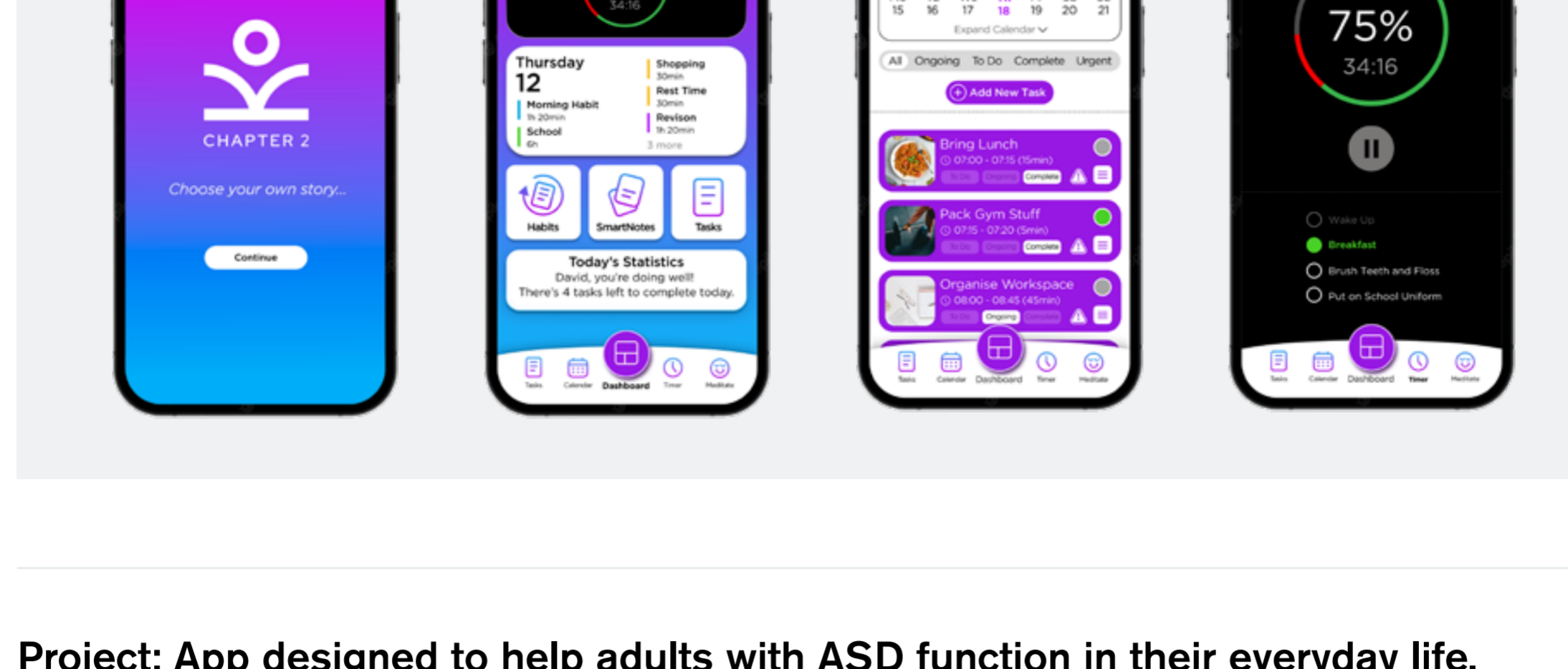




CASE STUDY

Mobile App iOS Aimed at improving the lifestyles of adults with High-Functioning Autism (ASD).

Key Skills: Design thinking, user research, information architecture, interaction design, new tools, processes and methodologies (lean UX and agile), logo design, branding.



Project: App designed to help adults with ASD function in their everyday life.

Key Skills: Design thinking, user research, information architecture, interaction design, new tools, processes and methodologies (lean UX and agile), logo design, branding.

1. The Mission

After conducting research on the day-to-day troubles high-functioning autistic adults face both professionally and socially, there is clearly a lack of support available. Over recent years, there have been technological advances and untapped potential with smart-phones, smart-watches and artificial intelligence (AI), which can be made accessible and affordable to people. As these technologies are close to or present on their body, and are seen as stigma-free, being used everyday by people of all abilities and ages (research shows that about 90 percent of adults own a smart-phone, with around 95 percent of those smart-phones used daily – Mobile Consumer Survey 2019), there is obvious potential to improve and enhance thousands of peoples lives with the opportunity to integrate people with ASD better into society.

