



HAVEN

(domestic violence help app and responsive website)

Project overview



The product:

Haven is a community based organisation focused on providing help and safety to the victims of domestic violence abuse. Specially victims of I.P.V (intimate partner violence). The community needs a tool that can help the victims get help fast in emergency. The primary target of the app is to provide means to improve the victims mental health, provide first aid tips, bring awareness educating the victims on what legal actions they can take to protect themselves and get back their identity and freedom from toxic relations.



Project duration:

September 2023 - October 2023



Project overview



The problem:

The U.S. ranks 34th for intentional female homicides at a rate of 2.6 killings per 100,000 women.

Moreover in the US three women are killed by their intimate partner everyday. Many women are scared or embarrassed to discuss their family problems with their parents or friends. They keep suffering until it's too late. The Haven community team has realised this problem.



The goal:

Design an app that would provide fast online help ,shelter and safety from community team in emergency. Also bring awareness about legal rights, self defense ,mental health and financial support.

Project overview



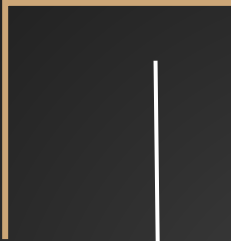
My role:

Ux designer leading the app and responsive website design from conception to delivery.

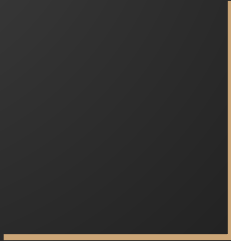


Responsibilities:

Conducting interviews, paper and digital wireframing, low and high fidelity prototyping, Conducting usability studies, accounting for accessibility, iterating on designs, determining information architecture, and responsive design.



Understanding the user



- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- Competitive audit
- Ideation

User research: summary



I did lots of research on domestic violence , about victims and after effects of trauma on victims mental state using Google search. Searching types of violence, the psychology of the victim ,the abuser and the survivor. I used Haven's data on domestic violence protection abuse to develop interview questions which were then used to conduct interviews. After my research i found most people were hesitant,scared ,nervous and embarrassed to tell about their abuse to anyone. Some of them were not even aware that were in the category of abuse type .I observed that they felt comfortable and willing to use a fast and easy to use tool to report their problem and get help to educate themselves against abuse types and methods to free themselves from their abuser.

Persona 1: Anna Williams

Problem statement:

Anna Williams is a abused housewife who needs a community help app on her phone in case of emergency because she needs protection from her husband and someone to help her come out of her situation.



Anna Williams

Age: 25

Education: B.A (hons)

Hometown: New York ,New York

Family: Married

Occupation: House Wife

“There is no one to help me get out of my situation.”

Goals

- Free herself from her husband's abuse.
- Financially independent
- Someone to guide in court matters.
- To find a secret shelter till i am back on my feet.
- Learn self defense.

Frustrations

- Can't find a service centre that understands my privacy .
- None of the services have a fast help button within the society.
- Feels there is no one to talk to for help.

Anna is a 25 year old married woman. She lives in New York with her husband who has been physically ,emotionally and financially abusing her. She cannot reach anyone,her family or friends as she feels she doesn't want to burden them with her problems. She wishes to divorce her husband and lead a normal happy life but is too afraid to step out as he keeps a vigilant eye on her freedom. She only has access to her phone and that too is monitored by him .She is quietly searching for some app on the phone where she might find help.

Persona 2: Richa Goel

Problem statement:

Richa Goel is a domestic violence survivor who needs to join a community help website as a volunteer because she wants to tell her story to inspire others and give them courage and legal support.



Richa Goel

Age: 48
Education: MA in political science
Hometown: New York ,New York
Family: Divorced
Occupation: Domestic violence advocate

“Standing alone is better than standing with someone who hurts you.”

Goals

- Share her personal story to inspire others.
- Reach out a larger crowd to help bring awareness about types of abuse.
- Find ways to educate people to stand up for themselves.

