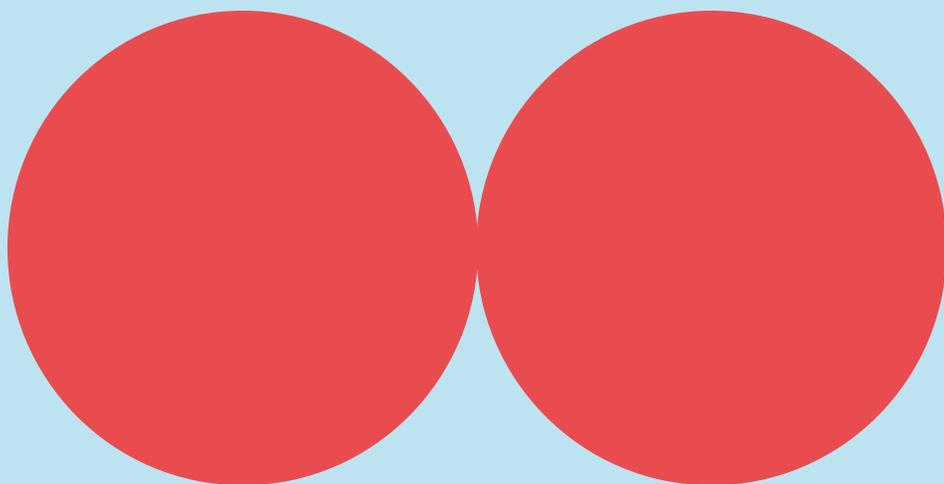


CO-DESIGN
FOR HEALTH & CARE

How to create a positive dialogue



PROJECT DATE

DESIGNED BY IN COLLABORATION WITH



A5 



VERSION 2 - OCT 2019

* empathy (n)

the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

INTRO

Good design requires empathy* for the people you are designing for, because their need is rarely your own.

To empathize, you engage with people trying to understand: who they are, their values, their thoughts, what is important to them. And the easiest way is to speak to them, building up a positive dialogue.

How to create a positive dialogue is the tool to enable you to connect with people, it is an opportunity to hear them describing their experiences in their own words. This is the tool which guides you to:

- Get to know the people you are designing for
- Keep people at the center of your research (Human Centered Design)
- Help people freely express their own needs
- Uncover needs that people have, which they may or may not be aware of
- Focus on real needs rather than desires
- Frame a feasible need
- Produce a clear and common vision on the concept

At the end of the dialogue, you can precisely define the need, which will become the new point of reference for the next phases: a need that is not fully understood it is difficult to be met.

THE EMPHATIZER ATTITUDE



» **Be curious**

Keep an open mind, approach this design challenge afresh and see the wonder.



» **Ask questions**

Even when you think you already know the answers, question everything to learn about user perception. You may be surprised by the answers.



» **Forget everything**

Don't carry assumptions that are based on your previous experiences, your understanding or expertise may lead you to misconceptions and stereotypes about disabilities.



» **Never judge**

Just observe and engage users without the influence of value judgments upon their actions, circumstances, decisions, or "issues."



» **Listen**

Really. This tool is a path but you can always leave the familiar and formal way. Don't think too much about the next thing you're going to say.

HOW TO MAKE AN INTERVIEW FOR EMPATHY

STEP 1: Prepare

- Define the role of all team members (i.e. interviewer, note-taker)
- Environment deeply influences people's behavior:
 - don't sit in front of the person with needs like a panel of judges
 - avoid hospital stereotypes as medical charts or technical language
- Respect the other's experience and role:
 - the designer shouldn't argue about the need's utility, or importance
 - the designer shouldn't argue about the personal aesthetic taste of the user: if he likes pink, then let's make it pink
 - the person with need shouldn't argue the feasibility/complexity of a project
- Help a nice and smooth creative process:
 - if you feel that the user is embarrassed or uncomfortable, back off and don't insist. Search for the info you need in another way
 - if you feel that the user has unrealistic or too high expectations, talk about it. Time and resources are limited, and we have to consider that
 - if you feel that the user has unclear ideas about the need, help him/her to clarify it (when do you feel this need? doing what? where? what if we start focussing only on this context...)
 - don't be aggressive and let the person finish thinking and talking. Wait a bit if needed
- Set reasonable goals:
 - the user has a need and the hope that you (and technologies) can do everything: be gentle and explain that you are all working together with the aim of getting to a final object and that this object might not be what they are imagining. You have to define, design, develop, make and share a working solution, plan things realistically
- Consider the "lost-in-translation" effect:
 - people with need may not be native speaker of the interviewer's language, so they may lack the proper words to talk about their disabilities
 - they may not feel comfortable enough to tell their personal background and knowledge in that specific situation: be kind and respectful



SUGGESTION Tick the checkboxes above as you complete the preparation.

