

# design for release: supporting victims of sexual violence

Ghislaine Tseng | Master thesis | Delft University of Technology



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# What and Why is this graduation report?

This thesis report is an overview of the work done the past six months for the graduation project *design for release: supporting victims of sexual violence*. This graduation project proposes a design solution to aid in the processing of sexual violence for female victims in the Netherlands specifically.

The why of this graduation project is because sexual violence is, unfortunately, part of human society. With accepting the fact that sexual violence exists, I want to improve life after such violence. The subject of sexual violence is one that interests me but also frustrates me greatly. This project is an attempt to raise awareness and offer victims a helpful design.

## **Victim - Survivor**

In the Dutch language, it is common to name a person who has experienced sexual violence a 'victim'. This word is used in Dutch law, in the healthcare system and in the media. In the United States, it is more common to use the word 'survivor' when talking about people who have experienced sexual violence. Which term a person identifies with is personal (RAINN, 2020). As I am unable to ask for your preference as the reader, I will use the Dutch terminology, as this project is conducted in the Netherlands.



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Professor of Form Theory

Mentor: Dr. ir. M. van der Bijl-Brouwer  
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April 2020

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'Onvolkomenheden in de details maken de schoonheid van het geheel'

**Griet Op de Beeck**

*in: Het beste wat we hebben, 2017*

# Executive summary

In the Netherlands, around 100,000 people become a victim of sexual violence each year, 90% of which are female, and mostly between 12-24 years old. "Sexual violence is a term used for all sexual acts that someone is forced to perform, undergo or see. It may involve sexual assault, rape or sexual abuse." (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2019). The consequences on victims' lives are severe. Victims can experience mental, physical and/or social problems, affecting their daily lives and sometimes lasting a lifetime if left untreated. 98% of the victims don't look for help due to feelings of shame, fear and guilt (Bicanic, 2018).

The aim of this thesis is to propose a design solution to aid with the processing of sexual violence, to specifically **design for female victims (between 12-24 years old at the time of the event) of sexual violence in a way that reduces the negative effects on their daily lives.**

The research phase focused on defining the negative effects and finding opportunity areas, using elements of ViP and systemic design methods. Based on literature and field research, the broad context of support after sexual violence was built. The research included interviewing victims and experts in the field. Insights were gathered in a system map, which visualized all stakeholders and their relations. The problems victims experience were listed and discussed. Themes were identified and formed the basis for a worldview, summarizing the current meaning of sexual violence in the Netherlands.

Based on the context research, a vision was formed including a framing statement, an interaction vision and design boundaries. Firstly, the most important stakeholders in the system were defined: the victim herself and her loved ones. The negative effect which needed

to be addressed was the deteriorating bond between the victim and her loved ones, due to misunderstanding and ignorance of loved ones around the effects of sexual violence. Following this, the statement goal was to make **a loved one feel confident in engaging with the victim by facilitating the sharing of insecurities in a playful way.** This vision formed the basis for ideation.

Ideation involved a generative session, individual ideation as well as rapidly prototyping ideas. The outcome was a working mechanism ensuring the sharing of insecurities. This mechanism was translated into a design concept, called **VORM**.

**VORM** is a social game designed to strengthen the bond between a victim of sexual violence and her friend. The goal of VORM is to meet each other in the middle, by building a bridge towards each other. Players can get closer to each other by asking questions about insecurities and sharing their truths. The elements of the game provide the input for the questions and building the bridge.

**VORM** was validated through user testing of the usability, desirability, effectiveness and sustainability of the game. Experts evaluated the target group fit, accessibility and placement in the care process. The conclusion is that **VORM** facilitates the sharing of insecurities in a playful way, strengthening the bond between players. Experts see a role for **VORM** in the care process and some participants expressed strong buying interest. Further research is required to map (the size) of the target group and consequent market opportunities.

# Acknowledgements

Working on this project was quite a challenge. Luckily, I had the help of many great people.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the people who were willing to share their personal experiences on the subject of sexual violence with me. Your stories were essential for this project and I am grateful for having benefited from your courage.

An academic thank you to my Team; Paul Hekkert and Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer, for making the graduation meetings fun, open and educational. Thanks for pushing me to get more out of the project and for asking the questions for some of which I still don't know the answers to. I have learned so much during this project and a lot of it is thanks to your guidance.

Thanks to my colleagues at Garage2020 Amsterdam for sharing your diverse connections, professional wisdom and Garage humor with me.

Thanks to my friends, for letting me use your valuable (graduation) time: Claire, Sanne, Tirza, Max, Mark, Thijs. And of course Reinier, for putting up with me at my worst.

Thanks to my parents and my sister for your care, support and indisputable belief in me, the final month virtually.

Finally, a mega thanks to Eva van der Drift for making it your personal mission to help me graduate. Your support, exorbitant amount of games, structural reassurances and sunny disposition have helped me enormously.

Enjoy reading,

Ghis

design for release:  
**supporting victims  
of sexual violence**

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# Domain

**This chapter describes the domain of sexual violence in the Netherlands and shows the relevance of this project. First, the definition and different types of sexual violence are explained, as well as the prevalence in the Netherlands. After this, the effects of the offender's actions on victims are mentioned as well as the available help forms and the Dutch legislation.**

- 1.1 Introduction to sexual violence
- 1.2 Prevalence in the Netherlands
- 1.3 Types of sexual violence
- 1.4 Offenders
- 1.5 Effects on victims
- 1.6 Help
- 1.7 The law
- 1.8 Key takeaways for this project





Photo by Ryoji Iwata on Unsplash

## 1.1. Introduction to sexual violence

Anybody can become a victim of sexual violence and a lot of people will. In fact, if you are reading this as a Dutch female adult, the chances are 1/8 that you have experienced rape, a form of sexual violence, see figure 1.

What is sexual violence exactly?

“Sexual violence is a term used for all sexual acts that someone is forced to perform, undergo or see. It may involve sexual assault, rape or sexual abuse. Sexual violence is also called sexual abuse or forced sex. It is sexual abuse specifically when an adult commits sexual acts with a child. Or when this happens in other situations where the perpetrator abuses the age difference or his or her power. In sexual abuse, there is always inequality. For example an adult and a child, a social worker and a client (with a physical or mental disability), a teacher and a student” (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2019).

The difference between sexual assault and rape is that rape involves penetration of the victim’s body (oral, vaginal or anal). Having experienced sexual violence is not only horrific in itself, but it can have long-lasting negative effects on a victim’s life, read subchapter 1.5.

## 1.2. Prevalence in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, around 100,000 people become a victim of sexual violence each year. Ninety percent of the victims are female and most are between 12-24 years old (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2018). These are surprising statistics for a country that is ranked the fifth-best country for women to live in (U.S. News, 2019). As you can see in figure 2, the Netherlands deals with a lot of physical and sexual violence compared to other EU member states. This is confirmed by knowledge center of sexuality Rutgers, see figure 3. Note: it is possible that sexual violence is (also) more often reported in the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, than in other EU member states.



Figure 1. Factsheet sexual violence (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2019)



## Percentage of women in European member states who have experienced physical and sexual violence

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2012)

■ Denmark 52%	■ United Kingdom 44%
■ Finland 47%	■ Latvia 39%
■ Sweden 46%	■ Luxembourg 38%
■ Netherlands 45%	■ Belgium 36%
■ France 44%	■ Germany 35%

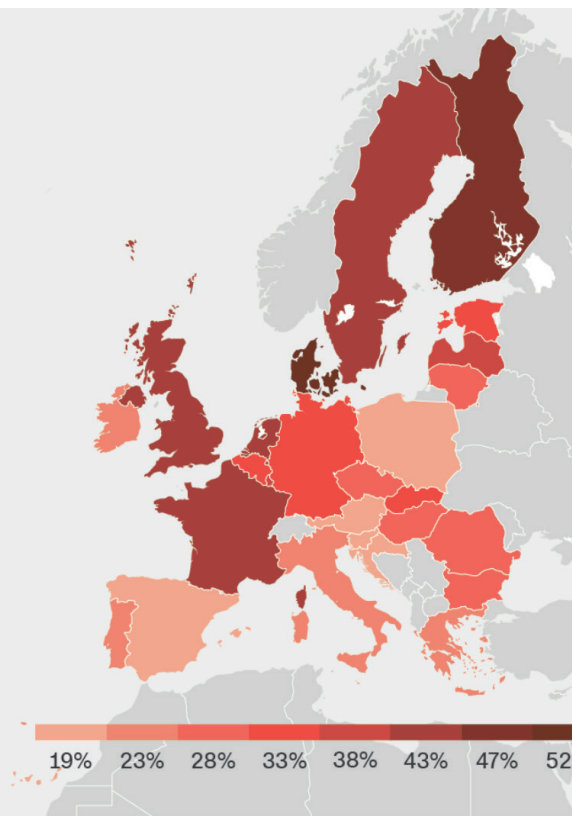


Figure 2. Physical and sexual violence in European member states (CNN Health, 2017)

**Tabel 6 Seksueel geweld\* tegen vrouwen in Europa en in Nederland (%)**

2014	Europese vrouwen	Nederlandse vrouwen
Meemaken van enige vorm van lichamelijk of seksueel geweld sinds haar 15e	33	45
Meemaken van seksueel geweld door partner of iemand anders	11	18
Meemaken van seksueel geweld door partner	7	11
Meemaken van seksueel geweld door iemand anders dan partner	6	12
Meemaken van seksuele intimidatie (ongewenst aanstaren, aanraken, opmerkingen maken, ongewenste avances, ongewenste e-mails of foto's sturen enz.)	55	73
Meemaken van stalking sinds haar 15e	18	26
Meemaken van enige vorm van seksueel geweld voor haar 15e	12	20

\*Hier valt ook onder: enige vorm van seksuele activiteit tegen de wil, of uit angst toegeven aan seksuele activiteiten

Figure 3. Sexual violence against women in Europe and in the Netherlands (Rutgers, 2019)

### 1.3. Types of sexual violence

As mentioned in subchapter 1.1, sexual violence is a collective noun that includes rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse. Apart from the physical act, the experience can also be distinguished on the *occurrence* and the *relationship* between the victim and the offender, see figure 4 for common categories. Sexual violence can occur in many forms, and multiple times in a lifetime by different offenders (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2019); therefore figure 4 is not conclusive. The difference in categories, occurrence and relationship, is reflected in the effect the event has on the victim. These effects will be further discussed in subchapters 1.4-1.5.



Figure 4. Sexual violence categories

## 1.4. Offenders

Who are the people that commit sexual violence? First of all, 94% of the offenders is male (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2018). Second of all, studies have shown that the initial stereotype of a rapist being *“the unknown man who attacks women in the park”* is not accurate. In over half of the submitted cases, the perpetrator is somebody the victim knew, a friend or family member (Kremers, 2016), corresponding with the categories ‘date rape’ and ‘incest’ from figure 4. This relationship is important to note, as it has an effect on the victim in two ways: firstly, it is more difficult for the victim to understand that it is sexual violence (instead of sex). Because why would that person want to cause harm? It is easy for them to put the blame on themselves (‘I didn’t say no, I wasn’t clear enough’). Secondly, this relationship makes it harder to break the cycle and find help. This is because of the proximity (from a safety point of view, for instance, the offender being a parent) and the feelings involved (not wanting to cause trouble for the family). For these reasons, it can take years, or even decades for a victim to realize that she experiences sexual violence and it can take even longer to put the blame on the offender.

So why does a person commit sexual violence? From an evolutionary point of view, rape results from the lack of balance between men and women concerning reproduction. Men need many different mates to increase their reproduction chances, while women are selective in their mates because the effort to reproduce is high (Thornhill & Palmer, 2000). However, in reality, not every man rapes or can rape and not only men rape but women as well. Several other factors for rape are proposed: anger, power, sadism (Groth, 1979), or sexual gratification (Felson & Tedeschi, 1994). Factors such as family honour, upbringing and societal factors (wartime) could also influence a person to rape. Especially wartime triggers something in people to commit unacceptable behaviour, because the chances of getting caught are low compared to the benefit

of the act. A final risk factor is that as a victim of sexual violence you can become an offender. However, this is not a direct cause as not all victims of sexual violence become offenders and not all offenders are victims (Living Well, 2016). As these factors are linked to humanity and being human, it is unlikely that rape, or any form of sexual violence, will disappear from human society.

## 1.5. Effects on victims

The effects of sexual violence on the lives of victims can be severe: potential problems include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, addiction, and pain during sex (MIND Korrelatie, 2019). In fact, if you have experienced rape, there is a 49% chance you develop PTSD. This percentage is a lot higher compared to other traumas, see figure 5.

Mental, physical and social problems are linked to experiencing sexual violence. These problems can last a lifetime if left untreated, which is what happens to most victims (Bicanic, 2018).

The reason we currently know more about sexual violence, its victims, and the effects than a decade ago is because of the #MeToo movement on Twitter. From 2017 on, (famous) women who experienced sexual violence made their stories public on social media and television hoping to receive justice and raise awareness in society. However, the effects of MeToo were not only positive for the victims. Reactions such as: ‘her clothes were too revealing, so she was asking for it’ were quite common. Victim-blaming is often the case with sexual violence and can even be worse for the victim than not revealing the violence (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2018). Not only outsiders are guilty of victim-blaming, police officers or medical staff can also contribute to the existing stigma. Although MeToo raised awareness and opened the door to share stories, for a lot of people (and especially victims) talking about sexual violence remains a taboo (Meeuwssen, 2013).

## 1.6. Help

Studies have shown that the quicker a victim gets help, the chances for psychological problems decrease significantly, as well as the chance of sexual violence happening again. However, only a few (2%) reach out to find help (Bicanic, 2018). Victims hesitate to reach out, because of feelings such as shame, fear and guilt, which counteracts the healing process.

Several treatments exist for the people that do search for help. Practitioners widely recommend Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Also, umbrella organizations such as the Sexual Assault Centers, combining law enforcement, forensics and psychologists could help within the first week after the event. Slachtofferhulp Nederland

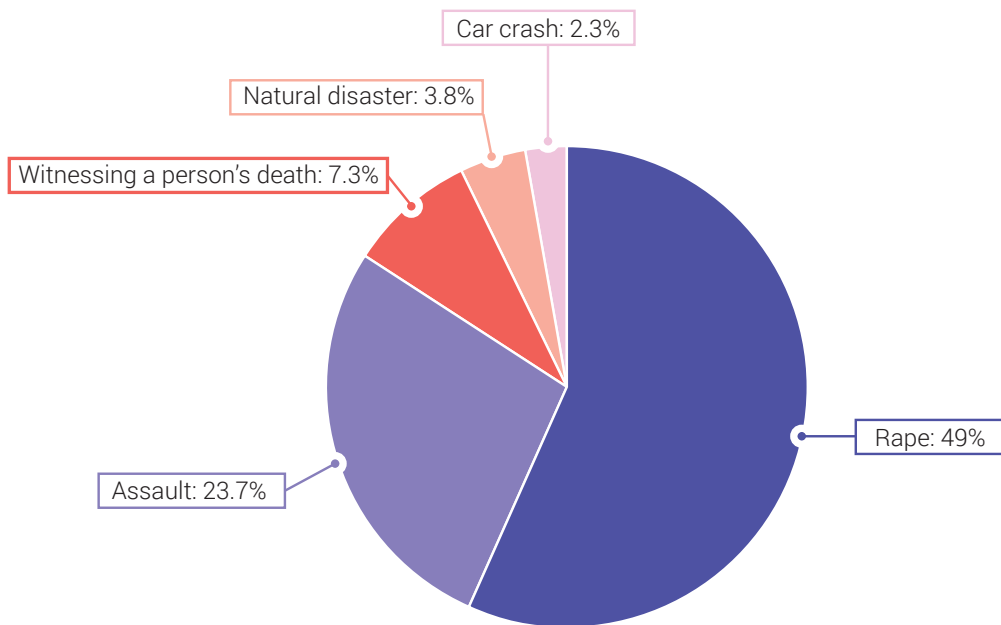


Figure 5. Chances of developing PTSD after traumatic events (Bicanic, Engelhard, & Sijbrandij, Posttraumatische stressstoornis en seksuele problemen na seksueel geweld, 2014)

Going to the police is often top of mind when hearing about this subject. However, as mentioned earlier, the police were long avoided by victims. This is because of the way they treated victims, victim-blaming them during interviews, and questioning their confessions (Bertling, Mack, Timmermans, & Vonk, 2017). The police were also avoided because proving sexual violence and getting a conviction is very hard with sexual violence, see subchapter 1.7.

is a large foundation, which focuses on legal, financial and psychological help. Victims can also see a psychologist or get help at specialized organisations such as Blijf Groep, Qpido and Fier, see figure 6. However, both victims that have been treated and the ones that have not can still experience the problems mentioned in subchapter 1.5 (Bicanic, Engelhard, & Sijbrandij, 2014). There is no guarantee that receiving treatment will benefit every victim.

## 1.7. The law

The current law in the Netherlands revolves around provable coercion. To get a conviction, it needs to be proven that force was used or that the offender threatened to use force (Openbaar Ministerie, 2020). When a victim *freezes*, a common survival reaction in traumatic situations called tonic immobility (Ford, 2015), there are often no signs of force and thus the offender can not be convicted. A bill is proposed to change the law from 'coercion' to 'against the will', meaning that the offender is punishable if he knew (or could know) the offending act was against the will of the victim (Rijksoverheid, 2019). This bill is similar to the law in Spain and Sweden. At the time of writing this report, the bill was not accepted yet in the Netherlands.

Sexual abuse is an exception to the current law as it is punishable without the use of violence. "For example, all sexual acts by an adult with a child are punishable, because by definition there is inequality. Other situations in which an age or power difference is abused also fall under the law, for example when a social worker has sex with a client" (Openbaar Ministerie, 2019).

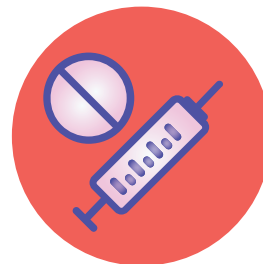
The Dutch law also makes a distinction between sexual violence with a victim who is unconscious (and under the influence of alcohol or drugs) or conscious. Raping an unconscious person is defined as sexual abuse. The maximum penalty for raping a person who is unconscious is lower than for raping a conscious person (Wet & Recht, nd).



*Force*



*Sexual abuse*



*Intoxication*



## 1.8. Key takeaways for this project

- Unfortunately quite a lot of sexual violence happens in the Netherlands, with an estimate of 100,000 victims a year.
- The relationship between the victim and the offender plays a big role in processing the event and the effects the sexual violence has on the victim.
- The vast majority of victims (98%) does not look for help, even though there is help available. Also, getting help does not guarantee to live a life without psychological problems.
- A conviction for sexual violence is difficult to get when there are no signs of force, for instance in the case of tonic immobility.
- 94% of the offenders are male and 90% of the victims are female.



Figure 6. Help organisations in the Netherlands



Psychische problemen bij jongeren zijn nog nooit zo groot geweest

**50%** **20%**

Van de jongeren met psychische problemen zijn 50% jonger dan 25 jaar en 20% jonger dan 18 jaar.

De adoltescentie leeftien kan om depressie en burn-out te voorkomen door in te zetten op weerbaarheid en een gezond zelfbeeld



Photo by @FrankByRenee during Garage2020 demo-night 2019





## Project outline

In this chapter, the project assignment and research questions are stated. After this, the approach and the graduation organisation are presented.

2.1 Assignment  
2.2 Approach  
2.3 Garage2020



## 2.1. Assignment

Taking into account the prevalence in the Netherlands, the severe influence it has on victims' lives and the fact that sexual violence won't disappear, the reasons for this project are stated.

The assignment is formulated as:

**design for female victims (between 12-24 years old at the time of the event) of sexual violence in a way that reduces the negative effects on their daily lives.**

The scope of the project is the 'after-event' phase, shown in figure 7, because the previously mentioned problems (subchapter 1.5) mostly occur in this phase. The research group is female\* victims aged 12-24 years old. This choice is made for research purposes.\*\* The goal is to minimize the negative influence of the sexually violent event(s) on the daily lives of female victims.

The following research questions are formulated to support the project:

*Q1: What are common problems experienced by female victims as a result of sexual violence and how are these connected?*

*Q2: Where in the support system for victims of sexual violence is it best to intervene?*

*Q3: What is the meaning of sexual violence in the Netherlands?*

*Q4: What can be offered to female victims of sexual violence in order to minimize the negative effects on their daily lives?*

The final deliverable consists of a report supporting the design, a validated design in some form (product, service, campaign etc.) and a presentation. For the project brief approved by the board of examiners, see Appendix 1.

