



IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय

DEP 406

B.Des Design Project- 2

Illustrated story on the adolescent and young adult crisis

Nidhi Deshmukh (18U130019)

Guide: Prof. Shilpa Ranade

Declaration

I declare that this project report is based on my work carried out during the Spring semester of 2021 at IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay. I declare that this written report represents my own ideas, communicated in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources.

I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not falsified, misinterpreted or fabricated any idea, data, facts or source in my submission.

I understand that any violation of the above will be the cause of disciplinary action by the Institute and penal action from the source in the case the work has not been incorrectly cited or if permissions have not been taken where necessary.



Nidhi Deshmukh
18U130019

IDC School of Design
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Approval

The B.Des Design Project- 2 titled “Illustrated story on the adolescent and young adult crisis” by Nidhi Deshmukh, Roll Number 18U130019, is approved, in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor in Design Degree at the IDC School of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

Project Guide

Chairperson

External Examiner

Internal Examiner

Acknowledgement

I thank Prof. Shilpa Ranade for her guidance throughout this project. Her suggestions helped me see many more opportunities that I hadn't previously considered and helped refine this story.

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Introduction

I have always struggled with imagining and planning for the future. I also struggled with all future-related decisions like academic ones about picking a stream, field of interest, discipline etc. or personal ones like what I want to do in the long run, where I want to live etc. These doubts caused me a lot of distress and, eventually, depression and anxiety. I always chalked this up to me being a very cautious and anxious person by nature. I would and still can worry about everything.

But in the past few years, I have noticed that such concerns also bother many, if not all, of my peers. It seemed odd how an entire generation of students is struggling to find these answers when their parents and older relatives never found this to be a significant problem and failed to relate to it.

Most people learn to overcome this and lead better lives. But some fail to. And there has been an alarming rise in the number of people suffering from such lifestyle-related mental stress and consequential illnesses.

The initial idea I started this project with was a very cynical take on our society's exploitative, consumeristic ways and how that weighs down on the human mind. This idea, I believe, came from a place of great anger and frustration. But as I started this project and dug more deeply into this problem, I realised that there is a lot of anger and frustration already.

What my peers and I may need is a story of comfort and coping– the ways of coping with the aforementioned exploitative, consumeristic ways and still trying to do what you can for your betterment.

Initial concept

I started this project with a rough story idea about repayment for the space you occupy in the world. The story is called 'space box'.

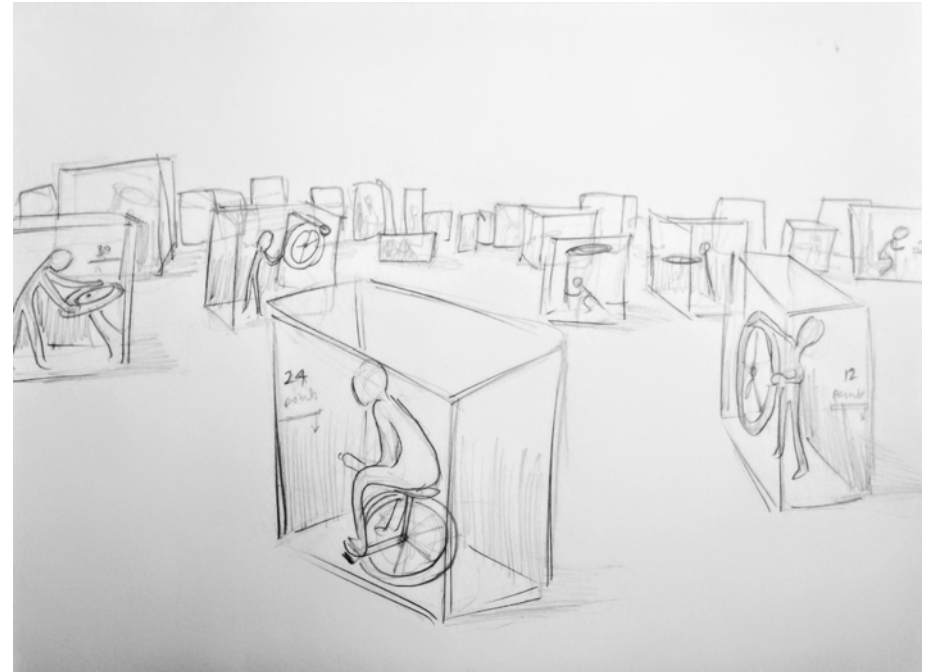
A 'space box' is a transparent box in which each person exists—it signifies the space your existence occupies. Every individual has to turn a wheel in their space boxes; some turn it vertically like a cycle, some turn it horizontally like a truck steering wheel, and everyone has their different ways. For every few turns, you get 'productivity points', and at the end of the day, you pay your space box with these points, repaying the universe for the space you occupy.

If any person doesn't have enough points, the space box lights up, and it is paraded around the other people's space boxes as an example of a waste of space till the person inside shrinks under their gazes and disappears!

It was a rather depressing story where each person has to literally pay in productivity for the space they occupy. So I analysed this and tried to point out what exactly I wanted this story concept to communicate.

At first, I thought it could be commentary about productivity culture v/s hustle culture, but after some more thought, I realised that this was more about working as repayment for your existence, to deserve living and also about expectations and perfectionism and how all of this reflects on our ideas of self and self-worth.

So with all this in mind, I dove into research about the topics I had listed.



Research

Primary research

For the primary research, I talked to some of my peers in the age group 16-21 about the issues I had pointed one from my initial story idea. The people I had talked to were all students, and though they came from different academic backgrounds, they were mainly in a similar socioeconomic class.

These were casual conversations, so we talked about many things that may influence a person's perspective, like life choices, fears, family relations, etc. While each person had a very different perspective about some of these topics, a lot of them shared similar beliefs and frustrations about others. I shall list a few here:

- Identity crisis:

Many of them struggle with the question of "What do I want to do in life?" and there seems to be an urgency to decide this. And they feel unprepared and unsure of how to proceed. It seems a bit impractical to plan out the entire life at 20, but there seems to be an expectation to do so.

- Career decisions:

Adolescence and young adulthood is the time when most of us are expected to pick a career path and then immediately succeed in it. This decision feels like the one ultimate decision that will make or break our entire future. One friend mentioned how she hates the "where do you see yourself in 5 years" question because she does not know where she will be. She recognises this pressure to find your niche career path in these years and feels unprepared to make that decision.