There is clearly a lack of suitable apps for adults who have high-functioning ASD on the market. The apps at present simply do not address the issues posed or utilise the potential technologies readily available and present in other apps. The brief was to create a 'toolbox' and support app that allows adults (of 15+ years) with high-functioning ASD to help with their day to day struggles at home, social and workplace environments. The app was to consider providing solutions that help people overcome or ease practical hurdles (e.g. time management, repetitive/restrictive behaviour, challenges with social communication and interaction, moods and reducing anxiety). The app should offer learning capabilities, support as well as tools to help with day-to-day activities.

2. The Approach

I created a time-boxed approach to utilise design thinking, lean UX and an agile mindset. The current audience profiles and their usage was limited to over 15s from a variety of demographics and stages in life. I wanted to explore as wider audience as possible, to be more inclusive and design around their needs and behaviours.

An inclusive and iterative design approach:

1. Inclusive profiles to cover: ages, abilities and those reluctant to adopt and engage.
2. Prioritise user needs (qual and quant) against lifestyle objectives.
3. Iterative prototyping, testing and learning until key assumptions are validated.

Work Samples

Personas

"John"
Age:16

- A good student but struggles with time management and keeping on task.
- Finds it difficult to get started on tasks and moving from one task to another.
- Mobile Savvy (uses apps/devices, SnapChat, FB etc).
- Doesn't usually use calendars or timers.
- Never spoken to counsellors

"Mary"
Age:34

- Busy mother of two young children, at-home-mum.
- Prefers to use traditional calendars to keep on track of tasks.
- A self starter but tasks often over-run going on to late in the evening.
- Mobile savvy but prefers 'traditional' ways of doing things.
- Has spoken to counsellors in the past. Wouldn't have a problem speaking to experts using a mobile device.

"Roy"
Age:51

- Father of two. Project Manager.
- Use traditional calendars as well as digital calendar's on iPhone to keep on track of tasks/meetings.
- Doesn't have issues with keeping to deadlines and meetings but like to use technology to keep on top of things.
- Has never spoken to counsellors in the past about his own diagnosis but has recently for both kids who were recently diagnosed with asd.
- Wouldn't have a problem speaking to experts using a mobile device.

"Lisa"
Age:72

- Mother of two. Semi-retired.
- Use traditional calendars to keep track of events.
- Not particularly mobile savvy but uses a smartphone for Facebook, whatsapp, emails and phonecalls.
- Hasn't spoken to counsellors in the past and suspects she has ASD asd.
- Wouldn't have a problem speaking to experts on a mobile device but would prefer face-to-face.

Concept Development

Wireframes

3. Project Reflections

There is a requirement for multiple tools, each having the flexibility to cater for many different needs and levels of aid, usability could suffer if everything was to be incorporated into a single app. Even if one could, the danger is it could become so complicated that users could potentially just give up on it. At present there are a range of apps that are specific to solving lifestyle problems. Apps such as Lifesum which can help people with food and keeping up with nutrition; Monday.com is good at helping work in check and visible; Routinery, good for building daily schedules.

Despite selecting a group of people using specific user profiles, the requirements of adults with ASD are still incredibly diverse. Designing an app that can offer particular tools to everyone based on their unique needs is simply unachievable. For example, some people with ASD are non-verbal, have very different social issues (ranging from small to debilitating), and in terms of time-management, some individuals struggle with what some consider to be the simplest of tasks (covering almost everything) and some requiring extended lists (supporting memory). To provide timers for every individual task may be seen to some individuals as cumbersome (or even insulting) to manage (and time) every every task at minute of the day. I have tried to mitigate this by the following:

1. I have allowed the user to turn on and off the timer on every task/habit.
2. The user is asked to set a priority on each task. Events with a high priority need to be done that day (labeled as 'urgent') events with a low priority may be able to be skipped (and this will be reflected in the Statistics dashboard (page)). I have introduced a question when the app starts up asking the user to rate how they feel on that particular morning. If they are stressed or unhappy, they can be prompted to adjust their calendar so only the priority events appear at the top of the days list which are necessary to be achieved. The other tasks are able to be achieved if they want but are 'nice to have's' and can flow onto the another day (for when they feel stronger/more positive) or be part of a reminder (which can be ignored).

Overview (Key Screens)