Frustrations

- **Wants to join a social help app for helping as many people possible as a volunteer .**
- **Wants victims to know that they are not alone.**
- **Wants to introduce the victims about laws, self defense and mental health to protect themselves.**

Richa Goel a 48 year old domestic violence survivor .She is an activist who is trying to reach out the IPV(intimate partner victims) bringing about abuse awareness. Teaching people about ways to strengthen themselves through knowledge about laws to protect themselves,self defense techniques, financial aid methods from society ,shelter and more.She tries to tell people her own story of survival in order to inspire the victims that be strong and believe in yourselves there is hope always.

Competitive audit

An audit of a few competitor's provided hints on areas needed to be improved and addressed with the Haven's app.

Competitive audit	Competitive audit goal										
	General information									First Impressions	
	Competitor type (direct or indirect)	Location(s)	Product offering	Price (\$ - \$\$\$\$)	Website (URL)	Business size (small, medium, large)	Target audience	Unique value proposition	Desktop website experience	App or mobile website experience	
Watch over me	Indirect	not mentioned facebook and twitter account mentioned	unlimited SMS alerts throughout the year.	4.99	http://watchovermeapp.com/about	medium	victims mostly women	"we hope to arm women with information and awareness so they can make better decisions about their safety."	Needs Work + not secure - not responsive	Okay + Visuals are okay. -missing location proof	
Violence intervention program	Indirect	New York	helpline, counselling shelter etc.	Donation based	https://www.vipmujeres.org/about-us/mission-history/	Large	victims mostly latina community women	"We pursue our mission by raising community awareness engaging in activism and providing culturally competent service."	Good + Strong and consistent + Easy to navigate	Good + Strong and consistent branding + Easy to navigate	
Domestic shelters.org	Direct	San Diego	Find a shelter or program near you	Donation based	https://www.domesticshelters.org/	Large	all types of domestic violence victims	"we provide the largest database of programs and shelters in US and Canada."	Outstanding + strong branding and visual designs + Easy navigation	Outstanding + All features are useful and intuitive + strong and consistent	
Smaritians	Direct	Awabakal County	Domestic and family violence, child support, community support, counselling and mental health	Donation based	https://www.samaritians.org.au/about	Large	all types of domestic violence victims	"We give our help unconditionally with care and respect empowering individuals to build their resilience and build their place in community."	Good + Consistent - needs more features	Good + Strong and consistent branding - could work on some more features	

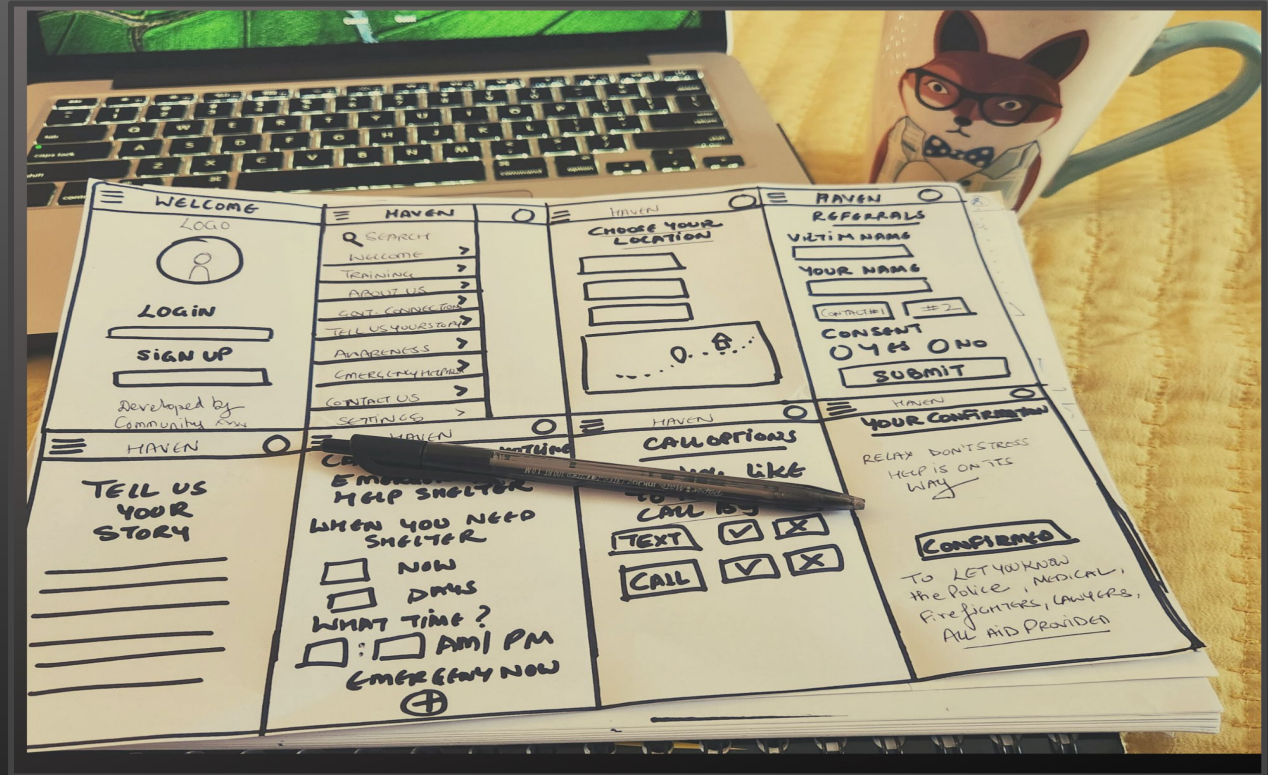
UX
(rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding)

