



a bar concept designed for those with invisible disabilities to encourage healthy socialization in an accessible environment.

Jacob Christopher deHahn | Thesis Research



## Dedicated to you,

The local bar and servers who knew the second beer I ordered meant I finally got in my groove, hard at work. I owe y'all a beer.

My thesis professors, advisors, and friends who gave advice, laughter as I stressed out, and celebrated my milestones together.

All interviewees, especially my target demographic -- in less than a year, I realized this is more than just a bar. ***This is truly for you.***

//

## All my love,

Patrick, those panic-filled midnight video calls paid off. Your brotherly positivity made a huge difference. Thank you, thank you.

Dad, you saw my passion for this and told me to go for it. Craft beer in hand, I thank you (mostly for covering every tab) -- cin cin!

Mom, I suppose *this* "is what I'm good at." Thank you for every daily text, endless loving support, and believing I could do this.

Guess what, folks?

**I did it.**

“Disability  
need not be  
an obstacle  
to success.”

- Stephen Hawking

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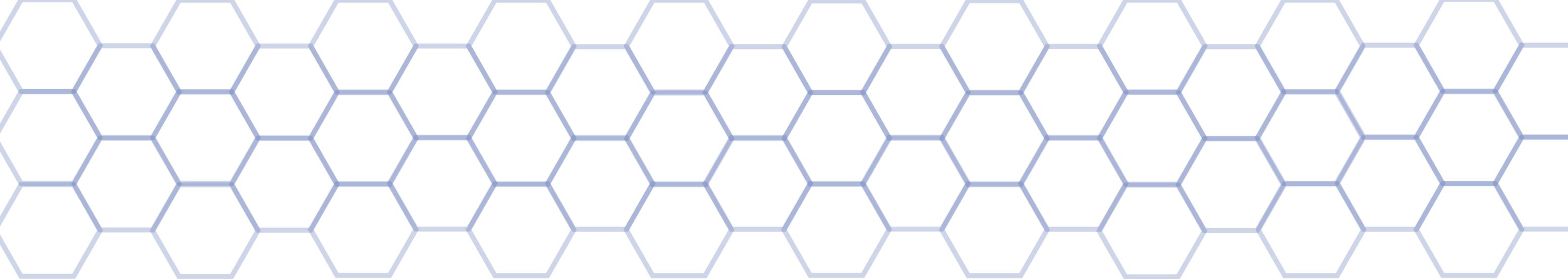
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**preface:**

**introduction**



# why does this mean so much to me?



## Bars:

When I turned 21, I sipped a local craft beer at a gastropub across the street from my apartment. The craft beer bug bit me. I'm an aficionado for craft beers and hole-in-the-wall bars. They shape my social relationships and experiences; I've made friends at bars and my confidence has increased *because* of bars.

## Disability:

Born profoundly deaf, I've lived my life among those with various disabilities. Growing up, I realized many things aren't accessible for everyone, and I truly believe this demographic deserves to have all the opportunities available to them. As a designer, I have the opportunity to fix these problems and hopefully make the world a more accessible place, piece by piece.

# here's a joke: a deaf guy walks into a bar

## for an audio-based trivia night.

Pretty good twist on the old joke, “A guy walks into a bar...”

But it's true. It happened to me.

//

A local bar was hosting Trivia Thursday and I was eager to test it out, thinking I might enjoy it and potentially become one of those trivia aficionados. As I sat down waiting for it to begin, I ordered a pint of beer amidst the crowded and noisy environment. Suddenly, a gentleman in the middle of the space holding a microphone began speaking – but his words came out unclear, muffled, and frustratingly quiet. The hole-in-the-wall bar filled with a boisterous abundance of passionate trivia customers had drowned out the trivia night host's slew of questions. That's when I knew there was no way I'd be able to partake – my deafness stood out like a sore thumb and made the experience inaccessible. Within a matter of seconds, the “deaf guy walks into a bar” joke became real, the ending resulting in a disheartened deaf guy missing out on a social activity that hearing people are capable of enjoying with ease. That's what I thought for the duration of drinking my pint of beer.

Disappointingly finishing my beer and feeling insufficient because of my disability, I allowed the indiscernible noise to take over, giving up on trying to decipher the words being said. But when I took the last sip of my craft beer, I began to look around. I suddenly found the teams beside me had begun asking their opponents to repeat the questions, as they missed, didn't understand, or lost part

of the question. It suddenly was blatantly clear. It wasn't just me; the hearing customers were struggling too. Peering around the small space, I discovered a quick and easy solution: the bar could take one of their wall mounted televisions and replace it with a PowerPoint presentation displaying the questions. Being in a bar made complete sense because this type of environment is perfect for socially acceptable inclusivity.

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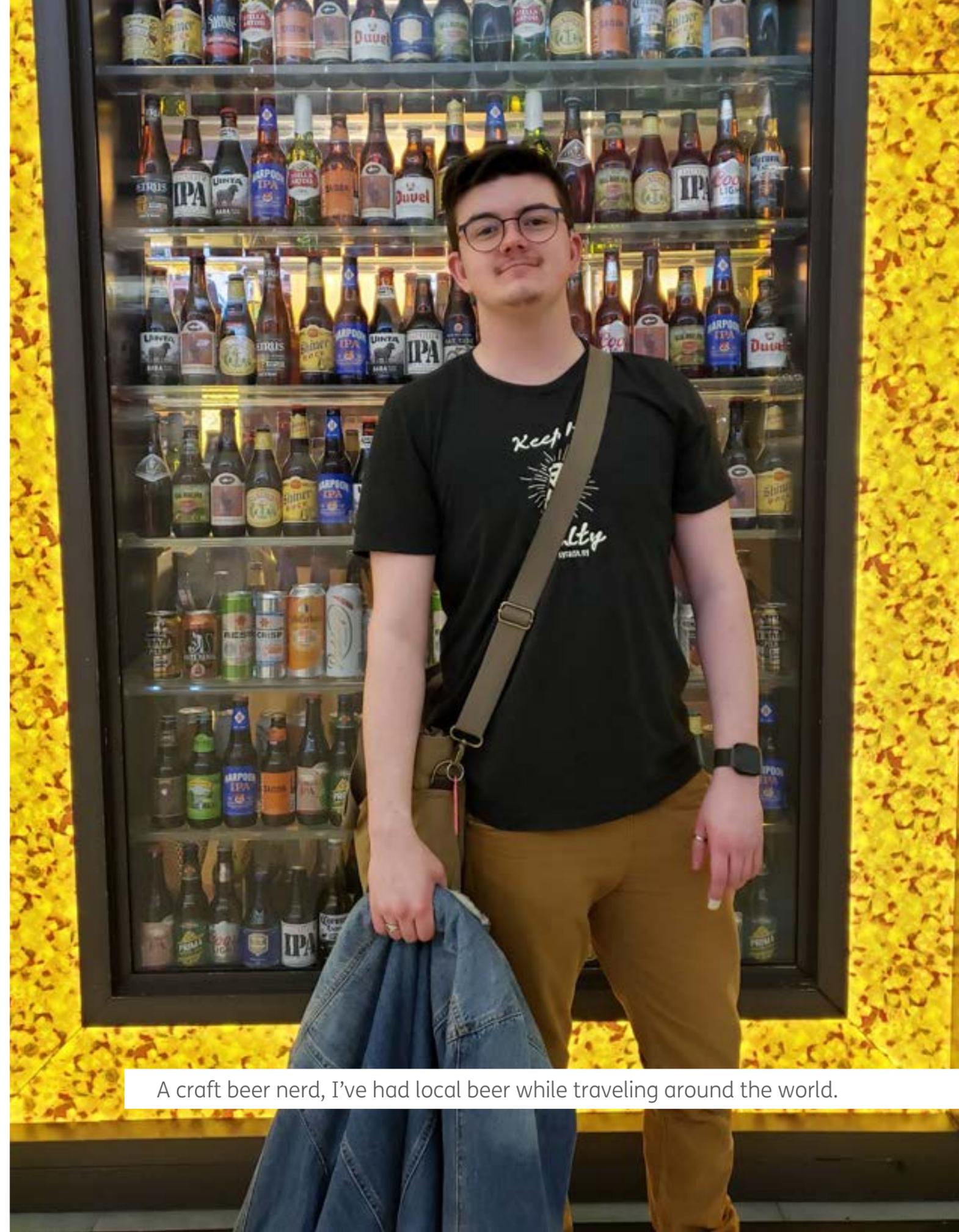
The first week of September my broad thesis topic was “how can we make the world a more accessible place?” and for a month and a half, I was stuck trying to capture a wide demographic,

**“In this moment, I knew exactly what I wanted my thesis to be – a way to make a space geared towards making social interaction accessible to all types of people.”**

**a bar  
for  
all  
people.**

thousands of locations, and creating a method of solving this much needed issue. I was focused on fixing every problem that currently exists beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to create a new, yet inevitably complex, standard. Luckily, this bar experience I had was an awakening moment.

It's how Back Home Bar started.



A craft beer nerd, I've had local beer while traveling around the world.

# what's the point?

## What's the first place you'd go to meet someone new?

### A bar.

The core age group for this bar design are young professionals (folks between the ages of 21-35). They're graduating from college, finding careers, moving to new cities, and most likely unfamiliar with the location or the people there.

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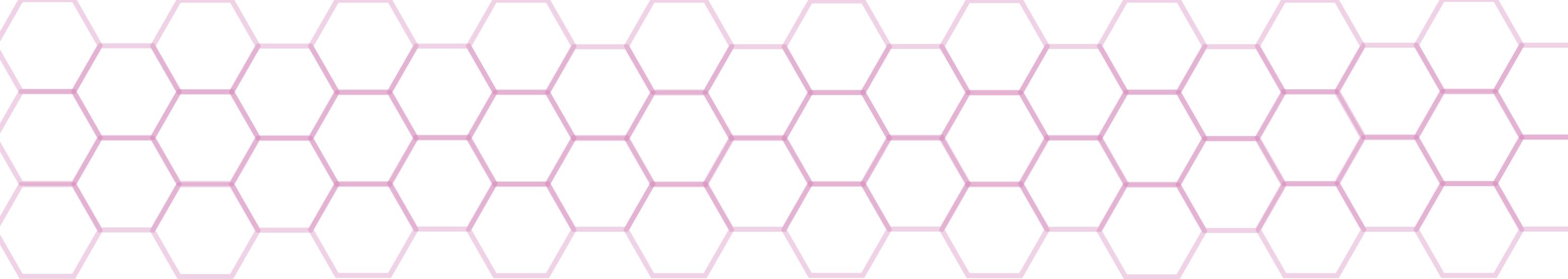
Studies show the effects bars have on improving and expanding human connections – which is why a bar is the hub for my thesis. Coffee shops attract my demographic: those with disabilities, especially people with autism or social anxiety. However, cafés aren't conducive for social interactions.

You use a bar space for personal self-growth, and you can learn so much about a place by going to a local bar. From interacting with locals to conversations with bartenders and servers, one can further develop their identity.

However, those with disabilities tend to have social difficulties compared to an able-bodied person. If they struggle with the sensory overload a bar can pose, they are likely to avoid them – and in turn, miss out on the social benefits a pub can offer.

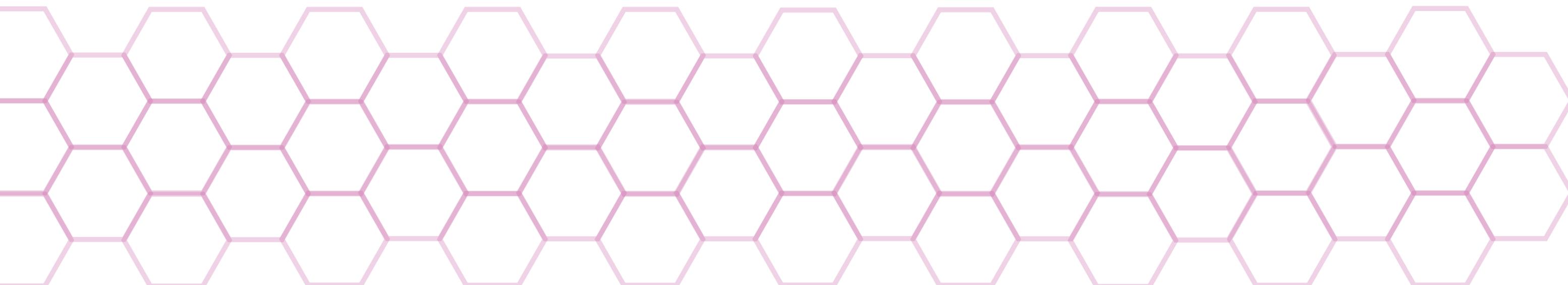
No one has  
solved  
this problem...

until now.



**part  
one:**

**target  
market**



# disability

[dis-uh-bil-i-tee]

*noun*

# what's the definition?

## Wait, is there even a definition?

There are dozens of definitions about non-visible, hidden, or invisible disabilities. They vary because **there is not a concrete, consistent definition for the term of someone “with a disability,” visible or not**; in fact, even the ADA struggles with capturing a particular definition to cover all types of disabilities. Overall, disabilities range from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is not life-altering, to full legal blindness, which takes away one of your five senses. Due to this range of disabilities, one complete definition cannot be made, at least not accurately enough to encompass such a large population of the world. Instead, the best way to approach a potential “definition” is to actually break it up into smaller components.

## Legal blindness

There is one disability our government and medical professionals are able to clearly define, which is legal blindness. The Social Security Administration’s definition of **legally blind is someone who has a “central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens”** (Meaning of blindness as defined in the law, 1983). The Social Security Code of Federal Regulations further explains the technical information that qualifies those to be determined as legally blind, which is incredibly specific. This very clear and medically diagnosable definition allows those who are legally blind, if they provide proper documentation by their medical provider, to have the ability to receive government assistance and benefits. Other disabilities are also able to receive benefits, but with less ease than those with blindness.

With vision impairment, our society is able to recognize and notice the individual because of visible indicators – whether or not it’s a walking stick/white cane, service dog, or assistant. This is the only disability that is easily found and measured, whereas every other disability requires further investigation.

### observation: navigation difficulty



At my local bar, I noticed there was a gentleman who regularly came in with his two young kids. I never thought much of him until one day I saw him folding up his white cane. A white cane, or probing cane, “probes for and locates obstacles in your path of travel” (“The Different,” n.d.). His kids would recite some of the

menu to him. The bar’s space made it harder for him to navigate; so he resorted to the first table closest to the door. Some servers wouldn’t rearrange the seating to help (unsure if it was because they were unaware or oblivious) others knew him and moved chairs and readjusted the space to make it easier for him to access his chosen table.

Why isn’t there an audio or vision impaired accessible menu?  
How can a bar’s layout be optimized or easier to navigate?  
There needs to be employee consistency for accessibility...

## Hearing loss

Hearing loss or deafness is widely known and one of the prominent disabilities people recognize. It is actually a bit more complex. With 14.4% of our population over the age of 65+ being diagnosed with hearing loss, people attribute hearing loss to be associated with age (Hearing loss and deafness: Normal hearing and impaired hearing, 2017). This is not necessarily the case, as hearing loss can be genetic: from illnesses, or accidents.

d/Deafness is a more complex disability. **Hearing loss is measured medically by sound pressure levels in decibels (dB), which is the “volume or loudness of a sound determined by the sound pressure level. The higher this is, the louder the sound is”**

(Hearing loss and deafness: Normal hearing and impaired hearing, 2017). Profound hearing loss is the highest form of deafness with a loss of hearing of more than 81 decibels (Hearing loss and deafness: Normal hearing and impaired hearing, 2017). However, in terms of medical assistance with hearing aids or cochlear implants, there is no measurement or method of how the hearing

amplification device can achieve “normal hearing.” With vision impairment there is 20/20 vision, or “normal sight.”

**Thing is, you cannot realistically understand or quantify how someone else hears.** This discrepancy exemplifies why it’s so difficult to define any type of disability. In the case of hearing loss (among others), the hardest thing to define is whether or not it’s visible or invisible.

## experience: having a disability



No matter what, I never let my hearing loss define me. It is a part of my life, but it does not dictate my abilities.

However, I am fully aware of my hearing loss, my deafness, and I know it unavoidably affects my daily life. With that, I’m not saying I can’t do as well, if not better, than an able-bodied person. I simply urge you to keep in mind how those with disabilities, especially invisible ones, do have difficulties to tackle daily. Empathy and knowledge can transform an able-bodied person into someone who understands how we’re all different.

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Since disabilities are hard to pinpoint (which you will learn reading this book), *how can I cater to every single person?* Is it possible? We’re all different, so is “disability” even real? I wrote in my personal journal in the fall, questioning how I felt about defining and describing this high population:

We're so focused on putting people in boxes, y'know? Making sure there's a label for everyone + everything. Why, though? Like, in reality, we're all different. We're all diverse individuals + it's actually upsetting to see how people with disabilities end up being singled out — **NEGATIVELY**. We're viewed as "less than" because the label is actually a stigma. Thing is, we're **CAPABLE**, just like anyone else.

## D(d)eaf politics:

The tricky part here is: **what separates visible or invisible disabilities?** Hearing loss is a great example of the dilemma. There is a divide within the community of d/Deaf people. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), one of the number one organizations people go to for understanding d/Deafness, uses a definition from 1988, using outdated language. However, they define the difference of the capitalization as “lowercase deaf [is used] when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing,” and usage of hearing amplification whereas uppercase Deaf is used “when referring to a particular group of Deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture” (“Community and Culture,” n.d.). This political issue within a community that should be unified is devastating. However, the visibility is interesting.

## For example,

if you have someone like me, who wears a cochlear implant on my ear, yet listens and speaks quite well, what am I?

You can say I have an invisible disability because I speak proficiently and immersed in the hearing world. However, I do have a visible amplification device I wear daily. On the other hand, someone who is Deaf and uses ASL can be considered much more visible than me because they are not verbally communicating; they physically and visually communicate with their hands, per their language. Not only is there an identity issue within the d/Deaf community, but there's a visibility struggle in defining their disability. This is also the case for other types of disabilities.

This discrepancy is confusing.

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Due to the discrepancy and controversy about hearing loss being either a visible or invisible disability, it leads to a crucial question that is difficult to answer. Is there a deciding factor for labeling the visibility of other disabilities or psychological/emotional diagnoses? **Is the visibility of various disabilities black and white, or is it a spectrum of how a disability is portrayed in society?** Since it is so complex, the categorization of disabilities and their prominence hinders societal understanding and can increase discomfort in potential interactions with those labeled "different." When it comes to ambiguity, could you say those with high-functioning autism, even though they may not have glaringly obvious cues of being in a wheelchair or having a service seeing-eye

dog, have a visible disability when they have social interactions with you, such as exhibiting minor characteristics or quirks signaling their disability at some point in the conversation?

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**The definition of what is considered visible or non-visible does not exist.** However, the obscurity provides a platform to create a system that's all-inclusive and hopefully eliminates societal perceptions and preconceived notions of those with various disabilities. The creation of a bar to improve social skills and interactions for those between the ages of 21-35 gives the possibility of all people to be included and not ostracized for their own differences. Partly a social experiment and proof of concept, Back Home Bar will hopefully broaden different types of clientele and inclusivity in a pivotal social environment where millennials have an opportunity to meet new people and grow as individuals.

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Now, it's important to break down this demographic further in order to understand the different sub-groups of a population deserving of universal accessibility. In fact, did you know that this overall population represents 1 out of 5 Americans?

It's true.

(Basically, keep reading to find out.)

1 in 5  
Americans  
have a  
disability.

## An underserved target market.

Since my thesis is centered around making a bar, there needs to be sufficient evidence of a target market to build this business and prove this demographic lacks spaces that encourage social interaction in a positive way. Regardless of those with disabilities being my main target market, **the bar design will be accessible and available for all people to attend and enjoy.**

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Overall, **the mission is to eliminate the divide of able-bodied people and those with disabilities, making the bar all-encompassing, inclusive, and unique.**

## There are so many disabilities.

There are a lot of disabilities to capture in one statistic. Our United States Census maintains the overarching number, however, they note a substantial margin of error due to several types of disabilities being hard to report (U.S Census Bureau, 2017). Someone who has mild hearing loss may never notice their disability. Someone might purchase non-prescription reading glasses to avoid seeking

“There are so many disabilities... every disability is circumstantial and diagnosed differently since every person is different.”

we're  
all  
unique.

a medical professional and their vision impairment therefore goes unreported.

Regardless, according to data collected about the United States population in 2010 published on Census.gov, there are **56.7 million people who have any type of disability in the United States** (U.S Census Bureau, 2017). The United States Census reveals that this data “represents 19.0 percent of the civilian non institutionalized population,” which means **1 in 5 people in the United States has a disability of some kind** (U.S Census Bureau, 2017).

With this, those with disabilities are evidentially a significant portion of our nation, which backs up and supports the need and potential success that comes with Back Home Bar. There are various

categories of disabilities among the 56.7 million people.

**There is not a specific, official list of all the disabilities,** but a source backed by the government is the closest to reporting how many disabilities there are in the United States. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is an organization providing information to assist employers and employees to make effective and useful accommodations for the hired individual, along with complying to Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (A to Z of disabilities and accommodations, n.d.) They provide a list of **95 different disabilities,** along with ways to assist those with the particular disability. The JAN also advocates to make aware of how “accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee’s individual limitations and accommodation needs” (A to Z of disabilities and accommodations, n.d.). This is most likely the most accurate and full list of disabilities – **but there are more disabilities** than on this list. The issue could be that every disability is circumstantial and diagnosed differently, since everyone is unique.

## Different types of disabilities.

Let’s focus on a few different types of disabilities, beginning with visible, more prominent disabilities. The numbers are easier to report and more accurate, such as legal blindness and hearing loss being determined and diagnosed by a doctor. The U.S. Census Bureau’s 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates has divided the statistics up by disability category. All numbers have a -1/+1 margin of error. The following population counts are the numbers of people between the ages of 18 and 34, capturing as

# Disabilities

by the numbers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017

**4.7**  
million  
have a disability

cognitive:  
**2.9**  
million

**73.9**  
million

young professionals  
in the U.S.  
(ages 18 -34)

ambulatory:  
**991,487**  
thousand

vision:  
**887,910**  
thousand

hearing:  
**652,350**  
thousand

close to my target market of people between 21 to 35 for the bar. Hearing difficulties appear in 652,350 millennials, 887,910 are reported to have vision difficulties, and 991,487 millennials have an ambulatory difficulty, or a physical impairment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). From an able-bodied person's perspective, they can visually identify all of the above disability categories if they met someone who had one of these disabilities. Now, beyond stereotypical visible disabilities, the U.S. Census has one category that over-arches the less visible disabilities.

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The U.S. Census reports cognitive disabilities; however, the term 'cognitive' covers all types of cognitive or 'invisible' disabilities. The number does not break down into the different types. Disabled World defines **cognitive disabilities as “a group of disorders defined by diminished cognitive and adaptive development... encompassing various intellectual or cognitive deficits”** (“Cognitive Disability,”

**“More than 3.5 million people in the U.S. have autism spectrum disorder.”**

**a lot of people.**

2016). This includes dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), various brain injuries, mild/moderate/severe cognitive disabilities based on the standard IQ test, and genetic disabilities such as Down syndrome and autism (“Cognitive Disability,” 2016). Since this is broad, it makes sense that **3 million** (2,985,131) of the U.S population between the **ages of 18 to 34 have a cognitive**

**disability** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Despite being “unseen,” cognitive disabilities affect a person, especially with social interaction.

**Invisible disabilities**, including cognitive disabilities, **is an umbrella term where several populations are represented.** The reported number of people with some of these disabilities is hard to capture; since the definition varies by person, not necessarily numbers like vision loss where perfect sight is 20/20 and easy to diagnose. People with autism, learning disabilities, or social anxiety are addressed on a case-by-case system. This broadens the demographic more, yet makes it difficult to provide an exact number of people. There are a few different types of invisible disabilities who will benefit from an inclusive bar to assist them with improving their social skills. The following data points capture the individual populations.

## Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

One large demographic who will greatly benefit from an inclusive social environment are those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a complex developmental disability with neurological differences. Autism is a spectrum, meaning not everyone with autism exhibits **some of these traits, such as “delayed learning of language; difficulty making eye contact or holding a conversation; difficulty with executive functioning, which relates to reasoning and planning; narrow, intense interests; poor motor skills’ and sensory sensitivities”** (What is Autism, n.d.). **More than 3.5 million people in the United States have autism spectrum disorder**, which appears in 1 out of 59 births (Facts and Statistics, n.d.). Not only are 3.5+ million Americans diagnosed with autism, the occurrence of the

neurological difference is rising (Facts and Statistics, n.d.). Those with autism vary greatly, but usually they struggle with holding or starting a conversation with a “neurotypical,” someone who does not have autism. Developing coping mechanisms, sharing experiences and suggestions, and learning how to connect with others is crucial for self-efficacy for those with high-functioning autism.

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**Aspergers**, another term people incorrectly use interchangeably with autism, isn’t a synonym. In fact, in 2013, American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders revoked the separation of diagnosing autism versus Aspergers (Happe, 2011). The difference between the two is the diagnosis of Aspergers “**is distinguished from autism by a lack of language and cognitive delay**” (Happe, 2011). Medically, Aspergers is **not a term used for diagnosis**, but *socially*, it is interchangeable with “high functioning autism,” as the individual has the ability to communicate at a higher rate than those on the lower end of the autism spectrum. Regardless of removing the diagnosis of Aspergers for medical professionals, people who have been diagnosed in the past can still take ownership of being “an Aspie” (Happe, 2011). Just like any other invisible disabilities, autism spectrum disorder encapsulates millions of people who vary on how they function every day.

A small, but evidential piece on how those with autism are actively wanting to grow and be able to interact with neurotypicals is shown through the internet. Wrong Planet, a website among many places to connect with others with “neurological differences,” has people posting on forums daily discussing how to interact, connect,

and grow (Wrong Planet, n.d.). Websites like these are proof that those with “autism, Aspergers Syndrome, ADHD, PDDs, and other neurological differences” are genuinely wanting better for themselves and to connect with others. **They deserve a space to exercise their social skills outside of the comfort of their home or the internet, especially with neurotypicals.**

Deservingly so, **those with autism spectrum disorder still** have emotional characteristics and **want to be loved and to create bonds with other individuals**. Even though it may take those with neurological differences a bit more time to connect with a new person, they still wish to have those opportunities. Many people with a neurological difference seek out groups to help their social skills and develop tactics to connect with neurotypicals, yet they tend to be in a sterile, scripted environment – I took part in a social skills group for my ADHD in my early years of high school for several months, but the only neurotypicals were the moderators. I was directly conversing with people with disabilities like me, not with able-bodied people in the real world. This is why a natural social space, like a bar, merges the two groups without making it glaringly obvious that one could be called “different” than the other.

an unfair  
struggle.

“Social anxiety can inhibit someone’s ability to embrace their day-to-day life... [including] partaking in a simple drink out with friends or coworkers.”

# Social anxiety & social phobia

Social anxiety or social phobia, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), **affects** 6.8% of our population, which accounts for **over 15 million adults** (Facts and Statistics, n.d.). Social phobia is noted as one of the highest phobias and most relatable forms of anxiety (Past Year, 2003). The National Institute of Mental Health states that 9.1% of people between the ages of 18-29 have social anxiety, which is the main age demographic that will reap the rewards and benefit from the potential bar design (Past Year, 2003).

**Defined as “intense anxiety or fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in a social or performance situation,”** social anxiety can inhibit someone’s ability to embrace their day-to-day life. This also includes partaking in a simple drink out with friends or coworkers, because the environment a typical bar can offer is quite overwhelming (Social Anxiety Disorder, n.d.). Just like autism being a spectrum, people who have social anxiety or phobia vary in how they experience their anxiety. It is crucial to create a space that is welcoming and reduces the potential triggers that may

## reddit: threads + conversation



Through posts on Reddit, I discovered information I hadn’t thought about. I printed out the various threads and annotated on the pages  
\* Note: my reddit username is @jakethedesigner

Post that I made:



The post responses by multiple users:

bars/clubs suck when you cant hear your friends around you and are awkward when strangers can hear your conversations.

