

# ADDITIONAL NEED FINDING + EXPERIENCE PROTOTYPES

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# BURNOUT BUSTERS



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# RECAP

## LAST WEEK

Initial need finding where we explored stress in a diverse set of users

## THIS WEEK

Additional needfinding, How Might We's, and experience prototypes to narrow down our solution

REFINED DOMAIN:

**BURNOUT**

**Narrowing in from “stress” to burnout: a state of utter mental exhaustion that happens after a period of prolonged stress**

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Appendix

# Part one

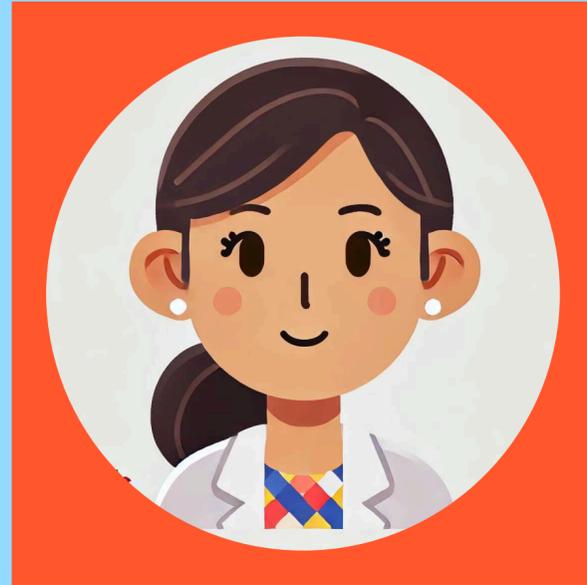


## PARTICIPANT 1



The Supported Engineer—after transitioning from a high-pressure startup to a more progressive corporate environment, his burnout lessened, illustrating how workplace culture can be key in preventing exhaustion.

## PARTICIPANT 2



The Compassionate Healer—while she finds deep satisfaction in helping her patients, the rigid structure of the healthcare system and lack of flexibility drive her toward frequent burnout, leaving her feeling trapped despite her efforts to reset through venting and running.

## PARTICIPANT 3



The Well-Being Warrior—while he has cultivated physically healthy habits, his burnout persists due to relational and work stress, showing that exercise alone isn't enough to stave off mental strain.

## PARTICIPANT 4



The Distracted Innovator—despite his passion for technology, his burnout is fueled by the digital distractions that pull him away from his core work, leaving him drained by excessive screen time.



# PARTICIPANT 1

The Supported Engineer  
33 yr old engineer at raytheon

**Location:** Cal-Train

**Interviewing Team:**

Jessica (Interviewer) & Ingrid (Notetaker)

**Reason for Selection:** to learn how workplace culture shifts can reduce burnout in high-pressure industries.

# Empathy map

# Empathy Map

**SAY**

- he is 15% stressed by work and 85% stressed by financial pressure
- Raytheon has a great culture of mental health where its easy to get days off
- This culture of prioritizing mental health overall net increases productivity despite the few who abuse the system
- Has had neck pains for the past 10 years of his life
- burnout ifor him is caused by external norms or managers the work or expectations
- He wants to practice better eating and sleep habits
- He goes to the gym 2 times a week
- mental health is very dependent on teh type of company and the speed at which they expect you to work specifically
- He wants to buy his fourth house soon
- was constantly stressed and burnt out at the startup he worked at because timelines were really fast

**THINK**

- He is not achieving the financial goals he had imagined for himself when he was younger
- More industries should be more considerate and open to mental health and burnout
- Management and culture in work is very important for feeling mentally healthy and long term staying invested
- He hasnt found any exercise that he finds enjoyable
- the hinge health app is a lot of fun because the more you do the more points you gain which means harder exercises unlocked
- His dog is a huge stress relief for him, and is a source of energy and positivity
- He use to do latin dance for many years but stopped recently and really misses it
- He has a very good work life balenace because he likes his working hours 10am-6pm
- He is in a stable position in life where he can start a family



**DO**

- Uses hinge health (provided by company) and has cured his neck pain through therapy videos
- Check his finance apps like banks and investment everyday multiple times
- Plays video games to take his mind off stress
- has tried many years of physical therapy but none of it worked for his neck until he started hinge health
- Is a very consistant well research investor with a medium risk tolerance
- Creates financial timelines and plans very frequently
- he was in the airforce and felt like the constant physical push and academic and work pressure was very stressful
- Does a home renovation and this is a stress reliever for him
- get about 7-9 hours of sleep everynight and sleeps around 12 every night
- Takes his dog out for a walk every other day

**FEEL**

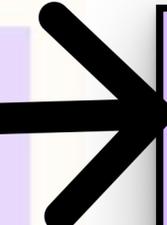
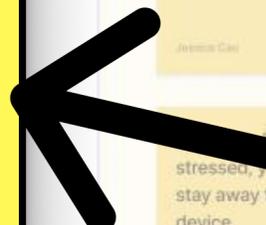
- He should practice gratitude more because it will make him less finanically stressed
- Very grateful that the culture at the company prevents any burnout from happening
- Very grateful towards the app hinge health
- His day to day of quality of life has improved because his neck pains are gone
- Like he doesnt really like to talk when he is stressed, because he should deal with it on his own
- under pressure to perform and contribute at work because his team impressive and its a technical domain
- He needs to be in good shape because he wants to be a father in the next few years
- triggered into financial stress due to constantly checking accounts
- he can save more by eating in but it would be a sacrifice of taking more time
- Discouraged to workout more because its hard for him to put on muscle

burnout for him is caused by external norms or managers that assign work or expectations

Uses hinge health (provided by company) and has cured his neck pain through therapy videos

the hinge health app is a lot of fun because the more you do the more points you gain which means harder exercises unlocked

Very grateful that the culture at the company prevents any burnout from happening





# PARTICIPANT 2

The Compassionate Healer  
46 yr old primary care doctor

**Location:** In-Person

**Interviewing Team:**

Ethan (Interviewer) & Ingrid (Notetaker)

**Reason for Selection:** o understand  
burnout in healthcare, where rigid  
schedules and lack of flexibility amplify  
stress.