Features	Interaction			Visual design		Content	
	Accessibility	User flow	Navigation	Brand identity	Tone	Descriptiveness	
Okay + Features are okay - many features missing	Okay - not so accessible	Okay + flow is okay - need to work on many aspects	okay + is okay - Shows insecure site	Needs Work + Visuals are average - Colors need work	Introduction on homepage is formal yet friendly		Needs Work + Site feels like its doing some work - has security issues
Good + Features are highlighted + Clear and straightforward	Good + Strong use of colors - Accessibility features not mentioned	Good + user flow is smooth and easy - needs some work	Needs Work - Some clickable elements need work + Overall navigation is average	Outstanding + Strong visuals and branding + Good use of high quality images	Formal precise limited		Good + conveys info clearly - limited to one type of community
outstanding + Good visuals and features + Ability to create profile	Good + Strong visuals and colours used - missing accessibility features	Good + process is clear and easy	Good + is good - needs some more input	Outstanding + Good use of visuals + Consistent strong UI	Formal yet very friendly		Outstanding + conveys info profoundly, very userfriendly + Good UI and visuals giving messages clear and strong
Good + Main features highlighted + All services mentioned clearly - Ability to create profile not mentioned here	Outstanding + Accessibility feature specially mentioned	Outstanding + flow is very good	Good + Comprehensive menu + it is easy to navigate	GOOD + strong brand reflected throughout the design - could add more features on homepage	Formal to the point language		Good + Clear and easy to understand - Homepage needs more clarity

Click here to view full [competitive audit](#)

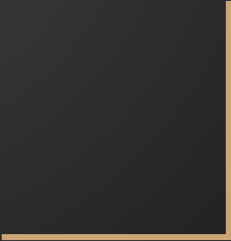
Ideation

Ideation process is always fun and quick. While ideating my main focus was trying to create an easy flow for the victim to be able to get help from the Haven's emergency help centre team discreetly and be rescued from the abuser by creating simple easy prompts and buttons features.





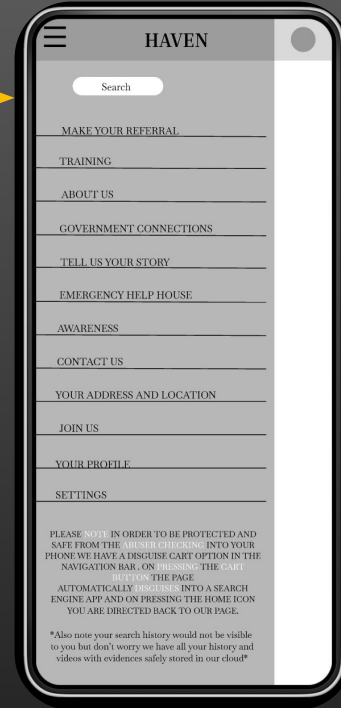
Starting the design

- Digital wireframes
 - Low-fidelity prototype
 - Usability studies
- 

Digital wireframes

I created the initial designs after ideating and drafting some paper wireframes for the Haven's app. My designs focus on the easy and user friendly designs for the users to have a smooth process using the app. Also adding encouraging sentences added for the victim to feel secure and confident that he/she is not alone and protected.