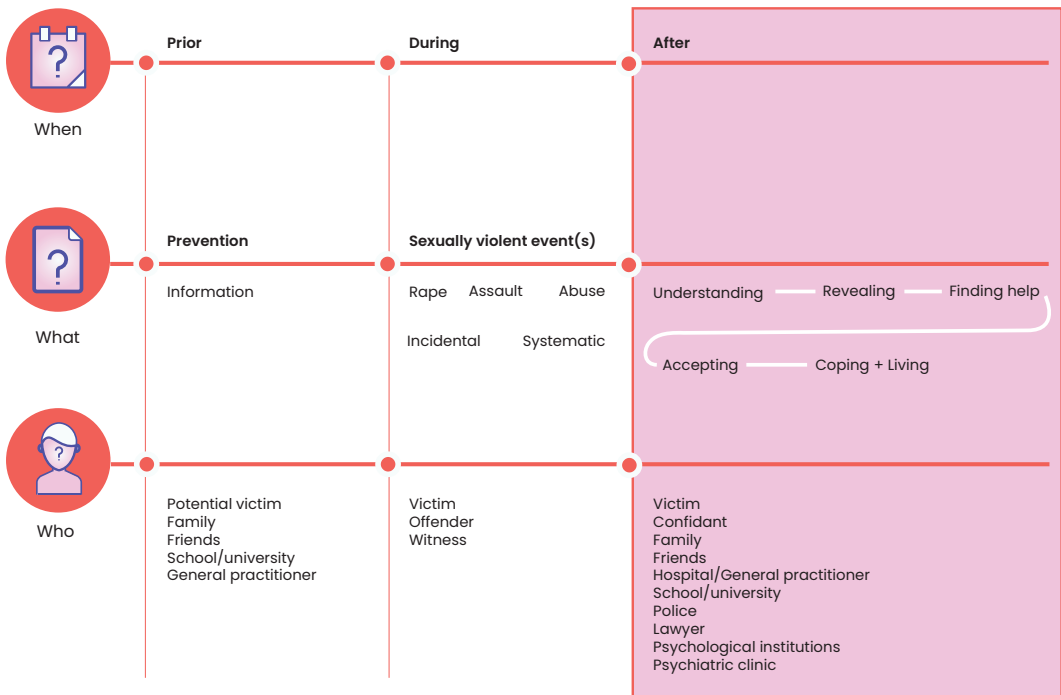


Figure 7. Phases of sexual violence

\* This does not mean that the final design can't be used by males, it is created by focusing on the needs of female victims, which can be similar to the needs of male victims.

\*\* Firstly, this is the largest group experiencing sexual violence in the Netherlands (Centrum Seksueel Geweld, 2019). Secondly, this group is more verbal and present in the media and easier to approach for this research than for instance male or younger victims.

## 2.2. Approach

### Social design

Why use design to tackle the complex, social problem of sexual violence? Being a designer, I lack the particular knowledge psychologists, caregivers and therapists have. However, as a designer I have the ability to reframe a complex problem into a manageable problem. Additionally, designers typically can gather relevant information from the above-mentioned domains, interpret this information from the perspective of the user and create useful concepts. Due to this fit between design thinking and societal problems,

many designers are shifting their focus from commercial projects to social projects (Tromp & Hekkert, 2010), like this project.

### Methods

The scope of this project, explained in subchapter 2.1, is large. The subject of this project is complex. At the start, it is not clear yet what the exact problems are and which problem needs to be solved in order to help victims of sexual violence. A method that can support in framing the problem, and that will ensure the need for the design from a user perspective is Vision in Product design, ViP (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2009), see figure 8. Besides these benefits, ViP also provides guidelines which could be used to structure the project.

The key elements that were used from the ViP method include an exploration of the future context of support after sexual violence, a detailed worldview and a translation of these insights into a framing statement. The deconstruction phase was left out as there was no current product to investigate, apart from therapy. A systemic design (Sevaldson & Jones, 2019) method was used to complement this context exploration by looking at the subject through a systemic lens, identifying all relations in the system (within stakeholders, processes) and finding places to intervene. In this way, systemic design helped clarify the complexity of the subject.

In short: ViP helped decide **what** (problem) to design for, **why** and **how** this design should be (interaction vision & product qualities), systemic design helped decide **where** to intervene in the system including **which** stakeholders.

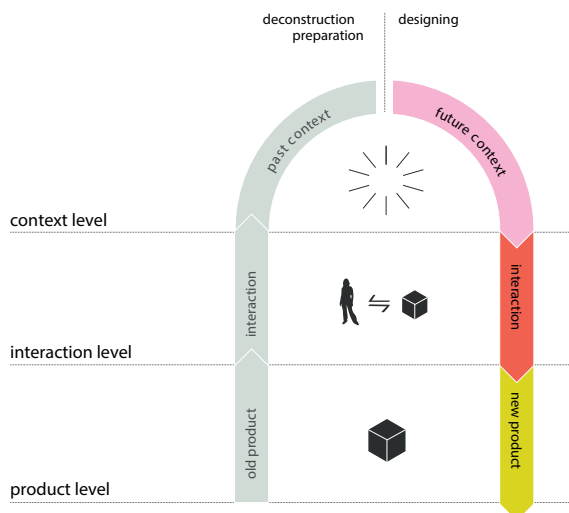


Figure 8. ViP method (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2009)

## Process

First, the future context (ViP) was built around the domain of support after sexual violence, by interviewing victims and experts and exploring the context. Context factors were clustered and themes were identified. A system GIGA map (Sevaldson, 2012) was created, visualizing the system of support after sexual violence and its relations, indicating where to intervene. A worldview was written, summarizing the research findings. Then, a vision on the problem was formed before designing the product/solution, consisting of a statement, an interaction vision and product qualities. This formed the basis for ideation and concepting. (Q1, 2&3)

During ideation, a generative session was held, followed by rapidly prototyping ideas. Multiple ideas were tested. The best idea was optimized into a final design concept. This final design was validated by experts and users. (Q4)

See figure 9 for the reading guide.

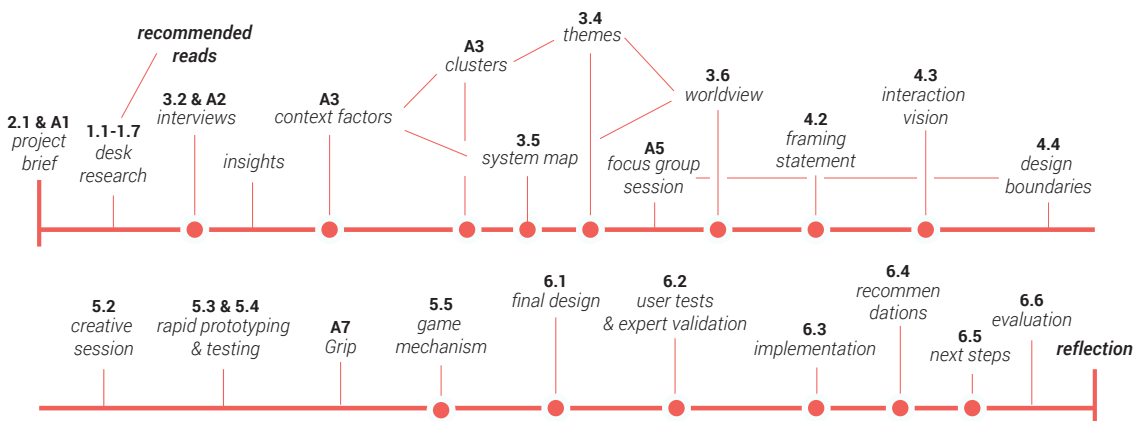


Figure 9. Reading guide

## 2.3. Garage2020

Garage2020 is a network in the Netherlands which develops social design projects aimed at relieving and radically changing youth services. They create alternative solutions to existing problems in youth services, in order to ultimately 'make youth care unnecessary'. The mentality of Garage2020 is to share (relevant insights) amongst the Garages in Leiden, Rotterdam, Twente, Utrecht and Brabant in order to improve youth services locally and nationally. The members of Garage2020 all have different backgrounds: in youth care, design, data science, technology or education.

This project was conducted for Garage2020 Amsterdam specifically. Garage2020 Amsterdam feels connected to this project because they believe sexual violence is extremely traumatizing and has major consequences for young people. They have recently entered a partnership with BlijfGroep, a domestic violence organisation, and are actively gaining knowledge on sexual violence. The Garage has relevant resources for this project, particularly close contact with practitioners, foundations and knowledge centers regarding sexual violence.



Figure 10. Logo Garage2020

# Current support after sexual violence

**This chapter contains extensive research used to build the future context (ViP) of support after sexual violence and the accompanying system. The chapter starts with defining the context domain and timeframe. Additionally, the research method is explained, after which the research results are presented: problems, themes, the system and worldview. The chapter is closed with key takeaways. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 are answered in this chapter:**

***Q1: What are common problems experienced by female victims as a result of sexual violence and how are these connected? - subchapter 3.3***

***Q2: Where in the system of sexual violence is it best to intervene? - subchapter 3.5***

***Q3: What is the meaning of sexual violence in the Netherlands? - subchapter 3.6***

- 3.1 Domain & time frame
- 3.2 Research method
- 3.3 Common problems
- 3.4 Themes
- 3.5 The system
- 3.6 Worldview
- 3.7 Conclusion





### 3.1. Domain & time frame

As mentioned in subchapter 2.1, the domain of this project is:

#### **support after sexual violence for female victims**

The time frame is now - 2 years in the future, in consultation with the graduation organisation.

### 3.2. Research method

#### **Information finding**

Information on support after sexual violence was sought through various types of media. Exploring the context varied from desk research, literature, podcasts and documentaries to victim and expert interviews, seminars and a court hearing.

The emphasis laid on conducting interviews, for personal and project reasons. A personal goal was to practice interviewing, especially with this sensitive subject. Besides this, the personal aspect of sexual violence also required first-hand information from people with private or professional experience. Through different channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, word of mouth, colleagues) 13 people were willing to participate in an interview: 7 victims and 6 experts. For all interviews, the goal was to find context factors and relationships.

#### *Victim interviews*

7 people were interviewed on their experiences with sexual violence. The participants' experiences were quite varied, as you can see in table 1. Because of the sensitive subject, attention was paid to prepare the interview and create an interview guide, which can be found in Appendix 2. The goal of these interviews was to find out more about:

- the problems victims have since the event
- the people / organisations / companies victims were in contact with after the event
- why they chose to have treatments, or why not
- which treatments they have had, and what the results were
- who they did or didn't talk to about the event and why

#### *Expert interviews*

A variety of experts were interviewed, see figure 11. This variety helped to build an interesting and broad context. For these interviews, an interview guide wasn't used, as every expert had a different connection to the subject and was prepared individually. Keeping in mind the context and system map, the goal of these interviews was to learn about:

- the victims' problems
- the different ways of treatment
- the victims' reactions to treatments/therapies/services
- the functioning of certain organisations
- the developments in the field

Interview #	Current age	Age at time of sexual violence	Connection to offender
Interview 1 (Semi-structured)	22	20	Distant friend
Interview 2 (Pilot) male	24	4	Neighbor boy
Interview 3	37	35	Ex-husband
Interview 4	21	11 & 17	Classmates, boyfriend
Interview 5	23	15	Camp leader
Interview 6	38	13, 18 & 25	Unknown, dance teacher, ex-husband
Interview 7	28	17	Unknown

Table 1. Victim interview classification



**Femke Alsemgeest**  
Writer, Experience expert  
Beschadigdlichaam.nl



**Willy van Berlo**  
Researcher  
Rutgers Knowledge Center



**Maaïke van de Graaf**  
Policy advisor Approach  
Municipality of Rotterdam



**Roos Koolhof**  
Behavioral scientist  
Qpido



**Collette Janssens**  
Homeopath, Experience expert



**Ruth Schippers**  
Program leader  
Spirit Specifiek

Figure 11. Interviewed experts

### 3.3. Common problems

#### Data analysis

After gathering all information and transcribing all interviews, insights were first extracted. These insights were then selected and formed into context factors, and/or translated to the system map. The step from an insight to a context factor was a conscious one: as described in ViP, context factors need to be original, novel, appropriate and fitting within the future context. This rule helped eliminate a lot of insights. While the objective for clustering was to reduce the number of factors, in the system map this was the opposite: the richer the map, the better. With the definitive set of context factors (see Appendix 3) it was possible to cluster, to find themes and eventually create a worldview.

#### Initial learnings

- Hearing how people became victims of sexual violence made me realize how dangerously easy it is to experience it. These experiences happened so unexpectedly, and with such severe consequences.
- Hearing about the problems from actual people made me realize the severity of the problems far more than reading about it in the literature. This made me even more motivated to design something useful.
- Almost all people I spoke to acknowledged that sexual violence still is a taboo in Dutch society.
- Not all sexually violent events have the same (amount of) effect on a victim. This difference can be seen between victims experiencing the same type of sexual violence, but it can also be seen within a victim experiencing different types in her life.
- It is possible that the effects of sexual violence on victims disappear for a certain period of time (months, years) and reappear more severely.

*Research question 1: What are common problems experienced by female victims as a result of sexual violence and how are these connected?*

Unfortunately, quite a lot of problems were uncovered at the victim side. At the start of all problems, lie the feelings of **shame, guilt and fear**. These are universal for victims of sexual violence.

**Fear**, or a feeling of being unsafe, can lead to avoidance. Avoiding men, avoiding friends with confronting questions, avoiding everything that can jeopardize the feeling of safety. Fear can also be a factor for developing an **eating disorder**, 'I don't want to be attractive anymore because that makes me unsafe'. Fear can also develop into **trust issues** or a **fear of commitment**. **Triggers** can cause an unsafe feeling. Experiencing a trigger can cause reliving the experience or flashbacks, at any point in the day.

**Shame** and **guilt** can be deeply rooted in the victim's mind, preventing her from reaching out to friends or finding help. The event remains **undisclosed**. The difficulties of shame, guilt and the silence around the subject is that **it is unique to sexual violence**, compared to other traumas. It is also ungrounded: feeling ashamed of what somebody else has done and feeling guilty for not stopping it happening to you or others.

**Negative self-image**. This negativity is focused on the specifics of the event. Whether the victim fought and lost or froze feeds the thoughts of 'being weak', 'being worthless'. This is a result of the shame and guilt feelings. This negativity can further develop into a **depression**: 'I don't want to be here anymore' and **suicidal thoughts**.

As mentioned in subchapter 1.5, **post-traumatic stress disorder** is common among victims of sexual violence. Just as **nightmares**, **concentration problems** and **burnouts**, which can affect (professional) performance.



Unfortunately, only victims of sexual violence can understand each other best. Friends and family simply can't fully understand it, because they haven't experienced it. This **misunderstanding** is unfortunate as it can lead to a deep **feeling of being alone**, and eventually **isolation**. Especially when they **victim-blame** her. The social circle becomes smaller.

Lastly, the most taboo problem victims can suffer from are **physical problems** sustained by the event. Think of incontinence, pain during sex, pain while going to the bathroom, pain when putting on/off clothes, physical damages, and scars, which act as constant daily triggers.

In short, psychological, relational and physical problems are common problems after sexual violence.

#### Reflection

- Reading this list of common problems might trigger the thought that experiencing sexual violence will ruin someone's life for good. This is not the case for the people I interviewed. The people I spoke to were able to use the event(s) and turn it into something positive, a strength or a motivation to help others.
- Interviewing victims and experts helped speed up the process of making this list, as they were able to share connections between problems and sexual violence that I had not yet found in literature. These people do their own research and they do it thoroughly.

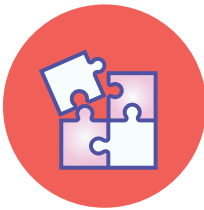


Illustration by Michelle Geerlings

### 3.4. Themes

Taking out the problems mentioned before, the remaining clusters (see Appendix 3) correspond to 5 overarching themes:

#### *Shared problem*



“When I finally told my mother, she blamed herself for not noticing it (at the time). I felt guilty for not telling her sooner.” - Interview 4

Having experienced sexual violence leads to a change in behaviour of the victim, mostly due to the feelings of fear, shame and guilt. For instance, not wanting to leave the house at night. This affects the people close to her in a practical sense that they can't meet with her outside her house at night. But the knowledge that this has happened to a friend or family member also affects the loved ones on an emotional level, often feeling fear, shame and guilt as well. (clusters 4,5,15,16)

#### *Knowledge gap*



“The second psychiatric nurse told me that the rape was my fault. She should not have been given a diploma. I didn't try therapy again after that.” - Interview 1

Knowledge gaps occur at the victim side, outsider's side, the professional and the medical side. At the victim side, this results in unjust emotions, as mentioned in subchapter 3.3. The other important stakeholders in the system, family and friends, unfortunately, don't have the appropriate knowledge to act in favor of the victim, as personal conversation is needed to know the preferred way to act. (clusters 5,15,16,9)

### *Personal*



"All our treatments at Pinq (closed treatment center) are tailored to the girl." - Ruth Schippers

Every case of sexual violence is different and every person, victim and loved one, reacts differently. (cluster 12)

### *Safety*



"Safety is the keyword. Victims need safety: to talk about it, to leave the house, to start treatment, to have social relations." - Femke Alsemgeest

Safety lies in the perception of the victim. Situations that look safe to non-victims don't feel safe to the victim and nobody can change that feeling for her. Safety is a burden because it prevents the victim from living her old life. Finally, safety is a paradox, as a person can never be 100% safe from sexual violence. (clusters 1,2,3)

### *Time*



"There was a period of 8 years where I didn't pay any attention to it. Having sex was problem-free during that period. Now I get so tense at the thought alone." - Interview 7

Every person has their own timeline. The time it takes to reach certain milestones (see figure 13) differs per person. The effect the sexual violence has on a victim's daily life also fluctuates over time. (clusters 10,11)

These 5 themes are interrelated, see figure 12. However, the themes Time and Personal transcend the other themes. They are always applicable. They are to be touched upon in subchapter 4.4.

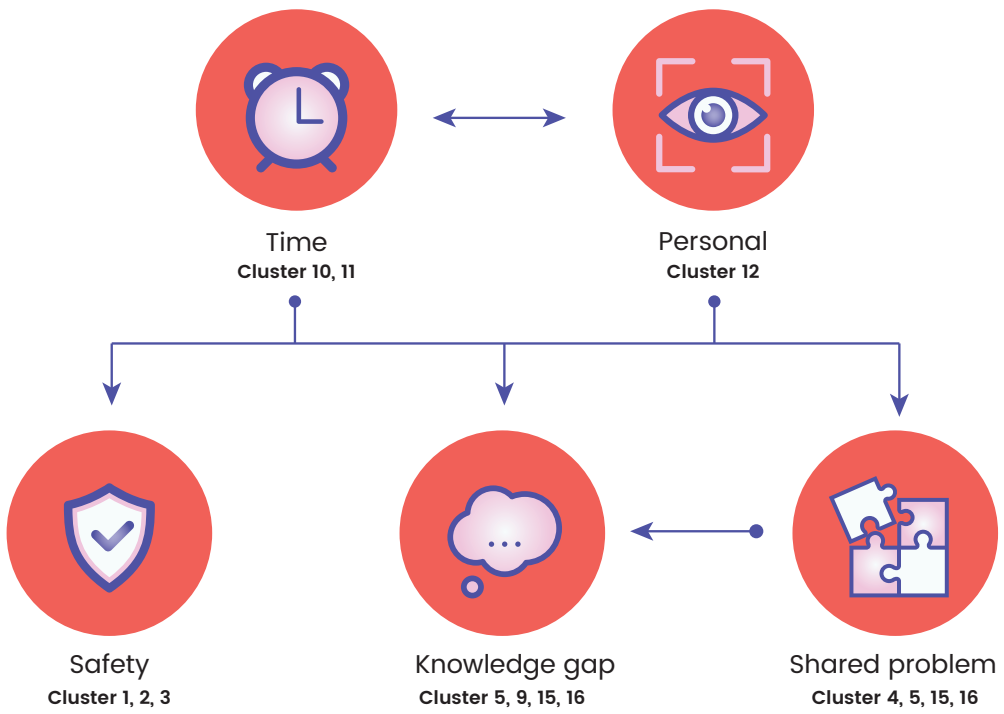


Figure 12. Relations between themes



### 3.5. The system

Simultaneously with ViP activities, a system GIGA map (Sevaldson, 2012) was created. The purpose of this map was to visualize all stakeholders and their relations (layer 1), as well as the victim's problems and emotions in the timeline (layer 2). See figure 13.

The next step was to enter the ViP clusters into the map and see which clusters match which stakeholder(s), see figure 14. Unsurprisingly, most could be placed at the victim.