# Empathy map

# Empathy Map

**SAY**

- Dealing with stress is like
- She loves to travel but its really hard to get time off. for example she has no break for christmas
- All of her stress is from work because there is constant need for her to contribute
- The hospital she works at is a 2 minute drive from her home
- She is a very new runner and its painful every start of her run
- Compares tolerance to stress at work to a callous, you just have to grow thicker skin
- She eats a very healthy diet and likes to cook
- She really loves to hike and enjoy nature, but doesnt have enough time
- She really wants to always live close to her parents
- It is sometimes exhausting how much her parents depend on her

**DO**

- comes home everyday at lunch to get a mental break
- She works every day at 8-5 so she has to sleep by 10 every night
- She goes on runs everyday and tracks them on strava
- Rants to her friends whenever she feels stressed about work
- Recently changed the hospital she works at because she didnt like the previous culture
- Does not engage much with health tracking apps even though she feels comfortable with technology
- She frequently takes care of her parents and talks to them everyday
- Go a kitten recently and is obsessed
- frequently hosts events and parties at her house because it makes her happy to bring friends together
- Takes weekend trips to different national parks and preserves



**THINK**

- Burnout is very natural and common in healthcare but she has to just suck it up
- Strava is very easy and nice to use, and that its very addicting and almost an incentive to run
- Social media is both an escape and an inducer of stress. thinks theres a golden zone
- Hiking is her favorite physical activity, but she wouldnt want to spend more than a few hours outdoor
- petting and cuddling with her kitten is very soothing but cleaning after the cat is stressful
- The healthcare system should find ways to allow workers to take care of their mental health more
- About transition into tech because she would like more work life balance
- Running has been a great way for her to be active since she does not like going to the gym
- Though she wants changes in the health care, she feels hopeless that any change can happen
- The better her running gear the better it will make her feel even though it might just be an aesthetics difference

**FEEL**

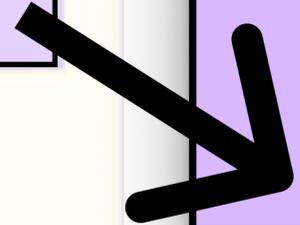
- Exhausted at work and its not a comfortable place for her to relax
- She dislikes the business, economic incentives in the health care industry which makes her less satisfied at work
- She needs to be active in order to fit in with her friends
- she is a really slow runner and wants to get faster
- The rigidity in the health care system takes its toll on her mental health in cycles
- very satisfied when she is helping patients and this is her primary motivation
- Like she needs to do a better job at optimizing sleep. She gets enough hours but still feels unrested
- Really grateful that she a strong support system with her friends
- Though she likes cooking, due to feeling tired form work, thinking about what shes going to eat is another small stress
- She really likes going hiking to pretty places and feels cooler to her friends after posting these photos

Compares tolerance to stress at work to a callous, you just have to grow thicker skin

Rants to her friends whenever she feels stressed about work

Though she wants changes in the health care, she feels hopeless that any change can happen

Really grateful that she a strong support system with her friends





# PARTICIPANT 3

The Well-Being Warrior

55- year old real-estate Developer

**Location:** In-Person

**Interviewing Team:**

Julia (Interviewer) and Ingrid (Note-taker)

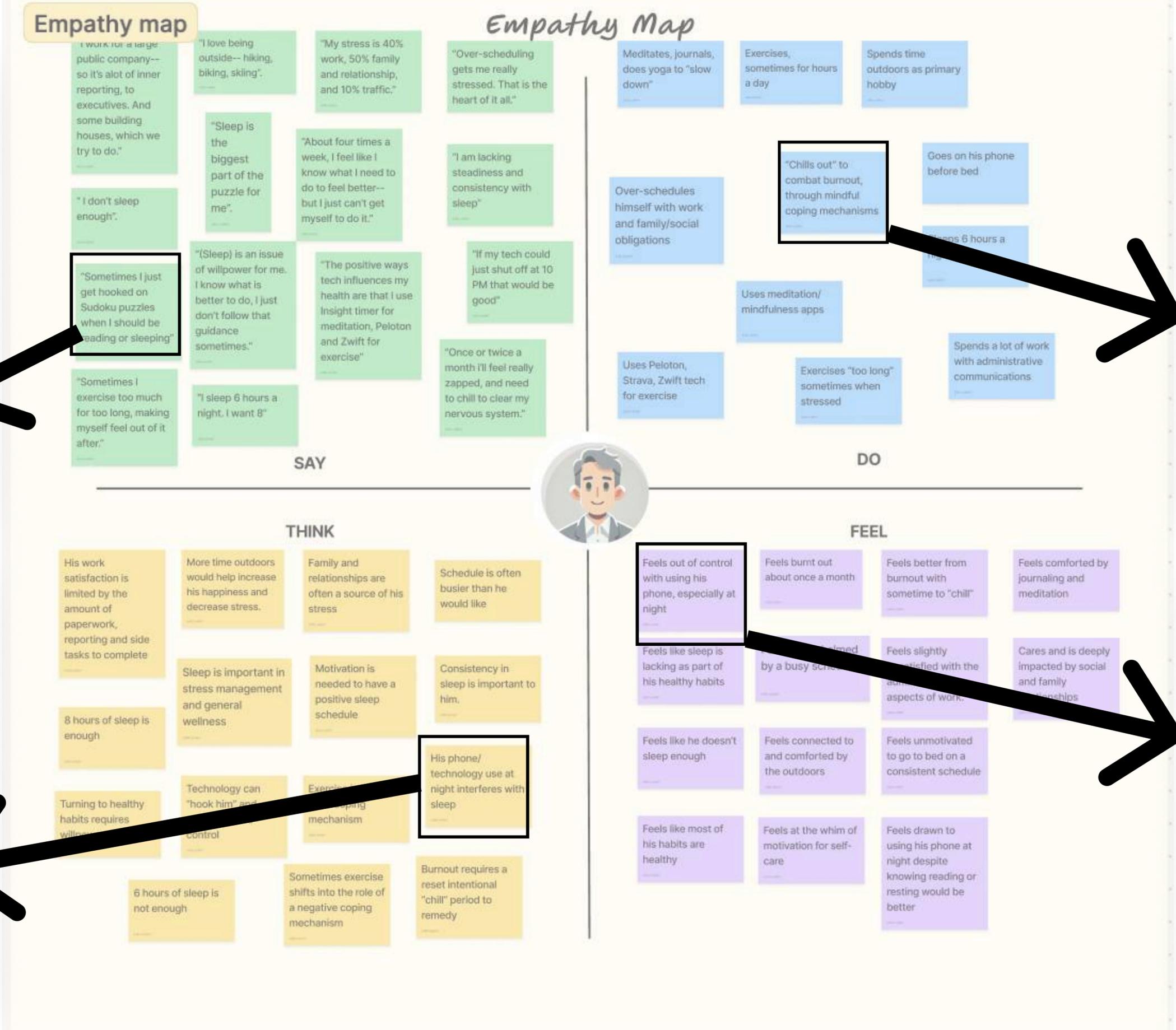
**Reason for Selection:** To see how physical well-being can coexist with persistent burnout from work and relational stress.

