Heuristic Evaluation of Wello

1. Problem

Wello is an application dedicated to improving and maintaining one's wellness and mental health – allowing you to send and receive encouraging messages/wishes from friends, journal, and find wellness-related resources.

2. Violations Found

Onboarding

1. **[H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design] / Severity 2 / B**
   Text on the onboarding flow is sometimes redundant and wordy. In general the copy needs to be more actionable, instead of stating the creators' mission. As a user I get this impression from all of the "we" used in the text instead of "you".
   Fix: Page 1 remove "We thank you for being here with us!"
   Page 2, you don't need to tell me that I'll find the willow tree on my home page, I'd focus more on what the tree represents and how you want people to use it.
   Page 3, this can be combined with the above page, maybe by including a drawing of the tree from top to root.
   Page 4, I don't know what the first sentence means. Maybe use more active words like in the second sentence.
   Page 5, make the 2nd sentence more user centric (eg. you can send and receive)

2. **[H3: User Control & Freedom] / Severity 2 / A, B**
   Participation in onboarding is forced. There is no way for me to skip it.
   Fix: Add a skip button and allow users to access the onboarding at a later time. (eg. "skip. You can always return to this page by accessing ____"

3. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 3 / A, B**
   Affordance on the "begin" is unclear. I am unsure if I should swipe right (because of the right arrow and how I've been navigating through the onboarding) or if begin is a button to click on.
   Fix: Add solid rectangle behind begin or some other visual change to make it look like a button.

Task 1: Completing a Journal Entry

4. **[H2: Match Between System & Real World] / Severity 3 / A, B, C**
   Home page icons are not easy to understand. I think they are map, book, willow, friends, and mail, but I am unsure of the first two.
   Fix: Adding text under icons is an easy fix, or look for less ambiguous icons for the left two (eg. pencil+book = journaling, include the location dot on the map).

5. **[H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design] / Severity 1 / B**
Navigation bar doesn't match with the rest of the visual design. Opacity of the background lets the content in the background distract from the clarity of the icons (wouldn't be as much of an issue if icons were filled, but they are lines).
Fix: Give the nav bar a solid background, and make it a different color.

6. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 1 / B**
Icons have different line weights. Smaller items like the leaves inside the journal are hard to decipher on a small mobile screen.
Fix: Use more consistent icons and avoid ones with small details.

7. **[H10: Help & Documentation] / Severity 4 / B**
Clicking on the question mark on the willow page brings up text that is way too small to read.
Fix: Increase font size

8. **[H1: Visibility of System Status] / Severity 4 / B**
Smile and sad icons on the journal page are too hard to differentiate on a small screen. I initially thought the same icons were used. In addition, having two faces seems redundant when trying to convey one person's emotions.
Fix: Use just one larger sized face.

9. **[H1: Visibility of System Status] / Severity 4 / B**
Date says September 02, but I am able to see all of the month's leaves which is confusing. I also do not know which leaf I have selected, because today's leaf is yellow. This could mean that I have journalled and my mood was not good, or that I haven't and the leaf is yellow because that is today's date.
Fix: Just display the month, or visually differentiate the month and day. Maybe outline today's leaf even after they have journalled, and use a color that is not in the emotion scale.

10. **[H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use] / Severity 3 / B**
I don't know how to view past month's journals.
Fix: Add a left and right arrow and allow users to swipe left or right to switch months.

11. **[H3: User Control & Freedom] / Severity 4 / B, C**
I expect to be able to click on today's leaf to start writing today's journal, instead of only being able to click on the write icon (this could be a prototype limitation).
Fix: Allow for drafting by clicking on leaves.

12. **[H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design] / Severity 1 / B**
Nitpick, but weird shadow behind this leaf that isn't consistent with the rest of the visual design.

Fix: Remove shadow, or make it a darker grey, or add it behind the other leaf on the page.

13. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 1 / B**
When I click on a quadrant, especially the top right, the "unpleasant" text moves to the left and the shape becomes a circle. As a user this is a little jarring, and it gets rid of the mental connection between the bigger picture circle and this quadrant's page.
Fix: Maintain the quadrant shape as well as the location of the titles.

14. **[H2: Match Between System & Real World] / Severity 4 / B, C**
Generally when I see a circle and words I expect to be able to click on a word directly. Instead, the app takes me to the quadrant I clicked on.
Fix: Maybe change the helper text to click on a quadrant. Allow users to click directly on words. Allow pinch to zoom or add a zoom out/in button.

15. **[H1 Visibility of system status] / Severity 3 / C**
On the 'How are you feeling today?' page, I'm not sure what to tap after selecting a couple of the emotions (in this case, 'frustrated' and 'annoyed'). The same issue happens when inputting text into 'How did frustration manifest in your day?'. It seems like users are expected to slide with their thumb to go to the next view, but this is unclear.
Fix: Either tell users what to do next now that they've selected emotions or indicate where to go next.

