

The background is a dark, almost black, space filled with abstract, organic shapes. On the left and right sides, there are large, wavy, white outlines that resemble the profiles of human faces. The interior of these shapes and the surrounding space are filled with a gradient of colors, primarily deep blue and vibrant red, which blend into each other. Scattered throughout the dark background are several smaller, glowing, oval shapes, some of which are outlined in white, resembling stylized cells or molecules.

# NEEDFINDING

Sofia Kim, Sheng Moua, Jennifer Quach, and Gracielly Abreu

# WHO WE ARE



**SOFIA KIM**

'25

Symbolic Systems  
Santa Cruz, Bolivia



**SHENG MOUA**

'25

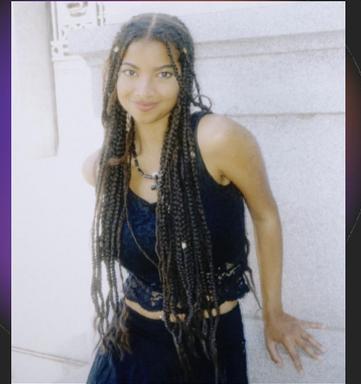
Computer Science  
Eau Claire, WI



**JENNIFER QUACH**

'25

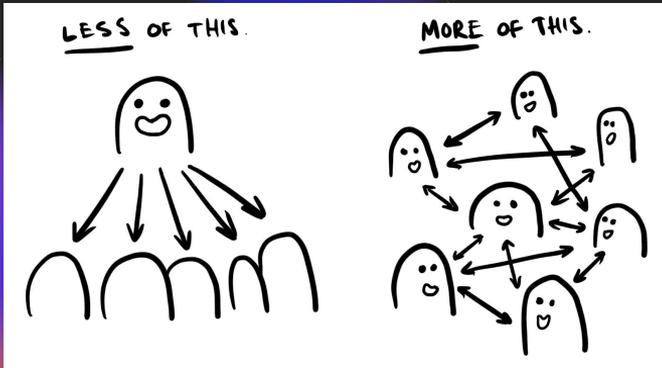
Symbolic Systems  
Lincoln, NE



**GRACIELLY ABREU**

'26

Computer Science & Design  
Orlando, FL



# DOMAIN OF INTEREST: Festival Community Building

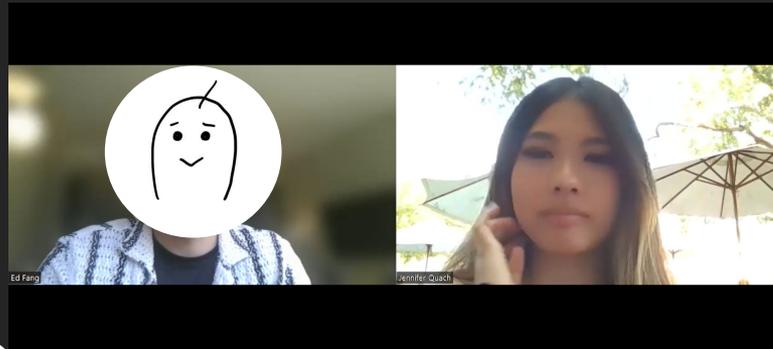
- ... a shared interest amongst members
- ... exploring the value of shared experiences
- ... researching unique perspectives

The background is a dark, almost black, space filled with several abstract, organic shapes. These shapes are filled with a gradient of colors, primarily transitioning from a deep purple at the bottom to a bright red or orange at the top. The shapes vary in size and orientation, some being large and irregular, while others are smaller and more elongated. The overall effect is a dynamic and modern aesthetic.

# NEED FINDING METHODOLOGY

# FINDING PARTICIPANTS

- Perspectives to consider:
  - Range of experience and age
  - Differences in musical interests
  - Broadening scope outside of Stanford Students
- Ended up with...
  - 2 extreme users, 1 average user
  - Jen - interviewer, Sheng - notetaker



# OUR INTERVIEWEES



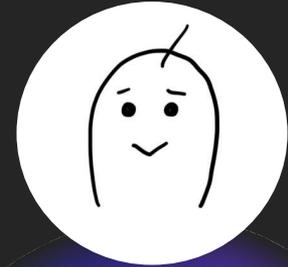
**JULIET**

- Nursing student @CVTC
- **Extreme user** - attended only one festival



**ALEX**

- Psychology student @Stanford
- **Average user**
- Started as a solo raver



**EDWARD**

- Senior data scientist @TikTok
- **Extreme user** - rave veteran & nomad

# GUIDING QUESTIONS

“How important is community for festivals?”