### Empathy map

### Empathy Map

“ I get hooked on (online) Sudoku when I should be reading or sleeping”

Technology use at night interferes with sleep



Needs to “chill out” once a month to combat burnout

Feels out of control with using his phone, especially at night



# PARTICIPANT 4

The Distracted Innovator  
20 yr old Startup founder

**Location:** SF Hackathon

**Interviewing Team:**

Ethan (Interviewer), Jessica (Notetaker)

**Reason for Selection:** explore how digital distractions and constant connectivity in tech lead to burnout. Also, enjoys working out 4x a week.

# Empathy Map

“Burnout goes crazy man ... I look at the same digital device [for everything], at least 10+ hours a day”

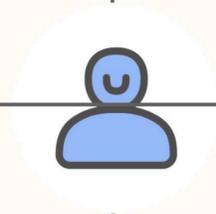
"It's like this never-ending loop of desperation ... I go to bed and think I gotta do this over again and again but for how long"	"It sounds a bit weird, but sometimes I spend a few mins chatting to an AI [ChatGPT] about my personal problems"	"I find myself always distracted when working fidgeting with social apps, games, and entertainment"	"Burnout goes crazy man ... I look at the same digital device [for everything], at least 10+ hours a day"
"It's super hard to balance this fine line between work and life"	"... I'm the CEO of ... All once say that work-life balance is myth ... I've felt this with burnout"	"On the occasion, doom scrolling does relieve temporary stress but it causes much more after"	
"Talking to friends is the great ... I hear their problems and feel better about mine"	"Scheduling work outs is also hard, its tough to find motivation"	"I like to run in my joggers ... helps me forget the problems and stress"	

SAY

Goes to exercise regularly, aims for 4x a week at the gym	Creates a list of things she wants to do in a day: taking, getting ice cream, and going to her happy place	Consumes alcohol once or twice a month, not big help with reducing burnout	Chatting with close friends & hash out problems together ... similar to group therapy
works from 8am - 5pm on the daily (some weekends are off), needs to finish all the work assigned	Spends a lot of times on digital devices / screens: post & during work is spending 12+ hours a day	Enjoys "bumming around" and just mooching at home to relax and spend time with family	Constantly eating quick meals and ordering from services like DoorDash and Uber Eats, due to demand
Watches a lot of "brainrot" reels and doomscrolling, which is oddly therapeutic but stressful	Doesn't pursue many hobbies and is limited by	Sleep overtime, trapped in weird sleep cycles with	

DO

Watches a lot of “brainrot” reels and doomscrolling, which is oddly therapeutic but stressful after



THINK

3D CAD works is extremely tiring for the eye	Its reassuring to hear about other's people's burnout	Alcohol is a temporary relief from the stressful post-work burnout	Use of tech (specifically screen time) makes the burnout worse especially with long hours.
the most important topics in person health are time management, stress, and burnout	Burnout is a complex problem that occurs in states	there is big potential with AI, from chatting as a therapist which works surprisingly well	
Finding your happy place (where you are most relaxed) helps you prepare to tackle your problems	Excessive screen time from digital distraction leads to digital burnout & stress	The mental hotlines today suck and provide inadequate assurance	

FEEL

Emotionally & physically tired often after work	Tired to a point where sleep comes before other priorities (eating or meeting with friends)	His eyesight is also deteriorating in quality which makes him spend more time on devices	Anxious about stress overload from work & other cases in the future
Grateful for his friends personal chats & advice	Exhaustion from long work weeks and sometimes several one-nighters	Enjoys exercise and the mood boosts (elevated happiness) from working out	Loves the collaborative work environment when multiple individuals simultaneously work on a task
when consuming alcohol, this slight guilt and regret with his behaviors & the post-consequences	Pressured to adopt better habits from peers who spend much less time	Sometimes trapped in a simulation & matrix that he can't win when he works extreme hours	

Finding your happy place (where you are most relaxed) helps you prepare to tackle your problems

Pressured to adopt better habits from peers who spend much less time on devices and have b...

