



ROOTS: designing for family connectedness



the team



Naomi



Aimen



Mai



Angela





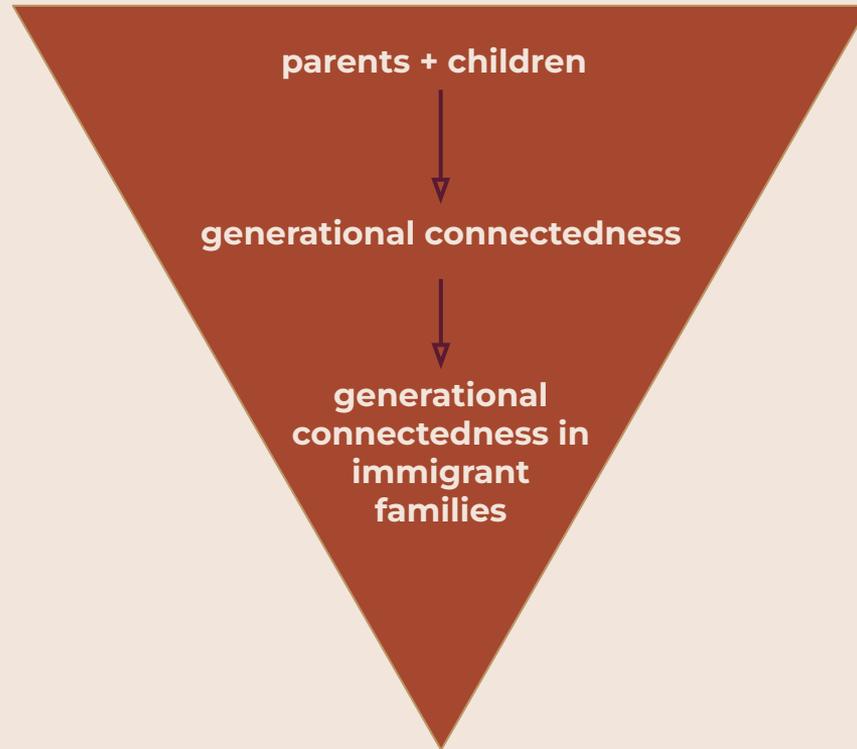
01

intro





domain narrowing





02

**additional
needfinding**



additional interviews



dr. helen hsu

outreach director @ caps,
20+ years of experience
aapa fellow,
bicultural/bilingual clinician



“olivia”

14 year old girl
from palo alto
salvadorian & taiwanese



additional interviews



“cathy” and “dan”

parents to 3 kids 18+
kids are in the US and Europe



“james”

13 year old boy
from the bay area



“martha”

30 year old palo alto native



learnings



dr. helen hsu

“Immigrant parents really, really want to talk to their kids but don’t know how.”

- Empathy/communication are learnable skills for everyone, no matter their age (worked with geriatric patients)
- Not many **culturally specific** resources available for immigrant families
- Referred us to great existing resources like CHIPAO and other outreach programs

“I think people have a stereotype that the people are impossible to change. And I'm like, that's absolutely not true.”



learnings



“olivia”

14 year old girl from palo
alto

- El Salvadorian mom, Taiwanese dad
- Has a great relationship with her parents – because of great communication
- Mother “broke so many generational cycles,” but nevertheless has “damaging habits” – **being aware of them has helped Olivia “deal” with them**

“Every single opinion I have given them, I don’t think I have ever felt judged. There have been times where they have been disappointed in me but they’ve never been like ‘you’re wrong’ or I feel like I’m going to be judged.”



empathy map

SAY

<p>"My mom went to Boston University and studied child psychology on the job to take care of my brother as a graduate!"</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I tell them what I'm feeling and when stuff happens, but I don't do that every month later...and my mom says 'avoid us to that'."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"The way he raised me was just the way she raised me, but they're not the same, it's just an off-differ."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"She moved in the second grade, she didn't know any English, she didn't know her biological mom at all, and she was going from being raised in a house to a brand new way to a new house."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I also learned about my dad's family from my mom."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"It's [the difference in dynamics on moms side to dads side] partly because of cultural differences, different attitudes, and the backgrounds there. But also I think their personalities are just so different."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"If they [mom's family] love 2 blocks away like my dad's family, did they would see on everyday."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I know her [her mom] presence in his [her dad's] life definitely changed how he acted, her family dynamic is not that definitely impacted him and how he relates one and my brother."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>The complex dynamics of her parents' families truly impacts her and her identity</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Feels comfortable going to her parents for support and advice</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Sympathy for her mom and her mom's experience throughout her complex childhood</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Her own extended family (aunts, uncles, etc.) sometimes feel to recognize that although she may not fluently speak Spanish, that is still a part of her identity.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Is hurt by the small comments or gestures that are made by her extended family, aunts, uncles, and the way they are an outsider to her Salvadoran heritage and culture</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Hurt when her Salvadoran family tries to translate for her but she can understand the conversation already.</p> <p>None</p>
<p>"I talk to my dad more about stuff that I'm interested in, like video things, because my mom will turn it into a lesson, sometimes I don't want to see it from the other perspective point of view."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I can't even imagine what it would be to be a child and know you're not the favorite."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Explained the stories about how her mom and her dad met, how they both immigrated to the US, what their lives were like before immigrating, and her parents' experiences with education before college.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I heard all these stories since I was little, I remember thinking about this as a kid."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"The dynamic between my mom's family and my dad's family is completely different. They don't talk about the past history and then moving here and everything like that. Whatever it is that I've learned about them [her dad's family] is stuff that my mom has told me."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"When my dad's mom died, my grandmother, me and my mom were talking about this and she was like 'wow, I could about her and definitely I cared about my granddad, but I don't know if I love her as the way I love my other family'."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"My mom and dad are very open people, they tell me if you struggle."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I have never had a strange relationship with either of my parents...I think I've always had a comfortable talking to them about things."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Her identity with mixed racial and cultural backgrounds, globalization and Tennessee significantly impacts the way in which she views her identity.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Doesn't know what her identity is and is conflicted with the cultural experiences/knowledge that she has or doesn't have!</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Understood how much of her mom's life was shaped by her mom's desire for her mom's life to be put in, the relationships she had with her family, being viewed as the "second choice".</p> <p>None</p>	<p>She has a balance between her parents in the sense where her mom often gives her good and important advice and her dad often lightens the mood in the "second choice".</p> <p>None</p>	<p>It's the small moments that she spends with her parents throughout the day that are important to her, not big family events</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>Her mom never knew her own dad, was raised thinking that her aunt was actually her biological mom and knowing that the truth when she was brought as an 8 year old to the US to meet her dad, mom and live in the US permanently.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I don't know my grandmother's name, it's interesting because my mom doesn't know about her dad, I don't obviously or know any of his family or know anything about him."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"When she was 5 she found out she was coming to the US to meet her biological mom, never met her, didn't know who that was, they didn't tell her [her mom] that she would be staying here."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"I don't know anyone who had a different kind of family dynamic when I was younger"</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"They [her dad's parents] lived close to us and we see my granddad every often but they're not very physically close to us, they're not very emotionally close to us versus my other granddads [from dad's side]"</p> <p>None</p>	<p>It was hard to communicate with her grandmother [dad's mom] because she had a procedure that severely limited her ability to talk.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>"Every single opinion I have given them, I don't think I have ever felt judged. There have been times where they have been disappointed in me but they've never been like 'you're wrong' or 'I feel like I'm going to be judged'."</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Even when she spends time with her Taiwanese family, she is not that comfortable around them because she simply doesn't know them that well.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>That she needs her own time to process big emotions and events sometimes.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Complexity with her Salvadoran background because she feels that she has more physically Asian features, understands Taiwanese, but cannot fluently speak it, yet has grown up her whole life around her Salvadoran family.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Between her Salvadoran and Taiwanese roots identifies more with the Salvadoran side because she knows that side of the family more and associates with the cultural values more than the other side.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Hurt by the comments others will make (not including family members) about her not being Latin.</p> <p>None</p>		
<p>Other videos involve with her parents or siblings on the couch laughing through laughter, (occasionally) with her mom</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Does not go out of her way to open up or connect with her Taiwanese family.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Talks to parents about emotional needs and topics, goes to her parents for support</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Defended her family structure to those who thought it was bring even at a young age.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Daily meaningful interactions with parents and brother even though they may be apart.</p> <p>None</p>									