I like the idea of cozy/private sit down areas with activities (cards/dice/tic tac computers) that give view to central activity area/bar. **gives a reason for people to mingle then invite to their areas for an activity!**

**HOW TO DIRECT PEOPLE?  
"START AT BAR", THEN @ THE HOUR, "GAMES" BEGIN**

could you specify what disability you have/identify with? This'll help with my records for my thesis data!

I love how you did contrast the open/closed concept. There's a million ways I can create the "ideal" space -- it can be a mix of the two! Would a compromise of really tall booths work? What kinds of alternatives would suit you best?

Music/noise is something that's proven to alleviate that "awkward gap" in conversations! I definitely would have it, but my father, who's IT/engineering, suggested more "exclusive" speakers. This means there's a LOT of speakers, but they're controlled by the people next to it, making it so you have control over noise levels. There's ways to do it, so I think it's a good route!

Oh no disability that's been confirmed. I just can't handle when a lot of people talk at the same time. I think the important thing would be to make sure that from the booth, you couldn't see the busyness of the place. Like entrances to each booth facing away from your main hub. Maybe like have 4 booths that are really tall meeting in a cross shape and some floating room dividers kinda like those walls in offices, but nicer, between sets of booths. Having speakers in your booth is a good idea! so if your party wants to drown out other groups talking.

if you implemented localized speakers, it would alleviate the issues of social circles being closer to each other.

I dont think tall booths would necessarily be a requirement if you sprinkle in tall greenery or other visual obstructions in the environment.

**imagine a fractal of sitting nooks composed of visual obstructions rather than walls of booths!**

I like the concept of "visual obstructions" for separation, as it combines the open/closed dilemma occurring here in the thread.

Thank you for bringing up a really great, and positive, remark here. Open spaces are fantastic, and I admit, initially I was going to make a coffee shop. However, that limited the opportunity to encourage socialization and interactions. I totally understand seclusion (I, too, sometimes gravitate towards a bartoop alone!) but I've noticed how much bars embrace new connections, hence the bar idea.

The noise level is a common concern, and a big one for me personally, as I'm a deaf person! I occasionally go to clubs (this is not going to be a club, by the way) and get frustrated when I can't communicate with friends. So that's a factor I DEFINITELY will focus on with soundproofing and speakers/etc being very well-located.

I would love events, especially since someone earlier stated how those with autism like schedules/structure with activities. If there are bands, I'll have to find a way to control the music levels so people aren't overwhelmed!

Feel free to continue giving any and all ideas or thoughts!

You want people with autism to drink? What a terrible idea.

that is hilariously ignorant

Thanks Wolf! Do you have any insight regarding the bar? Any input makes a difference in my design. You mentioned earlier about a "do not disturb" button -- I think it'd be a great asset, but I aim to encourage socialization and bonding. What things would make you comfortable to meet new people? Is it prompts to connect? Or is it a different layout in the bar, different spaces?

indeed, but the alternative is the shy person will not make the first step of showing up.

at least the dnd function will allow the person to get comfortable (and maybe get the courage to physically order next visit)

obviously you have design limitations but **in a perfect world I would have different sections dedicated to different activities** - ranging from **different music/dance areas, go cafe/game area, each space would work synergistically with each other**

if people go to the **space for a snack and a drink and conversation, its on the cafe side**. meet up with some people in the cafe. **get a group to go to the club side.**

people are going to be **drawn to the activities they enjoy**, but **once they are comfortable, they may try new things** - if they **had the ability to escape back to their comfort zone**.

**CANT FORCE PEOPLE TO TRY THINGS!  
- HAVE A "SAFE HAVEN" AVAILABLE, LIKE A CRUTCH IN CASE OTHER THINGS ARE "TOO MUCH"**

Of course I have design limitations in the "Real World" but since this is a thesis project, a proposal of a, well, "bar utopia," I could technically give myself free reign (since I self-curated my thesis in its entirety in order to graduate) for the size of the space. With that, anything's possible.

When you say "cafe," is it more a dining space or similar to a coffee shop setting? The merging of the two isn't a terrible idea at all I mentioned it to someone on this thread earlier -- I initially was going in the cafe direction, but realized it was limiting in terms of encouraging socialization, hence the bar choice. But merging the two is of course, feasible!

"Ability to escape back to their comfort zone" means the cafe space. I presume? What is a "comfort zone" for you personally? What makes it comfortable?

once you are in the bar environment, you are stuck in the bar environment, sometimes it's hard to escape from the music/conversations. sometimes it sucks to be around a bunch of frat bros chugging liquor when you want to relax and sip a pint.

I like the **idea of entering into a new room where the expectations of the environment change** (have a beer in the cafe section and eat a snack or go to the music room and rage).

besides the ability to "escape", having **different environments will bring in people from different social circles**. I'm more likely to be a regular at a cafe and occasionally frequent a bar/club I'm comfortable with.

people return to things they are comfortable with and people are more willing to try new things if they feel like there's a safe place to fall back to.

The frat bros line killed me. The city/location choice might be able to alleviate the college party demographic, along with the bar design. If activities are included, do you believe it could draw the "wrong" crowd?

I think your suggestion of actual space dividers that have designated activities or environments is a great idea. I've been getting a lot of those comments thus far, so I need to find out what kinds of things people would like in those individual spaces.

The "safe place" to retreat to is essential, I'm aware. With that, I would assume it'd be a quieter one?

**traditional bar, the focus is the alcohol.**

I think it would great for **activities/entertainment to be the focus** (and by the way, we serve alcohol if you need some liquid courage)

i think if you **set right environment and expectations of the patrons**, you have a calm sit down area, the expectation is to sit down and chill, you go to the dance floor, get jiggy.

**safe space definitely needs to be quiet, overstimulation of noises and people can be overwhelming.**

**HOW TO DO THIS?**

As always, That Flatstick Pub you mentioned is really cool! I checked out their site. With that said, they focus on craft beers and locally sourced, something people enjoy (especially in cities like Seattle). IT comes across like a 50/50 focus: craft beer and mini golf. Obviously my bar can't be mini golf, as it's already done, but from what you've said, it'd be an avenue to highlight on.

What types of furnishings do you foresee in these spaces? You seem to be eager in regards to the safe space -- do you see small tables and chairs? Couches/one-seaters? Bar tops and stools (with backs, of course?) Etc, etc.

↑ Wylfe@thameshead 1 point · 22 hours ago  
 ↓ As an autistic introvert, I prefer house parties in a familiar environment with people I know.

MAKE THE THEME SO/50 DRINKS + "ACTIVITY"

I do not like to drink outside of social environments and even when I do I don't like when drinking is the main focus. I think a tablet, allowing a do not disturb function (think Brazilian steakhouse where they had a red/green paper and they flip when you want people to bring more meats).

I also like the idea of ordering through tablet so you don't have to leave your comfort zone or have awkward conversations when you just want a drink and some peace.

→ NOT PREFERRED, BUT...

I like the idea of being able to people watch, to get comfortable in an environment without myself being "exposed" if you want "healthy" socializing then you need to have quieter areas with activities available outside of walking up to a stranger to grind on the dance floor. (barcade, quiz theme nights, maybe an outdoor area that offers ping pong/corntots/jenga etc)

→ TOO TYPICAL - WHAT CAN BE DIFFERENT?

...something to allow people to get comfortable, talk, and interact - instead of being thrown into a situation where you are asking strangers to perform an intimate dance ritual in front of other strangers.

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ jakehthedesigner 1 point · 22 hours ago

↓ First off, I definitely am not making a club environment. The suggestion for events, which may include music performances, would happen - but the music portion I don't foresee it being an "intimate dance ritual" situation! I totally understand your distaste for that.

I know Olive Garden/Unos/other chains have tablets that allow you to order, call your server, and so on without having to speak to someone. While I totally understand the comfort in doing so, I would like to steer clear of that - communicating with a bartender is a form of socialization, and I think it's something that can have great benefits, even if it's to order a soda. The menu would definitely be available.

The activities you suggested are definitely going on my list! I might create a "mock" schedule of weekly/monthly events within my thesis now. I think it's an opportunity to showcase regularity and a pattern of activities and options.

The people-watching is something I personally enjoy as well. Do you have suggestions for that? I see a devil's advocate side where people might find it on the side of creepy, so I need to navigate that, too. Those with autism sometimes don't see those social cues often times.

OH! As for the communication barrier, I neglected to state that I am interested in hiring bartenders who have a social services or special education background who are more apt to navigate conversations and make people comfortable. Does that sound more enticing?

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ Wylfe@thameshead 1 point · 22 hours ago

↓ I think hiring workers that are cognizant of awkward customers would be great but I wouldn't advertise it - no one wants to be reminded that they are an awkward person and have specialists that can pity them.

EVALUATE HIRING PROCESS  
 ↳ WRITE A PLAN FOR TRAINING

I have limited knowledge on a person-watching setup but I like the idea of private booth areas (or maybe seating with tall plants that help obscure the side area around you but still allow you to see what's going on in the common areas.

It lets you get comfortable watching the activities before you decide to join it.

I would not want the DND option to be a crutch but it would give people an option to get comfortable drinking/hanging out in the bar before they have to interact with anyone.

maybe clear ordering instructions and drink options - so newcomers are more confident in interacting with the bartenders.

→ TABLET AS A "MAP" TO DRIVE PROCESS

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ jakehthedesigner 1 point · 22 minutes ago

↓ I would avoid any sort of advertisement of the employees. If it's not social workers/special ed folks, I could implement a training program that goes beyond your standardized training for my servers and bartenders. This way it's making it so they're educated and understanding of all types of people, not just singling out those with disabilities.

DND?

The ordering instructions and interaction with a bartender is a GREAT point. The tablet/technology can have a system where it clearly lays out how you retrieve your drink - which I could use to eliminate that awkwardness of standing at the bartop waving down a bartender to order a beer.

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ Staff@thameshead 1 point · 20 minutes ago

↓ dnd - do not disturb

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ jakehthedesigner 1 point · 22 minutes ago

↓ Thank you, I sort of had a feeling but the last thing I want to do is assume.

I totally agree. I'd like to avoid creating overly-safe crutches like you stated. It contradicts the premise of the bar encouraging personal growth and new connections. With that, having an easy out of saying you want to be left alone the entire time and avoid the opportunities given in the space is something I would like to avoid.

↑ jakehthedesigner 1 point · 22 hours ago

↓ What were your initial thoughts? I couldn't tell if they were positive or negative. What would your "bar utopia" be? One that makes you comfortable and excited to return to?

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ amw@thameshead 1 point · 22 hours ago

↓ As an introvert, I don't want to go to the bar. You need to offer me something that is worth paying more for booze (it's cheaper to drink at home) and that is worth sacrificing my alone time (because being social is very taxing). Music sometimes can accomplish this. I love jazz. Meet and greet with industry professionals would, I'm long-time married, but, a mixer night might if I was still single.

- MUSIC  
 - BANDS  
 - CALM/JAZZ

↳ PROFESSIONAL HAPPY HOUR

I wonder about what the space is shaped like. Most bars I've been to conform to 1950's mid-commercial density, where the space is a long, narrow strip of a building, table seating is like tables of 4 or 6 all lined up against the one wall, and the bar is tucked away in a corner. I always insist on sitting facing the room due to anxiety, so a room that is very open and had lots of space to face the room would be ideal. Too bright is overstimulating. Fluffy lights is not great. Some "old england" styled pubs feel comfortable (walnut finished oak everything, polished like crazy).

- VISIBILITY/SIGHT

TRADITIONAL COZY SPACE DESIGN

The bar itself? At best I want to put my drink order into an iPad so I don't have to sign alphas and pretty girls to get my drink; that is the only favourable feature I can foresee... But I am happy to be surprised if you have something in mind. I don't order flashy or fancy drinks, just local brewed beer on tap and some pub fare.

↳ NEW ORDERING SYSTEM

When I think about which bar I'd like to go to, I usually choose one that has some activity to accompany the drinks. Pool table, board games, video games. Gimmicky or proprietary trivia feels fake, and I can't help but wonder if its pace is designed to keep me at the bar longer and buy more booze.

Also, I wouldn't mind a bar's FAQ, maybe right on their website. Do I pay cash for every transaction? Can I just sit wherever? What do I do if I'm uncomfortable?

Almost "instructions" for anyone to improve event comfort in the start to finish experience

If I'm totally honest, without something truly novel here, I feel like you're trying to sell ice to an eskimo; I'm not convinced that you have anything that I need.

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ Ruff 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ I'm an introvert as well and I don't ever want to work in bars. I tried for a day and I had some pretty bad anxiety the entire time. Why did you choose this field?

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ hana27 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ I think this is an amazing idea! To start, I think it would be great to have an open space. An introvert bar is very interesting because when I think of my introverted self I think quiet, reading/books, cozy, away from others etc. Bars tend to be more over-stimulating in terms of noise level and the number of people.

- EMULATE COFFEE SHOP AESTHETIC / ENVIRONMENT

So definitely open space concept so that people aren't too huddled together in a single area. Also you could have an option for people like a small stage or MC for local bands or spoken word/sign language poetry.

↳ BUT keep bar "socialization"

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↳ BUILD COMMUNITY

↑ jessicaw7583 1 point · 3 hours ago

↓ I was going to suggest the opposite and more walls so you didn't realize how many people were there. Rooms with less people are better for me. Starts getting really overwhelming above like 6 people. 2 to 4 is the sweet spot really. Noise is good cause it's a good distraction for uncomfortable spaces in conversation.

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↳ USER CONTROLS NOISE LEVEL - SPEAKERS

- 1/2 + 1/2 OF SECLUSION - DECOR AS BARRIERS?

↑ Lanaz7 2 points · 1 hour ago

↓ We are going to confuse this poor guy 😂 I guess it's true in a way though, having a venue with closed off spaces may work better if you just want to be with a few people at a time. I'm not a bar person to begin with anyway, because of the noise. I actually prefer uncomfortable silence. I usually find a way to bring something random up to break the silence, or just whip out a book to read lol

↳ BOOKSHELFS? OLD TAVERN VIBE?

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ jessicaw7583 2 points · 3 hours ago

↓ Well I like the silence too, except I know everyone else doesn't. And similarly I'm not keen on bar going anymore. Went to them for years and got myself in trouble a lot just doing what I thought I was supposed to be doing. No more social events for me thank you.

⊞ Reply Share Report Save Give Award

↑ jakehthedesigner 1 point · 22 hours ago

↓ Please, by all means, "confuse" me! Everyone has their own story, and I need to hear as many of them so I can make the best possible design for you. I replied to bslankster7583 above with a comment of a combined open/closed option within the space. I assume that's a good remedy.

You said you aren't a bar person because of the noise - justifiable! - is that the only thing that stops you from going? If the noise level was one you felt comfortable with, would you be more open to going to this bar? If that's not enough, what else would make you comfortable?

It'd be great if you could make this work. However, I hate to say it, but as an introvert, a bar is the last place I'd want to be.

WolffDromedary 2 points · 3 days ago

I was going to say, a button on the tablet to let people know not to bother you

jakethedesigner 1 point · 23 hours ago

Wolf: Not a bad idea, I totally understand the concept there!

jakethedesigner 1 point · 23 hours ago

And I hear you! However, can you tell me what in particular makes you say this? What about bars (that currently exist) turns you off? I ask because I'm using this thesis as an opportunity to completely redesign what a bar is comprised of!

Counselor\_3 2 points · 22 hours ago

Being around people is the issue. An introvert can't wait to retreat back to the comfort and solitude of their home where they're not forced to have social interactions.

jakethedesigner 1 point · 57 minutes ago

This is true; however, even if an introvert finds social interactions "draining," they still wish to partake in such activities, even if it's a short period of time. Everyone is different, which I truly understand! I'm trying to encapsulate such a broad, big demographic here, and hopefully people can give good insight on what WILL make them eager or want to attend the bar.

WolffDromedary 2 points · 23 hours ago

as an introverted adult, I have no reason to go to bars.

If I wanted to drink, I can drink at home.

If I wanted to socialize, I would hang out with friends in a familiar environment - not filled with drunk strangers.

I wouldn't have a reason to go to a bar unless there was some specific activity I already enjoyed or friends invited (and I would begrudgingly go because it puts me into an uncomfortable/ draining position.

SungTweeHwa 3 points · 3 days ago

Tablets at every seat is a terrible idea.

That just encourages more introversion.

Set up **activities, clubs, tribes, give interest badges at the door, build community in the meat space itself. People with anxiety need structure to do things and be motivated.**

jakethedesigner 1 point · 22 hours ago

Ah, not to jump to the defense, but the tablet concept is not something that you sit and "play on" or anything. It's more of an assister, a tool to encourage new friendships. If that makes more sense.

The last para was really helpful! Could you give some activities you personally would enjoy? I understand how those with autism also appreciate regularity, like a consistent schedule. The badges concept is something I hadn't thought of! In regards to that, what types of badges would you like? Is it a more regular/collectible thing?

andrewfhuo 2 points · 3 days ago

33 year old introvert, work in sales, anxiety and depression.

... You want to do what now?!

jakethedesigner 2 points · 22 hours ago

You're definitely someone who could have something to say about this idea!

*DRINK ORDERING SYSTEM - WHAT CAN WORK?*

*USE CAFES AS INSPO-*

*-STRUCTURE  
-ACTIVITIES  
-REWARDS*

negatively impact and affect someone with social anxiety. If Back Home Bar is designed effectively, those with anxiety could have the opportunity to engage in a rewarding social growth experience, even potentially helping them overcome their anxiety.

# Introversion & shyness

Although not listed as a disability, introverts are a demographic that will benefit greatly from Back Home Bar. According to the Myers & Briggs Foundation, the frequency of those who are introverted is

remove  
the  
fear.

“Shyness indicates a fear of people or social situations. Introverts, on the other hand, simply do not like to spend lots of time interacting with other people.”

# chat: situational introversion



Social anxiety + introversion can be relatively self-diagnosed. A woman I spoke to, who has a big personality, said when she is in busy spaces, she feels intimidated and is more reserved. She said, “People tell me all the time how I’m social and outgoing, but in crowds, it’s overwhelming.” When asked if she has been identified as having social anxiety or shy, she replied, “no, I never thought I had to tell my doctor, ‘oh, I’m not always

comfortable in crowds' because it's not necessary..." and she paused and shared, "but now that I think of it, you could say I have social anxiety and can be an introvert in big crowds."

Is social anxiety, shyness, or introversion self-diagnosed and not accounted for in data or statistics?  
What should we do to 'keep track' or does it even matter?

**50.7% of the population** – this number “was compiled from a variety of MBTI® results from 1972 through 2002, including data banks at the Center for Applications of Psychological Type; The Myers-Briggs Company; and Stanford Research Institute (SRI)” (How frequent is my type?, n.d.). All over the internet, when you search for ‘introvert,’ there are substantial lists of qualities that try to quantify the personality type. However, the Myers-Briggs test is a four-fold test where someone may be considered an introvert, but still love going out and having a drink, or an extrovert who absolutely avoids happy hour. With that said, there is a great difference between an introvert or being shy.

A good way to differentiate between shyness and being an introvert is how **“shyness indicates a fear of people or social situations. Introverts, on the other hand, simply do not like to spend lots of time interacting with other people.”** (Cherry & Gans, 2018) For those who are shy, social situations are much more difficult. Bars are a social environment that exudes drawing people in to create new friendships, which would deter someone that might be a wallflower. In the book *The Development of Shyness and Social Withdrawal*, they state how being social (socialbility) “refers to

## reddit: email correspondence



I posted on Reddit threads, both threads of /socialanxiety and /entrepreneurship, and retrieved a lot of information. One Redditor in the social anxiety group said she'd do an email correspondence, mainly because her social anxiety made her feel uncomfortable with doing a Skype or video call with a stranger. Happily, I wrote out each question and received a 5 page email with the answers. I've highlighted and wrote immediate thoughts that stood out.

@oregonsunstone spoke about atmosphere in many ways.

### Seating at bars

Going back to what I mentioned earlier, I definitely like bars with a number of seating options. Having a well-organized space that's more open and maneuverable makes me more comfortable, and more likely to stay for a while (which is usually in a bar's interest, since patrons who stay longer spend more money). The rounded bar idea is appealing to me because a group of friends would have an easier time equally engaging as a unit— as opposed to a straight-top bar where, like you said, you can only really talk to your closest seated neighbor.

cons

My one concern with the circular design though is that it might be unfair to the bartenders. In the traditional format, a bartender has one linear barrier between them and the people ordering drinks. In that way, it's easier for them to keep track of new arrivals and prioritize orders with accuracy. I worry that it could be an added difficulty if the bartender is physically surrounded by customers competing for attention. Of course, some bartenders fail to keep track even in the traditional lay-out, so this might just be the reality of any “walk up freely and place your order alongside a bunch of other people” transaction.

INNOVATIVE  
BAR TOP!!

focus on methods of  
easier socialization  
and visibility to others

## bar layout - what's helpful.

As for things I'd like to see in bars, the first idea that comes to mind is how nice it would be for there to be **small, quieter pockets** where you can **get some relief** from the constant noise and bustle. In most bars you can only get a break by going outside, but that's not exactly much of a relief if you'd rather avoid inclement weather and smoking areas. Additionally, going outside means giving up on whatever limited seating you managed to grab for yourself, so you might have to struggle to find a seat all over again once you go back inside. **If a bar had the space, several "quiet corners" would definitely be an appealing feature for me.**

activities could go in these spaces?

consistent with other people with social anxiety ✕

## lighting and atmosphere

Finally, and this one might not be easy to "design" per se, but I **really wish that bars could be brighter and cleaner**. **Dark spaces may be cozy**, but they **don't often contribute to a welcoming ambiance** when darkness is the only quality a space has. When I go into any place of business, I want to at least see something **eye-catching and pleasant**, especially if it gives the location more character. **Most bars** I've been to though are so **generic and bland**: neon signs here, pool tables there, maybe one wall lined with keg handles, etc. People may predominantly go out just to get drunk, but there's no reason why a bar can't be an aesthetically pleasing location to do

how to be "bright" without losing the typical bar vibe?

proof is in the pudding  
there IS A NEED!

All in all, your project has been really fascinating to think about. Truthfully, I wish there were developers like you in my local area, because I would love to go to bars if they featured some of your potential designs. **Being a part of the social scene isn't easy for people with anxiety**, but I've found that **there are many of us who would get out and engage with others more, if only there were places that were more accommodating for our particular preferences**. I find it really encouraging that you're taking the time to acquire direct and personable feedback to help you make those spaces a potentiality of the future. Thank you for your time and consideration, and keep up the great work!

the motive, strong or weak, of wanting to be with others, whereas shyness refers to behavior when with others, inhibited or uninhibited, as well as feelings of tension and discomfort" (Rubin & Coplan, 2010). This doesn't necessarily mean those who are shy will avoid bars, but it does mean the environment I create has to alleviate the tension and discomfort that shy people may face.

//

Overall, there are a multitude of disabilities, neurological differences, and social phobias in the world, with **the potential of 56.7 million people having a need for a safe, inclusive space that helps them flourish socially**. That's why I'm so passionate about this project and potential business concept.

The next step is to discover the particular wants and needs the individuals have in order to design the best bar.

simply  
want  
inclusion.

"If only places were more accommodating for our [my demographic's] particular preferences."

# businesses helping this population

## When I began,

I was thinking about creating a user-reporting app similar to Yelp to rate businesses based on their accessibility. There was going to be a business back-end to the concept to incorporate change. While the idea is still feasible, it was a lot to tackle in less than a year. Also, it turns out, there already is a platform doing rating and evaluating physical business locations. So I decided to tackle a different, and more interesting, challenge.

**Several of these businesses have made a difference for my target population,** and I have been inspired by some of their tactics. From café's to apps, people are trying to make change.

## AXS Map



AXS Map (pronounced 'Access Map') uses Google Places to **collect all the businesses and venues in the world** and **allows users to report on the accessibility of the particular space**. However, one of the obvious flaws is that AXS Map requests simple responses to: wheelchair entry score from 1-5, number of stair steps, a score of the bathroom for handicap access, y/n guide dog permissions, y/n handicap accessible parking, y/n for a second entry that may be accessible, y/n if the lighting is well lit, y/n for the quietness, and y/n if the environment is spacious (Review, n.d.). The focus, unfortunately, lies with visible, prominent disabilities, mainly wheelchair and handicap accessibility, not invisible disabilities

//

As of 2017, AXS Map had 960 users and their user contributed data has extended to over 600,000 locations (The playful way to create accessibility maps, 2018). The major benefit of AXS Map is how they use "Mapathons" as a gamification tool in order to retrieve more information on venues. They built a step-by-step process on how to create your own Mapathon for ease of use and convenience, encouraging a higher amount of participants (FAQ, n.d.). To date, they have had around 300 Mapathons, but there is no data on the success of those Mapathons (The playful way to create accessibility maps, 2018). AXS Map has been trying to tackle the "making the world a more accessible place" with gamification and

raising awareness on being more accessible. **The amount of success they've had is hard to determine, since the user-contribution is difficult to get, especially when it comes to a minority use.**

However, it's a step in the right direction.

## Half Access



Half Access, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is an **online based platform geared towards making music venues more accessible by creating a database and transparency on music venues around the world**. They are "dedicated to making live music accessible," in hopes the data gathered can be used to improve the spaces that are lacking (Home, n.d.).

//

Cassie Wilson, the founder of Half Access, "has a dwarfism that caused her bones to twist as she grew, so she's had a multitude of surgeries. She can't stand for long periods of time, so at concerts she uses a manual wheelchair" (Our Board Members, n.d.). In 2017, Wilson went to a concert venue where she faced discrimination and, instead of harboring her frustrations at the ableism, she created Half Access. In a video with Now This, Wilson discloses how there's two choices for her at a venue: to be 'safe' in the isolated accessible area that is usually unable to see the stage well or to risk her safety to roll

“In a concert setting, ‘people have this thing I call show-mode... they forget how to pay attention to their surroundings.’”

music  
venue  
difficulty

up for a good view (Now This, 2018). Wilson divulges something a lot of people with disabilities feel when around able-bodied people. In a concert-setting, she says “people have this thing that I [ ] call show mode... They just kind of forget how to pay attention to their surroundings because they’re caught up in the moment” (Now This, 2018). This doesn’t mean she, or anyone with a disability, is saying able-bodied people are jerks or inconsiderate, but rather oblivious or unaware. Overall, Half Access is working to improve music venues, even if the costs to redo a bathroom to be handicap accessible is \$9,000 on average (Now This, 2018). The costs to make a building accessible can be costly, so Wilson is hoping Half Access can contribute to improving these spaces, both socially and financially.

## Mary Free Bed YMCA

At Syracuse University, the Burton Blatt Institute conducted a research project designing the Mary Free Bed YMCA in Grand Rapids, MI, which was initially **a proof-of-concept Universal Design (UD) fitness facility**. However, after two years post-completion of the building, the “net revenues for the first year [were] up an unprecedented 25% above budget...and a growth in membership up 366% from the old facility” (Perry, Rotella, & Blanck, 2017). This

project supports the concept that “**Universal Design is not just the right thing to do from a social and moral perspective, but also an innovative and smart business decision from an economic viewpoint**” (Perry, Rotella, & Blanck, 2017). On the YMCA’s “Our Story” section of their website, they refer to Universal Design as a derivative of Accessible Design but expands to all people of all abilities and needs (“Our YMCA Story,” n.d.). They effectively state

it’s  
actually  
profitable.

“Net revenues for the first year [were] up an unprecedented 25% above budget.”

how “even the most able-bodied individuals pass through a time when they find themselves challenged by age (both young and old), language barriers, temporary illness and injury,” which implies how everyone has differences and are different in every way, and “by designing for diversity, the built environment becomes more functional and user friendly.”

//

Universal Design principles recognize “there is a wide spectrum of human abilities; its goals are to serve the widest range of people possible” (“About Us,” n.d.). Of course, Universal Design principles will be included and will be an example of the principles increasing net revenue and customer acquisition.

## The Blind Cafe



A pop-up experience, The Blind Cafe gives attendees the opportunity to have a meal completely in the dark, simulating the day-to-day experiences those who are legally blind have (Home, n.d.). Sensory loss is unfamiliar to able-bodied individuals, so a miniature exploration on how life could be without a sense can be incredibly powerful.