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## **Rigid Structures Amplify Burnout Across Industries:**

WHETHER IT'S HEALTHCARE, ACADEMIA, OR TECH, RIGID SCHEDULES AND INFLEXIBLE SYSTEMS EXACERBATE STRESS BY LIMITING PERSONAL CONTROL AND RECOVERY TIME. THIS HIGHLIGHTS THAT LACK OF FLEXIBILITY IS A KEY DRIVER OF BURNOUT ACROSS DIVERSE FIELDS.

## **Physical Health Alone Isn't Enough**

DESPITE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN PHYSICAL WELL-BEING THROUGH ACTIVITIES PEOPLE STILL EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT BURNOUT. THIS SUGGESTS THAT WHILE PHYSICAL HEALTH PRACTICES MAY HELP ALLEVIATE STRESS, THEY DON'T ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING EMOTIONAL OR RELATIONAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO BURNOUT.

## **Technology Amplifies Burnout Through Constant Distraction:**

DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS, ESPECIALLY FROM SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT APPS, ARE A MAJOR DRIVER OF BURNOUT IN TECH-SAVVY ENVIRONMENTS.

**POVs**

**HMIWs**



# INITIAL POV

**We met** Sarah, a PhD student in Biochemistry

**We were surprised to hear that** she gets anxious when she perceives herself as failing to complete a sleep goal.

**We wondered if this means that** she might need support in letting her sleep regulation putting unnecessary pressure on herself in regulating sleep

**It would be game changing to** make her excited about getting good sleep instead of anxious about failing.

#### HMW - 1

1. How might we encourage Sarah to view disruptions as a challenge instead of turmoil?
2. How might we reduce Sarah's sleep anxiety?
3. How might we provide an outlet for Sarah's anxiety?
4. How might we show Sarah she's not alone?
5. How might we consolidate Sarah's many habits into one place?
6. How might we make Sarah feel like she has more control over her rituals?
7. How might we give Sarah an alternative to prevent burnout?
8. How might we empower Sarah to feel more secure about her abilities?
9. How might we warn Sarah when she's about to enter burnout?
10. How might we predict when Sarah might burn out so she doesn't have to worry so much?
11. How might we help Sarah manage her sleep habits without letting them become a source of stress?
12. How might we reduce the anxiety that comes from trying to control pre-sleep rituals?
13. How might we encourage a more flexible approach to sleep habits that promotes good sleep quality?
14. How might we help Sarah build confidence in her ability to get to bed when she can't follow all her rituals?
15. How might we develop tools that help track sleep without adding to her stress?
16. How might we promote a mindset that sees sleep habits as goals rather than rules?
17. How might we help Sarah separate her sleep quality from her productivity in every aspect of her routine?
18. How might we create strategies that allow Sarah to sleep better without her pre-sleep rituals?
19. How might we encourage Sarah to be more adaptive with her sleep habits to reduce stress?
20. How might we create tools or resources that focus on sleep quality without triggering control-based anxiety?

#### POV-2

**We met** Connor, a college dropout & startup founder previously at UCLA. **We were surprised** to notice that, despite Connor's deep passion for technology, he felt stressed and deeply dissatisfied not with the work itself, but with his excessive screen time on social media and entertainment apps that he found himself drawn to during work. **We wonder** if this means that despite his passion for technology, the constant pressure to constantly engage and stay connected – specifically, his hours spent on digital distractions and inability to detach from non-essential digital interactions – is causing him to experience burnout. **It would be game changing** to help Connor cut through the noise of non-work related digital use, allowing him to focus without the emotional toll of constant connectivity.

#### HMW - 2

1. How might we help technology enthusiasts like Connor manage screen time without compromising their productivity?
2. How might we design tools that allow tech-focused individuals to balance their passion for innovation with healthier habits?
3. How might we reduce the pressure for startup founders to constantly engage with technology?
4. How might we create systems that monitor and alleviate the stress caused by excessive screen time?
5. How might we develop habits or routines that help Connor stay productive while limiting unnecessary screen exposure?
6. How might we encourage tech workers to disconnect from screens without feeling like they're missing out on work?
7. How might we design tools that help tech professionals establish healthy boundaries between productive screen time and leisure?
8. How might we create systems that help tech professionals manage the stress he experiences from digital distractions during startup work?
9. How might we design tools that help tech professionals find moments in the day for tech professionals to recharge and disconnect from screens?
10. How might we encourage managers in developing healthier work environments that support tech workers' mental health and reduce their connectivity?

# TOP THREE POVs

#### POV-1

**We met** Sarah, a biochemistry PhD candidate at Stanford who walks a thin line between healthy stress and burnout. **We were surprised** to notice she keeps careful track of sleep quality and pre-sleep habits, but this concern about her sleep is causing her even more stress than the actual sleep itself is. **We wonder** if this means she's ultimately terrified of losing control over her rituals. **It would be game changing** to help Sarah manage her stress and sleep habits without letting them become a source of stress.

#### POV-4

##### Julia Bonham Luyten POV

**We met** Tim, a real estate developer from Palo Alto who loves the outdoors as a mode of stress reduction (context: we met him while hiking the dish.) **We were surprised** to notice that despite having a daily exercise and meditation routine, Tim still feels burnt out from being overwhelmed by relational/work stress at least once every month, and has to take a step back from responsibilities when he experiences this. **We wonder** if this means burnout is not effectively prevented by physically healthy habits alone. **It would be game-changing** if Tim could identify what the proper mitigation strategy of his burnout is.