“What are some of the biggest challenges in attending festivals with a group?”

“Would you go to a festival alone? Why or why not?”

“Has not being able to find a person to go with deterred you from attending a festival?”

“Have you joined any new communities or made new acquaintances through your festival goings? Tell me about a time you developed a new connection through the scene.”

“What do you look for in finding people to attend festivals with, and how did you meet the people in your current group?”

“I’m scared to do things on my own... The people you go with do make or break the experience.”



**JULIET**

### SAYS

Observations: What did this person SAY that surprised you?

Pictures and videos on social media influence if she wants to go to a festival or not

Mentioned food and vendors

Aside from working around school/work, planning isn't too hard

Social media advertisements (for festivals) cater more towards people who are already familiar with the scene

Would like to keep going with the same group consistently

Feels comfortable protecting self physically, but feels anxious about going alone

Biggest concern is leaving the venue--traffic and crowds make it hard

Repeatedly brought up outfit planning for festivals

"The people you go with do make or break the experience"

"I'm scared to do things on my own"

saying she liked independence after saying she liked doing things on her own

Usually, crowds are comprised of fans of the performer

Said she only went to Lollapalooza to see 2 artists

being influenced by word of mouth as well as social media

### THINKS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be THINKING?

Thinks that going to live music events alone is not worth it.

Thinks about live music events more holistically. Specifically mentions food, vendors, outfits.

Approaches live music events more realistically. Thinks about the logistics (fees, distance, etc...) more.

Thinks that distant festivals aren't worth it without people to go with

Thinks that it's important to be self-reliant even within group settings.

Social media is a big indicator of whether or not a festival is worth going to

Thinks that it's worth it to go to a rave at least once for the experience.

Really considers WHO she is going with to live music events and thinks that the people she goes with can make or break the experience.

Thinks that planning (hotels, transportation, outfits) is an important aspect of going to a rave.

Thinks that social media and friends are the best way to get information about live music events.

they might be thinking that going to a festival can be dangerous

they might think the experience serves as a good instagram post

### DOES

Observations: What did this person DO that surprised you?

Went to festival with sisters rather than friends

Would plan everything in a group chat

Is planning to back to Lollapalooza despite traffic and crowds

Went with the flow at festival rather than making a schedule

Drove from Wisconsin to Chicago for the festival - prefers closer events

Decides if she's going based on word of mouth

Went to Lollapalooza without any set expectations

She doesn't really listen to EDM despite her desire to go to a festival

Not talking to people in crowds

Extensively plans before a festival--accommodations, travel, outfits

Her group stuck together; did not separate unlike other interviewees

Doesn't really talk to people outside her group

### FEELS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be FEELING?

Nervous - stated that she's nervous about new experiences in general

Feels anxious about future festivals due to lack of knowledge about them (repeated "I don't know")

excited to immerse themselves in a new experience

Lack of confidence answering questions due to lack of knowledge about the scene

isolated, as she doesn't hang out with big groups or talk to people in crowds

Feels hesitant about the large crowds as a newcomer to festivals

Overwhelmed with the planning and scheduling as well - not enough experience or time to do so

Feels reluctant to plan/attend a festival alone because "scared to do things on my own"

Overwhelmed - the festival was a new experience with large crowds, and she didn't know what to expect

informed-- she was determined to have a plan and use multiple sources of information to carry it out

Curious, as she alluded to wanting to go to an EDM festival to better understand the scene

Independent - would rather go with a person that doesn't need to be "babysat" and can take care of themselves



“There really isn’t a centralized festival community at my school, only certain individuals... That’s why I go alone.”



**ALEX**

## SAYS

Observations: What did this person SAY that surprised you?