Rosh, the owner and creator of The Blind Café, is a singer/songwriter inspired by a similar experience he had when traveling to Reykjavik, Iceland (Typeface, n.d.). The experience impacted him greatly and thus he decided to create this traveling cafe for those around the nation. His mission with The Blind Cafe is centered around live music and connectedness with those around you, not necessarily

“not designed to simulate blindness... but you hear from blind people and how they navigate [their disability].”

education  
brings  
empathy.

about the legally blind. However, he does hire those who are legally blind as servers, so there is inclusion. At the end of the meal, diners sit and have a Q&A with their servers who are legally blind, which thankfully, is an opportunity for customers to further learn and grow

from the immersive meal. The Blind Cafe can be perceived as an educational platform of what it's like to live without a sense and therefore has an improved knowledge on others' daily experiences.

Tiffany Costello, a TEDx Mile High contributor, sums up the purpose of The Blind Café: it is “not designed to simulate blindness because you can never know what it's like to be in someone else's shoes — but you do hear from blind people and how they navigate theirs” (Costello, 2017). Personally, I have mixed feelings with simulations of what it's like to have a disability like this or being in a wheelchair for a few days because yes, you develop empathy, but it can be perceived as mocking or offending the population. It all depends on perception and how it is executed.

## Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop



A lot of inclusive restaurants and cafes today focus on equal hiring processes by having employees with various disabilities. Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop, located in both Wilmington, NC and Charleston, SC, began because the two owners, the Wrights', have children -- two of their four have Down syndrome. **One in 691 of babies born in the United States are diagnosed with Down syndrome, making it so roughly 6,000 babies per year have Down**

**syndrome** (Parker, Mai, Canfield, et al., 2010). This population is also increasing.

//

Sadly, **over 80% of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are unemployed** (Parker, Mai, Canfield, et al., 2010). The Wright's take proud ownership that "Beau's Coffee created a path for people with IDD to become more valued, accepted and included in every community" ("About Us," n.d.). Those with Down syndrome have visible characteristics that identify them and most people are uninformed on the fact they are capable and willing to be in the workforce doing a job they can easily learn and perform. By starting a business hiring employees who are seeking jobs and will be appreciated, Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop is making a difference with the Down syndrome population. They are solving a real problem with a demographic often overlooked.

## Mozzeria

Similar to Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop and their hiring processes, Mozzeria, a Neapolitan-style pizza joint in San Francisco, is fully employed with those who are Deaf that use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary means of communication. Melody and Russ, a Deaf couple, met at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. Melody was born in Hong Kong with her parents having owned restaurants in San Francisco and Hong Kong, and New Yorker Russ is a natural-born pizza enthusiast (Pershan, 2017). They are acclaimed for their restaurant being "highly traditional: It's a member of the Associazione Vera Pizza Napoletana, an international organization

certifying Neapolitan pizzerias," recognizing that the food quality supersedes the employees with disabilities (Pershan, 2017). In a mini-documentary on the award-winning restaurant and food truck, owners Melody and Russ adamantly state how their restaurant is "about the food first, the experience secondary" because they don't want to be viewed as any less than their pizzeria competition (Small Business Revolution, 2015).

//

The Deaf community struggles for employment, just like those with Down syndrome at Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop. In an interview with ABC7 News, Melody confesses that **the Deaf "unemployment rate is 70-percent and even those who graduate and hope to find**

disability  
doesn't  
define you.

"It's about the food first, the [Deaf culture] experience secondary."

**a job are not getting hired.** Who is willing to give them a chance?" (Lim, 2017). They are. Every single person hired through Mozzeria is Deaf, even the people who installed the pizza oven imported from Italy (Lim, 2017). However, Melody and Russ passionately care about making sure their 90-95% hearing diners realize those who are Deaf aren't any different – it's all about the food. Just like Bitty and Beau's, Mozzeria targets on a different demographic to hire. However, there isn't a focus on the clientele, which is a theme I noticed throughout researching current projects and designs that are working today.

## Special Books by Special Kids



The biggest inspiration for Back Home Bar started with Special Books by Special Kids, a YouTube series where Chris, the host and interviewer, travels the world, talking to all demographics, ages, and disabilities about their experiences. He showcases their stories, and as I scrolled the comments section on every video I watched (almost every video!), people worldwide were sharing love, empathy, and support for every single person who appeared on SBSK.

Once I spent an entire Sunday afternoon watching video after video, reading comment after comment, I realized Back Home Bar is a way to emulate the same concept. Building a community where those with disabilities can gather, feel comfortable and at home, along with able-bodied folks embracing an open, diverse space where we've officially eliminated and eradicated barriers that society inflicts on us. SBSK is proof, on a "small" scale, that we, as a society, can be inclusive and accepting. All it takes is a space in which it can happen.

(Oh, check out their YouTube account at: [www.bit.ly/SBSK-YouTube](http://www.bit.ly/SBSK-YouTube))

"SBSK is a 501(c)3 **organization that seeks to normalize the diversity of the human condition under the pillars of honesty,**

**respect, mindfulness, positivity and collaboration.** This multi-media movement supports the acceptance and celebration of all members of the neurodiverse community regardless of diagnosis, age, race, religion, income, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression" (Ulmer, 2015).

With a powerful mission, I believe Back Home Bar can achieve a similar platform, but instead of being online-based, relying on YouTube commenters (at this point in time, 4/9/2019, SBSK's YouTube comments have been disabled due to discriminatory YouTube practices enacted within the month of March of 2019. SBSK commenters are now resorting to the Instagram page to share their love, support, and showcase to those with "differences" that they're not alone and they matter.), **Back Home Bar is an in-person experience that takes you out of your home and off your digital platforms.**

//

Businesses helping this underserved population are tackling a task that's challenging. I hope, by creating Back Home Bar, I can contribute to the community of aspiring businesses to make change. A revolution to eradicate discrimination and negative viewpoints towards those with disabilities starts by making people *aware of the issue*. From there, it's about bridging the gap.

Let's prove why a bar is the best option.

I said, there  
*has* to be a  
solution.

They agree.



**part  
two:**

**alcohol  
+ social  
drinking**



# bars and social drinking

Want to meet some strangers?

Oh, it's socially acceptable here!

Overall, **bars are noteworthy of being an open social environment for customers**, encouraging casual banter with the person sitting adjacent to you, regardless if you know them or not. This is common among those who are comfortable attending bars and do not feel a sense of negative emotional or a social disadvantage like those with disabilities might. To justify the validity of a redesigned space for those with disabilities, there are some secondary data points to prove the potential success.

**Note, currently, there isn't any research which links an effective accessible bar design for those with disabilities to increase social interaction.** There isn't even a bar for them.

Today, researchers are looking at the negative and harmful health risks that come with drinking alcohol. They usually focus on heavy drinking or overuse of alcohol, whereas the research behind moderate drinking proves there is a positive effect.

**“Alcohol stimulates social bonding, increases the amount of time people spend talking to one another, and reduces displays of negative emotions.”**

more  
**social  
bonds.**

## Small dosages of alcohol works.

A dose of moderate alcohol has proven to increase social interactions between all people. A study led by University of Pittsburgh researchers sought to evaluate their 720 participants and their smiles over a 36-minute timespan while drinking an alcoholic beverage versus a placebo or nonalcoholic beverage (Sayette, 2012). Participants interacted with each other, a group of strangers, and the studying of smiles dictated the research results (Sayette, 2012). The research was clear: **“alcohol not only increased the frequency of ‘true’ smiles, but also enhanced the coordination of these smiles”**

(Sayette, 2012). Individuals were personally positively affected by the alcohol in a group situation, but even more importantly, the drink enhanced the likelihood of ‘golden moments...’ [where] all three group members [smiled] simultaneously” (Sayette, 2012). Having optimistic social interactions greatly supports having a beverage as a way to alleviate social stress. They also discovered how the alcohol drinking groups had “greater social bonding than the non-alcohol-drinking groups and were more likely to have all three members stay involved in the discussion” (Sayette, 2012).

//

This emulates how a bar works. Bars are lively, boisterous, people-meeting spaces. The study clearly reveals that “alcohol stimulates social bonding, increases the amount of time people spend talking to one another, and reduces displays of negative emotions” (Sayette, 2012). Not only does this support reasoning for a bar design for those with disabilities, it also is a proven business concept. Even though this study did not evaluate those with disabilities, if this target demographic attends Back Home Bar, **an increased amount of time they stay at the location increases the chance of them buying a second drink, increasing profits.** Also, if people with disabilities enjoy and appreciate their positive experience at Back Home Bar, word of mouth and social media posts are an incredibly effective marketing tool, especially among this particular demographic – they will tell their friends who have disabilities as well.

## ‘blogging’: Living Library



On April 2nd, I participated in my University’s event, Living Library. Strategically, I made my “book” topic on this thesis topic in hopes of gathering new information and data in a more intellectual, open setting. The logic was sound and effective -- I also happened to have someone with “severe social anxiety” ‘check’ me out. Per the Living Library setup, I briefed her about Back Home Bar and what makes it so unique. The second she sat down, I noticed her demeanor was almost shut off, nervous, and timid.

I believe I am someone who comes across as easy to talk to and approachable. The first few minutes I opened up about the bar and let the new information sink in. After I explained Back Home Bar, I asked why she decided to ‘read’ me. She then confided in me, “I... I have severe social anxiety, so I was curious about what a ‘universally accessible bar’ would be.”

Immediately I smiled. I had so many questions, and luckily, she happily provided me with answers. Living Library allows you check out a ‘book’ (person) for 15-20 minutes at a time.

We talked for almost an hour.

The conversation went all over the place. I’ve included the notes I compiled (found in the journal section towards the end of this book), scribbling key words as she spoke. Unexpectedly, she,

right off the bat, **told me she doesn’t drink alcohol**. I had people tell me on Reddit they don’t drink, so I had put a sticky note reminder to find inclusive methods to make non-drinking socially acceptable. But that was via social media. Right here, right now, someone told me directly that they don’t drink. When you say “bar,” you’re implying alcohol. My research is about alcohol! Does that mean the bar doesn’t work without it? Of course not.

We dived into ways to be inclusive. I’ve concluded that the beverage menu will have various mixed drinks, but the “non-alcoholic” or mock-tails will simply have an alternate name. When someone doesn’t want an alcoholic beverage, they won’t say, “I’d like a virgin of \_\_\_\_ (drink name),” but rather request for a similarly-named, but non-alcoholic, beverage. She said that minor change would make all the difference. I hadn’t thought of this issue heavily, nor a viable solution prior. In fact, I could see her demeanor go from bashful to a smile on her face.

As we digressed into her experiences with severe social anxiety, I gave her open space to speak about her experiences of socialization as a first year graduate student.

“Coming here, I didn’t know anyone. I’m from Upstate, NY, yet don’t know people in this area [or the University outside of my classes]. I’ve been to University Union events, like movie nights, but no one really talks there.... No one wants to say hello because what if the other person doesn’t want to talk? ...I’d rather keep to myself than look ‘weird’ for approaching someone who could reject me.”

I listened intently, thoughts swirling in my head. I desperately

wanted to instantaneously fix the dilemma she had. However, I let her continue explaining what she felt. The entire time, my empathy and compassion increased. **I knew that, especially for her, Back Home Bar could make a difference.**

Upon detailing the activity calendar proposal, she began smiling again. "There are so many activities you can do! **I like the Netflix night one.**" I chuckled and outlined the concept further.

"This is what I've been waiting for. I like the movie nights on campus, but I don't really create new friendships there. If you have tasty non-alcoholic beverages [that are discreet], I'd get one. I've been watching [indiscernible TV show name], even though it's not exactly popular, but would love to talk to other people about it.... or play Scrabble or any of the old 90's games. I like this. A lot."

As the 45+ minute conversation concluded, her very last question was, "will you open one in Syracuse?"

My heart was torn, as I don't have plans to stay here for an extended time post-graduation. However, the question made me realize there's a need *everywhere*, and this concept can make change within the bar industry, trickling into my core goal -- to make the world a more accessible place.

I went into Living Library with a general hope I'd get insight from anyone regarding Back Home Bar. I didn't realize my heartstrings would be pulled, my drive for Back Home Bar multiplying, and how, for one person, this thesis concept and

extensive research could bring so much joy.

When she first sat down, I noticed her discomfort. However, when she shook my hand and began to get up, I could see a huge transformation. Not to be dramatic, but it felt like an expression of hope. Hope that someone else thought about her. Hope that there could be places to meet new people in a new, better way.

I write this after this event on April 2nd, grinning from ear-to-ear. Back Home Bar has a long way to go, but in less than a year, I've managed to innovatively create a project with potential to become something more than 100+ pages of research.

Alright, I'm done with my story post now.

## conversations: social drinking

### W/DISABILITY

Bar chats with various people:

"events make for LESS awkwardness"

"I don't think I'll go, but I bet my friends would."

"Little apprehensive but your mission makes me curious!"

### ABLE-BOODIED

"give me a drink and I'll be happy to get to know you!"

"I love trying new things + I'd try this for sure!"

"love meeting new people!"

# local versus city centered bars

## Cheers to the locals!

As a regular hole-in-the-wall bar seeker, I find local bars to be more effective for communicating with new people and cultivating more relationships. **They provide an open, quieter, and less “packed” space to have conversations and meet new people.** Along with that, I’ve noticed how kind customers can be.

I’m not alone. There is **proof that local bars are more conducive for socializing** rather than a populated, crammed city bar (think of bars in busy cities with loud music and crammed spaces). Along with that, I questioned locals at my favorite bar and they, too, agreed. Studies also back it up, too.

## Social drinking has positive effects.

A study from the University of Oxford in the UK also discusses the positive effects of social drinking. They centered their data around the differences of location: mainly between city-centered bars versus local pubs. The study was in the UK, making the terminology less familiar for Americans, but the concept is the same.

The definition between city-center bars and ‘community’ pubs are well described. A local pub tends to have regulars to a point where they are able to connect with the staff on a more personal basis (Dunbar, et al., 2017). They “**typically have a distinctly social ambiance, with a smaller, quieter venue**, are typically more beer-oriented than wine-oriented, and generally have lower per capita consumption [in the UK]” (Dunbar, et al., 2017). The **local pub concept promotes intimacy, less sensory overload, and inclusivity**. On the other hand, “city center bars tend to be larger, have a clientele drawn from a much wider, more heterogeneous population, and commonly lack the community ambiance of ‘locals’; their business plans typically focus on maximizing alcohol sales” (Dunbar, et al., 2017).

A key point on the sales of alcohol is valid, as the bar creation is a business, however, a ‘local’ pub is likely to be the most effective way to design Back Home Bar. If the business plan is built correctly, I should still see a positive return on investment in the process.

The inclusive and intimate space that comes with a local’s bar is natural and more inviting for those with a disability or have social

a  
**local  
bar.**

“Local pubs tend to have regulars to a point where they are able to connect with the staff on a more personal basis.”

anxiety. Now, the study displays glaringly obvious **disproportions on a conversation-style in a local pub versus a city center one**. The **mean length of an engaged conversation was 8 minutes at a local pub**, whereas at the busy city bar, it was 3 minutes (Dunbar, et al., 2017). Local, more intimate bars have more opportunities for smaller social interactions between a few people, along with a really important factor: increased trust (Dunbar, et al., 2017).

//

**For those with disabilities, being able to find a place that makes you feel comfortable and safe is crucial.** This is important for my thesis, as the study results say that those who have a local bar they frequent regularly “are more socially engaged, feel more content in their lives, and are more likely to trust other members of their community” (Dunbar, et al., 2017). This seems quite logical, as even able-bodied neurotypicals go to their favorite hometown bar where they know the bartender or servers because the environment is comfortable for them. The missing information are the numbers regarding the population and demographic I am working towards being my target market. However, those with disabilities will most likely be customers at an all-encompassing bar using different tools

## observation: regular customers



I frequent both a bar and a brewery often, and noticed the frequenters. I've said hello and had conversations with all of them, and over time, noticed how they slowly built bonds with each other. Not only that, they've created bonds with me.

There's three gentleman who go to a bar across the street from my house. They all know me by name and greet me every time I walk in with my laptop and ready to work. Their conversations last the entire time they're at the bar -- since it's calmer and easier to communicate in. If the bar was in a different location (like downtown Syracuse) or the vibe was a bit more modern (this particular bar has a lot of wood panels, chill vibe, artwork on the walls for sale, and overall very homey. I will be using similar aesthetics with Back Home Bar), there could be an increase in not only customers, but a different demographic.

Two of the three gentleman are in their 50's, the other is in his mid 20's. **Collectively, they don't look like a trio who'd hang out, but they connected through this bar and frequenting it.** With this, the environment of this local bar is proof a homier, low-key design and atmosphere can bring various people together.

Another positive thing about having a **more localized, laid back bar** like this gastropub, you can **connect with the bartenders** and servers. They're more inclined to have conversations with you beyond taking your order and serving you. Personally, I have connected with every employee and they all

check in with me frequently and ask what project I'm working on when I have my laptop open. This actually increases their tips, too.

I asked one of the servers how she likes working at this particular bar v.s. a city bar she used to work at. She said,

"I would get mediocre tips [at the city/packed bar] because people don't really connect with you. Here, yeah, it's slower, but I know everyone. **The regulars also tip me pretty well.** Maybe I'm not getting paid as much here than [the other bar], but **I'm happier here.**"

This statement was similar to the other servers I had casual banter with regarding their job at this gastropub. Another said,

"People actually care about me, mostly the regulars, because I ask them about their day, their families, their jobs [etc.]... I know if they're having a rough day, or if something great just happened."

She then followed up by saying, "oh -- I forgot to ask, how's [your] business going?" with a smile. With this, it's obvious there will be return customers, which will help Back Home Bar.

//

In the last few months, I've found a brewery right on the outskirts of downtown Syracuse. Similar to the gastropub, there's wood everywhere, cozy seating, and two televisions on mute (I asked for them to put closed captions on, since it wasn't). On my fifth visit to this brewery, I saw two people who had been there

• before. They created a strong relationship with the bartenders/  
• owners of the bar and it seemed very inviting and lighthearted.  
• Their hospitality was welcoming -- as soon as they noticed that  
• I came in with my laptop and was doing work, they greeted me  
• and respected my space, but when I turned away from my laptop,  
• everyone engaged in conversation. You could tell this was a locals  
• place, just like the gastropub I have near my college apartment.  
• .....  
•

to increase social interaction, especially one that feels like home and is comfortable for them.

//

In regards to the relationship between social anxiety, bars, and alcohol consumption, there have been plenty of studies. Yet most of them contradict one another. There is a lack of consistent, useful conclusions made, so two researchers set out to understand how alcohol affects anxiety (Booth & Hasking, 2009, [abstract]). This study was performed in the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine at Monash University, Australia. It focused on social anxiety and reward sensitivity with alcohol consumption. The study navigates how, when someone with social anxiety enters a space with fear, they are more inclined to consume more alcohol for confidence and increased social navigation. This could also apply to those who don't have social anxiety, too. Although the study intends to develop a greater understanding of how to decrease drinking problems or overindulgence of alcohol related to social anxiety, the message that people need a "boost" to interact with others when they may be anxious along with a safe, underwhelming

place to drink with people is positive for my bar. They concluded that the "relationship between social anxiety and drinking can be better understood [when considering] both expectancies and reward sensitivity" (Booth & Hasking, 2009, p. 735). If handled in moderation, alcohol brings great social benefits and rewards.

With good bartenders, moderating drinking can be executed while taking advantage of the positive confidence a drink can offer someone with social anxiety. Booth and Hasking back this claim by stating how the **"expectations of increased confidence and tension reduction were salient predictors of drinking, supporting a wealth of research linking alcohol expectancies with drinking behavior"** (Booth & Hasking, 2009, p. 735).

//

The numbers and studies prove the effects of a local bar providing a healthier, accepting environment for people to meet up, connect with strangers, or build on their preexisting relationships. This is why, instead of curating a café or alternative location-based retail environment, I decided to utilize the obvious benefits bars provide. **Back Home Bar will focus on being a "locals" bar with interior design and location - even if it hypothetically was in the middle of New York City. With curating a homey interior design, the atmosphere would make it a 'home away from home.'**

Because, well, Back Home Bar is a local, hometown bar.

The key  
components  
to building

one  
accessible  
bar.

# part three:



# overview: how I got here

## From research to building a bar,

I found the gaps and flaws that exist and have built a new, innovative bar. After two semesters of research, I've developed a system that discreetly, yet successfully creates an open, welcoming environment for my target demographic and beyond.

Back Home Bar has a product that brings two major components, solving and creating a conducive environment that's social and comfortable. The **interior design emulates "home,"** especially after Instagram surveys for words that describe home for people. Our **activity calendar brings regularity,** mainly for those with high-functioning autism. The **coaster eliminates awkwardness and unsuccessful service,** which alleviates the stress on all parties.

It started with intense secondary research. But throughout this experience, I've been driven by empathy, compassion, and making a difference. This is the result.

# socializing: weekly calendar

## How to capture people...

After speaking to those with high functioning autism and people with social anxiety, along with introverts, I realized **consistency and regularity is very important.** Most bars typically have a night during the week where there's an activity, such as Trivia Thursday. While this is great for those into trivia, it's only once a week -- and limited to that one activity option. The rest of the week is open with nothing else to draw customers in.

With this knowledge, **Back Home Bar has filled in the gaps regarding scheduling, lack of consistency,** and used this **as an opportunity to help people communicate** more because there are ways to meet new people by participating in things each individual is interested in.

# Days of the week people attend bars.

Asking 30+ people about the days of the week they attend bars and the days they do not, people expressed disinterest of going on Monday and early week.

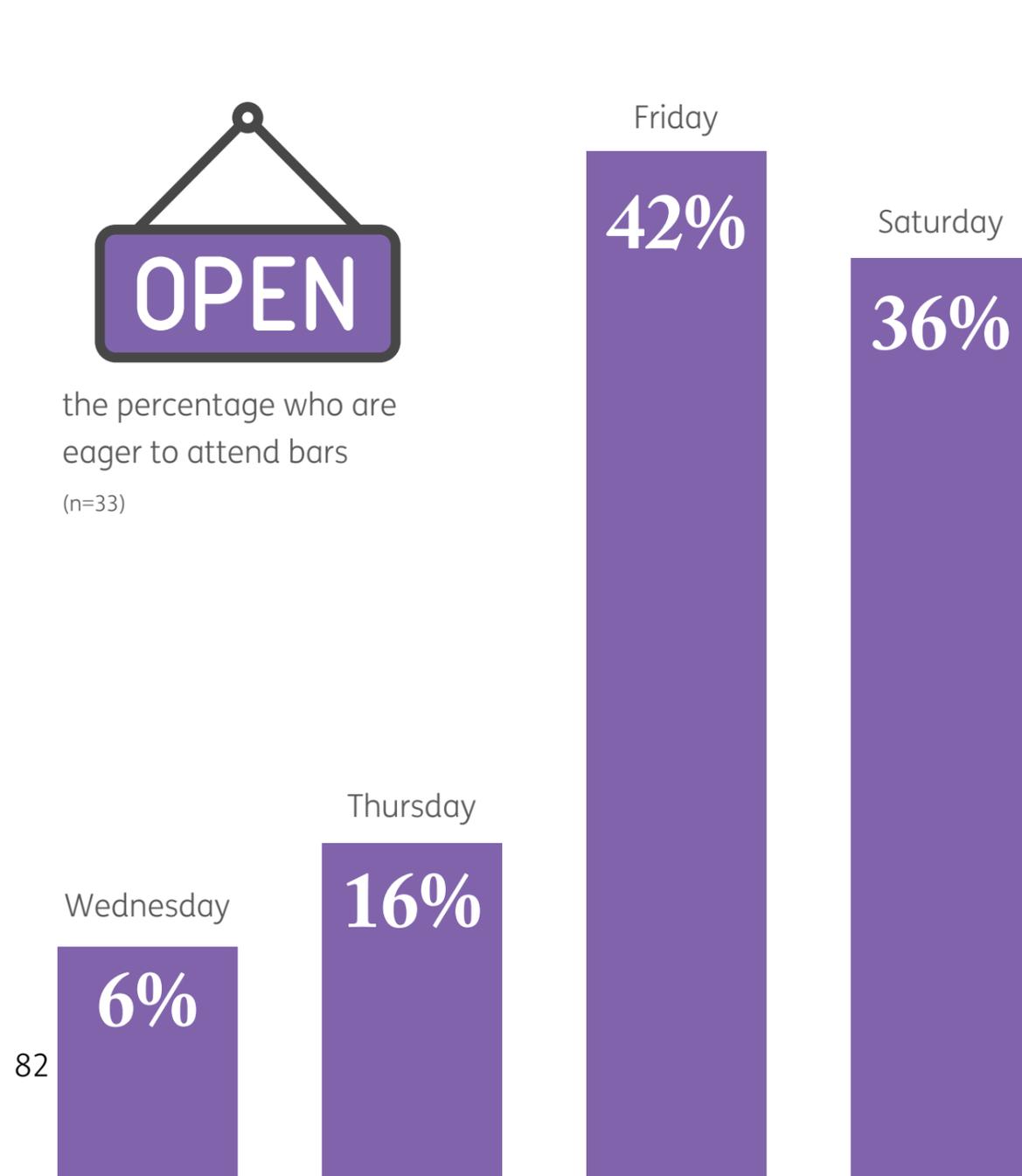
The majority go to bars on Friday and Saturday.

problem  
to  
solve.

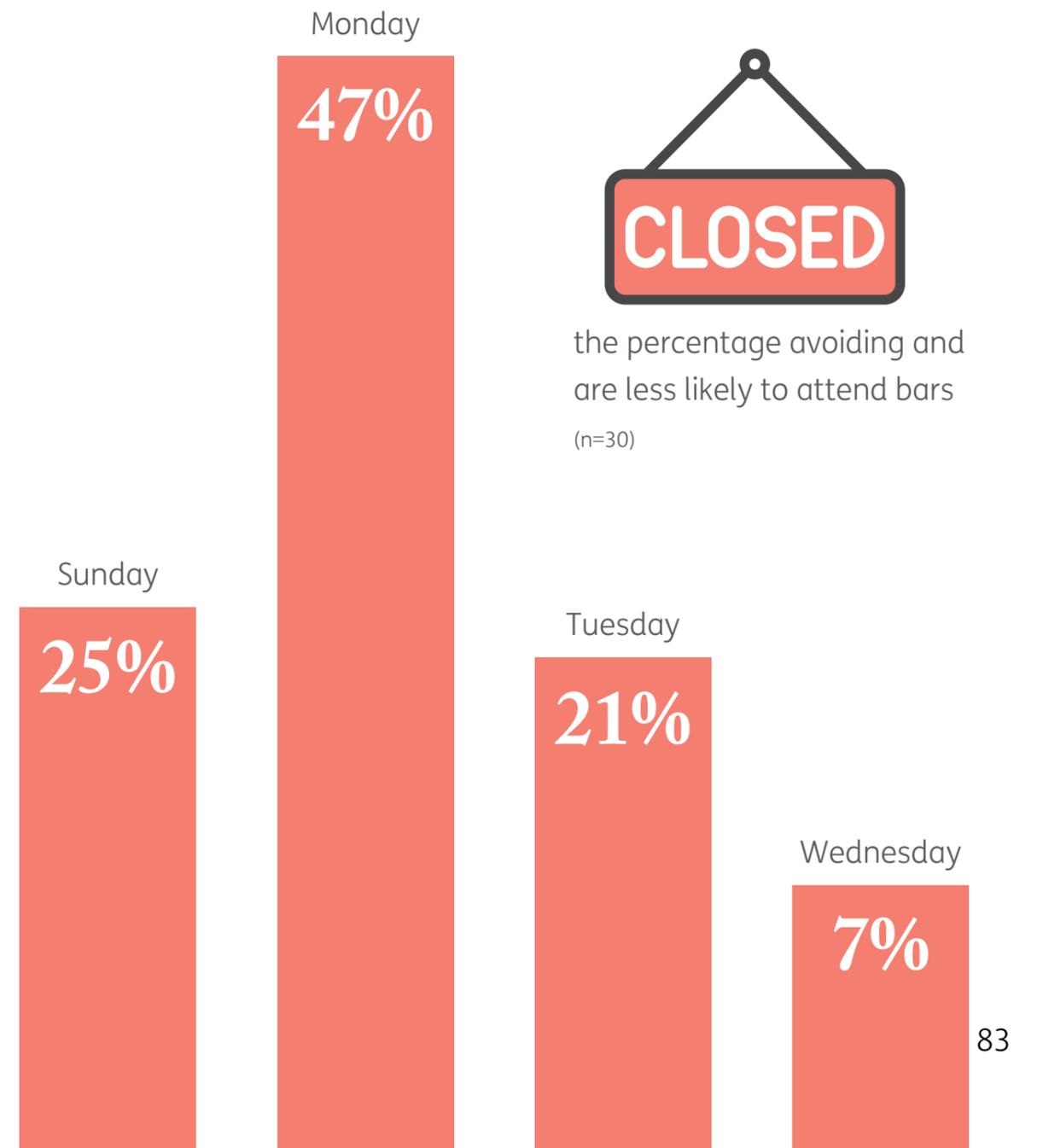
How do we get them  
to attend my bar on  
less popular days?



the percentage who are  
eager to attend bars  
(n=33)



the percentage avoiding and  
are less likely to attend bars  
(n=30)



In order to retain my customers within this demographic, I have designed a weekly calendar that is consistent, brings people together, and targets overall interests of different people.

