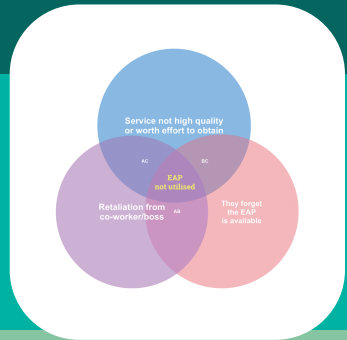


Qualitative and Quantitative Exploration in UX motivational factors and detractors in utilizing Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Intrinsic and Extrinsic factors in utilizing resources provided from the employees (users) perspective.

Tamia Sheldon – MSc User Experience Engineering, Computing Department, Goldsmiths University of London 2020/2021

<https://www.pixelpen.org>



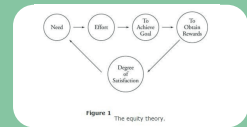
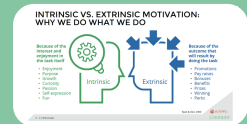
Introduction and Background

Who? My Pickle hosts the UK's largest not for profit support database that helps "Cut through the noise" and offers Data Quality vetting which ensures all resources are useful, trustworthy and kept up-to-date. MP is a start up company with intentions to be a unique signposting site that long term will also support local charitable services.

Why? MP conducted research that showed that historically EAPs are chronically underutilized. In 2021 MP is considering working with EAPs providing a specialized interface, future resource library and innovative UX researched tools to increase engagement, trust and interest.

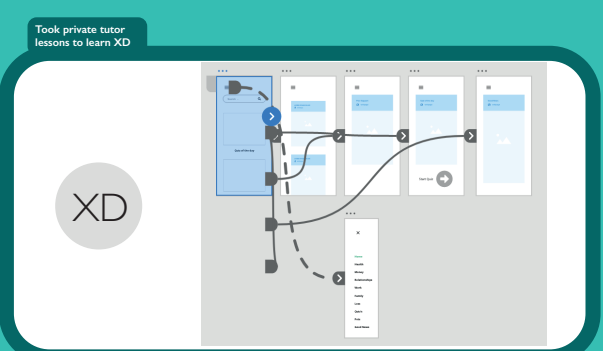
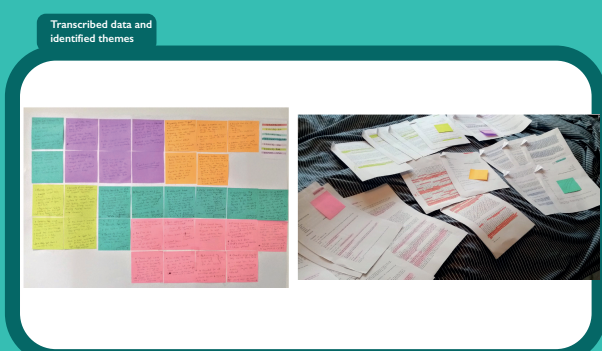
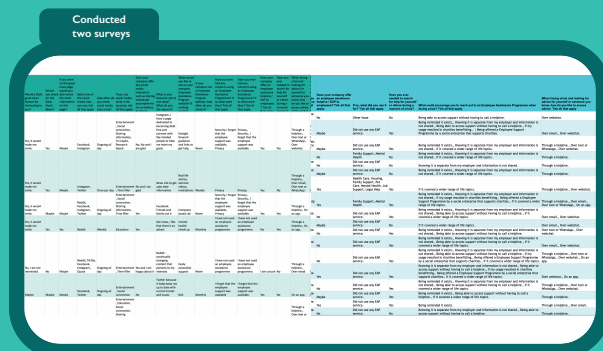
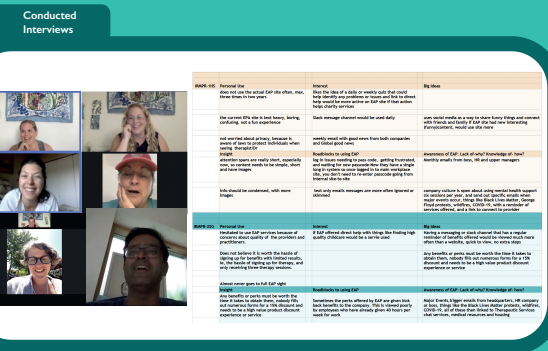
Abstract