- Toxic optimism:

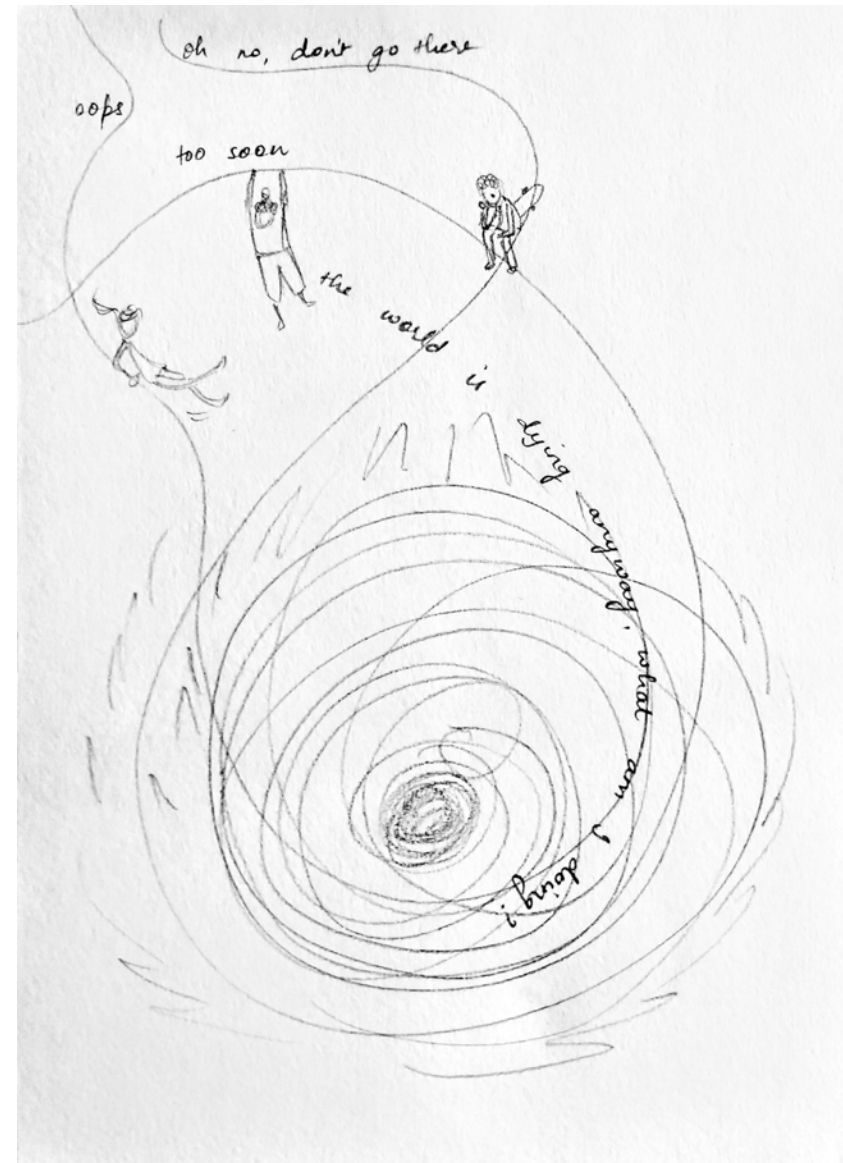
A lot of times, when someone is struggling with the issues mentioned earlier, the advice they get is to simply 'deal with it', 'it is not that big of an issue', or 'count your blessings, it can be worse.' None of these things said to be helpful actually help solve the problem at hand. All they do is dismiss the frustration and confusion felt by adolescents by calling it insignificant. This adds to the feelings of frustration. But it is still the standard narrative.

- Toxic productivity:

Many of my peers mentioned feeling an intense need to perform well in academics at the cost of their mental and physical health. There is a constant feeling that you have not achieved enough and need to work harder. An unspoken standard of "You're either the best at something, or you add no value," even if there isn't any explicit pressure. Overworking is celebrated by calling it 'passion', and burnout is dismissed as weakness. So when any of us feel burnt out, it is always accompanied by a deep sense of guilt.

- Self worth:

Along with the "what do I want in life?" question that contributes to an identity crisis comes the question of "What do I contribute to society?" To this, one of my peers said, "In the current society, your worth is determined by how useful you are and what value you add," which degrades your worth as a human being to what material labour you can provide. It's concerning how often people connect any failure to their sense of personal worth.



I listed these common feelings and some quotes from these students and approached a psychiatrist affiliated with IPH, **Dr Geeta Joshi**, to understand from what exactly these ideas and thought patterns arise.

We recognised many different factors, and I have listed a few below.

- Adolescent and young adult crisis:

Dr Joshi grouped students' identity and existential crises under the name "Adolescent and young adult crisis." This includes feelings of uncertainty and overwhelming fear at the prospect of planning out your future, lack of confidence in the self and general feelings of being lost.

One primary reason for this crisis is that the prefrontal cortex of the human brain does not complete development until around 25 years of age. So, it is quite difficult for people younger than this to resonate with some ideas of the future that an adult may have. This generally leads to a disinterest in the topic or an overwhelming sense of fear which is the source of many mental issues and existential and identity crises.

There are many such ideas prevalent on internet communities that I also noted in my conversations for this project, like "need to prove that I can do things by myself but also feeling like I haven't earned my existence or earned things that I have in this existence" and "Is a person like me allowed to exist." These may seem like unnecessary ramblings, but Dr Joshi explained that these ideas stem from questions of "what am I contributing to society?" and "what value do

I add?" or "what is it that I want to do in life?" These are all important questions to understand and figure out.

In conclusion, existential and identity crises are not necessary or unavoidable. Still, they happen, and it isn't a bad thing that they happen because it means that the person has started questioning and challenging their ideas. However, if these crises are not met with sufficient patience and emotional support, they can lead to excessive anxiety and feelings of depression.

- Identity and autonomy:

Dr Joshi mentioned the hallmarks of the adolescent and young adult crisis to be a need for:

Independence

Autonomy

Privacy

Permanency

Belonging

while developing your own identity and sense of self.

Managing all of this, along with career decisions and a developing brain, gets difficult. Moreover, a 20yr old has probably started rational thinking about the future around 10-12 years of age. This means while making these life choices, they try to take the 8-10 years of thinking and paint the whole picture. The equation gets distorted.

She also noted that in young adults, the definition of independence is not understood in the correct manner or perspective. Young adults often perceive personal independence as being able to survive without needing support. But just because you need assistance doesn't mean that you're clinging. Sharing your emotional burden does not mean that you're weak. Our understanding of independence is flawed.

- Too much information:

Regarding the stress of career choices, Dr Joshi reminisced how she had never faced that issue during her adolescence. For her, the career options were limited to engineering or medical, so she picked one. The reason for a drastic increase in an identity crisis regarding career paths in recent years is increased exposure to information all the time. Students are spoilt for choices; there are so many possible career paths. There is an overload of information, and not all students know how to connect the data and use these opportunities.

