

Mindfulness Project: Applications for Increasing the Practice of Mindfulness

Avery, Eileen, Isa, Nicole

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR TEAM'S DIRECTION

What we've learned

Our team aims to address the challenges of integrating mindfulness into the daily lives of individuals with limited exposure and awareness to the practice. While mindfulness is recognized for its positive impact on mental health and overall well-being, our research indicates a significant gap in participation—primarily due to barriers such as lack of awareness, accessibility, and tailored guidance for beginners.

An article from *Psychology Today* stated: “Overall, evidence suggests that mindfulness may help students cope with stress, anxiety, and depression. Implementing the best mindfulness-based intervention for your students, however, is where the challenge lies. Like most student support resources, the number one barrier is uptake, so consider how to encourage (but not coerce) students to participate. Finding ways to norm these activities through modeling or student testimonials may reduce stigma or skepticism around mindfulness-based practices.” After learning from articles similar to this one, we concluded that our primary focus would be to create an app that helps individuals increase their mindfulness activity by attacking one of the most common problems they face: where and how to begin.

Our goal

Our primary goal is to develop an application that introduces mindfulness practices in an accessible, personalized, and engaging way, allowing individuals to take their first steps toward mindfulness without pressure while also facilitating a personal desire to pursue mindful living.

Our target users

We decided to create an application targeting individuals who have had limited exposure to the concept and practice of mindfulness rather than a tool to enhance the experience of those who have already found ways to integrate mindfulness into their daily lives. We chose to prioritize beginners in our application design, as this group faces the most significant barriers to engaging with mindfulness practices. Unlike tools tailored to enhance the experience for the ones already in active practice, our app focuses on providing clear starting points, personalized activities, and accountability mechanisms for those just beginning their mindfulness journey.

Our additional focus on what is not seen

Our team's applications revolve around both the user and the provider. We realized in the middle of our creation process that there was another point of interest and an essential component of our goal towards an efficient and valuable application that needed to be addressed. With the catalyst of professional feedback, we realized that in order to create an app, you need creators. Therefore, we decided to think about the design of a back-end application that would serve as the behind-the-scenes hub for our main app: an app for organizations to input what you see in the front-end app. We will discuss this brainstorming and construction process for this idea later in our project discussion.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITY AREAS

We encountered many challenges along the way, but were also able to turn them into opportunity areas. We were fortunate enough to be able to speak to a diverse range of interviewees, guest designers, and clients that helped inform our decisions and design process.

FRONT-END APP

Many individuals are unaware of what mindfulness entails or where to begin practicing.

Our research revealed that people often feel lost by the unfamiliarity of mindfulness practices. A primary research interviewee expressed, “ I do think there could be more awareness about mindfulness, especially since not everyone knows what it is or how to get started.” We saw this as an opportunity to create an app that was simple in nature and straightforward. Mindfulness practices are

proven to improve emotional regulation and stress reduction, but only a fraction of people incorporate them due to lack of awareness and starting resources.

Mindfulness activities are often perceived as one-size-fits-all, deterring individuals who may not identify with traditional practices.

Another one of our primary research interviewees shared, “I understand that mindfulness has to have activities attached to it, but providing a range of activities that aren’t restraining will make mindfulness easier to approach. For instance, ORSEL hosts a “Pick your own adventure” event in which students can choose from a wide range of activities and practice mindfulness their own way.” We wanted to provide a diverse array of activities to suit individual preferences, allowing users to practice mindfulness in ways that feel natural and enjoyable for their own personal needs and desires.

Beginners often struggle to maintain consistent mindfulness habits due to a lack of external motivation.

When speaking with a guest designer, we received some insight on the issue of not only starting mindfulness practices but also maintaining them. She admitted that she enjoyed an app aimed at creating a healthier physical lifestyle, but when life got busy, she stopped opening the app and eventually stopped using it at all. In order to tackle the challenge of staying consistent, we incorporated features that encourage routine practice through gentle reminders, and easy ways to add events into one’s personal calendar. Therefore, its function and purpose is not closed to the app itself. It is able to extend into other applications that a user would already have more deeply integrated into their daily lives: their calendar.

