What is design research?

with Sophia Luu

Illustration by lily kong

Morning Quiz!!

What is wrong with this poster?

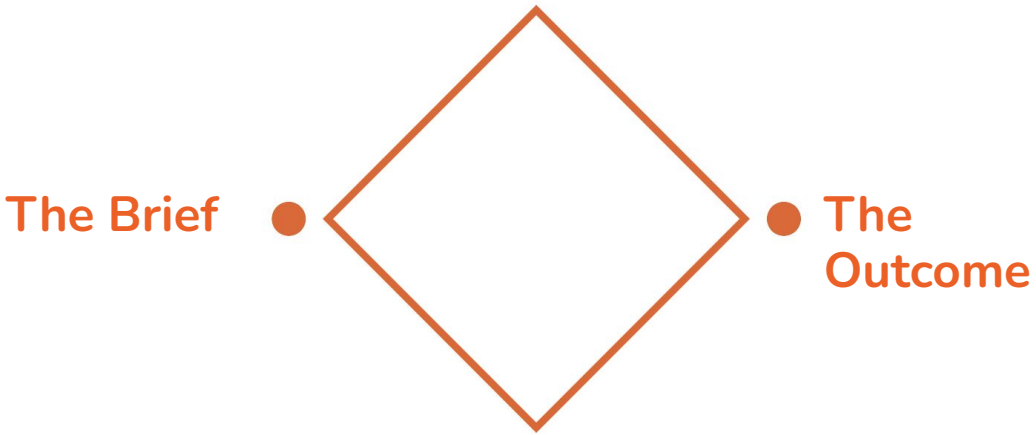
Poster on the Thameslink Train

What is wrong with this poster?

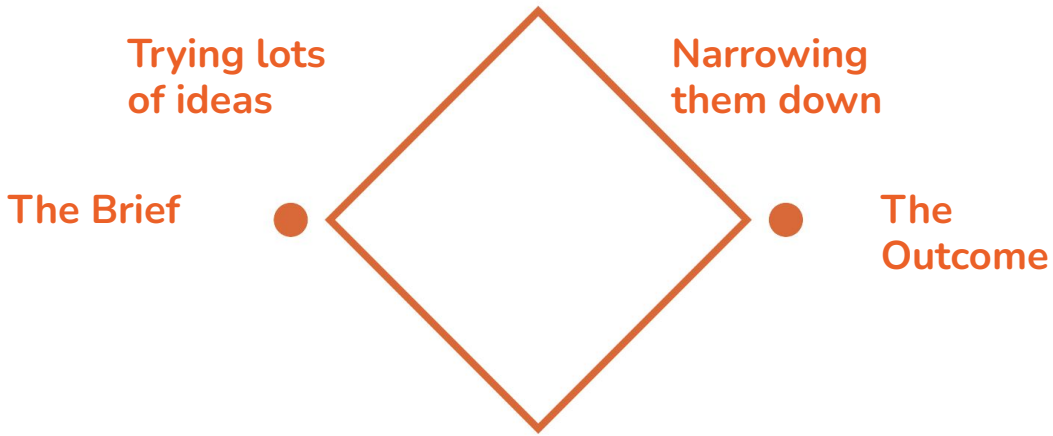
- Colours are not easy to read to target audience
- Copy-writing flaw: rhetorical question is unrelatable to text underneath and not easy to understand
- Too much focus on ‘should’ with no call to action
- Main hiring information hidden and hard to see
- Text placement is hard to read
- Targeting commuters on a train, outside of the toilet cubicle (which has limited walkthrough in peak commuter times)

Poster on the Thameslink Train

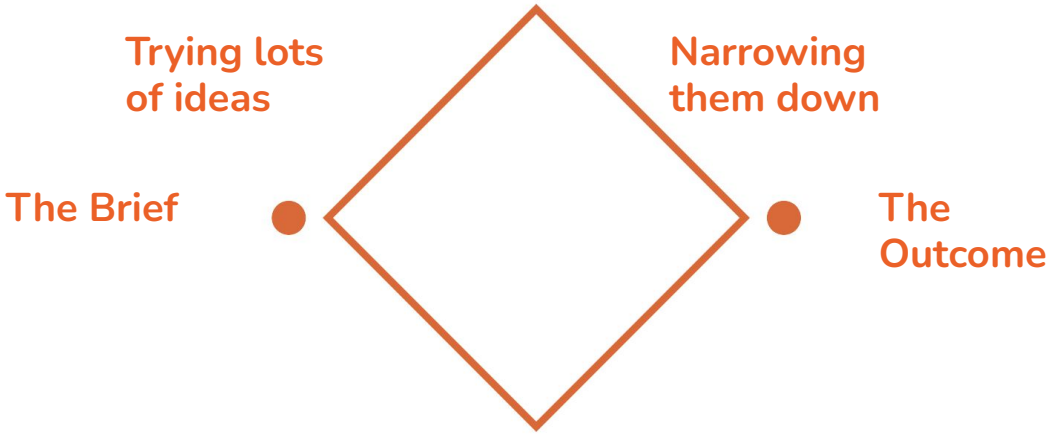
How we are used to thinking about a brief:



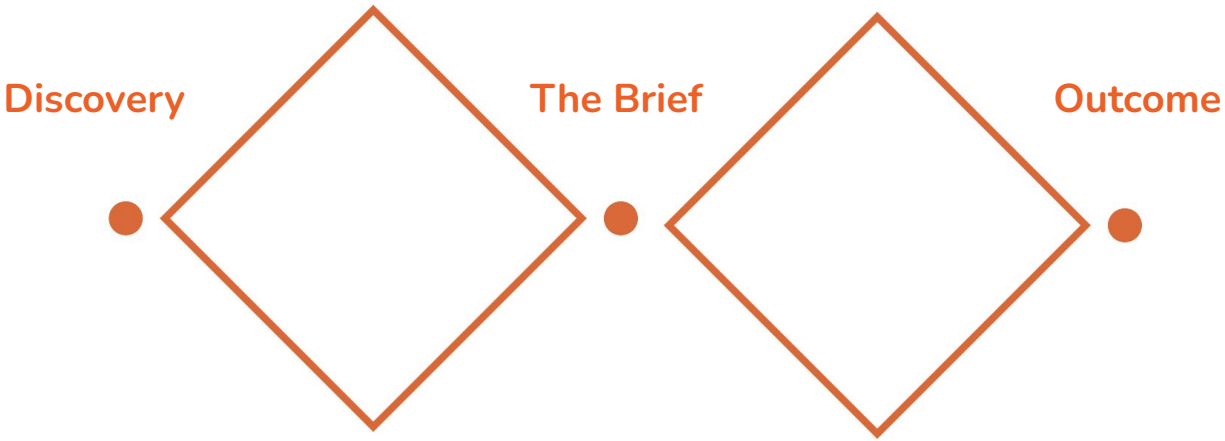
How we are used to thinking about a brief:



How we are used to thinking about a brief:

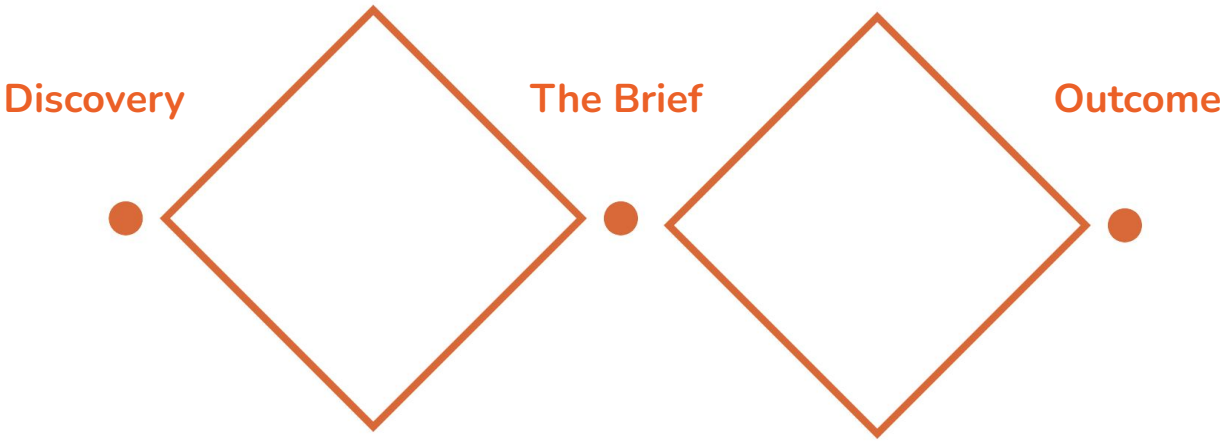


The double diamond



The double diamond

Most of the time, you will be commissioned at this stage



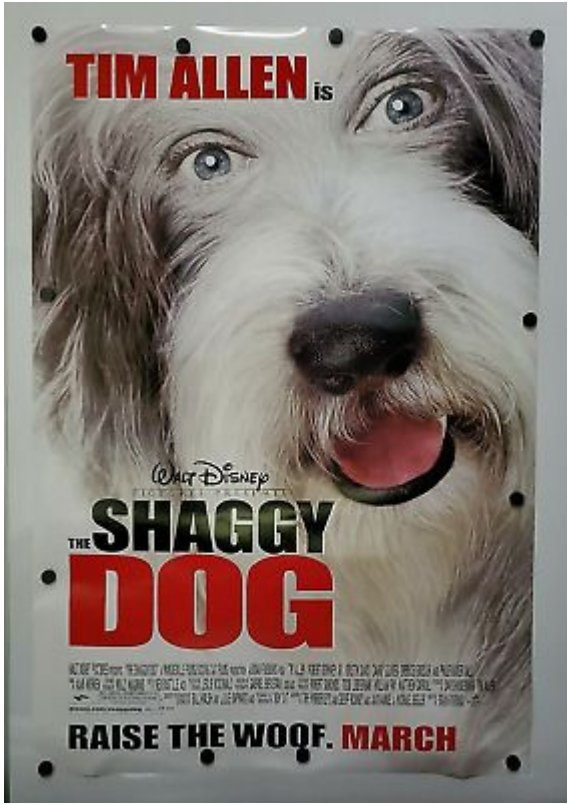
Without taking the time to really research our problem area, we risk designing some terrible outcomes...

Bad Packaging

Bad Labels

SIZE
36X32
100% COTTON/
COTON
MADE IN PHILIPPINES
RN54023
CA17897

Bad Posters



Bad UX

remember this location
Ok, I'll remember that
what did I ask you to remember
I remember you told me.
"This location"

Make sure you can tell the difference between bad design and bad design ‘on purpose’…

Smoking Packaging

Map design

📷 'There has never been a "Palestine" label on Google Maps,' said a spokesperson. Photograph: Google Maps

The world has too much badly designed stuff - don’t add to it!