DO

<p>Does not tell only one parent specific things, is very open to communicating with both parents equally.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Talks parents very frequently</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Communicates with her aunt on her mom's side through messages and Instagram videos</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Sometimes gets frustrated by her mom's occasional resistance to gendered or gendered other people</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Does as examples as she is the only girl in her family on the Salvadoran side and is the older sibling</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Has intentionally refused from communicating her extended families about her mom's behavior</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Makes the effort and the time to listen to her mom, she feels that her mom expresses, and the stories that her mom shares</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Opens up to her Salvadoran family considerably more than her Taiwanese family</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Spends equal time with mom and dad</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Sets examples as she is the only girl in her family on the Salvadoran side and is the older sibling</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Thinks that both of her parents do a great job of breaking negative generational cycles in terms of relationships, behaviors, and parenting.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Understands the contexts and environments in which both of her parents were raised</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Deeply aware of the present differing dynamics of both sides of her family and the relationships that her parents each have with their own sides of the family.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Recognizes that different cultures practices and develop different qualities in people.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Instagram positively impacts her relationship with some of her family members because they can see what she posts and what she's up to in her life.</p> <p>None</p>
<p>How others perceive her identity is often misaligned with how she perceives her family.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Her grandmother on her dad's side (dad's mom) did her best efforts to cultivate a strong relationship with her and her family.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>The emotional bonds within Salvadoran cultures are much stronger than the emotional bonds within Taiwanese cultures.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Taiwanese cultural norms emphasize privacy and introversion.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>As a child it was sometimes challenging to manage through having a different family structure than some of her peers had.</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Although her Taiwanese grandmother has the same cultural background, her grandfather was more present than the grandmother and tried to show his care in subtle ways.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>He not merely how much time you are spending with family but rather what you do and talk about during the time that you have together.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>There is a clash between what she feels like ethnically and her personal experiences.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Her Salvadoran family has very big, loud, and expressive personalities with contrary growths with her Taiwanese family characteristics.</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Her mom and dad had different efforts and weaknesses or what she goes to them for sometimes offers based on that.</p> <p>None</p>

FEEL

THINK





03

povs + hmws



original interviews (refresher)



lucia, 44

mexican american, full
time business owner,
mom of three boys



ananya, 14

indian american (but
grew up in singapore),
high school student



mohammed, 30s

afghan american,
co-owner of family
business





POV #1: Lucia





POV #1: Lucia

we met...

Lucia, a 44 year old mom of 3 boys, full time business owner, and daughter of immigrants from Mexico.





POV #1: Lucia

we met...

Lucia, a 44 year old mom of 3 boys, full time business owner, and daughter of immigrants from Mexico.

we were surprised to notice...

that even with her packed schedule, she prioritized getting even 10 minute chunks of time with her kids - while these small blocks seem “routine” for other parents, Lucia feels closer and more secure in her relationships with her children.





POV #1: Lucia

we met...

Lucia, a 44 year old mom of 3 boys, full time business owner, and daughter of immigrants from Mexico.

we wonder if this means...

that to her, parenting means presence rather than elaborate gestures. with the time and financial constraints of working parents, they care about intention and consistency rather than grand emotional or financial gestures.

we were surprised to notice...

that even with her packed schedule, she prioritized getting even 10 minute chunks of time with her kids - while these small blocks seem “routine” for other parents, Lucia feels closer and more secure in her relationships with her children.





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that even with her packed schedule, she prioritized getting even 10 minute chunks of time with her kids - while these small blocks seem “routine” for other parents, Lucia feels closer and more secure in her relationships with her children.

it would be gamechanging if...

we stopped designing for family time as a big event and started designing for these small and brief, but meaningful moments of connection.



how might we...

HMW help parents have more 1:1 time with their kids

luna

HMW help parents see/ gauge better what parenting style their kids need/want/prefer (so they can adopt them instead of what sounds the best to them?)

luna

HMW facilitate more traditions/shared activities/interests between parents and children to facilitate more conversations (like Elsa's family talks a lot about football)

luna

how might we make small moments (like a car drive or doing chores together) more of a deeper bonding experience for parents and children (like a game or something?)

luna

HMW facilitate more spontaneous connections between parents and children in very busy schedules

Mai Hoang



HMW balance freedom/ autonomy for kids while also building maturity/ responsibility

Mai Hoang

HMW help moms who are the only female in their families spend time aside of their families

Mai Hoang

HMW support parents in balancing their personal needs and familial needs/ responsibilities?

Naomi

HMW get kids to be present in conversation with their parents during the mundane moments of their day?

Naomi

HMW make kids excited to spend short periods of time with their parents throughout the day?



Naomi



HMW change the perceived notion that family time has to be heavily organized as a big event?

Naomi

HMW help parents to understand the times of the day that are best for them to engage in deeper conversation with their kids?

Naomi

HMW use the intentional time families put aside for each other to deepen their connections

Mai Hoang

HMW help parents talk to their kids about their decision making

Mai Hoang

HMW find ways to track these micro-presence moments?



Angela Wei



HMW know which moments are important for families?

Angela Wei

HMW let parents know these moments might be important?

Angela Wei

HMW increase presence in these moments?

Angela Wei

HMW we lessen exterior "stress" during these particular moments?

Angela Wei

HMW help parents turn these "chores" or routine tasks into cute micro-moments (like how intentional Elsa was with her children)

luna



how might we...

HMW make the in-between moments of everyday life (commutes, meal prep, clean up) into small moments of connection between working parents like Elsa and her children?

