



COVID-SQUAD

A game that encourages positive social behaviour among youngsters



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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a massive global health crisis. Because the crisis requires large-scale behavior change and places significant psychological burdens on individuals, the need to socialize is very human. But due to the lockdown, people were isolated in their homes for months. As the lockdown is relaxed, we are seeing more and more cases arising every day because of people not adhering to physical distancing norms. This low adherence is found to be higher in the case of young adults, possibly because the virus is less fatal to them and also because they're less mature and imprudent about the consequences. This can lead to them turning into asymptomatic carriers and pose a high risk to themselves and the people around them. Therefore, there is an urgent need to design a solution that fulfills the need of socializing through contactless means and mediums and reinforces adherence to physical distancing norms. Communication strategies must strike a balance between breaking through optimism bias without inducing excessive feelings of anxiety and dread.

The means used for behavior change have proven to be ineffective in case of youth because they are often involuntary and typically just not fun. While efforts to develop pharmaceutical interventions for COVID-19 are underway, the social and behavioral sciences can provide valuable insights for managing the pandemic and its impacts.



Social Isolation and Connection

In the absence of a vaccine, one of the most vital strategies for slowing the pandemic is “*social distancing*”. However, distancing clashes with the deep-seated human instinct to connect with others. Social connection helps people regulate emotions, cope with stress, and remain resilient during difficult times. By contrast, loneliness and social isolation worsen the burden of stress, and often produce deleterious effects on mental, cardiovascular, and immune health. Online interactions can also foster a sense of connection. Both receiving and giving support online can bolster psychological well-being. Technologies that are informationally rich, dyadic, and temporally synchronous appear better suited to generating empathy and connection.



PROBLEM STATEMENT

How might we instill social & behavioral change in imprudent youth to effectively and collaboratively manage the pandemic.



In just four months, from January 2020 to April 2020, There has been a 62% increase in numbers of downloads of online mobile games and 48% increase in global average playing time.

There is a growing clinical trial base of evidence that shows that games can improve players' health behaviors and outcomes in areas such as addiction control, healthy eating, physical activity, physical therapy, cognitive therapy, smoking cessation, cancer treatment adherence, and the self-management of asthma and diabetes.

Objectives of the Game

COOPERATION WITHIN GROUPS

Fighting a global pandemic requires large-scale cooperation. The problem is that, by definition, cooperation requires people to bear an individual cost to benefit other people. In particular, there is a conflict between short-term self-interest versus longer term collective interest. Several techniques, such as sanctioning defectors or rewarding cooperators tend to increase cooperative behavior. Providing cues that make the morality of an action salient have also been shown to increase cooperation. People are also more likely to cooperate when they believe that others are cooperating.

MORAL DECISION-MAKING

Moral decision-making during a pandemic involves uncertainty. It's not certain whether social interactions will infect others. People may be less willing to make sacrifices for others when the benefits are uncertain. Focusing on worst-case scenarios, even if they are uncertain, may encourage people to make sacrifices for others. Therefore, reframing decisions to carry on with "business as usual" during a pandemic as active decisions, rather than passive or default decisions, may make such behaviors less acceptable.

ALIGNING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE INTERESTS

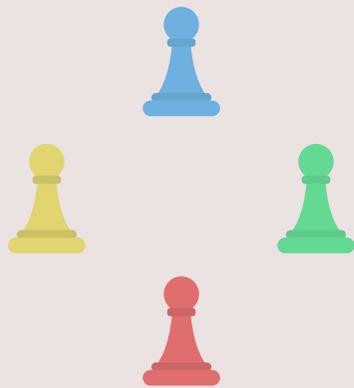
The behavior of individuals living in communities is regulated by moral norms and values. People who do what is "right" are respected and publicly admired, while those who do what is "wrong" are devalued and socially excluded. The mechanisms of our game is based on social enforcement by encouraging people to embrace and internalize shared guidelines, making them motivated to do what is considered 'right' while avoiding behaviors that seem 'wrong'.

REDUCING BELIEFS IN CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Some evidence suggests that giving people factual information prior to exposure to conspiracy theories can reduce conspiracy theory beliefs, and this strategy might work in efforts to combat conspiracy theories relevant to the current pandemic.

Social Norms and Persuasion

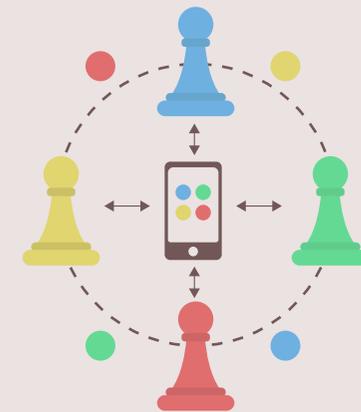
Social networks can amplify the spread of behaviors that are both harmful and beneficial during an epidemic. We have to use the social networks to convert existing behavior/ beliefs to desired beliefs by using specific persuasion techniques. Online interactions can also foster a sense of connection. We want to recreate a space where people can come together and discuss things: the way they did pre-COVID. As people's behavior is constantly influenced by social norms, such a game would provide a space for people to discuss health behaviors because of prompts provided by the it. Receiving and giving support online can also bolster psychological well-being of the players.