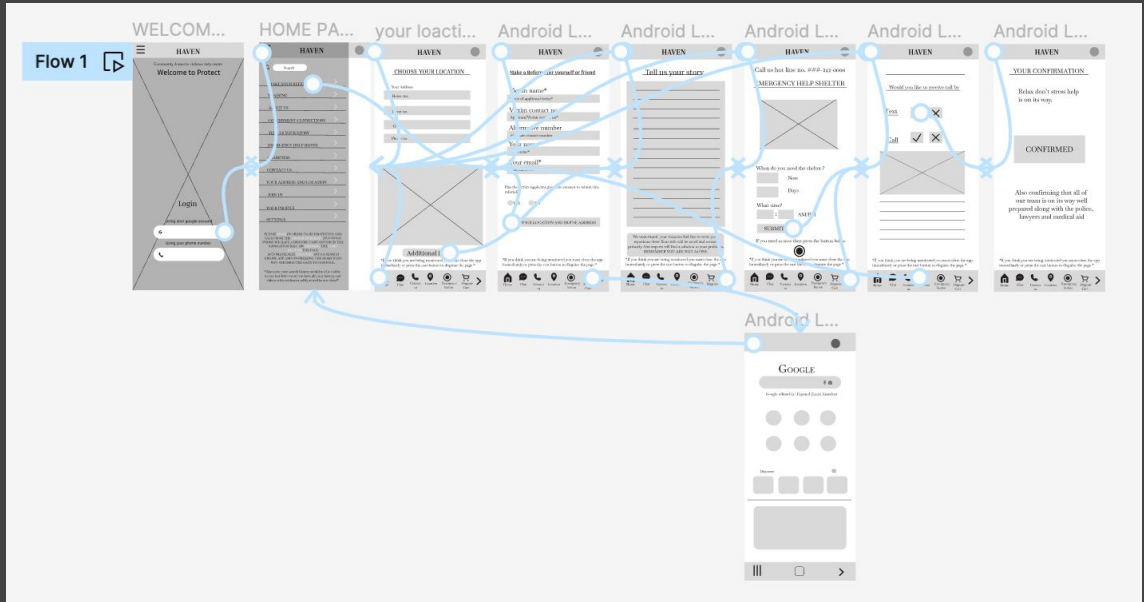
Easy hamburger menu highlighting all the features on the 3/4h of the page with a search bar.



Bottom page highlights the secret features like disguise button and disclaimer that the victims search history will not be saved but added to the cloud in order to keep the victim safe from the abuser

Low -fidelity prototype

I created a low fidelity prototype connecting the user flow which shows the victim filling referral ,adding address and location (for the community to better understand the victims situation and act accordingly),to asking for emergency help shelter , the team asking to confirm the confirmation to be received by text or call and then confirming that the rescue team is on it's way . I have also shown the disguise page option that opens after pressing the disguise button by the victim when the abuser approaches him/her for security reasons.



[Haven \(domestic violence app\) low fidelity prototype](#)

Usability study: parameters



Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



Location:

New York, remote



Participants:

7 participants



Length:

20 minutes

Usability study: findings

These were the main uncovered by usability study

1

Disguise confirmation

Some of the users wanted the confirmation to come under the disguise button.

2


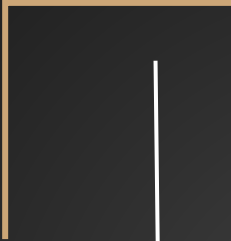
Language options

Some users found it difficult to use the app due to language constraint .They wanted different language options to be added.

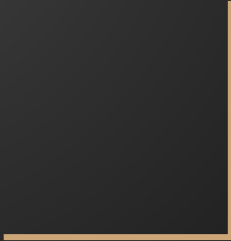
3

Fast referral

Some participants wanted the referral process to be fast .To save time in emergency .