## THINKS

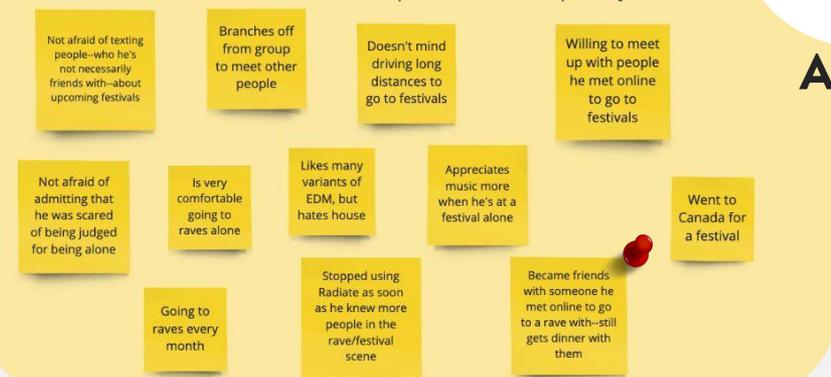
Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be THINKING?



ALEX

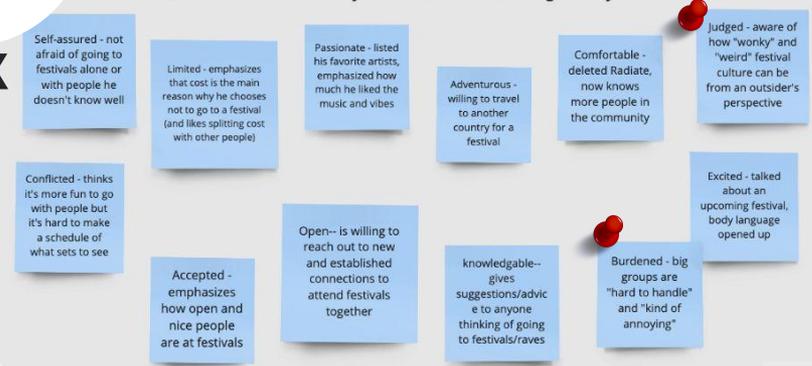
## DOES

Observations: What did this person DO that surprised you?

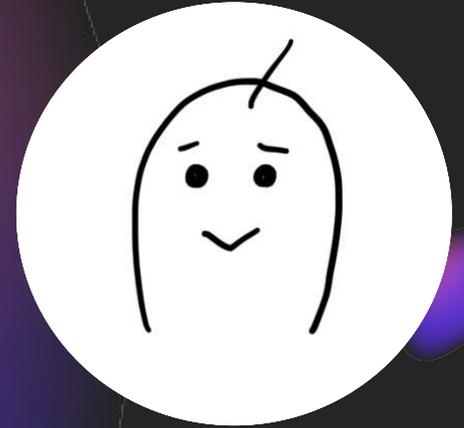


## FEELS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be FEELING?



“Elements of festival culture has transcended just the festival scene... even concerts like Taylor Swift are adopting festival community traditions like kandi [bracelets exchanged to represent memorable interactions]...”



**EDWARD**

## SAYS

Observations: What did this person SAY that surprised you?

Prefers a smaller group (~5 people) over a large one

Mentioned pre-festival anxiety for newcomers twice for separate answers

Community elements of festivals has transcended to concerts - gave examples like giving bracelets to strangers that represent good interactions at concerts like Taylor Swift albeit started at EDM festivals

Going solo allows you to make new connections there - he talks about how having the freedom to go alone makes way for more interactions

Stresses the importance of trust and familiarity with the individual he attends with - unlike concerts where there is less prior planning and interactions involved

Festival goes actively "adopt" strangers into their group - Edward was "adopted" by 2 men from Argentina when he went alone

Lots of planning is needed to manage a big group so smaller group is better - lots of conflicts can arise like different desired sets

using dating apps to find people to rave with

Mentioned that he'll run off from the group to explore and see who he wants to see

Mentioned that many were hesitant to go to festivals alone despite the open, accepting environment.

He started out with "underground" music and transitioned to more mainstream music - usually it's the other way around

Socializes with strangers while waiting in line for stuff at festivals

Mentioned that it was hard to justify buying festival tickets despite going frequently

## THINKS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be THINKING?

Thinks that it's important to keep in mind the energy you bring to festivals - "the experience is what you make of it"

Wants people to vouch for the people they invite to make sure they're "responsible" -> can infer that he thinks festivals can be risky due to certain aspects of festival culture

Repeatedly mentions festival-specific activities like glowing or trading kandi -> can infer that he believes festivals are a culture with shared customs (glowing, kandi, etc.)