Through interviews, I learned how, in the beginning of the week, people are less apt to go to bars. Friday and Saturday are the top two nights, which I predicted. However, upon further discussions with interviewees, they're more interested in passive activities on popular nights. Things like comedy, music/dancing, and karaoke are highly favored. On weeknights with low attendance, people seemed to show interests in active opportunities like trivia, board game night, or video games.

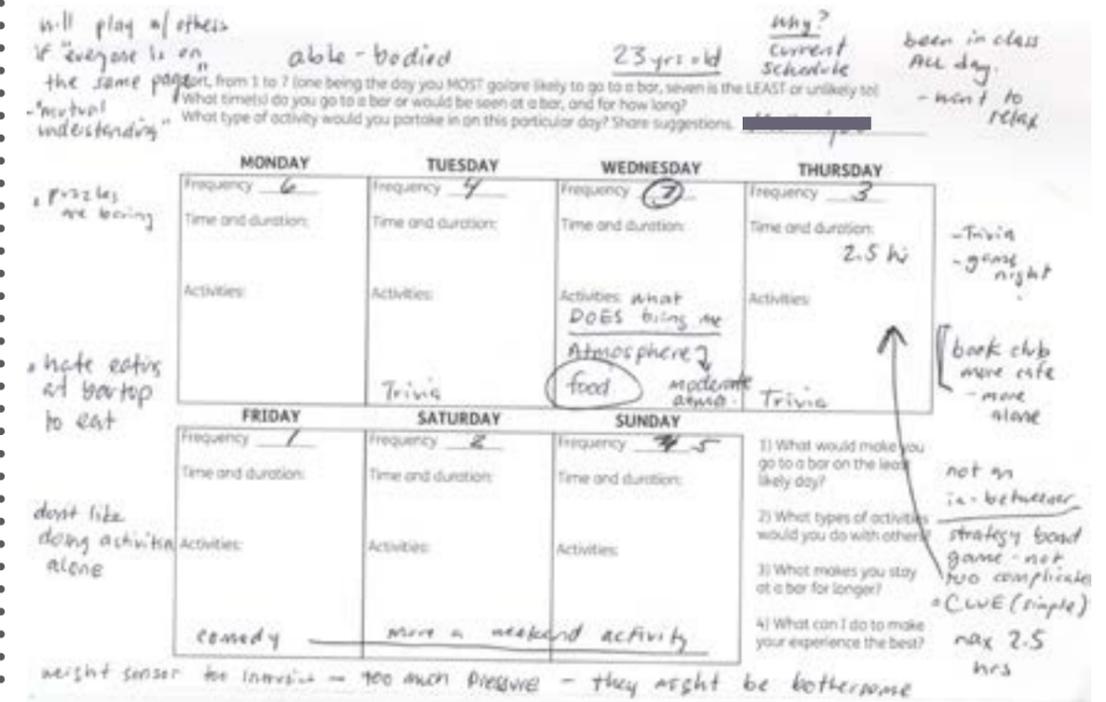
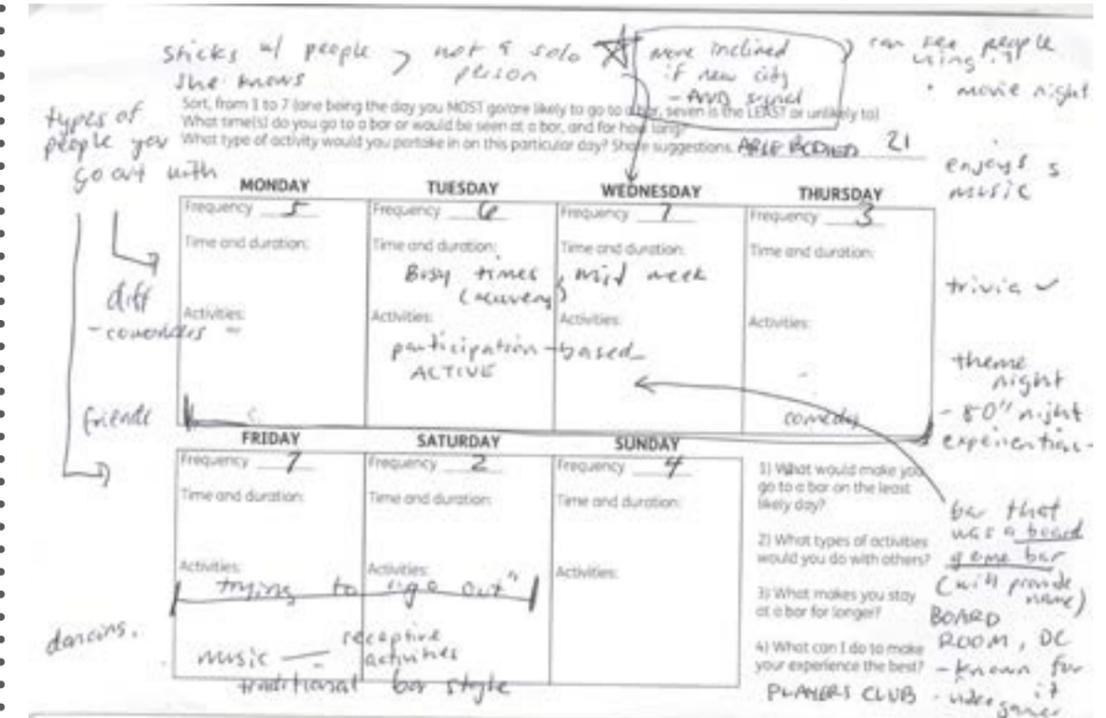
## research: calendar insights

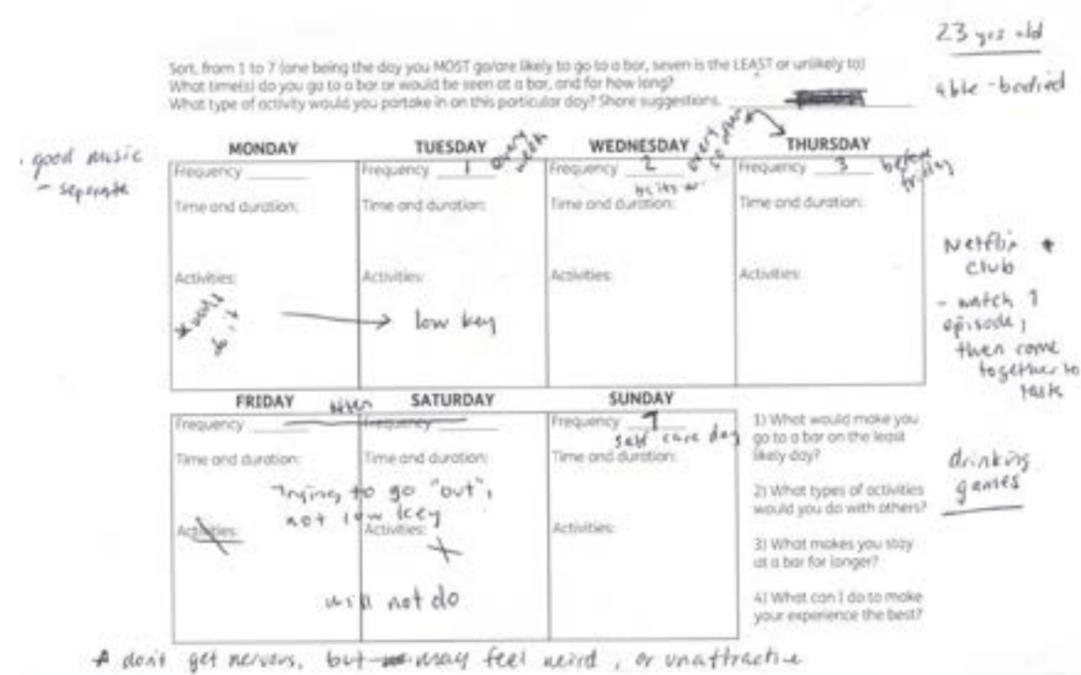


I spoke to able-bodied folks regarding a weekly calendar and what makes them inclined (or not inclined) to go to a bar. With this information, I learned a lot about a weekly schedule people have, especially

millennials and young professionals with diverse schedules. Curating a the weekly calendar stems from these conversations, along from online surveys asking people things they enjoy doing at home/on their own (seen on pages 88-89).

First, here are insightful notes from three (3) in person interviews where I shared a blank calendar and inquired about their personal schedule and each conversation led to different topics I could incorporate into my thesis.





"if you have a popcorn machine, I'm sold"  
 picking snacks - peanuts are more sanitary  
 GIN - TONIC  
 MARG - fruity / passionfruit

more seating (off wall)  
 likes back LESS more  
 goes to bar w 1 or 2 other ppl  
 enough for your party  
 - have right seating for EATING

With this information, I made a weekly calendar for Back Home Bar. All the activities are consistent and will not change on a whim. My initial demographic will be comfortable and confident knowing that, if they go to Streaming Sunday, they're going to talk about Game of Thrones, Grey's Anatomy, or any hit TV show.

Overall, in order to encourage participation more, there is a small monetary discount provided. With my secondary research, receiving a positive reward for doing something helps promote people to do it, then if beneficial, they will do it again. Something as simple as \$1 off the customer's drink of choice. We can also provide an appetizer special (if food is served at the bar) or have snacks around the activity area, drawing people in.

## instagram survey: interests

Through Instagram's story option where you can create a true/false survey, along with having a "questions" box, I asked my followers to type in activities they enjoy doing on their own; their hobbies and interests. The feedback helped me curate the calendar design.

Since some of the people were my personal friends, a few of them got a little silly regarding their suggestions, so those particular ones are removed from the survey data, and I disregarded repetitive ones regarding sleep (as I wouldn't want people sleeping in the bar!!).

The next two-page spread showcases the results from the Instagram stories and the patterns are easily identifiable.

# Hobbies and activities:

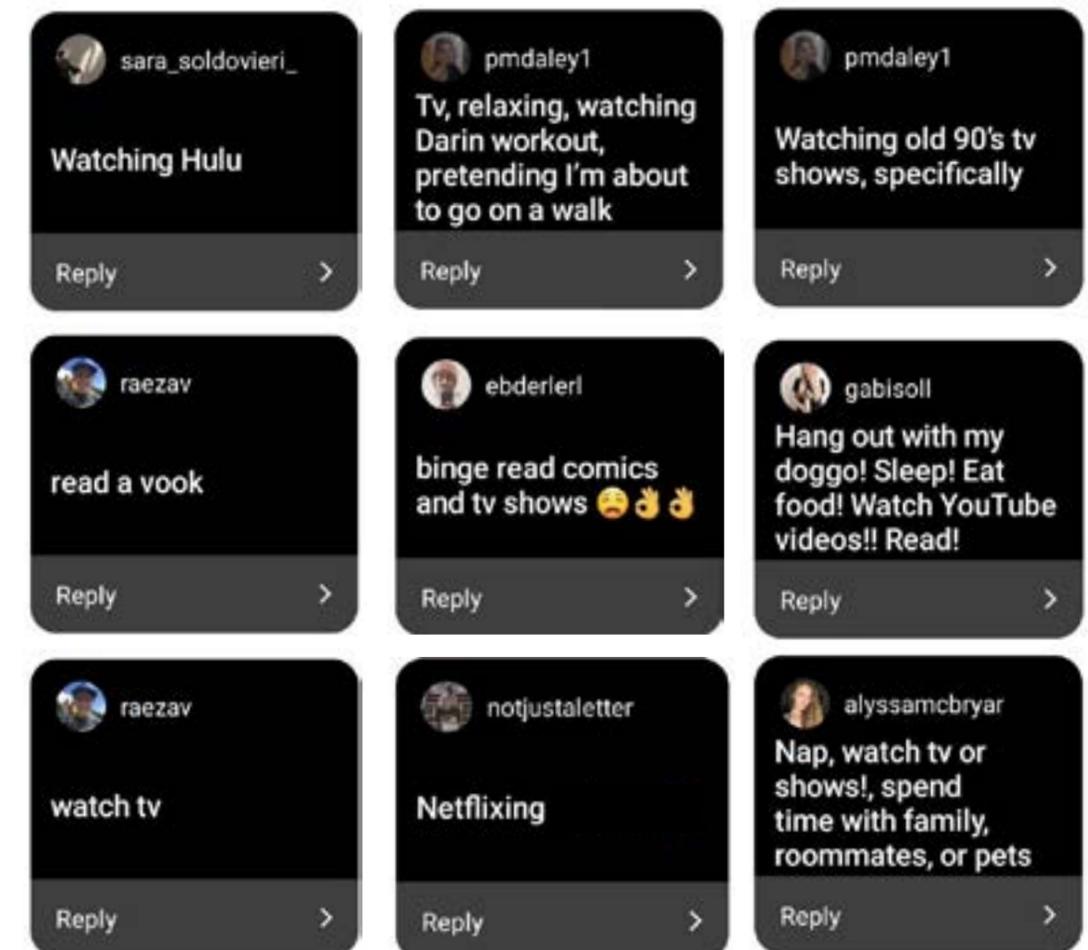
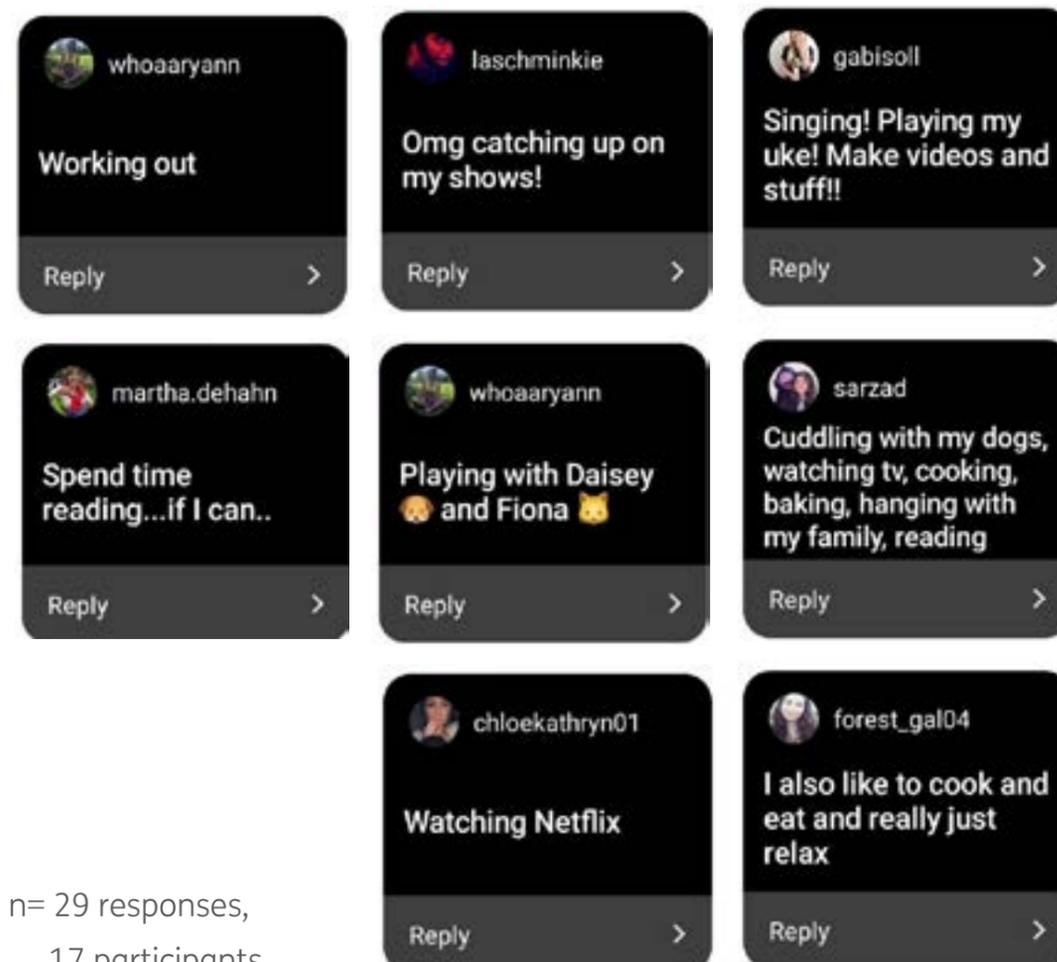
Through Instagram's questions box, with 29 responses, over half of the messages were about TV and books.

//

Having two major popular activities so glaringly obvious, I used them for the days/nights that turned out to be less popular -- Sunday for television and monthly book club on Wednesday. The other suggestions sparked several other weekly activity options.

lots of mutual interests.

Most of the options people shared were common and feasible to incorporate.



n= 29 responses,  
17 participants

## research: feedback

When I shared the various ideas to other people, I wrote down their feedback to the concepts. These usually ensued while I sat at my favorite bars with a craft beer, writing and working on this thesis book.

### Person 1 (mid 20's)

- enjoyed the innovative event ideas that were suggested
- liked having more than one type of activity being available at one location.

- not a huge trivia fan
- little shy

### Person 2 (mid 20's)

- "I want a certain, designated space within the bar just for activities."

- was yelling to speak to me
- seemed annoyed with current bar layout we were in

### Person 3 (early 40's)

- diverse options were "enticing"
- loves and frequents bars and "hasn't seen anything like this before."

- got worried when I called the bar "for young professionals"
- wants accessible for ALL ages

### Person 4 (mid 20's)

NETFLIX NIGHT!!

Every person I mentioned this concept to LOVED it. (average 20+ at bar conversations all semester)

### \* Person 3

'please pick shows that are good for all ages, especially me'

### Person 5 (early 20's)

"I really like Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday."

- mixes things up
- new opportunities

- eager to make their own suggestions
- introvert identified.

### Person 6 (early 30's)

"You're right - I won't go to a bar on a weekday, but these choices are more than 'just getting a drink.'"

- age = more "settled in" life, not going "out" as much
- showed interest and curiosity in the new friendships despite being older

## The final calendar:

The results on active/passive needs are very obvious from the data visualization spread shown on pages 82-83. Using these results, I divvied up the week into “two” sections - **the beginning of the week is more active, participatory opportunities.** Towards the **more popular bar-going days, the events are more passive.** This decision helps make sure my demographic is receiving the services they need and deserve, while including able-bodied folks. With this, I’m ultimately achieving my goal: an all-inclusive space for anyone and everyone.

//

The coasters (further explained in the next chapter) are integral for the weekly activities and events. It connects participants and assists coordination of the interactions. Along with this, some activities require one of Back Home Bar’s employees to assist in the process. This is actually a huge benefit for my target demographic, since they won’t be alone -- there is a support system of educated employees to discreetly help them.

## Streaming Sunday

[Television Show “Book Club”]

Time: mid-afternoon till close

On Streaming Sunday, throughout the day, there are several popular television shows (different ones based on current show airings, new series, and what’s trending at that time) that will be the topic of “discussion.” **Similar to book clubs, participants will watch the show before the event** (however, the show(s) will be displayed on TV’s or projectors in the space -- no sound, only subtitles -- in case you didn’t see it or need a refresher), **ready to discuss, debate, and connect over what happened in that episode.**



TV shows have “cult” followings, which people bond over. For those with high-functioning autism, they tend to fixate on something they find interesting and eager to talk and discuss it. With shows, they will be more inclined to attend. Make no mistake -- able-bodied folks love this concept, as there are Game of Thrones, Grey’s Anatomy, and Dr. Who fanatics worldwide.

# Monopoly-Free Monday

[Game Night]

Time: mid-afternoon till close

We all know Monopoly is a highly-aggressive board game (that's why it remains behind locked doors!) --- but there are thousands of fantastic board, card, and video games out there. **On Monopoly-Free Monday, the bookshelves are filled to the brim with every game imaginable.** Traditional games like Clue, Sorry!, and



Scrabble will be stacked up and available. There are card games like Cards Against Humanity, Exploding Kittens (featured in the thesis video on page 120), and Uno. For video games, one section of the room will have a TV or projector running, and a retro video game console (with pre-installed games) for participants to have a beer and compete against each other.

//

Monopoly-Free Monday is one of the simplest days of the week to explain and participate in (Trivia Tuesday is also the easiest to follow). It also is the number one activity that can bring strangers together -- and further grow new, unexpected friendships.

# Trivia Tuesday

[Trivia Night]

Time: 7-9 PM

Trivia is pretty popular in bars across the nation, and some trivia aficionados tend to “trivia hop” -- they find all the trivia nights in the area and try to attend them all. Of course, Back Home Bar has its own trivia night!

In order to never make the joke that started my thesis come true (check out the story on page 3), **Trivia Tuesday has multiple ways for the question to be presented and people to participate.** There are already app platforms for people to use, and The Bar Trivia App ([www.thebartriviaapp.com](http://www.thebartriviaapp.com)) is most likely the one Back Home Bar will use, due to its popularity and high ratings. To also further accessibility, all televisions in the trivia space will have large type text with each question, and someone reciting the questions out loud (the more traditional form of trivia).

//

Trivia is notorious for being an event groups of friends gather for. It doesn't always mean individuals



can't meet others or have team players. So, in order to still cultivate new relationships, the coasters are key to partnering people up. Let me explain:

Before the event begins/as people enter the space intending to participate, the employee that's "hosting" the trivia game (the one reading the questions and guiding folks through the event) will greet attendees at the front door, cheerfully asking if people are participating, and if they need someone to be partnered with. If someone needs a group of people to play with or a group wants more players on their team, those individuals will put the coaster lights on. The "host" can then scan the room, see if any lights are on, and then direct people together. This instantly removes the stress on the attendees to awkwardly approach other people, and rather focuses on the main purpose -- building new friendships.

## Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday

[Various Rotating Activities]

Time: 5-9 PM (or specified otherwise)

**This is the one day of the week that is NOT the same every week.** Some may say it's risky for my target demographic seeking regularity, but, due to wanting to cover a lot of people's other interests, a **mid-week "change up" bodes well for capturing people who may not otherwise participate in the six (6) other activities throughout the week.** Plus, it's an opportunity to challenge my demographic to step outside their comfort zones, try new things, and potentially find something they like that they didn't expect to before.

Rest assured, Back Home Bar will use all social media platforms and our accessible-website (or potentially designing an app) to, in advance, announce the activities on Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday.

The schedule for Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday will be outlined for the entire month, and activities will be re-announced a week in advance, along with the day before.

Some activities people mentioned through my Instagram survey (on pages 88-89) that didn't repeat as often as the other suggestions are on the list for Wednesday. The benefit of a weekly change-up day allows bar-goers to be included in decisions.

Some of the activities include:

### Mixology and Drink Education

Length: (30 - 45 minute sessions)

This activity was suggested through a quick chat that can be found in the journal section. **Participants who are curious about how their favorite drinks are made, interested in understanding**



**wines and beers, or want to sample different beverages can gather for an interactive education from a bartender.** This will be hosted in the social activity space with a pop-up bartop and bartender on duty for the event. Limited amount of participants are allowed, unfortunately, due to space limitations, but if there's a popular want, there can be multiple time slots added for customers to sign up for on this day.

### **Old School Book Club**

**Duration: (open to close based on interest)**

People did mention how they also enjoyed reading in the comforts of their homes, and several identified that they tend to read popular novels. If this event becomes **a monthly staple (occurring 12 times a year), people can have a full month to read the chosen monthly novel.** This will give people ample time to “prep,” along with reducing pressure for completing the book in time. Book suggestions can be given via social media (and direct messages (DM's)) and on Back Home Bar's website. There can be different books chosen for this activity based on popular demand.

### **Professional Growth and Connection Cocktail Hour**

**Time: (6-7 PM)**

**Several people, especially the young demographic group, are trying to build their careers, connect with other professionals, and meet different people that may not be in their career path.**

In order to help accelerate the success for our young professional demographic, Connection Cocktail Hour would be one of the most organized events, well-prepared for. The coaster would indicate if someone is looking to chat, and the space would be organized

by “field” or interest of the various people. (Details will be further developed down the line.)

As people enter, employees will have old-fashioned name tags available, and collect (if participants are comfortable) some professional data such as emails, LinkedIn profile URL's, etc.. Having a list of people and their contacts makes it so participants do not have to ask (or if they forget the name/contact/don't have a business card/etc...) the other person for their information. Instead, people are focused on connecting and building relationships. The organization of this event can (and most likely will) change over time -- based on participants' feedback regarding the exchange of information and layout of space.

### **Have an Event? Suggest One!**

Most importantly, since *Back Home Bar is for the people*, their home away from home, Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday is coordinated based on customer interest. As mentioned numerous times, Back Home Bar uses the website and social media, along with requests in-person at the bar to curate the activities provided on this day. As the owner of Back Home Bar, all concepts are not “up to me” at the end of the day. **Every single component is ultimately up to the customers: the Back Home Bar family.**

# Thrifty Thursday

[Small Pop-Up Marketplace/Local Businesses selling products]

Time: open to close

Since I am a small business owner (Bowtie Boulevard: [www.bowtieblvd.com](http://www.bowtieblvd.com)), my sales are mostly online. This is the same for several other small businesses, hobby shops, or thrift stores. **To achieve a more inclusive bar, supporting the local community brings people together.** Back Home Bar's intent is community, family, and inclusion. Supporting folks trying to grow their current business status is a wonderful opportunity.

As Thursday's were an in-between day from my survey, I wanted an activity/event that wasn't passive nor active. Thrifty Thursday allows people to embrace the coasters, connect, and grow.



How?

Think farmers markets.

When you walk through one, you don't often socialize with the other shoppers. However, people tend to converse with the sellers or the farmers. This can be recreated here.

**Think of it this way -- folks may not necessarily directly interact with the other bargoers, but they**

**will interact with the pop-up shops brought into the event space...** and that is socialization!

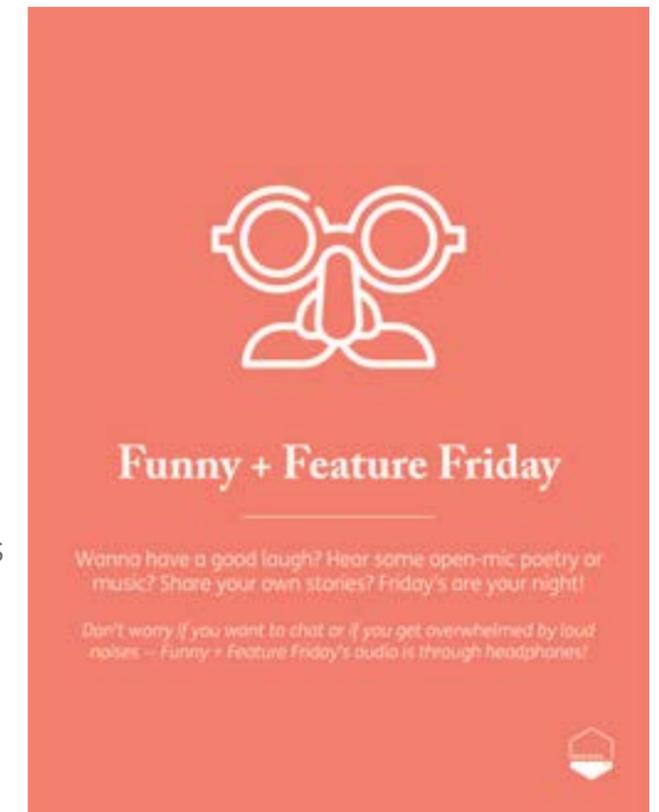
I got this event concept from my job at an entrepreneurship incubator, the Blackstone LaunchPad at Syracuse University. My 5 coworkers all expressed heightened interest, and the other product-based businesses seemed interested in selling their wares in a non-traditional format. This is definitely not typically seen at a bar! But that leverages Back Home Bar from competitors.