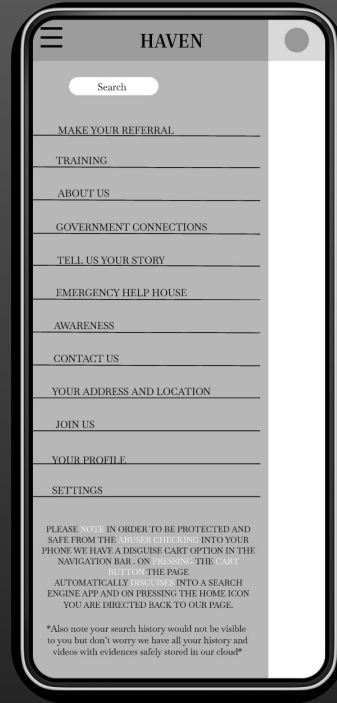
Refining the design

- Mockups
 - High-fidelity prototype
 - Accessibility
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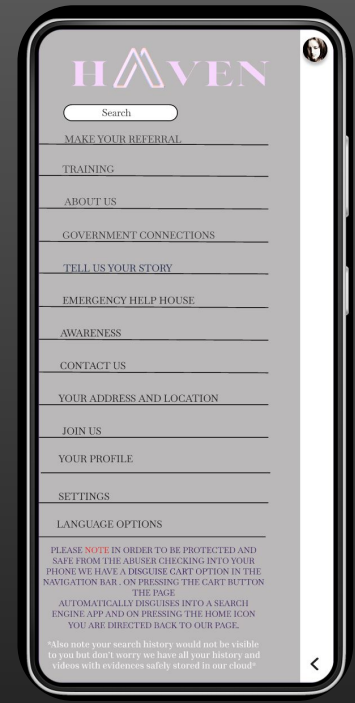
Mockups

Based on the insight from the usability studies ,i applied changes by adding language options in the menu .Also highlighted the note button to red color so that the victim does not miss the important disguise feature in the app .Also disclaimer that we don't save history for better security of the user.

Before usability study



After usability study



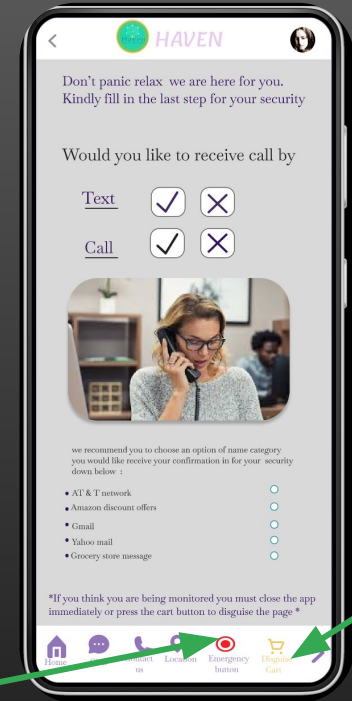
Mockups

Additional design changes were made again based on usability studies. As per the study the users wanted confirmation message to be received under a disguise category. So here I added confirmation receiving option to be by text or a call. If by text then a disguise message page like from gmail stating your update is delivered "as in it's confirmed rescue team is on it's way." Also the emergency button has prominent red colour and disguise page is a cart in yellow color in the bottom bar.