One of the problems all college students face is that of idealism vs implementation. They feel that they must give up their ideals and settle for a career that gives them financial stability. With the rise of competition, exposure, and a need to be visible and implement our ideas, young adults must come to terms with the fact that not all of these needs can be met sufficiently. And accepting this brings a sense of helplessness.

Our conversation ended with Dr Joshi saying, "***We don't want mastery stories. We want coping stories.***" People often feel very alone and isolated, and it is comforting to know that there are people who have faced the same insecurities as you and still managed to get past them.

Secondary research

In my primary research, I had identified some issues that many of my peers faced. While talking to Dr Joshi, it was clear that the same issues were a cause of concern for many young adults. However, I wished to understand the scale of this problem and see the global perspective. So I read a number of research papers, articles and talks. I will discuss what I learned from two of these talks in depth.

Salecl, Renata. "Our unhealthy obsession with choice."

The reason for identity crises to be so seemingly common is mainly a lot of exposure.

We are spoilt for choices. There is pressure to make the right choices and the notion that we are entirely in control of our choices which is not always the case. Our choices are consciously and subconsciously affected by many social factors we may not be aware of. All choices cannot be entirely rational and perfect.

But this pressure to make the perfect choices can cause a lot of anxiety as with choices comes risk. When we are told that we have seemingly unlimited horizons and choices, any failure would mean that we didn't make the right choices– that it is our fault we couldn't succeed, that we aren't good enough. This causes an increase in anxiety, feelings of guilt, being inadequate and that we are failing in our choices

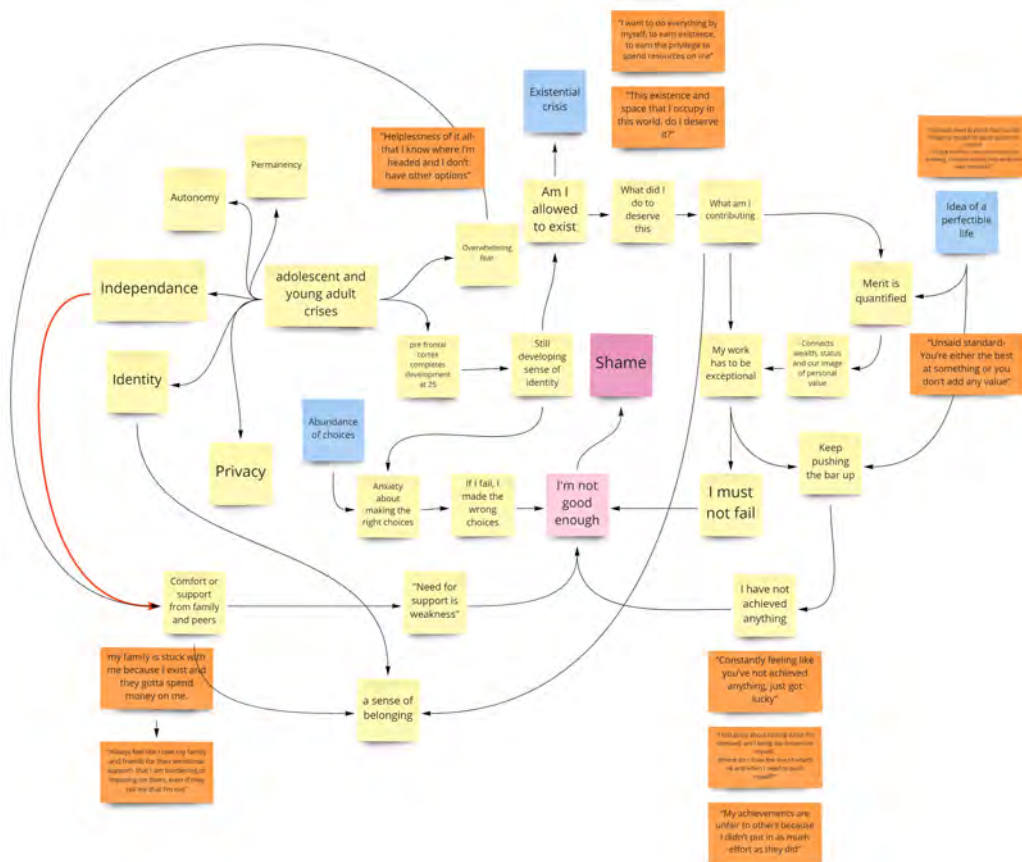
Curran, Thomas. "Our dangerous obsession with perfectionism is getting out of hand"

There is the belief in a perfectible life and a perfectible lifestyle. Everywhere we see, merit is quantified in grades, wealth, status, and success. We have constructed the idea of this fictional summit that one must reach, that after reaching it, people will see our worth.

In our market-based society of unrestricted choice and personal freedom, we are told that nothing is out of reach for those who want it badly enough, that hard work always pays off, and we are captains of our own destiny, which leads to connecting wealth, status and our image of personal value.

But the idea of being in complete control of your life is basically fiction because even with equality of opportunity, we are subject to a number of economic, social and political influences that we as an individual have little control over. But regardless of that, achievements seem to decide self-worth and value.

Perfectionists usually start as ambitious and hardworking people. However, perfectionism develops in one's formative years because of parents who police failure and society's emphasis on competition, evaluation and testing. Thus, achieving this unrealistic perfect ideal seems like the only meaningful thing in life.



Causal loop diagram showing the interconnection between the topics

I mapped all this information and tried to fit in the quotes I had gotten from my peers. In summation, for adolescents, accepting all of these external factors along with the internal struggles of understanding yourself, the need for independence and autonomy, the general consensus of asking for comfort or support is weakness leads to feelings of helplessness and shame— which in turn can lead to a host of mental disorders.

I discussed these topics with some people from an older generation. The information I got was that for the equivalent of this same socioeconomic class, some 40 years ago, the choices were limited, information was limited, and the clear percentage of just how many students failed to pass the entrance exams was not broadcasted all the time. So many times, the issues they faced and their ways of dealing with them were quite different. And older generations find it very difficult to relate to this thing the younger generation is feeling because once you get past a certain age, these things feel trivial.

For the current generation of adolescents and young adults, just having all this information about all the possibilities in life that you're not living causes intense pressure to then try to achieve this ideal. There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to reach any ideals, but this reflects on their ideas of personal value quite often. That's when we have a problem.

