

# We've got Issues

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## WHAT IS WE'VE GOT ISSUES

In this dice and card game, players take turns rolling dice and drawing from a deck of Event and Issue cards. The Issue cards are named after and loosely represent psychological disorders by modifying the way you roll and changing the rules! Having multiple issue cards of the same type increases its severity and changes its gameplay effect. Event cards usually change the shape of the playing field like clearing away cards or adding extra dice rolls. At its core, We've Got Issues (WGI) is an entertaining and meaningful game meant

to promote awareness and discussion concerning psychological disorders. Psychological disorders are very real and fundamentally change how people live. We wanted to show that mental health should be taken as seriously as any other ailment, and that people can function and live fulfilling lives while coping with a psychological disorder. There are any number of valid approaches to the problem we have taken on. As game developers, we chose to create an experience to try and

make our point. The simple metaphors of randomness and arbitrarily imposed rules are at the core of the We've Got Issues experience. We wanted to drive home the fact that anyone can manifest a psychological disorder at any time, and that they are coped with, not cured. We want to be the reason for players to Google search issues they haven't heard of before. We want our players to cheer one another on as they each stare down the odds.

### EXPERIENCE

#### EXCITEMENT

Excitement is the center of WGI's experience. Its deceptively simple mechanics provide several routes to producing excitement from the common experiential channels players look to for enjoyment when entering a game space. The channels WGI targets are competition, system exploration, socialization, and rule-based challenge.

#### RANDOMNESS

In WGI, drawing and rolling are completely random gameplay elements the players have no control over. However, the players can choose how to utilize their cards and when to bank their score. These inputs provide enough agency for players to feel their choices matter, but not so much to strongly internalize bad feelings about a low-scoring turn. Additionally, the Panic Attack event keeps scores close so the player in last place is often one good-to-excellent turn from being in first place.

### ARCHETYPES

#### COMPETITION

Since WGI's end state is achieved when the first player reaches 7,500 or some house-chosen number of points, those who love competition may simply enjoy trying to win.

#### SYSTEM EXPLORATION

WGI revolves around stacking and resolving layers of rules which govern the way the player can bank points for that turn. Explorers enjoy figuring out which card interactions produce a competitive edge, fantastic stories to share later, or both. For example, the current record turn score is 7,250 points.

#### SOCIALIZATION

Since WGI is not a zero sum game, players are less likely to feel too badly about a low-score turn and more likely to cheer for one another. Everyone is effectively an underdog reacting to whatever the game dishes out. There are no poker faces to maintain, and plenty of opportunities for discussion.

#### CHALLENGE

Much of WGI gameplay is gauging the expected value of rolls given currently active issues and events. Players have been known to devise play style themes and meta-achievements to further characterize their play narrative.

### PERCEPTION

#### PROMOTING AWARENESS

WGI wants to be questioned. There are some disorders in the game that are not as well known, such as Munchausen's Syndrome. That card is present deliberately to instigate a Google search. The Issues and Events are not realistic, but roleplaying the art of coping with compulsions is intended to help an uninitiated player become comfortable thinking about the concept. WGI wants those players to be comfortable enough to ask questions and hopes players who know the answers might be willing to provide them. WGI's genial atmosphere is beginning therapy for deeper conversations.

#### KEEPING IT LIGHT

Although WGI is fun, it is not without criticism. Namely, some have felt that the game's approach is in fact making light of these issues. That is a fair criticism, and there are other ways to engage the problem of getting more people to be knowledgeable and supportive of those with psychological disorders. However, the creators of WGI have endeavored to maintain a respectful tone while crafting this piece of introductory media that they feel is part of the solution.