BACK-END APP

The creation of our back end app

The idea of our back-end app came from a feedback session we had the opportunity to participate in. When describing an app idea, our guest brought up the technical reality that apps take a lot of work to actually make and maintain. They suggested the idea of potentially creating two iterations of our app: one that could be created with a high budget and one with a low one. They also prompted us to think about a challenge that we ended up pursuing and expanding on: How will your app continue to have updated and accurate information? How will your app get its information?

There is limited visibility of mindfulness events.

From our initial research, we discovered that many people are unaware of mindfulness practices happening in their surrounding communities. This presents an opportunity for organizers to actively promote their events and reach their target audience more effectively. Our backend app addresses this by enabling organizers to easily upload and advertise their events. This system incorporates tagging/filtering functionality to enhance discoverability for users on the front end, ensuring events are more visible to diverse audiences.

There is a lack of metrics and feedback for organizers.

During an interview with Mindy Choo, a participant in Mindfulness Week, we learned that navigating events was difficult due to the lack of consistent reminders and a centralized schedule. Mindy mentioned that it was hard to navigate all the events happening around the school. The events were spread around campus, and scheduling was tricky to manage. This highlighted an opportunity to collect and provide useful feedback and metrics through the backend app. By offering organizers data such as participant numbers and registration stats, they can evaluate what worked or didn't work and refine future events based on these insights.

A challenge is the complexity of event oversight and management.

Organizers often struggle to manage multiple events simultaneously while coordinating schedules to avoid conflicts. In an interview, Fabi Pineda shared that one major challenge during WashU's Mindfulness Week was optimizing event schedules to maximize attendance. Many organizers face similar issues, needing a system to track overlapping events and improve planning. Our backend app serves as a centralized event management hub, equipping organizers with tools to streamline scheduling, avoid conflicts, and simplify the overall event management process.

DESCRIPTION OF OUR APPLICATIONS

DESCRIPTION OF FRONT-END APP:

Our front-end application is designed to provide individuals, specifically those who have limited exposure to the practice of mindfulness, a tool to access mindfulness local events based on their preferences. This platform provides a way for individuals to get recommended events that are tailored to their preferred mindfulness practices, which they can change later in their profile, as well as store these events within their daily calendar. This app aims to promote the user's mental health restoration and enhance user participation mindfulness events through the app's recommendations allowing them to access tailored events efficiently without the pressure of having to seek them out.

After users first login, they are prompted to complete a survey, in which they input their preferences for mindfulness practices and activities, like the amount of participants, the type of the event (ie. breathing exercise, sensory experience , etc.). Once they save their preferences within the app, they are recommended local upcoming events related to the preferences they had just inputted. At the bottom of the recommended events page, there is a button where users can sync their everyday calendar to the app. Once they select which calendar they want to sync to the application (ie. their Outlook, Google, or Apple calendar), events that are saved will be automatically added. On their dashboard, users can view their daily events by clicking on the calendar to see what events they have on a specific day. The number of dots underneath the calendar date helps indicate which days a user has a mindfulness event and how many events are happening that day. Besides our recommended events, users can find other events through search and filters on the events page, accessed by the "events" icon on the app's navigation.

DESCRIPTION OF BACK-END APP:

Our back-end application is designed to serve event organizers by simplifying the process of managing and promoting mindfulness events online. This platform provides an efficient way for organizers to create, register, and monitor events, ensuring they can connect with participants while managing all logistical details in one place. This app aims to promote mindfulness events by allowing event hosts to input event details and publish them efficiently so that front-end users can stay connected with mindfulness activities

that suit their preferences and needs. The back-end app enhances user analytics by tracking participants, available spots, and retention metrics, enabling data-driven decision-making for future successful events.