STEP 2: Interview

Introduce yourself (3–4 sentences): it's always nice to know a bit about the people we talk to. Say something about your skills as well.

For "non-designers" it may be useful to have a visualization of ideas, such as images, materials, sketches while proceeding with the collection of information.

This is a simple list of possible questions (use it as an inspiration, don't ask all of them!)

Introduction

- What is your name?
- Can you tell a bit about yourself?

Interest

- Have you ever taken part in such events like hackathons or co-design sessions?
- What is your interest in this initiative? What do you think it is going to happen during this initiative?
- Have you ever built something for your own need?

Needs

- Which is the action to be enabled?
- How did the need come about? (i.e. at the restaurant, at school, ...)
- Why is it a problem?
- Which actions are possible?
- Considering the aids or what you are currently using, can you figure out what you would need to better make the action/movement?
What would enable you to make it easily?
- In which circumstances do you need a spoon? (i.e. eating a soap/ice cream)
What is the precise action you're interested in doing? (i.e. eating alone, eating in a restaurant, eating with colleagues, etc.)? In which context/environment? (i.e. at the seaside, in the office, at home) It helps to narrow possibilities
- If you are the caregiver of the user ask how did you figure out the need and when it is most likely to have an impact

Aesthetics

- What do you like? How important is for you a beautiful object (i.e. its color)?
What about functionality? Don't forget that we are human and beauty is the lever that makes the difference between "I have it" and "I use it"
- Beyond aspects related to both the need and type of disability, while brainstorming, take into consideration personal taste and beliefs like environmental choices (i.e. against disposable products or objects made of plastic), cultural/gender/religious issues (i.e. against pink as a girly color), food...

Tips and tricks about language style and behaviour

- Make sure to write down exactly what the person says, not what you think they might mean, hearing exactly what people are telling you
- Ask confirmation of what you have written down, just to make sure you understand correctly. i.e. "Let me make sure I've got this right, you mean..."
- Be friendly and willing, so that the person feels comfortable to say "no" or "I don't agree"
- Construct the sentence using positive tense or "encouraging" verbs i.e. "it helps" is better than "it lacks"
- Ask "why?" (i.e. "why to you is more important to be able to have dinner in a restaurant than lunch with colleagues?") because what users want and need can be different and inconsistencies may hide interesting insights
- Ask questions neutrally and don't suggest answers
- Ask questions regarding disability or other related issues as it is normal to have no direct experience or knowledge of anything. Use polite expressions such as "I am sorry but what do you mean with...?"
- Don't be afraid of asking or talking
- Be aware of body language and emotions as they represent not verbal clues
- Have fun! Even when things get serious, it is always important to remember to laugh and celebrate results and good talking
- In case of tension, you can change the topic, and even stand up or have a break at the coffee station

STEP 3: Conclusions

- Collect all thoughts and considerations, setting off from a broad perspective and gradually getting into more and more detail
- Review the answers to the questions and prioritize the information: what is important? Why?
- Reframe and rewrite the initial need
- Frame the need description with brief, clear, precise sentences
- Frame the concept description with brief, clear, precise sentences

The final result of this process is the NEED definition:

Define the need using these questions as a guideline. Your objective is to understand clearly what the real need is.

- Why is it important for the user? (he/she wants to be independent on/ more productive)
 - it's important to understand the real motivation behind the requests, as it helps to stay focused on the user's need

- Who is the person with need? (he/she a child, an adult, an elder, etc.)
 - different ages, sex, believe, groups, etc. affect how to design the solution
- What is the action to be enabled? (I want something to help me to...)
 - clarify and define what the action is.
 - try to narrow down the request. A need well defined is easier to tackle
- Where is a solution more needed? (at the restaurant, at school, at home...)
- When is the solution more needed? (alone, with friends, when he/she goes to bed...)
 - often similar problems require different approaches based on the context, narrow down the context to better define how to design the solution

A good need should be expressed in one or two sentences at most.

It is important to rewrite the phrase describing the need again and again until its intended sense and potential are fully recognized by the entire team.