##### How might we's for Tim:

- How might we help reduce Tim's daily stress load?
- How might we motivate Tim to engage in stress-reducing activities?
- How might we track Tim's risk for burnout?
- How might we make Tim's schedule more smoothly organized?

**It would be game changing** if managers and fellow employees have the power to prevent burnout by setting work norms. It would be game changing to implement these healthy work values at other companies.

# TOPS THREE HMW's

#### POV-3

**We met** Ziliang, a 32 year old engineer at Raytheon who used to frequently get burnt out when he worked at a startup. He is from Boston but was in San Francisco to visit family because it's easy for him to get time off. **We were surprised** to notice that Raytheon, an older established defense company, was more progressive about mental health than a new tech startup. **We wonder** if this culture at his current work place makes him feel safe to express his exhaustion. **We wonder** if this means managers and fellow employees have the power to prevent burnout by setting work norms. **It would be game changing** to implement these healthy work values at other companies.

##### emotional and relational factors?

5. How might we create tools to help Tim manage relational stress more effectively in his personal and professional life?
6. How might we explore methods for Tim to integrate mental and emotional resilience practices into his routine?
7. How might we support Tim in managing work-related stress without having to completely step back from responsibilities?
8. How might we design a flexible framework that helps Tim handle monthly stress spikes in a more sustainable way?
9. How might we encourage Tim to take proactive steps in managing relational stress before it leads to burnout?
10. How might we create strategies for Tim to combine his physical health routine with new approaches to mental and emotional well-being?

##### risk of burnout?

7. How might we foster a company culture that values mental health as much as productivity?
8. How might we train employees to recognize burnout symptoms in themselves and their colleagues?
9. How might we create a workplace environment that normalizes taking mental health breaks?
10. How might we encourage peer-to-peer support within companies to help prevent burnout?

# POV #1

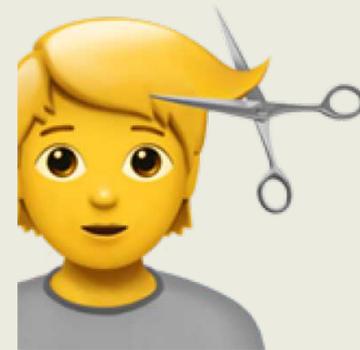
**We met:** Sarah, a biochemistry PhD candidate at Stanford who walks a thin line between healthy stress and burnout..

**We were surprised to notice:** she keeps careful track of sleep quality and pre-sleep habits, but this concern about her sleep is causing her even more stress than the actual sleep itself.

**We wonder if this means:** wonder if this means she's ultimately terrified of losing control over her rituals.

**It would be game changing to:** for her to feel more peaceful when her rituals are disrupted.

1. HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE SARAH TO VIEW DISRUPTIONS AS A CHALLENGE INSTEAD OF TURMOIL?
2. HOW MIGHT WE REDUCE SARAH'S SLEEP ANXIETY?
3. HOW MIGHT WE PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR SARAH'S ANXIETY?
4. HOW MIGHT WE SHOW SARAH SHE'S NOT ALONE?
5. HOW MIGHT WE CONSOLIDATE SARAH'S MANY HABITS INTO ONE PLACE?
6. HOW MIGHT WE MAKE SARAH FEEL LIKE SHE HAS MORE CONTROL OVER HER RITUALS?
7. HOW MIGHT WE GIVE SARAH AN ALTERNATIVE TO PREVENT BURNOUT?
8. HOW MIGHT WE EMPOWER SARAH TO FEEL MORE SECURE ABOUT HER ABILITIES?
9. HOW MIGHT WE WARN SARAH WHEN SHE'S ABOUT TO ENTER BURNOUT?
10. HOW MIGHT WE PREDICT WHEN SARAH MIGHT BURN OUT SO SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO WORRY SO MUCH?
11. HOW MIGHT WE HELP SARAH MANAGE HER SLEEP HABITS WITHOUT LETTING THEM BECOME A SOURCE OF STRESS?
12. HOW MIGHT WE REDUCE THE ANXIETY THAT COMES FROM TRYING TO CONTROL PRE-SLEEP RITUALS?
13. HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO SLEEP HABITS THAT PROMOTES GOOD SLEEP QUALITY?
14. HOW MIGHT WE HELP SARAH BUILD CONFIDENCE IN HER ABILITY TO GET GOOD SLEEP, EVEN WHEN SHE CAN'T FOLLOW ALL HER RITUALS?
15. HOW MIGHT WE DEVELOP TOOLS THAT HELP TRACK SLEEP WITHOUT ADDING STRESS OR PRESSURE TO MEET SPECIFIC METRICS?
16. HOW MIGHT WE PROMOTE A MINDSET THAT SEES SLEEP HABITS AS GUIDELINES, RATHER THAN STRICT RULES?
17. HOW MIGHT WE HELP SARAH SEPARATE HER SLEEP QUALITY FROM HER ANXIETY ABOUT CONTROLLING EVERY ASPECT OF HER ROUTINE?
18. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE STRATEGIES THAT ALLOW SARAH TO SLEEP BETTER WITHOUT OBSESSING OVER HER PRE-SLEEP RITUALS?
19. HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE SARAH TO BE MORE ADAPTIVE WITH HER SLEEP HABITS IN WAYS THAT REDUCE STRESS?
20. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE TOOLS OR RESOURCES THAT FOCUS ON SLEEP QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WITHOUT TRIGGERING CONTROL-BASED ANXIETY?



# **HMW #1**

How might we encourage people to be more adaptive with their sleep habits in ways that reduce stress?