EXISTING BEHAVIOR



PERSUASION TECHNIQUES



DESIRED BEHAVIOUR



BIASED ASSIMILATION

"A fit person would be able to fight corona. That's why I'll go to gym"



IDENTITY PROTECTIVE REASONING

" All my friends are going out to the pizza place. It would be safe to go out"



DIRECTIONAL REASONING

"God is our saviour. Going to the temple would not harm me."



PERSONAL REASONING

"Face mask is neither comfortable nor stylish. It makes me sweat a lot."

Appealing to social consensus or scientific norms

Focus on protecting others (Elderly, Children or Loved Ones)

Aligning with the recipient's moral values

Highlighting social group approval

"I'll attend online fitness classes for workouts at home"

"If not for can be fatal for my parents"

"God is testing our patience. Besides, He is omni-present"

Highlighting social group approval

Game Considerations



In order to spark conversations between the players, the game consists of a videocalling feature. The players win the game by helping each other in different ways through the various levels of the game.



At each stage in the game, there are two types of players who are playing the game. A primary player and other secondary players. At the start of each game, one player is made a primary player. She takes the decisions for that game. The secondary players help the primary player by guiding her or with the help of special powers that they get throughout the game.



As the players collaborate on different levels in the game, and collectively try to defeat COVID, it reinforces cooperation and collective decision making.

BALCONY BROADCAST

People are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories in times of crisis. This is likely because people are more drawn to conspiracy theories when important psychological needs are frustrated. Conspiracy theories may gain more traction as COVID-19 spreads and more people isolate themselves. It is our responsibility to curb the spread of fake news and conspiracy theories; and it can start from anywhere, even your balcony. *Balcony Broadcast* is a multi-player game which gives you a say in what goes inside the minds of your neighbors. Each time, a new game character comes out of balcony and expresses their opinion, the primary player decides whether it should be swiped down to share the information with the people in their balconies or should be swiped up to discard it away. Each statement has either a positive or negative value associated with it. The points for that statement gets multiplied by the number of active people on their balconies. The secondary players can suggest the primary player to take the right action over the ongoing videocall. The aim for the player is to spread the maximum correct information to the neighbours in a time frame of 90 seconds. This game helps you internalize the need of correct information sharing while also exposing the fake information around COVID that has been spreading in our society.

SCENARIO 1:

If a wrong statement (with -3 points) is said by a game character and there are 12 people in the balcony.



If the player swipes down the message then 36 points($-3*12$) are deducted from the players' total score.



If the player swipes up, no point is deducted from his total score.

SCENARIO 2:

If a correct statement (with +4 points) is said by a game character and there are 6 people in the balcony.



If the player swipes down, the message then 24 points($+4*6$) are added to the players' total score.

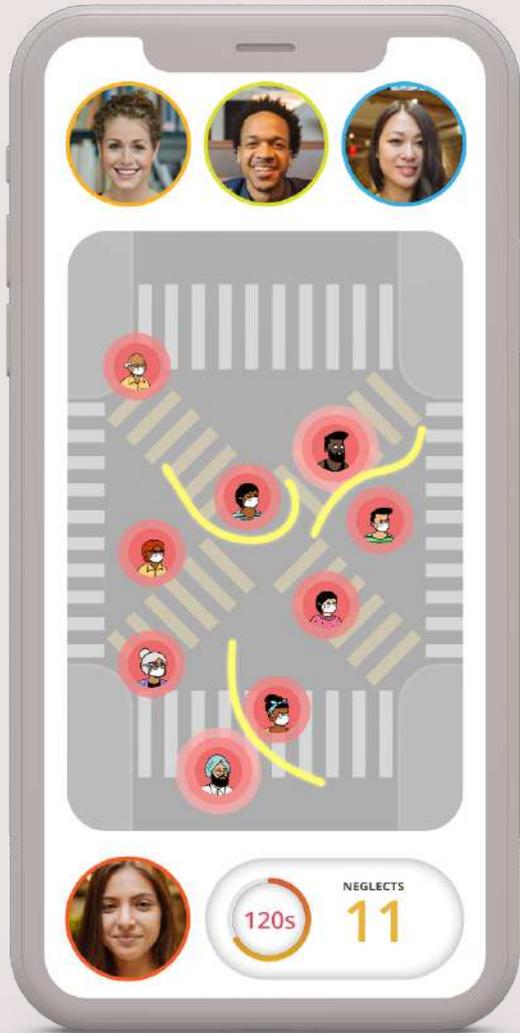


If the player swipes up, no point is added to his total score.



