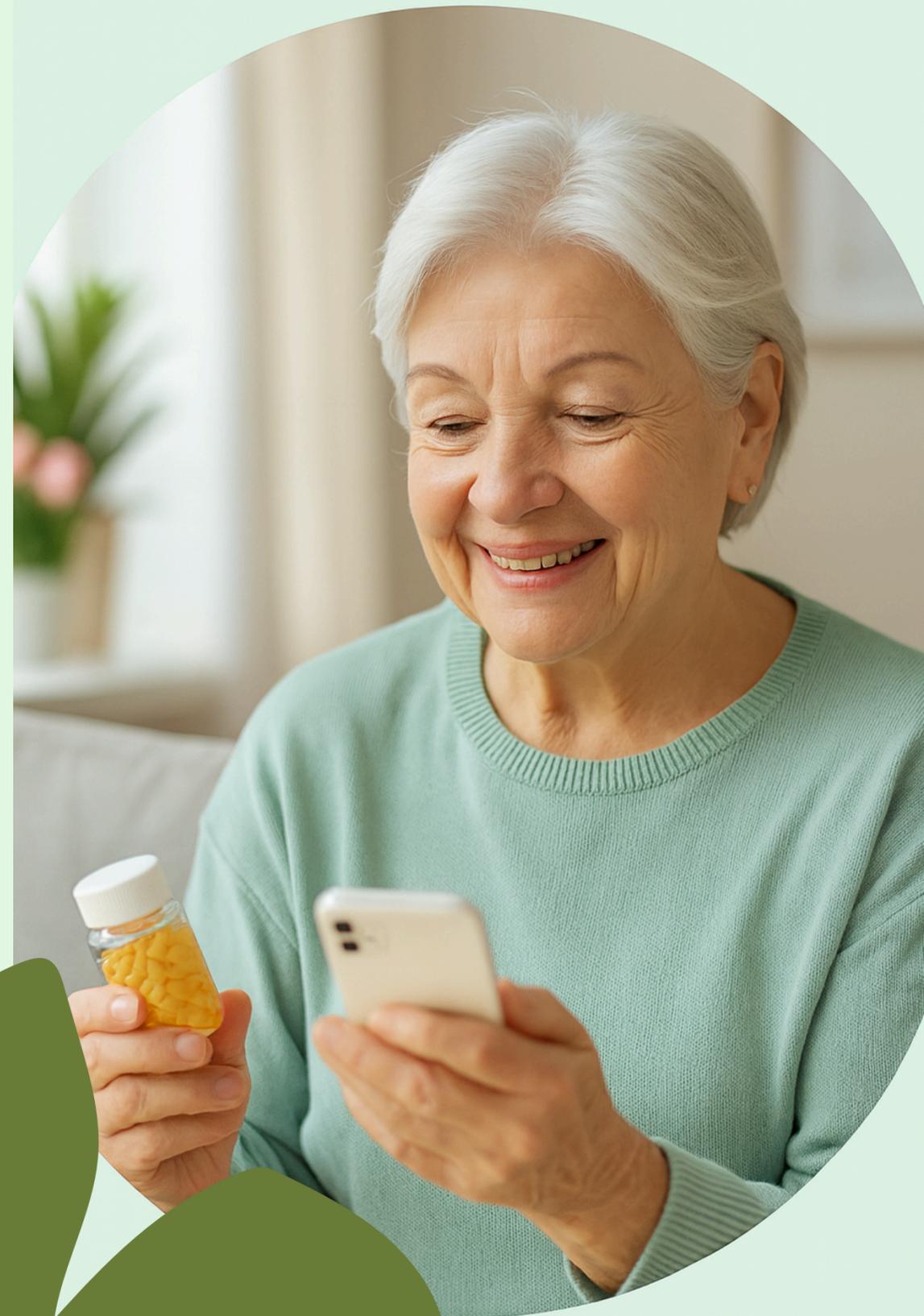# Pill Pal: Medications Made Social

MALISHA L.
MIN J.

Our Value Proposition

Tagline:

Medication made social — turning routine care into moments of shared support.

How we landed on the name

We wanted a warm, human name that avoids medical coldness. "Pill Pal" combines pill (routine health) + pal (friend), reflecting our goal of transforming adherence from an isolating duty into a shared, friendly ritual.

The Challenge of Loneliness

Primary user: Older adults and individuals managing chronic medications who often feel isolated or demotivated about adherence.

Problem: Most medication apps treat users as patients to monitor, not as people who need encouragement and emotional connection. This creates guilt, shame, and disengagement.