Your brief for cycle 4 is about narrowing down the problem yourself. That is why research is a quarter of the module this year.

So... where do you start?

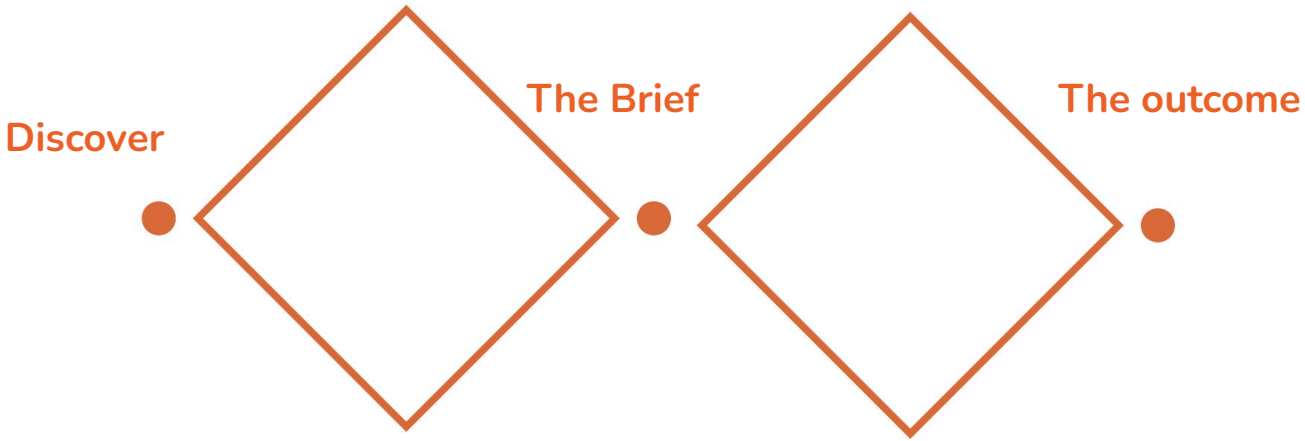
01

What is Design Research and why is it important

A Design Researcher uses creative thinking techniques to approach problems from the perspective of those they are designing for.

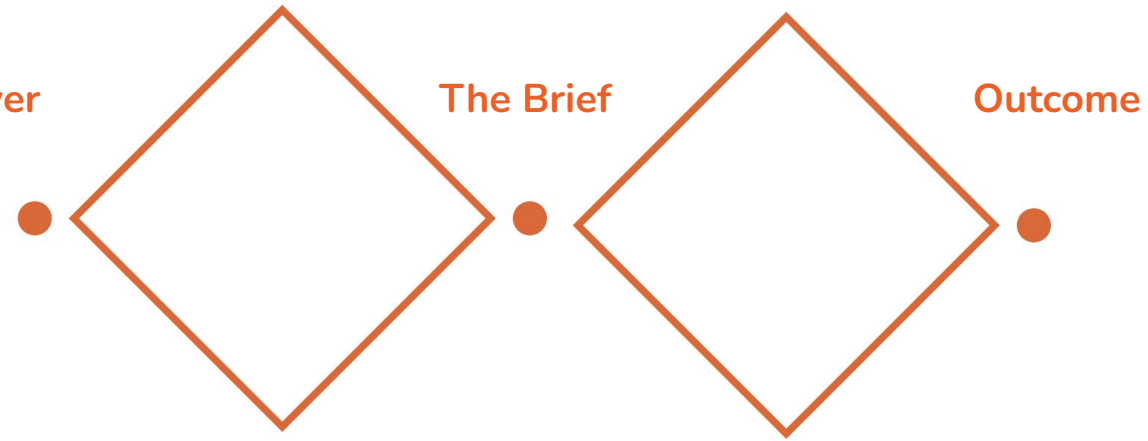
The double diamond

Design researchers work mostly at this side of the double diamond



Steps in Research

Design researchers work mostly at this side of the double diamond



Defining the scope
Profiling the ‘users’
Desk Research
Site visits
In-person research
Interviews
Synthesis
Writing Insights
Sharing Insights

Defining the Scope

Why Hong Kong?

Today, 60% of the entire world's older population (60+) are in the Asia-Pacific region. And the ageing of the region is going to continue to accelerate relative to the rest of of the world.

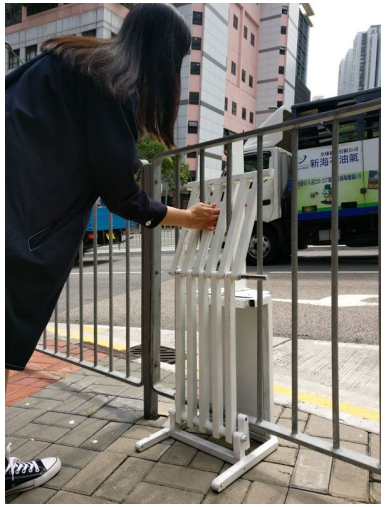
To prepare for the future it is helpful to understand emerging behaviours and values relating to ageing in key locations such as Hong Kong.

Although Hong Kong is a unique location, it has relevant cultural and economic similarities with the broader region.

Hong Kong is also characterised by dense living conditions and hence can provide insight into life on smaller square footage.