CROSSROADS

As the lockdown is getting relaxed, more and more people are going to go out to public places. People are coming out of their houses, but it is necessary to maintain boundaries with the Corona virus. *Crossroads* is a game through which we wish to instill the idea of physical distancing in public places. It is also a multiplayer game, with one player acting as a primary player. The primary player acts as God and creates boundaries between the people who are about to come in physical contact with each other. She does so by drawing a boundary on the screen. When the players come in contact with this boundary, their direction gets deflected. The game keeps a count of the number of physical interactions (called as - Neglects) that have happened between the people at the crossroads. The lesser the neglects, the better the chances of winning.



SECONDARY PLAYERS' POWERS

SPEED REDUCTION



SINGLE TAP



X SPEED

0.75X SPEED

AREA REDUCTION



DOUBLE TAP



BIG RISK AREA
Not wearing mask

SMALL RISK AREA
Wearing mask

For the players with both the powers, a single tap would first reduce the speed and a double tap would decrease the area influence

BONUS BASED ON PREVIOUS GAME:

STATUS	PREVIOUS SCORE	POWERS GRANTED
Loser	< 100 points	Speed Reduction 1 Secondary Player
Average	100 - 150 points	Speed Reduction 2 Secondary Players
Good	150 - 200 points	Speed Reduction All Secondary Players
Excellent	> 200 points	Speed Reduction All Secondary Players
		Area Reduction All Secondary Players

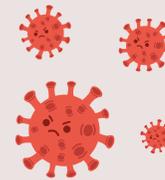
NIMBLE NURSE

Since the pandemic has hit the world, the front line workers have played a major role in stopping the spread of the virus. The healthcare workers have played a vital role in improving the health of the affected by selflessly putting themselves at danger. *Nimble Nurse* gives us the chance to show our care for the healthcare workers. Corona virus is creeping around in the hospital trying to infect the nurses who are taking care of the patients in hospital. The nurse is taking care of each patient on the bed. Each bed has a patient with varying levels of illness represented by colors. On each bed, a bell is located to call the nurse. The nurse would move to the patient who is the most severe and closest to her. You have to save the nurse from coming in contact with the virus by calling her towards the patients. But also ensure that she reaches the patients that are critical in due time.

ILLNESS SEVERITY

- 
-  Less Severe
 -  Highly Severe
 -  Alarmingly Severe

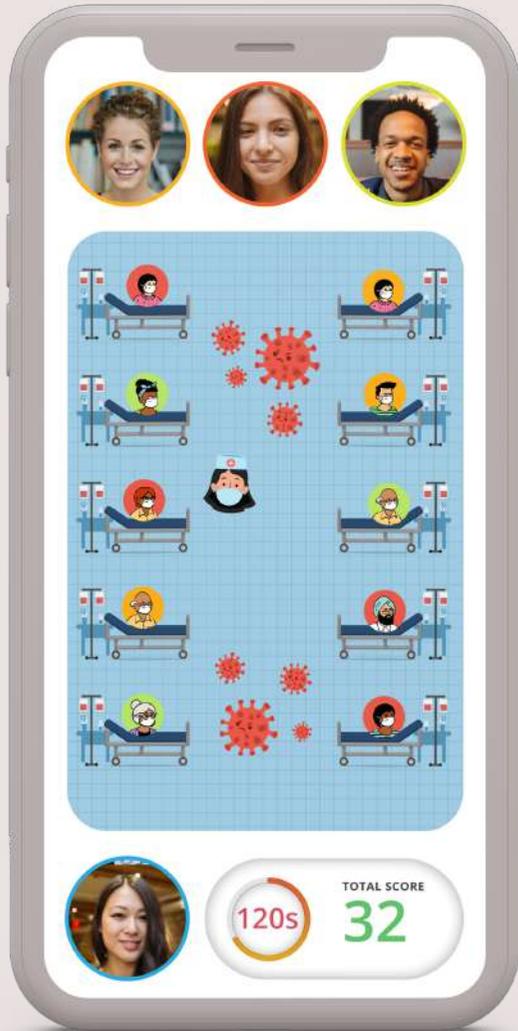
VIRUS INFESTATION



This is a high risk area for the nurse. If the nurse passes through an area that is populated by the virus, then the score goes down rapidly.



The nurse moves towards the most severe the most severe and closest to her. The direction of her face shows the intended direction of her movement





WHO recognises the value of human behaviour in managing pandemics. Behaviour changes can reduce the spread by as much as 80%.

— **OUTBREAK COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE**

THANK YOU