# POV #2

**We met:** Connor, a college dropout & startup founder previously at UCLA.

**We were surprised to notice:** that, despite Connor's deep passion for technology, he felt stressed and deeply dissatisfied not with the work itself, but with his excessive screen time on social and entertainment apps that he found himself drawn to during work.

**We wonder if this means:** the constant pressure to engage and stay connected – 12+ hours spent on digital distractions and inability to detach from non-essential digital interactions – is causing him to experience burnout.

**It would be game changing to:** help Connor cut through the noise of non-work related digital use, allowing him to focus without the emotional toll of constant connectivity.

1. HOW MIGHT WE HELP TECHNOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS LIKE CONNOR MANAGE SCREEN TIME WITHOUT COMPROMISING THEIR PRODUCTIVITY?
2. HOW MIGHT WE DESIGN TOOLS THAT ALLOW TECH-FOCUSED INDIVIDUALS TO BALANCE THEIR PASSION FOR INNOVATION WITH HEALTHIER HABITS?
3. HOW MIGHT WE REDUCE THE PRESSURE FOR STARTUP FOUNDERS TO CONSTANTLY ENGAGE WITH TECHNOLOGY?
4. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE SYSTEMS THAT MONITOR AND ALLEVIATE THE STRESS CAUSED BY EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME?
5. HOW MIGHT WE DEVELOP HABITS OR ROUTINES THAT HELP CONNOR STAY PRODUCTIVE WHILE LIMITING UNNECESSARY SCREEN EXPOSURE?
6. HOW MIGHT WE EMPOWER TECH WORKERS TO DISCONNECT FROM SCREENS WITHOUT FEELING LIKE THEY'RE FALLING BEHIND?
7. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE A MORE MINDFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY FOR THOSE WHO ARE DEEPLY IMMERSED IN IT?
8. HOW MIGHT WE HELP CONNOR ESTABLISH HEALTHY BOUNDARIES BETWEEN PRODUCTIVE SCREEN TIME AND DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS?
9. HOW MIGHT WE HELP CONNOR ALLEVIATE THE STRESS HE EXPERIENCES FROM DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS LIKE ENTERTAINMENT AND FOCUS ON HIS STARTUP WORK?
10. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE SPACES OR MOMENTS IN THE DAY FOR TECH PROFESSIONALS TO RECHARGE AWAY FROM SCREENS?
11. HOW MIGHT WE SUPPORT STARTUP FOUNDERS IN DEVELOPING HEALTHIER WORK ENVIRONMENTS THAT REDUCE STRESS CAUSED BY CONSTANT CONNECTIVITY?

## **HMW #2**

How might we create a more mindful relationship with technology for those who are deeply immersed in it?

# POV #3

**We met:** Tim, a real estate developer from Palo Alto who loves the outdoors as a mode of stress reduction (context: we met him while hiking the dish.)

**We were surprised to notice:** despite having a daily exercise and meditation routine, Tim still feels burnt out from being overwhelmed by relational/work stress at least once every month, and has to take a step back from responsibilities when he experiences this.

**We wonder if this means:** burnout is not effectively prevented by physically healthy habits alone

**It would be game changing to:** identify what the proper mitigation strategy of his burnout is.

1. HOW MIGHT WE HELP TIM IDENTIFY NON-PHYSICAL STRATEGIES TO MANAGE RELATIONAL AND WORK-RELATED STRESS?
2. HOW MIGHT WE DEVELOP A BURNOUT PREVENTION SYSTEM THAT GOES BEYOND PHYSICAL HEALTH HABITS LIKE EXERCISE AND MEDITATION?
3. HOW MIGHT WE HELP TIM RECOGNIZE THE EARLY SIGNS OF BURNOUT BEFORE THEY BECOME OVERWHELMING?
4. HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO STRESS MANAGEMENT THAT INCLUDES EMOTIONAL AND RELATIONAL FACTORS?
5. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE TOOLS TO HELP TIM MANAGE RELATIONAL STRESS MORE EFFECTIVELY IN HIS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?
6. HOW MIGHT WE EXPLORE METHODS FOR TIM TO INTEGRATE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE PRACTICES INTO HIS ROUTINE?
7. HOW MIGHT WE SUPPORT TIM IN MANAGING WORK-RELATED STRESS WITHOUT HAVING TO COMPLETELY STEP BACK FROM RESPONSIBILITIES?
8. HOW MIGHT WE DESIGN A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK THAT HELPS TIM HANDLE MONTHLY STRESS SPIKES IN A MORE SUSTAINABLE WAY?
9. HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE TIM TO TAKE PROACTIVE STEPS IN MANAGING RELATIONAL STRESS BEFORE IT LEADS TO BURNOUT?
10. HOW MIGHT WE CREATE STRATEGIES FOR TIM TO COMBINE HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH ROUTINE WITH NEW APPROACHES TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?
11. HOW MIGHT WE HELP REDUCE TIM'S DAILY STRESS LOAD?
12. HOW MIGHT WE MOTIVATE TIM TO ENGAGE IN STRESS-REDUCING ACTIVITIES?
13. HOW MIGHT WE TRACK TIM'S RISK FOR BURNOUT?
14. HOW MIGHT WE MAKE TIM'S SCHEDULE MORE SMOOTHLY ORGANIZED?
15. HOW MIGHT WE HELP TIM COMPARTMENTALIZE HIS RELATIONSHIP STRESSORS?

## HMW #3

How might we develop a burnout prevention system that goes beyond physical health habits like exercise and meditation?

# Part three



How might we encourage people to be more **adaptive with their sleep habits** in ways that reduce stress?

How might we create a more **mindful relationship with technology** for those who are deeply immersed in it?

How might we develop a burnout prevention system that goes **beyond physical health habits** like exercise and meditation?



