

# Heuristic Evaluation of B-Sharp

## 1. Problem

B-Sharp is an iPad application that inspires musicians to be more mindful of themselves during rehearsals by allowing them to navigate tabs to track goals and emotions, view progress, and hear from others in the community.

## 2. Violations Found

### 1. [H2-2: Match System and Real World][Severity 3][Found by: A, B, C]

In the menu, the term “Select” did not have a clear meaning. Given it is paired with a musical note, I would think it would take me to the page to select a song to play, but instead it brings me to the set goals and log emotions page. This labeling creates a disconnect between what I believe the button will do and what it actually does. Solution: Choose a term like, “Practice” or “Log Emotions”, which may be more indicative of the button’s function and aligns with the user’s overarching goals.

### 2. [H2-8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design][Severity 1][Found by: B]

User interface elements under the select tab are not aligned to a grid. This results in a haphazard and unprofessional feel. Examples include the set of sheet music icons and the text entry boxes for setting goals and emotions. Solution: Consider correcting by using a grid overlay to help realign UI elements.

### 3. [H2-3: User Control and Freedom][Severity 4][Found by: A, B, C]

If the user selects one set of sheet music and either changes their mind or wishes to practice something else within the same session, there is no easy way for them to go back and make that change. The user will have to simply end that session and start a new. The current rigid, unidirectional design restricts the user from performing what I believe would be a common task. Solution: Either just having a generic back button or a “change sheet music” button within the sheet music view.

### 4. [H2-5: Error Prevention][Severity 3][Found by: B]

If the user doesn’t enter anything into the “set goal” or “log emotions” text fields, the system will continue without getting confirmation from the user that they indeed intended not to enter anything. Since goal setting and emotion logging are perhaps the main points of the the app, it seems prudent to at least check with the user to ensure that they really meant not to log this data. Perhaps they were a confused novice, or just needed a friendly nudge to get them to make the time investment. Solution: I would include a confirmation popup that ensures this was the indented action of the user or allows them to easily correct it if not.

### 5. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by: B]

Button size and placement differ between screens in the select view. Consistency of visual design would be ideal. Solution: Choose one size and placement to go with and stick with that for this section.

### 6. [H2-7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use][Severity 3][Found by: A, B]

In the “rate satisfaction” window, the user is presented with radio buttons from 10 to 1 that is labeled “Most Satisfied” to “Least Satisfied,” respectively. This reading step requires the user to take a moment processes what exactly the scale represents before entering in their feelings. Furthermore the radio buttons for selection of satisfaction ratings don’t seem to fit the rest of your design in color or style, especially since the rest of the app focuses on qualitative evaluation. I would suggest finding a way to collect the same data through a more intuitive apparatus. Solution: use a sliding scale.

**7. [H2-1: Visibility of System Status][Severity 2][Found by: B]**

There is no confirmation signal to the user for after they enter in their feelings about their session. The user is brought straight back to the starting page of the “select tab” and must wonder if indeed the system has logged their info or not. Solution: Flash a notification that says something to the effect of “Your feelings have been tracked.” Alternately, you could display a summary of info logged from the session.

**8. [H2-8 Aesthetic & minimalist design][Severity 2][Found by: C]**

On "Select" section, sheet music is organized by tiled icons, with small thumbnails and little space for titles.

While not part of task flow, I thought it'd be worth mentioning users may find it overwhelming to see all this information, especially if thumbnails for sheet music look similar, and if titles are long.

Organize sheet music with list format to prioritize the title names and minimize icon space.

*Task 2:*

**9. [H2-6: Recognition Rather Than Recall][Severity 2][Found by: A, B, C]**

Each view on the Progress tab has a note at the bottom to tell the user to swipe left/right to get to a different page. An interface should not need a textual reminder of how to navigate. Rather, we should have visual affordances that cue the user in on how to get to the next page. Solution: Consider using dots on the bottom of the page to denote how many pages you can swipe through and highlight the dot corresponding to the current page. This is fairly standard across iOS devices to signify swipe-able content. Also, add a header to the top of each page to eliminate the instructions, “Swipe left to [get to some page].”

**10: [H2-8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design][Severity 1][Found by: B, C]**

All the text on the inspirational quote page, including the instructional text, is the same font, weight, color, etc. This makes the page look bland and poorly designed. Subtle variations in text features can add a lot to the sophistication of a product and can be an especially good way to differentiate between content and navigational chrome text. I would suggest at least starting with something as simple as italicizing the quoted person’s name and having the instructional text be less bold.

*Task 3:*

**11. [H2-6: Recognition not Recall][Severity 0][Found by: B]**

While the user has the ability to “un-send love” by tapping on “sent” label, there isn’t anything that cues the user to recognize this. They must find this out on their own and then remember it themselves any time they wish to carry out this task. Consider replacing the “sent” label with an un-send button.

**12. [H2-3: User Control][Severity 3][Found by: B, C]**

It’s unclear what a user can or should do if they play multiple instruments and wish to submit a message about one in particular. The user should have a clear means of adjusting the instrument they are posting about. I suggest adding such an option in the “add” screen.

**13. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 2][Found by: A]**

On the landing page of the Community tab, the plus button is darker blue. This leads me to believe, the other parts of the page that are the same color are also selectable. However, the Vocals/Drums/Trumpet/etc. labels are a matching color and are not selectable. The Send Love button is a different color but is selectable. Solution: Swap the colors of the Send Love button and the instrument label, so that selectable screen elements all share a common style.