Having all this information contained in one map made it possible to decide where to intervene and to answer *research question 2: Where in the system of sexual violence is it best to intervene?*

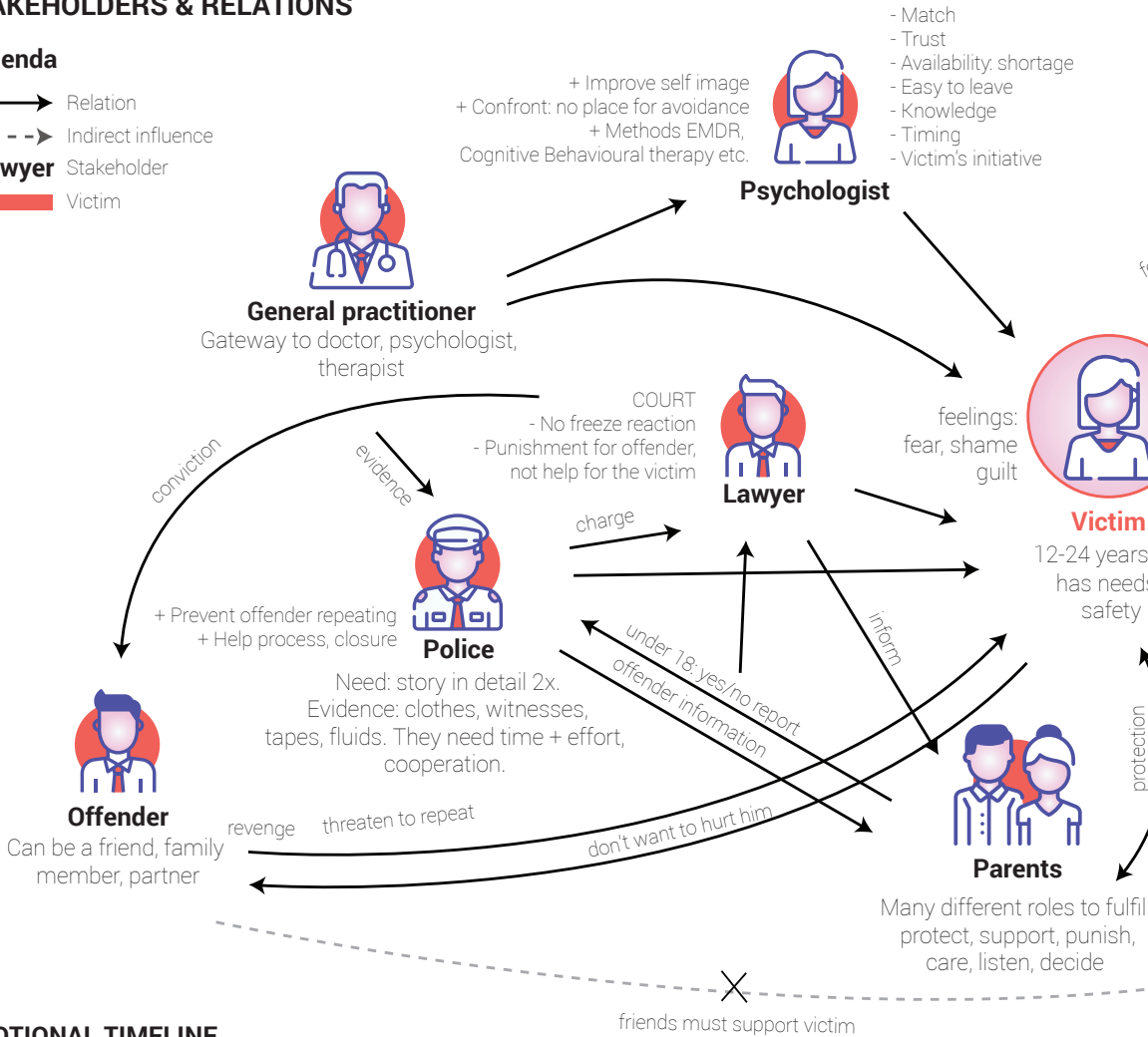
When looking at the system, it became clear that the people close to the victim, the loved ones are important. This importance can be seen in the relation arrows going both ways: between the victim and the parents, the friends, and the partner. They (their reactions, actions) have a strong influence on the victim, but they also get influenced by the victim, since the event might result in a changing relationship with the victim. This corresponds to the theme 'shared problem'. Iva Bicanic, founder of the sexual assault centres in the Netherlands, confirms the importance of others; "Processing can't be done alone."

Through the system it also became clear that certain stakeholders (police, medical, public) are (more) difficult to reach, even though there are problems that need solving. For instance, the public. There are many misconceptions about (victims of) sexual violence rooted in Dutch society, but to try to correct those would require extensive research into changing the public thought, exceeding the scope of this project. It would also require a nationwide effort, the opposite of Maximum Effect with Minimal Means (Hekkert, Crilly, & Da Silva, 2016). As for the police and Dutch law, change in these systems requires public awareness and political intervention. I hope to contribute to this awareness with this project, but achieving political intervention requires means beyond my reach as a designer. Looking at the map from my perspective as a designer, the places where I believe I can make a difference and where intervention is required are illustrated in gray in figure 15.

# STAKEHOLDERS & RELATIONS

## Legenda

- Relation
- - - -> Indirect influence
- Lawyer** Stakeholder
- Victim



## EMOTIONAL TIMELINE

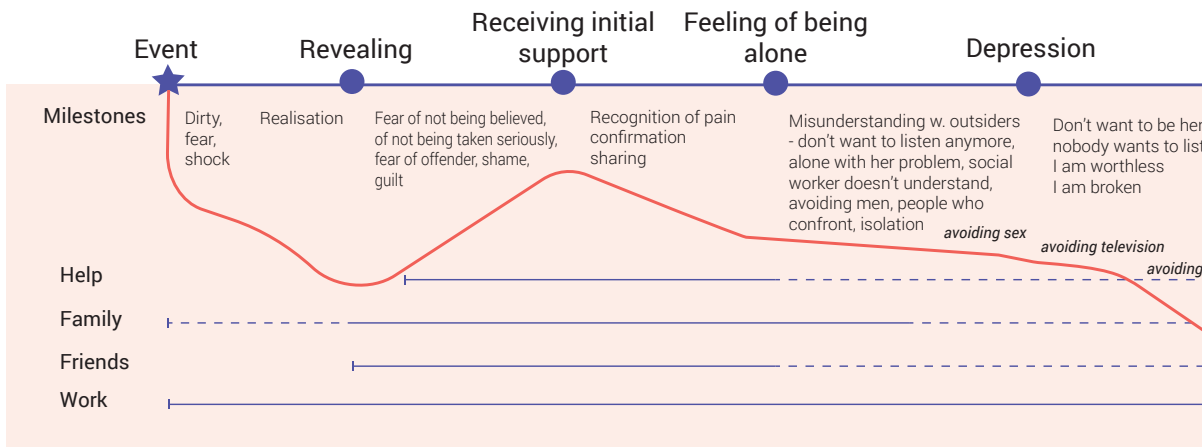
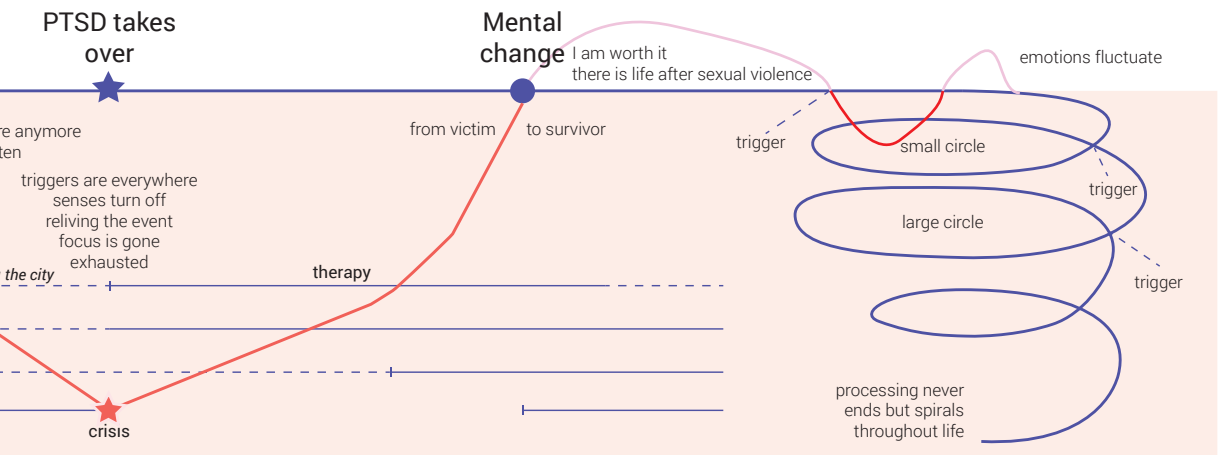
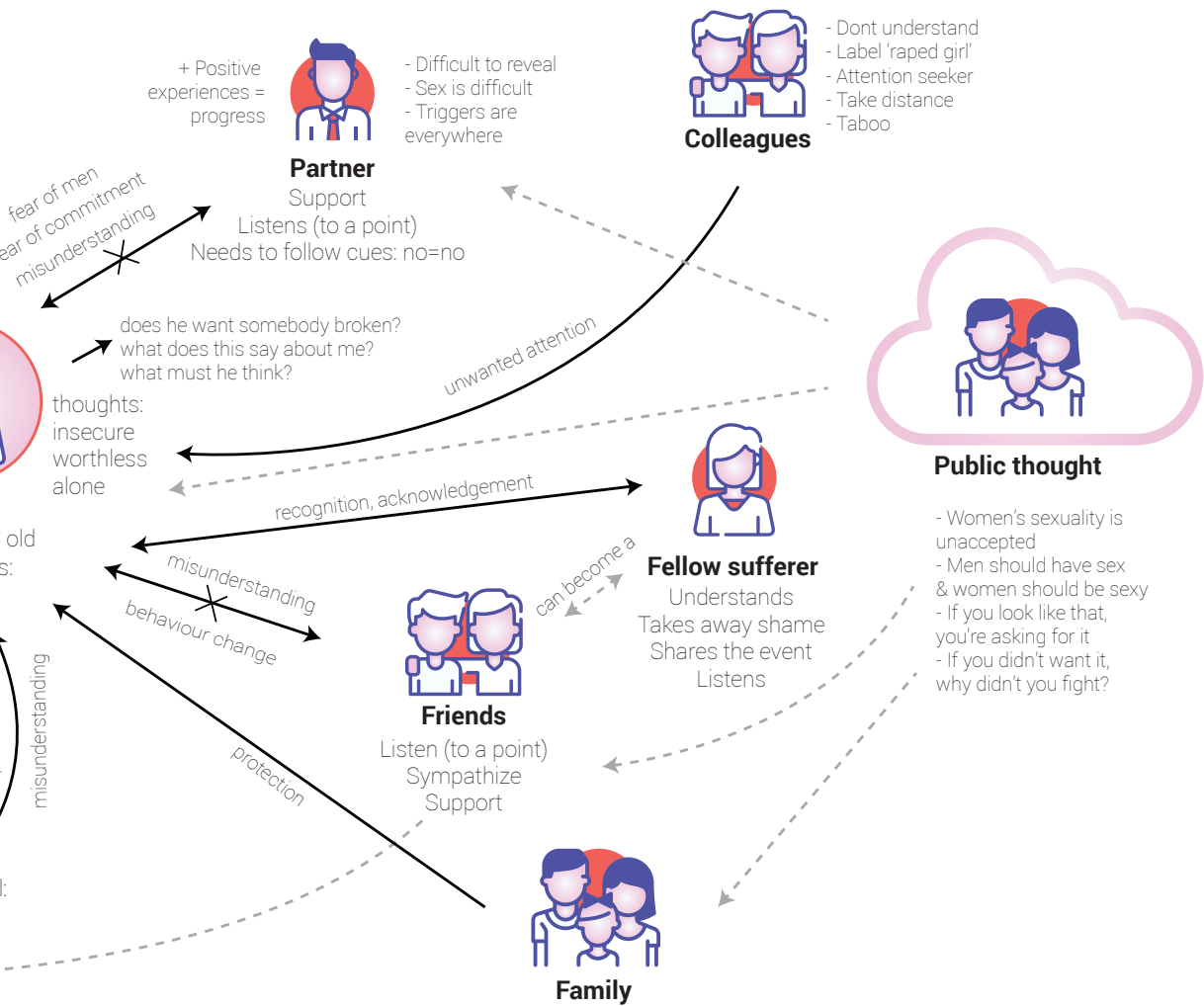


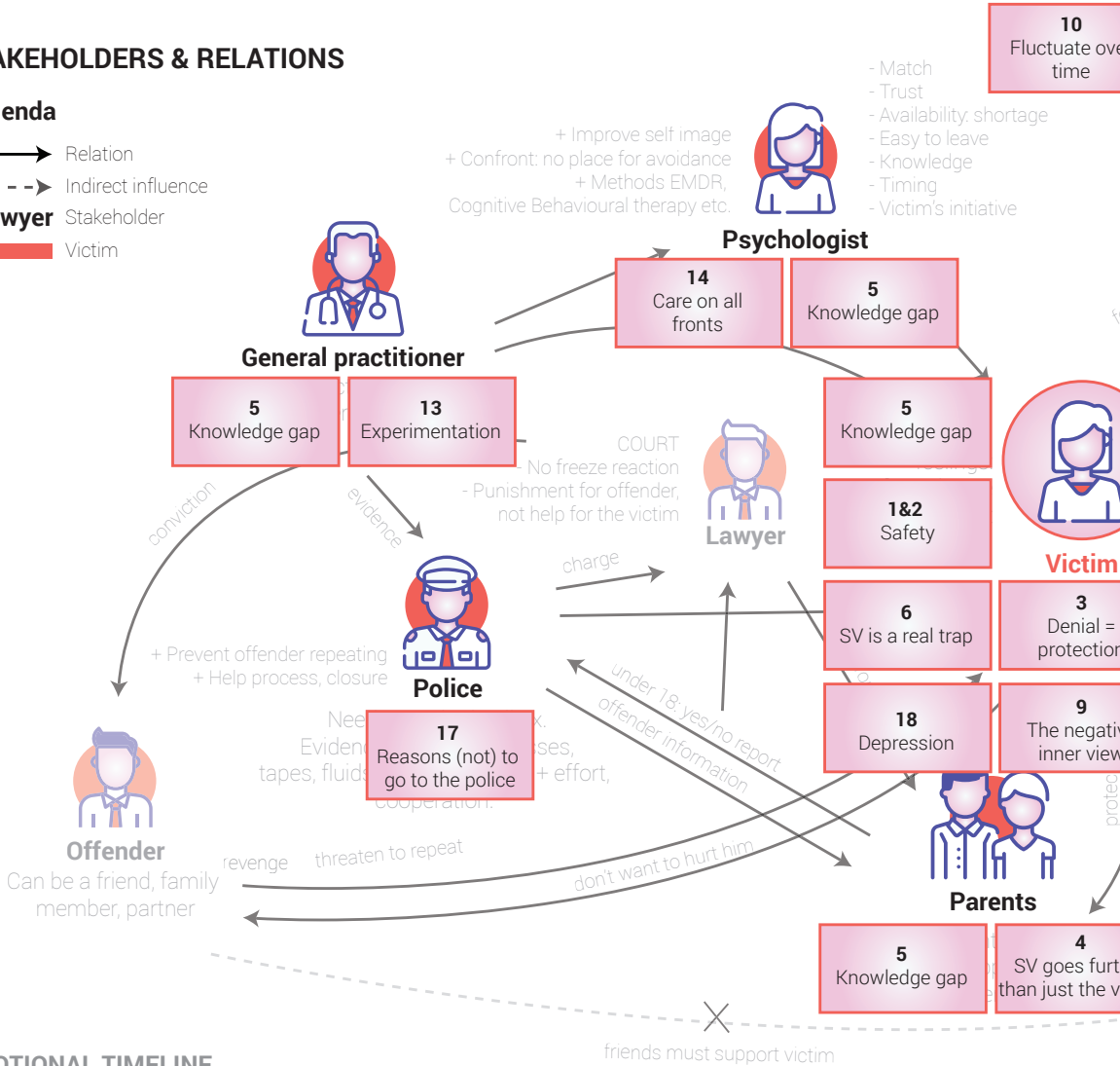
Figure 13. System map



# STAKEHOLDERS & RELATIONS

## Legenda

- Relation
- - - → Indirect influence
- Lawyer** Stakeholder
- Victim



## EMOTIONAL TIMELINE

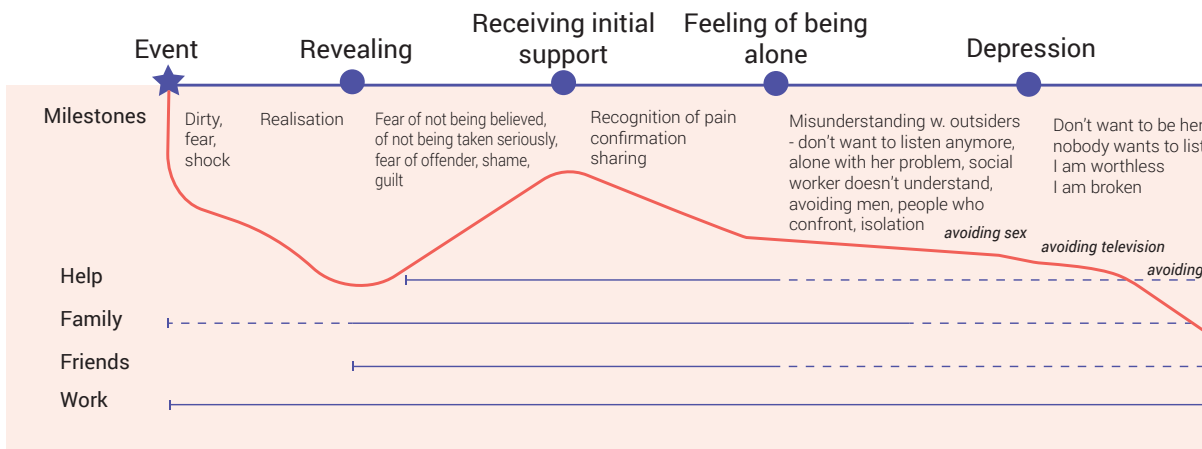
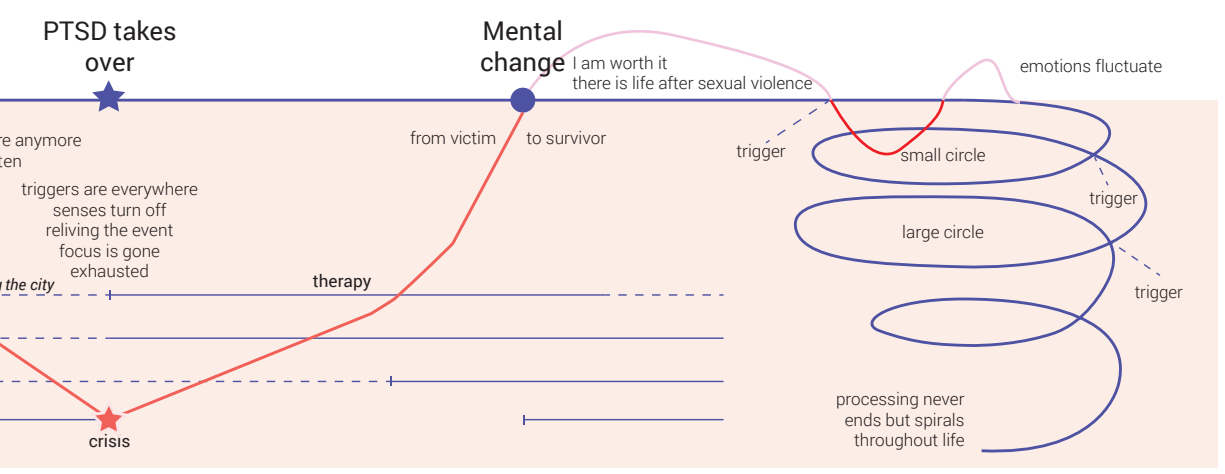
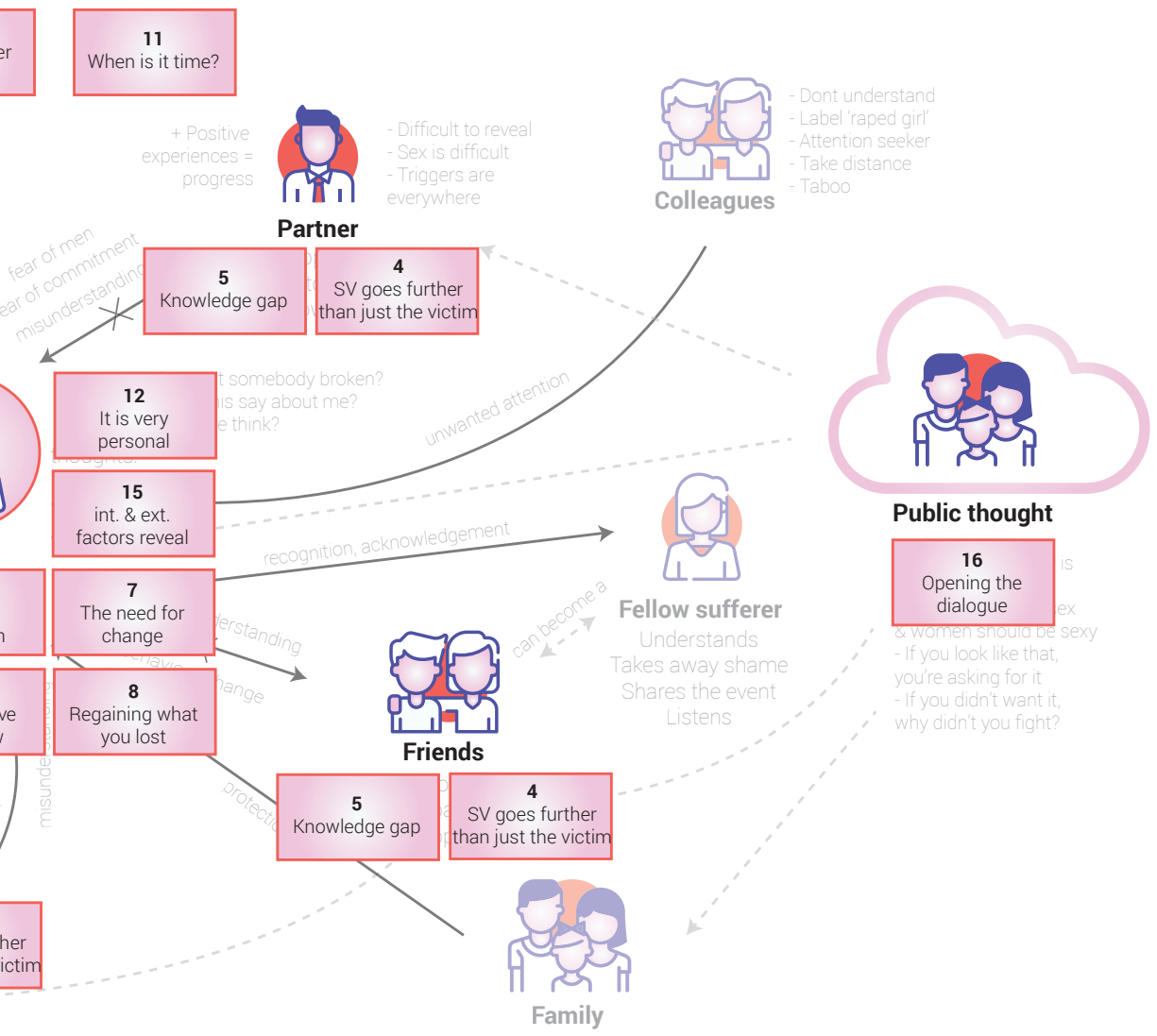