HMW help parents have more 1:1 time with their kids

luna

HMW help parents see/ gauge better what parenting style their kids need/want/prefer (so they can adopt them instead of what sounds the best to them?)

luna

HMW facilitate more

how might we make small

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Angela Wei

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POV #2: Mohammed





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we met...

Mohammed, a 30 year old son of Afghan immigrants and a co-owner of the family business





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we met...

Mohammed, a 30 year old son of Afghan immigrants and a co-owner of the family business

we were surprised to notice...

the shift from a strained, culturally charged relationship with his father transformed into a more **intentional** and **collaborative** one, not in *spite* of their cultural differences but because of them





POV #2: Mohammed

we met...

Mohammed, a 30 year old son of Afghan immigrants and a co-owner of the family business

we wonder if this means...

that cultural differences don't *just* create barriers, but could give rise to deeper connections precisely because the labor of translating across cultures is itself a bonding ritual that strengthens trust and understanding

we were surprised to notice...

the shift from a strained, culturally charged relationship with his father transformed into a more **intentional** and **collaborative** one, not in *spite* of their cultural differences but because of them





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we were surprised to notice...

the shift from a strained, culturally charged relationship with his father transformed into a more **intentional** and **collaborative** one, not in *spite* of their cultural differences but because of them

it would be gamechanging if...

we created conditions where difficult cross-cultural conversations feel safe, so that cultural differences can become sources of strength rather than weakness



how might we...

HMW facilitate more difficult/vulnerable conversations with parents (no one teaches you how to do these things?)

luna

HMW help keep both parents and children informed on the other's culture

luna

HMW help develop connections, or maintain them, between parents and children.

luna

HMW help parents be more aware of their children's moods/emotions?

luna



HMW rebuild connections between parents and kids who have grown apart?

Mai Hoang

HMW help kids feel safe talking to their parents about their emotions?

Mai Hoang

HMW help kids forgive their parents for mistakes they've made in parenting

Mai Hoang

HMW help kids to understand the historical and cultural background of their parents?

Naomi

HMW help kids to believe that cultural differences between them and their parents don't always have to be an entirely negative thing?

Naomi

HMW guide parents in seeing the (culturally) different needs of their kids even if they don't agree with them?

Naomi

HMW get kids and parents to believe that cultural differences can be bridged?

Naomi



HMW get kids and parents to put in the effort to bridge cultural differences/gaps?

Naomi

HMW we make having vulnerable conversations more approachable?



HMW use cultural differences between kids/parents as a way to actually strengthen connection

Mai Hoang

HMW teach parents/children that these conversations are important

Angela Wei

HMW destigmatize regular conversations?

Angela Wei

HMW gamify learning these resources/having conversations?



HMW help children from conservative Islamic families reconcile these values with more progressive/independence-based western values?

Mai Hoang

HMW help parents share more about their upbringings/lives with their kids

Mai Hoang

HMW help kids feel more empowered to give their parents constructive criticism?

Mai Hoang

how might we...

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Iuna

HMW help keep both parents and children informed on the other's culture

Iuna

HMW help develop connections, or maintain them, between parents

HMW help parents be more aware of their children's moods/

HMW rebuild connections between parents and kids who have grown apart?

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HMW help kids to understand the historical and cultural background of their parents?

Naomi

HMW help kids to believe that cultural differences between them and their parents don't always have to be an entirely negative thing?

Naomi

HMW build structured activities to make vulnerability between immigrant parents and children feel less intimidating?

HMW help parents start to

s?

HMW we make having vulnerable conversations more approachable?



HMW use cultural differences between kids/parents as a way to actually strengthen connection

Mai Hoang

HMW teach parents/children that these conversations are important

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HMW help parents with more progressive/independence-based western values?

Mai Hoang

HMW help kids

Mai Hoang

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HMW help kids feel more empowered to give their parents constructive criticism?

Mai Hoang





POV #3: Ananya





POV #3: Ananya

we met...

Ananya, a 14 year old high school freshman at palo alto high school, child of Indian immigrants.





POV #3: Ananya

we met...

Ananya, a 14 year old high school freshman at palo alto high school, child of Indian immigrants.

we were surprised to notice...

that even though she said she trusted her family, she relied more on her American friends for support because she had to develop that trust more





POV #3: Ananya

we met...

Ananya, a 14 year old high school freshman at palo alto high school, child of Indian immigrants.

we were surprised to notice...

that even though she said she trusted her family, she relied more on her American friends for support because she had to develop that trust more

we wonder if this means...

her definition of trust depends on the cultural context: her trust for her family means something different than her trust for her friends.





POV #3: Ananya

we met...

Ananya, a 14 year old high school freshman at palo alto high school, child of Indian immigrants.

we wonder if this means...

her definition of trust depends on the cultural context: her trust for her family means something different than her trust for her friends.

we were surprised to notice...

that even though she said she trusted her family, she relied more on her American friends for support because she had to develop that trust more

it would be gamechanging if...

there were opportunities for families to express the differences in these big, emotional definitions, so that they can understand each other more fully



how might we...

HMW help parents understand their children (if they have different value systems etc)

luna

HMW help parents stay up to date with the newer generation's topics of discussion/trends.

luna

HMW help kids develop trust in parents instead of it being something they are just expected to have?

luna

HMW help parents build a more collaborative relationship with their kids?



HMW help kids feel more comfortable sharing personal/vulnerable things with their parents?

Mai Hoang

HMW help parents use current trends/youth culture to connect with their kids



HMW help immigrant parents to understand that the definition and cultivation of trust differs across cultures?

Naomi

HMW help parents to prioritize a deeper trust beyond familial trust in their relationship with their kids?

Naomi



HMW get kids to start going to their parents more often for emotional support?

Naomi

HMW help kids to gain a desire to build deeper trust with their parents?

Naomi

HMW help parents to step into their kids' understanding of the world?

Naomi

HMW help parents understand that trust isn't a given in parent-child relationships and has to be built/maintained

Mai Hoang

HMW teach parents that having quality time is important?

Angela Wei

HMW force parents/ children to say the real things to each other?



HMW get PARENTS to pre-empt kids' feelings?

Angela Wei

HMW facilitate small spontaneous moments of connections in families in addition to having grand gestures and intentional time together like vacations?

Mai Hoang

HMW use comedy as a medium for bonding between parents and their kids?

Mai Hoang



HMW help parents who have to travel a lot for work bond with their kids?

Mai Hoang



how might we...



HMW help parents understand their children (if they have different value systems etc)

luna

HMW help parents stay up to date with the newer generation's top discussion/trends

luna

HMW help kids develop trust in parents instead of

HMW help parents build a more collaborative

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HMW help parents prioritize a deep bond beyond familial ties in their relationship with their kids?

Naomi



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HMW use gestures and intentional time together like vacations?

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Mai Hoang



HMW help parents who have to travel a lot for work bond with their kids?

Mai Hoang



HMW turn the process of learning how to empathize across cultures into something fun and enjoyable?





