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BEARS CONNECT TO MOVE: A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY-BASED INTERVENTION APP FOR STUDENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH NEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

- College students are at a critical point in their lives in which the promotion of physical and mental health can significantly influence one's long-term habits (Melnik et al., 2012).
- Basic Needs Theory (BNT), a mini-theory within Self Determination Theory (SDT: Deci & Ryan, 1985), posits the fulfillment of one's basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness predicts their psychological well-being and self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
- 'Bears Connect to Move', an application (APP) created based on the posits of BNT, serves as an intervention designed to promote and sustain student connection, mental health, and physical activity (PA).

PURPOSE

To examine the effectiveness of a theoretically-based APP ('Bears Connect to Move') intervention on student health and wellness.



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METHODS

Participants: Through email, newsletters, and flyers, UNC students (undergraduate and graduate) offer voluntary participation.

Design: Pretest-posttest to examine significant differences in student well-being based upon engagement with the APP.

Beta-testing: Initial beta-testing of the APP was implemented allowing participants to provide feedback about the operation and usefulness of the APP's features.

Aims of APP Features: Students can...

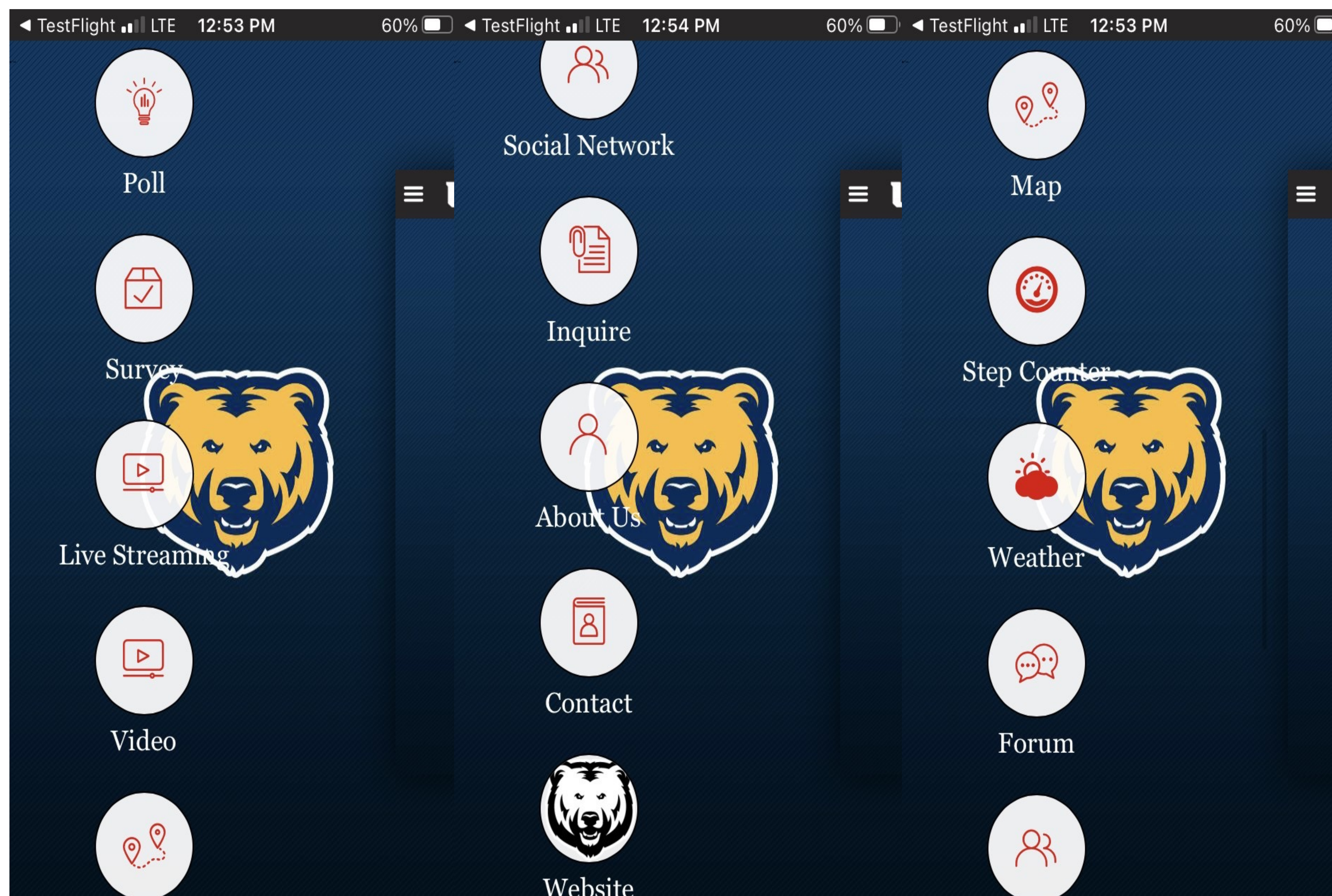
Create profiles and indicate PA preferences and interests.

Schedule workout plans.

See indoor and outdoor locations for PA.

Create message boards.

Engage in PA with one another remotely out of respect for COVID-19 and social distancing.



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Feedback from beta-testing:

- Include headings once inside the APP feature.
- Include preview of APP features as notifications.
- Very helpful in terms of connecting and communicating with friends; and easy to find locations on campus due to the virtual map feature.
- APP provides helpful information of UNC fitness and exercise options.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Due to the persistent challenge of university student retention (Prial, et al., 2021), the APP may operate as a helpful resource for both incoming and current students to ensure the health and well-being of UNC's diverse student body.
- The use and implementation of the APP may provide insightful implications to administrators, student affairs practitioners, and faculty about UNC's diverse student body and students' particular needs.

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