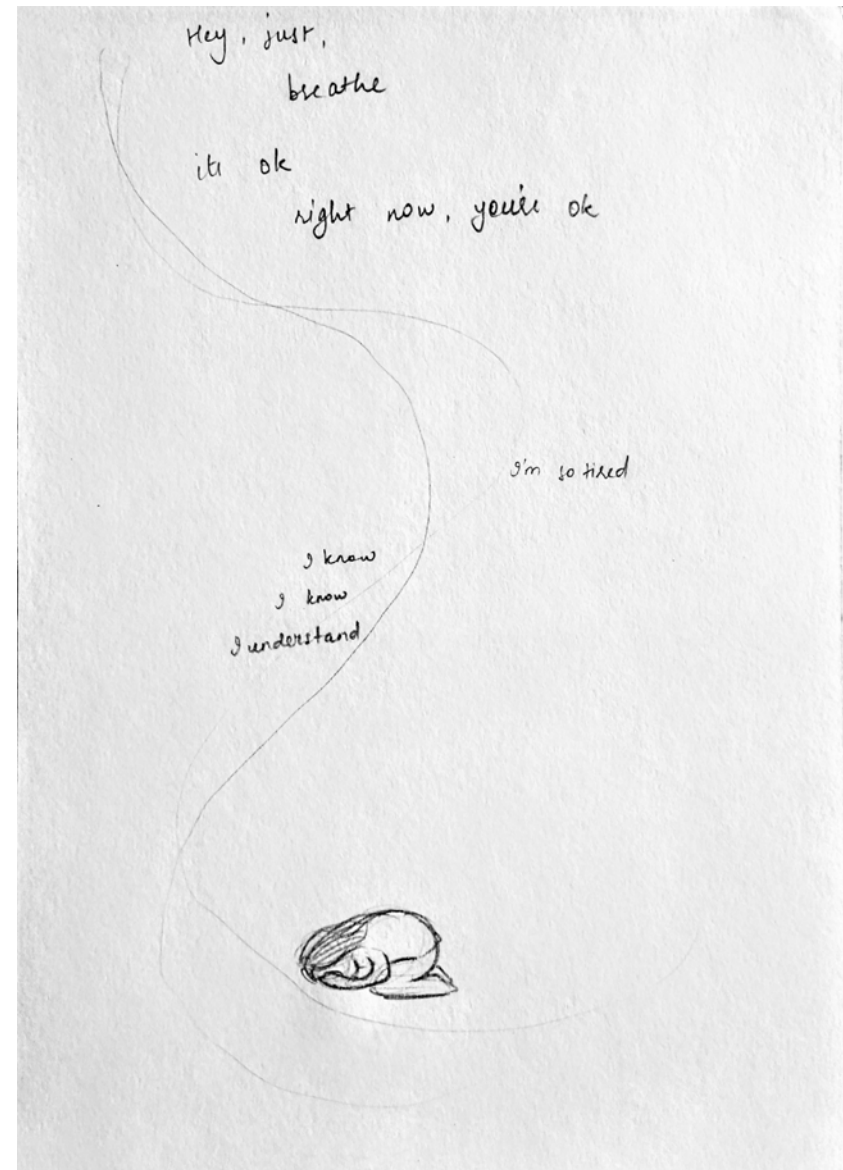
In all this, there is a severe lack of self-compassion and empathy. Beneath all these existential and identity crises is just the need to find a sense of belonging and purpose. Because these feelings are natural and are inevitable in the current society, we just need to take the pressure to decide our entire life off. Little steps and small decisions are fine. *Coping is fine.*

Intention

My intentions with this project and this story changed slightly after the research. Initially, my intention was to simply highlight a problem that was often not acknowledged in our circles. However, after my conversations with my peers and Dr Joshi, I wished to make a story that could help deal with this problem of many crises.

The intention of this story is to highlight an issue as well as to provide some comfort. In my talks with Dr Joshi, she mentioned that her patients often found comfort in knowing that there are many students in their age group who also struggle with deciding what they wish to do in life and the consequential successes and failures. There is comfort in knowing that you're not alone, that this is not a 'you' problem. The intention is to help break the connection of self-worth to personal failures, specifically because of unavoidable circumstances.

So I want to write a story about coping— just getting through it, baby steps, but in kind of a harsh manner. Kind of like saying, "get down from those clouds; things can be horrible at times, but that's alright, you'll get through it." I love the idea of a gentle message told in a very harsh manner. I want to attempt that.



Story writing process

The stories from people

After finishing my research and rethinking my intentions, I arranged meets again with the people I had talked to for my initial research, and we talked about random things they do to feel better and deal with these pressures and stressors. I asked them to explain what helps them calm down when they're overwhelmed, how they work through anxiety and uncertainty etc.

And I wrote down and sketched out things that we were talking about. Little things they do that make them feel ok; sometimes it's not entirely healthy, like working too much to avoid your thoughts or binge eating delicious food, and sometimes it's things walks, washing dishes, singing songs or talking to people.

We also talked about the ideologies that help deal with all this stress and uncertainty, simple things you tell yourself– that it'll be fine, just make the next decision. Sometimes you have to step back, let things happen, and not worry about how it'll go. A little bit of self-compassion goes a long way.

The main issues to be represented in the final story were:

Identity crisis

Career decisions

Overwhelming choice

Toxic optimism

Toxic productivity

Lack of guidance

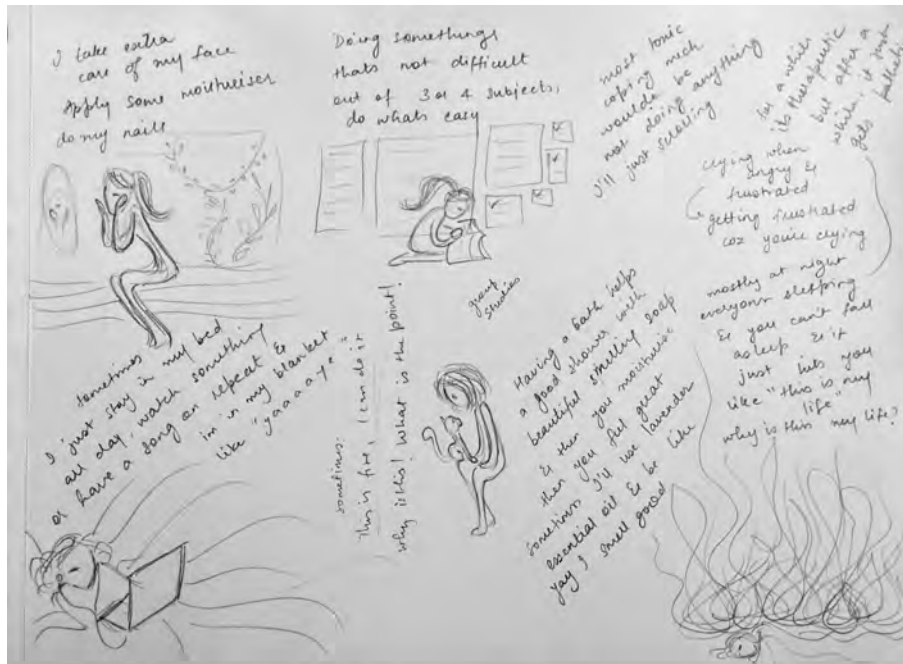
And the frustration, fear and feeling of helplessness that comes from this. In the story, identity crisis would addressed most often,

followed by career decisions, choices etc. and lack of guidance would be implied indirectly.