Upon logging in, users are welcomed with a personalized greeting and a display of their dashboard. The dashboard summarizes critical metrics, including events inputted, the total number of participants, and event retention insights. Users can easily add new events using the “Add new +” button. In the Event Creation page, organizers can seamlessly input event details in a simple, structured form. The form ensures no critical details are missed before submission. In the event activity feed, organizers can view a list of all events, and easily spot their own published events. Filters and tags allow users to search events or sort by different categories, such as attendee size, duration, or type. Each event has a dedicated details page where organizers can view event information, track registration, and monitor participant engagement. These analytics help organizers optimize event planning and engagement strategies.

DESIGN MOCK-UPS AND ADDITIONAL VISUALS

Link of our final design process & wireframes for PROFESSOR REVIEW for better quality visuals:

<https://www.figma.com/design/BjORbI76QS1L31UDbMQ9j6/Mindfulness-Apps-Design-Process?node-id=690-989&p=f&t=BrSgJm15twOoYXm7-0>

Link of wireframes & storyboard for CLIENT REVIEW for better quality visuals:

<https://www.figma.com/design/g6CkoTYOd2JgIr58lgaBtZ/Mindfulness-Apps-for-Client-Review?node-id=1-18449&p=f&t=vSkLr2Z07Ln3QBtp-0>

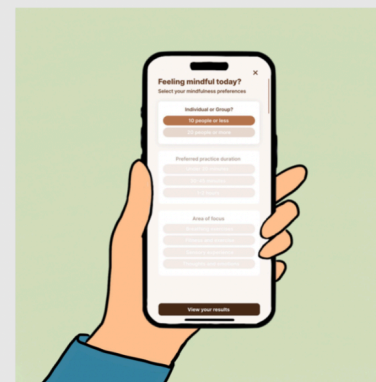
STORYBOARD - FRONT-END APP



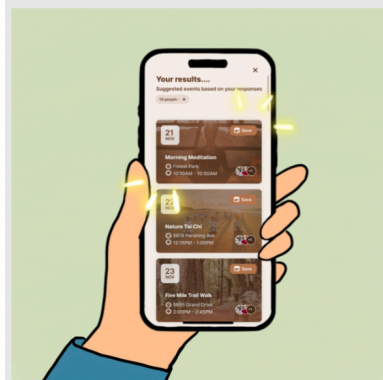
[JOHN] SEES A POSTER FOR A MINDFUL OPEN PARK YOGA EVENT AND DECIDES TO CHECK IT OUT.



HE REALIZES THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE EVENT WAS GOING TO BE LIKE AND WASN'T EXPECTING SO MANY PEOPLE. HE FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE AND ENDS UP NOT PARTICIPATING.



[JOHN] DECIDES TO USE HIS SOULSYNC MINDFULNESS APP TO LOOK FOR AN EVENT MORE CATERED TO HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE FOR GROUP SIZE.



THE APP GIVES HIM RESULTS FOR EVENTS WITH 10 PEOPLE OR LESS, AND A "MORNING MINDFULNESS" EVENT SPARKS HIS INTEREST.

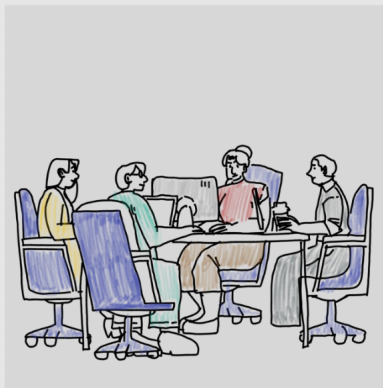


[JOHN] ARRIVES THE NEXT DAY AND SEES THAT THERE IS A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE MEDITATING IN THE PARK, WHICH MAKES HIM FEEL IMMEDIATELY RELIEVED AND WILLING TO STAY.



[JOHN] FEELS DOESN'T FEEL OVERWHELMED, AND HE GAINS CONFIDENCE TO JOIN THE GROUP IN THEIR MINDFULNESS EXERCISES.