Before usability study



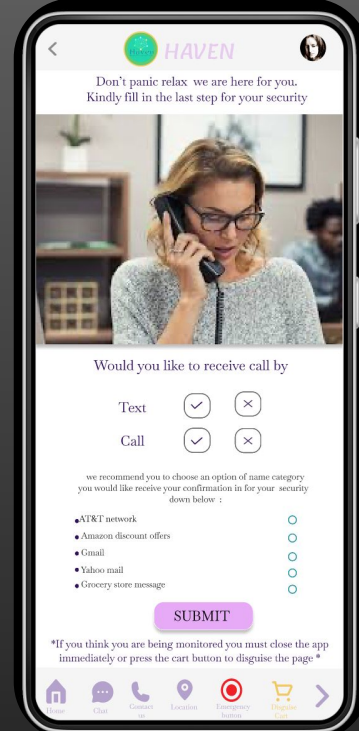
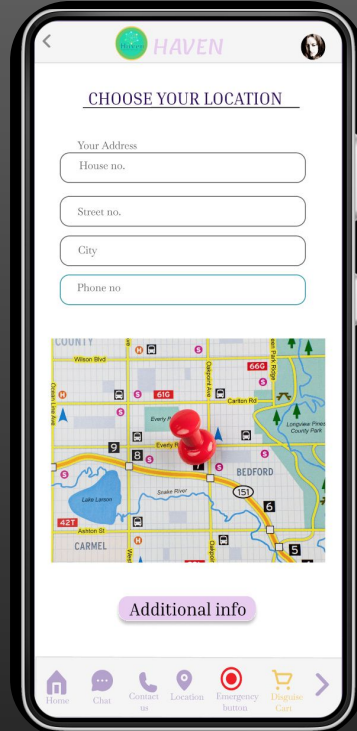
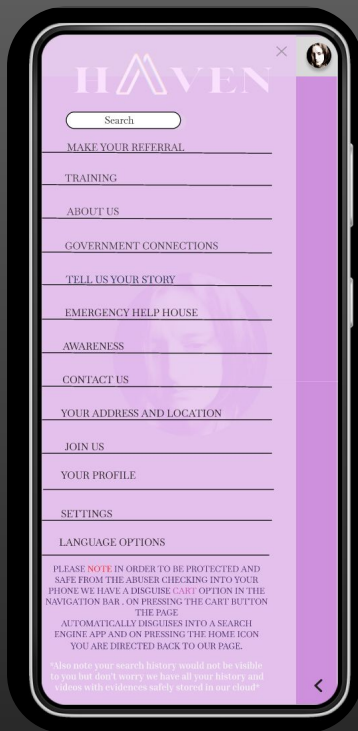
After usability study



Emergency button

Disguise Page

Mockups



High-fidelity prototype

High fidelity prototype here was created using the same user flow as the low fidelity prototype. After lots of iterations here i included the design changes after usability study .



[Here is the link to high fidelity prototype](#)

Accessibility considerations

1

I ensured to create a simple and clear layout for users to understand . Very visible elements for those who need to magnify the screen

2

An easy-to follow app with clear indicators.Consistency throughout the app.Button clearly labels, clear menu bar for the users to explore the app quickly and easily.

3

Simple and consistent formatting for dyslexic users and those with impaired vision