I tried to connect the words of my peers gathered in primary research to all the insights I had collected with my discussions with Dr Joshi and secondary research. The intention behind this was to put the abstract feelings students feel into a recognizable framework to understand the whole picture and the system.

The coping and comfort mechanisms would be added verbatim with minor edits to not break the continuity of the narrative. Following are the sketches of my conversation with each person I interviewed for this project.

Anushka



Anushka's go-to tactic for taking a break is skin care. She takes long baths with lavender oils, moisturises her skin and relaxes. But sometimes, that seems like too much work. Sometimes, you just want to stay in bed all day or have a song on repeat and just stay tucked into a nice blanket.

But when it's time to push through and get to work, she finds listing priorities and checking them off as she goes helps her manage her stress better.

Manasi



Manasi finds herself shuffling through Instagram or Pinterest when overwhelmed and breaks for food when she isn't hungry just to calm down. Booze and baking can also be good coping mechanisms!

She thinks growing plants also helps her distract herself from stress. But when all that doesn't work, she just picks a playlist that makes her feel happy and listens while she sketches.

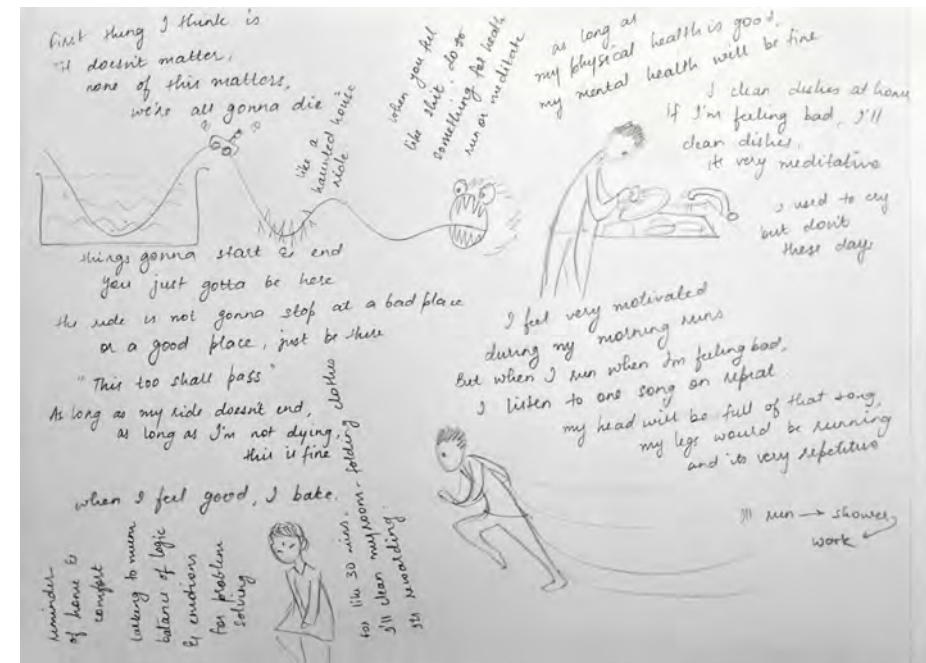
Krishna



Krishna has tried many things to cope. Meditation, walks, talking to people, violent sports all are good methods in her opinion. She personally enjoys walks a lot.

Although she struggled a lot with depression, now that she's in a better place she acknowledges that a healthy lifestyle really helps. Eating your food, sleeping on time, just learning to take time to breathe helps. Even though this much can also be difficult sometimes.

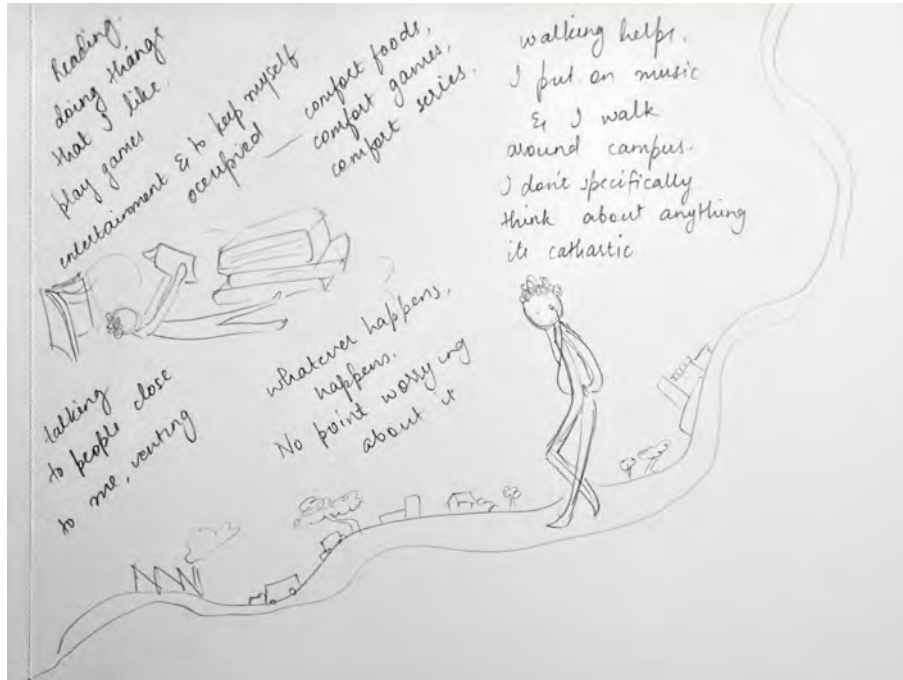
Abisek



When Abisek gets overwhelmed, the first thing he thinks is, “it doesn’t matter, none of this matters, we’re all gonna die,” which may not be the best way to handle crises, but it works.

On a lighter note, he bakes when he's feeling good and cleans dishes at home when he's feeling bad. He finds it very meditative. He goes on morning runs to feel motivated. When he feels upset, he listens to one song on repeat and goes out for a run. With his head full of that song and his legs running, he finds that calming.