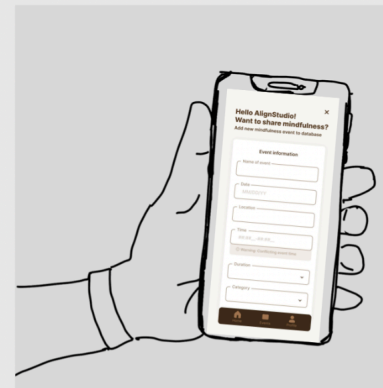
STORYBOARD - BACK-END APP



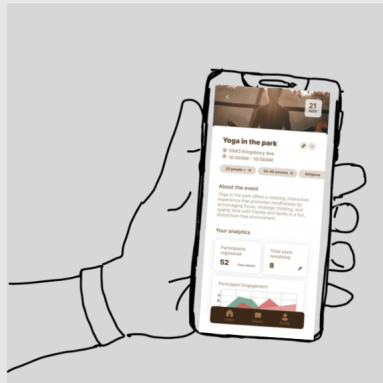
ALIGNSTUDIO'S STAFF IS MEETING TO PLAN THEIR UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE MONTH



THEY FACE CHALLENGES PROMOTING THEIR EVENTS AND CONNECTING WITH THEIR TARGET AUDIENCE



THEY OPEN THE APP TO UPLOAD EVENTS, MANAGE DETAILS, AND USE TAGS TO INCREASE DISCOVERABILITY.



ALIGNSTUDIO IS ABLE TO ACCESS REAL-TIME DATA TO REFINE THEIR EVENTS AND BETTER SERVE THEIR AUDIENCE.

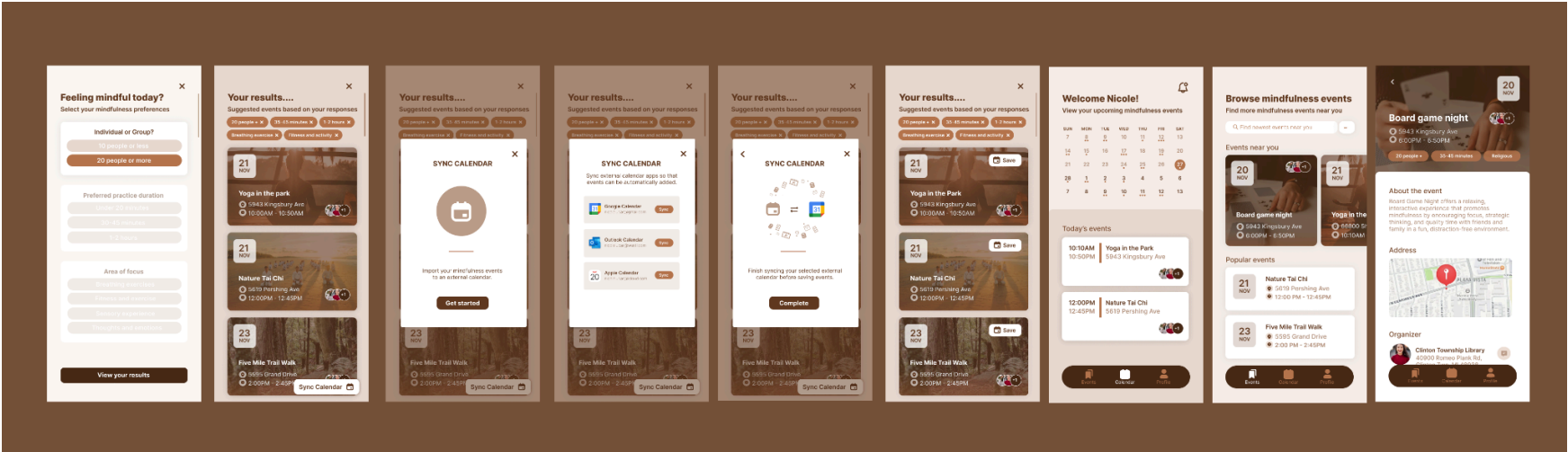


THEY ANALYZE THEIR METRICS TO ENSURE SUCCESS FOR THEIR UPCOMING EVENTS. THEY HAVE AN EASIER TIME WITH SCHEDULING AND EVENT MANAGEMENT.