16. **[H4 Consistency and standards] / Severity 3 / C**
In the end, there is a 'finish' button, and this is inconsistent with the previous views that had no buttons/indicators to continue.
Fix: Have consistent buttons on the bottom right of the app view that say 'Next' to continue drafting your journal entry.

17. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 2 / B**
Why does the record button disappear after I have typed a message? What if I want to type and also record?
Fix: Keep record button on screen.

18. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 1 / B**
White on dark background, small font, and serif make this text very hard to read.
Fix: Make font thicker.

19. **[H9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors] / Severity 1 / B**
Not clear once the text is filled if I can go back and edit it.
Fix: Make it look more like a text field, or add an edit button.

20. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 4 / A, B**
When I'm on the second two pages of filling out my journal, the back button takes me to the previous page. When I'm on the quadrant page it takes me back to the leaf. I would expect this back arrow to take me to the leaf page no matter what part of filling out the journal I am on.
Fix: Make back arrow point back to leaf page instead of previous journal page.

Task 2: Navigating to a wellness resource

21. **[H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall] / Severity 3 / B, D**
I do not know what the numbers represent. It would be beneficial to have some title/image that hinted at where the numbers would take me or what they represent.
Fix: Add wellness resource descriptions below each number. Maybe imagery on how significant/impactful the resource is, what type of resource it is.

22. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 1 / B**
Title text is treated the same but changes from "Resources" to "Resource Three" when I click on a resource. These pieces of information are at two different levels.
Fix: Add a subtitle, so you always see "Resources" but underneath you can see the number. This title of "Resource Three" is not helpful and could just be removed.

23. **[H4: Consistency & Standards] / Severity 1 / B**
Numberings on the resource cards suddenly appear after I click on a number on the tree.
Fix: These numberings should always be visible.

24. **[H4: Consistency and Standards] / Severity 1 / A**
When I'm on the home page and scroll down to the roots of the tree, I need to tap on a number placed on the root to receive the corresponding resource. The tapping required is not mentioned at all in the tutorial, despite the fact that the image of the roots with numbers is almost identical. Users should not have to remember that tapping would achieve nothing in the tutorial but is essential to view a given resource from the home page.
Fix: Enable tapping in the tutorial to maintain consistency between the instructions and Interface.

25. **[H4 Consistency and standards] / Severity 1 / C**
The scroll-down indicator near the willow tree view does not match the general design of the app. Also, viewing the resources by clicking on the tree and viewing them from scrolling has different padding/margins w.r.t. the bottom of the app view.
Fix: Make the scroll-down indicator dark green and slimmer. Make the padding/margin consistent no matter how we view the resources.

Task 3: Send an audio message to a friend

26. **[H8 Aesthetic and minimalist design] / Severity 2 / A, C**
It seems redundant to view the same tree when clicking on a friend's willow tree. The only difference is a new background color and the microphone button to send a new message.
Fix: Each friend's willow tree tile should have an accompanying microphone button, and clicking on the tile should not navigate away to a (nearly) identical view.

27. **[H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design] / Severity 2 / A, B**
    There is no visual differentiation between different people's willows (no customization), meaning I get no information from the full page display of my friend's willow. Having the full picture of the willow when viewing my friends also makes it much more time consuming to scroll through.
    Fix: Just show a list of your friend's names.

28. **[H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use] / Severity 1 / B**
    An expert may have one or two friends they really enjoy chatting with so adding some sort of sorting or some favoriting capabilities could be helpful. In this way I can more easily visit my most commonly visited trees.
    Fix: Allow users to favorite specific friends' trees.

29. **[H3: User Control & Freedom] / Severity 3 / B, D**
    Once I record an audio message the only option is to send it. What if I want to re-record?
    Fix: Render both an 'X' or 'Redo' option so a user can re-record.

30. **[H5: Error Prevention] / Severity 4 / A, B, D**
    There is also no way for me to listen back to my recording to make sure I like it. Also, I may hit the send button on accident when I didn't want to send.
    Fix: Add some sort of confirmation before sending a message and a play icon so a user can listen to a recorded message before sending.

31. **[H4 Consistency and standards] / Severity 2 / C**
    There is no option to send a written message or dictate a message, and this option was provided in the journal portion. Having the options to send a written, dictated, or spoken message is a typical convention in most applications nowadays.
    Fix: Allow the user to send both a written or spoken message. Also, allow the user to dictate a written message like in the journal portion of the app.

32. **[H1: Visibility of System Status] / Severity 2 / B, D**
    It is not clear to me when my friend has read my message. There is also no way for me to send another message after sending one. It is also not clear to me how long my friend can listen to my message and to whom my friend sends my message to as well.
    Fix: Make the "your wello wish has been received" text disappear, and maybe center it instead of having it replace the record a message button. Visually show the message opened after it is opened. In addition, enable the sender the ability to limit how long the receiver can listen to a message as well as limit who the receiver can send the message to.

33. **[H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use] / Severity 1 / B**
    It would be nice to be able to listen to a message and then directly respond to that message (mail screen) instead of having to go back to my friends, find their tree, and then leave a message.
    Fix: Add a reply button to each person's message.