# Funny and Feature Friday

[Comedy and Open Mic Night]

Time: open to close

A more passive activity, yet participatory for those who want to play music, make some jokes, or showcase a talent, Funny and Feature Friday might not entirely involve many conversations, but it still does bring people together. The coaster system becomes a signal if someone is willing to chat with others -- but if the coaster light is not on, the person or people



may be preoccupied or busy within their own circle. If the light is on, people are making themselves available to be approached, a signal indicating someone's willingness to step outside their comfort zone. Just like every other day, customers are always encouraged to utilize the coaster's light signal, but it is never mandatory.

//

Silent Discos have been a trend for the past few years, and even if they are a fad, this concept is more than ideal for Back Home Bar. The brand itself states on their website how **“a silent disco atmosphere is more conducive to holding a conversation with your friends than at a venue with a traditional sound system”** (“What Is Silent,” n.d.). Whether or not Back Home Bar uses this particular system, I will incorporate the same concept, if it's Bluetooth (for those with hearing aids, for example) or another option.

It truly embraces the two worlds in the best, most effective way: if you're simply interested in hanging out with people and chatting (our board game bookshelf is always available, along with any non-music related table activity!), you can flip on the coaster lights and are then available to meet new folks. However, if your goal isn't to socialize in Back Home Bar's method and would rather focus on the performances, plug in or toss on some headphones and go right ahead and get up and close with the poets, comedians, or musicians!

## Singin' + Swingin' Saturday

[Live Music and Dancing]

Time: open to close

Just like Funny and Feature Friday, Singin' and Swingin' Saturday is very “Silent Disco” oriented. **The main focus is on dancing -- get your groove on! -- and letting loose. Even the most outgoing person may not be super comfortable or confident to dance in public, but at Back Home Bar, the weirdest, awkwardest dancers are the best kind!**

Out of all days of the week, Singin' and Swingin' Saturday is the closest to a traditional, regular bar night. Most bars do live music and entertainment on Saturday nights (Friday nights too), so we are another business doing that. However, any bargoer walking through the doors knows how we're making it comfortably accessible for anyone.

//

Part posters, part wall decorations in Back Home Bar, each weekly activity will have it's own “visual” imagery. Similar to movie posters, each day has an identity that helps it stand alone.



# ordering: coaster system

## The activity calendar started it...

Based off of the activity calendar, I knew I had to develop a way to notify customers who is participating in the event of the day. Starting with analog methods like paper or cards, I knew it'd be less interesting and unique, along with being less visible.

Back Home Bar has **custom-made coasters that signal to customers who is (or isn't) participating in the activity.** For my target demographic, this eliminates the awkward discomfort of asking strangers if they're available or looking for a participant.

I learned through conversations with bartenders and servers that there's stark miscommunication issues between customers and the employees. No one's to blame -- except the old system.

## Coaster: social activity signal

We can be awkward or uneasy talking to strangers! This isn't new information. My research showed how much people wanted different activities (hence the weekly calendar!) but almost all of them indicated how they will be more inclined to participate with friends rather than strangers. When asked why, they claimed how approaching strangers seems intrusive, especially interrupting someone who may not even be participating in the activity.

//

Going off of a (mainly) college-related party "theme," as Urban Dictionary (I know, not an actual dictionary, but 'traffic light party' is a social concept) defines it simply (there are variations, of course), it's "a party/dance where colors show your availability [or intents for the night]. Red = Taken, Yellow = Undecided [or not particularly looking], Green = Single" ("Traffic Light," 2008). The colored cups that drinks are served in are based off of those three categories. With this very visual concept, people can understand the intents of the colors and -- most importantly -- the meaning.

This simple cup identification concept makes perfect sense for indicating whether or not someone is participating. However, using different colored glasses aren't ideal in the bar. People should have the freedom to say they aren't participating anymore, or

spontaneously change their mind and want to participate. This is why the electronic coaster was made.

## Coaster: visual for servers

Servers are human! We all make mistakes. However, customers don't always recognize that, and can get impatient, testy or upset if a server potentially (accidentally) neglects them, walks by, or doesn't notice if they need assistance. Using a way to indicate that someone is seeking some help, I thought a subtle second light in the coaster would assist servers. As servers scan the room, they can easily see the server-designated colored light and work their way over to that specific area.

## chat: actors of video



As I was setting up with my actors for my second thesis video (find it on page 118), they had the opportunity to disclose their input of the coasters. Both of them entrepreneurs, Dave and Nick were eager to share their thoughts. Dave blatantly said, "you know I tell the truth; I say how I feel about projects. I just want to tell you, this idea... It's brilliant. I'd go [to Back Home Bar] and happily participate." Nick chimed in, supporting Dave's claims, "I agree! It's so simple yet effective. Plus the added feature of the drink indent will help those who may have had a few too many!" The two laughed and, took a sip of their (free) beer, and we filmed.

# Initial sketches in notebook

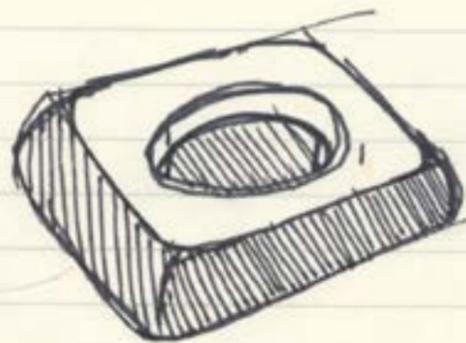
After I decided on the concept, I sketched very simple, basic ideas for the coaster's body, keeping in mind thickness because of the technology that will be integrated with the coaster.

Ranging from simple to a bit more "out-there," I tried to make some unique, yet recognizable as coasters. Below are some quick drawings from my travel notebook:

1. COASTERS:

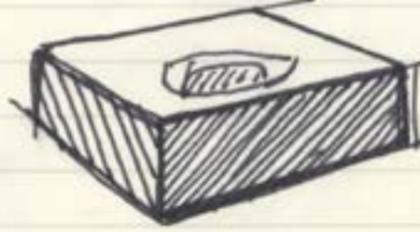
- LED, battery-operated lights for signalling ① activity participation ] colors? and ② server identification
- USB battery pack for customers to charge their phone(s)
- WHAT ELSE INSIDE?  
analog screen? fan?

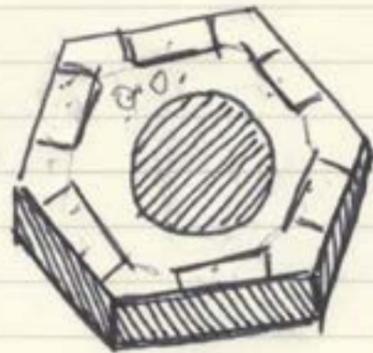
• design / shape of body:

①  rock-like, "bulky" (but light) coaster w/ indent for glass

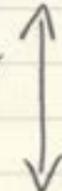
pink, <sup>warm</sup> white, blue(?)

②  round, circular coaster with drink insert

③  simple box, nothing fancy

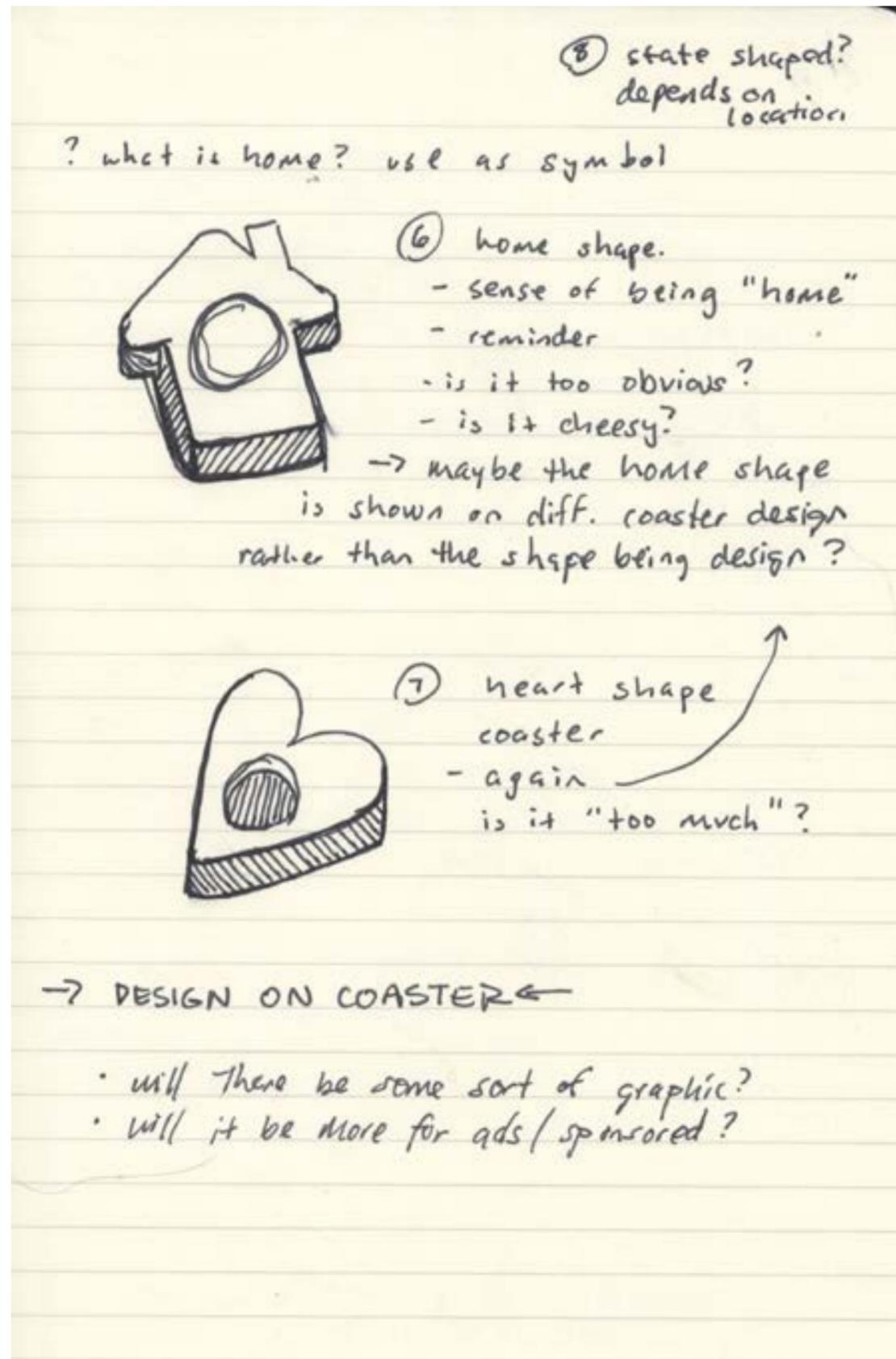
④  hexagon coaster

- interesting + "fun" to stack / have side by side
- can symbolize unity - intertwining representing those w/ autism

either/w 

⑤  puzzle piece

- known symbol representing people w/ autism
- can be interactive?
- \* articles say 2 things
- ⊖ ① they have divide over if pp is "conformist."
- ⊕ ② it can raise awareness and it's a sense of identity "logo"



## Making a decision...

I went online and made lots of search queries regarding the puzzle piece symbol (an option I seriously considered for the coaster design) and found lots of controversy over the symbol being used to represent the overall community. Some people believed it was inclusive and supported a more positive viewpoint, however, there seemed to be more anti-puzzle piece, as many thought it was trying to indicate "normalcy." People didn't want to be seen as trying to fit in with able-bodied folks, which is very similar to the d/Deaf community parallel I made in "part one: disability - what's the definition?" on pages 17-19.

Sadly, communities within the disability umbrella, tend to hold strong, firm beliefs regarding how they identify and how others should identify. It gets political, controversial, and often harmful (mainly emotionally distressing). So I made the conscious choice not to use an icon I personally thought would be innovative and inclusive. Instead, **the hexagonal design seemed to convey a similar concept -- groups of people gathering together can "link" the hexagons together similar to a honeycomb visual.** This subtly, with my design thinking and intent, refers to the unity, connection, and growth Back Home Bar strives for using a coaster for activities.

//

Once I began making very low-density, quick prototypes, I showed them to several designers within my graduating class for feedback. Utilizing designers was crucial, as they understand user experience and what's most effective.

## A rapid foam prototype

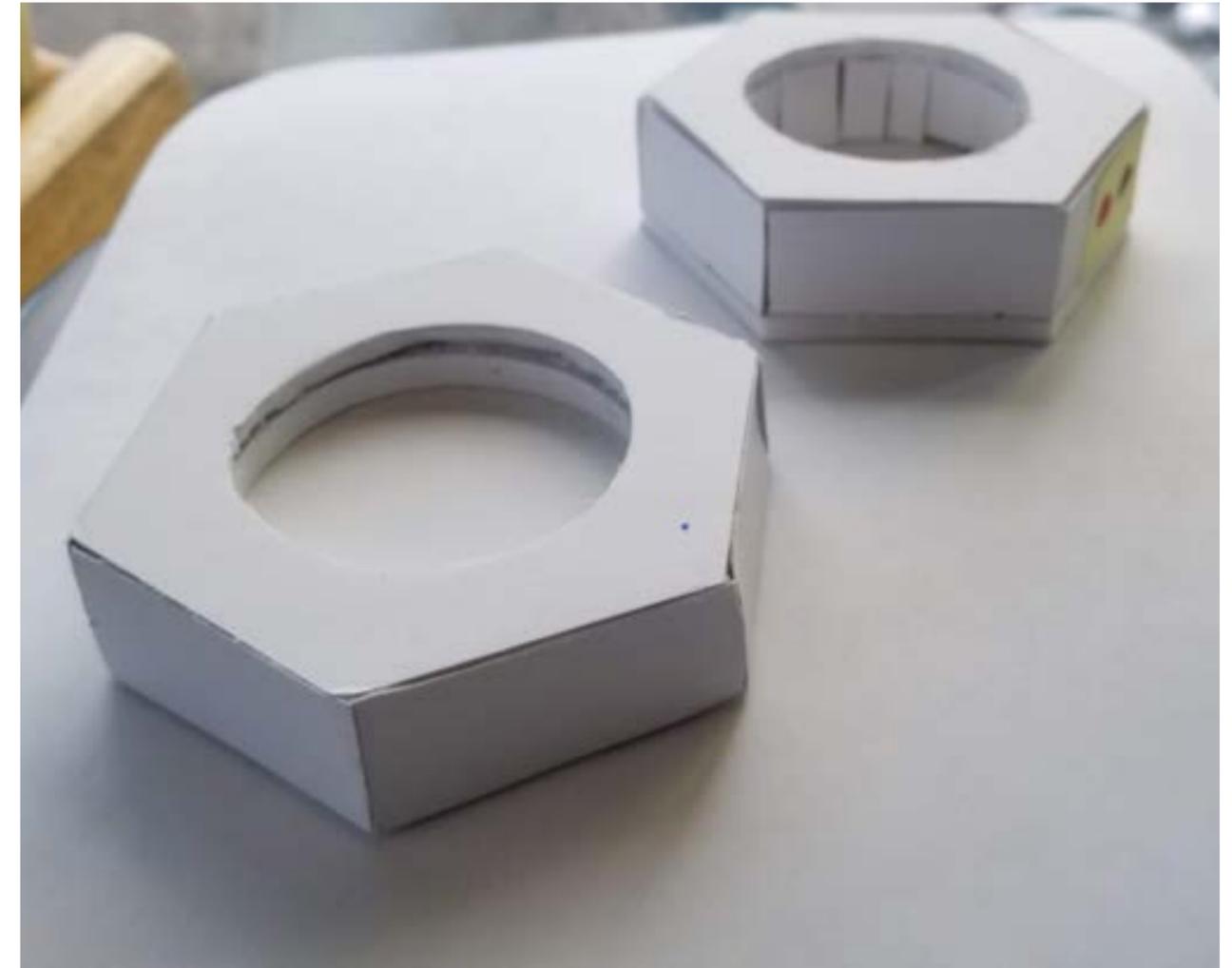
I took simple foam board, cut it up, and made three simple, low density examples of the hexagonal coaster design. It simply conveys the message of how the coaster will look in its final form. To demonstrate lights, I used sticky notes, colored them with two different colors, and placed them on the top surface of the coaster. This is how I presented the coaster in my second thesis video, as a simple way to convey the overall message.

//

The coaster design was then presented to several peers for critique. I asked two major questions: 1) where should the lights be placed on the coaster and 2) where should the buttons be and what style/type?

As I began the conversations, I learned much more than I ever expected. In fact, their feedback changed many components of the coaster. The overall design is the same (the shape and two functions) but there are added aspects making it much more effective for a real-life scenario, rather than simply being a coaster with lights.

Ideally, the final physical coaster prototype would be similar to the SolidWorks part I create, however, due to time constraints, practicality, and cost, I will present a simpler version during my thesis show on May 10th.

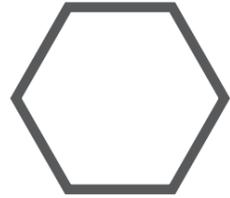


(Above: foam board coaster mockups, ready to be drawn on by design peers in order to figure out location(s) of the buttons and lights.)

//

I am fully aware of this coaster being an evolutionary process. It isn't done, but i intend to improve it as time goes by. This coaster is the "hub" of Back Home Bar, and needs to accurately encompass the mood and setting of my bar.

## research: designers + coaster



Using my industrial design peers, I handed out Sharpies and markers of various colors for them to draw out two major things: 1) the location of the buttons 2) where lights should go/ how many, etc. Doing this helped me make a conclusive decision on placement of all components onto the coaster for the final 3D printing model for May 10th.

### Claire + Brittany:

Claire (in the jean shirt) actually hadn't heard an update on my thesis for a few months, so she came in "blind." An outsiders perspective helped greatly. They both mentioned some unexpected ideas.



### GROUP 1 (2 designers)

→ put lights on the sides, not on top.

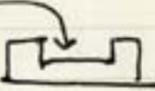
\* button as spring back, flush

Signal if tables are free

→ flip coaster over

• text on back for customer says "flip me! ... " (to use)

"Make sure all interactions with the coaster is accessible YET NOT inconvenient for servers ... don't slow them down"

□ bottom of glass section 

magic 8 ball idea

• "shake for topics, how to talk to those with disabilities suggestions, etc."

• could be a digital screen instead (cost? logic? hmm...)

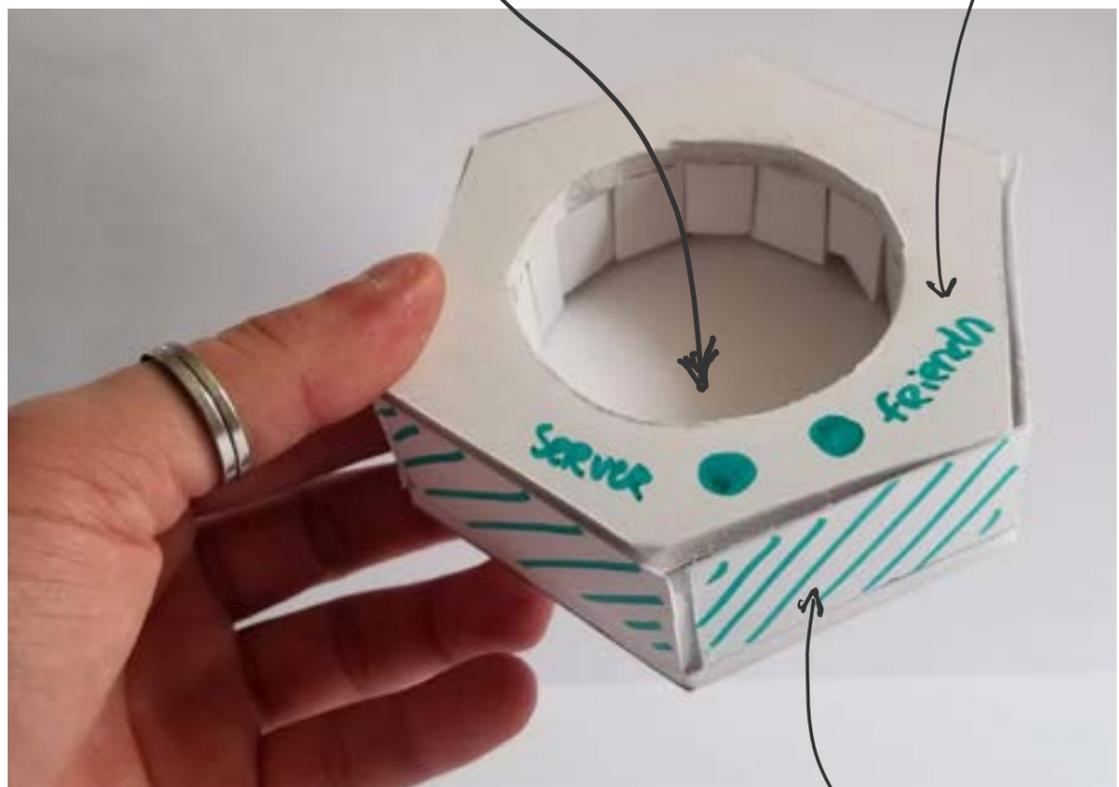
→ it could simply be different statements printed on it?

→ using it this way is "a way to normalize people with disabilities and be more inclusive"

"most people don't know people in this demo, so some "assistance" can make it easier"

Spring-back buttons for on/off lights

visual text for identification



full-panel lights

They doodled on the coasters provided and visually gave fantastic insights from a design point of view.



Putting text on the bottom has multiple benefits: 1) It can be a way for servers to know if a table is free (if the coasters are upside down, the table is free) 2) users now physically learn the purpose of the coaster.

**Ellie:**

After conversing with Claire + Brittany, I asked Ellie, another 5th year, to provide some feedback. He seconded Claire + Brittany's suggestions and ideas. He also gave great suggestions for further prototyping post the May deadline.

Here are a few major components he mentioned in the conversation that will make the coaster drastically better:

//

1. Move away from simple, round buttons. Make bigger, more unique and accessible push buttons. Get creative.



2. Have the lights also shine on the table(s), like a halo. This way it's not simply on the coaster's body, but rather creating an overall vibe and ambiance in the space.

3. The coaster should be a theme in the bar. Include the shape, intent, the purpose of why it even matters so bargoers who are unfamiliar can understand immediately.

(1 designer)

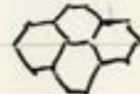
- overall make it "match the intended mood"
- coaster hole has lights?

have the lights on side illuminate onto the table so it is more visible  
→ "helps create ambiance"

- buttons on top - make them more interesting  
→ maybe not a ○ circle button  
→ integrate the uniqueness of the coaster being a hexagon

- make sure there's an obu. diff. between the intent/purpose of both buttons

- likes flipping over action the other group proposed - "it's interactive and really nice"

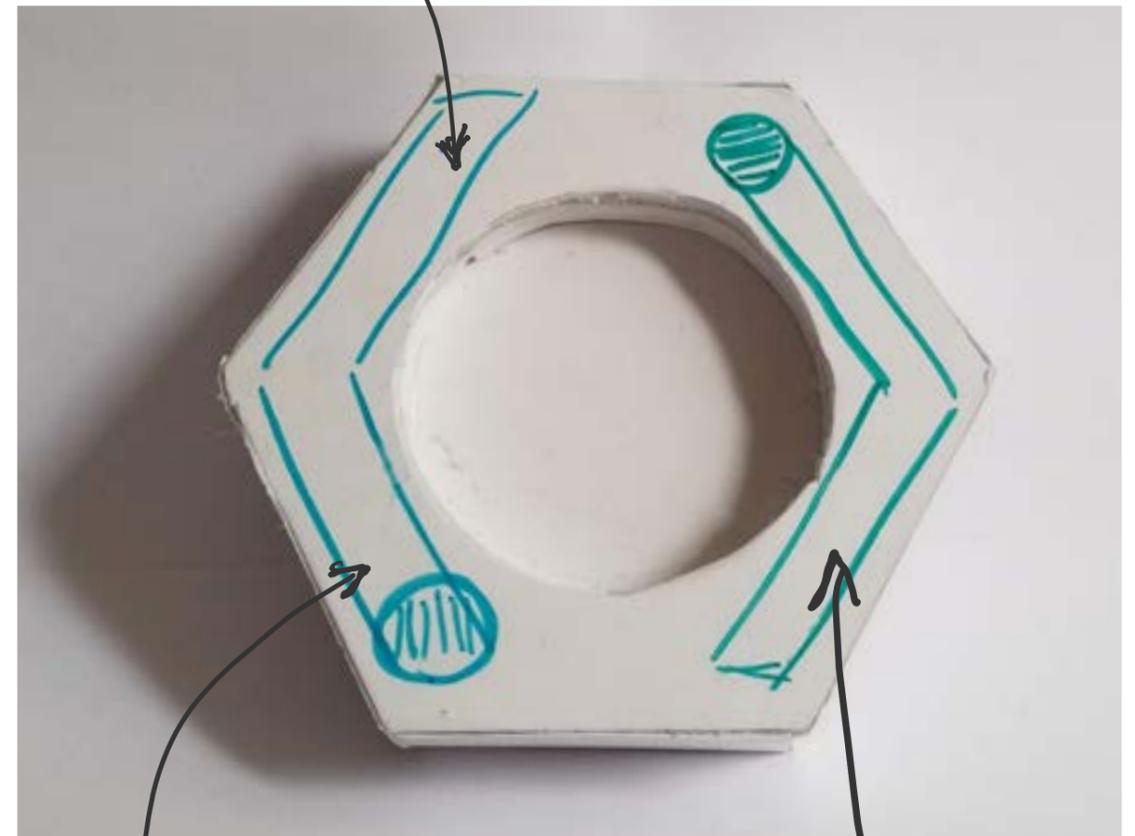
- draw/paint the  on tables - both single and grouped ones -  So people link the purpose of it  
→ inside the paint outline, write what to do, what coaster does  
→ use the respective light colors as paint

- Use hexagon thematically around the bar  
- "brings that unity you're striving for."

→ gave more ideas for further development.

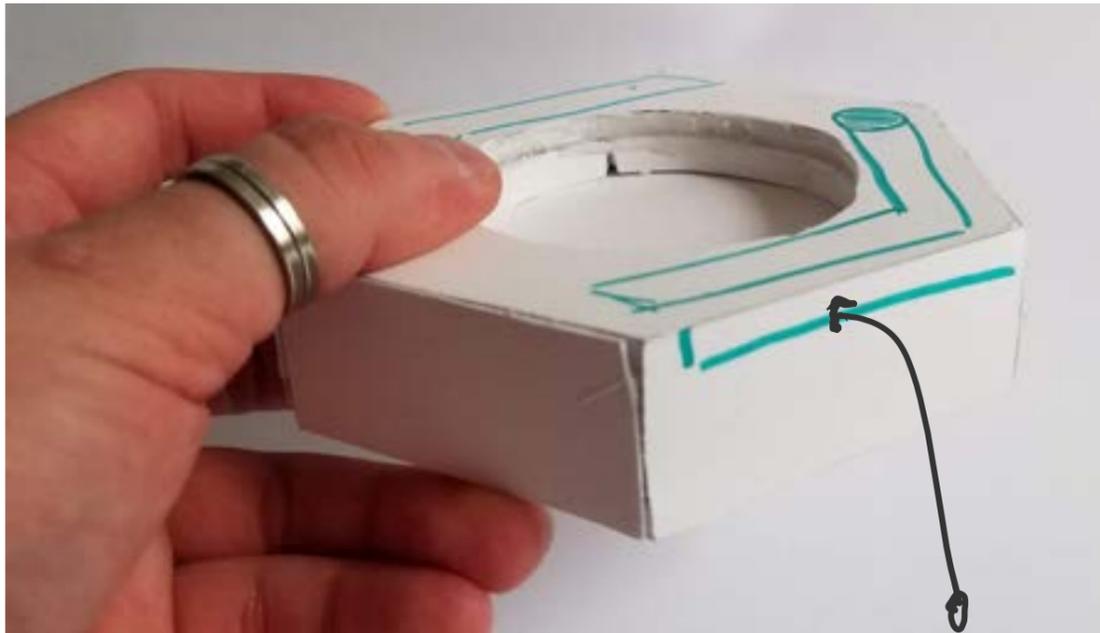
"these buttons should also have color identification."