# **1) A social media app to share your screen time & stake with your friends.**

- Give control of your screen time to your friends
- Make bets to improve your habits & disciplines
- Participate in weekly app-wide competitions and compete with friends
- Have streaks and stats boards for each profile.

## **2) Physical box with digital app meant to remove tech before bed.**

- Serves as room decor.
- Put your phone in at night to be closed in
- Offers phased lighting to match circadian rhythm
- Put your phone in while doing homework, and an hourglass will count down (pomodoro)
- Plant/grass/flower, “feeding” it ur phone
- Accompanying app to set sleep time, study time, track/reward.
- Customizable material – wood, metal, glass, animals/plants/ colors/fuzzy for kids.

### **3) Aromatherapy subscription (app & physical product)**

- Users take an in-app quiz for preferences & get essences tailed to them monthly.
- The app sends reminders to meditate & breathe.
- The app partners with suppliers to send users calming or revitalizing essential oils that match their burnout profile (e.g., lavender for stress relief, peppermint for clarity, citrus for energy)

# Part four

# 4

EXPERIENCE  
PROTOTYPES



# OUR PROTOTYPES

Screen Time  
Social Media

Digital Detox  
Box

Aromatherapy

**SCREEN**

**TIME**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

# Screen Time Social Media

Inspired by Strava – sharing screen & staking: an interactive **social app that lets you make bets with friends to “stake” money for screen-time habits.**

ASSUMPTION:

Gamifying healthy habits makes users more likely to stay consistent

1. USERS WHO WORK HARD AT NIGHT (AFTER 10PM, PRESUMABLY CORRELATED TO STRESS), WERE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN A “GAME” WHERE THEY STAKED MONEY TO INFLUENCE THEIR SCREEN TIME HABITS.
2. USERS PAID UPFRONT AND WERE ASKED TO ADJUST THEIR SCREEN TIME TO AN AMOUNT THAT MADE SENSE, SAY 3 HOURS → 2 HOURS ON TIKTOK AND THEN ASKED TO PUT SOME MONETARY UPFRONT (\$10 / \$20).
3. AFTER 24 HOURS:
  - IF THE USER ACHIEVED THEIR GOAL, THE MONEY WAS RETURNED.
  - IF NOT, THEY LOST THE MONEY.

Before: 3 hours



After: 44 mins





## MICHELLE

**Who:** Columbae resident, 22 units, grinding out 2 projects this week

**Relevance:** avg 3 hours a day on Tik Tok (on the higher end)

# R E S U L T S

### What worked:

- Michelle: 3 hrs -> 44 min
  - staked \$10
- Jonathan: 1.5 hours -> 1 hour
  - staked \$20
- Users noted they were “more productive” and “less guilty” after

### What didn't work:

1. “It lowkey worked” but would need to be tested on longer periods to measure digital burnout effects
2. Some users were confused why they were putting up their own money to get it back

### Learnings

- Monetary incentives are effective to reduce digital engagement
- Staking (money upfront) kept users conscious of their digital distractions
- Users would be more inclined to play if they could earn

### Moving Forward:

We want to continue to push our users by making a multi-player competition out of it and expand it to more complex digital habits

**DIGITAL**

**DETOX**

**BOX**

# Digital Detox Box

A sleek, white opaque box designed as an elegant piece of room decor, with the primary purpose of encouraging tech-free nights by storing your phone before bed. It serves as a productivity tool during work or study sessions—place your phone inside, and watch a plant or animal grow with each hour of no phone usage

ASSUMPTION:

Users will actually  
keep their phone  
in the box

User was tasked to place their phone in a box while they did 1 hour of homework, and their behavior and feelings were analyzed and debriefed





**Gaby**

**Who:** Stanford Coterm

**Relevance:** Has a hard time concentrating because of her phone usage



**Daniel**

**Who:** Stanford Coterm

**Relevance:** Wants to detox from his excessive social media usage

# RESULTS

## What worked:

- Putting their phone in the box was an intentional act that made them feel good about their productivity (it made them **feel more productive**)
- “Out of sight, out of mind” idea worked - not seeing their phone by their side made them think about it less
- Liked the physical action of putting their phone in the box

## What didn't work:

- Still hard to deal with urges to go on their phone
- They got **notifications** on their computer that made them want to go on their phone
  - Only having the box wasn't enough of a deterrent to avoid checking the phone after a really strong urge, but this only happened one time

## Learnings:

- Also should put their phone on do not disturb so that they don't hear the notification
- Because it was so easy to put their phone in the box when it was right next to them, they felt more motivated to do it

## Moving Forward:

- We want to find a way to manage notifications
- make the box an aesthetic statement
- add positive reinforcement for putting phone in

**AROMATHERAPY**

# Aromatherapy Subscription

Users take an in-app quiz for preferences & get essences tailed to them monthly. The app sends reminders to meditate & breathe. The app partners with suppliers to send users calming or revitalizing essential oils that match their burnout profile (e.g., lavender for stress relief, peppermint for clarity, citrus for energy)

ASSUMPTION:

Users think  
essential oils do  
something to help  
with stress

We ask high-stress users (working at night) to have essential oils in their space for 2 hours. After 2 hours, we evaluated whether their stress levels had decreased.