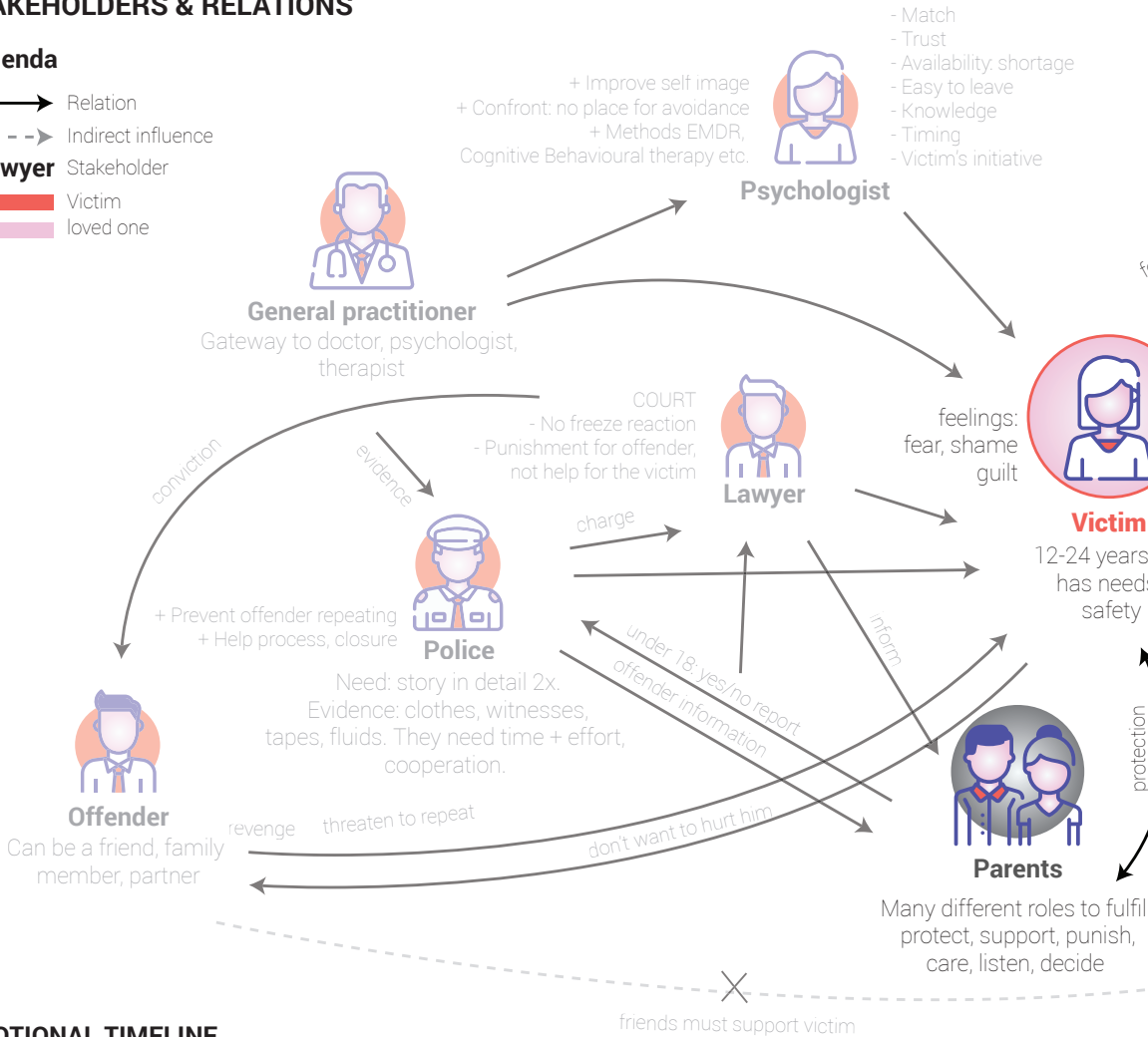
Figure 14. Clusters in system map



# STAKEHOLDERS & RELATIONS

## Legenda

- Relation
- - - → Indirect influence
- Lawyer** Stakeholder
- Victim
- loved one



## EMOTIONAL TIMELINE

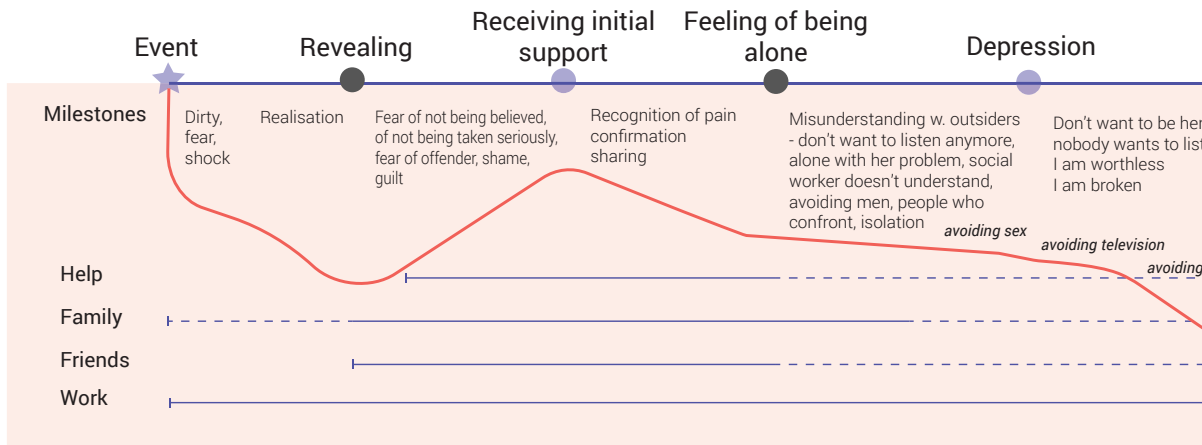
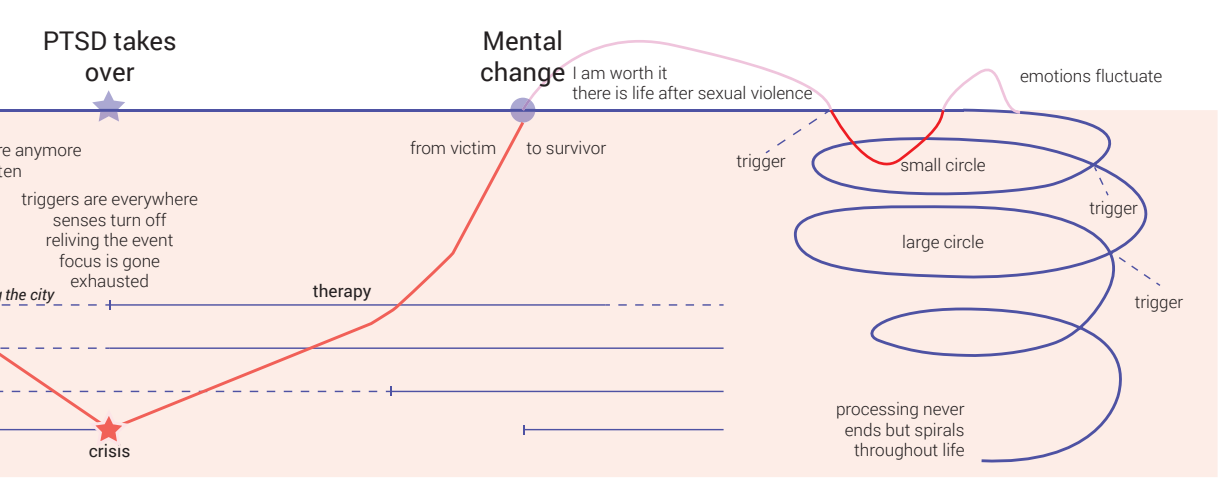
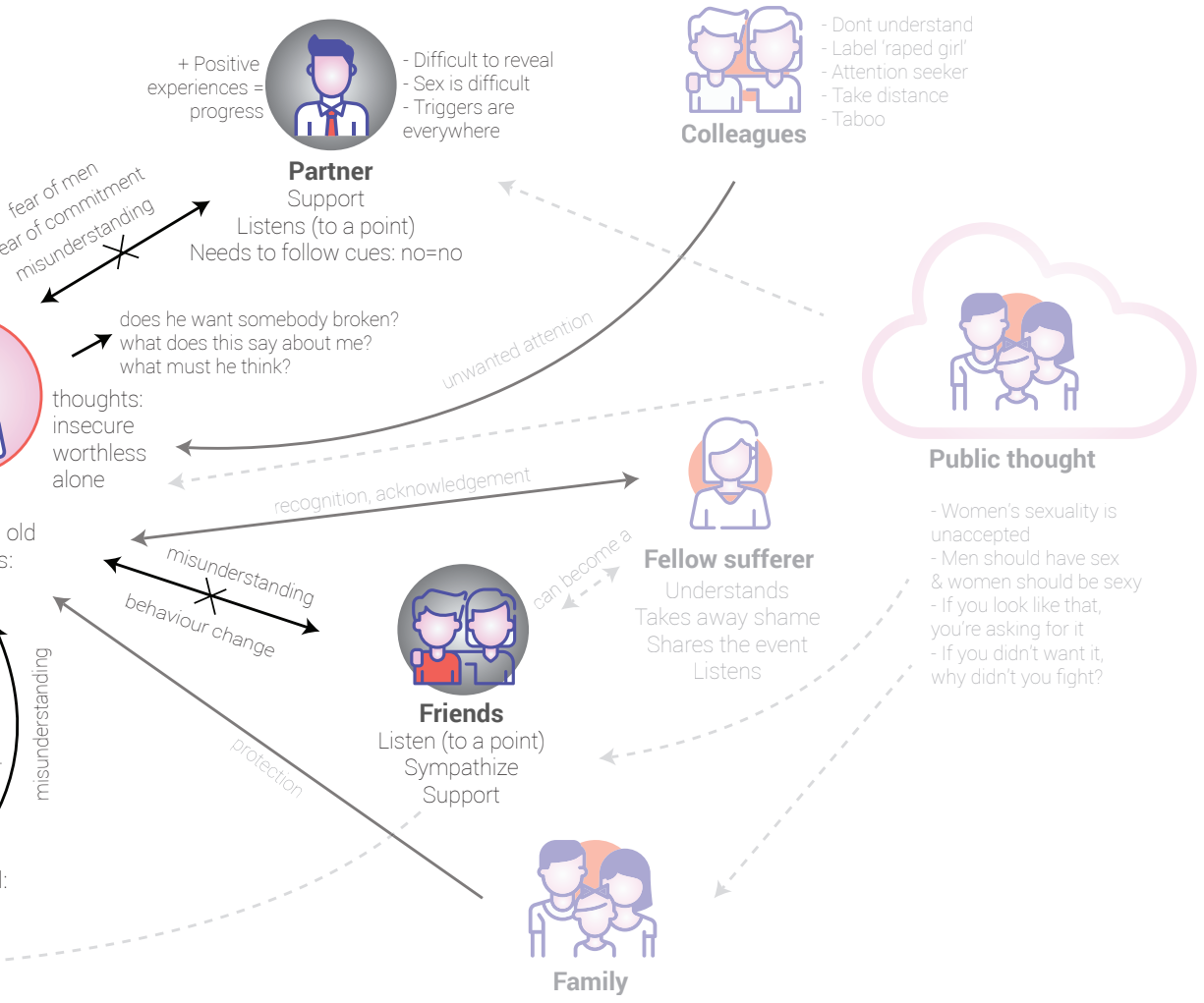


Figure 15. Places to intervene in system map



### 3.6. Worldview

Due to the large amount of information derived from literature and interviews with victims and experts, a conceptual summary will help you, the reader and me, the designer, to zoom in on the most relevant results. This worldview is written from my perspective as a researcher and summarizes the context of support after sexual violence in the Netherlands. This section also answers *research question 3: What is the meaning of sexual violence in the Netherlands?*

The context of support after sexual violence appears to be a complex and for the most part negative world for the victim. Both internal and external factors play their part in the victim's daily life.

Internal factors: loss of safety

When talking about internal factors, safety plays an important role. It is a key term because it defines and controls a victim's daily life, from the moment the sexual assault happened. Similar to a robbery, the victim lost things: the contact with her body, her memory or her ability to trust. The attack also took the feeling of safety away. Now, her actions and thoughts revolve (unconsciously) around the question: *'will this ensure my safety?'*. Avoidance is a direct result, as victims avoid anything that can harm their so-called safety. Think for example of; certain places, people, television shows, even eating. The interesting thing is that practical measures for physical safety, such as getting a guard dog and installing five different locks, do not ensure the feeling of safety. It is all about the perception of safety in the mind of the victim. In order to live free again, she needs to retrieve the feeling of safety. The paradox is that she can never be completely safe (from sexual harm), since nobody can. On top of that, victims often experience triggers, the occurrence of which lies beyond their control. These can happen at any moment and create a feeling of unsafety that is hard to prevent.

External factors: (Re)actions of the social environment, the loved ones, of the victim

When looking at the system of support after sexual violence, it becomes clear that the effects of the sexual attack not only affect the victim, they also involve the people close to her, her social environment. People in this group include her parents, her friends and potentially her partner. On the one hand, it affects these people because their relationship with the victim changes. Parents' support and protection roles might increase. Friends need to accept the victim's new rules of safety and behaviour (possibly not going to parties anymore, not talking to boys anymore) and a partner is confronted with the victim's trouble with sex, intimacy and trust.

On the other hand, their reactions and actions largely affect the victim. For instance, when parents put her on house arrest out of protection, she can feel that she is to blame. When friends don't want to talk about it anymore (because they've heard it too many times) she can feel worthless: nobody wants to listen. And lastly, when a boyfriend does not immediately stop when told so during sex, it can repeat the trauma. Besides such actions, their reactions also have a big influence on the victim and her self-image.

Internal and external factors feed victim's negative self-image

For the largest part, the negative self-image is formed by the victim's mind and the details of the attack. Feelings of shame and guilt help to construct this image. If, for instance, her body froze during the attack, this is quickly defined in her mind as *'the inability to save myself'* which then gets changed into *'I am to blame'* or *'I am worthless'*. In reality, it was her body going into survival mode and she is definitely not to blame, however, she does not know that. The guilt feelings are directed to herself (for not saving herself) but also to people in her social environment: *'because of what happened, I am a burden to my parents', 'I feel guilty*



*because I can't have sex with my boyfriend'*. It is also based on (ungrounded) assumptions of what people close to her must think about her. A small part of forming a negative self-image comes from reactions of other people, for example: *'if you didn't want it, why didn't you fight?'*, *'if you wore that, you were asking for it'*. This victim-blaming just confirms the shame and guilt feelings that the victim already had. Luckily this negative self-image might improve over time.

Talking about the event helps healing, but is very hard for both victims and outsiders

In order to validate the self-image and start processing the event, people need to talk about it. Sharing experiences can put things in perspective and create understanding. But talking about sexual violence is very difficult, for both the victim and outsiders. For the victim it might not be physically possible to find the words to describe the event, or the fear of not being believed or understood is too high. It can take several years before the reveal and even more years before she might be able to discuss the event. For victims as well as outsiders it can be too confronting, as it brings up emotions such as anger, fear, and disgust. Most people don't know how to respond, don't know how to ask about it and don't dare to bring it up, so they think it's best to avoid the topic completely. And perhaps with that, avoid the person dealing with it as well. The only person that doesn't find it difficult to talk about is a fellow sufferer, who understands the victim best.

Public dialogue does not support victims (yet)

In a larger sense, the public dialogue around sexual violence is also quite closed and the following statements are not yet widely accepted in society: *it is never the victim's fault*, and *nobody wants to get raped*. How to make this common knowledge, when sexual violence is still a taboo subject?

Differences in effects over time and per person make design for support highly complex

Whether and how the above-mentioned problems affect a victim, differs per person and per moment in time. Because this context revolves around humans, it is implicit that they are all unique. Every sexual attack is different and has a different effect on the victim. This is reflected in time. These (negative) effects can disappear and reappear in life. Every victim also has their own pace in processing the event and some reach a certain milestone faster than others. It is also possible to start experiencing negative effects years after the event. When looking at receiving professional care, besides this personal aspect, timing is important. The rule of thumb is: the quicker a victim gets help, the better. Processing is a life long activity, so it is best to start as soon as possible. But if the victim gets help too quickly, it won't help the victim and she will either drop out of the treatment or go back to avoiding. If it is too late, it is possible that post-traumatic stress (or another) disorder has already developed, requiring a lot more help than before. Thus, the 'perfect' timing of support is different for every victim.

As we have seen, the concept of support after sexual violence is highly complex.

### 3.7. Conclusion

There are more than enough problems victims of sexual violence deal with every day. In the system of support after sexual violence, several areas of opportunity for designing for support are found. The key to success lies in deciding for **which problem**, involving **what people**, at **what place** in the system, to design for.

# Design Focus

**This chapter explains the design vision. It contains the decisions needed before starting the design process: the framing statement, the interaction vision and the design boundaries.**

- 4.1 Statement criteria
- 4.2 Framing statement
- 4.3 Interaction vision
- 4.4 Design boundaries



Photo by @FrankByRenee

## 4.1. Statement criteria

There are many different ways of looking at the problems concerning support after sexual violence and how to solve them. The key for success lies in the framing of the statement: which *effect* will be evoked by which *mechanism* using which people. In subchapter 4.2 a statement is formulated which solves one of the problems mentioned in chapter 3 using the right mechanism.

An interesting question is: How do we know if the chosen statement is correct? In reality, only time will tell. Fortunately, the following criteria can help to assess a statement:

- Design ability. The ability to solve the problem through design and by me as a designer.
- MEMM: Maximum effect with minimal means (Hekkert, Crilly, & Da Silva, 2016). The ability to solve the problem with little effort or little means.
- Personal motivation. The statement motivates me to look for a solution.

Multiple statements have been formulated and tested along the above-mentioned criteria. See Appendix 4 for the statements and their evaluation.

## 4.2. Framing statement

The final framing statement is chosen in consultation with Garage2020. As they are not the actual user, the statement has also been discussed with expert Kristine Evertz (Blijf Groep) to ensure the user group fit. Taking into account the criteria proposed in subchapter 4.1, the final framing statement reads:

**I want loved ones to feel confident in engaging with the victim by facilitating the sharing of insecurities in a playful way**

See page 49 for the explanation of the statement. This statement addresses the most important negative effect in the context of support, namely

the deteriorating or missing interaction between the victim and her loved ones. This deteriorating interaction develops due to misunderstanding, ignorance and a lack of confidence on the loved one's side, and a feeling of being alone on the victim's side. This negative effect was found in the common problems (subchapter 3.3) and the system map, see figure 15. The statement also builds on the themes Knowledge gaps, Personal, Shared problem, and the worldview.

The mechanism, sharing insecurities, is essentially opening up to another person about sensitive matters and being vulnerable with that person. Sharing insecurities and thus being vulnerable is necessary in order to get support from other people, as they need to know and understand what is going on. The mechanism is based on Brené Brown's theory which confirms that being vulnerable to each other leads to better relationships (Brown, 2010). She also describes that vulnerability is at the core of our emotions.

