Our Generation - Developing an App to Engender Peacebuilding and Resilient Mindsets in Young People

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Introduction

The effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their negative impacts on mental health, self-regulatory capacities, education, employment, and crime are well documented. Correspondingly, the multitude of harmful effects as a result of ACEs, may compound and increase maladaptive outcomes later in life, including suicidal behaviours. Research has suggested that building resilience may help reduce risk among those at risk of suicide, and the general population. Building resilience at a population level has the capacity to reduce the likelihood of many stress-related disorders and, consequently, self-harm and suicidal behaviour. The OUR Generation Project seeks to build peace through emotional resilience by engaging children and young people, and their key contacts, in activities which build emotional resilience and improve good relations. The Project currently delivers 23 different programmes to achieve these outcomes and the development of an app based on the Project will allow wider access to children and young people and ensure a greater legacy of The Project. This poster outlines the concept of the App which will be launched in late 2022.

Objectives

This App aims to improve resilience and peace building in children and young people by engaging them in gaming activities based on seven key indicators that promote these outcomes.

Methods

A monitoring and evaluation framework, developed for the OUR Generation project, informed development of the App. This framework included the seven indicators identified from academic literature as contributors to emotional resilience and peacebuilding, including empathy, intergroup trust, mental health and well-being, perspective-taking, outgroup attitudes, intergroup contact and coping and problem-solving. Workshops were held with six groups of young people aged 8-23 years to explore ideas for the content and gamification of the App. All feedback was provided to Fluxguide, Austria, who won the tender to development the App. The developer was then enlisted to work within the guidance from the workshops and the indicator framework.

The App includes six generic game types, and each level of the game will be informed by one of the seven indicators. Activities and games will be deigned using text and images and the following formats:

➢ Single- and multiple-choice questions
➢ Binary questions
➢ Drag and drop games
➢ Estimation exercises
➢ Simplified Puzzle games

Outcomes are measured against each indicator using questionnaires adopted for each. Players will complete a short questionnaire before and after each level which will evidence changes in each of the seven indicators. Data from questionnaires completed by players will be analysed using quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness of the App across each of the seven indicators and therefore in improving the resilience of children and young people.
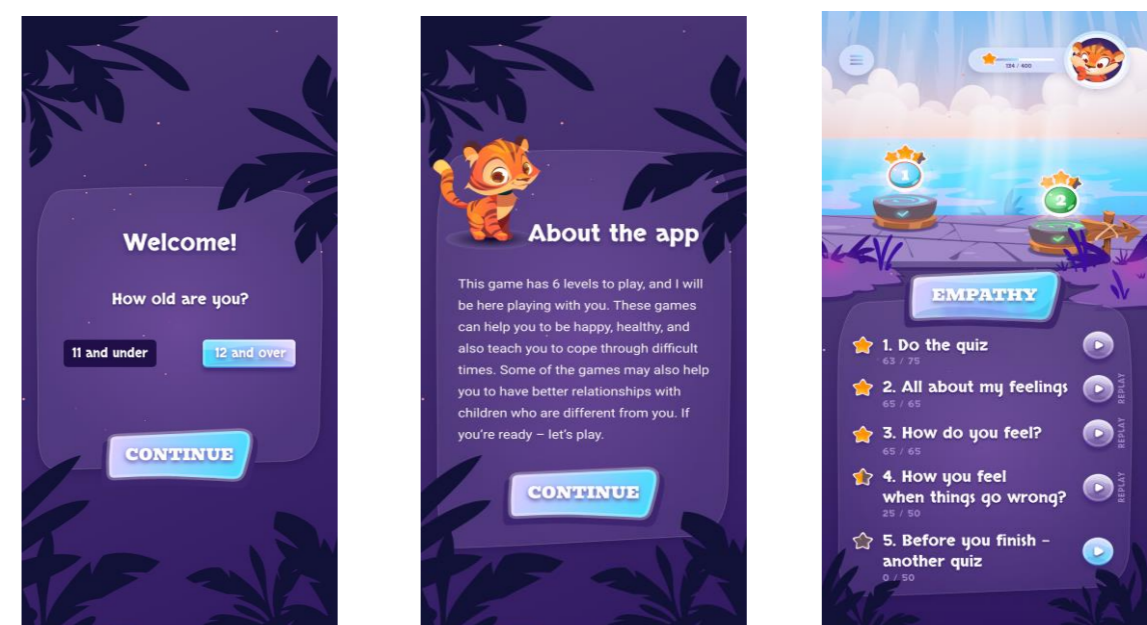
App Structure and Content

The App is currently under development with an estimated launch date of late 2022. The current structure and content of the App is outlined in this section.
Two age-appropriate versions of the games and activities are being developed for ages 11 and under and 12+ years. Players are accompanied throughout by their own Avatar or Buddy. Each version will have 3 challenges to complete for the seven indicators, 21 games and activities in total. Players will complete a questionnaire, based on the games and activities they have engaged in, both before and after each level.

As players progress through the game, stars are earned as a reward and players are then ranked according to how many stars they have earned. There are six different ranks that can be achieved in the game. Through the reward system players are encouraged to try to improve their knowledge and skills and thus improve their ranking.

The App visuals will vary for each age group to ensure they are age appropriate but both versions have been deigned using a calming colour palette.

Results

Evidence illustrates that resilience training and interventions can support a decrease in psychological distress and increase suicide resilience. Broadening assessment of interventions beyond mental health measures, and beyond one population, can help illuminate specific avenues and recognise the risk and protective factors that contribute to the differential outcomes. This App will provide a population wide resource that can be used to improve resilience and peace building, and evaluate changes in attitudes, knowledge, behaviours, and skills across these indicators through the gamification of interventions relating to these. Analysed data from questionnaires complete by players will be available from approximately six-months post launch, when interim findings will be published.

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