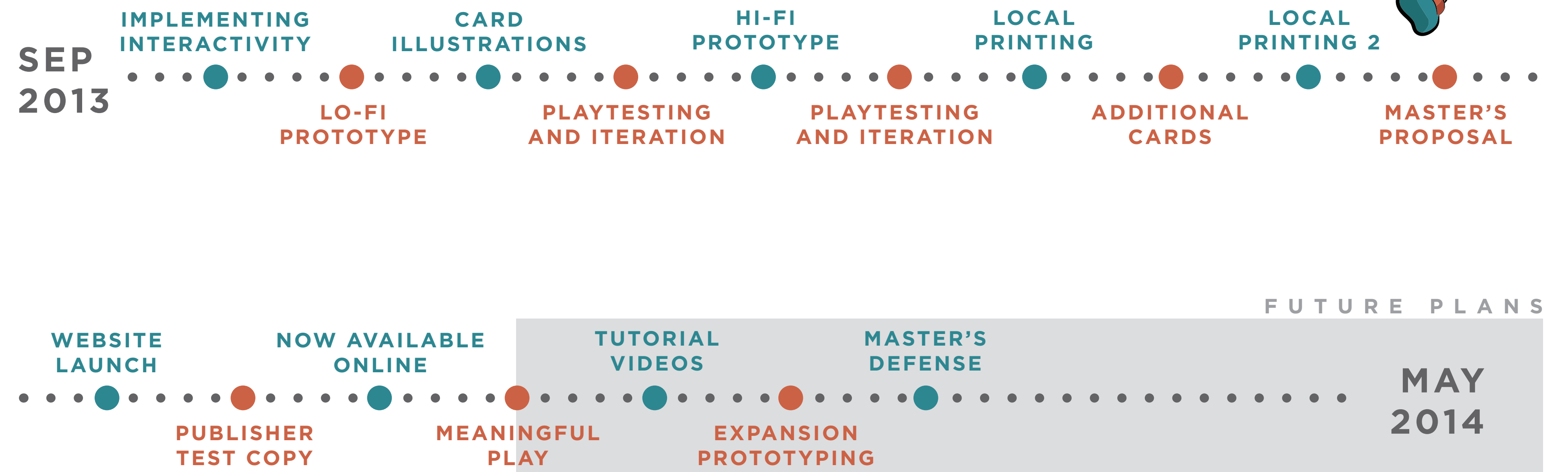


### ELEMENTS

STRATEGY GIVEN CONSTRAINTS  
LAYER OF RULE INTERACTIONS  
TURN RESOLUTION  
RESULT  
STORYBUILDING



### TIMELINE



### CARD EXAMPLES AND REVISIONS

### FUTURE PLAYTESTING

**BIPOLARITY**

**MILD**  
5's don't count as scoring die this turn.

**SEVERE**  
Gain a Second Opinion this turn.

**CRIPPLING**  
Gain a Second Opinion this turn, but 5's do not count as scoring die.

**ISSUE**

Bipolarity was originally a non-stacking issue which flipped between manic and depressive states each turn.

In WGI, cards and effects do not persist between turns, unless activated by an effect or a stacking issue. Bipolarity was difficult for players to remember, and contradicted the consistency of the rules in a way that made the game more difficult to learn.

**PTSD**

Increase the level of one of your issues for this turn. Play this turn as if you had drawn that level of the chosen issue. At the end of this turn discard PTSD.

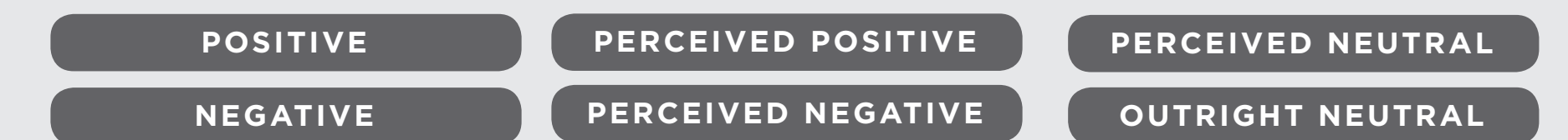
**EVENT**

PTSD was a non-stacking Issue card with the same effect it currently uses. If the player had no other issues, they would gain a Second Opinion for that turn.

Having a unique effect for the player every turn is a major part of WGI's design, which PTSD contradicted. It was also too powerful, violating the theme of not making cards seem solely positive to players.

PTSD is the reason the rule, "if a card is drawn and does not have an effect on the turn, discard it and draw another card," was added to WGI.

Informal playtesting has already informed WGI design revisions. In the future, the team plans to collect data on player reactions to the cards using the scale below.



By observing, recording, and coding player preferences and perceptions to cards during games, the team hopes to gain a better understanding of the trends, balance, and overall perception of WGI cards and gameplay.

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