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### BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

- Mental disorders are now a top cause of disability in Thailand, with demand accelerating amid demographic shifts and post-pandemic pressures.
- Persistent access barriers—workforce shortages, stigma, distance, and time constraints—hit rural and underserved communities hardest, deepening inequities in care.
- With >90% smartphone penetration (NBTC, 2024), there is an unprecedented opportunity for scalable, equity-driven digital mental health solutions.
- Gap: Thailand currently lacks an integrated, evidence-informed digital mental health platform combining empathetic AI support, self-care tools, community engagement, and safe crisis escalation pathways.**

### CURRENT STATUS & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

#### Current Progress:

Prototype is in ongoing usability testing

- High initial engagement and positive user feedback
- Strong perception of empathy and confidentiality in AI interactions
- Preliminary reviewers valued the concept's anonymous access and 24/7 availability
- Cultural appropriateness of "easing the heart" (NapJai) concept validated

#### Planned Pilot Evaluation Targets:

- ≥70% onboarding completion
- ≥80% weekly check-in adherence among active users
- ≥0.5 SD symptom improvement in ≥50% of users
- ≥30% 30-day retention
- ≥100 supportive peer interactions with minimal moderation flags



Scan to explore prototype concept



### CONCLUSION / LESSONS LEARNED

- Concept- and prototype-stage findings suggest strong potential for community acceptability and early emotional support.
- Human-centred co-design is critical for trust, safety, and engagement in mental health technology.
- Clear crisis pathways and privacy-by-design elements must be integral before deployment.
- The upcoming pilot will be essential to assess real-world usability and early outcomes.
- NapJai highlights the potential of AI and community-based design to complement Thailand's mental health workforce, especially in rural and underserved populations.**

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support development of evidence-informed digital mental health platforms to expand early access across populations.
- Encourage university–government–community partnerships to co-create safe digital health tools.
- Integrate digital mental health with existing national services (e.g., hotline 1323) to strengthen system capacity.
- Utilize anonymized insights from digital platforms to inform population-level planning and equity-focused policy.
- Promote inclusion of digital mental health literacy into national health promotion strategies to strengthen sustainable community engagement.



#### References:

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- Fitzpatrick KK, Darcy A, Vierhile M. Delivering cognitive behavioral therapy using a conversational agent (Woebot): A randomized controlled trial. JMIR Ment Health. 2017;4(2):e19.