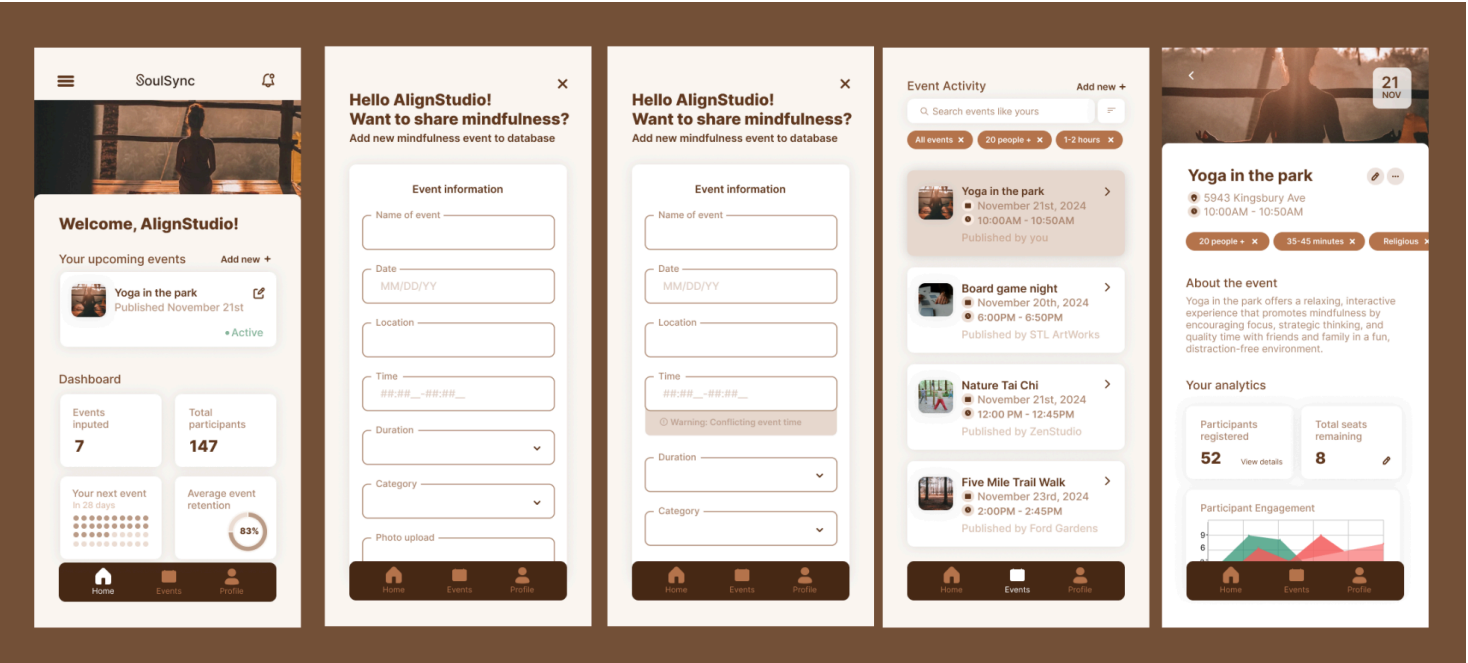


THEY PLAN A WELL-ORGANIZED EVENT WITH STRONG ATTENDANCE, WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER AN ENGAGED AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY IN MINDFULNESS.

WIREFRAME - FRONT-END APP



WIREFRAME - BACK-END APP



A DISCUSSION OF OUR DESIGN CHOICES

FRONT-END APP

Design consideration #1:

We designed cards with a drop shadow effect in order to create dimensionality and the appearance that the card is floating. We decided to do this in order to emphasize the carefree nature of the app and indirectly encourage the feeling of elevation and a detachment from anxiety or concerns tied to the complexity of life.

Design consideration #2:

Throughout the app, we decided to use rounded corners in order to give the audience a more calming association with the app. Through the visually smooth edge as opposed to an aggressive, jarring edge, we hoped to create the illusion of continuity and wholeness which are topics commonly included in mindfulness practices.

