EMPOWER SYSTEM
Empowering and educating young adults to find support for depression through social media

How can we leverage social media to improve depression support and screening accessibility for young adults?

Integrate an app with Facebook that provides resources to learn, connect with others, and get help from professionals right there on Facebook.

How does it work?
The Empower System opens to the Mental Wellness Dashboard, accessed by clicking on the message "Are you doing okay?" in the status box. This message appears when the user’s actions-per-week (posts, likes and comments) change significantly in consecutive weeks, or when a post receives a majority of "sad" reactions.

Learn
Links the user to the National Institute of Mental Health depression page to learn more about symptoms, risk factors and treatments.

Reach Out
Encourages the user to reach out to their close friends and family. Young adult participants mentioned that discussing their feelings strengthened their relationships.

Connect
Connects the user to a depression support group on Facebook which provides anonymous membership and a customizable group feed.

Get Help
Administers the PHQ-9 (depression screener) online. Based on their responses, they are connected to an expert on Facebook who is trained to respond to the user’s degree of depressive symptoms.

Research
Conducted a literature review to understand current research and optimize interview questions. Expert and young adult interviews helped us to root the problem in specific experiences.

Design
Designed using specifications derived from research themes:
- Natural & Convenient
- Educational
- Accessible Screening
- Empathetic Connection

Evaluation
Organized a concept evaluation with experts and young adults using an Invision prototype to gather feedback on the initial design. Finally, we updated the prototype based on the feedback.