The dilemma of disclosure: Designing interpersonal informatics tools for mood tracking
Daniel Westphal, Pape Sow Traore, Elizabeth Murnane

Motivation

- Only 35% of college students with mental health issues receive professional treatment within a year while 78% used informal counseling or support (Eisenberg et al, 2011)
- 45% of students believe that "Most people would think less of someone who has received mental health treatment" (The Healthy Minds Survey 2021)
- There exists a tension between gaining benefits from social support and disclosure of condition that we call "the dilemma of disclosure"

Design Solution

Leverage visualizations where personal data is encoded in non-stigmatizing ways (e.g. a garden metaphor)

Methods

- We ran a 3 week study of 24 undergraduates at Dartmouth using an iPhone app, Sprout V2 (screens from this app are on the right)
- Participants were equally divided into 3 experimental groups
- Group 0 had access to no social features, Group 1 had access to social features with strangers, and Group 2 had access to social features with friends

Results

We found that while friends tended to misrepresent their true mood more, they reported higher levels of mindfulness relative to other groups. They also were more entertained, had more fun, and found the app more worthwhile, rewarding, and useful. Group 2 (friends) also reached out to others when they saw they had tracked sad moods compared to Group 1 (strangers).

Average response on misrepresenting mood by group.
Average response on connectedness to emotions by group.
Two graphs encapsulating our main findings. Created from data from offboarding survey.

Friends that track their mood together rarely misrepresent their mood and gain the most benefits