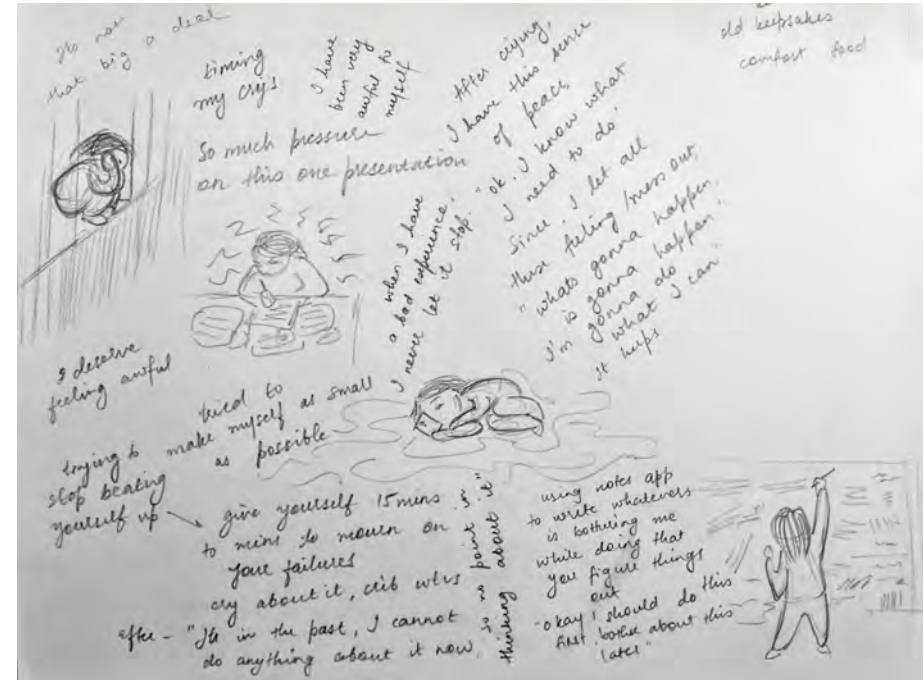
Ishaan



Ishaan's coping mechanisms are distractions. He does things he likes— reading, playing games, entertainment, whatever keeps him occupied. He has a whole list of comfort foods, comfort games and series.

Other than those, he finds that walking helps him. He puts on some music and just walks around aimlessly. He doesn't specifically think of anything while he wants, but it's cathartic.

Drishti



When Drishti feels overwhelmed, she cries. She times her crying sessions. After crying for a while, she feels a sense of peace and that she can continue with her work now that the mess of feelings is out.

She often gets overwhelmed easily because she has difficulty organising her plans. So she uses the notes app on her phone of any writing material around her to write down her thoughts and plan a course of action.

Creating a cohesive narrative

With the stories from each person in place, I had to find a way to compile these numerous conversations into one narrative. I considered the following two approaches for this.

Chapter wise:

Chapter-wise approach would contain pages of illustrations and texts of one person's beliefs and troubles, followed by how they cope with them and things they do to make them feel better. Each such person would have one chapter dedicated to them.

This approach can be a great way to have a full start-to-finish story of a person's struggles and how they recover, which could get very intensive and interesting. It would show a direct connection between their troubles and consequent methods of dealing with them; a journey of one person and the complete storybook would be such journeys of many different people.

Common journal:

Another way would be intertwining multiple stories and perspectives into one cohesive narrative. This will mean bringing together all these ideas from different people experiencing similar issues and depicting each person's different ways of handling it and the other people's reactions to this.

This could work like a common journal multiple people use and have a conversation in. Someone writes a bit, and someone else replies to that, and more than two people continue this conversation, like a joint diary.

The idea behind this approach is that in these things, even if there is no direct solution other than intense therapy, lot of times, knowing that you're not alone goes a long way. There's a difference between knowing this in theory and actually hearing or having conversations with other people about it. This method would create a more comforting story, so I went ahead with this common journal approach.

Visual style

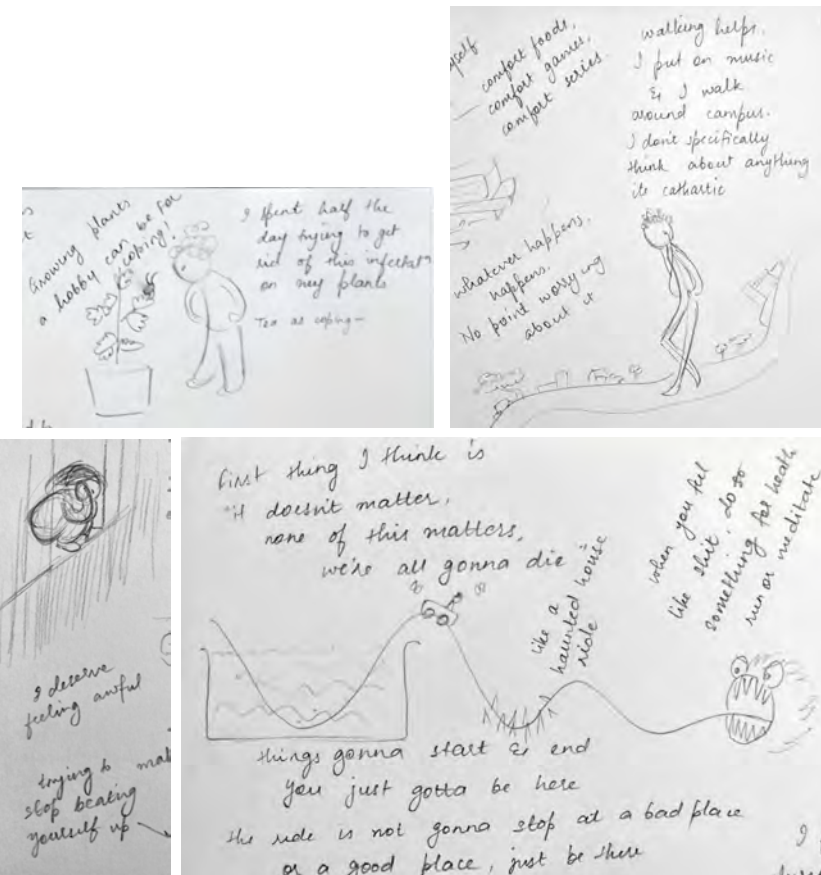
With regards to the visual style of this narrative, I was advised to not lose the naturalness of the initial story pages. For those pages, I sketched and took notes of whatever felt important while listening to the person. So there is a certain ease and informality to those and wanted to make a style out of it– to articulate that accident.

I noticed a few patterns in those pages. For example, how an image is surrounded by the words that explain it. If you read the quotes in the order that it's written in, you can guess how the conversation flowed, how one thought led to another. So, even if this is not a full transcript of the conversation, you can still see that it is derived from a conversation. It is not just different unrelated ideas put together. This is not very obvious so I wanted to very deliberately put it in that manner to show the narrative as a discussion between many people.

I also planned to use simple, black and white pen drawings to further illustrate the common journal quality of this story

Bringing in the identity of the people I have talked to:

Since I compile this story, it represents my understanding of what my peers want to say. Even in places where I use direct quotes, the framework creates an outlook that I want to communicate to the reader. So it is important to me to include little bits that represent these people.