"now people are actually not "obvious" when they go to push a button."

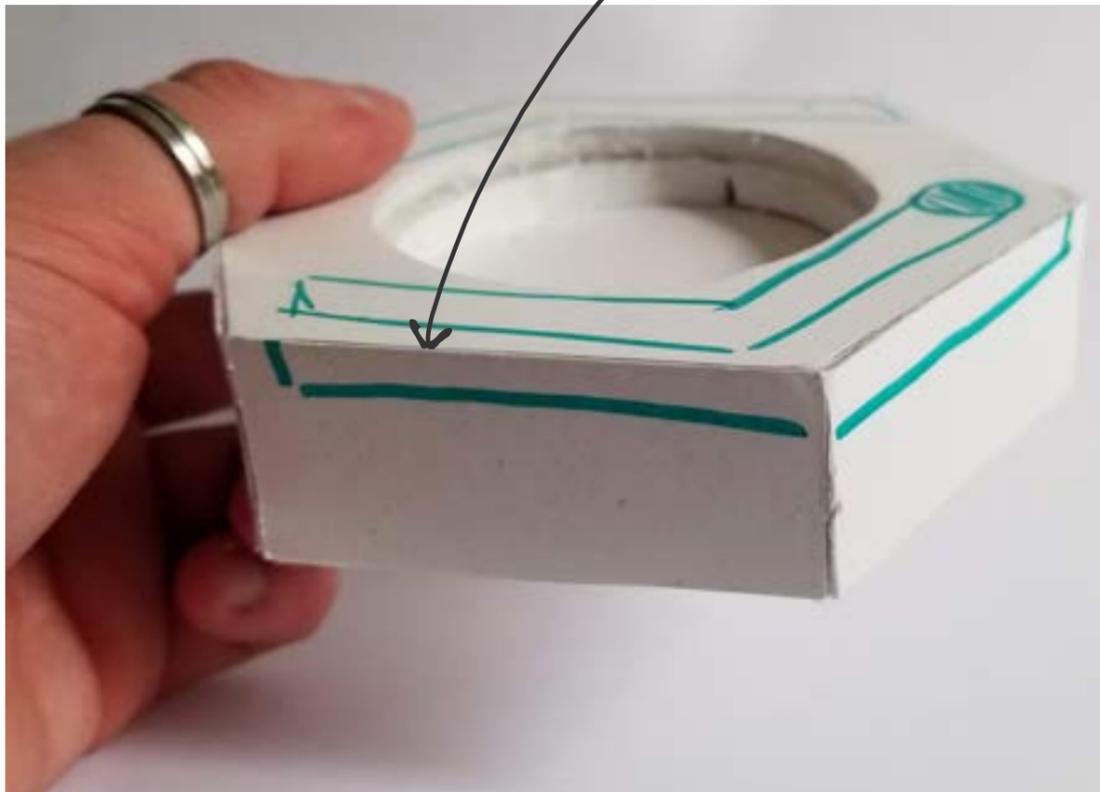


"this is just one idea for a bigger, distinct button shape."

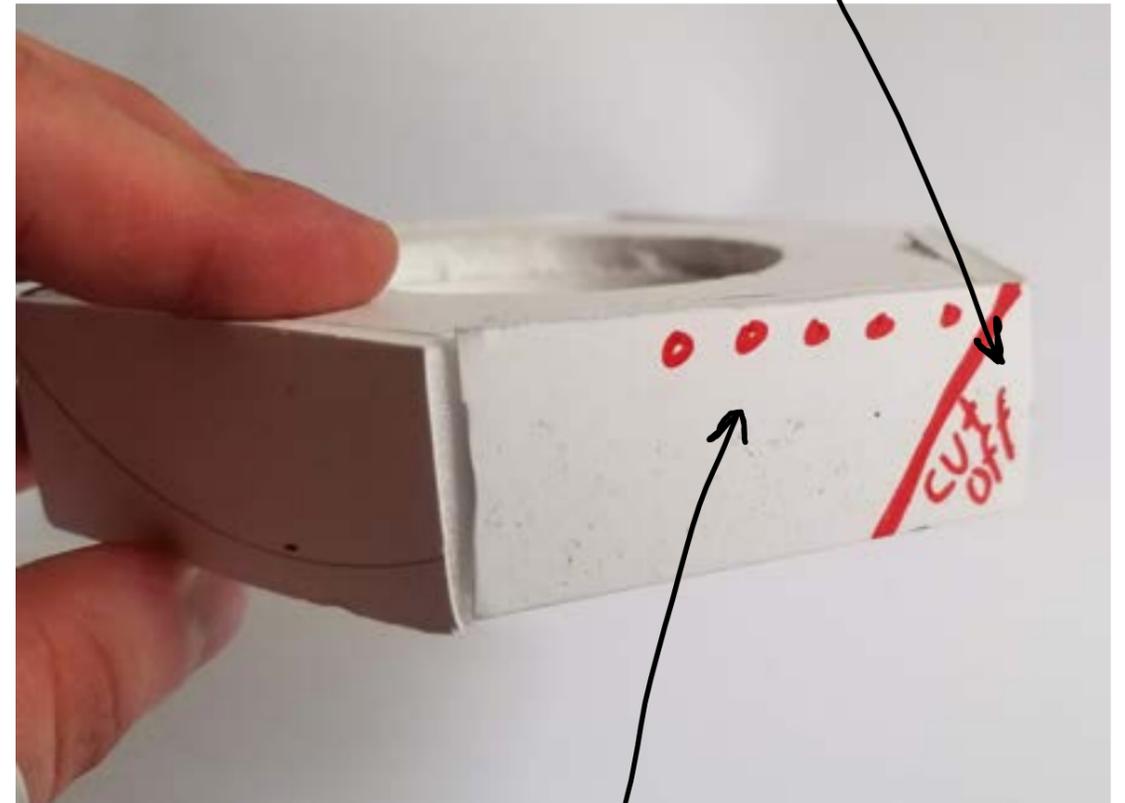
wide, almost spacebar size button



button extends  
beyond top  
surface



"have an angle cutoff  
to achieve this, plus  
it looks nicer than  
a boxy shape you  
have now."



have both lights on  
the top edge, then  
ones below that  
extend the 'ray' to  
shine on the table.

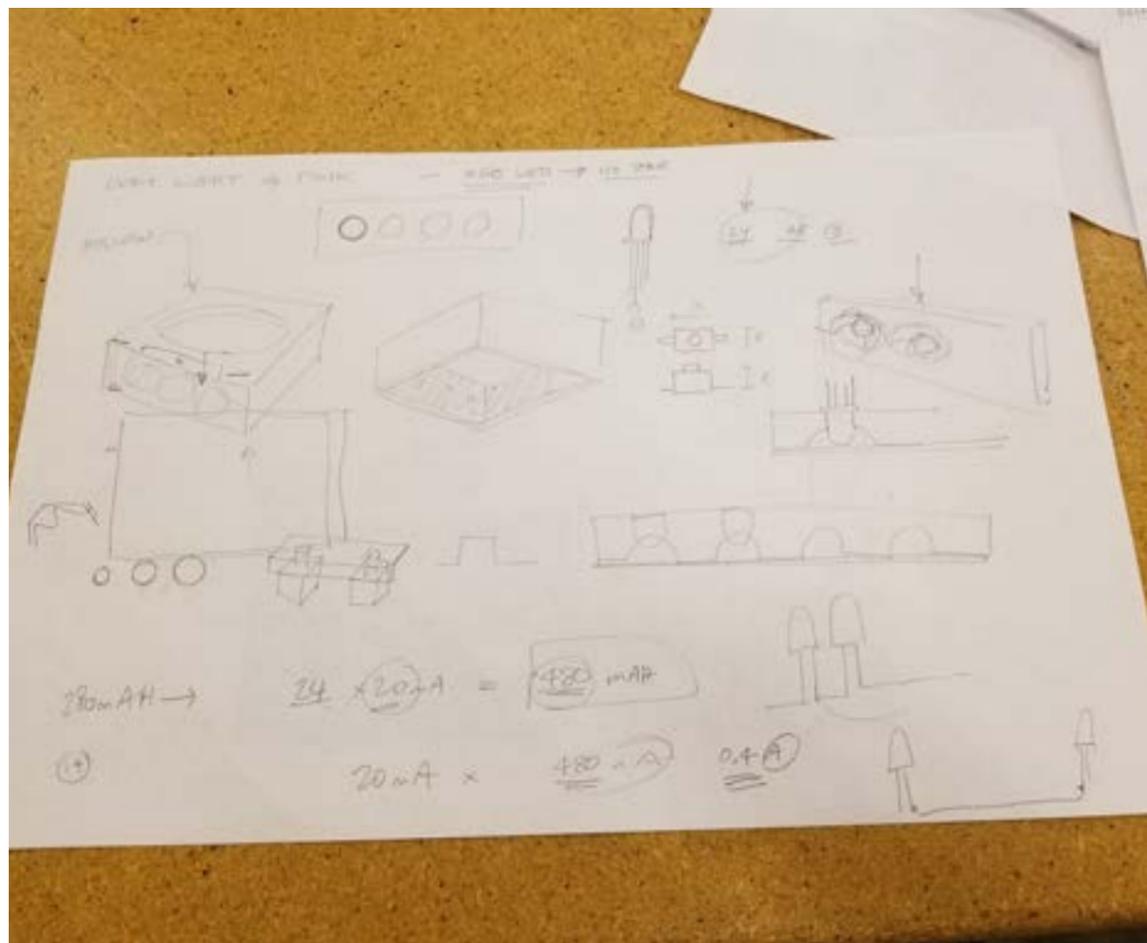


# Final coaster-making process

For my thesis show and beyond, I made five working coaster prototypes. They were not the ideal aesthetic, but the goal was to make functional, easy-to-use, and cost effective coasters. If Back Home Bar were to progress, the coaster design would be further developed.

## ELEGOO kit + Arduino + Breadboard wiring

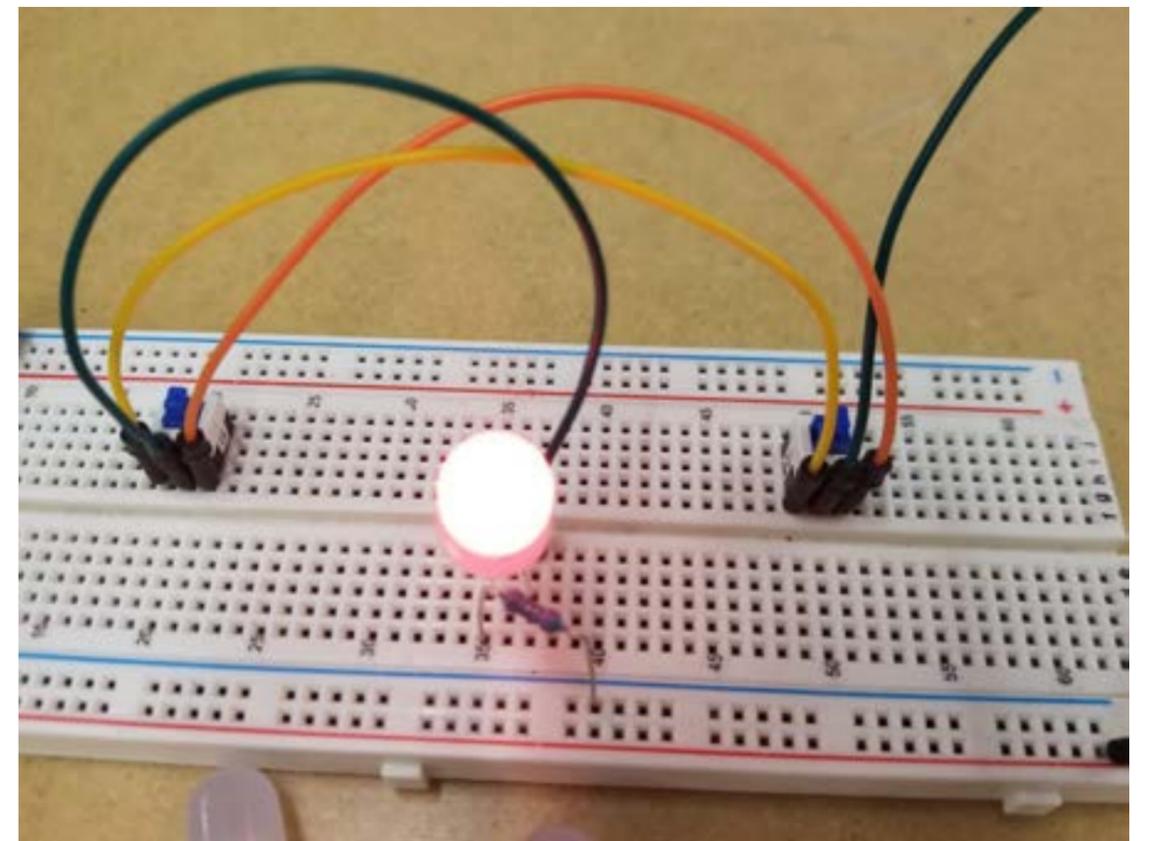
Sitting down with a professor well-versed in electronic prototyping, we mapped out how to create a self-powered and self-contained light-up coaster. Below are sketches of wiring.



## Breadboard mapping

There were going to be switches, RGB light bulbs (that were trimmed to only be one color prong to avoid errors or mishaps), resistors, and a multitude of wires. The process was through soldering for connecting all components, along with hot glue as barriers to protect wires from touching and then short circuiting. Each light bulb was put into place via superglue.

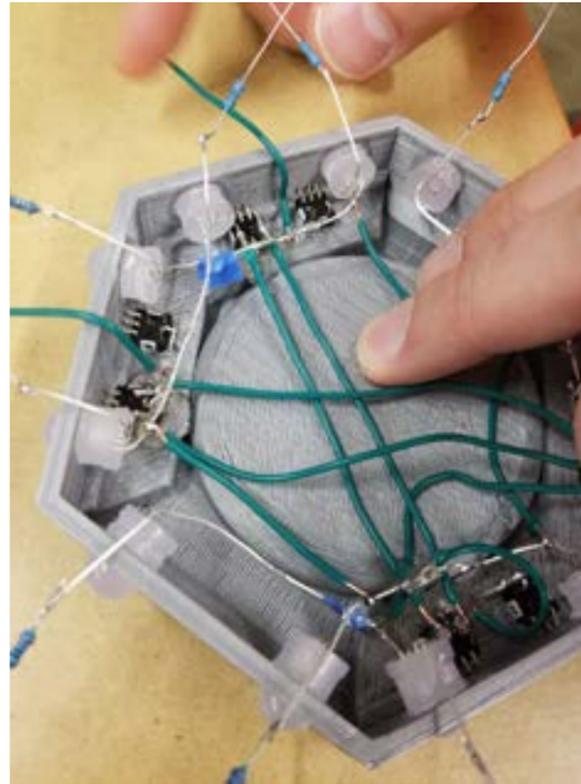
First, I had to figure out the wiring process for the light bulbs in order to remember the positive/negative wiring and placement. I had to understand how the little power switches would work in terms of connecting to multiple lights AND only being one color. Using a breadboard from a prototyping kit, I figured out a system.



## The “first layer”

The difficult challenge was trimming each bulb, marking the light and wires to distinguish which was which, keeping track and protecting resistors all in a small space.

Once light bulbs were glued into place and the switches firmly secured, I began soldering. The “first layer” was soldering wires that connected the switches to one another. This process was used on the remaining 4 coasters.



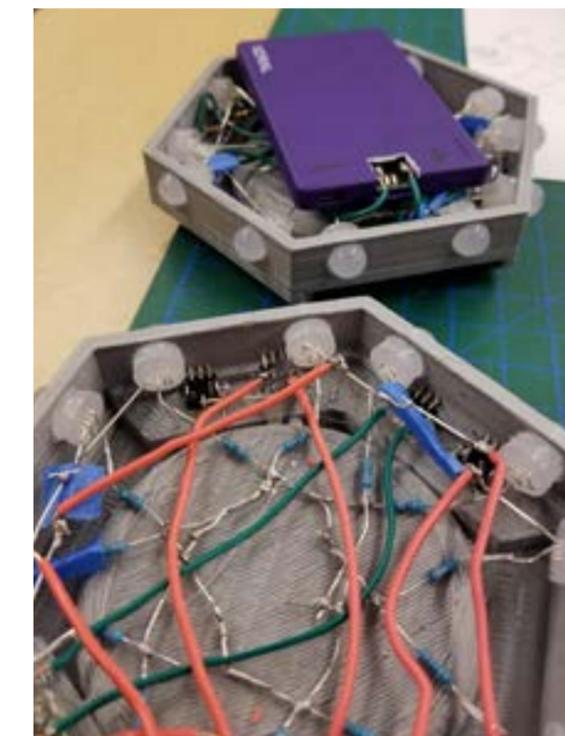
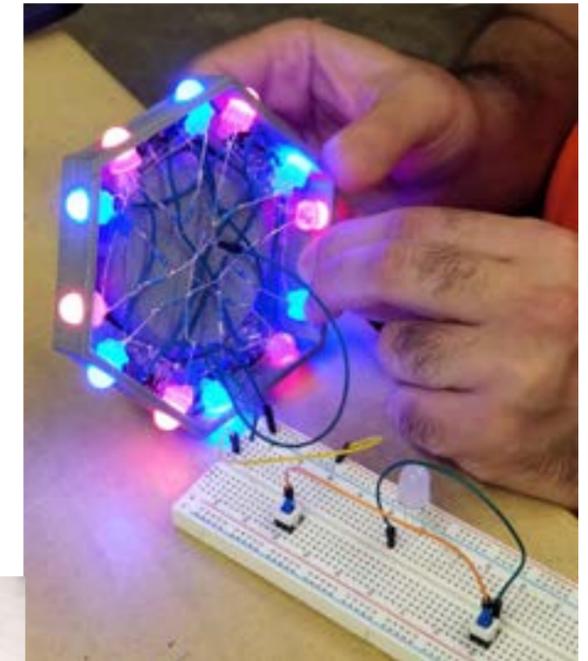
## The “second layer”

After all the switches were connected, I then made sure each light bulb was connected, too. This was a tedious process due to the first layer having to not touch the second. After all parts were soldered, I was about to find out if the 6+ hours each would work.

(Hint: it did!)

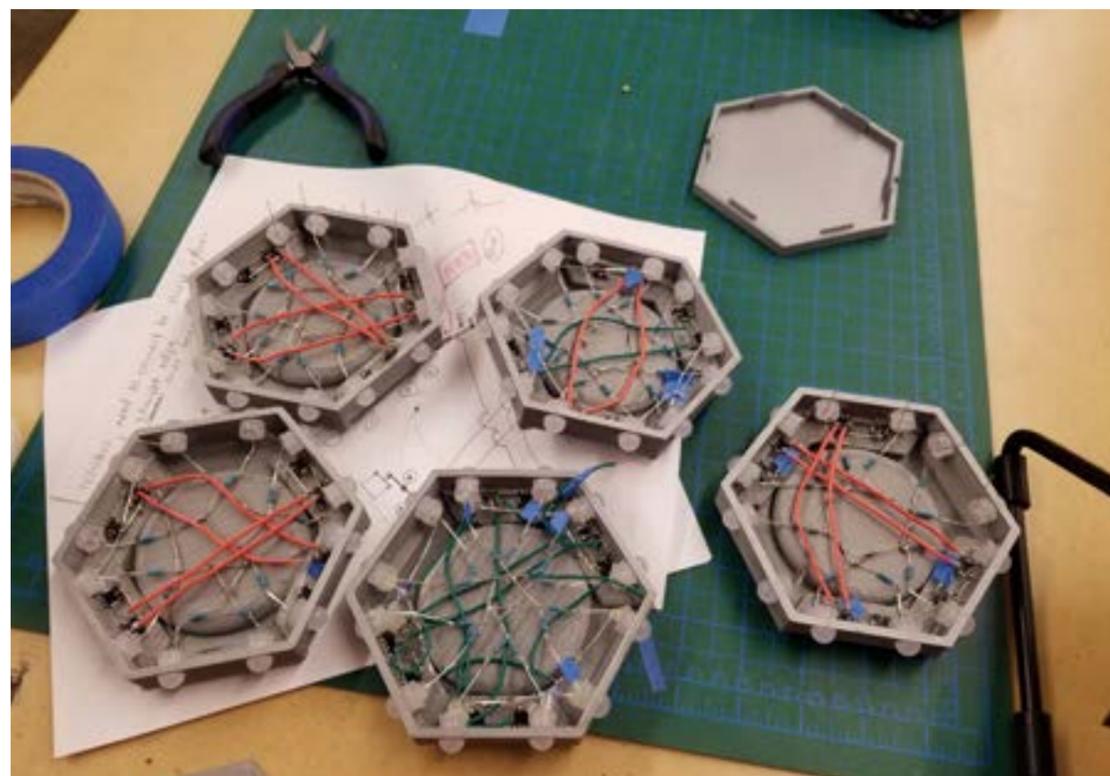
## Power source

I wanted to avoid disposable batteries, so I did a “hack” of purchasing low cost phone charging packs. 2000mAh credit card sized chargers were a perfect fit to use for a 3 hour



period. I connected the + and - to the power bank and left some extra room for wire access to the charging port.

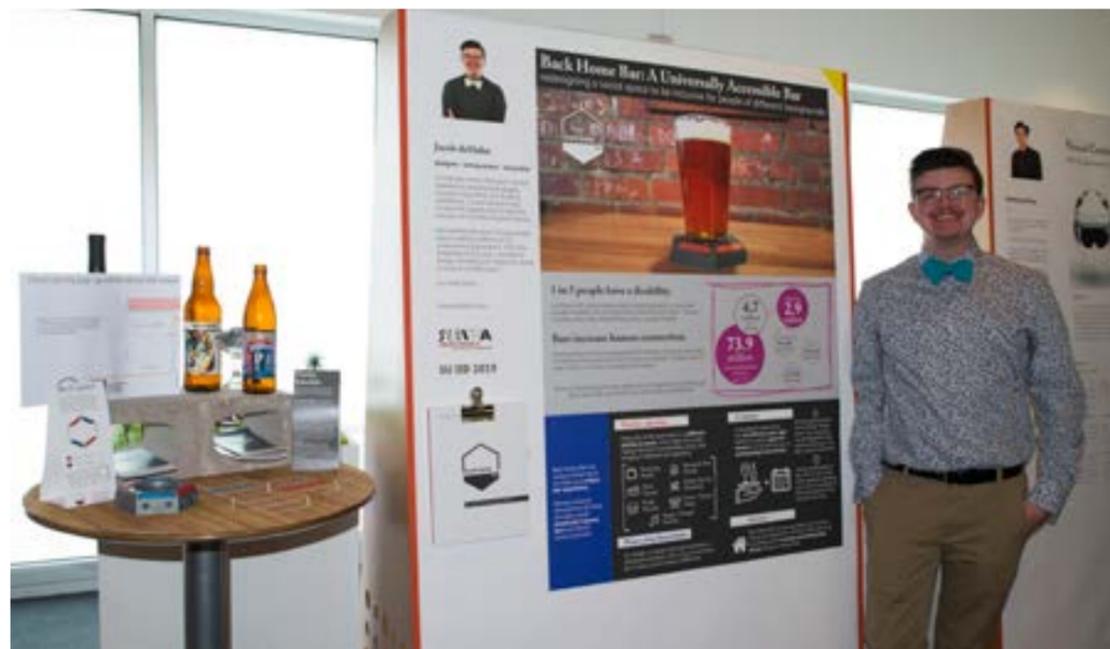
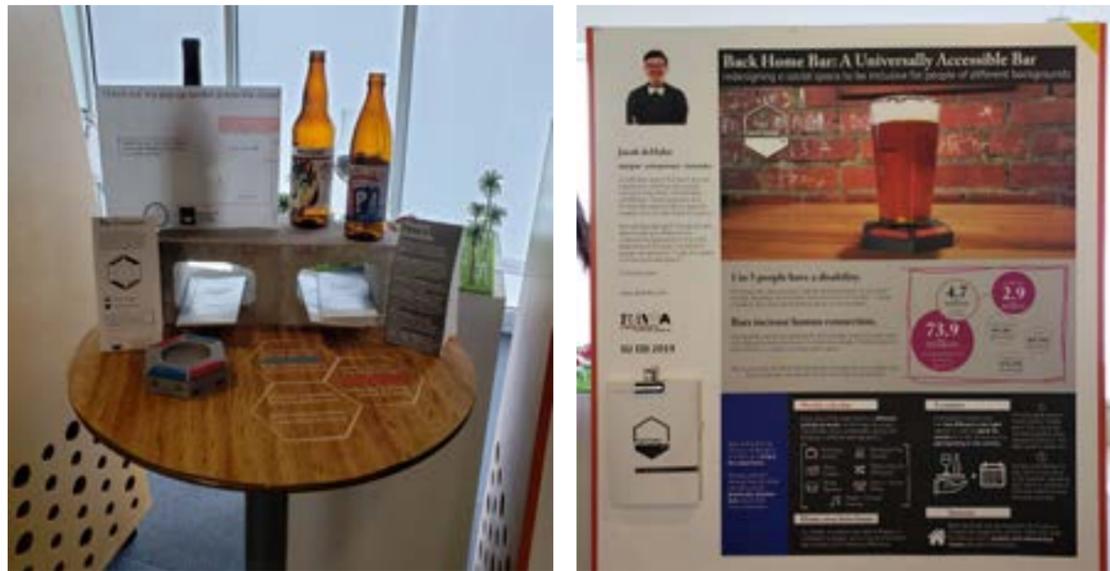
Once each of the 5 coasters were wired completely, I glued the 3D printed bases on, along with the blue + red buttons that corresponded to the light color.



# The final coasters in action

The best and most rewarding part of making functional coasters in time for the thesis show was seeing them in action when taking over the bar. Here are the coasters in action, along with photos of the final thesis show.

