

# Developing a mobile app intervention based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for adults with a visible difference affected by appearance distress

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## Background

### What is visible difference?

- > Any physical appearance considered atypical.
- > E.g. cleft lip/palate, scarring, skin conditions.
- > Many describe receiving unwelcome attention.<sup>1</sup>
- > Some experience social anxiety, poor body image, and/or low quality of life.<sup>2</sup>

*Space saver: currently seeking out photos of people with visible differences*

### Why Acceptance and Commitment Therapy?

- > ACT targets quality of life by increasing mindfulness, acceptance of experience, and valued behaviour.<sup>3</sup>
- > ACT offers a pragmatic approach for those with minimal control over appearance or others' initial reactions.<sup>4</sup>

## This project

### Why an ACT-based app?

- > Some with visible differences favour remote psychological support.<sup>5</sup>
- > Mobile apps may partly compensate for lack of therapist support, via immediately accessible guidance (e.g. during social exposure) and tailored prompts.<sup>6</sup>
- > ACT-based apps show promise in changing health behaviours.<sup>7</sup>

### Project objectives

- ① Design the overview and content of an app, by utilising a wide range of expertise.
- ② Gain feedback on an app demo from stakeholders, and iteratively re-design the app.
- ③ Show proof of concept, then apply for a grant to build app and conduct a research trial.

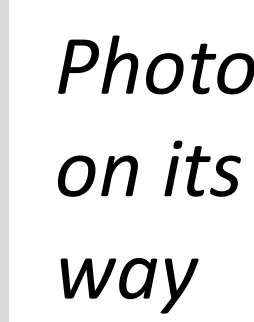
## The app team

### Researchers



- > Fabio Zucchelli > Manage project; and Dr Heidi Williamson, CAR, UWE Bristol.
- > Co-produce app overview and content.

### Clinical expert



- > Dr Olivia Donnelly, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, North Bristol NHS Trust.
- > Co-produce app overview and advise on content.

### User representative



- > Emma Rush, Vitiligo Support UK Founder.
- > Advise on project material and delivery.

### Software developer



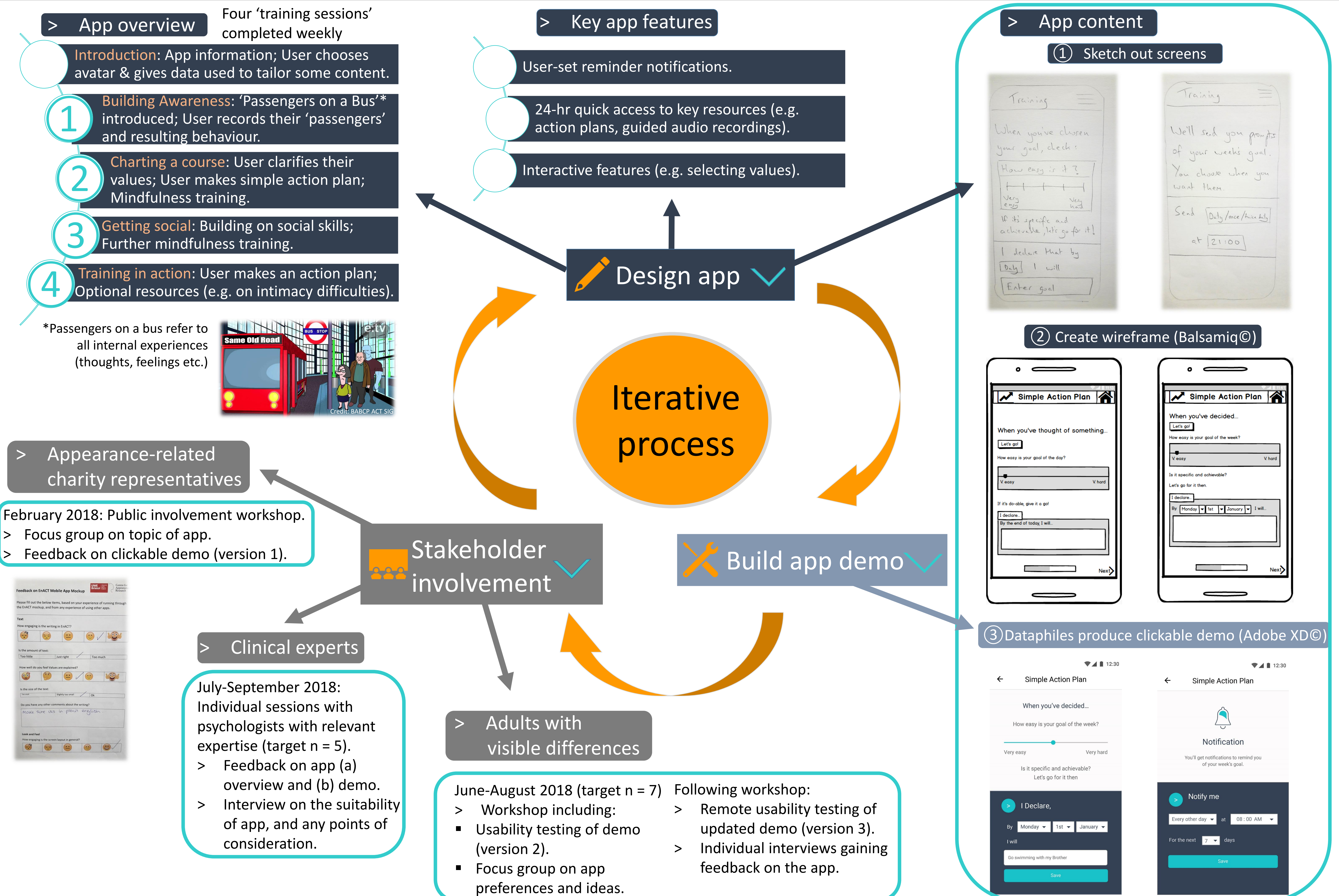
- > Advise on app design.
- > Build clickable app demo.

### App usability expert



- > Dr Praminda Caleb-Solly, UWE Bristol.
- > Advise on usability element of app design.

## The development process



### References

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6. Ivanova, E., Lindner, P., Ly, K. H., Dahlin, M., Vermark, K., Andersson, G., & Carlbring, P. (2016). Guided and unguided Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for social anxiety disorder and/or panic disorder provided via the Internet and a smartphone application: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, 44, 27-35.
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