04

**solutions + experience
prototypes**



location based app - members of a family share their location on the app and if it detects 2 or more family members together it sends a random prompt to do something together

It's difficult to find resources for empathy

Khanacademy type videos and cool sounds when you get something right

send out a challenge every week for family to do and if u do u can document and get points or grow a garden or feed a pet or something

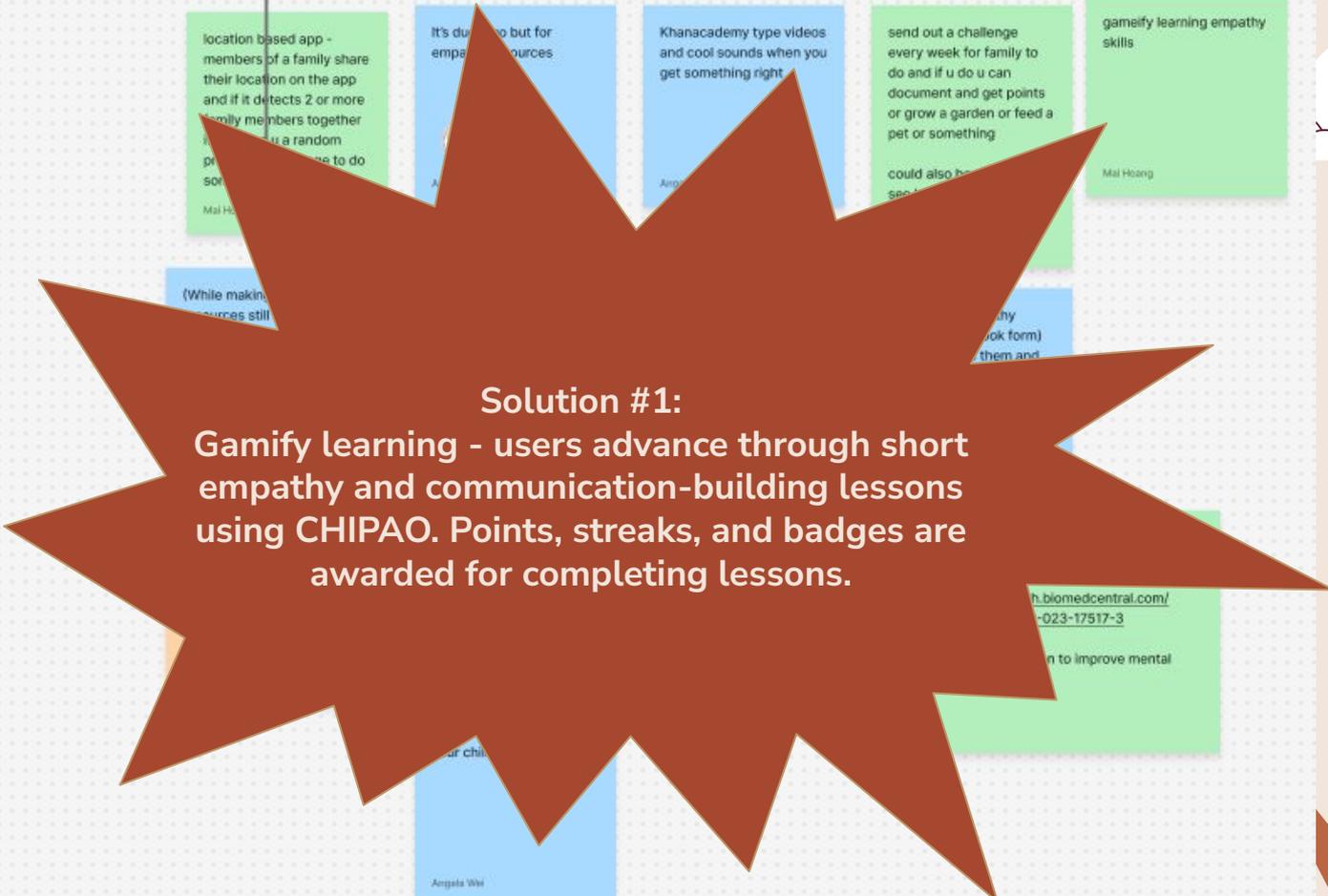
gameify learning empathy skills

(While making resources still

any (look form) them and

h.biomedcentral.com/023-17517-3 n to improve mental

Angela Wei



Solution #1:
Gamify learning - users advance through short empathy and communication-building lessons using CHIPAO. Points, streaks, and badges are awarded for completing lessons.





solution 1:

solution

Gamify learning: users advance through short empathy and communication-building lessons. Points, streaks, and badges are awarded for completing lessons.

assumption

Parents find that online resources are a worthwhile way to learn about communication skills





experience prototype

assumption

Parents find that online resources are a worthwhile way to learn about communication skills

props

a 5-minute YouTube skit from [CHIPAO](#) that teaches culturally-specific communication skills

actors

2 Chinese parents

data

asked the participants a brief survey about their experience with learning about communication skills before the video, and then some questions about what they learned about the video/how engaging it felt/whether they would do it by themselves





experience prototype

what worked

- parents were really, really receptive to vid
 - “the video is short, so it’s good.”
- skits provide concrete example

what didn’t work

- self researching would “take too long” – a lot of “prerequisites”
- gap isn’t knowledge—it's using skills in the moment