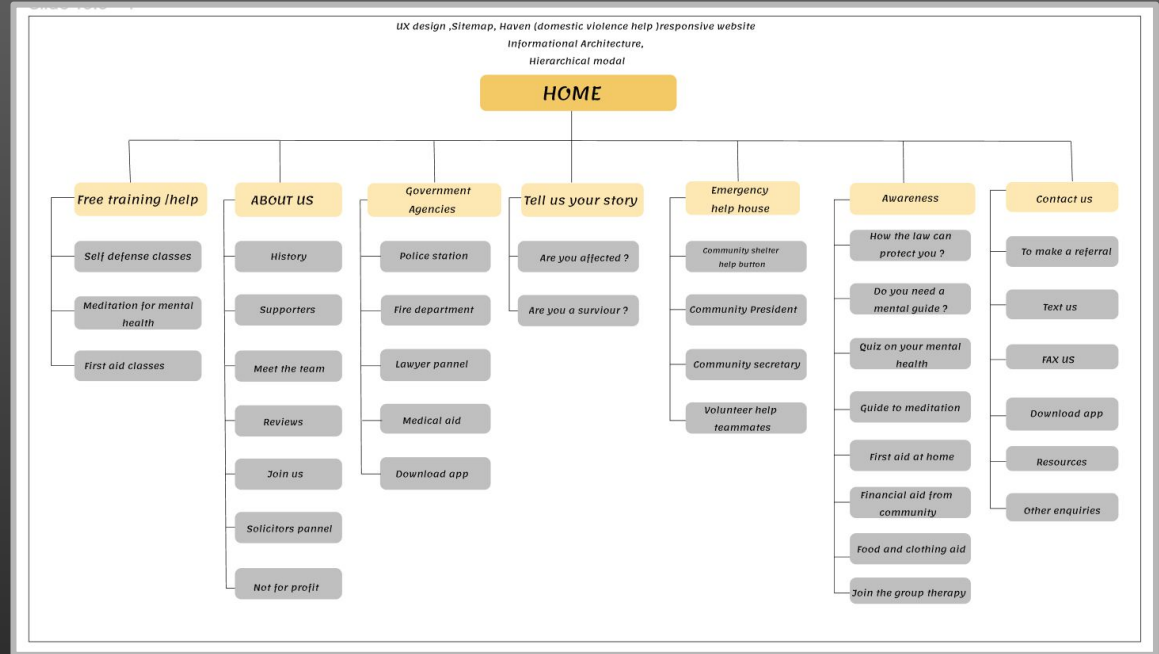
Responsive Design



- Information architecture
- Responsive design

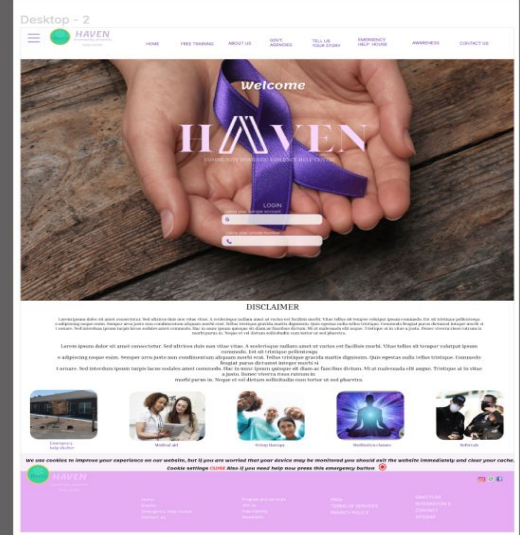
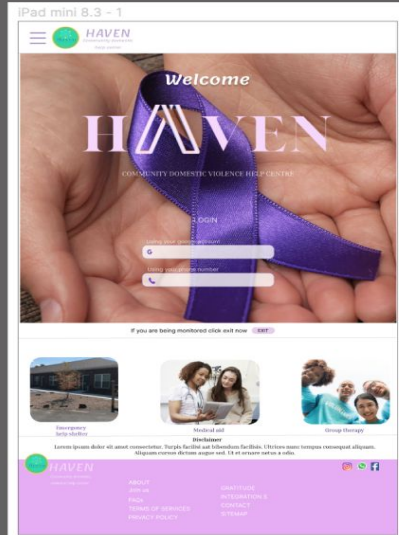
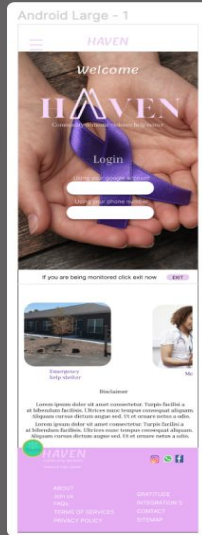
Sitemap

After completing the app designs In order to ensure a cohesive and consistent experience across devices i started to work on the IA for the sitemap of Haven's app.I prefer using the hierarchical modal for this Haven's website.



Responsive designs

For screen size variation i include mobile ,ipad mini 8 and desktop.I tried to keep the screen variation ratio in consideration also ensure to fit designs specific user needs of each device and screen size.



Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

The users shared that the app seemed very useful. They liked the idea of a community app which could not only help solve the problems of the victim but also help and guide them to get back their independence emotionally, financially and physically.

One of our users said "I like the idea of having a feeling of security of protection available just pressing a few buttons in a app and a community team that is so caring."



What I learned:

I learned that for a good design we need to make lots of observation and study of our design again and again. A good design is not about what you think is a great design it's about how user friendly is your design. Every smallest detail matters from small action buttons, navigation bar, your images included in design, the color theme and more. The more you study your design and iterate it keeps getting better.

Next steps

1

Conduct research on how successful the app is in achieving its goal bringing about safety and rescuing the victims in emergency A goal to make the victims feel they have a community with them that they are not alone and unsafe .

2

Add more free facilities for the victims and survivors to have better mental health ,financial stability ,knowledge regarding legal rights etc.

3

Providing incentives to volunteers for participating and helping the victims.Creating a fast network option in the app for the victims segregated as per the type of abuse so that they can relate to each other and can be of comfort and support for each other after being rescued .

Let's connect!



Thank you for your time reviewing my work on Haven (domestic violence prevention) app! If you would like to get in touch , my contact information is mentioned below .

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