This dissertation investigates the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in HCI behaviour using workplace Employee Assistance Programs. By deeply understanding some of the roadblocks or detractors to using the EAP three key factors were identified: Distrust, Lack of Awareness and Quality Concerns. Utilizing a User Experience viewpoint, I was able to research novel solutions on how to make the process of finding and using EAP services easier, and more appealing from the employees perspective. Creating an interface that met people where they were, meaning people reported they communicated daily using messaging tools such as Slack and Teams, and rarely or begrudgingly would check work email or even less willingly, go to another site to view any benefits. Removing this obstacle and having a weekly post on a messaging channel would allow the EAP benefits to remain centred in their minds verses in the periphery. The research also suggested that at times, people were unsure of what kind of help they needed, were eligible for, or what support was available to them. By creating examples of quizzes to help identify any latent or urgent issues, the EAP could then directly signpost the individual to a specific service or support that was needed. Many people found the whole experience of viewing or learning about the EAP benefits to be tedious and distinctly "un-fun". To counter this viewpoint the Weekly Good News post was included within the channel as a way to re-frame the experience of viewing the information while creating positive associations with the EAP. Amongst respondents, this concept was widely and universally applauded as something they would intentionally seek out, and would click to view weekly (89.9% of respondents) thus offering the good news alongside the reminder of the services available through direct text and links but also the quizzes to identify and respond with proper care as needed.



Research Methodology

By identifying and addressing concerns over the user experience of EAPs, we came up with a list of possible pathways to increase engagement. We then created sample website pages for visual examples. Questions were written and submitted for approval, and two multi-question surveys were sent to over eighty respondents and interviews were held, in total 102 respondents feedback/data was reviewed. Created screener to limit respondents to United Kingdom residents with experience working for a company. Conducted quantitative and qualitative research consisting of in-person (remote) interviews and surveys.



Research Results & Conclusions

Quiz Results*

How is your stress level?

Once people took the quiz they could be directed to the proper support needed (dependent on the results).

Survey results*

Your daily dose of GOOD NEWS

Secondary survey results*

EAP - An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is support that an employer puts in place for their employees when their lives are under stress. Typically it includes an anonymous helpline and/or an external website to find advice and support and also confidential counselling. How often do you use it? Tick all that apply.

Key findings

| Quantitative UX research methods | Initial Survey (IS21): Total of 48 respondents June 2021 | Second Survey (SS21): Total of 57 respondents July 2021 | Total 102 Respondents queried. |
|--|--|---|---|
| If your company has an Employee Assistance Programme website, how often do you check it? | 16.7% | 20.50% | 37.2% of all respondents forgot they had an EAP available to them |
| Privacy concerns using an Employee Assistance Programme | 29.20% | 45% | 74.2% respondents have privacy and security concerns with using an EAP |
| Main reasons for utilizing the EAP: Mental Health | 16.7% | 21.7% | 38.4% of all respondents used counselling/therapy services |
| Family support | 16.7% | 6.5% | 22.4% of all respondents needed help with family support |
| Health care | 14.6% | 8.7% | 23.3% of all respondents needed help with healthcare |
| Job Support | 6.5% | 6.3% | 12.8% of all respondents needed help with job support |
| What could encourage you to reach out to an Employee Assistance Programme when facing crisis? | 67.4% | 56.3% | 123.7% of all respondents said that being reminded it exists would encourage reaching out to using the EAP during a crisis. |
| If your company has an Employee Assistance Programme website or helpline, how often do you use it? | 37.5% | 35.40% | 72.90% of respondents said they never use the website or helpline. |

Recommendations

Meet people where they communicate daily (Slack/Teams). Quizzes to help identify areas for support the EAP could signpost to services. Associate Good News/ positive connotations with EAP interface. Assurance of privacy and quality care should be a high priority.

* Full data sheets to be released to MP company upon completion of program, 01/09/21