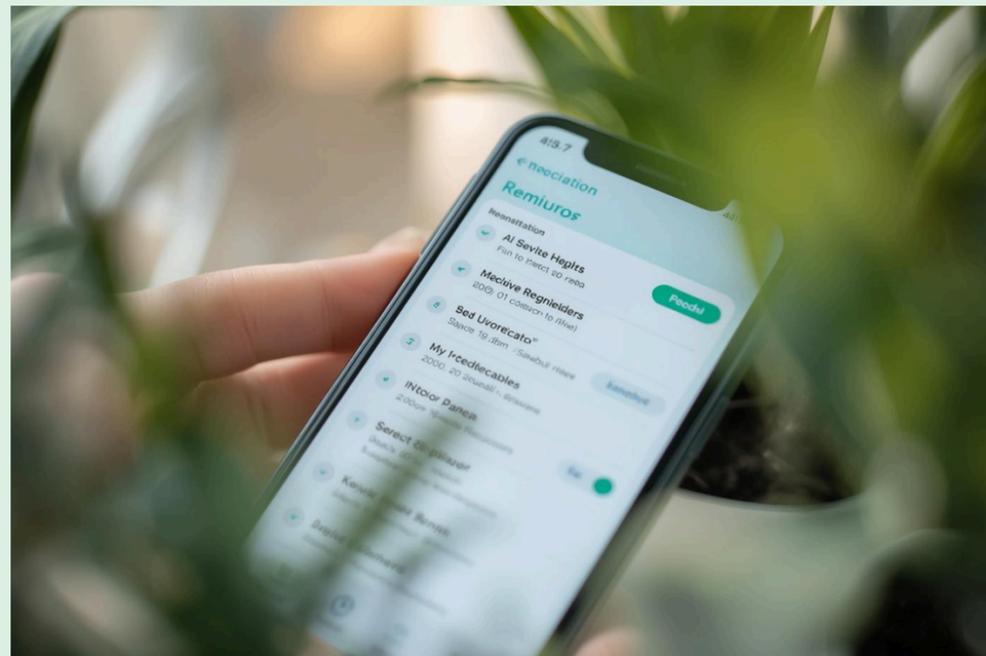<u>**Pill Pal**</u> aims to offer a more social, compassionate approach to taking medications.

Assessing the Current Medication App Landscape
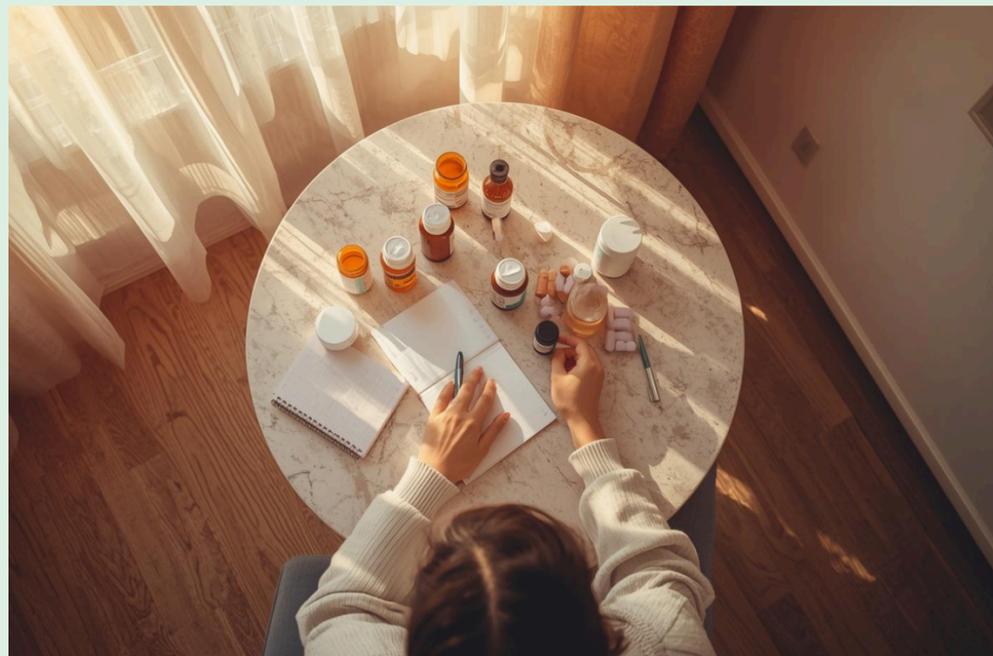
MEDISAFE

Focused on compliance with caregiver monitoring tools.

MYTHERAPY

Individual tracking with logs and streaks for reminders.

DOSECAST

Strong scheduling features but lacks social connection.