## Numair R

Relevance: Stanford Econ Undergrad student  
with coursework burnout

# R E S U L T S

### What worked:

- The essential oils were immediately relaxing to the user
  - They were easy to administer topically -- applied to the user's wrist

### What didn't work:

- The essential oils had only a short-term effect
  - User complained of headaches from the strength of the product

### Learnings

- Essential oils may only be a short-term solution to stress
- Users may not have long-term improvements from anything other than placebo

### Moving Forward:

- Essential oils may only be a short-term solution to stress
  - Finding another way to administer the essential oils like a diffuser might make their effects last longer

**Part Five**

**Whats  
next**

**5**

Screen Time  
Social Media

Digital Detox  
Box

Aromatherapy

**SOLUTION WE ARE  
MOVING FORWARD WITH**

# Screen Time Social Media



## Ethical Considerations

- 1) **Privacy:** Sharing screen time data may expose sensitive information, leading to potential misuse.
- 2) **Mental Health & Gambling Risks:** Public comparisons, social pressure, and financial betting could increase stress, lower self-esteem, and lead to unhealthy ha...

## Who is included/excluded

- 1) **Motivated & Social Users:** Tech-savvy, competitive individuals who thrive on accountability and community support.
- 2) **Who It Doesn't Serve:** Privacy-conscious users, those with compulsive tendencies, and people facing financial difficulties may str...

**6**

**Appendix**

# Solution brainstorming

Each of our top 3:

Jess:

1. **App that hands off permissions for your screen time to a friend**, allowing you to control each other's use. 🧐👤👤
  - a. Strava1 for screen time
  - b. Has a betting feature/ stake money
2. **Sleep Pattern Experimentation App**: Develop an app that helps Sarah experiment with different sleep patterns 🧐👤
  - a. So many people don't understand the sleep they need
  - b. We are all just told 7-8 hours but everyone's body is so different. Can easily find optimal schedule through experimentation
    - i. Sleep changes during different hormonal changes
3. **Digital Detox Hourglass**: A physical hourglass that users turn over to activate a designated tech-free time period 🧐👤👤

Ethan:

- ~~AI sleep therapist~~ — can ask questions about sleep-related struggles, to vent and also to get concrete advice.
- **Staking money for non-work screen time.** 🇸🇪🧐👤👤 (creative) or the Detox one
- **Sensory healing/aromatherapy subscription service** 🧐👤👤

Ingrid:

- **Staking money for non-work screen time.** 🇸🇪🧐👤👤 (creative)
- **App that hands off permissions for your screen time to a friend**, allowing you to control each other's use. 🧐👤👤
- **Pre-Sleep Digital Detox Box**: Promote screen free environment. 🧐

Julia:

11. **Pre-Sleep Digital Detox Box**: Promote screen free environment. 🧐
  - o Built in alarm – displays calming music, could even build in circadian rhythm light elements. Plays meditations at night. Project sleep data/tips onto the wall? Could records a sleep journal out loud upon waking up
  - o Paired with an app
12. **App that hands off permissions for your screen time to a friend**, allowing you to control each other's use. 🧐👤👤
13. **Burnout Early Warning System**: Build an AI-driven tool that monitors behavioral patterns (like procrastination, irritability, or cognitive overload) to alert users when they're showing early signs of burnout, offering tailored strategies to mitigate it. 🧐

# Assumption brainstorming

Strava – sharing screen & staking: a social media app to share your screen time journey with your friends. You can give control of your screen time to your friends and even make bets with them on who can have the healthiest schedule. Participate in weekly app-wide competitions, and even stake your money on your discipline. We can have streaks and stats boards for each profile.

- **Gamifying healthy habits makes users more likely to stay consistent**
- People will take their screen time habits more seriously if they are staking money on it
- People will try to control their habits for the sake of public image and social pressure
- Competition with friends makes the app more addicting
- Friends will want to help their friends with screen time issues
- People will want to trust friends with control/knowledge over this
- Unhealthy screen time is correlated with procrastination and so prolonged screen time adds more stress for people which is why they want to change
- Based on what apps people use/ how people use their devices, you can connect with other people/friends and learn more about them: instant glimpse into their life
- Having a streak will motivate people to be consistent

Aromatherapy subscription (app & physical product) – users take an in-app quiz for preferences & get essences tailored to them monthly. The app sends reminders to meditate & breathe. The app partners with suppliers to send users calming or revitalizing essential oils that match their burnout profile (e.g., lavender for stress relief, peppermint for clarity, citrus for energy)

- Users are willing to spend money to relieve their stress and burnout
- People are willing to spend money on an essential oil as their stress reliever
- **Users think essential oils do something to help with stress**
- Users will know enough about preferences to take an informative quiz
- Users will use enough and consistently to have a subscription make sense
- Users value customized wellness products
- Users will listen to reminders to breathe or meditate
- Users will know their own burnout profile
- Users think aromatherapy is effective in reducing stress
- Users want outside help in relieving stress
- Users want to proactively prevent burnout

We ask high-stress users (working at night) and tell them to have this essential oil and see if they felt better after an hour or 2. Less stress

Hourglass (app & physical product). White opaque box, pretty looking, meant to serve as room decor. Primary intention is to put your phone in at night to be closed in and remove tech before bed. Offers phased lighting to match circadian rhythm and put you to sleep. Also functions as a productivity helper: you can put your phone in while doing homework, and an hourglass will count down/help you with pomodoro. plant/grass/flower, “feeding” it ur phone– if you take it out it kills the thing. Has an accompanying app to set sleep time, study time, track/reward. Customizable material – wood, metal, glass, animals/plants/colors/fuzzy for kids.

- Users will be motivated by keeping the little animal or plant alive
- It will be easier for users to wake up if there is some sort of lighting change
- Having a physical product in the room is a constant reminder and reason to be motivated. No excuse of forgetting
- **Users will actually keep their phone in the box**
- Users will want the object as room decor
- Users will not take their phone out of the box
- Users are concerned about technology’s impact on sleep
- Users will use the box every night
- Users will use the box during the day to be productive
- Users recognize that physically removing their phone from sight will improve focus

Prototype: User was tasked to place their phone in a box while they did 1 hour of homework, and their behavior and feelings were analyzed and debriefed