Thinks festivals are a form of escapism especially after breaking up with girlfriend

Thinks social media is the most used method for finding people prior to a festival - mentioned reddit, facebook groups, discord

Thinks festivals are a great way to form community - whether prior to or at the event, referenced how Jen and him met in line for ticket inquiries at Electric Daisy Carnival Festival

They might be thinking that curating a good experience for a group can be too challenging

Thinks that the EDM community stemmed from a place of acceptance and freedom, which is why he was drawn to the festival scene

Thinks the majority of people would rather go with a group - states he's "in the minority" for being comfortable with going to festivals by himself

Thinks festival planning can be stressful - repeatedly mentions that it's hard to make a schedule of who to see due to group conflicts

they might think it would be a good idea to find a way to match preferences and interests with potential group members in a convenient, fast way

Thinks that the festival community is open and interested in meeting new people - festivals foster and are good for community



## DOES

Observations: What did this person DO that surprised you?

Willing to reach out to people from high school/workplace to go to festivals with

Feels comfortable going to a festival alone

One of the ways he convinces friends to go is by telling them who's going/in the group

Leaves group to explore despite possibility of getting lost/losing them

Eyes lit up in regards to questions about EDM festival traditions and when elaborating on community aspects

**EDWARD**

Responsible - Wants to make sure he's not the only one in his group - mentions people who they want to see and that they feel alright at festivals

Nostalgic - recalls a lot of his "firsts" such as his first time going to a festival alone and how he's been going to festivals for over a decade

Conflicted - wants to accommodate group members but also wants to be free to do what he wants

Concern - emphasized the anxiety an inexperienced festival goer may feel without someone to go with

Passionate - continuously advocated for going to festivals and the sense of community he gained from them

curate his own experience in festivals by being open

being picky about the people he plans to go with despite joining random people when alone

Went to a festival immediately after breaking up with his girlfriend

Willing to only catch half a set to make sure everyone sees who they want to see

Actively participates in the EDM scene as a "glover" who gives light shows to people in the crowd

Stressed - the circumstances that often bring him to festivals are stressful and banding to the needs of the group can add stress.

Welcome - feels accepted by festival community unlike where he grew up

Connected - emphasizes vibing with other people in the crowd, trading kandi, glowing, adopting someone who's there alone into his group, and "coming together to make something greater"

Became friends with 2 guys from Argentina while going to a festival solo

Has been in the festival scene for 11-12 years

Empathetic - understands that it can feel scary going alone for the first time

Surprised - was shocked at finding out that some people resort to dating apps to find people to go with

Curious - they crave new experiences that help him learn more about himself and other

Awe - was surprised to find out that Taylor Swift fans trade bracelets because it reminds him of festival culture

# TENSIONS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND SURPRISES

- Everyone in a festival group has more **responsibilities** than they would at a concert... people are more comfortable going with those they can **truly trust**
- Most receive information on festivals from **social media**, but what to **expect**, how to **plan**, and who to **connect with** prior to the event is foreign to newcomers
- Festivals are **stigmatized** and can be **overwhelming** due to large crowds, intense music, unfamiliar cultures and traditions, and possible prohibited activities
- The best way to **enter** and **stay** in the festival scene is to already know someone who has **experience** going - going alone isn't a popular option

# INSIGHTS & NEEDS #1

**INSIGHT:** Interviewed users described problems that can arise in group festival settings that are particular to larger groups (8+ members). These included inability to meet up after splitting up, schedule conflicts, and potential bad energy amongst members. No one wants to take care of someone who can't handle themselves, and there is a sense of responsibility for all members of a festival group.

**NEEDS:** People interested in festivals should be **familiar** with the people they are attending with in order to fully **prepare for and enjoy** the festival experience.

# INSIGHTS & NEEDS #2

**INSIGHT:** There is no central festival community at schools and those with little (or misunderstood) knowledge about festivals can be dissuaded into attending them. Social media posts tend to cater towards those that are already familiar with the scene.

**NEEDS:** Information on festivals should be more accessible to those without festival going experience in order to alleviate pressure when planning and increase interest in attending.

# INSIGHTS & NEEDS #3

**INSIGHT:** Festivals foster community and community strengthens the festival experience. The people and crowd make or break the experience, and there are embedded traditions and shared values in the scene that draw people together, separating them from a standard concert experience. However, this “community” is only accessible by those already in the scene.

