

## Design Proposal Template:

**School:** Peoria High School      **State:** Arizona      **Division:** High School

**Team Members' Names:** Lamia Hadzic, Elysia Ledesma and Ian LeBron-Ortiz

**Project Title:** Readers should have a general sense for what the project is about and want to read more. (20 word maximum)

***Brighter Days: An Interactive Website For Kids With Mental Health Issues***

**Inequity Being Addressed:** Describe the inequity that you will attempt to address with your proposed solution, and why you chose this inequity. Students are able to consider a global perspective related to their inequity. (75 word maximum)

Our project addresses the inequity of limited access to mental health support for children, especially those facing depression. Many children lack resources due to financial barriers, stigma, or a shortage of child-friendly tools. This issue exists globally, where mental health care remains inaccessible for many. We chose this inequity because mental well-being is crucial. Our website offers an engaging, accessible way for kids to build healthy habits and express emotions, promoting emotional resilience.

**Community Research and User Identification:** Explain the process used to identify the inequity and select your user. Include any research done to identify issues in your community and understand which groups face challenges because of these issues. (150 word maximum)

It all started with Ayla Hadzic, a young girl who struggled to cope with anxiety but didn't know how to express her emotions. She often felt overwhelmed and had no safe outlet to turn to. Through her experience, we realized she wasn't alone—many children face the same challenge. Our research showed that nearly 50% of kids with mental health issues don't receive treatment, often due to cost, stigma, or lack of access. We surveyed students and spoke with doctors who confirmed this need for better support. Additional users include children recovering from serious illnesses, like cancer, who face emotional stress but lack mental health tools. Our interview with Dr. Angulo, a pediatric oncologist, revealed the wide gap between these children and the help they need. That's when we knew this problem was bigger than one person—it's an inequity that demands a solution.

**User Profile:** Provide a detailed description of your selected user. Include information about challenges they face, how those challenges impact their lives, and specific project needs based on user feedback. (150 word maximum)

It all started with Ayla Hadzic, a young girl who struggled with anxiety but didn't know how to express what she was feeling. She often felt overwhelmed and alone, without a safe space to open up. Her experience opened our eyes to a bigger issue affecting many children who lack access to emotional support.

Through research and outreach, we found:

- Nearly 50% of kids with anxiety or depression don't receive treatment (CDC).
- Barriers include cost, stigma, and lack of resources.
- Our survey showed students feel overwhelmed but have no safe emotional outlets.
- Educators and peers agreed kids need accessible, engaging mental health tools.
- Our target users are children without access to professional care who could benefit from positive habit-building and emotional expression.
- Additional users include kids with serious illnesses, like cancer.
- Dr. Angulo, a pediatric oncologist, confirmed the urgent need for more mental health support.

**Project Goals:** List your project goals and explain how these goals will address the inequity. Project goals should define the desired outcomes, not specific features of the proposed solution. (150 word maximum)

Our project aims to improve children's mental well-being by promoting healthy emotional habits and self-expression. Our first goal is to **increase accessibility to mental health support** by providing a free, engaging platform that removes financial and social barriers. This ensures that children, regardless of background, have a tool to build resilience. Our second goal is to **encourage positive daily habits** that contribute to emotional growth. By fostering activities like social interaction, exercise, and mindfulness, we help children develop coping strategies that support long-term well-being. Our third goal is to **reduce stigma around mental health** by making emotional self-care feel natural and rewarding. By framing it as an interactive experience, we create a safe space where children feel encouraged rather than overwhelmed. Together, these goals address the inequity of limited mental health access by providing an engaging, judgment-free way for children to develop emotional resilience and well-being.

**Proposed Solution:** Describe your proposed solution, including any innovative and unique features, and explain how this solution will address your users' needs and the inequity they face. (150 word maximum)

Our proposed solution is an interactive website that helps children struggling with depression by promoting emotional resilience through daily mood-boosting activities. The website allows kids to log in and complete small tasks, such as talking to a friend, exercising, or journaling. These activities help grow a virtual pet, providing a fun, rewarding incentive. The platform also includes an online sandbox where children can draw and journal their feelings, encouraging creative expression. What makes this solution unique is its ability to combine mental health support with gamification, making self-care engaging rather than overwhelming. It offers a safe, judgment-free space for children to develop positive habits and express emotions. By addressing the lack of accessible mental health resources and reducing stigma, the website fills a critical gap for children who don't have access to professional care. It's designed to be both fun and therapeutic, making mental health support easily accessible and approachable.

**Initial Design:** A single graphic of your first design idea with key features adequately labeled. It should be easy to understand and the reader should have a general understanding of how the prototype functions by looking at the graphic. Max size 8.5" x 11"

Sample page of interactive website.