experience prototype

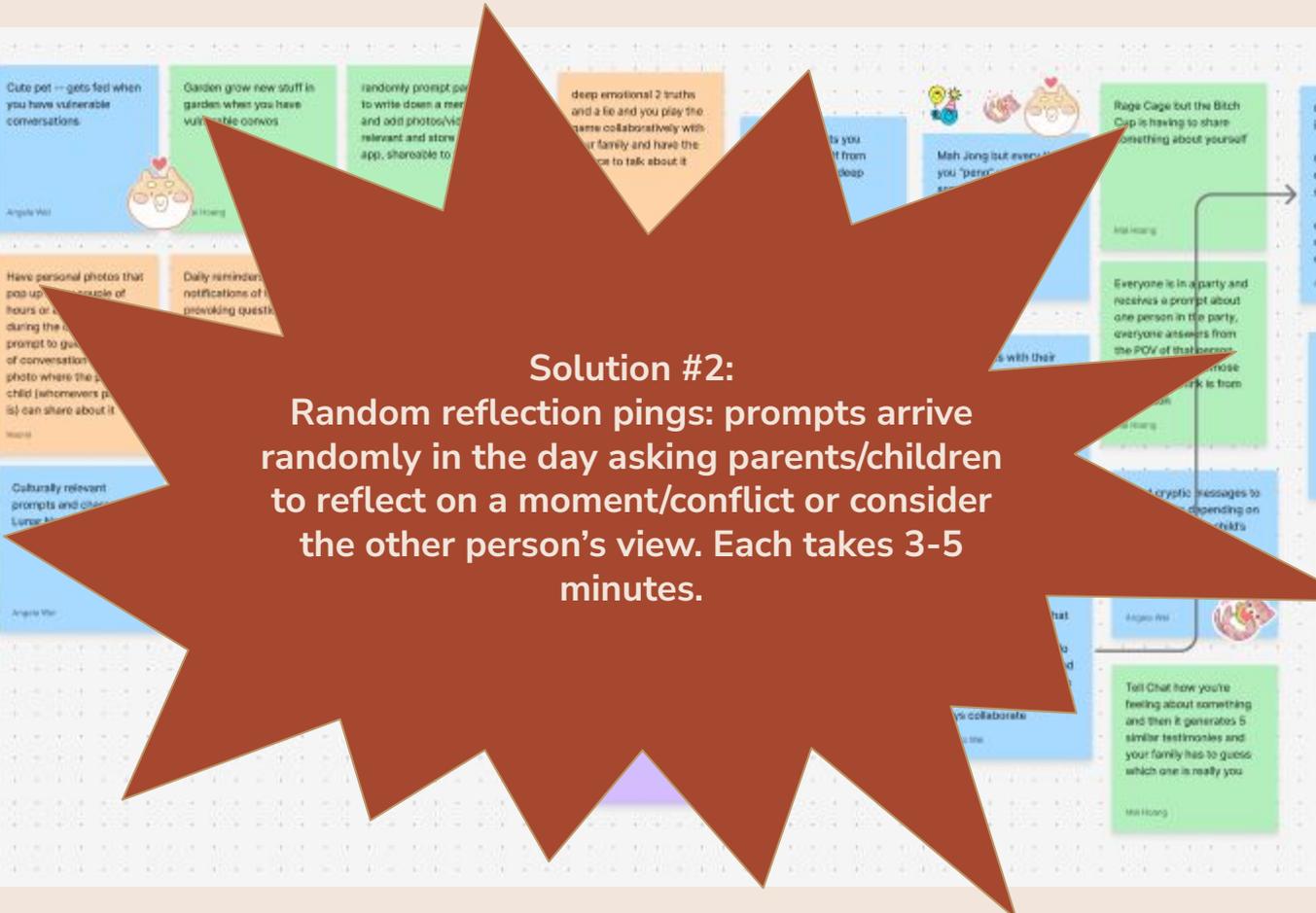
what we learned

- “communication skills,” interpreted in **business context**
- skills still transferable to communicating with family
 - one person said that learning these skills in a business setting helped her communicate with her family)
- communicating is easy in theory, hard in practice

what this means moving forward:

- **design for families for whom therapy is not in their conceptual framework**
- making an app that doesn't just provide information, but one that helps *practice* those communication skills





Solution #2:
Random reflection pings: prompts arrive randomly in the day asking parents/children to reflect on a moment/conflict or consider the other person's view. Each takes 3-5 minutes.

weekly emotion check in

Mai Hoang

Cute pot -- gets fed when you have vulnerable conversations

Angela Wei

Garden grow new stuff in garden when you have vulnerable convos

Mai Hoang

randomly prompt ppl to write down a memory and add photos/videos relevant and store in app, shareable to family

deep emotional 2 truths and a lie and you play the game collaboratively with your family and have the app prompt you to talk about it

is you
if from
deep



Mai Jong but every time you "panic" app prompts you to reflect

Rage Cage but the Bitch Cup is having to share something about yourself

Mai Hoang

On the spot in the moment instead!

Guessing answers to questions (if/when not really strangers, interactive)

could also include like scripts for vulnerable convos?

Angela Wei

prompts throughout week to collect emotions and feelings and tensions then facilitate weekly check in at the end somehow so ppl remember what was bothering them thro the week

Mai Hoang



Have personal photos that pop up in a couple of hours or a day during the week as a prompt to question of conversation or photo where the person/child (whomever ppl is) can share about it

Mai Hoang

Daily reminders notifications of 1 provoking question

Culturally relevant prompts and challenges

Angela Wei

3 good things prompt
2 things that could be better
1 bad thing

Mai Hoang

with their

Everyone is in a party and receives a prompt about one person in the party, everyone answers from the POV of that person

Mai Hoang

App forces you to pass the phone between each other, instead of doing on own (downloading on separate phones)

(offline collab)

Angela Wei

cryptic messages to depending on

Mai Hoang

Forced to be a lil (like 2PlayerGames on phone)

Angela Wei

that

Angela Wei

Tell Chat how you're feeling about something and then it generates 5 similar testimonies and your family has to guess which one is really you

Mai Hoang

collaborate

the



solution 2:

solution

Random reflection pings: prompts arrive randomly in the day asking parents/children to reflect on a moment or consider the other person's view. Each takes 3-5 minutes.

assumption

People who opt in to a reflection app already have above-average willingness to reflect, and—when given brief, guided prompts—this reflection **increases** relational awareness (empathy/perspective-taking) rather than reinforcing self-bias.





experience prototype

assumption

people who opt in to a reflection app already have above-average willingness to reflect, and—when given brief, guided prompts—this reflection **increases** relational awareness (empathy/perspective-taking) rather than reinforcing self-bias.

props

a text message thread where people respond to self-reflection prompts about their relationships with others 2-3 times throughout the day

actors

5 people, 4 adult children and one immigrant parent

data

have participants take a survey before and after the experience that asks about how much they care about introspection and how willing they are to change their behavior for others, and how engaging in self reflection helped them



experience prototype

what worked:

- users engaged with depth
- prompts were specific
- users reported feeling more empathetic toward others after responding

I had a disagreement with my brother recently. He had just come from a conversation with his therapist where he talked about how family is family and he should forgive my mom and work on his relationship with her. We had scheduled a call right after and I mentioned that I was not going back home during the summer because the plane ticket price wasn't worth it for the time I would spend at home. He started patronizing me and telling me that I should forgive our mom and that money is not an important issue and that I should go home. I felt like he was projecting his issues onto me and minimizing my problems, especially because money is such a big issue in our household. I wish he understood our family's financial situation and stopped spending so much money on unnecessary, expensive things.

i was accepted to ucla for college and my mom would not allow me to go. she was very worried that i would be so far from home. i felt frustrated that she didn't understand how exciting and big of an opportunity this was and that she was letting her fear limits my future. i ended up writing her a letter to express my feelings and to my surprise, she read it several times and changed her mind in support of me. im happy with the outcome and dont wish anything different.

what didn't work:

- some users get too bogged down trying to come up with polished answers and would respond much later
- 1 user was not able to respond at all due to being too busy
- lower tech usage -> less comprehensive answers

In college my mom blew up at me for painting my nails, saying it "wasn't something men did", and I tried to argue it didn't matter and was hardly a big deal at all. I felt micromanaged and constricted. I wish on their end that they'd at show curiosity and openness at least at first, and I wish I didn't end up getting so emotional during the argument.



experience prototype

what we learned:

- some immigrant parents are open to reflection but haven't been socialized into Western psych practices (journaling, therapy-speak)
- performative reflection is an issue

what this means moving forward:

- at most 1 prompt a day, even maybe 1 prompt every few days
- anti-rumination guardrails: set a time limit, after 90 s move on
- user-set time window
- need to design for low English users / low tech knowledge users
 - Viet mom wanted to call