I planned to do this by including doodles of each person made by them. At some point, I was also considering including their handwriting in some way. The intent was to bring in more of their voices in whatever way I could.

Character design

The characters are loosely based on the people I talked to for the story. Their appearance is derived heavily from the people themselves, but their mannerisms and dynamics are altered to best suit the narrative. Their personalities are exaggerated to make each character distinct and recognisable. I have also included sketches done by these people of themselves.

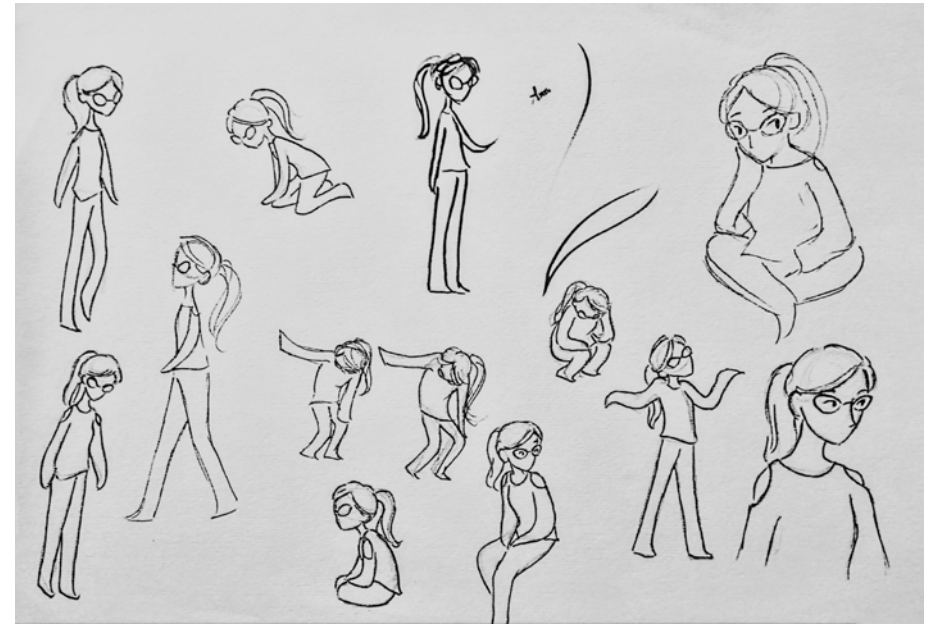
Visually, I tried to make each character distinct and recognizable. Throughout the story they are each associated with a pattern, object and mannerism to make it easier for the reader to remember them. These objects and patterns are derived from some incidences the characters tell about themselves in the story.



Ana

Ana is the youngest in this group and is very inquisitive. She prefers to gather information and plan before stepping into an unknown situation. So, she has a lot of questions about how to navigate life choices and feels anxious when she doesn't have all the answers.

She just got into a medical college and has barely had any time for herself because of all the exam prep, entrance examinations and admission processes. All she wants is to unwind in a long bath with lavender essential oils.



Manu

Manu has her life sorted. Or at least she has her plans sorted. After many years of plans not going the way she wants, she has learnt to accept things as they come. But the large gap between her field of choice and a field that provides financial stability was not something she had considered in her life plans.

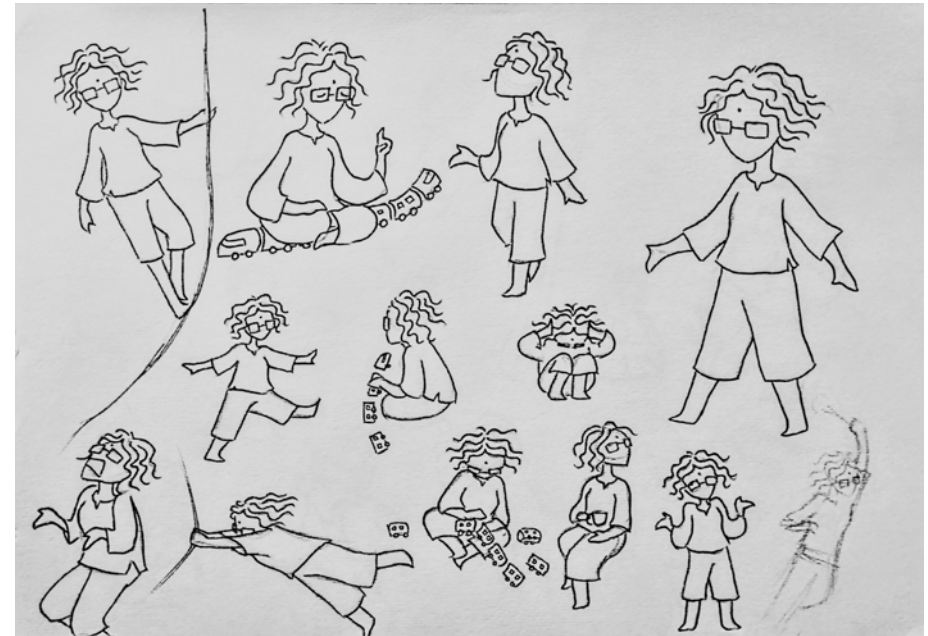
She is in her final year of accessory design, and she has many opinions about her classmates— especially those who do not put effort into their work. Regular work, a bit every day, adds up and helps create wonderful projects. This belief had led her to find a love for gardening, regular care and a bit every day, leading to wonderful little plants.



Kich

Kich is done. She is mentally, physically and emotionally done. There are too many troubles in life, and she would like to sit down and ignore them all. But of course, she can't, so she scrambles around trying to do what she can and hoping her work meets her high expectations.

She has just gotten a job that she doesn't know if she wants. But, well, she has it, so she has to go contribute to society when all she wants is to walk away from it all. If only mindless violence could have solved her problems, her life would've been so much easier.



Sek

Sek doesn't worry all that much about things. His goals and ideas are clear; he's sure he'll get where he wants to be one way or another. Each step of the way is still frustrating, but he'll get there. "Life is a journey. Sometimes you just gotta sit back and let things happen" is the belief that keeps him going.

He gives very deep and philosophical advice— something his peers don't really agree with all the time. But that's fine, philosophies exist to be discussed and debated. As long as it doesn't get boring, this much is fine.



Ichu

Ichu does coding. Ichu is good at what he does. Ichu also doesn't get to doing anything if a deadline isn't staring him in the face. Which often leads to him getting very overworked and stressed before the project submission. But that's alright because he will make sure his work is still amazing.

