

FROM CONCEPT TO ASSESSMENT

A CASE STUDY ON GAMES FOR MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNICATION

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CONTEXT: "FOR THE RECORDS" INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY

- DePaul University, Play 4 Change lab production
- 4 films, 4 games, 1 animation
- youth and mental health



GOAL

- promote understanding and dialogue



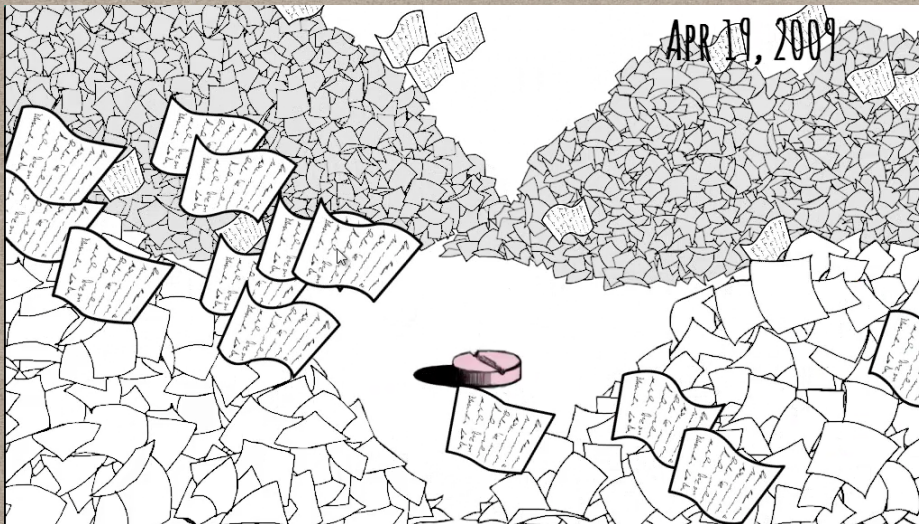
Eating Disorder



Bipolar Disorder



Attention Deficit Disorder



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Eating Disorder: "Perfection"



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: "Into Darkness"



USER STUDY WITH 16 THERAPISTS

- 15/16 played "Perfection" and "Into Darkness"
- Questionnaire/pre-interview for demographic info, experience with disorders, experience with games
- Gameplay session: observation with audio recording, talk aloud, note-taking, prompting
- Debriefing interview and reflection

FINDINGS


- usability is key
- lack of gameplay experience + usability issues = undermines common sense & game comprehension



ISSUES/INSIGHTS

- Use simple mechanics and consistent patterns
- Add an effective tutorial
- Provide clear feedback

metaphor comprehension in "Perfection" and "Into Darkness"

The background is a textured, yellowish-brown surface. Scattered throughout are various green plants, including clumps of grass, small flowers, and leafy bushes. Several butterflies in different colors (green, yellow, brown) are depicted in flight. There are also some white, shell-like objects on the ground. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

**But it is overgrown with weeds and infested by slugs.
Signs of weakness.**



Can you bring out the beauty? Can you make it perfect?



"[L]ike, a panic attack... just let it close...therapeutic environment, and then you learn you survive it, you're not really wallowing in pollution...and nothing happens to you. It gets worse and worse and worse, yet you're still there.

LESSONS LEARNT

- design for utmost usability and accessibility
 - test early with target audience
- choose a metaphor that is close to source
- prompt reflection
- design context of use

Back

This game is about enacting eating disorder behavior.
How do you play and what does it mean?



The garden is your physical
and emotional body; the
plant is your health; the box
stands for the eating disorder.



The slugs stand for emotions.



The weeds are unfavorably
perceived body parts.



Watering the garden represents
eating; eating brings
about unwanted emotions.



Scrubbing away slugs
stands for exercising.



The saturation meter indicates
how hungry you are.

The brown text on the screens between stages is the Eating Disorder Voice
*The yellow text represents the healthy inner voice
talking back to the Eating Disorder Voice*

thanks! questions?

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