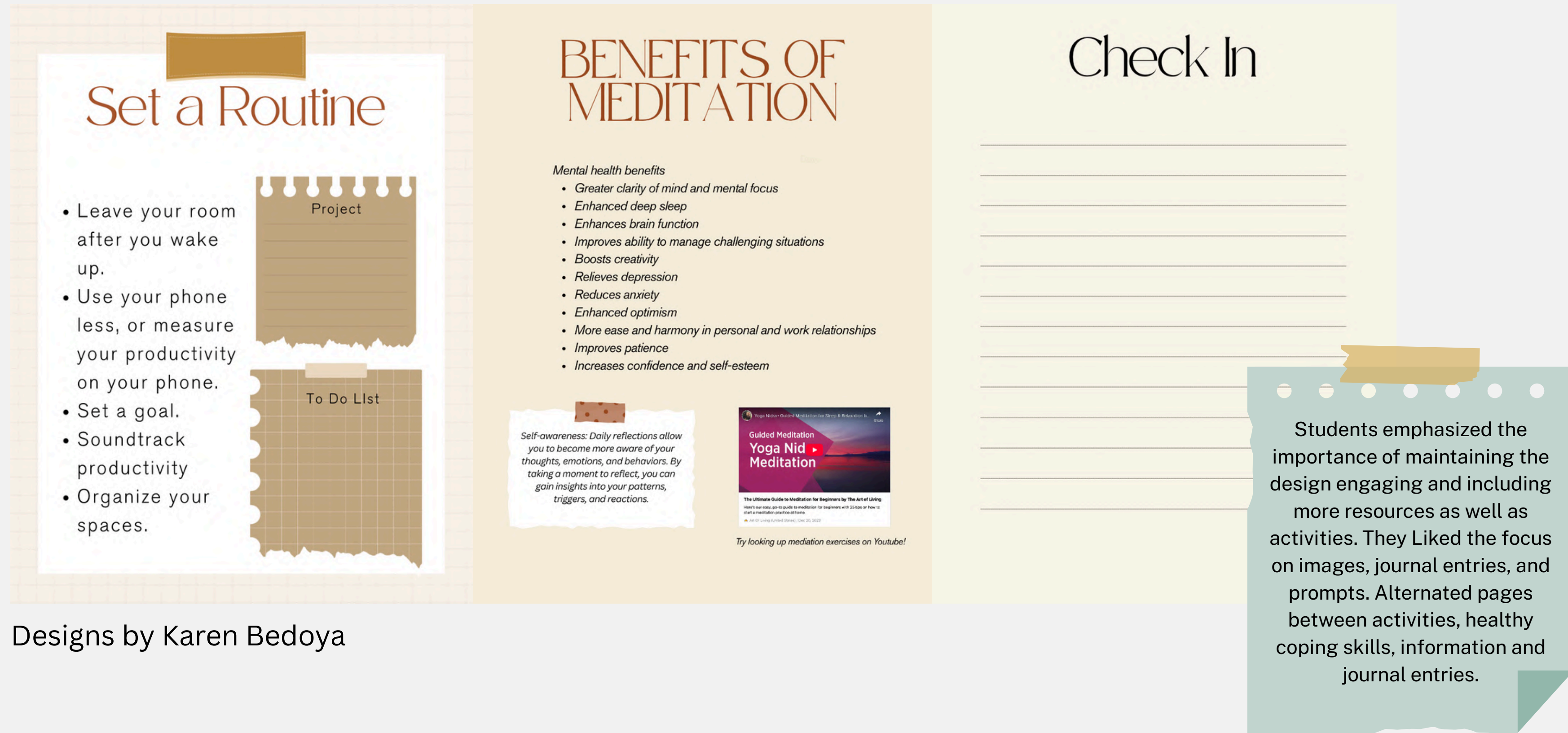
“Sometimes I talk to others for support but a lot of the time I isolate myself because of the pressure.” -Student questionnaire response

“I like the idea of giving advice towards the issue is better than just like giving all these statistics and saying that it's bad because every single person or at least people who do it know it's bad.” - Student comment from usability meeting

“Giving advice and learning advice and then talking about the advice rather than talking about the problem, it really promotes more of a safe space.” - Student comment from usability meeting