1

Medisafe: Compliance Over Connection

Medisafe focuses on dosage tracking, refill alerts, and caregiver oversight through "Medfriend."

While effective for compliance, its one-way monitoring can make users feel watched rather than supported.

Pill Reminder

Take pill now

MyTherapy: Tracking for the Individual

MyTherapy uses medication logs and streaks to encourage individual adherence. It emphasizes meticulous record-keeping but emphasizes less group support.
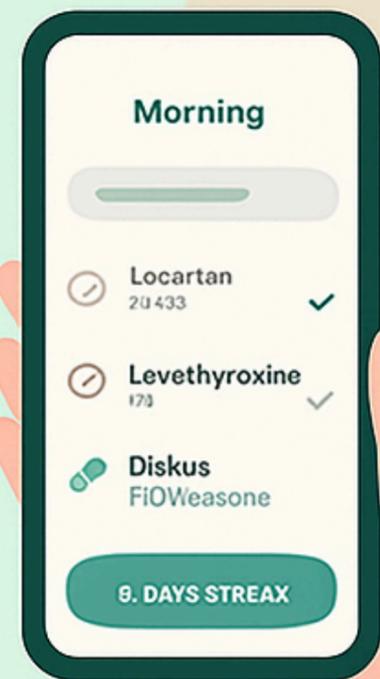
Dosecast: Utility Without Empathy

Dosecast excels in scheduling flexibility and reminders, but its design staps at functional utility.

Without an emotional or social layer, it treats adherence purely as a task list rather than a human experience.

9:00 AM

✓ Reminder

✓ Reminder

How Pill Pal Stands Out

ENCOURAGEMENT

Pill Pal fosters **mutual encouragement** among users, transforming medication adherence from a solitary task into a supportive journey together.

BELONGING

Our **group streaks** cultivate a sense of belonging, encouraging users to celebrate achievements and create meaningful connections with peers.

PRIVACY

We prioritize **privacy and dignity** by implementing design features that empower users to control their information and interactions seamlessly.
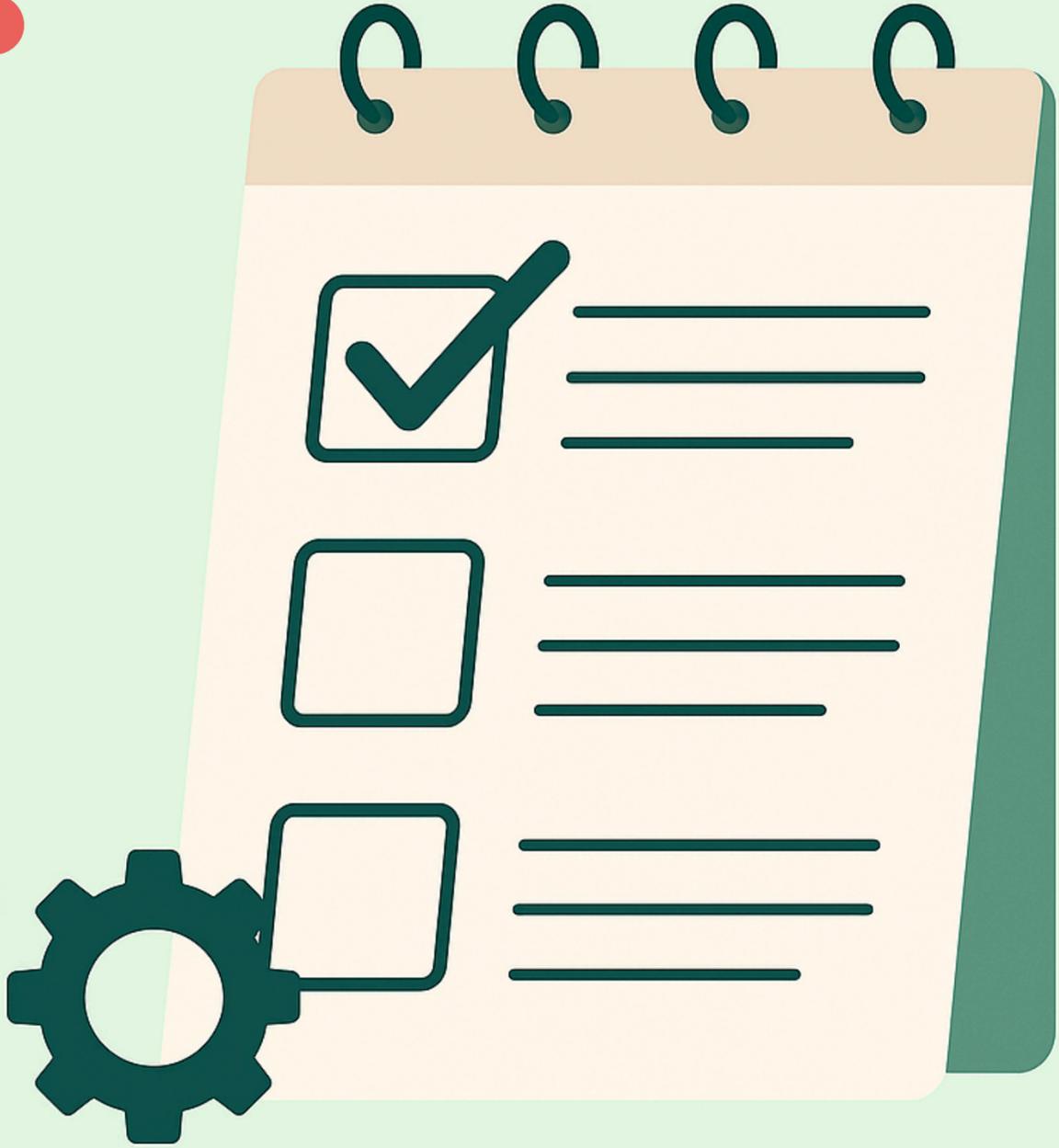
Stakeholders