Chuyện mâu thuẫn giữa tôi với người chị cả bàn về việc chăm sóc mẹ ruột của chúng tôi

Đã có 2 quan điểm khác nhau nên mới xảy ra xung đột nhỏ, sau đó tôi cảm thấy mình thật sự sai lầm khi muốn người khác phải theo ý kiến của mình

Đã có nhiều lời nói không đúng về người chị thứ sáu của tôi, tôi giữ im lặng vì không muốn làm tổn thương chị, nhưng khi chị ấy biết thì lại quay ra trách móc tôi tại sao không kể cho chị biết, tôi cố giải thích những chị vẫn không đồng tình, cuối cùng tôi giữ im lặng

My partner was working in a very toxic work environment. She would often talk to me about it both on the job and also on our free time together. At one point I mentioned something along the lines of "you should try and take your mind off of this place as well, and not just constantly talk about it even when getting respite from it". I was coming at it from an angle of like keeping her mind as healthy as possible to tackle the challenging work environment everyday, but she got frustrated bc it felt like I was just being dismissive of all her issues. While that wasn't remotely my intention, I can definitely see how my comments came across like that, and how it can be difficult to just "remove yourself mentally" from a shitty work environment even if you're physically not there. I definitely didn't phrase it or offer said advice in the best context.



Some sort of scavenger hunt each week (or every two weeks) where every chore that the child does they get a clue.

Incorporate classic games that everyone knows (or can learn) and put some twist on them (e.g. chore or 3 press and then each other)

like a rapid fire/heads up type thing to learn more about each other

like a fave songs playlist they can karaoke to in the car when travelling etc

Mad... chores moments throughout you fill in the

kid gets pro... parent prepare... not punishment :) If reward of some kid

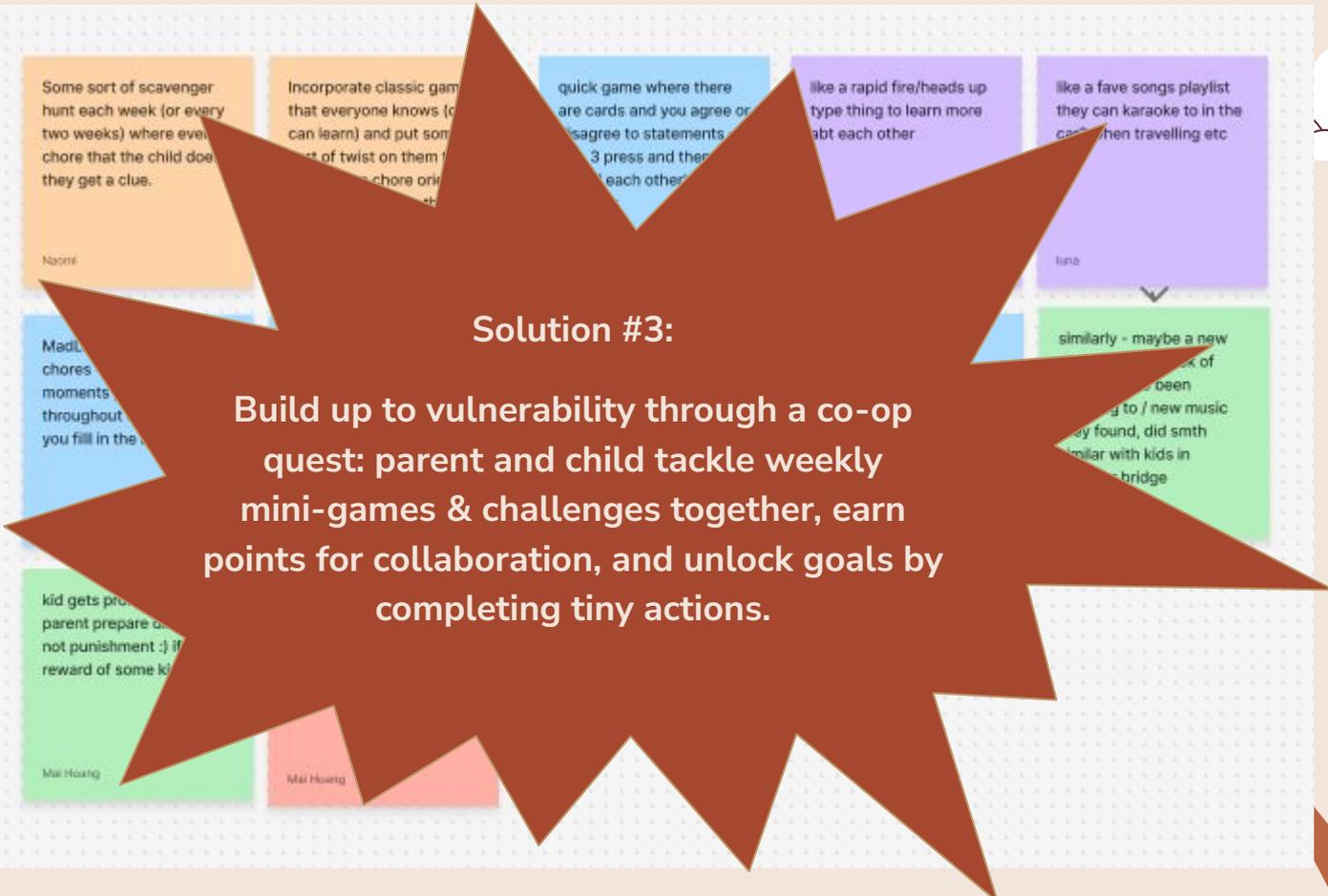
similarly - maybe a new... of... been... to / new music... y found, did smth... similar with kids in... bridge

Naomi

lina

Mai Hoang

Mai Hoang



Solution #3:

Build up to vulnerability through a co-op quest: parent and child tackle weekly mini-games & challenges together, earn points for collaboration, and unlock goals by completing tiny actions.





solution 3:

solution

build up to vulnerability through a co-op quest: parent and child tackle weekly mini-games & challenges together, earn points for collaboration, and unlock goals by completing tiny actions.

assumption

games help parents and children open up and build deeper connections because they're casual and lower the stakes.





experience prototype

assumption

games help parents and children open up and build deeper connections because they're casual and lower the stakes.

props

live phone call with parent; random questions asked, if they choose not to answer -> do a silly light hearted "dare"

actors

an international parent + child

data

asked the participant to share a photo from their album and the story behind it or about their daily conversations and what sort of things they talk about.





experience prototype

what worked

- questions felt new and sparked learning (“we don’t ask these daily”).
- positive energy: lots of laughter; more back-and-forth than usual.

what didn’t work

- answering ≠ opening up

what we learned

- play lowers the barrier: light settings help people leave their comfort zone.
- genuinely enjoyable for both parent and child

what this means going forward

- timebox each question (60–90s).
- balance tone: mix light prompts with 1–2 deeper “step-up” prompts





05

what's next?





moving forward

combining collaborative mini-games like parents are human (**solution #3**) with a responsive teaching component (**solution #1**)

ethically: don't want app to replace in-person connection, don't want children to be dependent on technology for relationships, cultural/linguistic respect, gamification -> addiction

for: bicultural households who want more communication and connection but lack the resources, but might leave out; families in the dominant culture, families with low literacy or access to technology





the point: making a communicating app
that's "for us"





06

appendix



narrowing down the HMWs

- used sticker method – top three for every HMW, and then top three of final HMWs

FINAL 6 HMWs

HMW find ways to track these micro-presence moments?