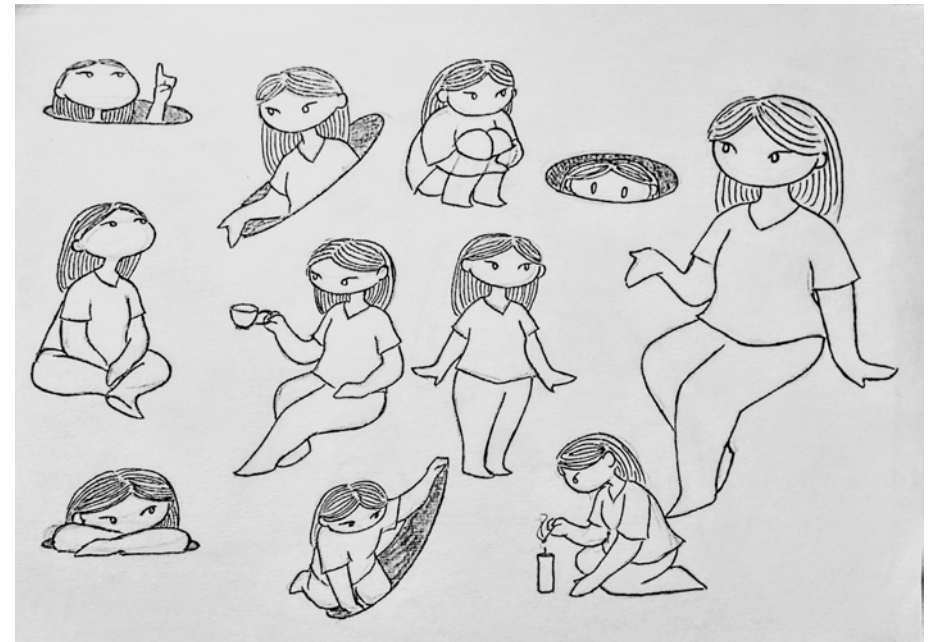
And after all that work is done, he likes to immerse himself in games, movies, TV series, books, songs and everything exciting and immersive. His natural state is distraction. So anything and everything that can combat said distractedness is fair game.



Mishti

Mishti likes the quiet, comfy places and scented candles. She does not like to get out of the aforementioned comfy places. Most things are uncomfortable. Uncertainty is uncomfortable, stress is uncomfortable, and confrontations are uncomfortable. And Mishti likes to stay away from the uncomfortable.

But she can't. And she knows that. Trying to avoid upsetting but necessary things while having a functioning moral compass is difficult. She understands that very well. But attempts will certainly be made.



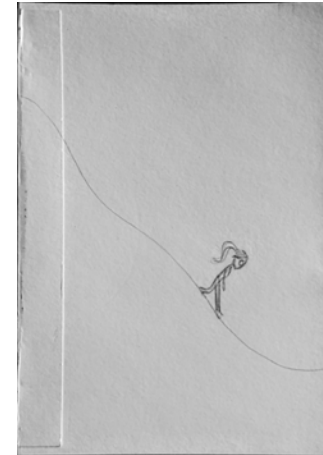
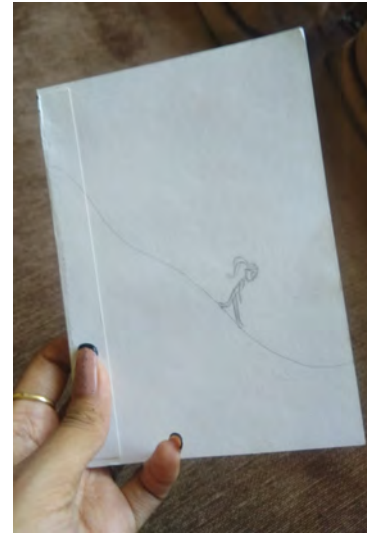
Feedback

I sent a draft of my story to my peers who had not contributed to this project previously and asked them if they could relate to the content.

Some people relate and some don't. Many said they felt called out by this. A few said that they understand these issues but aren't that distressed by them anymore. One said she relates to the feelings expressed in the story but not in terms of career choices but rather about uncertainty and pressure about interpersonal relationships.

Another feedback I got was that the characters sounded the same in terms of language and speaking styles. To solve this, I sent the dialogues of each character to different people and asked them to write it in their own style.

I was told that at times, it was difficult to tell which character was speaking as the text was a bit scattered. So in my final draft, I added pointers and speech bubbles in some places. I had tried to use different fonts for each person but that was not visually appealing.



The story

The final story is in the form of a small illustrated book. The dimensions are 10.5 x 14.8 cm; it is an A6 book. The illustrations are hand-drawn with black pen on paper and then digitally edited.

This story takes place in an abstract space where these characters are walking on their specific paths in life. They meet in this fictional space by chance and strike up a conversation.

The story starts with Ana and Manu stumbling upon each other as they are walking. Ana tends to be the person driving the narrative as she is the most inquisitive and unsure, so she keeps asking questions and trying to understand how others deal with their problems. Krishna, Sek, Ichu and Mishti drop in at different parts of the story, and all of these people share their stories and struggles with each other as they continue walking.

At times they all despair together about all the things going wrong in their life, and at times they try to comfort each other. They are essentially strangers to each other, but that perhaps opens up more opportunities to share and bond over stories.

By the time they part ways, there are no particular solutions for their struggles offered. But they've met and maybe found some quirky life hacks to get by. And that's enough for now. After all, they will always know each other. And they will always be there to lend a hand when any of them needs it.

Full script of the story can be accessed at the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1twWDJ2w-yQuO2h5ptQyGOWiicFutAjDw/view?usp=sharing>

Full illustrated story can be accessed at the following link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_9cStSShrwxsb7dpApVNW_Tq23zdrs4w/view?usp=sharing

Parting thoughts

I was feeling very ambitious when I started writing the first draft of this story. I put all my faith in the belief that “there’s comfort in knowing you’re not alone” and based this entire story on that belief. And there is definitely comfort in that. It is comforting to know that there are many who face the same struggles as you and manage to get by pretty well. But this in itself offers no solutions. I was keenly aware of this as I worked on this project.

My reasoning for going forward without solving this shortcoming was simply that the characters themselves do not know enough to solve their problems yet. And I, as a member of that same age group, also cannot advise any proper solutions. So I did not wish to add any such uninformed advice. The things mentioned in the story that people do to feel better are just that, coping mechanisms to temporarily deal with the problem. Because, at this point, that is the only way we know.

All I wanted to say is that it’s alright to not know all the solutions. It’s alright to just stumble upon things and make it work as you go. It’s alright as long as you keep going.

Far too many times, my friends and I have joked, “Oh, how I wish I could end it all! One cliff is all it takes!” And there have been times when some of us genuinely wished that. When I tried to offer any words of advice to that, I found myself falling short. Because I do not know any better, either. So, this story is essentially the only thing I can say to my fellow peer who’s struggling. Just keep going. I cannot promise that it’ll get better, but I can say, with confidence, that we do want you to keep going. To keep walking ahead with us.

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