A playful design is not necessarily a game. However, the format of a game fits the mechanism perfectly. Firstly, because a game can stimulate the sharing of insecurities, by integrating the sharing of insecurities as a rule. Secondly, because a game can create a playful and light setting to share in. See page 49 for the other benefits of using a game.

The statement results in the following frame:  
Give loved ones confidence to strengthen the interaction between themselves, the loved ones, and the victim. By creating the sharing of insecurities, loved ones can understand the victim better and vice versa thus strengthening the bond between loved ones and the victim.

This statement gives direction during the design phase and ensures the design fulfils the needs of its users.

## Assignment

design for female victims (between 12-24 years old) of sexual violence in a way that reduces the negative effects on their daily lives

Negative effect

deteriorating or missing interaction between victim and loved ones

Statement

I want loved ones to feel confident in engaging with the victim by facilitating the sharing of insecurities in a playful way

The loved one feels confident enough to maintain the interaction with the victim. The loved one dares to start the conversation about the current worries and insecurities. The loved one and victim confide in each other about private matters and have mutual trust.

By sharing your own insecurities as the loved one, you make way for the victim to share her insecurities back, giving her the option to talk about the event. This sharing brings perspective because everybody has insecurities, whether you have experienced sexual violence or not (Craig, 201a9). Being vulnerable helps build trust, leading to better relationships (Brown, 2010). Knowing these insecurities, users can support and understand each other. Sharing ensures that the loved one also feels supported, which is definitely needed (Meeuwsen, 2016).

Creates a low threshold to talk about insecurities. Entertainment as an incentive to use the design (Wiz Cabin, 2019). Lightens the mood, even though serious issues are shared. The users find themselves at the same level. As equals, there are no roles of victim and supporter anymore.



### 4.3. Interaction vision

An interaction vision is chosen to accompany the statement in guiding the design phase. This interaction vision defines how the interaction between the design and the users should feel like. A metaphor was used to illustrate the interaction vision.

#### Going on a blind dinner date

Two people meet for the first time and share a meal in hopes of feeling a connection. They want to get to know each other and proceed to share stories, but they don't know how the other person is going to respond or react, making it an exciting evening. Their food serves as conversation inspiration. Through the nerves and the awkwardness laughter arises.

The interaction should feel **like going on a blind dinner date, with your friend**. The users who already know each other rediscover each other through playing the game. The game serves

as conversation inspiration, uncovering new knowledge for both players. They decide to play the game in the hopes of strengthening their bond. By sharing their insecurities, they understand each other and can support each other better.

The metaphor includes two elements: the daters and the food

#### The daters = the players of the game

The daters represent the players of the game. Their incentive is to get to know each other better, which is why they organized to play the game.

#### The food = the game

The food on the table represents the game. The game acts as a conversation starter, providing topics to talk about and stimulating the players to share their insecurities. As the food changes, the conversation topics change as well.



Figure 16. Still from First Dates NL (BNNVARA)

## Interaction qualities

The metaphor contains several qualities which are desirable for the product-user interaction.

### Staged encounter

Blind dates are often pre-arranged, in the case of the show First Dates even months before the date night. The date, location and time are known to both daters and agreed upon.

### Balanced conversation

When the date goes well, a good balance in the conversation is present, meaning both daters talk equally as much. Nobody wants to spend a night with somebody who only talks about him/herself and does not ask any questions back.

### Changing stimuli

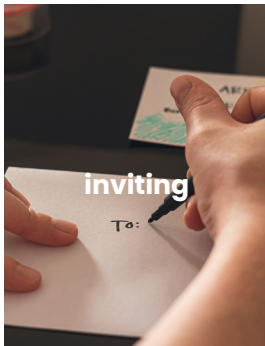
During the dinner, daters can always resort to the food for conversation inspiration. When having a 3-course meal you can at least ask how it tasted if you don't know anything else to say.

### Quality attention

Part of dating etiquette is to give quality attention, but the date can go wrong if one of the daters gets distracted by other people, looks at the phone all the time, or doesn't listen to the other person.

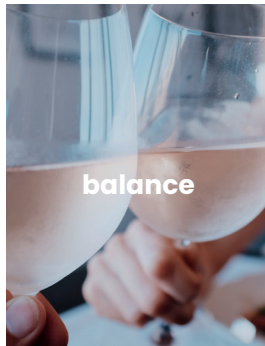
## Product qualities

The interaction qualities are translated to product qualities, to ensure the product embodies the intended interaction. See figure 17.



inviting

The game needs to be inviting to play. It should also incorporate an invitation prior to playing.



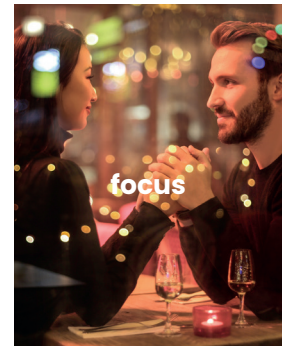
balance

The game should facilitate a balanced conversation, having both players share equally as much.



diversity

The game should have multiple rounds in which different stimuli are provided to share insecurities about.



focus

The game should be the focus point. Players should not be distracted while playing.

Figure 17. Product qualities, photos by Castorly Stock, Vincenzo Landino, Andrew Wong



## 4.4. Design boundaries

Concluding the Design focus chapter, the following design boundaries are formulated.

### Personal

As mentioned in subchapter 3.4, the personal aspect of sexual violence should be taken into account when designing for support. A design is needed which gives space to share personal insecurities, since every person is different and every person has their own securities.

### Time

The aspect of timing for each victim is also different, however, this design can only be used after having revealed the event to the person the design will be used with. The design should make this clear.

In an early stage of the project, a focus group session (van Boeijen, Daalhuizen, & Zijlstra, 2020) was held in order to discover what practitioners in the field of sexual violence think is important when proposing a design, see Appendix 5. Through dot voting (Hyper Island, 2019) three factors were chosen:

- Sustainability of the design, the guarantee that it will still be relevant in the future
- Accessibility of the design, there is a low threshold to use the solution
- Effectiveness of the design

These boundaries, together with the statement and interaction vision, will be taken into account during ideation and concepting. See figure 18 for all design boundaries.

### Statement fit

- Feeling confident
- Sharing of insecurities
- Playful
- User fit

### Interaction fit

- Inviting
- Balance in conversation
- Diversity
- Focus

### Themes fit

- Personal
- Time

### Focus session fit

- Effective
- Sustainable
- Accessible

Figure 18. Design boundaries



Roommates having a fun conversation

# Ideation

**In this chapter, the ideation approach is described. First, the game definition is explained. Second, the idea generation methods are mentioned. Six prototypes are created and tested in two iteration cycles, resulting in a working conversation mechanism and learnings for the final design.**

- 5.1 Game definition
- 5.2 Ideation approach
- 5.3 Cycle 1
- 5.4 Cycle 2
- 5.5 Conclusion







Photo by @FrankByRenee

## 5.1. Game definition

Subchapter 4.2 explained that the product will be a game. The required qualities of the game are stated in subchapter 4.3. The product quality 'focus' led to the decision that the game should be a physical game. In this way, players can focus fully on the game and each other.

A physical game is not specific enough. Board games have a broad variety of categories, such as; parlor games (gezelschapsspel in Dutch), serious games, persuasive games and many more. The type of game needs to be specified in order to find examples, ease ideation and position the final design. This statement does not call for a parlor game as a type of game, as the main goal is not entertainment. Neither should the game be a serious game, because its aim is not to learn new skills\*. Nor should it be a persuasive game, because the game is not aimed at changing behaviour (Siriaraaya, Visch, Vermeeren, & Bas, 2018). The category this statement does fit in is 'social games' (Markussen & Knutz, 2017). The goal of a social game (or activity) is to alter or strengthen the social relation between the players of the game. As social development is the central game goal, the social game can be more open-ended, free and ill-structured than other game categories (Markussen & Knutz, 2017). In my interpretation, a social game can also be a conversation starter and does not need a win-state. This definition also fits the frame mentioned on page 48: 'strengthening the bond between loved ones and the victim'.

\*Literature mentions several different definitions of serious games. In this project I am using the definition stated by Siriaraaya et al. in order to emphasize the differentiation between the categories.



Photo by Bao Truong on Unsplash



## 5.2. Ideation approach

To kickstart idea generation for a social game that facilitates the sharing of insecurities, two actions were undertaken:

1. **Idea generation session with fellow design students**
2. **Quick iterations of insecurity games**

### Idea generation session

The goal of the idea generation session with design students was to get inspired and quickly collect different points of view regarding the creation of an insecurity focused game. The session was also an opportunity to discuss the topics 'sharing insecurities', 'games' and personal experiences, see figure 19.

#### Setup

Together with 6 graduation students (IPD, DFI & SPD), ideas were generated using How To's based on the statement presented in subchapter 4.2. During this session the brainwriting method was used. Multiple A3's containing one How To each were scattered across the room. Students worked in pairs, to facilitate building on each other's ideas, and walked the route until all pairs had generated on all How To's. A discussion followed.

#### How to's

- How to stimulate people to share their insecurities?*
- How to create a game out of insecurities?*
- How to rank/categorize/equate insecurities?*
- How to stimulate people to keep reaching out to a loved one, when they get no response back?*
- How to ensure people share their insecurities repeatedly?*

#### Results

Within one hour, all papers were filled. A discussion followed where it became apparent that for this group, sharing their insecurities is a rare activity and not often practised. Whereas they all often played board games. An interesting insight. The group also confirmed that it is tiresome to keep reaching out to a person with no response back, but that it is often worth the effort. They had either experienced an insistent friend (during hard times) themselves or got appreciation from their friend for constantly reaching out. Besides these insights, doing the session also gave a much-needed energy boost. The results were used to ideate further on individually.



Figure 19. Creative session impression

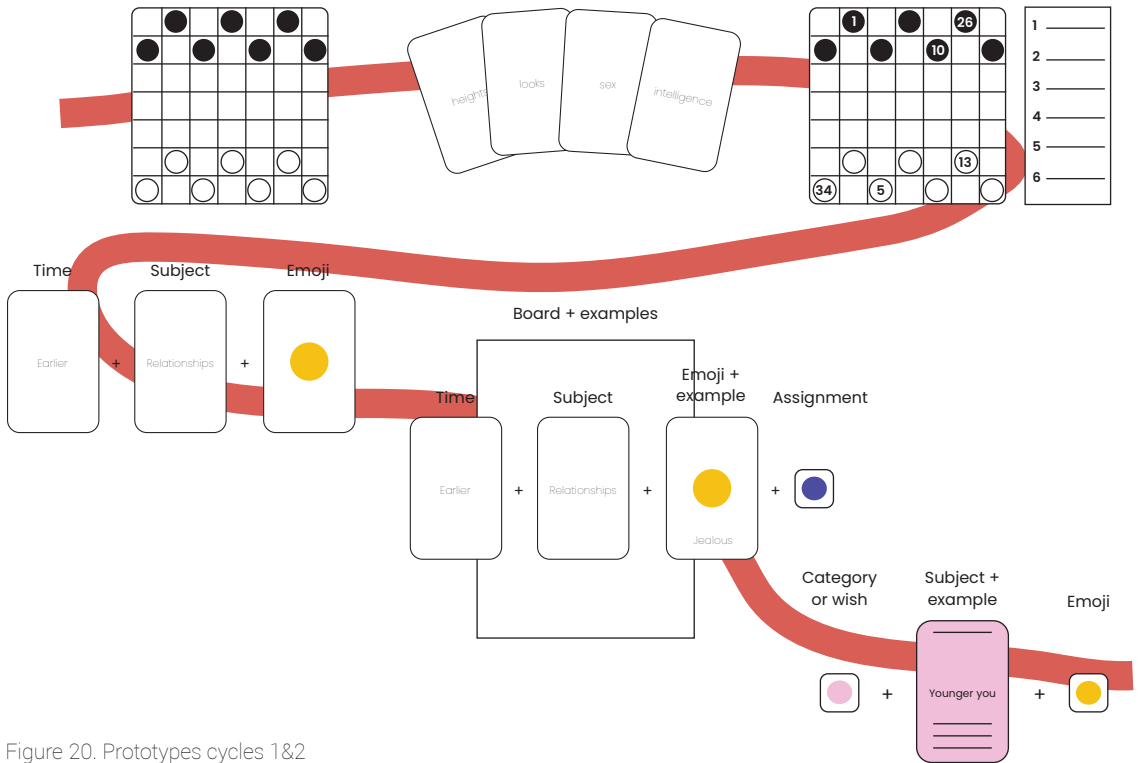


Figure 20. Prototypes cycles 1&2

### Quick iterations of insecurity games

As I could not find examples of games with the intention of sharing insecurities or focused on insecurities, I decided to use existing games, mentioned in the idea generation session, to add insecurities to as a basis for designing. I assumed that, this way, it should be possible to either find a good match between a game and insecurities (and use this to investigate and reproduce this match), or find learnings to ideate further on. The rapid prototyping approach led to two iterative cycles, see subchapters 5.3 & 5.4 and figure 20.

The goal of cycle 1 was to find out what would happen if insecurities were added as a rule to the commonly known games of checkers and quartet.

The main question was: in what way can the sharing of insecurities be incorporated in games? The learnings from this cycle were used for the second cycle.

The goal of cycle 2 was to create a working mechanism to share insecurities, in order to ultimately shape it into an original game.

All of the 'games' were tested with a good friend (to fit the statement), and myself as the fellow player, to study the workings. In this way, observing and experiencing the game was possible as well as speeding up the iterations. The connection to sexual violence was not required for these cycles.



## 5.3. Cycle 1

In this cycle, insecurities are added to the games checkers and quartet. For the prototypes, see Appendix 6.

### Checkers

Checkers is a widely known game that many people have played in their childhood. The rules are simple and the game is for two players, which makes checkers a good basis to add insecurities to.

The instructions were: 'Write down your insecurities underneath five stones. Mix the stones and play the game. If you win a stone with an insecurity of your opponent, you can 'buy' the explanation by giving back two stones.' The game was tested with one participant, see figure 21. Afterwards, questions were asked about the addition of the insecurities.



Figure 21. Testing checkers

### Results

#### ● Will to win over asking about insecurities

The rule where a player 'buys' information about a specific insecurity is essentially a step back in the progress of the game. For this reason, the opponent never chose to ask about the insecurities he won. Therefore there was no conversation about insecurities.

#### ● Inequality in writing down insecurities

The insecurities of both players differed in terms of vulnerability or 'deepness'. This led to a feeling of being cheated at the side of the player who wrote down more deep insecurities.

#### ● No balance in sharing

The person who wins more wins more insecurities about the other player.

#### + Tension in revealing insecurity

The player said that it was exciting to turn over a stone and see whether or not there was an insecurity written down. It also felt like a 'double win' if the player had won a stone with an insecurity.

#### + Share what you want

Because the rule is to write down insecurities beforehand, the player has the opportunity to share what he/she wants to share with the opponent.

## Quartet

Similar to checkers, quartet is a widely known game. The goal is to collect four cards of the same series. The cards contained subjects that people commonly feel insecure about.

The instructions were: 'Collect four cards with insecurities that fit you. For every card that doesn't fit you, explain why it doesn't fit you, put it away and grab a new card. Once you have quartet, explain why.' The game was tested with one participant, see figure 22. Afterwards, questions were asked about the subjects and the rules.



Figure 22. Testing quartet

## Results

### ● Inequality in explanations

The same 'cheated' feeling can occur with this game as a player controls what to say about a card. Players can go as deep as they want. However, if both players are not on the same level of openness this can be disappointing.

### ● Explaining why you don't have a certain insecurity

For the player who has this insecurity, it can feel as though having that insecurity is strange or insignificant, whereas every insecurity is personal and should be respected.

### ● Not fun with two players

Quartet is more fun with more players. With only one opponent you know rather quickly which cards are in the deck and the game is finished quickly.

### + Makes you talk about it

As it is a clear rule that in order to finish the game, you must explain why you have quartet, you initiate the conversation about insecurities.

## Checkers + Proust

A second version was created, as the first checkers proved to be exciting to play, but did not evoke a conversation about insecurities. The 'buying information rule' was eliminated as well as the inequality in writing down insecurities. This inequality was removed by using a Proustian questionnaire (Barrois, 2019). The questions were predefined and identical for both players. The questionnaire included questions such as: 'What do you regret in your life? What would you change about yourself?' which ask about insecurities. These questions can help to get to know an opponent better. In this version, a conversation is mimicked, matching the interaction vision.

The instructions were: 'Choose 10 questions you want to ask your opponent from the question list. Write the numbers underneath the stones. Mix stones and play the game. If you win a stone with a number, answer the corresponding question.' The game was tested with one participant, see figure 23. Afterwards, questions were asked about the addition of the questionnaire.



Figure 23. Testing checkers + Proust

## Results

### ● Replayability

It is possible that once players go through all 35 questions, they know the answer to almost all of them. Most questions were, for instance, about early childhood or hero figures, the answers to those questions won't change (soon).

### ● No balance in sharing

The person who wins more shares more than the other player (opposite to the first version).

### + Getting answers to personal questions

Picking out the questions beforehand created anticipation for getting the answers. It felt personal as the player chose which answers he wanted to know.

### + Equality in questions and answers

Equality in questions as players can get the same question. Because the questions are specific, it requires a specific answer as well.

### + Getting to know each other better

The questionnaire included a lot of questions which are not part of normal day-to-day conversation. The answers to those questions are actually valuable. Almost all the questions were about an emotion, which is not something people normally directly ask about. The fact that in this game the player did, helped get a better understanding of the opponent. This matches Brown's theory mentioned in subchapter 4.2: 'vulnerability is at the core of our emotions'.

Conclusion of cycle 1:

- The first version of checkers did not work that well as it did not lead to a conversation about insecurities for an understandable reason: there is a will to win. Sharing insecurities alone is not enough to fit the interaction vision. An actual conversation is required.
- The quartet game was the only game which facilitated equal sharing: every player had to share the same amount of insecurities. Equal sharing is part of the product quality 'balance' (subchapter 4.3) and should be incorporated in the final design.
- The last version of checkers seemed to work well in starting the conversation about insecurities because of the question-asking element and the emotion element, which was taken to the next cycle.



Figure 24. Open Kaart, source: openkaart.co

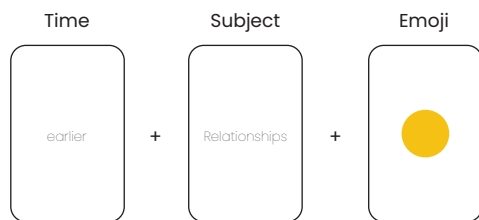


Figure 25. 3-card game



Figure 26. Testing 3-card game

## 5.4. Cycle 2

For this cycle, the goal was to get the conversation about insecurities to work. Besides the learnings of the previous cycle, inspiration was also derived from several other games and for different elements:

- The game 'cards against humanity' for the replayability element, see figure 27.
- The game 'truth or dare' because of the question-asking element.
- The game 'Open Kaart' (open card), because of the simple, yet fun way to have deep conversations, see figure 24.

Three games were created and tested: 3-card game, 3-card game extended and doubles, see Appendix 6 for the prototypes.

### 3-card game

The 3-card game consists of 3 card decks, see figure 25. The purpose of the game is to formulate questions for each other comprised of 3 different cards. Having three different decks adds to the replayability: 3 time cards x 6 subject cards x 6 emotions = 108 possible combinations.

The instructions were: 'Place the card decks with the information down. Turn one card of every deck. Formulate a question for your fellow player using the given input. The second player answers the question, turns three new cards and continues accordingly. Continue until all cards are turned.'

The game was tested with one participant, see figure 26.

Afterwards, questions were asked about the workings of the game.

### Results

- Difficult to formulate questions

It proved quite difficult to form questions as some card combinations did not make sense.

- Different interpretation of emoji

The fact that the emotion cards can have multiple interpretations adds to the replayability element. However, in order to include specific emotions (that link to the subject of sexual violence for instance) the emoji do not work. Emoji do add to the playful look of the game.

- + Balanced conversation

Matching the interaction vision, subchapter 4.3, the question-asking mimics an actual conversation: the first person asks a question, the second person answers and asks a question back.

- + Getting answers to personal questions

Having formulated the question himself, the player feels more connected and is curious to know the answer.

- + Imagination

The questions are based on the opponent's imagination. This also adds to the replayability aspect.

- + Getting to know each other better

Especially because of the subjects and the emotions, specific questions could be asked about the subject a player might not know about yet, combined with emotions they don't often talk about together.



Figure 27. Cards against humanity, source [cardsagainsthumanity.com](https://cardsagainsthumanity.com)



### 3-card game extended

Trying to make the question forming easier, a dice was added which decides how to answer the question: share an insecurity, tell a wish or give a compliment. Examples were also added to ease question forming. All elements came together on the board, matching the interaction vision.

The instructions were: 'Place a card of every deck on the board. Roll the dice and form a question based on the cards and the dice. Continue until all cards are used.' The game was tested with one participant, see figure 28. Afterwards, questions were asked about the workings of the game.

