

Description of Methodology:

To gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the PROtect app and the most important features, we needed to understand a Mom's perspective on personal safety. To do this, we conducted 5 in-depth interviews by talking to Mothers of children ages 13 - 24 who live in various areas across the Midwest about their experiences and viewpoints on personal safety. From these user interviews, we learned behavior patterns and trends among the preexisting knowledge and fears of the target group: Moms.

Trends on Awareness:

With most of the interviewees, we found that the prevalence of sexual assault cases in the news caused a general sense of being more aware of surroundings and led the Moms to take more precautions when they are out and about. Many of the moms talked about feeling cautious and having a heightened awareness when they are at shopping centers and in parking lots. Several of the interviewees specifically mentioned having a greater fear for the safety of their daughters, and not as much so for their sons.

Trends on Alerting family:

It was found that alerting a couple of members of one's immediate family was the most common response to who the Mom's would want to alert if they found themselves in an uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situation. All of the interviewees said that they would want to alert a trusted individual in an uncomfortable situation. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they would call a trusted male relative or friend to come to their aid, if possible, to help alleviate their fears if found in a situation that had the potential for danger. All of the Moms said that they currently use the tracking app "Find My Friends" to track the location of their family members, but only one said that they use an app, Life 360, that has a feature where you can check in with others.

Trends on Travel:

All respondents indicated that they typically use a personal car to get around and not public transportation. One of the things that made the moms the most uncomfortable was riding in ubers.

Findings:

During the analysis of our interviews with mothers of teenagers, we found some key findings that resonated with PROtect and what it has to offer. All of the moms found it necessary to actively track their family members to give themselves a peace of mind. The top locations/situations where moms would want to use a protection app are at-home maintenance worker visits, uber trips, malls, and parking lots. Also all of the Moms reported that they are alone just about everyday either at home or going to work.

Recommendations:

Based on the interviews, one of the features of the PROtect app that is attractive to Moms is the ability to message and check in with people, while they are tracking them as well. We found that we need to find an easy way to set up an event so that people wouldn't just revert back to using their generic tracking app. It could also be beneficial to come up with a feature that allows you to repeat events in the future without having to set a specific timer. Such as a mall shopping trip or a trip to the grocery store that you could start with the press of a button and end with the press of a button when you know you are safe again. Lastly, we found that it would also be beneficial to find a way to incorporate the ability to track the family members while you are messaging with them as well. It could be a good idea in the redesign to include texting functionality, with the ability to see a tracking map of family and friends as well, all within the same platform.

Can you think of features of an app, along the lines of personal safety, that you would use on a day-to-day basis and would in fact make you feel more safe?

"You know what would be nice? It's just like you facetimeing me or calling me when you're going home, but if you were, let's say you were in an area where you didn't feel safe, but you think you're okay but you just want somebody to be aware, if you could send me a message saying "check my location for a while I'm feeling a little nervous" and then give me an all clear afterwards."

- Cindy Allison, 55, Louisville, Kentucky (Mom of 20 yr old girl, 23 yr old girl, 24 yr old boy)