Profiling the users

Desk Research

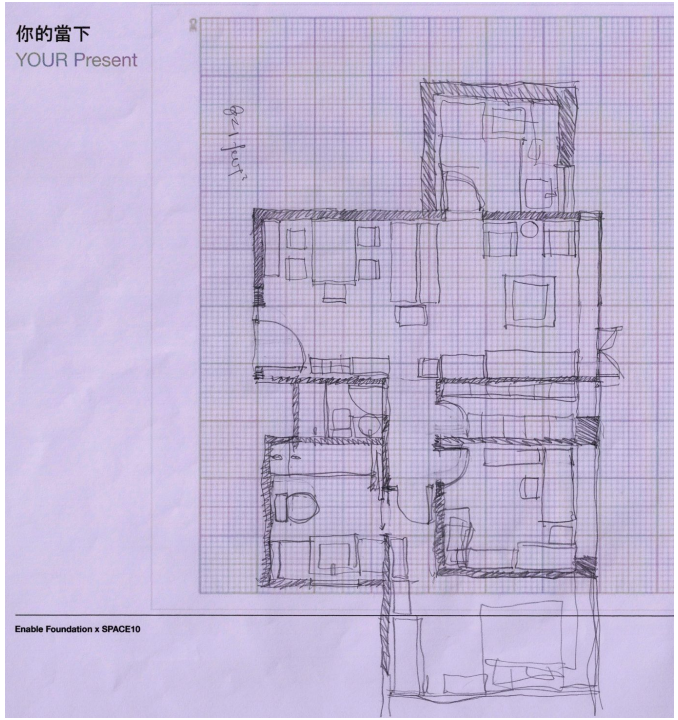


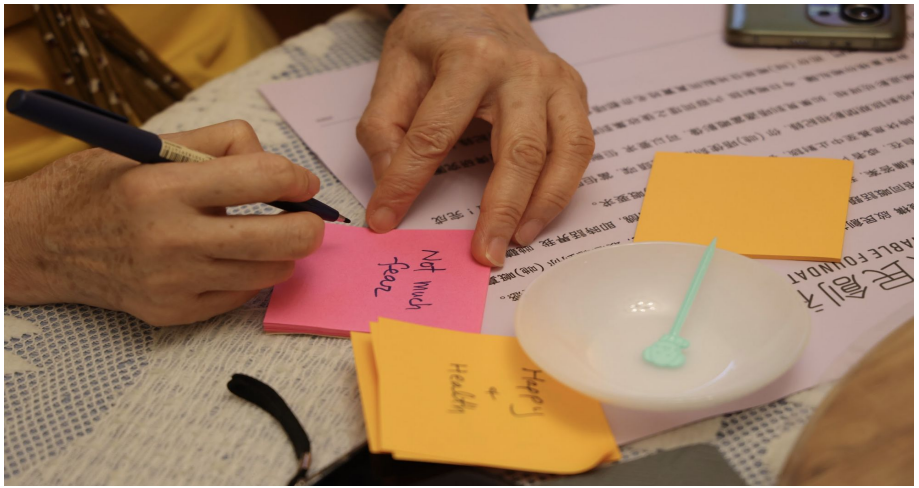
DOMAT studio

Enable Foundation

Site Visits

In-person research - Partnership with Enable Foundation

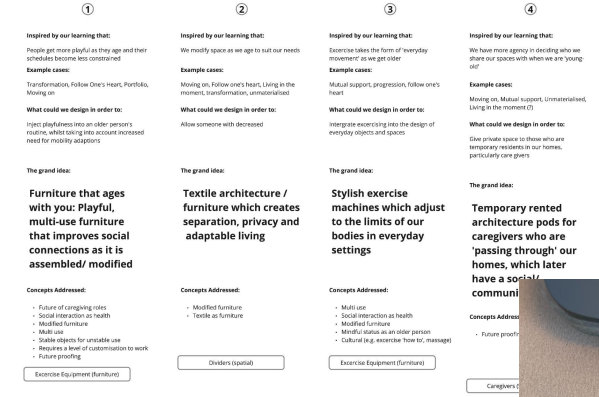




Interviews

Probe 3
我們的未來
OUR Future
保持視力
病(要身邊人長期照顧的)
- 有親人朋友相伴
- Keep looking up
- 每天運動
- 繼續旅遊
- 吃得是福
- 病痛
- 卧牀
Enable Foundation x SPACE10
2023

Synthesis



①

Inspired by our learning that:

People get more playful as they age and their schedules become less constrained

Example cases:

Transformation, Follow One's Heart, Portfolio, Moving on

What could we design in order to:

Inject playfulness into an older person's routine, whilst taking into account increased need for mobility adaptions

The grand idea:

Furniture that ages with you: Playful, multi-use furniture that improves social connections as it is assembled/ modified

Concepts Addressed:

- Future of caregiving roles
- Social interaction as health
- Modified furniture
- Multi use
- Stable objects for unstable use
- Requires a level of customisation to work
- Future proofing

Exercise Equipment (furniture)

②

Inspired by our learning that:

We modify space as we age to suit our needs

Example cases:

Moving on, Follow one's heart, Living in the moment, transformation, unmaterialised

What could we design in order to:

Allow someone with decreased

The grand idea:

Textile architecture / furniture which creates separation, privacy and adaptable living

Concepts Addressed:

- Modified furniture
- Textile as furniture

Dividers (spatial)

③

Inspired by our learning that:

Excercise takes the form of 'everyday movement' as we get older

Example cases:

Mutual support, progression, follow one's heart

What could we design in order to:

Intergrate excercising into the design of everyday objects and spaces

The grand idea:

Stylish exercise machines which adjust to the limits of our bodies in everyday settings

Concepts Addressed:

- Multi use
- Social interaction as health
- Modified furniture
- Mindful status as an older person
- Cultural (e.g. excercise 'how to', massage)

Exercise Equipment (furniture)

④

Inspired by our learning that:

We have more agency in deciding who we share our spaces with when we are 'young-old'

Example cases:

Moving on, Mutual support, Unmaterialised, Living in the moment (?)