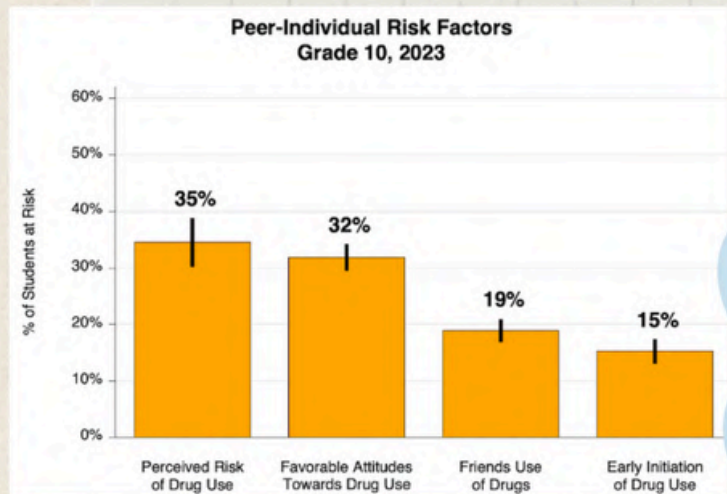
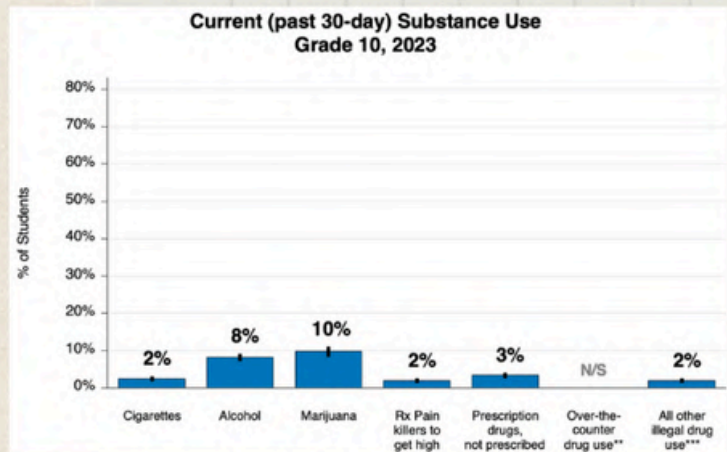


Design Iterations



Designs by Karen Bedoya

Did you know?
Facts and Data
for 10th Graders



Social support from community, including support from family, peers, and teachers, can help students successfully navigate challenges and do well in school.

Statewide, more 10th graders who use illegal drugs (not including alcohol, tobacco or marijuana) report lower grades in school (C's, D's or F's) compared to those who don't use.

What I know now

What did I learn?

What stood out to me?

How can I help a peer?

More Resources

- Crisis Hotlines**
- 911: Imminent danger to self or others
 - 988: Mental Health Crisis Intervention Specialists
 - BlackLine Crisis Line: 800-604-5841
 - Trevor Lifeline: 866-488-7386 (for LGBTQ youth)
 - Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860
 - Crisis Text Line: 741741 (text “HOME” to access services) 24/7 support
 - Military Helpline: Call 888-457-4838/Text MIL1 to 839863
 - Veteran Crisis Line: Call 988+1/ Text 838255
- Regional Services (Local mental health and crisis support by region)**
- Washington Teen Link: 866-833-6546/ Text 866-833-6546
 - Washington Health Care Authority (County/Region Specific Lines):
 - Pierce County: 1-800-576-7764
 - King County: 1-866-472-4747
 - Thurston/Mason: 1-800-270-0041
 - Snohomish County: 1-800-584-3578
 - Washington Warm Line: 877-500-9276
 - Pierce County Crisis Recovery Center: 253-319-7272
- Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services**
- Washington Recovery Hotline: 866-789-1511
 - Alcohol & Drug Helpline: 800-923-4357 or Text “Recovery Now” to 839863
 - Youth ERA: 971-334-9295
- Support Groups (Peer support, survivor support, and community resources)**
- Washington Support After Suicide: Online; Crisis Connections
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Pierce County: 253-677-6629
 - 2-1-1 Info: local community resources: 211info.org or dial 211
 - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Survivor Outreach Program – Peer support for survivors of suicide loss
- Mental Health Websites (General mental health information, research, and resources)**
- Mental Health America: mentalhealthamerica.net
 - National Council for Behavioral Health: thenationalcouncil.org
 - National Institute of Mental Health: nimh.nih.gov/health
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - Now Matters Now: nowmattersnow.org
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: samhsa.gov
 - Suicide Is Different: suicideisdifferent.org
 - Suicide Prevention Resource Center: sprc.org

Team Members

Karen: Visual Lead and Stress Management

Melissa: Project Lead and Research & Resources

Yesuf: Technical Lead and Peer Support

Thank You!