**14. [H2-3 User control & freedom][Severity 2][Found by: A, B, C]**

Under "Community" section, the status update page does not have a return page, in case the user wants to exit.

Though user could return by clicking on the "Community" section on the nav bar, this is non-intuitive. Add a return button on status update page.

**15. [H2-8 Aesthetic & minimalist design][Severity 0][found by: A, C]**

"Send Love" button could be replaced by an icon.

Replacing with an icon can minimize the amount of text on a page which is inevitably more text-y.

Replace with an iconic button, such as a heart.

**16. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 0][Found by: A]**

The plus button in the page does not seem to conform to typical mobile UI standards. It resembles the floating action button (a circular icon floating above the UI signifying an action) that is more common on Android platforms, except for the fact that it is in the top right while floating action buttons are typically in the bottom right. The plus sign symbol in iOS is commonly in the navigation bar on the top right. This button is in neither of those places so may be less intuitive to the user. Solution: Either move the floating button to the bottom right, or turn it into a navigation bar item and add it to the navigation bar in the top right.

*General:*

**17. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by: A, B, C]**

Across the tabs, all the instructions and button text vary between title case and sentence case. Some text is also larger than the rest of the text on the tab. Solution: Unify font sizes across the app for page titles, and create some standard for title case vs. sentence case.

**18. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 4][Found by: A, B]**

The menu at the top of the screen resembles a typical tab bar controller in form, but not in position or usage, which makes it rather confusing. Tab bars are typically at the bottom of the screen and do not get removed or added with a hamburger menu button (as you have in the top left). Further, you can typically only select a tab once, which would bring you to the most recently viewed screen on that tab, or, if there isn't one, to the root screen. Here though, the tabs work as buttons, so pressing the "Select" tab will bring you to the Set Goals/Log Emotions screen, even if you are already further down the flow of that tab.

Solution: This one can be fixed in two ways. One option is to keep the tab bar design, but move it to the bottom of the screen and have it function as a normal tab bar with the separate navigation stacks. The other is to modify the design to be more menu-esque (perhaps a side drawer) so that the functionality of the buttons more closely matches their design.

**19. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by: A, B]**

The text field boxes (in Select and in Community) are rather large, but the font inside them is quite small/hard to read and does not at all fill the box. Solution: Make the font size inside the text fields larger so as to make it easier to read and to fill the space allotted for that text.

**20. [H2-1: Visibility of Status][Severity 1][Found by: A, B]**

There is no variation in what the current tab's icon looks like as compared to the non-current tabs. This might cause the user to wonder if their tap has been registered and or if they're on the correct page.

Solution: I suggest changing the color of the current tab's icon.

**21. [H2-1 Visibility of system status][Severity 2][Found by: A, C]**

Pages do not have visible headers for each page.

This could help remind users which page they are on for better user experience.

Solution: Add a visible header at the top of the page, under the navigation bar.

## 22. [H2-3 User control & freedom][Severity 2][Found by: C]

Navigation bar does not minimize.

Minimizing the nav bar gives the user freedom to maximize screen space (especially important for viewing sheet music and feed).

Solution: Allow nav bar to minimize.

## 23. [H2-10: Documentation][Severity 0][Found by: B]

There is no system wide help or documentation. Making information accessible might be necessary for novice users who are just getting used to your whole system. I suggest having a settings and help tab where you can put such information and any optional settings you wish to present the user with.

### 3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
[H2-1: Visibility of Status]	0	1	2	0	0	3
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]	0	0	0	1	0	1
[H2-3: User Control]	0	0	2	1	1	4
[H2-4: Consistency]	1	3	1	0	1	6
[H2-5: Error Prevention]	0	0	0	1	0	1
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]	1	0	1	0	0	2
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]	0	0	0	1	0	1
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]	1	2	1	0	0	4
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]	0	0	0	0	0	0
[H2-10: Documentation]	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total Violations by Severity</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>

### 4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C
sev. 0	50%	25%	25%
sev. 1	50%	100%	33%
sev. 2	57%	42%	71%
sev. 3	50%	100%	50%
sev. 4	100%	100%	50%
<b>total (sev. 3 &amp; 4)</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>total (all severity levels)</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>48%</b>

### 5. Summary Recommendations

*Overall, B-Sharp's interface is off to a good start; it is clean and we like the use of calming colors that might put the user in the mindset to practice.*

*Most violations found in the prototype lie in navigation and consistency, and can be fairly easily resolved with some modification to one of those two domains.*

*In terms of navigation, we'd recommend using a standard iOS tab bar on the bottom of the screen. This would allow you to keep the icon design you currently have, but in a manner that users are already familiar with. In addition, with a fixed tab bar, the UI will no longer require a hamburger button in the top left to toggle the appearance of the menu, so that space can be freed up for a back button, which was missing from several of the screens. Additionally, consider mapping out all the junctures in the user interface and then thinking about every potential user desire or need at each juncture.*

*As far as consistency goes, some standardization of font sizes, colors (and what those colors indicate), buttons, and other interface elements will pull the app together very well and make it more clear to the user what each element of the interface is supposed to do.*

*While the colors are consistent across all pages, we would recommend having more color accents on certain pages, such as the progress page, and to unify the colors, such as the graph on the progress page, into the aqua hue for a better visual experience and for more visual continuity between pages. Also, on the subject of color--the app name at the top is hard to read, so perhaps make it a darker shade.*