Angela Wei

HMW help parents build a more collaborative relationship with their kids?

Mai Hoang

HMW we make having vulnerable conversations more approachable?



HMW help parents turn these 'chores' or routine tasks into cute micro-moments (like how intentional Elsa was with her children)



HMW gamify learning empathy resources/having conversations?



HMW force parents/children to say the real things to each other?

Angela Wei

TOP 3 HMWs

HMW build structured activities to make vulnerability between parents and children feel less intimidating?

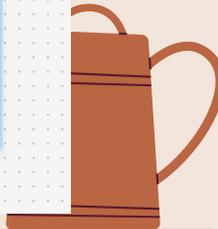
Mai Hoang

HMW turn these 'chores' or routine tasks into cute micro-moments (like how intentional Elsa was with her children)

luna

HMW turn the process of learning communication and empathy skills into something fun and enjoyable?

Angela Wei



HMW build structured activities to make vulnerability between parents and children feel less intimidating?

Mai Hoang

HMW from Mohammed

weekly emotion check in

Mai Hoang

Cute pet -- gets fed when you have vulnerable conversations

Angela Wei



Garden grow new stuff in garden when you have vulnerable convos

Mai Hoang

randomly prompt parent to write down a memory and add photos/vids if relevant and store it in app, shareable to family

Mai Hoang



deep emotional 2 truths and a lie and you play the game collaboratively with your family and have the chance to talk about it later

Naomi

Uno reverse lets you prevent yourself from getting asked a deep question

Angela Wei



Mah Jong but every time you "ping" you get to ask someone a question

Angela Wei

Rage Cage but the Bitch Cup is having to share something about yourself

Mai Hoang

On the spot in the moment instead!

Guessing answers to questions (We're not really strangers, interactive)

could also include like scripts for vulnerable convos?

Angela Wei

prompts throughout week to collect emotions and feelings and tensions then facilitate weekly check in at the end somehow so ppl remember what was bothering them thro the week

Mai Hoang



Have personal photos that pop up every couple of hours or a couple times during the day and have a prompt to guide some sort of conversation about the photo where the parent or child (whomever photo it is) can share about it

Naomi

Daily reminders through notifications of thought provoking questions

Naomi

Instead of having to directly approach person to ask to talk abt something - have app where u can signal that there's something u want to talk abt

Mai Hoang

geocaching but you have crazy outlandish questions along the way to chat about with your family.

Naomi

smthg like we're not really strangers card game but deeper qs?

luna

Solve riddles with their difficulty based off of how emotionally close you are to each other

Angela Wei



Everyone is in a party and receives a prompt about one person in the party, everyone answers from the POV of that person and then vote on whose answer you think is from the person

Mai Hoang

App forces you to pass the phone between each other, instead of doing on own (downloading on separate phones)

(offline collab)

Angela Wei

3 good things prompt
2 things that could be better
1 bad thing

Mai Hoang

Culturally relevant prompts and characters -- Lunar New Year

Angela Wei

Fun colors

Angela Wei

Use chat to convert all of your serious emotions into a set of emojis that then the parent has to guess to figure out

Angela Wei



like an app that monitors or like supervises discussions, parents can put in their red line, children can put in theirs, they can say something/ talk, and there can be like emotions and each person could click one of the emotions to express how they feel abt a certain thing?

luna

Twisters but each time you get eliminated you have to say something really deep

Angela Wei

Make "having a vulnerable conversation" look like conquering a task together! -- a game that is cooperative that parents/children both do throughout the week, and then get points/win goals based off of how well you guys collaborate

Angela Wei

Tell Chat how you're feeling about something and then it generates 5 similar testimonies and your family has to guess which one is really you

Mai Hoang

Forced to be a 1! (like 2PlayerGames on phone)

Angela Wei



HMW turn these 'chores' or routine tasks into cute micro-moments (like how intentional Elsa was with her children)

luna

HMW from Lucia

Some sort of scavenger hunt each week (or every two weeks) where every chore that the child does, they get a clue.

Naomi

Incorporate classic games that everyone knows (or can learn) and put some sort of twist on them to make them chore oriented or possible to play them during chores

Naomi

quick game where there are cards and you agree or disagree to statements -- 1, 2, 3 press and then reveal each other's answers

Angela Wei

like a rapid fire/heads up type thing to learn more abt each other

luna

like a fave songs playlist they can karaoke to in the car? when travelling etc

luna

MadLibs, but not for chores -- just random moments you get throughout the week -- you fill in the blank

Angela Wei

Streaks like Snapchat but for checking in on the app every time they're driving to practice together

Mai Hoang

small like challenges kids have to do throughout the day to get bonus pocket money for the week (these can be like shared one thought thats been on your mind with mom/dad, something you're stressed about)

luna

Gamble: bet on each others' emotional wellbeing and then win/lose money depending on that

Angela Wei

similarly - maybe a new playlist every week of what they've been listening to / new music they found, did smth similar with kids in summer bridge

Mai Hoang

kid gets prompted to help parent prepare dinner if not punishment :) if yes reward of some kind

Mai Hoang

bucket list of items to try to complete every time they're on a commute

Mai Hoang



HMW from Ananya

HMW turn the process of learning communication and empathy skills into something fun and enjoyable?

Angela Wei

location based app - members of a family share their location on the app and if it detects 2 or more family members together it can give u a random prompt or challenge to do something or a question

Mai Hoang

It's duolingo but for empathy resources



Angela Wei

Khanacademy type videos and cool sounds when you get something right

Angela Wei

send out a challenge every week for family to do and if u do u can document and get points or grow a garden or feed a pet or something

could also be social can see leaderboard of other families

Mai Hoang

gameify learning empathy skills

Mai Hoang

(While making the game/resources still seem legitimate)

Angela Wei

random prompts throughout the day to get parents to reflect



luna

something like a game or like questions game which is like fill in the blanks but the start of the sentences is how these conversations should be started?

luna

Take those empathy resources (in book form) parse through them and then randomly drop hints throughout the week

Angela Wei

Something that is progress based like a scavenger hunt for a certain treasure or end goal

Naomi

something like code/ names but like for emotions and vulnerable conversations?