#### Results

- Difficult to make good questions with the dice & the cards: mismatch

In contrast to what was expected, adding a dice did not ease question forming. For instance: sharing a wish about your childhood does not make any sense.

- Suggestions on the emotion cards

Although the suggestions underneath the emoji made it more clear, it looked strange to have both and confused the player.

- ⊕ Dice adds excitement

Because of the difference in dynamics between turning cards and rolling the dice, it already felt more like a game. Also, rolling a dice appeared to be more exciting than just turning over a card.

- ⊕ Board adds to game experience

The board brings the game elements together and reminds the player of a typical board game.

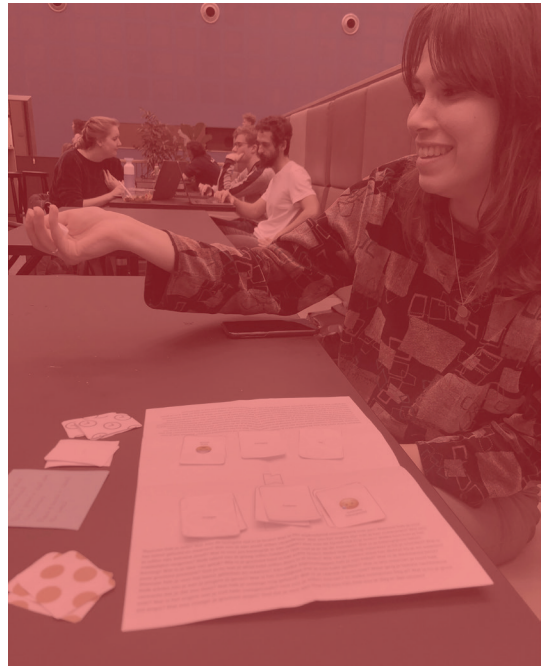


Figure 28. Testing 3 card game extended

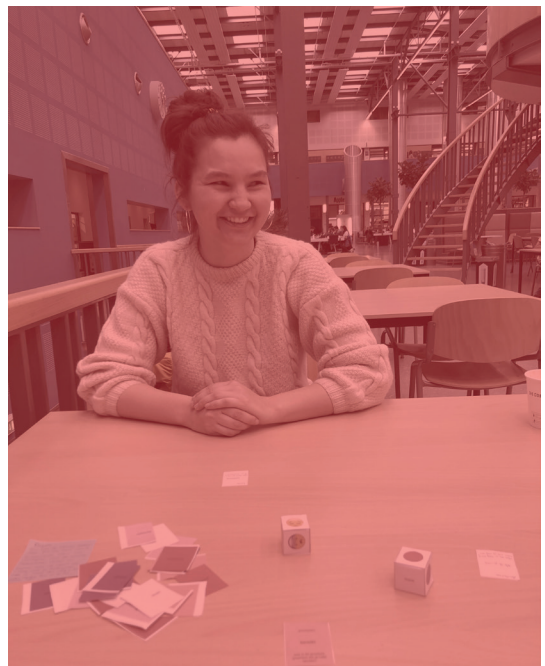


Figure 29. Testing doubles

## Doubles

Learning from the previous versions, Doubles has changed the emotion deck into a dice with only emoji, as the playful aspect appealed more. The assignment dice became the 'subject' dice, with the option to make a wish and the subject cards all have one example question.

The instructions were: 'Throw the emoji dice, then throw the subject dice and take a card of the subject deck. Let your opponent create a question for you using the subject card and the emoji!'

The game was tested with one participant, see figure 29. Afterwards, questions were asked about the workings of the game.

### Results

#### ⊖ Examples confuse

The examples on the subject cards caused more confusion than that they were helpful. This confusion was a result of the examples being full combinations of a subject with an emotion, which did not make sense with a different emotion.

#### + Option to share what the player wants to share

With the 'wish' assignment on the subject dice, the player can share her wish for herself, the opponent, the world. A wish can also be seen as a positive insecurity: something that has not happened yet and that you do want to happen for some reason.

#### + Conversation starter

The question forming worked well with only having a subject and an emotion.

### Conclusion of cycle 2:

- The conversation worked well by asking each other questions that you formed yourself.
- Less is more. Only having a subject and an emotion made it possible to form questions which ask about insecurities.
- A choice must be made between using emoji or written emotions. Is the use of emoji more preferable for the playful and interpretative effect than writing out emotions for clarity? Using both caused confusion.
- Adding a board brought the game and all its elements together.
- Different formats for the subjects and emotions worked well to make the game feel more dynamic. For instance: the dice and the cards.
- The option to share what you want to share was possible through the 'wish' rule.

### Reflection

I really enjoyed doing these iterations. Every new prototype felt like a step in the right direction. I could well have kept iterating further, because each round taught me something. Luckily, the committee advised me to stop and reflect, which helped in the progress of the project and the creation of the final design.



## 5.5. Conclusion

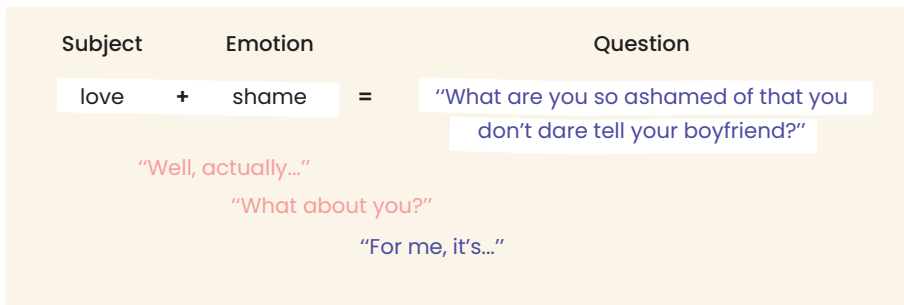
The outcome of the cycles was a working conversation mechanism, forming the basis for a social game about insecurities, see figure 30. The mechanism works by asking each other questions about subjects and emotions, which leads to talking about and sharing insecurities. The mechanism ensures replayability, matching the boundary of sustainability mentioned in subchapter 4.4 and the sharing of insecurities. It is implicit that insecurities change over time, which requires a replayable solution. The personal aspect is also present as the conversation revolves around sharing personal experiences, thoughts and feelings.

An initial game concept was created called Grip, see Appendix 7. However, Grip still lacked too many elements in order to call it a game and to match the boundaries.

Now the mechanism is sorted, it could be translated into a design. The criteria for the final design are: playfulness, target group fit and accessibility. In addition, the design should communicate when to play in the timeline of a victim, in accordance with the design boundaries (subchapter 4.4).

The final design of a social game is presented in chapter 6.

### 1st turn



### 2nd turn

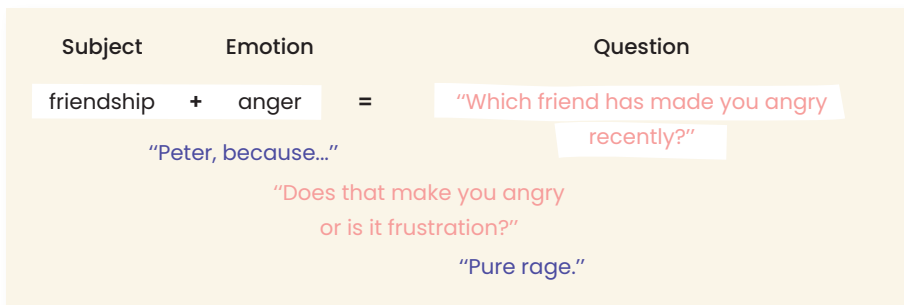


Figure 30. Conversation mechanism

# New product

In this concluding chapter, the final design concept is presented and discussed, answering the fourth research question. The design is validated with experts and potential users. An implementation plan is proposed to ensure the product will reach the market. Additionally, recommendations are given for further development. The chapter ends with an evaluation of the design.

*Q4: What can be offered to female victims of sexual violence in order to minimize the negative effects on their daily lives? - subchapter 6.1*

- 6.1 VORM
- 6.2 Validation
- 6.3 Implementation plan
- 6.4 Recommendations
- 6.5 Next steps
- 6.6 Design evaluation



# VORM

vorm je vraag - bouw jullie vorm

het sociale spel voor jou en je vriendin



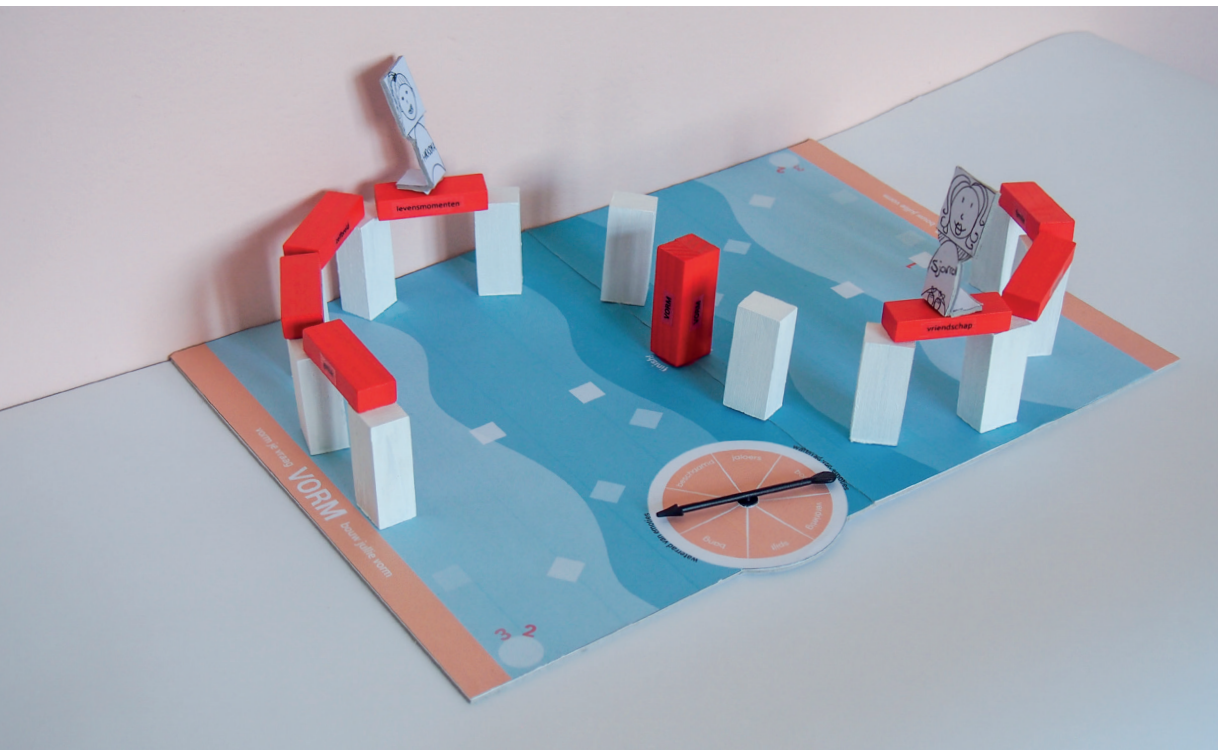
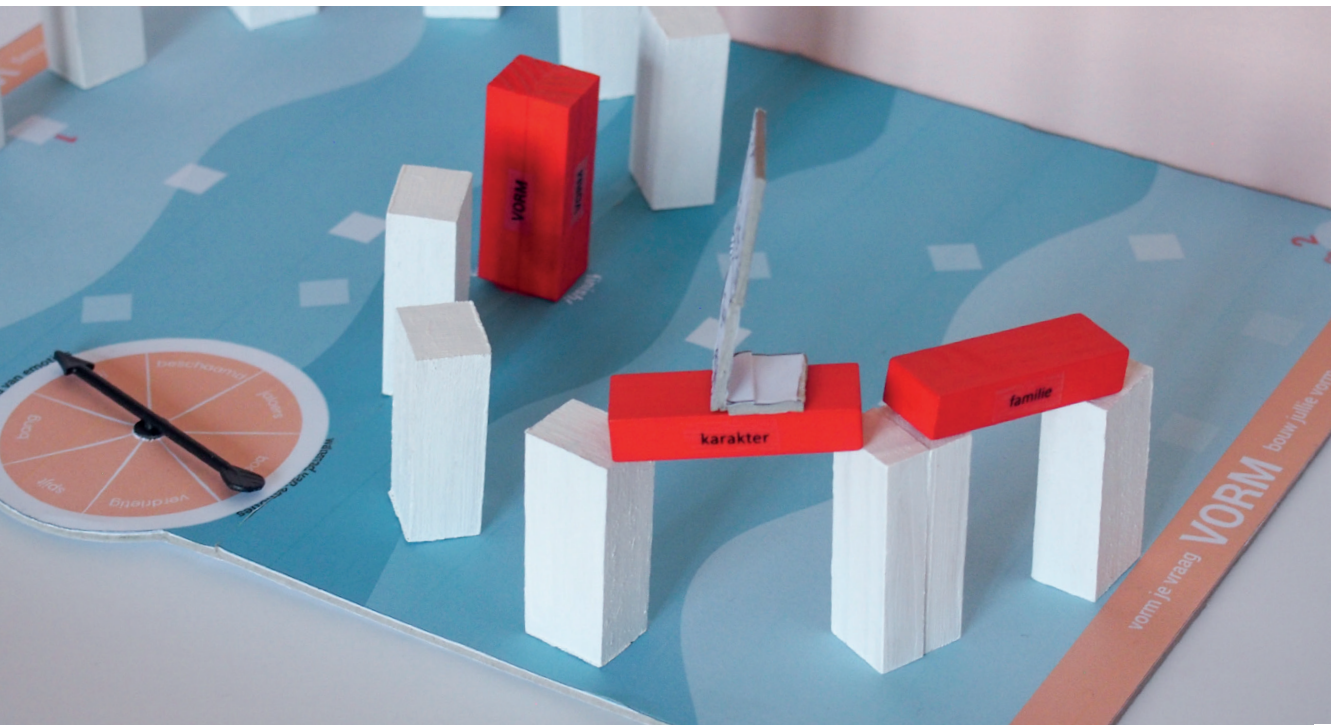


Figure 31. VORM the social game



## 6.1. VORM

### VORM the social game

VORM, see figure 31, is a social game designed to strengthen the bond between a victim of sexual violence and her friend. Due to misunderstanding and ignorance, the bond between a victim and her loved one can deteriorate. VORM offers help, in the form of a physical game. Thus answering *research question 4: What can be offered to female victims of sexual violence in order to minimize the negative effects on their daily lives?*

The name VORM (form) comes from the two elements in the game: formulating questions and building a form together. The name implies that the game is malleable, that the players can influence the game and can form it to fit them. Every time the players play VORM, the game takes on a different shape, also due to the different stories being shared.

Players get closer to each other by asking each other questions about insecurities and sharing their truths. In this way, they get to build the form, and they get to know and understand each other better.

The goal of VORM is to meet each other in the middle of the water, by building a bridge towards each other. The bridge represents the effort they are putting into their bond, as well as the visual progress of the game. The players can build an existing form, or lay their own, depending on the time they want to invest. Every stone contains a subject and every round, the water wheel containing emotions needs to be turned, see figure 32. These two elements, the stones and the emotion given by the water wheel, provide the topics for the questions. A player can only use the stone to build, once she has answered the question of her fellow player in an open and honest way. With every answer given, the players become closer, figuratively and literally. The game initiates deep conversations between the players, acting as a conversation starter.

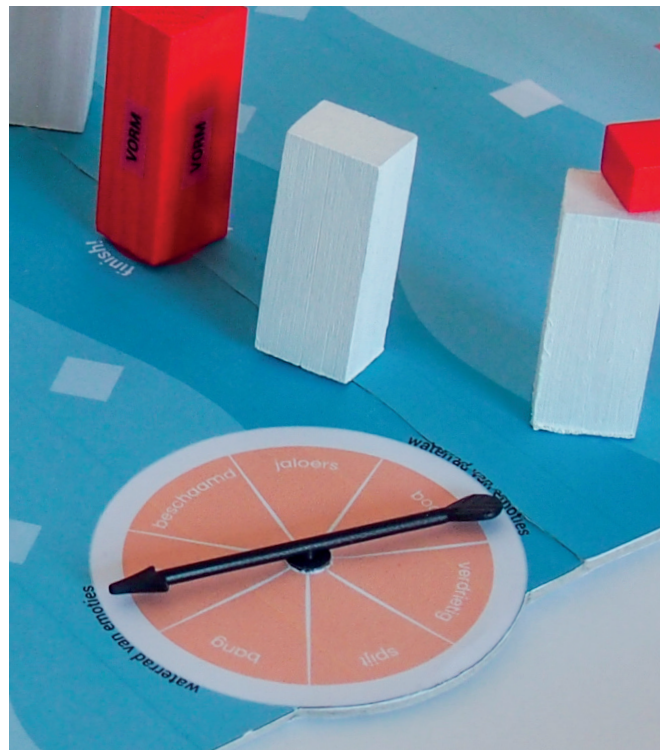


Figure 32. Water wheel detail containing the emotions: fear, jealousy, anger, regret, shame, sadness, happiness. See Appendix 8 for the explanation.



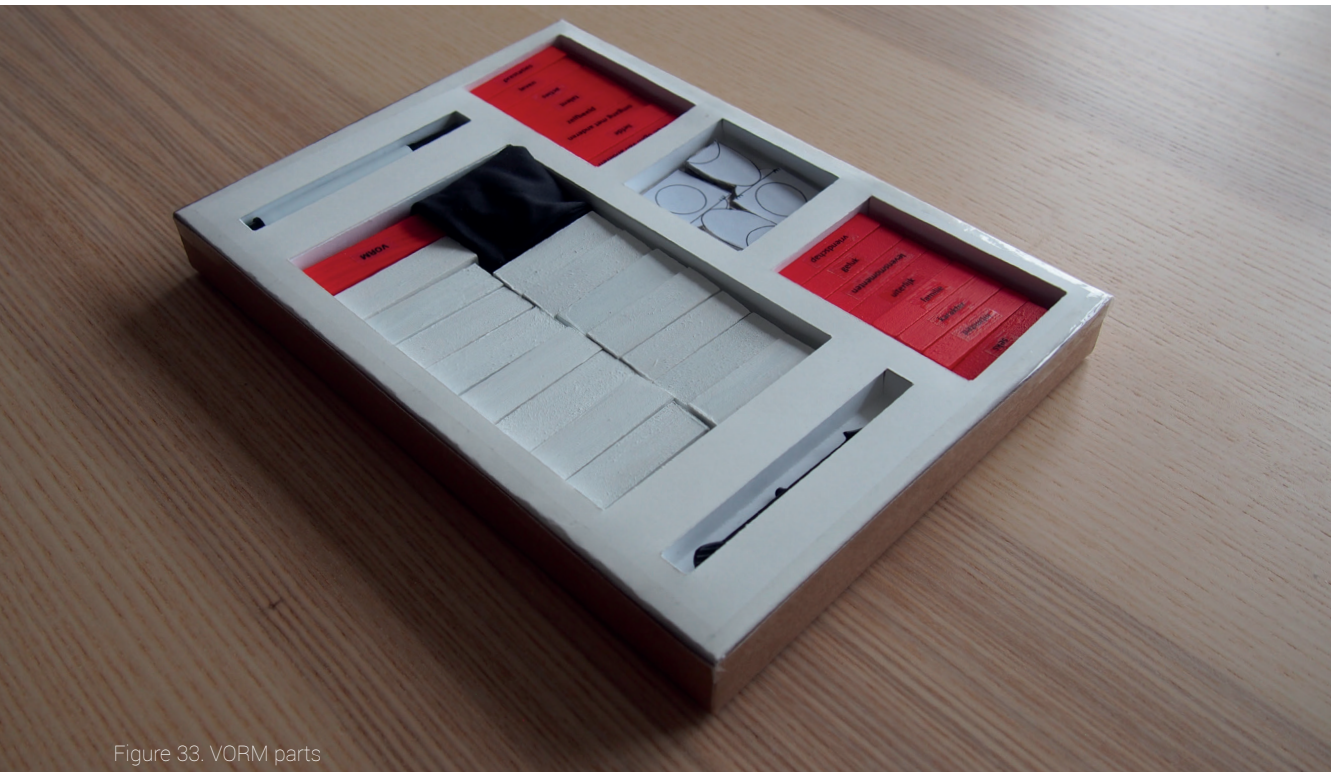


Figure 33. VORM parts



## Unboxing

VORM consists of 8 different parts, see figure 33. VORM comes in a protective box with insert (to protect the parts during delivery). Inside, players find a play manual, a marker, a game board with an emotion wheel containing 7 emotions, 16 red stones containing subjects, 16 white pillars, 1 red pillar, 1 arrow, a bag and two blank pawns. The materials used are paper, cardboard, plastic and wood.

## Who can play VORM?

The minimum age to play VORM is 14. This is based on the idea that at 14, a girl has reached the social and cognitive level needed to play VORM. VORM is also designed primarily for female players, but being male is not a limitation to playing the game.

### *VORM & sexual violence*

VORM is designed to be played by a victim of sexual violence and her friend in the first place. The subjects and emotions in the game are general, but if players desire, the questions can easily be targeted towards the effects of the sexual violence, see Appendix 8. Especially with the subjects of intimacy, relationships and sex. According to Kristine Evertz (Blijf Groep), it works best to ask direct questions to the victim, if you want to talk about the sexual violence.