What could we design in order to:

Give private space to those who are temporary residents in our homes, particularly care givers

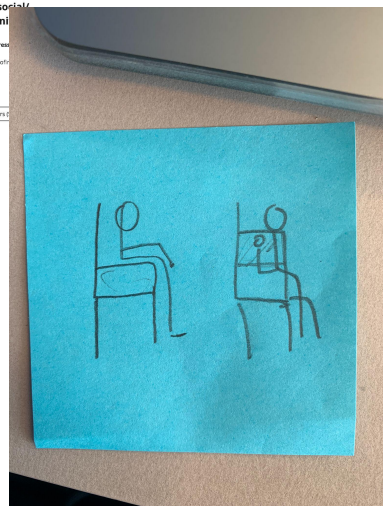
The grand idea:

Temporary rented architecture pods for caregivers who are 'passing through' our homes, which later have a soci… communi…

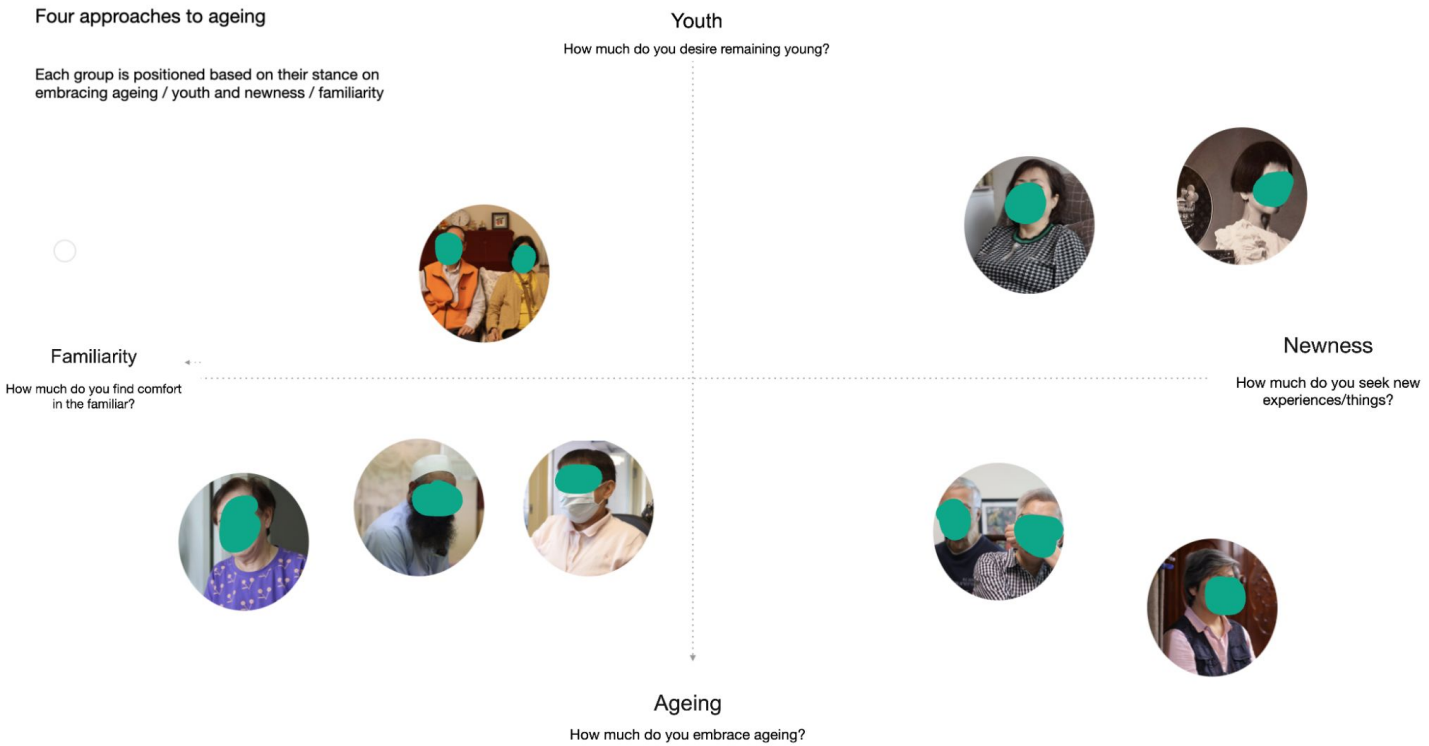
Concepts Addres…

- Future proof…

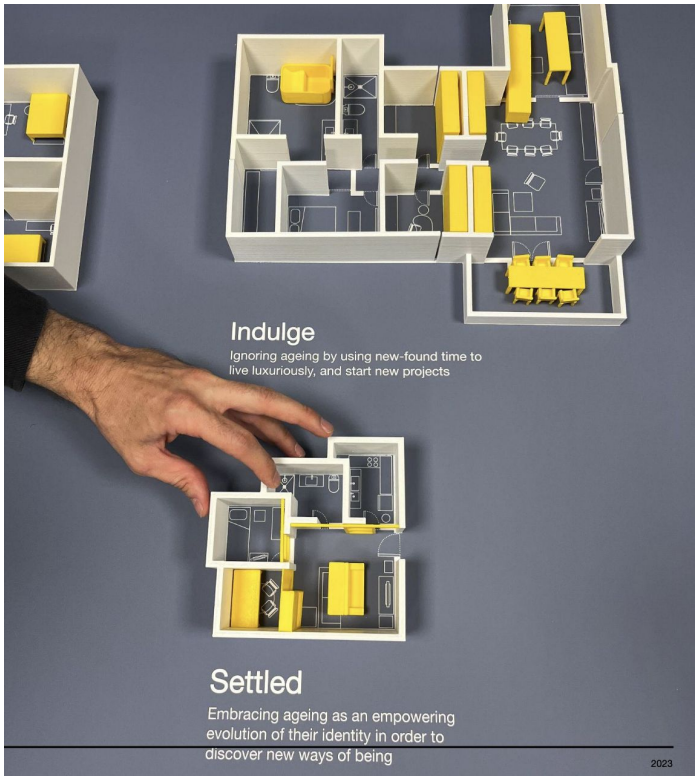
Caregivers (…