Direct:
- App users
- Friends and family

Indirect:
- App developers
- Healthcare providers

Ethical Implications

Values in Design — Tarot Cards of Tech

Tarot Card	Ethical Implications	Reflection / Mitigation
THE BACKSTABBER	Care Circles could become surveillance tools if family members use them to monitor rather than support, leaving users to feel watched and judged	• Default to mutual support, not monitoring • User-controlled visibility settings • "Pause Sharing" mode for privacy
THE BIG BAD WOLF	Medication data could be exploited by insurers to deny coverage, employers for discrimination, or family members for control	• No external data sharing to third parties • End-to-end encryption • Regular security audits
THE SIREN	Streak gamification creates anxiety when users miss doses, turning health management into a high-pressure performance metric	• Grace windows for late doses • "Pause days" without breaking streaks • Celebrate returns, not punish absences • Focus on patterns, not perfection
THE BFFs	Power dynamics in families where dominant members might overcontrol elderly users' medication routines	

Main User Tasks: Engaging with Care

SHARING MEDICATION MOMENTS

- Users can easily log their doses and share moments of connection with friends, fostering community and support around medication adherence.
- Each log becomes a **moment of support** : users feel connected, supported, and celebrated for staying consistent in their care.
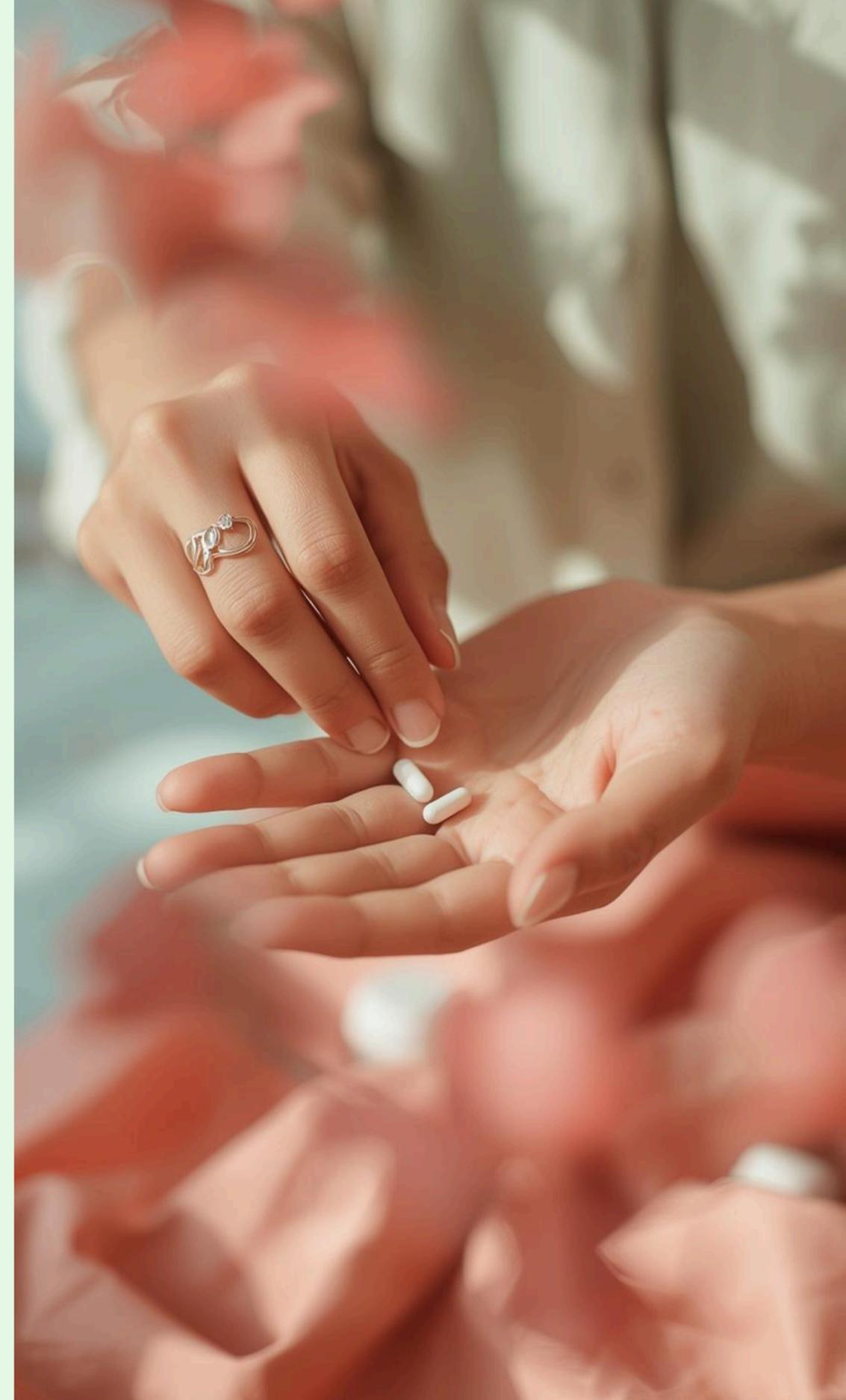
Simple Task