## Exhibit at class-wide show (poster and small setup)



## Takeover of bar across the street



bar entrance: videos on thesis, poster about Monopoly Free Monday



crowded bar with people reading my accessibly designed menus

## Takeover of bar across the street

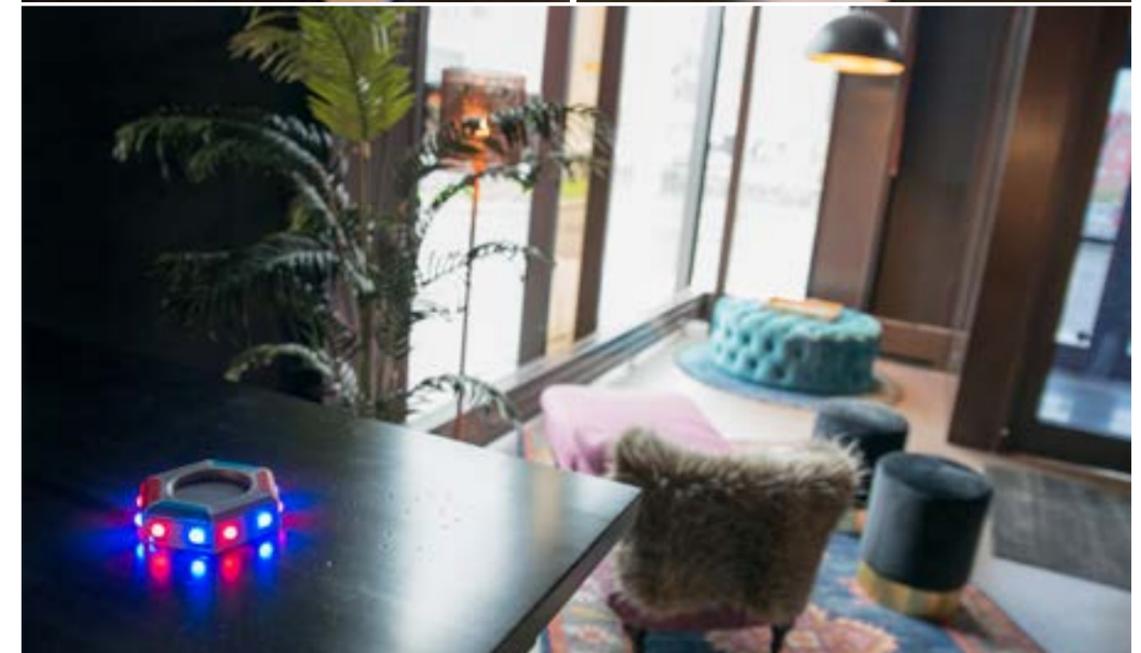
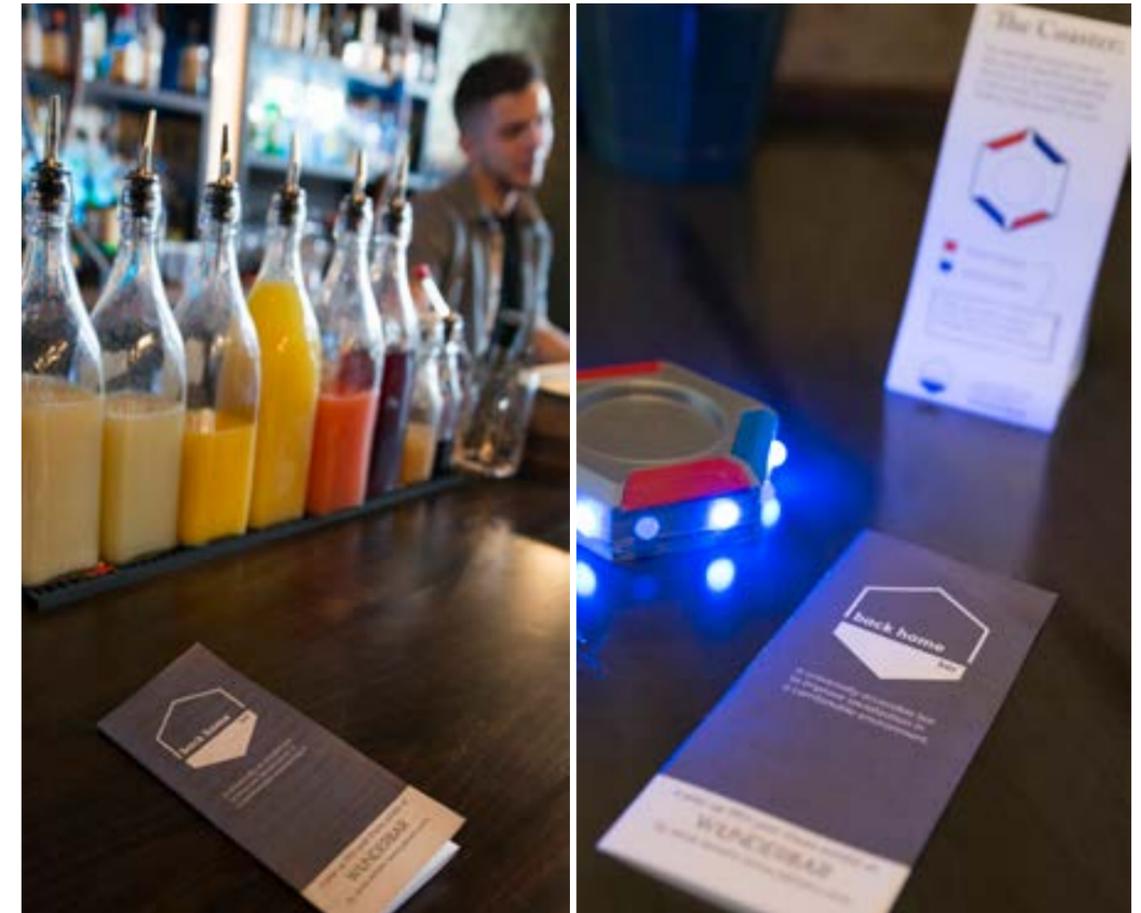


Director of The School of Design talking about the menus and bar



coaster being used in-action shot

## Branding and design



# bar: the interior design

## Idealistic v.s. realistic

When creating an interior design, I debated between making an “ideal” floorplan -- something open and spacious, or using a preexisting space to build around. Luckily, **in downtown Syracuse, a new bar was being built** in an old warehouse that used to be a cafe. I decided to connect with the new owners to get their **floorplans and utilize their space to be the blueprint for Back Home Bar**. This opportunity couldn't come at a better time!

With using Wunderbar (the new bar) as the base for Back Home Bar, I was able to photograph the space while it was under construction, which makes it look more authentic. Along with this, I learned what components that already exist in spaces today are not as effective. Overall, using Wunderbar helps prove that Back Home Bar can be built, well, anywhere.

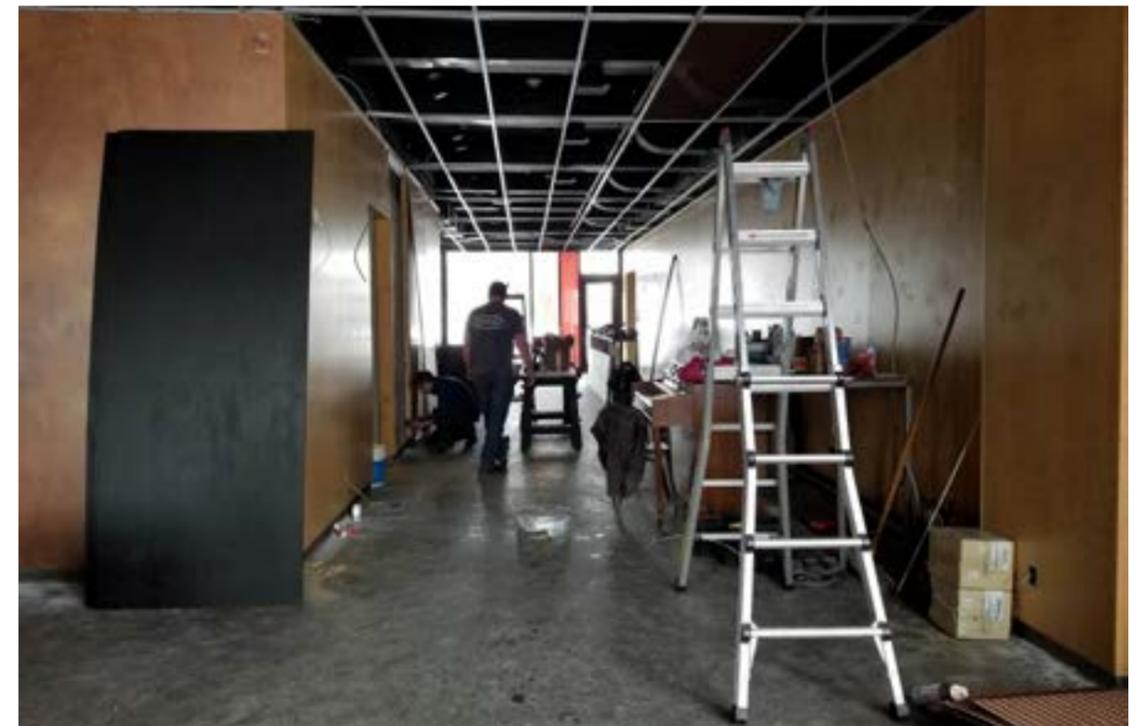
## A narrow space...

Once I entered Wunderbar's space, I was hit with an astounding reality -- it was long and narrow. There was absolutely zero wide, open spaces except a small difference in the front of the building -- albeit still not as wide as I would have liked for a successful open space plan. Concerned, I worried this would be too big of a task to conquer for a bar that needed proper room for socialization. However, the challenge was reality. Business-wise, I can't just go and build the "perfect space" when finances are in play (I am, after all, always on a tight budget!). With that, as an entrepreneur, I took the smart route, albeit challenging, of utilizing a location conveniently close to my college.

This particular location exudes unique qualities from a design perspective. The entrance has tall windows (some with tints) that bring in light when the remainder of the building is sandwiched between two brick walls. This gives an opportunity for Back Home Bar to make the "widest" space in the venue the area where our weekly calendar activities are hosted. With windows, it makes a space look wider and open.



The front doors of Back Home Bar's proposed location with the widest space in the entire venue.



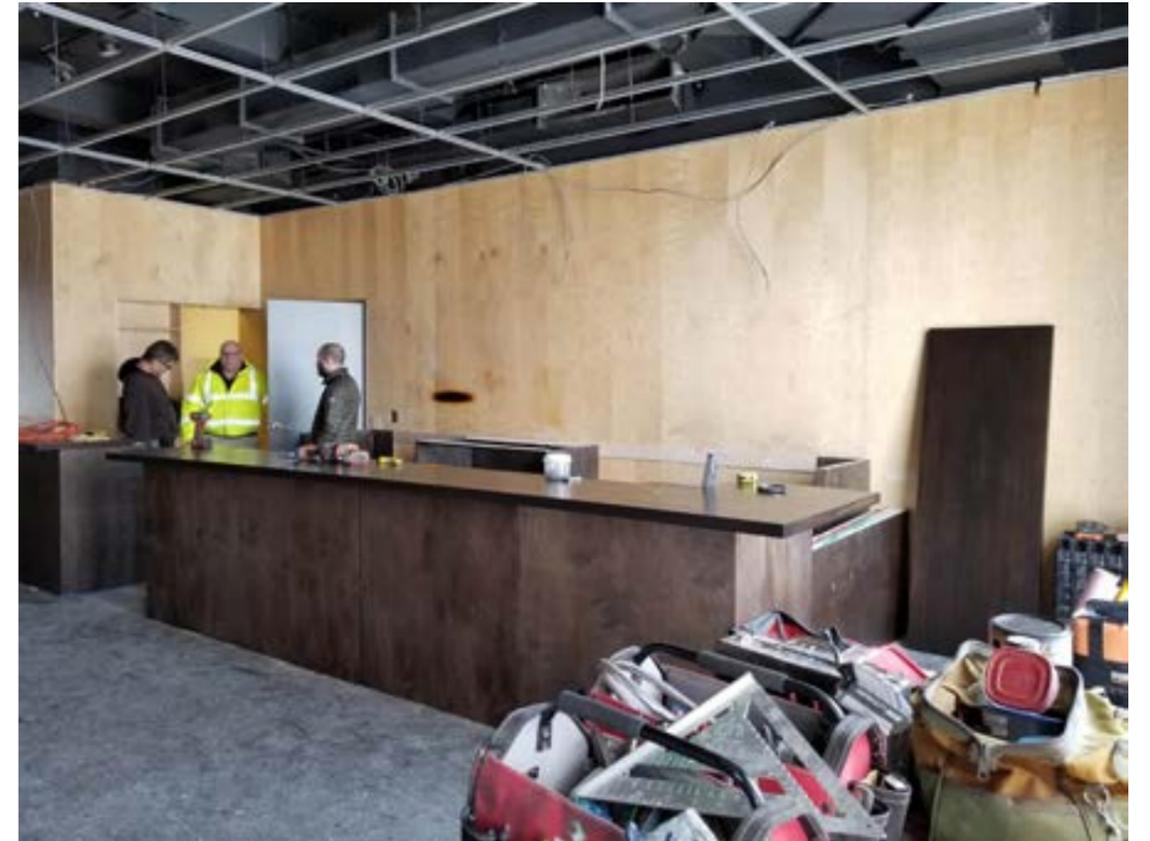
View looking to the back from the front entrance of the venue.



View looking towards the back when sitting at the widest area.



The bar section (Back Home Bar would avoid a straight bartop).



The amount of space for a bartop to be placed in is very small.



The bar from the outside.

## Not ideal, but always possible!

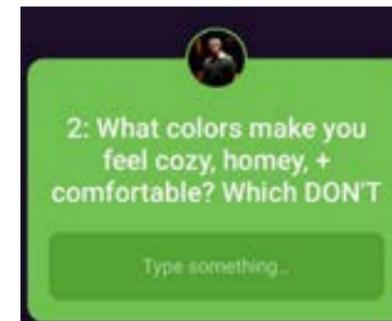
After walking through the space of what is now Wunderbar, I knew the challenge was apparent. However, I used their provided architectural floorplan and made a 3D form in SketchUp to bring it to life digitally and visually. I embrace real-life challenges, and using this difficult, but not impossible, floorplan made me consciously think about the types of furnishings, decor, and most of all, the bar shape.

I've made a mood board spread of the paint colors, decor, furniture, and the outline shape of the back bar top. Overall, the bar exudes mostly wood aesthetic. One of my professors who is both a designer and an artist, experienced in various mediums, blantly told me how "dark wood, brass, and [warm, purple-ish] pastel colors are very comfortable and home-feeling for anyone, not just people with a disability like you are describing."

Figuring out and **learning what "home" meant to people helped identify the atmosphere I need to offer to both able-bodied folks and those with disabilities.** The interior design needs to bring the two together, bridging the social divide of stereotypes.

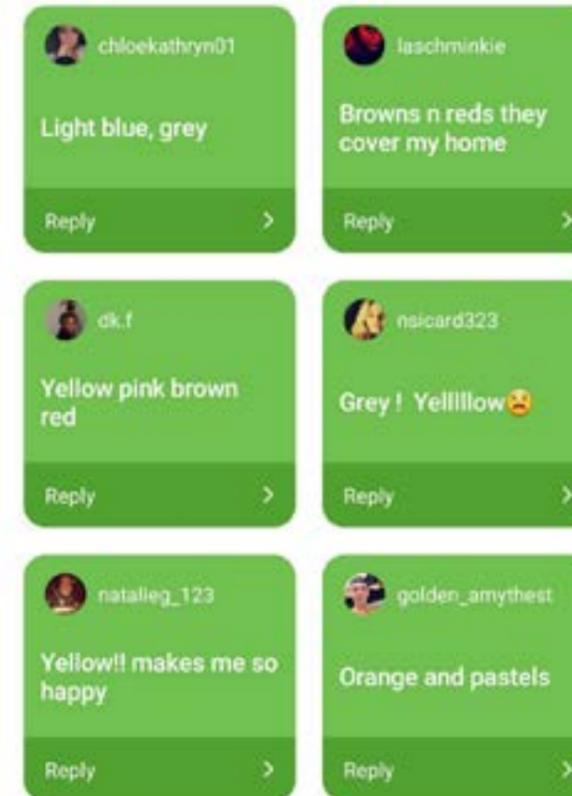
### instagram: adjectives + colors

I used Instagram for quick replies to confirm my secondary research data. Two questions that I posed were "fill in the blanks." The following are the questions and responses (color coded).

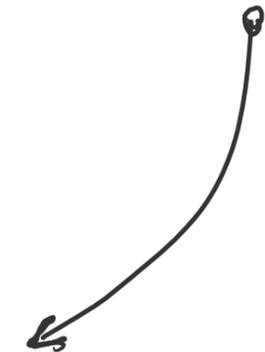


When asking this question on Instagram, the intent was regarding paint colors.

However, these results actually helped choose the colors used in this very book!



Pastels were a common vibe.





Of course I want to make Back Home Bar feel like home.

Adjectives are hard to quantify, but these help how I want customers to feel.



Comfort is a theme - in conversations outside of IG, it was the #1 adjective

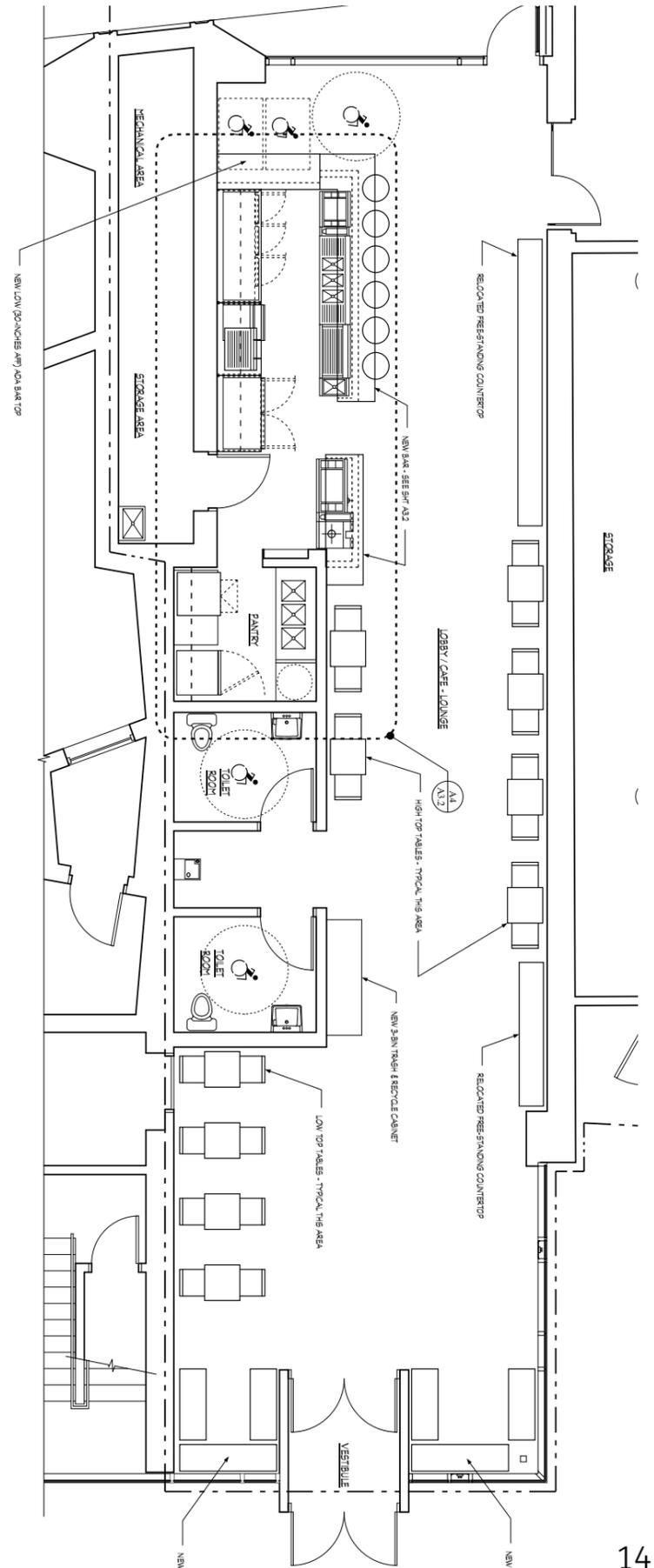


## The physical bar

Once I photographed Wunderbar before all their furniture was placed and the space completed, I had the owner provide me with the floorplans. I then took it and built a 3D model on SketchUp so I could visually see the space and create around it.

//

On the right is the technical floorplan (the furniture is outlined, but that is not the one(s) used in Back Home Bar).

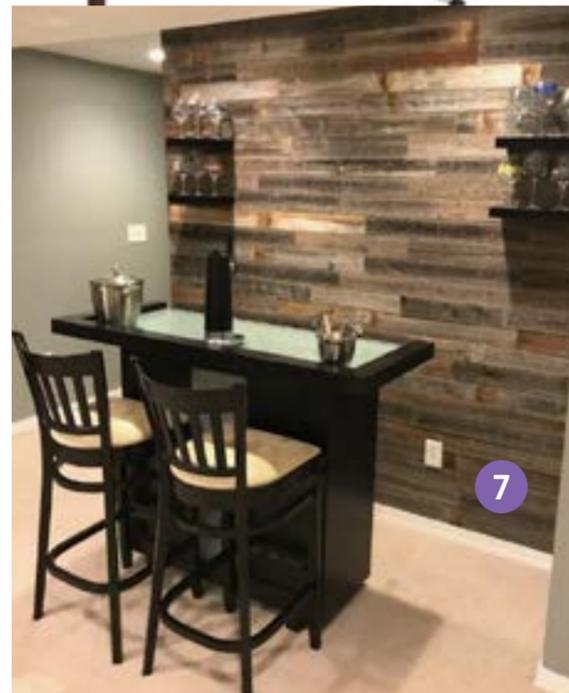




Mismatched  
chairs +  
seating of  
various kinds



off-wall tables  
that also expand



wood panel  
accents

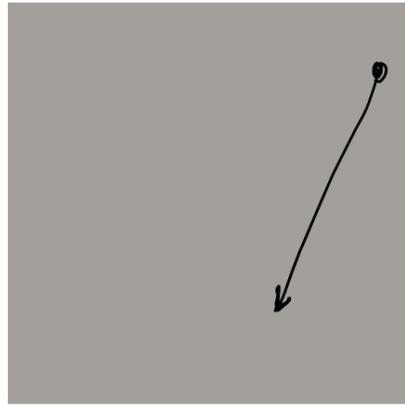


Small, round bartop  
in the back (the  
bar isn't main focus)

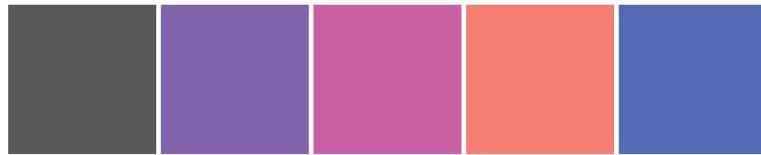


on ends of bar are  
clusters like this so  
you can see multi-  
people at once.

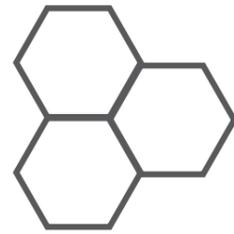
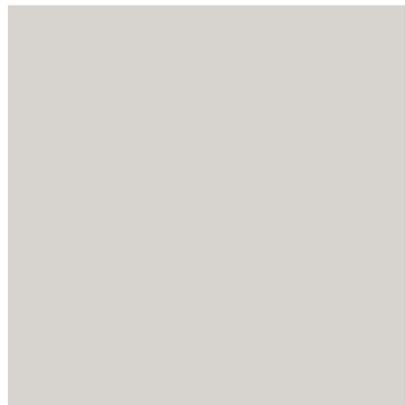
"homey" accents  
like a brass  
bar foot rail.



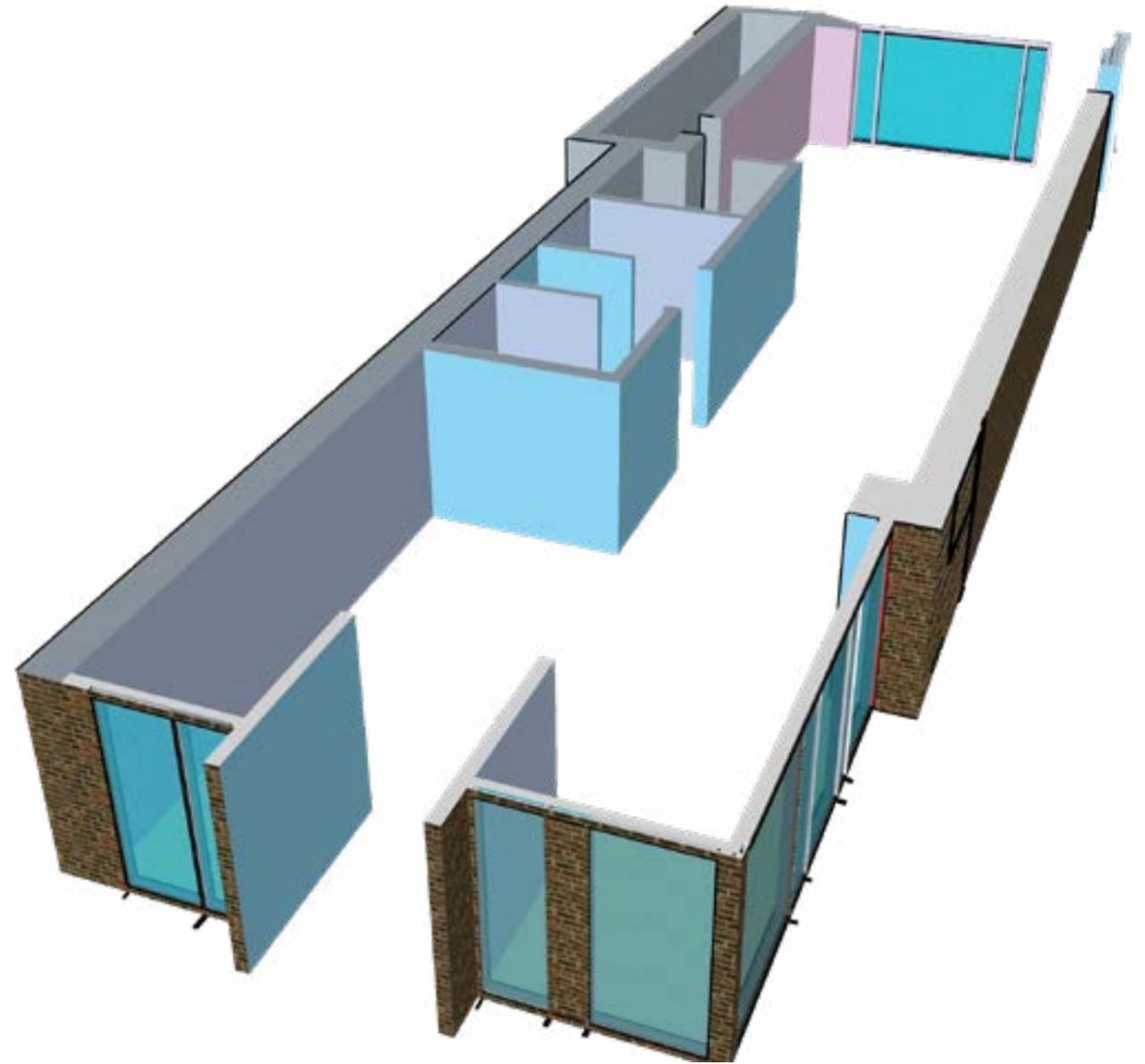
Neutral tones to be used as wall paint colors (ideal for bar environment)



usage of accent / POP colors help visually brighten space and can signal important things



hexagon shape as a reoccurring visual theme ~ on walls, painted on the tables, etc.



(Above: 3D created visual made on SketchUp)

# what's next for Back Home Bar?

## It's more than a thesis.

In this thesis book, I've provided research backing up my target demographic and the reasons why designing a bar is an effective method to build new relationships in this type of a socially conducive environment. I also have showcased my prototyping progress thus far and the potential of Back Home Bar being a realistic, successful business.

If pursued further (which I anticipate), **my prototypes created will undergo further testing and development.** The current ones are nowhere near the level they need to be in order to be brought to market in a bar. However, I am proud of the progress made with the coasters in such a short period of time.

Ultimately, Back Home Bar has to be **refined both aesthetically and systematically from a business perspective,** too. The mood board on 132-133 is a starting point but finances will dictate the odds-and-ends furniture choices for the interior.

There needs to be **marketing in place, along with branding.** Menus, signage, advertisements are all components to be designed next. The coaster and calendar are the starting point.

Wherever I travel/move to in my life and decide to build Back Home Bar there, all design choices (from furniture to color to identity) is likely to **alter due to the demographic in the area.**

//

At the end of the day, **I hope I can find a way to make Back Home Bar a reality** -- but if not, I know this last year has been spent learning things I never knew about a demographic I actually thought I understood. I have grown as a designer with empathy and dedication to Universal Design and accessibility for all.

In fact, **I now know my greatest passion and personal mission is to make the world a more accessible place.** Whether with my career or personal life, Back Home Bar is where it began.



CHEERS TO THE FUTURE.

Jake

All the  
research and  
journaling

that  
created  
this project



**part  
four:**

**more  
info.**



# journal: notes + thoughts

## It's an evolutionary process.

My method of evolving my design concepts and innovation lies in my notebooks I carry with me in my hand-me-down messenger bag everywhere I go. Some of these pages and notes didn't quite fit into the book as sources or thoughts, but in order to showcase the behind-the-scenes of my design thinking, **I share with you what my mind -- and pages -- looks like.**

\* less about WHAT YOU'VE DONE, more WHY.

\* meaningfully connect to who you're pitching to  
USER-CENTERED, SOLUTION

~~keep~~ So what?: creating an  
Universally accessible bar for  
those w/ nonvisible disabilities  
between the ages of 21-35

Who cares?: b/c

It is important to provide <sup>them</sup> a  
social space for self-growth,  
and identity development @ such  
an <sup>(pivotal)</sup> important time of <sup>their</sup> your life.

Why you?:

As someone w/ a dis., I have noticed all my life how  
this demographic is misrepresented  
and underserved. And I want  
to represent them b/c I can <sup>and make</sup> a space where <sup>they can</sup>  
relate to the struggles they <sup>grow</sup>  
go through

bar social interaction enthusiast and  
passionate about creating inclusive spaces

In-class task with a partner, we had to answer three questions in 30 seconds (an elevator pitch): So what? Who cares? Why you?