**NEEDS:** The community aspect of the festival experience should be inclusive to newcomers and those with little experience in attending them. The process of connecting interested individuals with one another should be streamlined and popularized in order to give everyone a sense of the true festival experience.

The background is a dark, almost black, space filled with several abstract, organic shapes. These shapes are filled with a gradient of colors, primarily transitioning from a deep purple at the bottom to a bright red or orange at the top. The shapes vary in size and orientation, some being elongated and others more rounded. The overall effect is reminiscent of a nebula or a stylized, colorful map of a region.

**SO TO SUMMARIZE THE  
PROCESS THUS FAR...**

# SUMMARY

We started with talking to people with **gaps in experience** in the scene...

We explored the festival scene and what makes it different from **regular concerts**.

We identified the **hesitations** that people may have towards attending festivals, which included **planning logistics**, **stigmatization**, and **lack of knowledge** in the scene.

We found that it's **not just about going with** a group, but **finding the right one**.

# NEXT STEPS

1

## DIVERSIFY

Conduct more interviews with a wider variety of people.

2

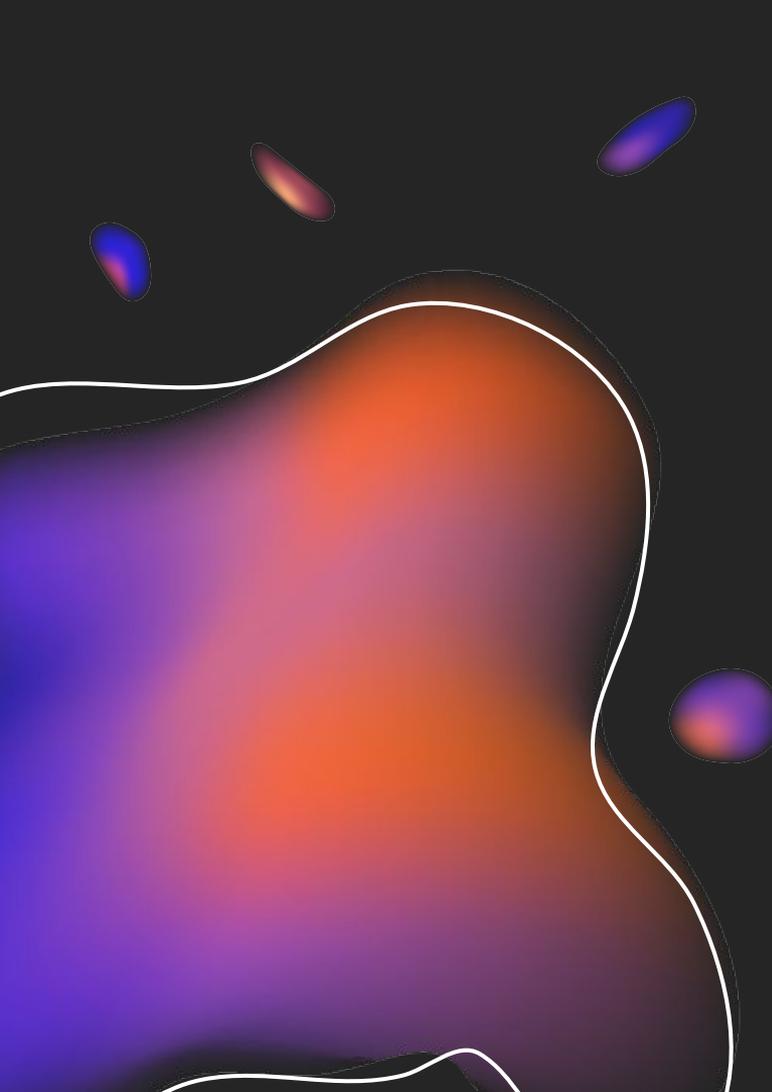
## FOCUS

Narrow down domain of interest and establish problem space.

3

## DEFINE

Generate POVs and HMW statements.



# THANKS!

Questions?

Contact us!

[sofiakim@stanford.edu](mailto:sofiakim@stanford.edu)

[smoua@stanford.edu](mailto:smoua@stanford.edu)

[tmquach@stanford.edu](mailto:tmquach@stanford.edu)

[gabreu@stanford.edu](mailto:gabreu@stanford.edu)