Share a moment with your Circle

User goal: After taking medication, the user log it and shares that moment with their Care Circle for encouragement.

– It's quick, core to daily use, and the user feels supported.

– This turns routine medication from a private act into a micro-social moment that reinforces belonging.

Moderate Task

Invite a Pill Pal & Set Visibility Preferences

– The user adds a friend or family member to their circle and decides what they can see, ex. doses, reminders, or moods.

– It's occasional and involves reflection about trust, privacy, and support levels. This also symbolizes consent and agency in how social support is built into healthcare.

Complex Task

Handle a Missed Dose with Empathy

– The user realizes they missed a dose and decides how to handle it, **ex.** take it late, skip, or reach out for support.

It's emotionaly charged, rare, and may involve multi-party coordination (the circle, reminders, self-reflection).

Storyboard Artifacts

VIDEO

Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tcj7k4HA-
pyMTXtI9c_i6knL8Wwm-vmM/view?usp=sharing
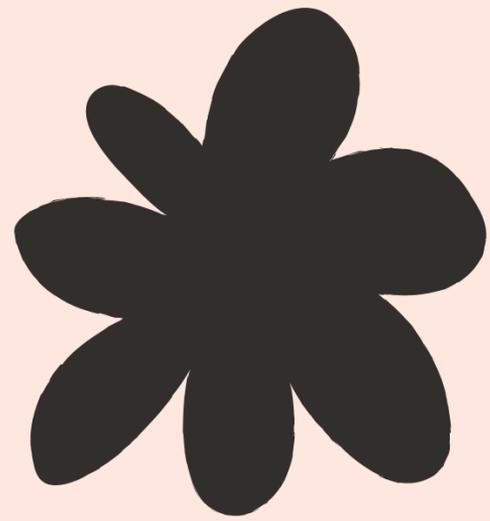
Analysis of Video

Simple Task

Time (approx): 0:02 – 0:06

The protagonist wakes up, checks her phone, and sees a notification reminding her she has to take her medication later today.

Moderate Task

Time (approx): 0.06 - 0.09

She taps on her phone and is adding her mom to her Care Circle, symbolizing trust and shared accountability in managing her medication effectively.

Complex Task

Time (approx): 0.40 - 0.44

Later in the day, she realizes she missed a dose after receiving a follow-up message from her mom, highlighting the emotional support provided by the Pill Pal community.
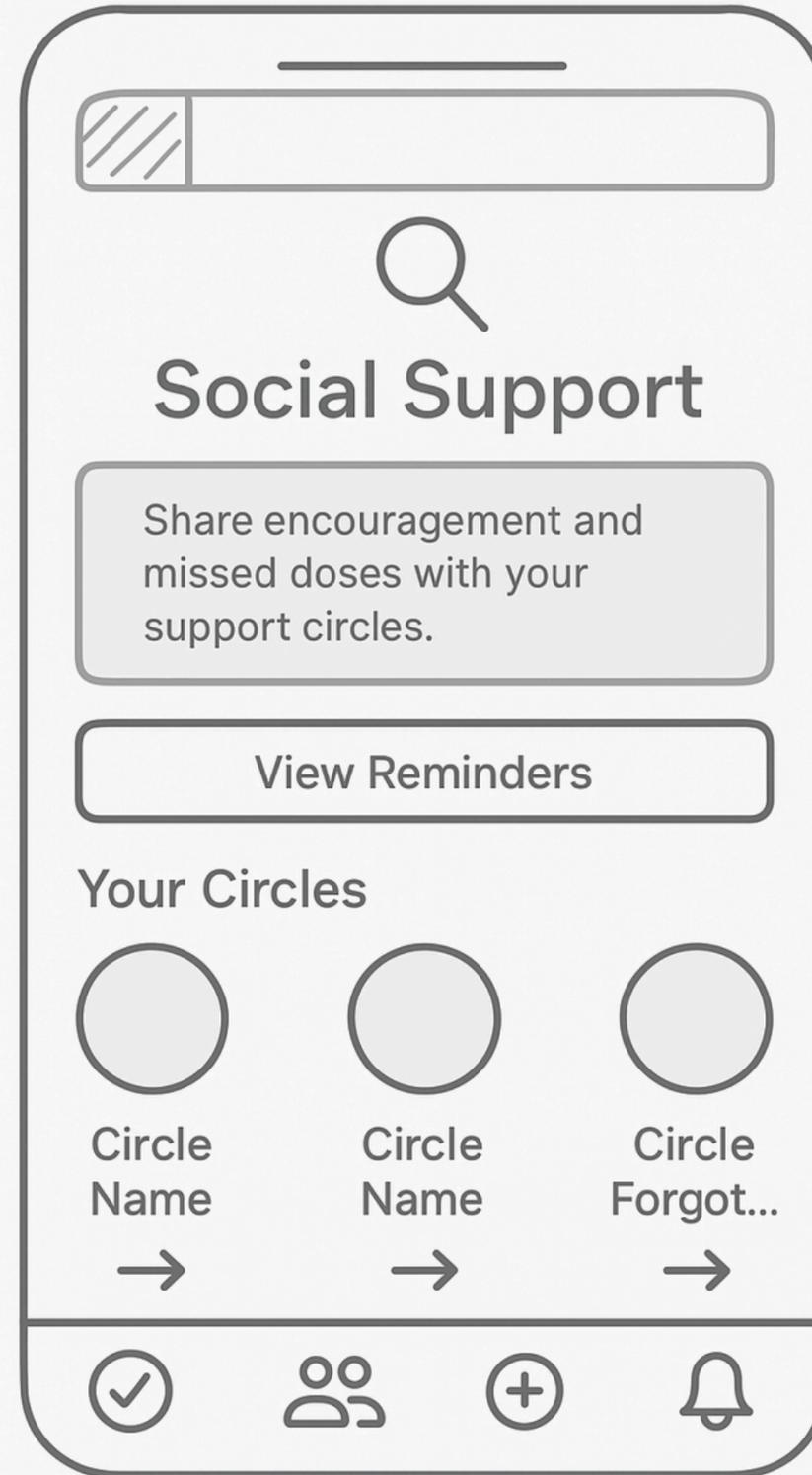
Appendix

Iterated on defining the core social support feature

Over three design iterations, we focused the design less on medication logging and emphasized the friend-based social support feature.