So what? }  
who cares? } in 30 seconds  
why you? } (elevator pitch)  
doing this

- universal accessible bar 21-35  
- makes inclusivity →  
- because I have a disability and there's  
nothing out there for dem.  
↓  
misrepresented (community) provide  
an social space

I want to rep.  
this comm.

- Universally accessible bar for those w/  
~~my~~ nonvisible disabilities  
ages 21-35

Develop your identity in an inclusive  
space  
This demographic is misrepresented  
and underserved  
Provide a social space for self-growth  
And I want to represent them  
because I can relate to the struggles  
they go through

This happened the first month of the year, and interestingly enough, somehow the information here didn't change much.

(2) Using Reddit to gain insights for wants & needs — (1) safe space (2) activity / structure

(3) Observe something ppl do but not outside the home  
↳ general things

CONCLU

(1) Turn main things to focus on design

(2) By e-layers system

(3) Ultimate  
① drink ordering  
② activities + structure  
→ non-threatening  
→ ideate / brainstorm INDIVIDUALLY

① got drink HOW  
② socialize

Sticky notes (lost many over the year). My bedroom walls were covered with words and ideas written in the middle of the night.

RANDOM THESIS THINGS:

1/29

(?) What do people like or enjoy at home or things they don't naturally do in public?

(!) If someone enjoys books — could the bar be a "book theme": a book club / featured book of the week

(!) Ordering a drink is a difficult process. What can be improved? Redesign the way we order drinks. Do we emulate how cafes / coffee shops do their system?

(?) An activity / activities will set the structure of the bar is crucial. What will it be? How will the layout be affected because of it? What do the PEOPLE want?

(!) Any activity or structure made has to be NON-THREATENING while also being NEW and INNOVATIVE.



INTERVIEW IDEA:

- Give people images of potential colors, type, and most of all, FURNITURE to look at, 2 at a time. "Which do you like best?"
- Keep track = make sure to clarify "WHAT MAKES YOU COMFORTABLE" or "WHAT SAYS "HOME" TO YOU?"

Brainstorming and questioning what's next. I believe I wrote this in a bar, as the bartender asked me questions on my journaling.

# HOW CAN WE MAKE THE WORLD A MORE ACCESSIBLE PLACE?

Jacob deHahn  
Fifth Year Thesis Map

## LEGAL

### AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

#### definition of ADA

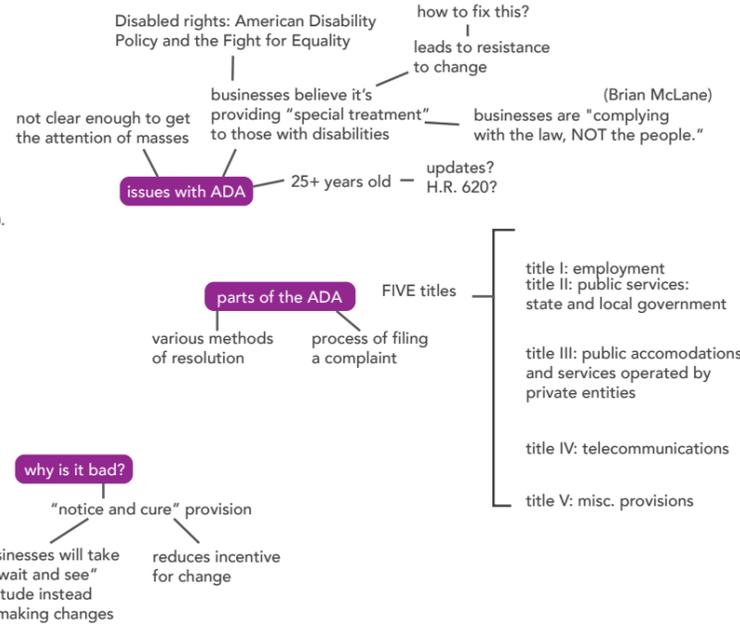
Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), S. 5.933 (July 6, 1990).

"The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public."

### H.R. 620

#### definition of H.R. 620

a reform act that causes major problems  
\*\*"Notice and cure" (the biggest issue with H.R. 620) requires the person with a disability to notify a business before filing a lawsuit. Often, it includes a waiting period for business to fix the problem. H.R. 620 also practically removes all incentive for businesses to provide access on their own. Instead, most will likely take a "wait and see" attitude, doing nothing until they receive notice.



## IDEAS

### APPLICATION PLATFORM DUALS AS A BUSINESS

AXS Map already exists...

but they don't have the back end concept at all

great potential but biting off more than I can chew

front end: user-reporting app to gain knowledge on what is LACKING in current businesses

back end: once flaws are voiced, OUR business platform goes in and hires contractors, lawyers, etc., to improve the location (paid by the business owners)

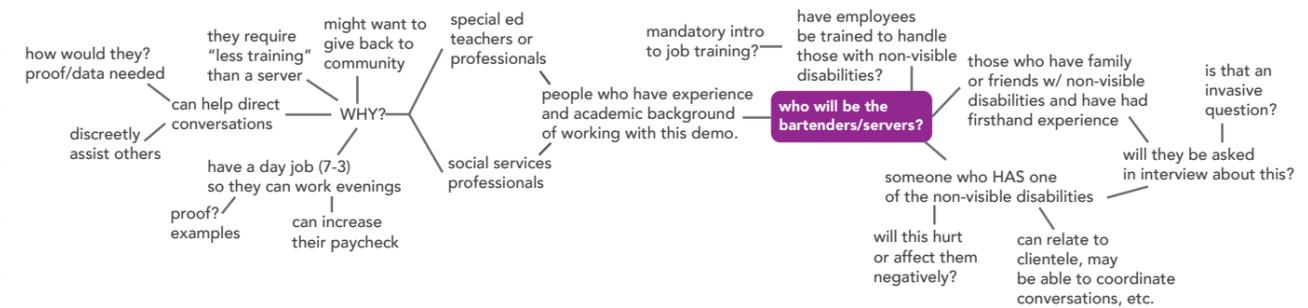
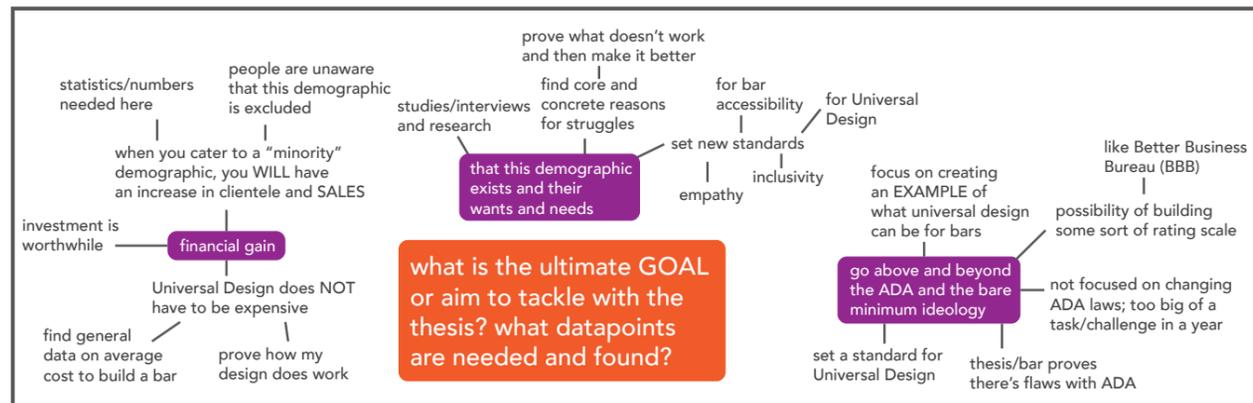
covers more/stronger impact in regards to "making the world a more accessible place"

creative/innovative methods of interaction within a new space

### CREATE AN ACTUAL ACCESSIBLE RESTAURANT, BAR, COFFEE SHOP, ETC.

### BAR

## HOW CAN WE BUILD A BAR FROM THE GROUND UP THAT IS UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WITH NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES?



## INSPIRATION

### 35 people with various disabilities to make Savannah Dhu a fully accessible wildlife preserve

### Savannah Dhu

American Dream Forum

5,000-acre nature preserve retreat minutes from Syracuse

proof is in the pudding - taking design to it's most accessible level WORKS

### Mary Free Bed YMCA "Universal Design" project

Color Universal Design

had an unexpected 25% increase in profits when launched

Universal Design

focus on "normalizing" disabilities by overall accessibility design

### CURRENT PROJECTS/DESIGNS THAT ARE IN PLACE AND ARE FORWARD-THINKING

### The Blind Cafe

an immersive experience of what those with visual impairments have every day

discusses social impact with legally blind people

theblindcafe.com

event-style, not permanent

liability waivers are required (!)

### MOZZERIA

not about "educating" but about inclusion

FOOD is priority; experience is secondary

vimeo.com/135719881

### Bitty and Beau's Coffee

exposure to how all people are different in a good way

bittyandbeauscoffee.com

specialty shop

focus on experience

### Special Books by Special Kids

specialbooksbyspecialkids.org

guy interviews/has conversations with various people with disabilities and health backgrounds

helps with awareness

educating about diversity

destigmatizing being "different"

### AXS Map

www.axsmap.com

only reporting, no tangible business or ability to make change

main focus on VISIBLE disabilities

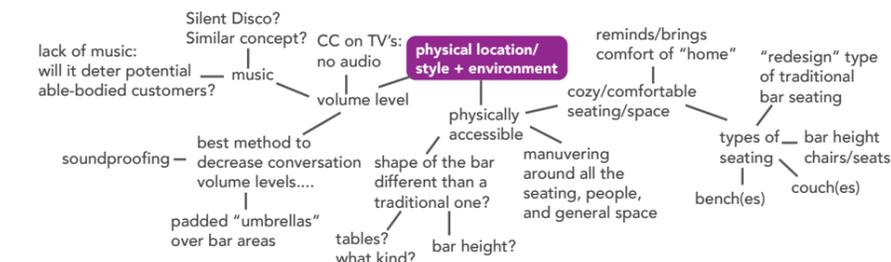
user-reporting platform

mid 2017, AXS Map had 100,000 users in 200 cities

gamification

not successful with marketing

"Mapathons"



### types of clientele

inclusive bar helps them grow

social fear of "sticking out"

bars are a place to meet new people

major turning point in millennial's lives - socializing and creating new friendships

ages 21-35 are the main demo.

bar is inclusive

bar is Universally Designed

not core population though

visible disabilities

able-bodied people

types of clientele

- those with social anxiety
- non-visible disabilities
- autism
- introverts
- aspergers

bar is inclusive

opportunity to educate the general pop. that those with disabilities are still PEOPLE

bar is Universally Designed

not core population though

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- autism
- introverts
- aspergers

website / tablet  
→ customers then "indicate" which table or area they're in + servers will be alerted to go to that space b/c there's someone.  
→ → also saves servers time / (neglect) of customers  
! → similar to those buzzers given at Panera

? what does home mean to you / look like  
how you relax @ home?  
where do you sit?  
distance

- focus groups? -

- ① SERVER ORDERING REMOTE
- ② BAR LAYOUT / INTERIOR
- ③ ACTIVITY CALENDAR
- ④ BOOK DESIGN + LAYOUT
- ⑤  VIDEO 1  VIDEO 2
- ⑥ THESIS SHOW DESIGN
- ⑦ RESEARCH COMPONENTS

Key components and tasks I wrote often so I wouldn't forget deliverables (there are 18 pages throughout the book like this).

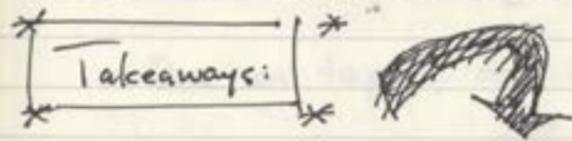
As I sit at my favorite gastropub's bar top on this Tuesday night, it's strangely busy. I was writing some things I had to do, and suddenly I realized... All the people around me are MEN. Granted, this is a beer-based bar (there is no hard liquor), but I've been coming here forever and it hit me... this place, and most bars, are male-dominated.

If the bar is "feminized" (socially, like it has "frilly" cocktails + wine-based) - stereotype, I know, but wait — the gender gap is opened. Back Home Bar needs to be inclusive, not just for disabilities, but also for ALL GENDERS.

Excerpt from my journal. An observation I sadly noticed and kept in mind for the future of Back Home Bar -- how to fix this.

[2/5]

## THESIS PECHA KUCHA PRESENTATION



- "Autism" is VERY broad
  - specify it's high-functioning
  - write in book data on high functioning

Emily - how do you regulate who comes into the bar?

- e.g., college students/area
  - = drunk, rowdy, anti-purpose
- is there a system in place for those w/ disabilities?
  - especially if they get "triggered" by certain things?
  - how do you make it non-obvious?

### MAKE IT REALISTIC

- employee training
  - write up an outline?
  - training program based on social skill tactics\*

### EXECUTE INTERVIEWS

discover what is to be added

Academically did a Pecha Kucha presentation -- this is the feedback from my peers. These things I didn't think of before.

(2/5)

Sitting in this bar, I feel anxious, overwhelmed, and frankly, frustrated. As I write this, a stranger next to me commented on the fact that I'm writing in a journal - and how it's "old school." I thanked her for saying praise for being a young millennial who still appreciates writing.

However, she went on to converse with me, which I was eager for. But damn, this bar is LOUD. I'd ask her to repeat or clarify, but after a while, ~~it was~~ she seemed to personally give up on our conversation. I don't blame her - who wants to keep restating things to someone every other sentence?!

This happens far too often. It wasn't packed here; the issue(s) are -

- ① The damn TV's have AUDIO on... but NO CAPTIONS ????
- just reverse it? Easy fix...
- ② There's no common sense to also have LOUD MUSIC PLAYING too!
- ③ The shuffleboard table is right next to the bar, + people are CHEERING. Move it somewhere else!!

THIS COULD BE SOLVED... \*sigh\*

Journal entry, feeling upset over accessibility. I had a few other pages similar to this in my personal journal about the same thing.

What to do for 2 thesis videos?

One on topic, one on research

Decide on thesis book design / layout.

Interior design, layout + activity choice

---

DESIGN IDEAS: 2/6

① Themes based on interests → calendar  
 → Monday = "book club" day  
 where there's a featured book /  
 topic and encouragement to  
 partake  
 → video game night

② How to encourage participation?  
 → Incentives:  
 if you do the "book club"  
 \* from 5-8 (happy hour)  
 you get \$1 off your drink.  
 → schedule per week for certain  
 topics

③ Ordering system  
 → similar to POS systems  
 showing the floor plan +  
 tables — but on phone!

More journal thoughts -- first time thinking about a "calendar."  
 Most of my scratchy pages were written in February.

# Drinks

by the numbers.

Via Instagram surveys, people voted for which drink they're most likely to order at a bar.



## types of mixed drinks:

- |              |             |             |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| whiskey sour | vodka + OJ  | margarita   |
| whiskey      | rum + coke  | screwdriver |
| vodka soda   | gin + tonic | mudslide    |
| vodka + coke | moscow mule | newport 75  |

This was originally inside the contents of my book. During editing it didn't have a place. It does provide information for the future.

2/14

IN CARMEL INTERVIEW

\* vibrator on server to alert (buzz) \*

① trivia night

COLOR: best colors - non-threatening

dynamics of color  
 → blues & calming  
 → lilac, light yellow  
 like pink → most popular colors in the world

vision impairments  
 → pop colors  
 → PURPOSE \*

brass → honey, warm

- print menu + digital  
 descriptions - serif?

what do I like? ← at bars around

put in CONTEXT

visit mult. locations ← survey

~~Rileys~~ bar  
 Riley's → "young professionals" term.  
 → same "free" food  
 QUALITY

Chat with Carmel, a professor who specializes in color and art. Helped with color choices and integrating new terminology.

2/14

INTERVIEW WITH TANNER

③ TAKEAWAYS + notes:

Pitched the coaster system

- shared purpose regarding my own bar design
- explained why it matters
- described how it works +

TANNER'S DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

"In sharing what I, a bar owner, would question if I were pitched this product overall."

① COST: this cannot cost too much, otherwise what's the point?

- find big name brand (Budweiser, ex.) to "buy" the technology + then their label is on it. (branding)
- coasters are "disposable" - this is another thing to wash + take care of. How do you fix this?
- people "collect" coasters sometimes (Carmel Nicoletti), they miss out on this opportunity...
- how many will use it? How much do you buy?

Tanner, owner of Wunderbar, gave insights regarding the coaster, which made me decide *against* using the coaster in other bars.

## ② TECHNOLOGY: what components

- what if you're someone who likes to hold your drink, never put it down, carry it?
  - you lose the purpose

- WEIGHT SENSOR: there are so many different glasses, measurements, ice, etc — how do you "program" it?

- lights — may not serve a purpose beyond MY BAR? What else could it signify? ★

- will the technology / server calling actually save time?

- won't servers be slower?
- RUSH HOUR?

- they can't focus on it, there needs to be rapid output

- will it integrate with POS system?

"I am going to use Square. Will it connect?"

It helped me realize that the coasters and activity calendar could work in other bars... -- but from a business perspective, is an

## ③ LOCATION / ENVIRONMENT:

where are drinks / furniture?

- ottoman — there isn't a place to put drink down, means no place for coaster

- side / coffee tables?

- walking / standing — is there a way for it to travel?

- Camel: "if someone is standing and drinking, [no coaster] the coaster isn't 'needed' because you actually have accomplished your goal: socialization"

- NOT EVERYONE NEEDS ONE — if at the bar, the "calling" feature may not be used — but the "activity" signal can be.

IF 80% OF BAR CUSTOMERS USE IT AT A TIME, THAT IS A SUCCESS — IF 1/2 OF THOSE PEOPLE ARE SOCIALIZING, WIN-WIN

WHAT IS MAIN GOAL?

opportunity to leverage the experience I designed is something no other bar has. I found a unique solution -- don't give it away.

① learn how to make your own drink

hotel bar → how they interact there  
 townie → may not feel like outsiders avoid  
 regulars → intimidating

→ casino bars have diversity too

---

don't want to intrude  
 - don't like to drink ↗  
 - how to fix ↘

noa alch.  
 material is there but not constant  
 → board game

trivia - indicate looking for  
 player

- website - research + has all  
 descriptions

→ menu in window →  
 ↗ AND coaster descrip-  
 ↘ digital

(Before bracket) suggestion for a Weekly Pop-Up Wednesday event: Mixology night and how to make 'outsiders' feel at home.

classes to meet people

pre-provided events  
 ↳ awkward

night vs. day  
 tea + coffee - obvious not drinkers

activities are low key enough

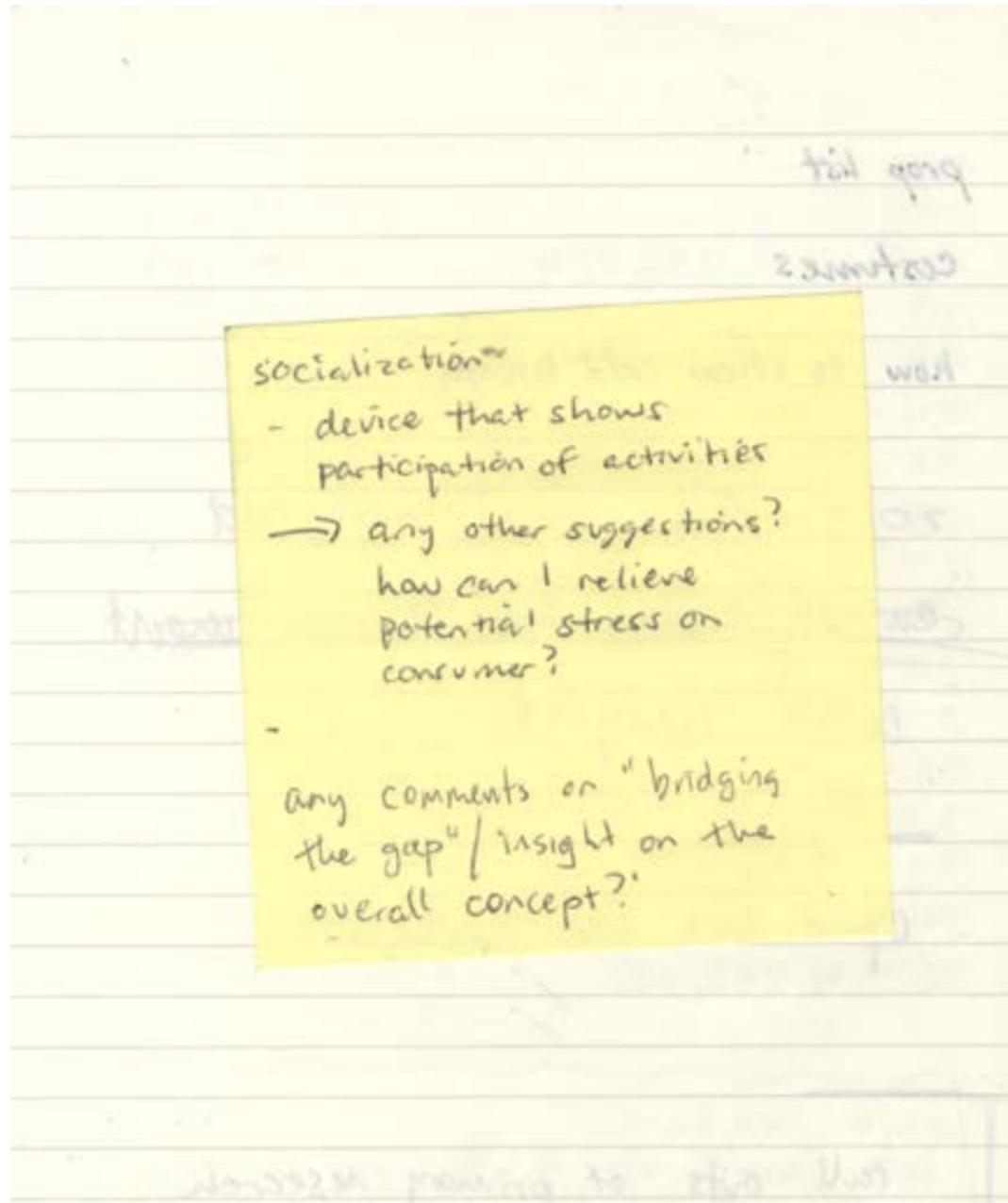
how drinkers needs to be normalized  
want a bar for me  
 ↳ normalize

flasship  
 (↳ can be more hands on)

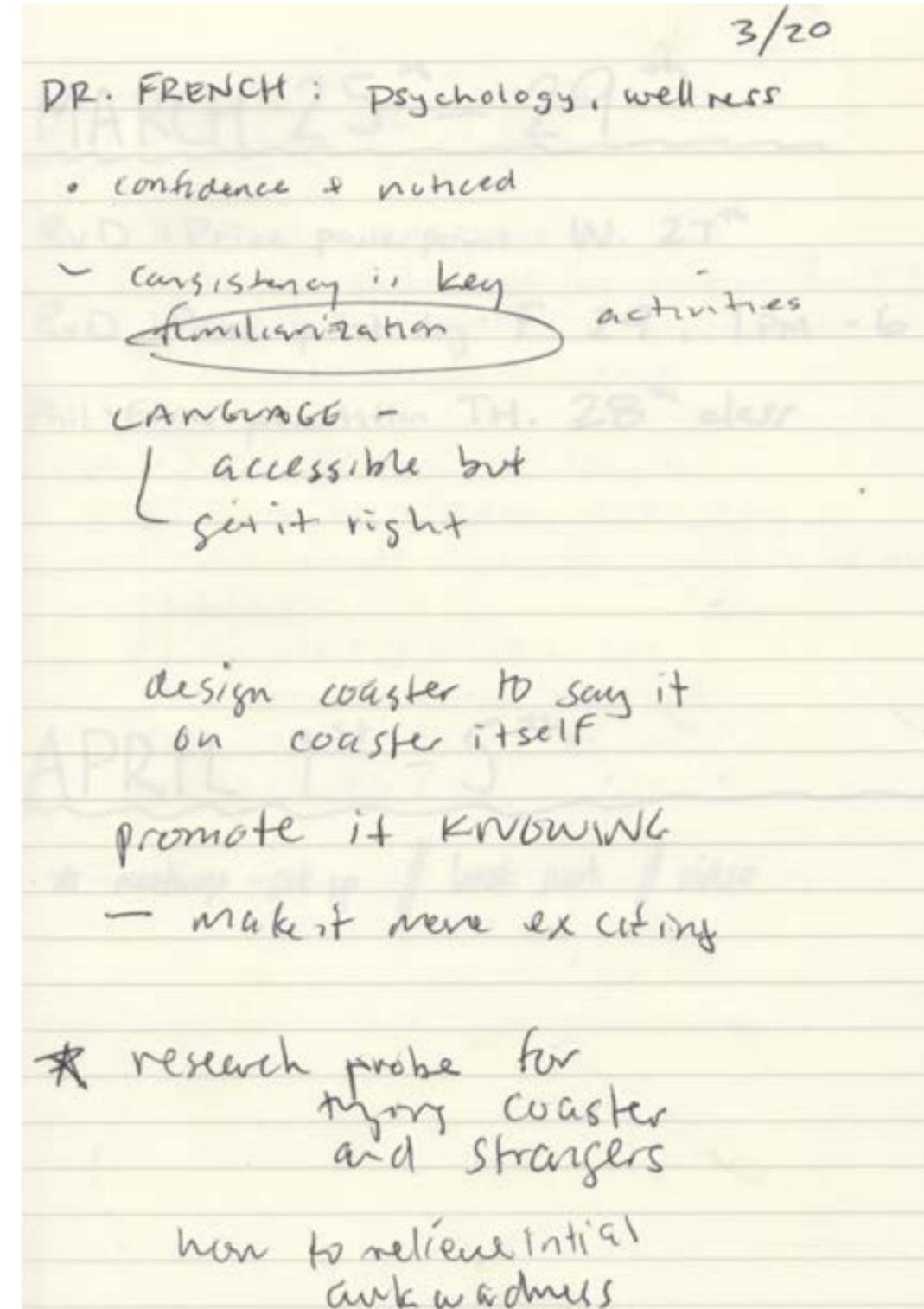
candles, CLEAN  
~~dark~~ light table tops

enclosed spaces  
 no upholstery - vinyl plastic  
 wipeable

(After bracket) scratchy notes from Living Library. Even this person said Back Home Bar should be its own business.



Our professor had her friend, a design psychologist from Australia, stop by our class. Above is a sticky note of thoughts I wanted to go into the casual conversation with. The next page has the scratchy notes I gathered during our chat -- mainly key words.



“Language” and “familiarization” stood out to me -- in order to be inclusive, I need to ‘speak’ all languages.

# citations: lots of resources I used.

About us. (n.d.). Retrieved November 20, 2018, from Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop website: <https://www.bittyandbeauscoffee.com/about/our-story/>

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\*\*Iconography used throughout the book are sourced from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com) with my color and line tweaks applied.

## Links to images on 132-133

1. *Extending kitchen table* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.archiproducts.com/en/products/ideas-group/wall-mounted-extending-kitchen-table-fortune\\_295708](https://www.archiproducts.com/en/products/ideas-group/wall-mounted-extending-kitchen-table-fortune_295708)
2. *Wooden chair with cushion seat 3D model* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cgtrader.com/3d-models/furniture/chair/wooden-chair-with-cushion-seat-c6d63fc8-1c50-4043-8efb-833da7bf80cb>
3. *Faux leather seat wooden dining chairs* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Techni-Home-Walnut-with-Faux-Leather-Seat-Wooden-Dining-Chairs-Set-of-2-RTA-DCH41-WAL/304491402>
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5. *Octane counter stool with wood seat* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.industrywest.com/octane-counter-stool-with-a-wood-seat.html?refSrc=1810&nosto=productpage-nosto-1>

6. *Wood accent walls are the next home decor trend* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.pinterest.com/ppin/145663369177094720/?lp=true>
7. *Real weathered wood planks walls* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Weathered-Wood-Reclaimed-Paneling-Application/dp/B07C6SYSTK>
8. *Rounded international bartop* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://essentialhome.eu/blog/maison-objet-2017-best-cocktail-bars-relax/>
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10. *Comptons gray wood velvet brass bar* [Photograph]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.decorpad.com/bookmark.htm?bookmarkId=57413>



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