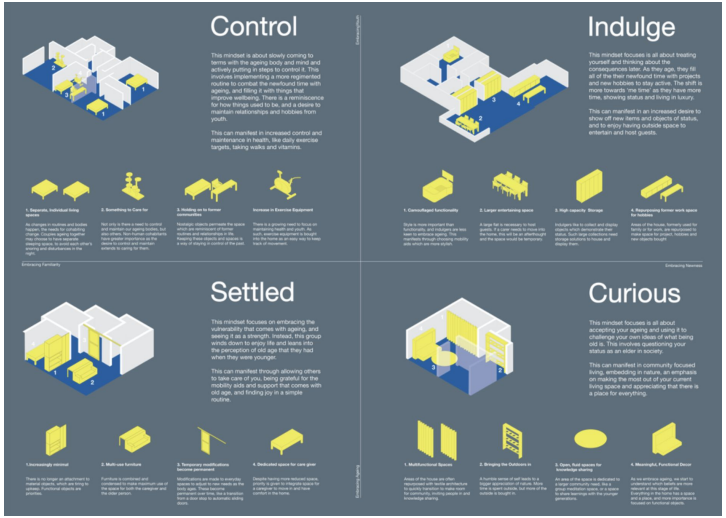


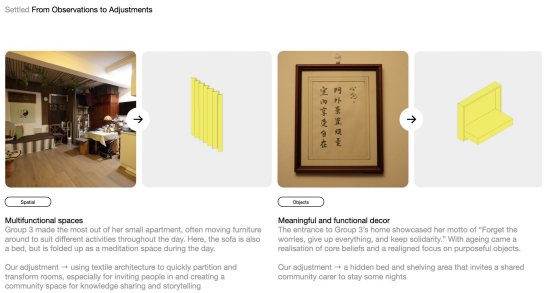
Writing Insights



Sharing Insights







02

Knowing your audience

Designing for everyone = Designing for No one

A rich British man in his 30s with a networth of over 300 million

Defining your users with research questions.

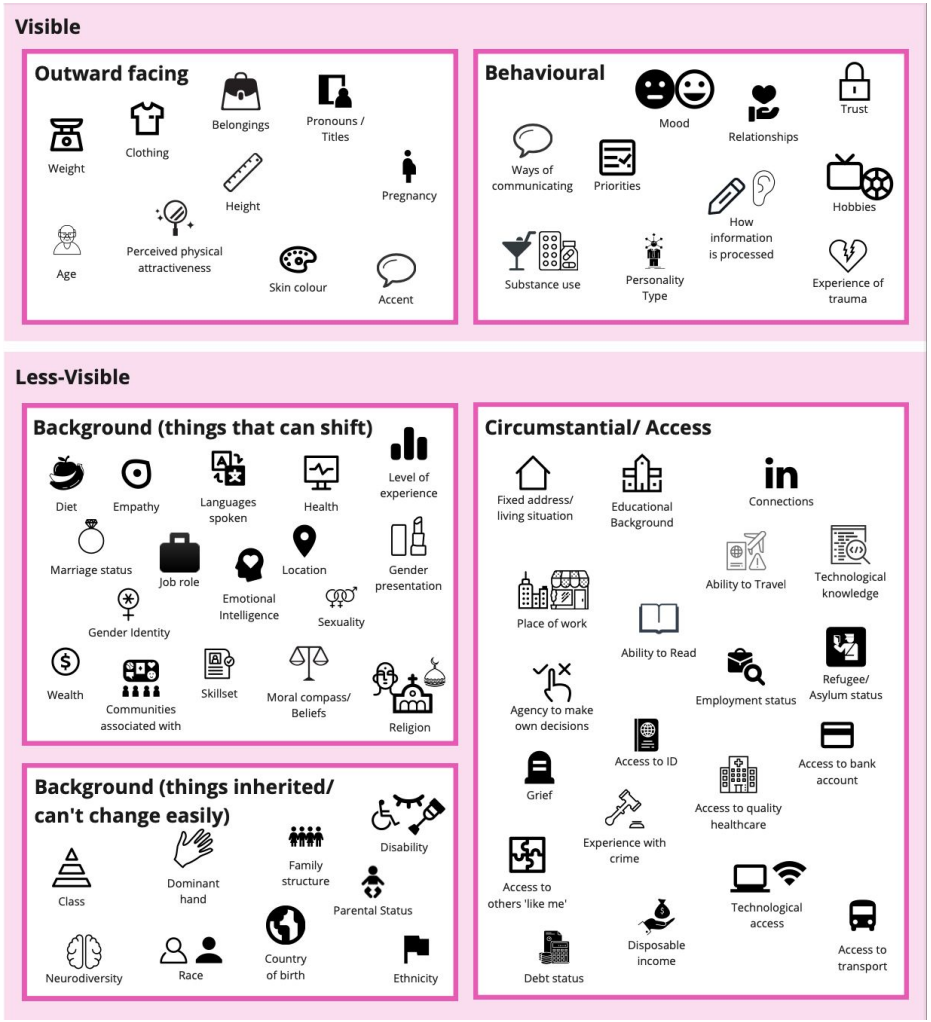
A research question gives a more specific scope to your project, helping you to stay on track and focused.