Low-fidelity wireframes of early explorations
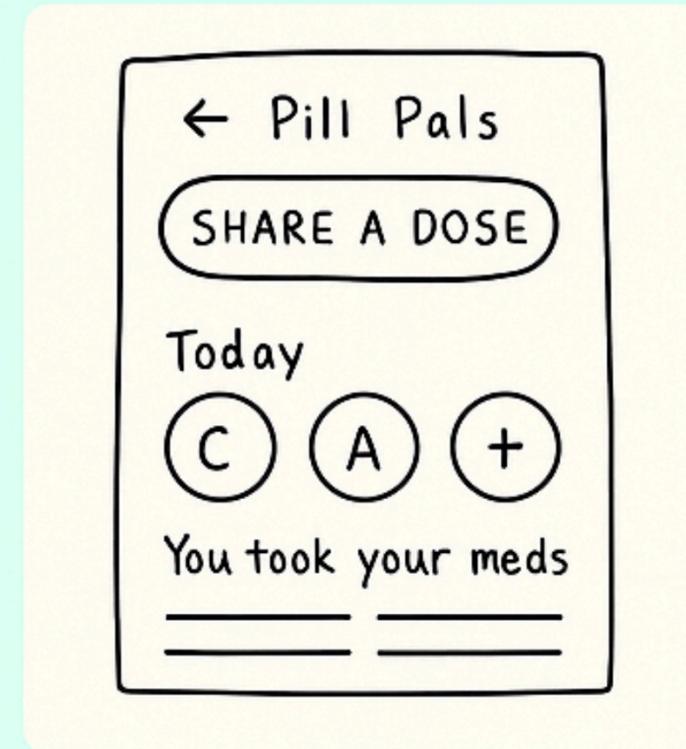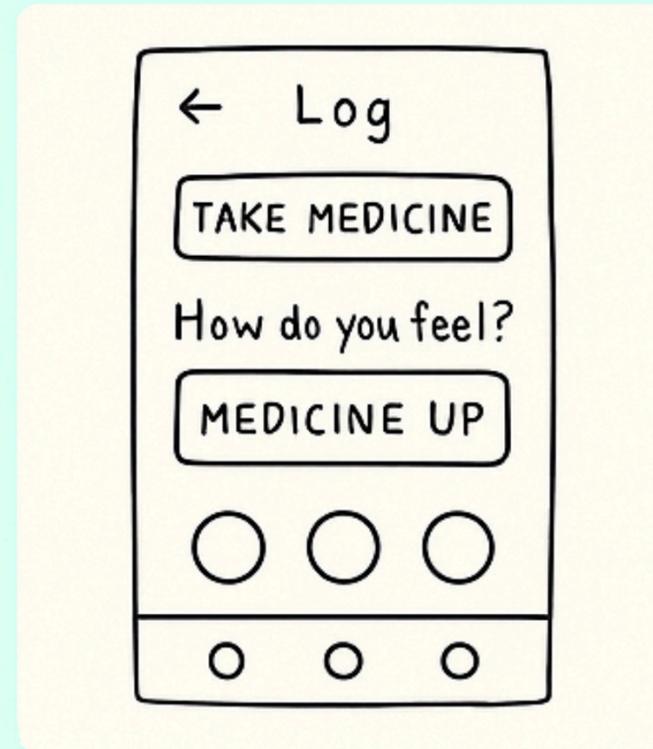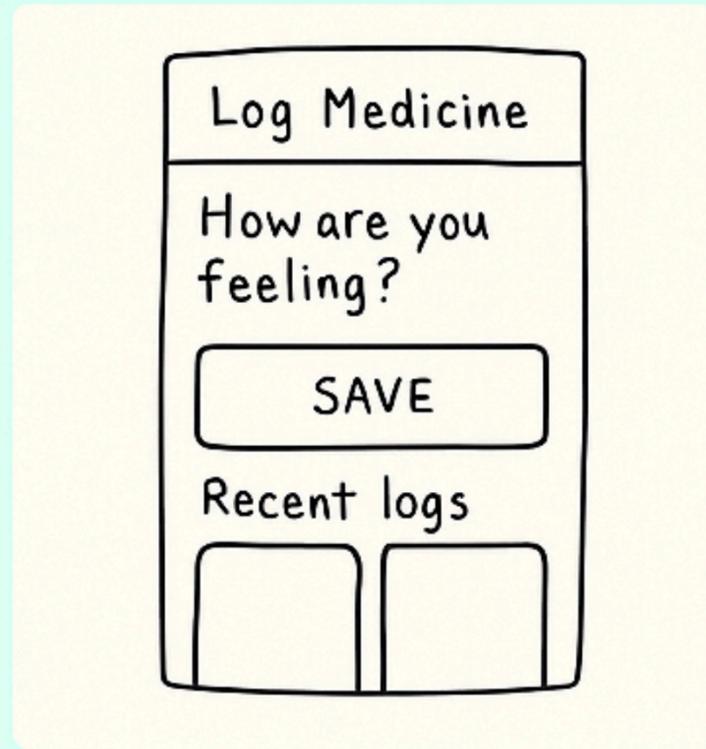
# More Wireframing Designs

Why is Pill Pal unique?

- Pill Pal transforms medication tracking from a solitary, clinical task into a shared, encouraging experience.

- By engaging a circle of friends or family, users feel supported and connected in their medication routines.

- Gentle nudges inspire care consistency while **avoiding guilt**.

- Pill Pal provides a vital form of social connection, addressing both health management and loneliness.