34. **[H1: Visibility of System Status] / Severity 1 / B**
    How do I know if I have viewed a message or not?
    Fix: Add colored circle or other visual indicator that a message is unread.

35. **[H8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design] / Severity 1/ A, D**
    On the "Wello Wishes" page, scrolling up and down moves all the messages in the inbox
    appropriately but does not do the same with the title ("Wello Wishes"). Instead, the title does
    not appear to move appropriately and is stuck on position, sometimes overlapping with inbox
    messages. Such an overlap is unaesthetic and limits the user's visibility when scanning the
    inbox for a particular message.
    Fix: Ensure that the title ("Wello Wishes") stays at the top of the page and does not
    interfere with any content regardless of how far the user scrolls.

36. **[H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall] / Severity 1 / A**
    On the "My Willow" home page, the willow tree has on top of it a bird carrying an envelope
    with a red number. The envelope with a number is standard industry convention to indicate a
    new message, the use of a bird is fairly specific to this particular app. I had to go back through
    my memory and recall that I had seen this bird-and-envelope icon in the tutorial and then try
    to remember what it meant. This design asks a user to rely on recall, rather than recognition of
    an inbox.
    Fix: Add help to jog the user's memory of what tapping on the bird with an envelope
    would do. Alternatively, maybe standardize the icon so it's just an envelope with a red
    number.

3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H1: Visibility of Status		1	1	1	2	**5**
H2: Match Sys & World				1	1	**2**
H3: User Control			1	1	1	**3**
H4: Consistency		6	2	2	1	**11**
H5: Error Prevention		1			1	**2**
H6: Recognition not Recall		1		1		**2**
H7: Efficiency of Use		2		1		**3**
H8: Minimalist Design		3	3			**6**
H9: Help Users with Errors		1				**1**
H10: Documentation					1	**1**
Total Violations by Severity	**0**	**15**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**36**

4. Evaluation Statistics

ex) If Evaluator A found 1 of the 4 total severity 1 violations, they would put down 25%

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D
sev. 0				
sev. 1	20%	73%	7%	7%
sev. 2	43%	71%	29%	14%
sev. 3	29%	71%	43%	29%
sev. 4	29%	100%	29%	14%
total (sev. 3 & 4)	29%	86%	36%	21%
total (all severity levels)	28%	78%	22%	14%

*__Note that the bottom rows are *not* calculated by adding the numbers above it.__

5. Summary Recommendations

Wello finds its strengths in a soothing UI and design of a centralized dashboard that makes it easy for the user to access various wellness-related tasks from the home page. The selected color palette, with earth tones such as beige and green, is appropriate for the intended feel of the app, and the willow tree metaphor is an interesting unifying concept that is carried throughout the prototype.

The overarching sources of usability violations were 1) following visual design standards, 2) improving navigation, 3) setting people's expectations for the app's interactions (mental model), and 4) being consistent with interactions.

1. In general I would increase your font sizes and the amount of space a person can interact with. Much of the content was just too small to read and even harder to interact with (error messages, subtext on the mailing page, adjectives on the journaling page, etc.). The curve radii on your cards and line widths on buttons/icons are also all different.
2. It needs to be clearer where exactly a user is and how they can navigate between pages (i.e. scrolling versus tapping a 'next' button), especially for the journaling flow.
3. Many times I would expect one interaction and get another. This happened with the begin button in onboarding, and with the quadrant interaction while journaling. It is least clear how I am supposed to interact with the resources page.
4. Consistent actions and call-to-actions across the app are critical: allow scrolling on almost every component and render consistent 'continue'/'next'/'finish' buttons throughout the app's different flows. Additionally, the visual design (e.g. font choice, curve radii, background colors) should be consistent.

Following this general line of improvements, removing (or at least attaching some meaning to) the willow trees in the "My Friends" page would streamline the task of sending voice messages to friends and improve the overall design quality. For instance, make sure that the user can not only record a

voice message, but also check to make sure they want to send it and to whom as well as perhaps put restrictions on the voice message for sharing and viewing etc.

Additionally for the resources flow: What does seeing these resources do for me? How can I find new resources? What will I see when I click into a resource that will benefit me? I also think there is a big opportunity to allow customizability for the willow tree, or more fully take advantage of its visualization. A big part of someone's investment in their willow may come from making it personal to them. That said, the willow could be used more effectively. Specifically, the growth of the willow on one branch could signify growth in one area of usage and that interacting that way has helped the person versus no growth signifying perhaps interaction but limited growth. This could be calculated by looking at interaction as compared to the word choice in the journal entries over time and outputting a growth score as related to interaction with specific wellness resources. Another interesting idea to explore would be looking at interaction with friends and correlating a wellness score related to friend interactions.

We look forward to seeing the next iteration of the prototype!

Severity Ratings

>   0 - don't agree that this is a usability problem
>   1 - cosmetic problem
>   2 - minor usability problem
>   3 - major usability problem; important to fix
>   4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix