

## SITUATION

Like most men of my age (my late 30s), my close circle of friends had gotten smaller the older I had gotten.

It never really bothered me until the pandemic hit. I was self-soothing and created superficial office relationships that went little beyond small talk, football and politics.

I realised I didn't have a close circle of friends to talk to about the world coming to an end and that I'd neglected the relationships I did have because I'd switched my focus towards a career and gained social interaction from 'Work-mates'.

I didn't realise I was lonely, or If I did, I ignored it.

## PROBLEM

Research suggests that I wasn't alone, and many men also suffered from what is known as the 'silent epidemic', silent because men do nothing and suffer alone in silence.

A study Commissioned by the Royal Voluntary Service found that Millions of men across the UK hide their feelings of loneliness.

An estimated eight million men feel lonely at least once a week, whilst nearly three million feel lonely on a daily basis.

More than one in ten men say they are lonely but wouldn't admit it to anyone. Highlighting the stigmatism associated with male vulnerability.

The research also suggested male loneliness correlated with that of substance abuse and male suicide rates globally. So I knew there was a problem that needed fixing.

## APPROACH

I started looking online. The apps, products and sites I found were focused on dating and mindfulness. But there was nothing out there that focused on creating plutonic friendships or sustaining existing ones.

I couldn't find anything that targeted people who were suffering like me, people looking to get out of a mental rut before things got too hard to manage.

With the spectrum of Mental Health being so wide, I tried to narrow down my search a little and looked at mental health treatments rather than mental health prevention. In addition to that, I studied behaviour and what made relationships thrive, intending to determine whether there were any causal links.

I ran a set of qualitative and quantitative studies alongside reading academic research on friendship and mental health.



8m

men feel lonely at least once a week

1 in 10

men say they are lonely but wouldn't admit it to anyone

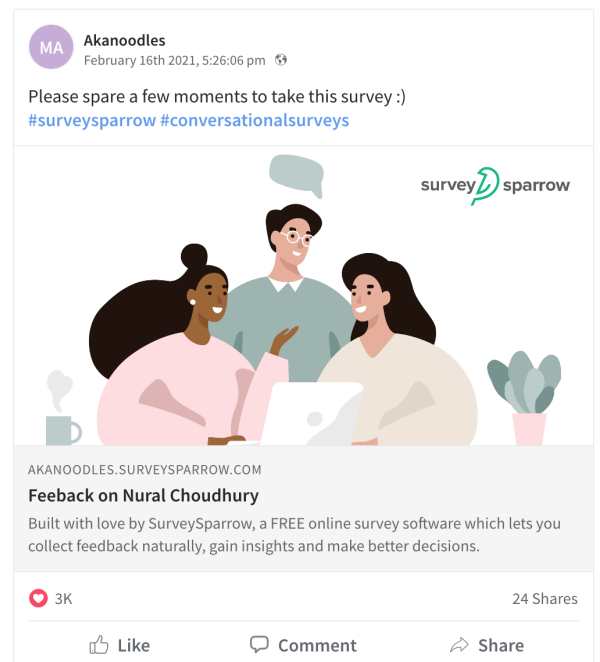


Image of the quantitative survey advert used on Facebook

# FIND ASIDE

After analysing the data, I concluded that my product would need to provide two main features:

- Participate in and create physical group activities with people they know and people they don't know.
- The ability to log mood and symptoms and possibly journal about everything they're feeling.

I came to this conclusion as both **Physical activity** and **Talking** have been proven to be treatments for mental health problems.

**Physical activity** - this releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better about yourself and give you more energy.

This activity also helps manage stress, anxiety and racing thoughts, releasing cortisol.

Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.

**Talking** - for men, it's hard to reach out, many can't find the words to describe what they're feeling, but once it is out, we soon realise we're not alone and integrate better back into society.

Self-reflection and journaling about how we're feeling can help us get a clearer idea of what we want to say—working as a guide for future conversations.

Daily symptoms check and pauses can help us understand what we're feeling and give us a place to start talking to others.

Making yourself available, giving people a simple heads-up or excuse to talk to people has also proven to work; serious conversations start with casual ones. As you begin to spend more scheduled time with people, we feel we can open up.

**Behavioural archetypes** - I used these two main features as a starting point and created a set of Behavioural archetypes that would represent the user's mindset and intent, rather than the single person view of a persona.

In a 'Passive' sense when not using it and an 'Active' sense of when they need to complete a task.

The four I came up with were:

## Active

I want to participate in physical activities with people I know and people I don't know.

## Active

I want to be able to gather my thoughts and be prompted to think about my feelings.

## Passive

I want to be aware of people's activities and be prompted to join if they match my interests.

## Passive

I want to be notified of when people want to engage in conversations with me and need help.

With the archetypes set, I listed out a set of tasks that would need to be completed to fulfil the goal of each archetype.

I then started to lay these out into screens and created an application flow to see how users would navigate through the app.

## Key features

Participate in and create physical group activities with people they know and people they don't know.

The ability to log mood and symptoms and possibly journal about everything they're feeling.

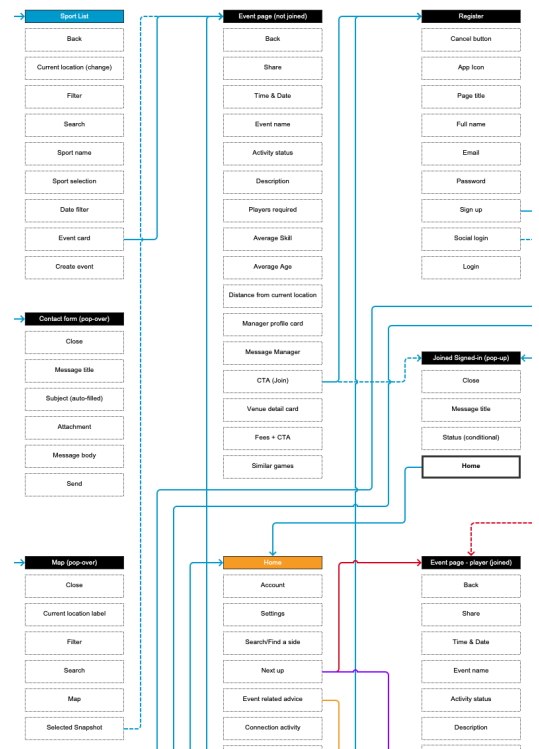


Image of application flow design

# FIND ASIDE

This phase of work revealed the information architecture that would be required to support key journeys and revealed user types.

- Managers
- Player-managers
- Players
- Guests

I ran a set of initial user tests and asked people to emulate one of the above user types. Consolidating the screens so each user type could cohesively use the app to complete their task and switch mindset or profile to complete another task easily.

For example, a participant might want to start their own game if they find out their current game has been cancelled that week.

Or a person may only use the self-reflection features and veer away from playing in games.

The core features were rolled up into:

- Join and create games
- Collect fees and book venues
- Chat to and find players
- Complete missions and track progress

These had multiple subtasks below and would also be conditional based on the user type.

## DESIGN

The colour palette chosen was blue as it represents harmony and peace. Our product also needs to do a lot of trust-building, which blue also evokes.

The typography used was standard iOS fonts SF Compact. Mainly due to device compatibility and lack of time to create a custom font.

I was also unable to explore the branding to any level of depth that would make the product ready to ship within the timeframe—only exploring an app icon while putting the case study together.

could not explore the micro-interactions to a level of depth that indicated the product had a personality. But I was able to source illustration [unDraw](#), imagery from [unSplash](#) and iconography from [nounProject](#).

## CONTENT

The biggest challenge to the product was self-reflection content.

I wanted to encourage men to open up and talk to each other, but I didn't want it in the users' face.

The best way I thought of doing this was to look at where I could inject self-reflection features at each part of the engagement funnel.

The engagement funnel is as follows:

**Awareness** - I've just become aware of your product through offline interactions and exposure to traditional media. I have a visceral feeling I need/want to use it, so I've downloaded it.

Intent

- Gain an understanding of what the company does

## User types

Managers

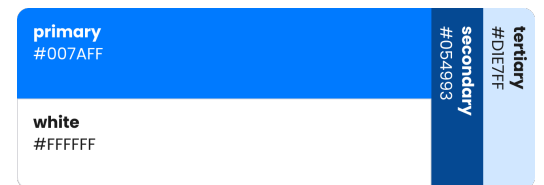
Player-managers

Players

Guests



Beta prototype used to emulate user types



Product colour palette and typeface

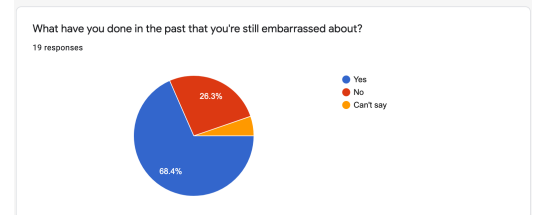
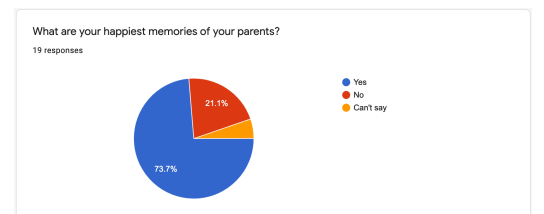


Image survey results to determine appropriate content

# FINDASIDE

- Gain an understanding of product integrity
- Possibly learn about the company history
- Gain confidence in the level of expertise of the brand

**Consideration** - An expression of consideration has developed, and I would like to put you into consideration for engaging. I may have come through exposure to new media, been referred to the app, or had it shared to me through user-generated content.

## Intent

- Evaluate our product against another
- Find proof points
- Find detailed information
- Begin or experiment with the conversion features

**Conversion** - I've already done my research and are now ready to convert. I may have used your service before and want to redo my last journey.

## Intent

- Onboarding
- Payment

**Pre-engagement** - I've converted into a live user and want to be aware of changes. I'm also looking for information that may aid me during the engagement or post-engagement. I also might want to change my mind about things.

## Intent

- Pay any fees connected to my event
- Monitor features and keep track of any changes
- After-sales support
- Evaluate the service and be reassured by proof points

**During engagement** - I'm taking part and want to make use of any product features that would enhance my experience and give me joy.

## Intent

- Companion features that record 'in-play' activity
- Customer Support if things go wrong

**Post engagement** - After I've taken part, I want to be supported whether my experience was positive or negative.

## Intent

- Customer Support if things go wrong
- Review the previous event
- Re-purchase the previous event
- Companion features that record 'in-play' activity
- Exit features - such as deletion of account

By analysing my engagement funnel and looking at the customer intent at each stage, I thought it best to inject self-reflection features at the onboarding, pre-game and post-game stages.

At onboarding, we'd ask probing questions. Asking the user to take a moment to think and address the questions with sincerity. Trying to get them to take calculated risks at self-revelation.

Pre-game, we'd measure mood, and post-game, we'd measure mood and every 36 hours ask probing questions.

## AWARENESS

- Gain an understanding of what the company does
- Gain an understanding of product integrity
- Possibly learn about the company history
- Gain confidence in the level of expertise of the brand

## CONSIDERATION

- Evaluate our product against another
- Find proof points
- Find detailed information
- Begin or experiment with the conversion features

## CONVERSION

- Onboarding process

## PRE-ENGAGEMENT

- Monitor features and keep track of any changes
- After-sales support
- Evaluate the service and be reassured by proof points

## DURING-ENGAGEMENT

- Companion features that record 'in-play' activity
- Customer Support in the event that things go wrong

## POST-ENGAGEMENT

- Customer Support if things go wrong
- Review the previous event
- Re-purchase the previous event
- Companion features that record 'in-play' activity
- Exit features - such as deletion of account

Engagement funnel with user intent at-a-glance



# FINDASIDE

## SUSTAINABILITY

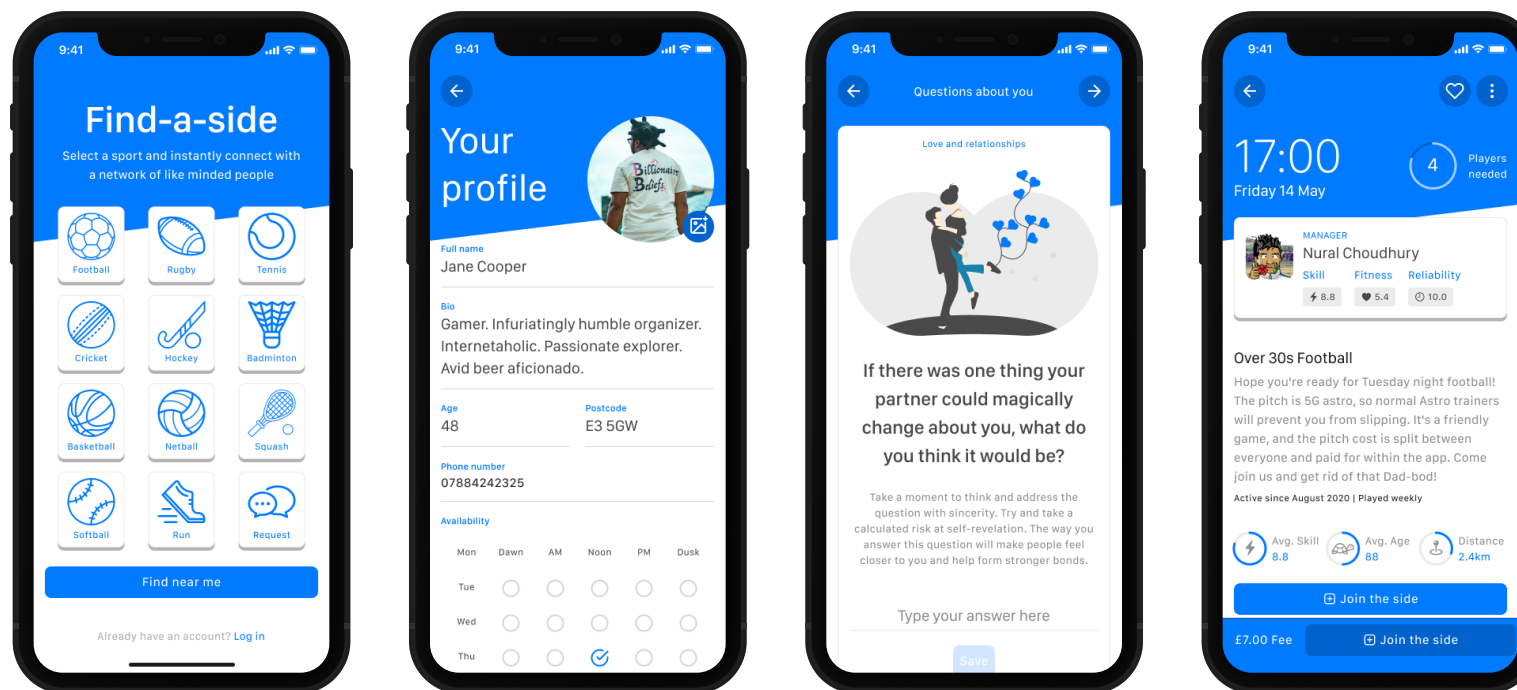
Find a side's revenue will be generated through the charging of transaction fees. This monetisation strategy requires connecting a resource to demand, handling the transaction, and taking a percentage of the transaction for profit.

Many startups have successfully taken advantage of transaction fees to generate app revenue. Uber, Deliveroo and Stripe follow similar business models and charge users small fees for every completed transaction.

The charging of transaction fees is a simple revenue model and avoids charging users fees upfront and provides incremental revenue. Our app will take a fee from each player attending a game/event.

For example, a pitch could cost £80. In a team of 10, each player will have to contribute £4 for the pitch plus our 50p transaction fee.

However, there is a considerable risk in this model as it can be sometime before you can see a return on your investment—profit directly links to the volume of transaction fees and long-term service use. So we must make our app is sticky and desirable.



## RESULT

The solution responds with the creation of a high-quality, scalable product that accommodates a variety of user needs while creating an elegant aesthetic that hints at a trusted brand.

Supporting the core features:

- Join and create games
- Collect fees and book venues
- Chat to and find players
- Complete missions and track progress

This new experience conveys a positive message of **'Don't give in, get out'** and looks to lead mental health treatment by combining physical activities with self-reflection exercises.

The product prototype can be found [here](#), with the most complete journey to be the emulation of a new user.

# FIND ASIDE

## NEXT STEPS

The next phase of the product would be to test out the Self-reflection features and complete all the user type flows, such as Managers and Player-managers.

This would involve booking and finding venues and pooling payments, and drawing down fees.

All this can be achieved with more time and most likely as part of my final project submission.