This is a non-exhaustive list of 'protective characteristics'. Things that define a person.

Choose one thing on this list that could give you a new perspective on your brief. Write it in the format of a 'Research Question'.

For example "How might someone's religion affect the way they perceive and care for their skin?"

(20 mins)



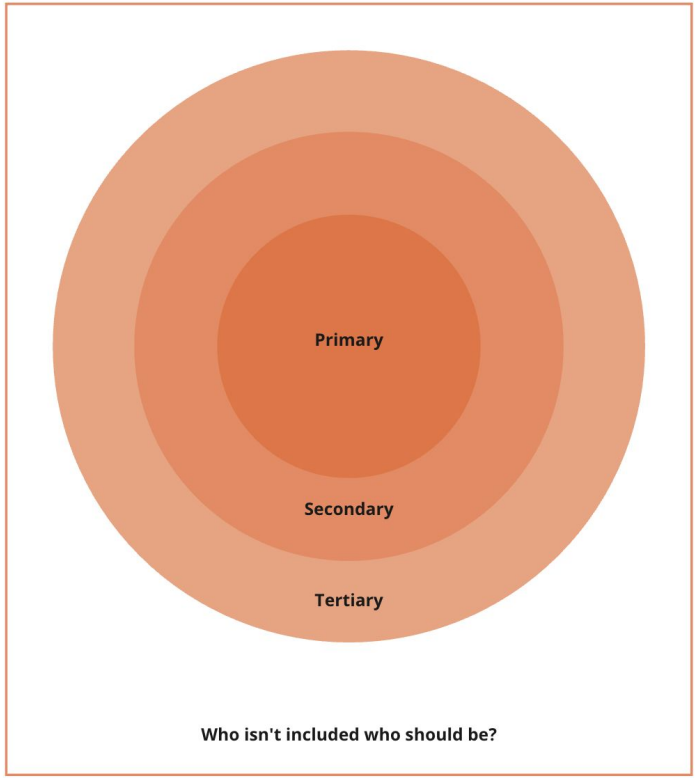
Now ask yourself: Who would I go to to find answers to this question? Fill out the following template: (20 mins)

Primary Audience / User (s)
The main person who you are trying to do research about e.g. an older person with dementia.

Secondary Users Audience / User (s)
Someone who interacts with that person on a regular basis e.g. A carer

Tertiary Users Audience / User (s)
Someone who enables the secondary link e.g. Age UK charity

Those who aren't included but should be
For example, a neighbour who provides 'informal' care.



03

Research Methods

Conducting Research with Research Guides

No leading questions
Use props
Meaningful incentives

What is the question I want to find out?

How do old people really feel about being cared for?

How can I ask it in a way which doesn't feel leading?

Instead of saying "do you find it annoying to be cared for?" ask "how do you feel when you get help with xx"

What are some of the research methods I can use?

If doing a survey, will it be tech friendly to my target audience?

If going via a carer, how will I factor in biases from secondary users?

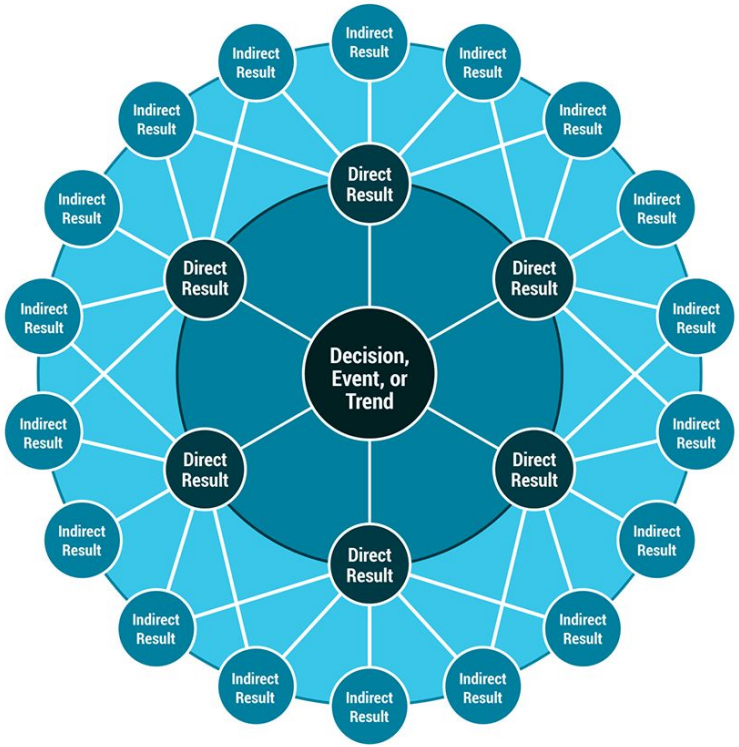
How do I ensure that I don't take the person's time for granted?