Pill Pal

Morning

A gentle reminder to take her medication.
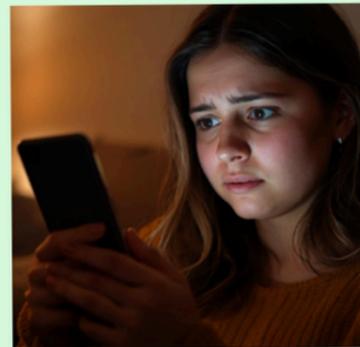
Concern

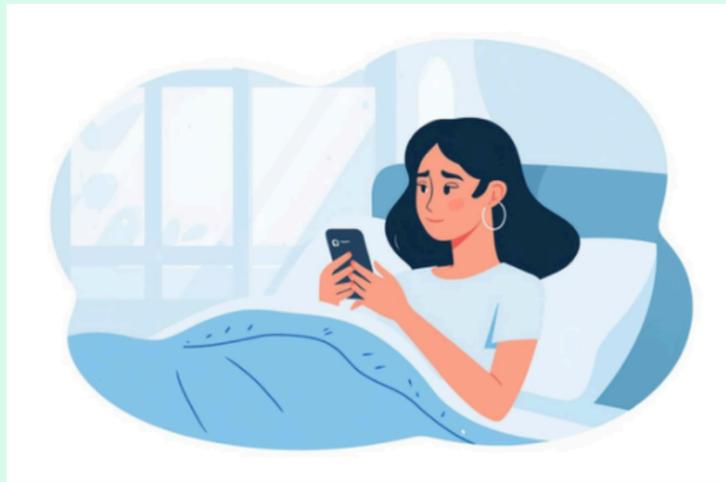A moment highlighting emotional safety and support.

Trust

Building connections through shared accountability with care.

Connection

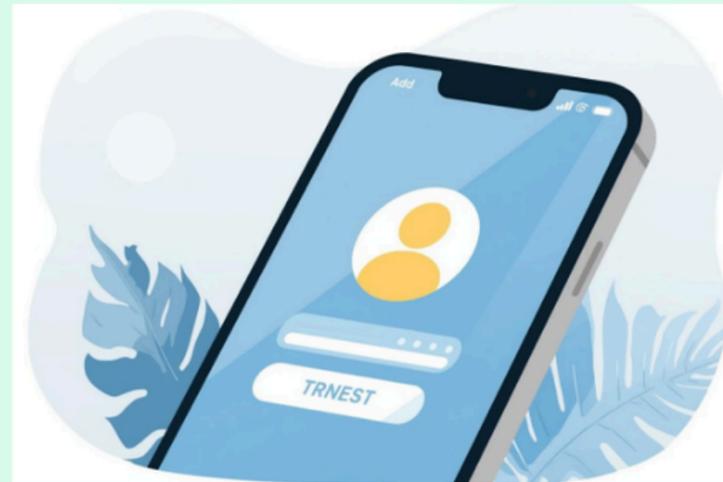Celebrating the importance of community and care.

Overview

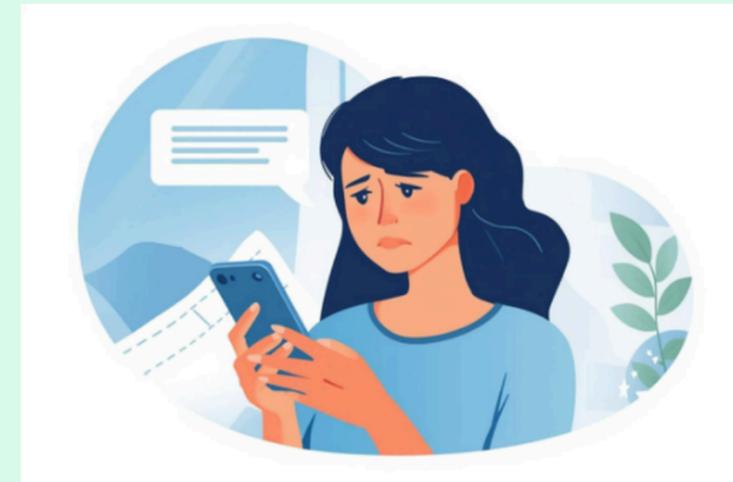**MORNING NOTIFICATION**
Gentle Reminder

A woman checks her phone, receiving a medication reminder when she wakes up.

INVITING TRUST
The smartphone screen illustrates the act of adding a trusted contact for support.

A woman shows concern as she receives a message about a missed dose, fostering connection.

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
Emotional Connection

The scene depicts a moment of empathy, highlighting the importance of community support for medication tracking.