luna



smthng like bereal but thoughts and feelings instead of j pictures

luna

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10654169/>

<https://bmcpubhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-17517-3>

articles about gamification to improve mental health

Mai Hoang

Scripts for talking with your children

Angela Wei





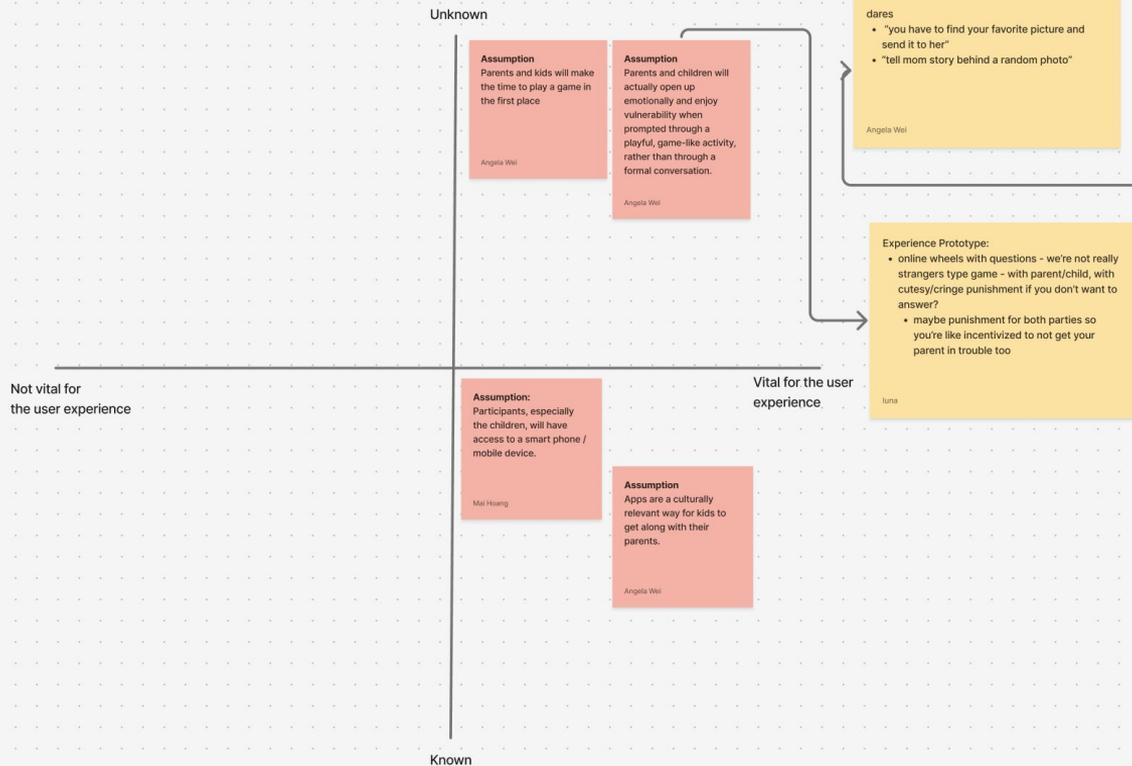
assumption maps



Make having a vulnerable conversation fun like composing a task "quest" - a game that is cooperative that encourages both to be vulnerable, and then get punishment points based off of how well you guess each other's

Angela Wei

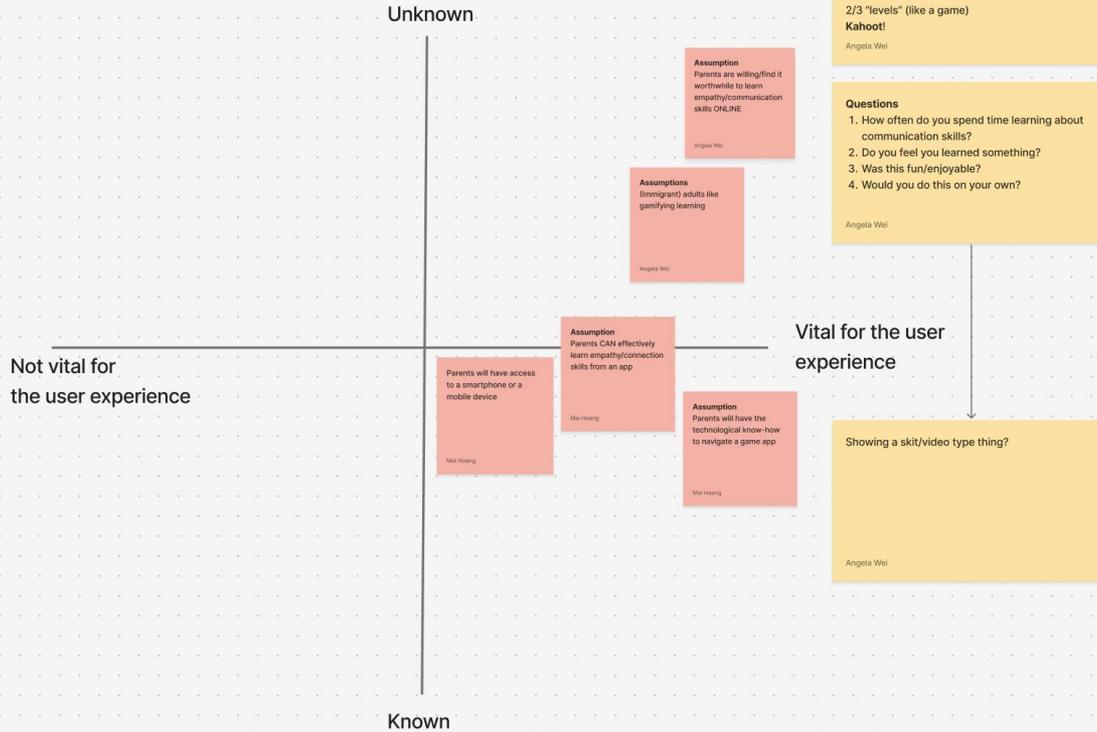
Solution #1: Assumptions



Gamify learning empathy resources -- passing levels, etc.

Angela Wei

Solution #2 Assumptions



Solution #3: Assumptions

random prompts throughout the day to get parents to reflect

Mai Hoang

Unknown

Assumption: people who choose to download a reflection app self select for being introspective people / they're people who likely already intrinsically want to reflect

Mai Hoang

Assumption: people like spontaneity and are more open to doing spontaneous things

Mai Hoang

Not vital for the user experience

Experience Prototype idea:

Find people

Text them 2-3 times throughout the day with a self-reflection prompt and ask them to spend 5-10 minutes responding to it. Then ask questions about their experience / how they felt doing it? (ask them about like... relationship with other people)

they will also take a quick intake and outcome survey before/after the experience (will only be administered for 1 day tomorrow (Thursday))

Mai Hoang

Assumption: self-reflection will prompt anyone to then become more aware of their relationships with others (doesn't just reinforce self-biases)

Angela Wei

Vital for the user experience

Ideas for prompts:

- tell me about a time you had a conflict with a family member. what happened? what did you feel? what do you wish went differently (either from you or from the family member?)
- tell me a time when you behaved a way you didn't want to toward someone you cared about. (What led up to it, how you felt after, and what you'd try differently next time.)
- what makes you feel seen by other people? who does this well in y our life, and who doesn't yet?
- name one moment you felt misunderstood by someone you cared about in the past year. what might the other person's story be?

Mai Hoang