How can I meaningfully involve the person in the project?
How can I credit them for their time?
If I can't pay them for their time, can I do a skill share?
How will I be clear about how I will use their data?

Thinking of the consequences of your work

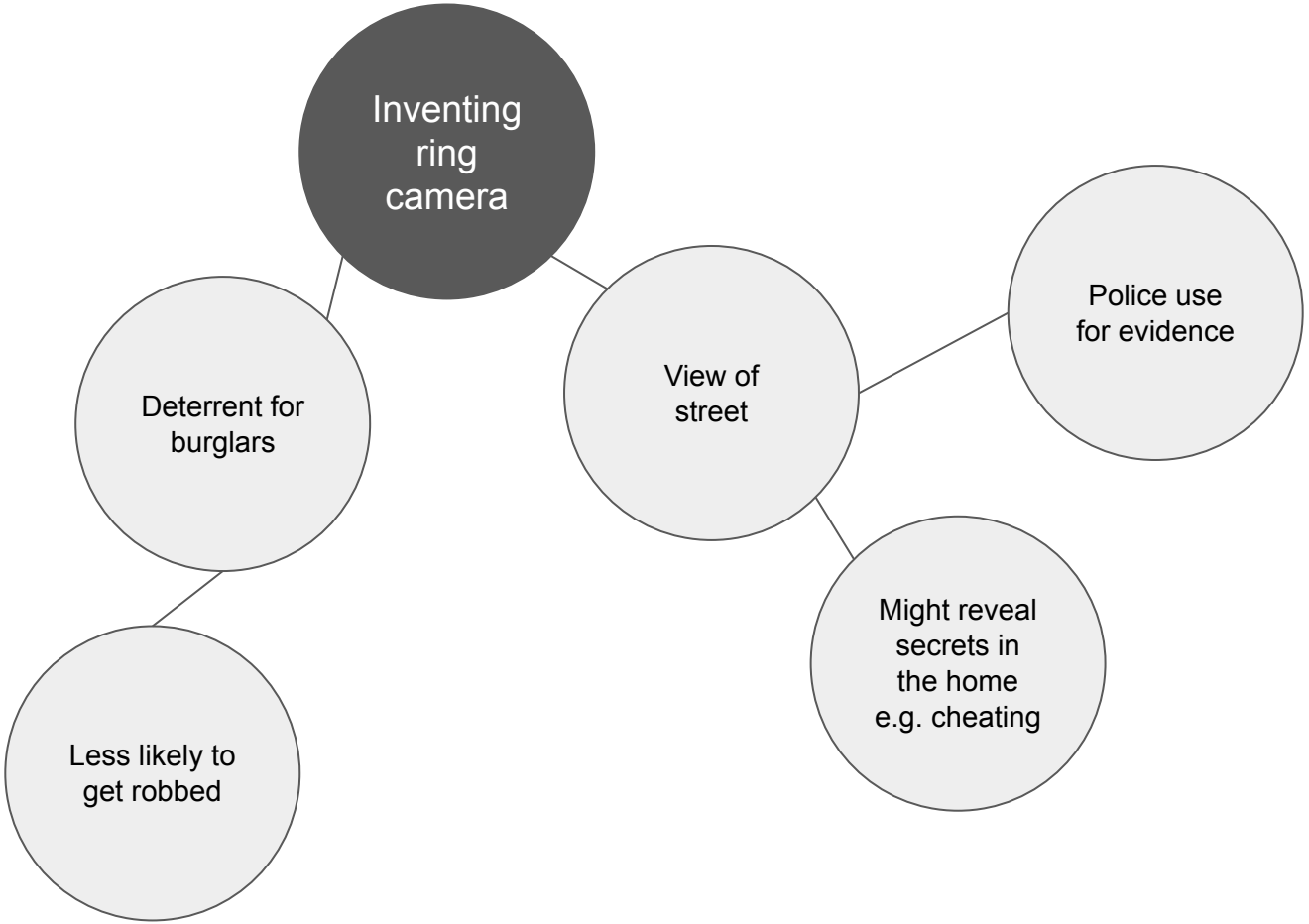
What is a consequence wheel?

A consequence wheel is a diagram that shows the relationship between causes and effects. They are helpful to make sure that designers have captured gaps in their work.



For example:

What is the consequence of using the ring doorbell camera?



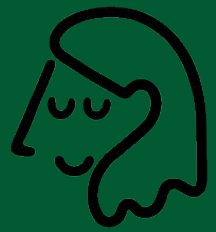
Making our own consequence wheels (20 mins)

What would be the direct and indirect consequences of **not considering the diversity of a skin condition that I'm researching**?

What would be the direct and indirect consequences of **not involving carers in my research**?

What would be the direct and indirect consequences of creating a logo which is very 2020 centric?

What would be the direct and indirect consequences of ignoring people who are asexual (Ace) from my project?

Thank you!

sophialuu22@gmail.com
@secretsworthshaing_