This is the journey of a

🛠️ Skill-Builder

Skill-builders are people who are learning to navigate intense emotions and behaviors with **intention over impulse**. They are not trying to "fix" themselves overnight; they're practicing skills that help them survive difficult moments, build insight over time, and allow value-aligned behavior to play a bigger role in their lives.

What are their key goals and needs?

- Consistency: Being sure to track their diary card every day
- Skillfulness and Resource Use: are they using the appropriate skill and full-protocol DBT requires to their advantage?
- Preparedness for therapy session: do they show up being able to talk through their week, or are they in a mess this because that's what they're feeling in the moment?

What do they struggle with most?

- Remembering to complete their diary card before bed each night
- Current diary card options: spreadsheets are too sterile, existing app options are doing too much
- Procrastinating the diary card results in foggy recall of the week's events and — and how you overcame them when its time for session

What tasks do they have?

- Logging Emotions
- Logging DBT Skills Use
- Logging Behaviors

Why I chose these metrics

A little less exciting and a little more industry standard, I chose these metrics to primarily zoom in on actions,

Why I chose these metrics

- This crucial step is our activation or "lightbulb" moment. It's the spark where engagement starts before a task starts, and every journey map will have one.

  Behaviorally, this is the B in the Fogg Behavior Model. It's both our cue recognition and intent formation.
- Most journey maps don't isolate hesitation – we assume it exists somewhere in the neighborhood of the first phase, whatever that may be.

  I think it might be the most important part of a behavior-informed mental health app's ecosystem.

  Better Brain is supposed to be intuitive, of course, but *interface friction* and *psychological friction* are equally important to a workflow that works.
- It was important to me to separate hesitation from entry to isolate the question of whether or not the first interaction validates the user's decision to engage or quietly undermines it.
- Every journey map ought to include the actual "during" phase, of course, but this is also where I made a critical design choice that framed the app as a whole.

  Rather than measuring speed or completeness, I evaluated whether users could continue even when energy or clarity were limited. **This ensured the design supported imperfect participation.**
- Sense of completion, especially under pressure, is crucial to habit forming. I isolated this phase from logging and post-completion action items (reflection) to examine how feedback influences willingness to return to the task at hand the next day.
- Diary card completion is helpful in the moment, of course, but it serves as a guide for your therapy session when you're it it, too. Coming to session equipped with context for your emotions, behaviors, and skills as recorded in the moment completely elevates the productivity of your session and your ability to meet your goals.

Journey Steps Which step of the experience are you describing?	**Trigger** Why would a user even consider acting?	**Hesitation** "I mean, I don't *have* to..."	**Entry** Does the UI invite someone in or confirm their hesitation and procrastination?	**Logging** Is a user able to complete	**Completion**	**Reflection**
Actions What does a user do? What is their context?	"I forgot to track today!" "I shouldn't have kept putting it off"	"I know I should, but..." → Procrastinating → Feels the urge to skip it all together	Opens Better Brain	Logs Emotions → Logs Skills → Logs Behaviors	*submits log*	Reviewing entries live-time in session
Thoughts + Emotions What is the user feeling?	🤯 → Guilt, overwhelm	🤔 → avoidance	👀 → "I guess I'll try"	🥳 → "this feels manageable!"	😅 → I did it!	😌 → All this context was recorded livetime, I'm super prepared for session today!
Pain Points What does the customer want to achieve or avoid? *Tip: Reduce ambiguity, e.g. by using the first person narrator.*	Logging feels like a chore.... even before the app is open	"I don't want to bring my whole day back up again" I don't want to	Potential for overload	"I don't want to do all of this" → "too many choices"	overly celebratory feedback feels patronizing	Minimalist design for primary flow makes secondary flows slightly harder to access
Touchpoint What part of the service do they interact with?	N/A Addressing psychological friction here, not interface friction; all of this is happening internally for the user	N/A Addressing psychological friction here, not interface friction; all of this is happening internally for the user	Login → Breather → Menu	Skills → Behaviors → Emotions	ONE screen for feedback and the ability to save info; not one for every screen	At-A-Glance Therapy Session View
Backstage						
Design Response + Opportunities How can I address user pain points?	Logging should feel supportive and validating, not like filling out a google spreadsheet before bed. Design failure in this stage looks like: **No Activation**	Intentional push notifications, minimal 1 per day; no "you're almost out of time" language or pressure for "tracking streaks" Design failure in this stage looks like: **Emotional Avoidance**	Minimal design, clear entry points Design failure in this stage looks like: **Interface Intimidation**	Sliders + taps only things required; adding context is there, but optional Design failure in this stage looks like: **Cognitive Overload**	Affirming completion indicators are visualized via affirming button states Design failure in this stage looks like: **Shame or Pressure**	Structured summaries with visuals to indicate progress across the week Design failure in this stage looks like: **No perceived value:** *that was kinda pointless..*

What changes for them?

Consistency

Building a consist habit that allows the Skill Builder to show up prepared for therapy each week and build upon lessons learned each week.

What are they able to do now?

- Complete their daily log with real-time reflection
- Feel supported, not obligated
- Show up to session with an honest recap of the week

What can they finally avoid doing?

- Putting it off
- Vaguely recalling their week at at once; now, they're equipped with day by day snapshots, summaries, and trends

What changed in my environment?

- Access to the diary card
- Convenience
- Less physical labor – no laptop needed for a spreadsheet or diary card to appear for a traditional diary card