The player answering the question always has control over the answer and can choose to skip the question, if necessary. VORM makes it possible to talk about sexual violence, but in my opinion it is not necessary to talk about the event(s) every time you play the game. The idea behind VORM is to share what is currently on your mind and possibly get support for that.

The loved ones mentioned in subchapter 4.2, also include parents. VORM could be played by a daughter and a parent, but a prerequisite could be that they are willing to share these sensitive answers with each other.

Loved ones also include partners. I believe VORM can easily be played by a couple. The question is who would take the initiative to buy it and who would suggest playing the game.

### *VORM & friends*

Because the mechanism of VORM is general, the questions can be applied to everybody's life and relationships. VORM can be played by everyone who has friends, regardless of their past experiences. For instance, people who want to strengthen their bond with their long lost friend can also use VORM.

Figure 34. Pawns used during testing



### Where to get VORM?

VORM can be ordered online primarily. There are several arguments for this decision.

Firstly, of the entire Dutch population, 15-35 year olds are the biggest online shoppers (Polak, van Rooij, & Demoed, 2017). This coincides with the assumption that the larger part of victims who do not reach out for help (98%, subchapter 1.6), do their own research online, as I mentioned in subchapter 3.3. Selling online would enable reaching both victims of sexual violence, as well as non-victims in the right age group.

Secondly, selling online adds to the accessibility of delivery, as well as the anonymity, which can be a benefit for victims and their friends.

Thirdly, the accessibility of playing VORM is enhanced even more because selling online provides the option to send the package to the address of your friend. A personal note can be attached explaining why you are sending this to your friend, together with a suggestion for a play date. As VORM arrives through the letterbox of your friend, it is already present at her house. The only step left to take is to confirm the play date! For all the steps of acquiring VORM, see figure 35.

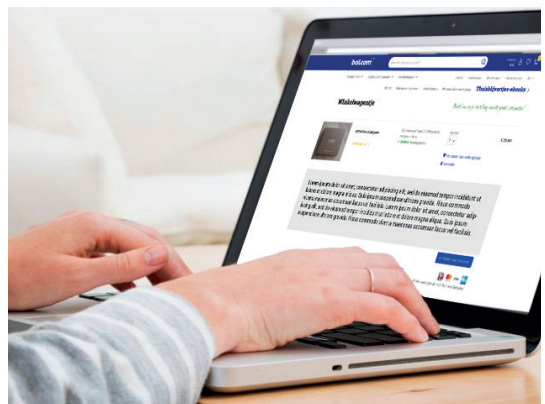
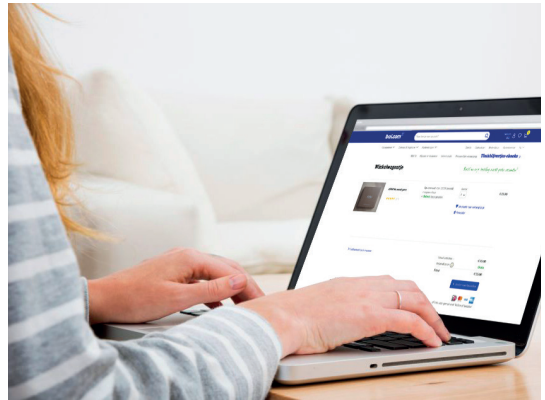


Figure 35. Ordering VORM

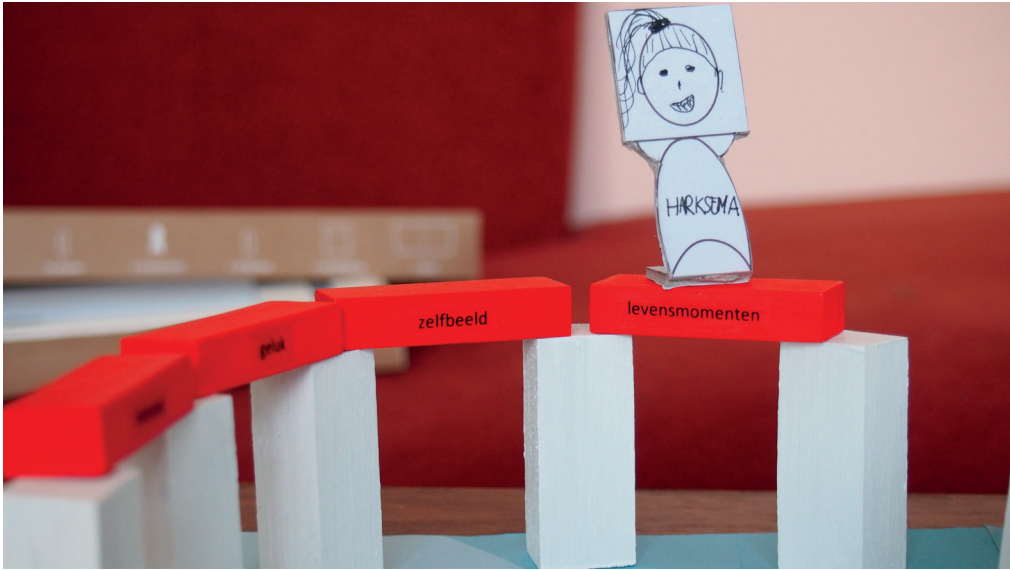


Figure 36. VORM detail

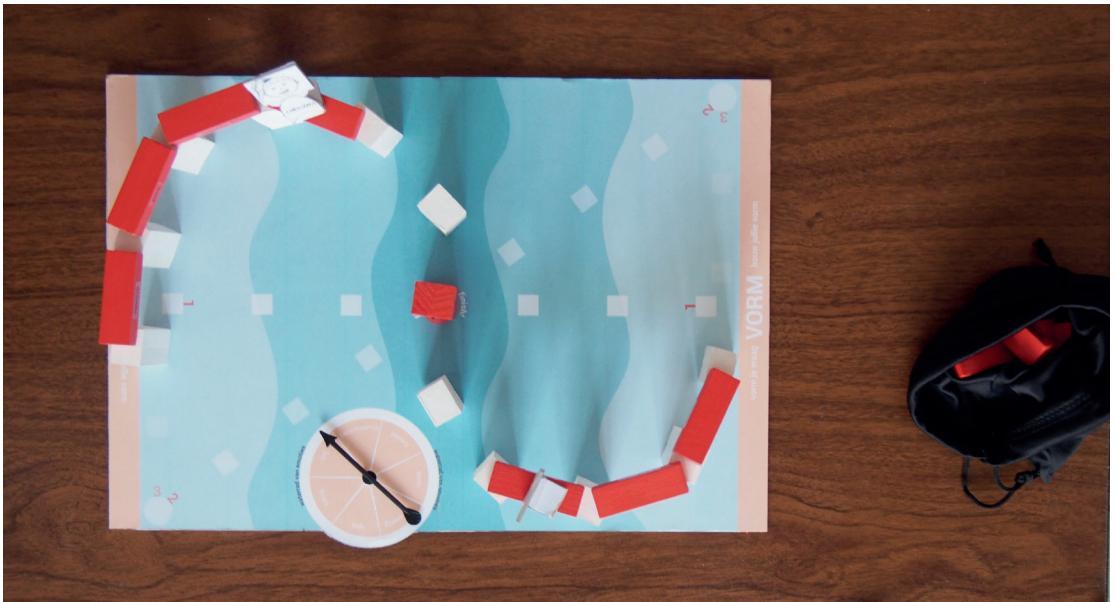


Figure 37. VORM topview Form 3



## How to play VORM?

Once the friends have acquired VORM, the playing can begin. The suggested play setting is in the cosiness and privacy of somebody's house or room, because in a private setting, sensitive matter can be shared more easily.

VORM is a simple game, with only a few steps and rules. These are explained in the play manual. Tips for question forming and using subjects are also present in the play manual, see Appendix 9. Two tips help make playing easier and more interesting:

- Who, which person, is the question about?
- When, which period of time does this question address?

Using these tips every round will help specify the questions, making it easier to answer them.

The following pages show the steps of VORM.

**1** The game starts with personalizing the pawns, see figure 38. The players are asked to draw the characteristic features of their fellow player's face, add their nickname and the current date. The pawns are then exchanged. This step serves as an icebreaker, creating the light, funny setting needed. This step also enhances the feeling of ownership of the game.

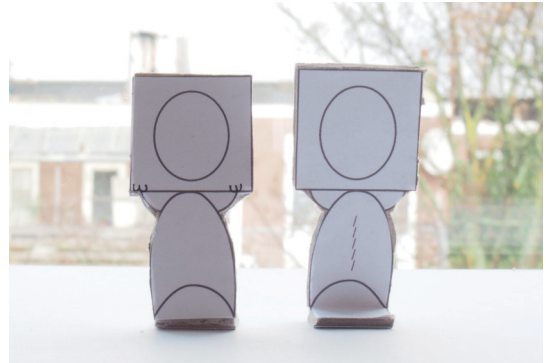


Figure 38. Blank pawns with space to write five play dates

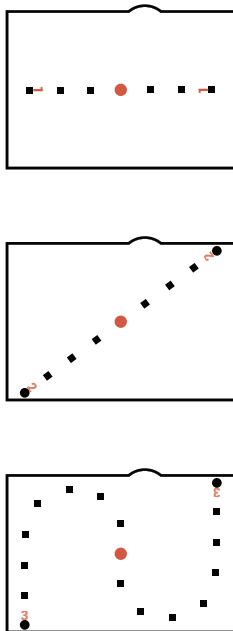


Figure 39. Forms

**2** The second step is to decide which form to build: form 1, 2, 3 or a personal form. See figure 39 and Appendix 11. The longer the form, the more questions to ask and the longer the game will take. Form 1 should take around 20 minutes. Form 2 should take around 30 minutes and form 3 takes around an hour. The actual time depends on the conversation.

After deciding on the form, the pillars need to be placed on the board, see figure 40.

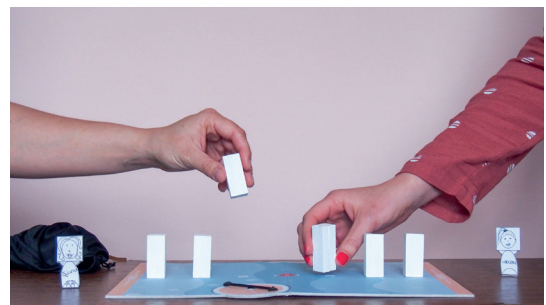


Figure 40. Starting position

**3** Now the game can start. The first player grabs a stone from the bag and says the subject out loud. Then the wheel is turned, providing an emotion to match the subject, see figure 41.

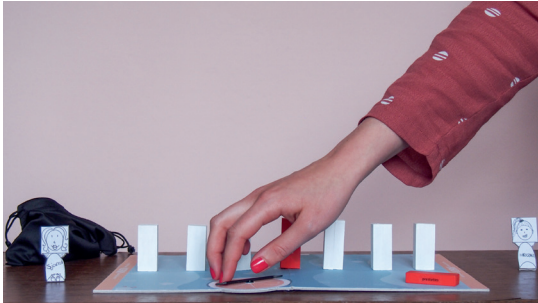


Figure 41. Turning the water wheel

**4** The second player forms a question using the subject and the emotion given by the first player. The second player can consult the play manual for some tips. By forming the question herself, the player can ask specifically what she is curious about, see figure 42.



Figure 42. Player asking a question

**5** The first player answers the question in an open and honest way. The stone may be laid down, with the pawn on top, facing the other player, figure 43.

In answering the question, the player has worked on strengthening the bond with the other player, by giving new information. As a reward, she may lay the stone.

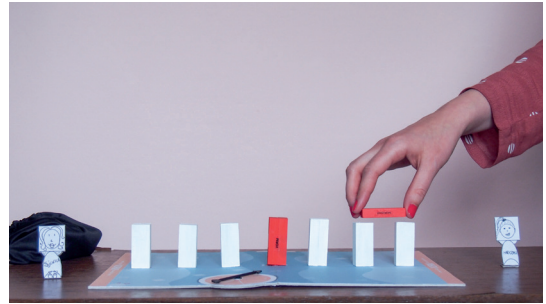


Figure 43. Laying a stone

**6-8** It is now the second player's turn to grab a stone from the bag and turn the emotion wheel, see figure 44. The first player formulates a question using the input provided by the second player and the second player answers the question. The second stone may be laid, see figure 45. The answer might raise new questions and so the conversation can evolve and transcend the game.

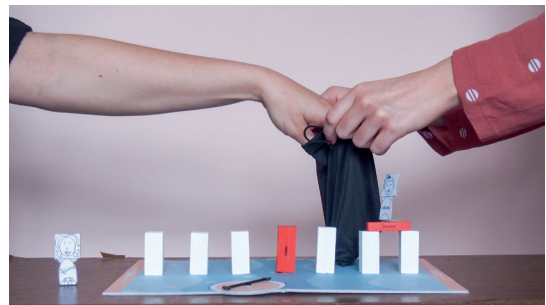


Figure 44. Grabbing a stone

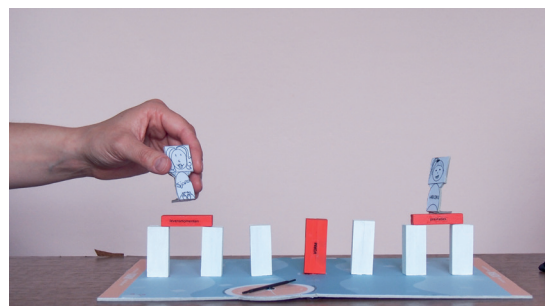


Figure 45. Placing the second stone

**9** This mechanism repeats itself until the stones reach the red finish pillar and the pawns have reached each other, shown in figure 46. If during the game a part of the bridge falls or the pawn falls, the responsible player has to share a secret as compensation for the 'carelessness'. This adds another element of play.



Figure 46. Finished game

**10** The final step before packing up, is to decide when to play again. On the board, players are reminded about this step at the the finish circle. The new or approximate play date can be written on the side of the box with the marker provided, as a reminder and a commitment. The white sticker can be erased to enter a new play date after the following game, see figure 47.

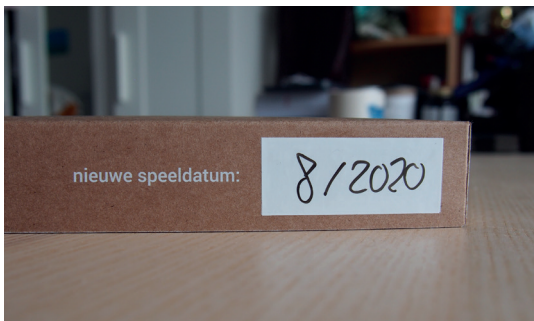


Figure 47. VORM play date

The idea of VORM is that the friends play the game multiple times over a period of time. They can decide how much time needs to pass in between the game. By playing VORM again and again, the players keep each other up to date on what is on their mind. For this reason, the pawns have space to write 5 play dates on.

**11** The game can be packed. The used stones should be separated from the unused stones, so that in the next time, new topics will be addressed, see figure 48. The box should be stored with the date visible.



Figure 48. Packed game

**12** When playing VORM for the second time, a reflection round can be played. In this version, the first step is to take one of the stones used the previous game and answer the accompanying question again. In this way, players can reflect on the changes they have experienced in the meantime.

As you can see, VORM has taken the conversation mechanism of subchapter 5.5 and incorporated it into a dynamic social game.

The rest of this subchapter explains the visual style and the communication of VORM. Also, VORM is compared to two similar conversation games, to show the benefits.









Figure 49. Collage containing visuals of Terra Nova & Empathy game

## Visual style & scenery

The visual style of VORM (excluding the box) can be defined as minimal meets playful, see Appendix 11. To appeal to the target customers (aged 14+) it should not be too playful and cartoonish. On the other hand, it should add to the imagination of building a bridge and coming together. Enhancing this scene, the bridge is built over water. Water being fluid, ever changing, requires the form to cross it. The water also provides a way to incorporate the emotion chance element: in a water wheel.

A subtle color scheme was chosen to match the natural colors of the scene. Inspiration was drawn from illustrations and other games which use a similar visual style, see figure 49.

The elements of VORM are overall light. The white pillars purposefully match their locations on the board (usecue). They are neutral, as they only serve as support for the important element: the stones. The finish pillar matches the color of the stones to form a unity and to indicate where the players have to build to. The pawns are black and white, to be personalized using the marker.

The bricks are a deep red as they are the most important pieces of the game. They need to stand out. They contain the subject to form a question with and they visualize the progression of the game.

The water wheel turning in the water, stands out from the water as it is also an important element. Though the emotion serves to compliment the subject in the game.

The box is made from cardboard, to remind the keeper of the invitation, the way it entered the house. The text is light to match the insides. As the box is neutral, it creates curiosity as to what is inside, inviting you to open it.



# het sociale spel voor jou en je vriendin

## Communication

The communication of VORM is in Dutch, as the game is designed for Dutch users. The focus is on understanding each other better and with that, understanding the subjects provided by the game. For this reason, the subjects are also explained in the manual, see Appendix 9.

The communication on the box, the manual and online is generic and playful. It is not focused on victims of sexual violence and their friends, it is directed towards every Dutch girl with friends.

This is because firstly, the game needs to be accessible to victims. Victims don't always want to talk about the violence. Using a phrase like 'designed for victims of...' would create the expectation that the players must talk about it when playing VORM, raising the threshold for the victim to play it. Secondly, the communication should not suggest that playing the game will solve any problems related to sexual violence. The game is designed to aid in strengthening the bond between players, but does not replace other forms of help. Thirdly, directing the game towards all Dutch girls means a bigger group of potential customers, who can also use VORM to their benefit.

The story on the box uses the word 'designed' specifically to take away the feeling of commercial entertainment. Additionally, it can remind players of the thoughtful process it took.

Insecurities are not specifically mentioned as being part of the game, as this might scare away potential players. The sharing of insecurities is an intrinsic quality of the mechanism, so players do not need to know that this is the purpose before playing.

Lastly, on the box it is mentioned that this game has not been designed to help reveal traumatic events. Other games and tools do have this purpose, but VORM does not. This has been added to the box to inform potential users about that fact.

# VORM

vorm je vraag - bouw jullie v

**VORM** is een sociaal spel voor jou e

Kom dichterbij elkaar door vragen  
jullie samen aan je **VORM** en leer je

Het doel is om elkaar in het midden  
mag pas aan de **VORM** bouwen al  
woord. Bij elk antwoord wat je geef  
en ontdek wat je nog meer over je n

Welke VORM bouwen jullie?

\* dit spel is niet ontworpen om traumatisch



Some important information is depicted on the sides and on the bottom of the box, such as the minimum playing time, minimum age and amount of players, see figure 50. The content is also illustrated on the side, to inform and interest players.

orm

en je vriendin, ontworpen om jullie band te versterken.


te stellen en antwoorden te delen. Op deze manier bouwen  
elkaar beter kennen én begrijpen.\*

van het water te bereiken, door naar elkaar toe te bouwen. Je  
s je de vraag van je tegenstander open en eerlijk hebt beant-  
t kom je dichtert tot je medespeler. Laat je gesprek de vrije loop  
medespeler kan leren. Maar pas op dat je niet in het water valt!

gebeurtenissen te onthullen.

leeftijd  
**14+**

**2**  
spelers

15+  


  
**GARAGE**  
**2020**

Figure 50. VORM packaging bottom





Figure 51. Open Kaart (Open Kaart, 2019)

### What makes VORM unique?

Comparing VORM to two similar, existing games shows the differences and benefits of VORM.

### VORM vs. Open Kaart

VORM and Open Kaart, figure 51, are quite similar conversation games. Both use questions to play the game and have similar topics. Where VORM uses emotions to combine with subjects, Open Kaart has topic cards with full questions, sometimes containing emotions. Open Kaart is played by a group of people where one player asks a question and the other players have to guess the answer for that person. The person who is most right wins the round.

Because of the full questions on the cards, the game is slightly less replayable than VORM. If you would play Open Kaart multiple times with the same people, at some point you know which answers are correct. However, similar to VORM, the players can use their imagination to find better answers.

Another difference with VORM is that Open Kaart is more fun with more than two players, as you get more guesses and more opinions. Whereas VORM is designed specifically for two players, to ensure the open and trustworthy environment to share deeper information.

Additionally, the people to play Open Kaart with do not have to be people you know, whereas VORM is intended for existing friendships, to share more deeply and actually support each other afterwards.

The biggest difference is that Open Kaart is not really suitable for victims of sexual violence. The purpose of Open Kaart is to discover how other people see you. This can be very confronting and painful, for anyone but especially for people with a negative self image. With Open Kaart the player whose turn it is, is not in control of what the others will say about him/her. The other players could say hurtful things. Especially using the 'Shadow side' category can uncover the misconceptions, prejudices and knowledge gaps that outsiders have about the victim.

Open Kaart does have a competitive option, awarding points to the person who has the best answer per round. VORM does not have this element, as the purpose of VORM is not to win from each other, but to strengthen the bond by unconditionally accepting the answers any player gives.