Design consideration #3:

When the user is initially prompted to finish the survey to fill out their preferences and view results, we include “x” marks in the top corner in order to give the user a sense of freedom and control, allowing them to choose to seek out their own events in a less personalized, browsing approach or simply exit to their personal dashboard to see what events they have already added to their calendar.

Design consideration #4:

We have buttons appear on each event card which allow the user to add the event to their calendar after they have synced it. These buttons include a calendar icon which is slightly abstract in design to go along with the simplistic aesthetic of our app as a whole. In order to make sure that the user associates it with adding an event to their synced calendar, we made sure to use the same icon when the user goes through the syncing process. In this way, the user subconsciously has seen the icon before and will likely have a greater understanding of the function of buttons that appear later on.

Design consideration #5:

We made the bottom navigation bar extremely simple and straightforward, with only three pages to travel between. In this way, we focussed on the fundamentals of the app without too much adornment or information. Since our target audience are those who are not familiar with practicing mindfulness, we wanted to create easy navigation of our app by making sure it wasn't overwhelming.

Design consideration #6:

We made distinct pages for a personal calendar with selected events and a browsing page in order to organize the event information for the user. There is a dedicated "Calendar" page for the events the user has chosen to sync to their calendar along with an agenda format so that they know what is coming up and what they have chosen to sign up for. In the "Events" page, there is a general assortment of all events the app has to offer, without any filtering, in case the user would like to simply browse events. By having these two pages separate, the user has clear knowledge of what they have already chosen, and what they haven't seen. The browsing events page also is created to be distinct from the "results" page after the user has imputed their initial preferences in the survey. Therefore, if the user doesn't have any particular preference one day, they can simply look at general events posted on the app.

BACK-END APP

Design consideration #1:

We chose a neutral and warm color palette (browns, creams, and soft tones) to create a calm and professional aesthetic, appropriate for a mindfulness-related app. Neutral tones evoke relaxation and focus, which aligns with the purpose of mindfulness events. It also ensures that the content remains the focal point. Using bold, larger text for headings (such as "Yoga in the Park") creates clear visual hierarchies, which helps guide the users through the app.

Design consideration #2:

We added a visible warning ("Warning: Conflicting event time") when a new event conflicts with an existing one. When using our back-end app, users could potentially enter conflicting times without realizing it, which could lead to future frustrations in event management. We decided to implement a real-time warning to improve event scheduling clarity and reduce errors.

Design consideration #3:

There was careful consideration in choosing which key metrics to display on the dashboard page, as well as the event details page. After iterations, we decided to display *Events inputted*, *Total Participants*, and *Average event retention* on the dashboard for quick

access. An important part about working with data, is getting an instant snapshot of event statistics that may be considered important for the user. Visualizing data such as “83% average retention” encourages event organizers to track performance.

Design consideration #4:

Events that are published by the user are visually highlighted on the Event Activity page. This is done by using a slightly darker background and a label (*Published by you*) beneath the event details. Users would need to quickly identify events they had personally created, especially when managing a long list of activities. By visually distinguishing “your events” from others, users can easily spot and track their contributions. The subtle and clear styling ensures the event stands out without overwhelming the page's overall clean and organized design.

Design consideration #5:

Small icons, such as location pin, clock, and participant count are consistently used alongside text in the Event Details section and throughout the app. Labels like “20 people+” or “35-45 minutes” provide additional clarity in the design. The combination of these labels and icons improves information accessibility and comprehension, especially for users who scan rather than read in detail. Icons help users quickly identify key details and create a more polished and professional look for our app.

Design consideration #6:

We designed the Event Details page to closely mirror the front-end user experience, ensuring organizers have a clear understanding of how their events appear to participants. This consistency helps organizers preview their events layout while managing it effectively. To enhance functionality, all details on the Event Details page are editable, providing back-end users with flexibility to update event information as needed. Tags include an “X” button for quick removal of categories or tags, allowing for easy adjustment. Additionally, organizers can access detailed analytics at the bottom of the page, such as participant engagement and registered participants, with options to explore further insights for specific metrics. Essentially, this design balances usability and transparency, enabling users to seamlessly manage their events.