The visual style is bright, dual tone and appeals to young adults, similar to VORM.





Figure 52. Vertellis (Vertellis, 2020)

### VORM vs. Vertellis

Vertellis, figures 52 & 53, is a social card game sharing the same purpose as VORM: to strengthen the bond and create more understanding among players. Vertellis is positioned as an alternative to digital, superficial entertainment. It consists of 46 cards, divided over four rounds with questions much like the Proustian questionnaire mentioned in subchapter 5.3. The questions are focused on the future or on the past and are meant for self reflection.

Two of the four rounds are similar to Open Kaart: guessing the answer to the question for your fellow player. The other two rounds are based on the future or the past. The fact that Vertellis has different rounds makes it more dynamic. However, with only 46 cards the replayability will be less than VORM. The two 'time' rounds are meant to reflect on yourself, by yourself. VORM also has a reflection version, and as you play VORM with the same person, you can help each other reflect on the last time you played VORM and the answers that were given then.

In contrary to VORM and Open Kaart, Vertellis contains mostly positive questions. This helps to keep the conversation pleasant and light. But it prevents players from reaching deeper understanding. Although Vertellis emphasizes in their communication that the cards are primarily



Figure 53. Vertellis cards (Vertellis, 2020)

intended to start the conversation and not to win from each other, it has the same competitive element as Open Kaart.

The design seems to target an older age group (30+) as it is black and white and quite straightforward.

### Conclusion

VORM's uniqueness comes from the mechanism of sharing insecurities and its replayability. VORM can help strengthen the bond by sharing the good and the bad things of life, multiple times with the same players.

### **Design boundaries fit**

VORM has been designed in order to fit the design boundaries stated in subchapter 4.4. See figure 54.

#### *Statement fit*

Whether VORM leads to the loved one feeling confident has to be tested, see subchapter 6.2.

VORM facilitates the sharing of insecurities by letting friends ask each other questions about specific subjects, combined with emotions.

The physical activity of VORM is building a bridge. The game is dynamic as well as playful, as players move their personalized pawns on the bridge.

The subjects and emotions selected for VORM can be used to ask about the effects and problems regarding sexual violence. The visual style of VORM is adjusted to appeal to the target group age. Whether VORM truly fits the intended target group needs to be evaluated by an expert, see subchapter 6.2.

#### *Interaction fit*

The mechanism of VORM mimics and provokes a conversation and both players share equally as much.

VORM is a physical board game with all necessary elements present in the box.

Depending on the form the players are building, every stone with every turn provides new input for questions.

The box of VORM itself can be used as the physical invitation to play the game. The sober packaging invites people to open the box.

#### *Themes fit*

VORM is personal as players get their personalized pawn to play with. The combination of the subject and an emotion, together with a friend ensure that the questions players receive and the answers they give are personal.

The timing to use VORM, after revealing a traumatizing event, is written on the box, see figure 50.

#### *Focus session fit*

Whether VORM works as is intended needs to be tested, see subchapter 6.2.

VORM is sustainable in the sense that it is replayable. The chance element in the stones and the emotions, together with the imagination of your fellow player, and the emotional and psychological development each player may experience over time, make VORM impossible to finish.

VORM can be ordered online and delivered through the letterbox of the intended friend. As it is already present in the house, the step to start playing is small. Whether this is accessible enough for the target group, needs to be evaluated by an expert, see subchapter 6.2.

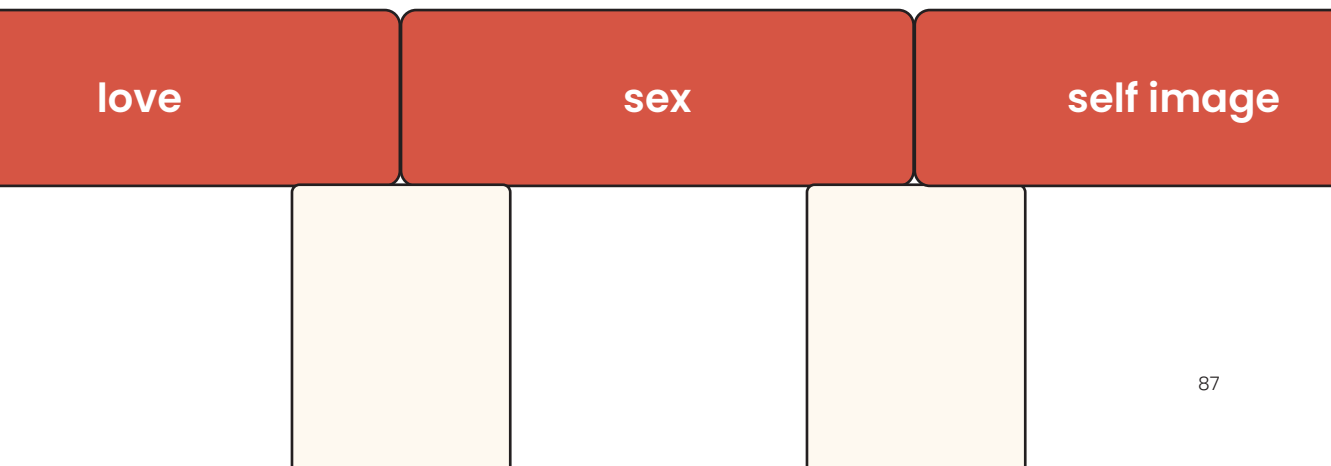
- Statement fit**
- Feeling confident
  - Sharing of insecurities
  - Playful
  - User fit

- Interaction fit**
- Inviting
  - Balance in conversation
  - Diversity
  - Focus

- Themes fit**
- Personal
  - Time

- Focus session fit**
- Effective
  - Sustainable
  - Accessible

Figure 54. VORM boundaries fit before testing



## 6.2. Validation

The final design was validated with both end users and experts. With the end users the usability, effectiveness, desirability and sustainability of the product were tested. Additionally, two experts were asked to evaluate the design on target group fit, accessibility and placement in the care process. For both validation approaches and results, see Appendix 10.

### User test results

Three friend couples tested VORM: the first couple in real life, the second couple via Skype, and the third couple in real life with me observing through Skype, see figure 55. All couples were formed by a victim of sexual violence and their friend.

### Usability

- The users are able to form questions with the given subjects and the emotions.
- They are able to build the bridge and decorate the pawns, however the play date on the pawns is not clear.
- The play manual is clear and works.

### Effectiveness

- Playing VORM was effective in the sense that it led to getting to know each other better by sharing new information.
- For some it led to understanding each other a bit better and being able to support each other with the subjects discussed.
- In this test, VORM did not lead to an explicit increase in the feeling of confidence towards their friend. This feeling was already there prior to playing.
- Almost all questions asked were about insecurities and all questions were answered.
- Some questions were directed to the sexual violence, but most were not.
- On a scale of 1-5, participants rated the playfulness of VORM at 3: not too serious, but also not too playful that it becomes childish.

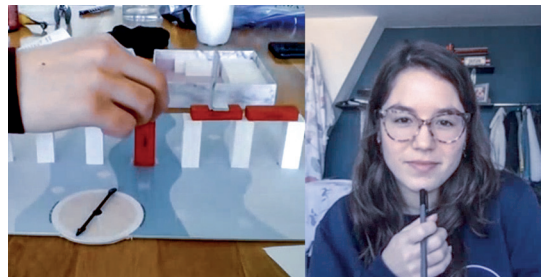
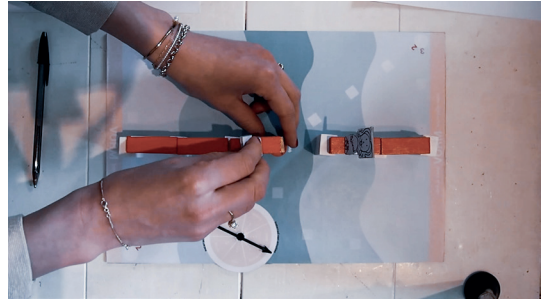


Figure 55. User tests

### Desirability

Although the testing sample is very small, one hypothesis is that the target group is quite distinguished: the participants were either very convinced and would definitely buy VORM or they did not feel they needed it or would play it. However, all of the participants enjoyed playing it.

### Sustainability

- The players believe VORM can be played eternally, but they would play it about 5 times before not wanting to play anymore.
- None of the players believe the play date sticker is enough to remind them. They do think the final step of deciding the play date helps to play the game again.
- All players would put the play date in their digital agendas.

## Expert results

Behavioral scientist Roos Koolhof (Qpido) & social worker Mark School (Pinq) gave their opinion about VORM through Skype.

### Target group fit

Both experts think VORM can help victims of sexual violence and their friends.

Mark comments that for the victims, VORM is a way to share the current situation and receive support from someone you trust. It will help the victim to feel less alone. He also believes that playing with friends is better than playing with parents, as teenagers might not want to share this information with their parents. Roos mentions that the players can benefit from the normalizing effect of sharing insecurities. "Playing provides insight into the other, but it makes you think about yourself as well."

Concerning the friends of the victims, Mark says: "Friends can definitely benefit from VORM. By playing it, they can cultivate more understanding concerning the current situation".

Concerning the age limit of 14+, both experts wonder whether this should be higher. Roos: "at 14 girls have fluctuating friendships. These relationships are less stable and less safe than for instance at 16." Mark confirms that at 14, or even at 12, girls are old enough to understand the subjects. However, "girls aged around 16/17 have more solid friendships. They are more developed and have a better sense of what friendship really is".

### Accessibility

Roos questions whether having VORM delivered to your letterbox is accessible enough to play the game. She would prefer to look at ways to make it more accessible. Mark believes the delivery aspect is great.

### Placement in the care process

Mark believes that the best time to use VORM is before intensive care is needed (such as treatment at Pinq), when the girl is still living at home and she needs to share her worries. In this way, they can prevent the need for invasive care, saving money but also keeping the girl at home longer.

Mark believes the game can also be used during treatment at Pinq, by the therapist, as a way to get to know the girl and her life. The game has the benefit that it will be the focus point, causing the appointment to feel less like an interrogation.

Roos also believes VORM could be used during treatment at Qpido, where the mentor and the girl have a casual bond.

Additionally, Roos wonders about the pricing. If they were to produce it, she estimates the price to be around 35 euros, which is a lot to pay for a teenager.

Both experts think VORM is a fun game to play.

## Limitations

Due to the timing of this project, the final month coincided with the corona crisis in the Netherlands. Therefore it was not possible to conduct all user tests in person, nor was it possible to conduct as many tests as I had originally planned. The test participants were chosen based on target group fit, availability and proximity. They were not chosen based on the criterion of having a deteriorating bond. Although they have experienced deteriorating bonds with loved ones in the past, none of the test subjects experienced this currently or with the particular player that was available for the test.

By testing through Skype, see figure 55, I was still able to observe the participants. However, the participants in test 2 have not had the prototype in their hands, and thus missed a large part of the experience. Because only three couples have tested the game, it is not sure whether their opinions are accidental or significant for the target group, also because the third couple was male.

Concerning the experts, the corona crisis meant for some of them that the switch to online working came with a lot more work. This was the reason that I received less reactions than I had hoped for. Luckily, two experts were willing to talk. Unfortunately, they were also unable to see and experience the prototype in real life. I tried to give this experience by showing them a video of the prototype during the user tests, however it is not the same.

## Conclusion

- VORM helps to strengthen the bond of victims of sexual violence and their friends, however it does not necessarily lead to a feeling of confidence at the loved one's side. The participants were not selected on the criterion of having a deteriorating bond, therefore it can not be concluded whether VORM never leads to this effect. Specific testing with a larger sample should confirm this.
- VORM facilitates the sharing of insecurities through a mechanism.
- Through playing VORM players get to know each other better and some understand their friends better.
- Playing VORM can convince people to buy it. Testimonials of convinced users could therefore be a strong marketing tool.
- The game can be played many times and participants think 5 times would be appropriate.
- Experts believe VORM fits victims and their friends perfectly. However, 14 years old as a minimum play age is too low.
- The delivery option is valuable, however VORM could be made even more accessible.
- Finally, in the care process, VORM could be used before treatment, at home, during ambulatory treatment at Qpido or during intensive treatment at Pinq. The best place would be before treatment, as that could prevent needing care. See figure 56 for a summary.



### Statement fit

- Feeling confident
- Sharing of insecurities
- Playful
- User fit

### Interaction fit

- Inviting
- Balance in conversation
- Diversity
- Focus

### Themes fit

- Personal
- Time

### Focus session fit

- Effective
- Sustainable
- Accessible

Figure 56. VORM boundaries fit after testing

### 6.3. Implementation plan

In order to get VORM on the market, several steps need to be taken, see figure 57:

#### Step 1: Launching partner

*Amount of work for finding a partner: 60 days*  
*Amount of work for further development & production: 120 days*

Partner: Spirit Specifieq

Garage2020, the graduation company, works as a design consultancy agency for youth services. They only take on projects on request. Garage2020 does not have the financial resources to develop VORM. A launching partner will provide the funds to develop the game further (see 6.4 recommendations) and will handle the production costs. This partner is essential for the future of VORM. Once a launching partner has been found, research & development can start. Finding a partner requires building a pitch, including projected costs and benefits. With the partner, market research will be conducted at an early stage, to quantify the desirability of the product. An appropriate partner could be Spirit Specifieq, as they have close ties with Garage2020, are informed about VORM and have shown interest. Additionally, they have experience with developing serious games. Finally, they also have a webshop offering literature and tools for care patients and professionals. Finding a launch partner should take around three months. Further development and production could take around six months, as this involves additional research, testing and implementing changes.

#### Step 2: Points of sale

*Amount of work: 40 days*

Partners: Bol.com, Centrum Seksueel Geweld, Slachtofferhulp NL

Once VORM is finalized, the product should be able to ship throughout the Netherlands. In order to sell VORM online, a point of sale is needed. Webshops will offer the game to customers. Bol.com came up during validation with users as a recommended online sales channel. Because of the fame of Bol.com in the Netherlands and their assortment of games, including the category of ‘conversation starters’ this could be a good match. Looking at the field of sexual violence, the Sexual Assault Centre website could endorse the game, also Slachtofferhulp NL. The point of sale should be able to meet the delivery requirement: adding a personal note to each package. These points will be chosen in consultation with the launching partner. Finding points of sale and taking care of logistics should take around two months.

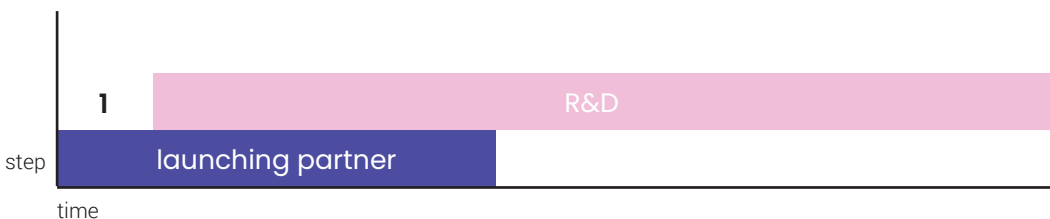


Figure 57. Implementation timeline

### Step 3: Launching campaign

*Amount of work: 60 days*

Partners: social workers, experience experts, psychologists, de Sekszusjes, VICE

The first part of launching VORM is through personal recommendations. Professionals and experience experts in the field of sexual violence recommend the game to their network, clients and friends and can offer a trial. Testimonies will be recorded for online communication.

The second part involves social media. As teenagers and young adults spend a lot of time on social media such as Instagram and YouTube, it would be fitting to target them on these platforms. Influencers of all sorts can talk about VORM, think of spokespeople against sexual violence, lifestyle bloggers, game lovers. For instance, the Sekszusjes (VPRO). With their program they discuss all sides to sex in a taboo-breaking way, for a younger audience. Also, VICE NL publishes a lot of articles about sexual violence and its effects. VICE NL could be a good platform to reach Dutch teenagers. This second part focuses on targeting all Dutch female teenagers.

In total this implementation plan will take maximum 14 months, depending on the time it takes to find a launching partner.

### 4. Future plan

If expert organizations in other countries are interested and/or if the product is a success, VORM can be translated into English or other languages.



## 6.4. Recommendations

Some recommendations for further development, based on the concept and validation:

- More testing

Only three couples so far have tested VORM, of which one couple online. This is too small a sample to draw conclusions. Further research, qualitative, and also small scale quantitative research, should be done with the entire product in real life, including the packaging and the manual. To study the concept, the content and marketing aspects such as buying motives. It would be good to test with more victims of sexual violence, in order to validate whether the design actually helps to talk about the current effects of the event, and which optimizations are desirable. It would also be interesting to test VORM with people who are experiencing a deteriorating bond, or want to deepen a bond with a loved one, and study whether playing VORM strengthens the bond, making it a game for a larger audience than victims of sexual violence.

- Further research into subjects

The proposed subjects vary between being very specific and wide. Using only specific subjects could help players in forming questions, but it could also limit the game and their imagination. Further research should conclude which subjects work best for the target group, also focusing on age. Extension packs could also be an option, to prolong and widen the use of VORM.

- Age

As Roos Koolhof mentioned, the age limit of 14 is quite low. This should be studied further, in order to position the game better. Together with this decision, the ways of targeting this group should be investigated as well.

- Production

The prototype I made consisted of parts of other games. As the game consists of a lot of different parts, it needs to be investigated how this can be done in an efficient way, in order to balance between cost and quality. The cardboard elements such as the box, the board and the pawns require an investment for the dies. The size of the market and resulting order size will influence decisions about production, investments and market price.

- Experts for accessibility

To ensure the target group will use the product, once it is produced, the accessibility should be as high as possible. I would recommend interviewing more experts who work with the target group on a daily basis, and increase the accessibility based on their suggestions.

## 6.5. Next steps

Due to the corona crisis in the Netherlands during the final month of this project, it was not possible to test with victims of sexual violence in at a treatment center. Once the crisis dies down and personal contact is possible again, I want to take VORM to the center to test it properly and study their reactions.

Additionally, I will arrange meetings with Spirit Specifiek to see whether they are interested in developing VORM and offering VORM on their webshop or possibly using it in their treatments at Qpido, Meisa or Pinq.

## 6.6. Design evaluation

Looking back at the goal of the project:

**Does VORM reduce the negative effect of a missing or deteriorating bond between a victim and her loved one?** On the one hand, yes. VORM helps to strengthen the bond between a victim of sexual violence and her friend, by sharing insecurities. This sharing works by letting players ask each other original questions, which uncover new knowledge.

On the other hand, this particular effect has not been tested. The test participants were not selected on having a deteriorated bond, therefore it can not be concluded whether VORM helps or not.

Looking back at the framing statement:

**Does VORM lead to a feeling of confidence at the loved one's side by facilitating the sharing of insecurities in a playful way?** For what we know now, the game does not lead to a feeling of confidence, based on the three user tests conducted. Further tests should confirm whether this depends on the game or on the test subjects.

What has been confirmed in the tests is that VORM facilitates the sharing of insecurities in a playful way. The need for a product such as VORM has also been confirmed by experts. The question-asking element works well for talking about sexual violence and its effects. The purpose of VORM, strengthening the bond, is also very relevant when helping victims of sexual violence and their friends.

Looking at the three pillars for innovation:

### *Feasibility*

VORM consists of everyday parts. It can be manufactured easily with current technologies and materials, however, it may not be cheap.

### *Desirability*

From the tests I can conclude that one couple would certainly buy it, but this is too small a base to conclude if there is a (consumer) market for VORM. Further market research is required to evaluate the desirability.

### *Viability*

As I discovered during ideation, there are not many games with the purpose of sharing insecurities. There are games whose aim it is to strengthen the bond between players such as Vertellis, however, these games are not as replayable as VORM. Also, there are not a lot of games focused on victims of sexual violence and the processing of the event. There is a game designed to help young victims explore sexuality and intimacy called **Vil Du? App** (YipYip, 2017), however, this is used during treatment, with the therapist. VORM provides help within the social circle of the victim and is the first social game focused on victims of sexual violence and their friends.

Looking at the title of this project:

**design for release: supporting victims of sexual violence**, I believe VORM is a good outcome. Victims can release their troubles with their friends and can receive support.







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# Recommended reads

If reading this report sparked your interest in sexual violence, here are some books, films and podcasts I recommend, as they provide different, interesting views on the topic.

## *Text & image*

Alles wat we hebben - Griet Op de Beeck

Helen van seksueel misbruik - Ivonne Meeuwssen

Misogynies - Joan Smith

Ontaard verklaard - Una

Partners in beeld: seksueel misbruik raakt het hart van de relatie - Ivonne Meeuwssen

Verlamd van angst - Agnes van Minnen

## *Video*

Bombshell - Annapurna Pictures

Centrum Seksueel Geweld - YouTube

Khata - Interakt

Niks aan de hand - 2doc

Verkracht of niet - BNNVARA

Verstijfd van angst - BNNVARA

## *Audio*

Chanel Miller reads her victim impact statement - 60 minutes

Het verhaal van Lisa - VPRO





design for release: **supporting victims of sexual violence**

by Ghislaine Tseng