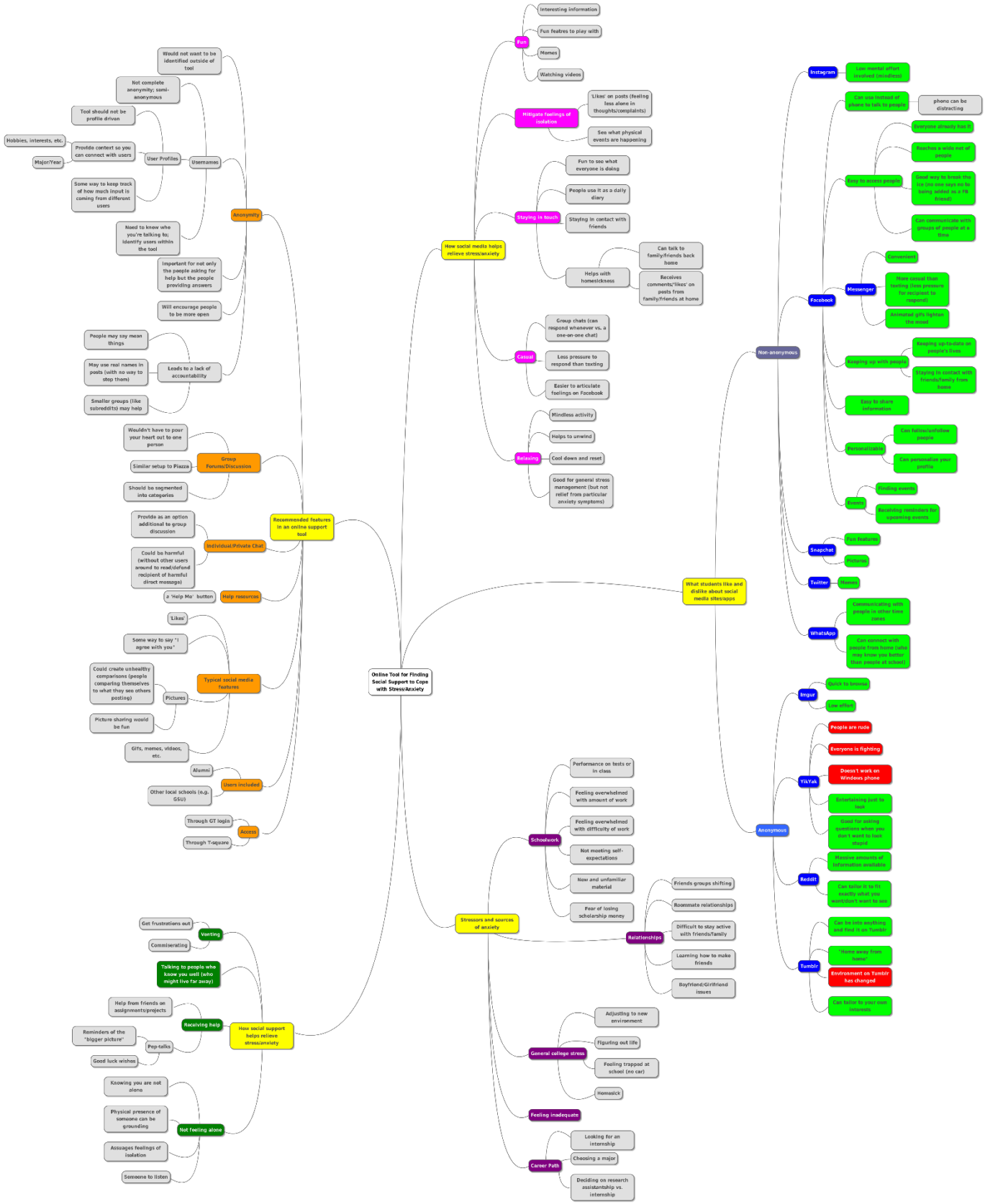
Appendix C


Online Tool for Finding Social Support to Cope with Stress/Anxiety
Recommended features in an online support tool
Anonymity
Would not want to be identified outside of tool
Usernames
Not complete anonymity; semi-anonymous
Tool should not be profile driven
User Profiles
Provide context so you can connect with users
Hobbies, interests, etc.
Major/Year
Some way to keep track of how much input is coming from different users
Need to know who you're talking to; identify users within the tool
Important for not only the people asking for help but the people providing answers
Will encourage people to be more open
Leads to a lack of accountability
People may say mean things
May use real names in posts (with no way to stop them)
Smaller groups (like subreddits) may help
Group Forums/Discussion
Wouldn't have to pour your heart out to one person
Similar setup to Piazza
Should be segmented into categories
Individual/Private Chat
Provide as an option additional to group discussion
Could be harmful (without other users around to read/defend recipient of harmful direct message)
Help resources
a 'Help Me' button
Typical social media features
Likes
Some way to say "I agree with you"
Pictures
Could create unhealthy comparisons (people comparing themselves to what they see others posting)
Picture sharing would be fun
Gifs, memes, videos, etc.
Users included
Alumni
Other local schools (e.g. GSU)
Access
Through GT login
Through T-square
How social support helps relieve stress/anxiety
Venting
Get frustrations out
Commiserating
Talking to people who know you well (who might live far away)
Receiving help
Help from friends on assignments/projects
Pep-talks
Reminders of the "bigger picture"
Good luck wishes
Not feeling alone
Knowing you are not alone
Physical presence of someone can be grounding
Assuages feelings of isolation
Someone to listen
How social media helps relieve stress/anxiety
Fun
Interesting information
Fun features to play with
Memes
Watching videos
Mitigate feelings of isolation
Likes' on posts (feeling less alone in thoughts/complaints)
See what physical events are happening
Staying in touch
Fun to see what everyone is doing
People use it as a daily diary
Staying in contact with friends
Helps with homesickness
Can talk to family/friends back home
Receives comments/'likes' on posts from family/friends at home
Casual
Group chats (can respond whenever vs. a one-on-one chat)
Less pressure to respond than texting
Easier to articulate feelings on Facebook
Relaxing
Mindless activity
Helps to unwind
Cool down and reset
Good for general stress management (but not relief from particular anxiety symptoms)
Stressors and sources of anxiety
Schoolwork
Performance on tests or in class
Feeling overwhelmed with amount of work
Feeling overwhelmed with difficulty of work
Not meeting self-expectations
New and unfamiliar material
Fear of losing scholarship money
Relationships
Friends groups shifting
Roommate relationships
Difficult to stay active with friends/family
Learning how to make friends
Boyfriend/Girlfriend issues
General college stress
Adjusting to new environment
Figuring out life
Feeling trapped at school (no car)
Homesick
Feeling inadequate
Career Path
Looking for an internship
Choosing a major
Deciding on research assistantship vs. internship
What students like and dislike about social media sites/apps
Non-anonymous
Instagram
Low mental effort involved (mindless)
Can use instead of phone to talk to people
phone can be distracting
Easy to access people
Everyone already has it
Reaches a wide net of people
Good way to break the ice (no one says no to being added as a FB friend)
Can communicate with groups of people at a time
Facebook
Messenger
Convenient
More casual than texting (less pressure for recipient to respond)
Animated gifs lighten the mood
Keeping up with people
Keeping up-to-date on people's lives
Staying in contact with friends/family from home
Easy to share information
Personalizable
Can follow/unfollow people
Can personalize your profile
Events
Finding events
Receiving reminders for upcoming events
Snapchat
Fun features
Pictures
Twitter
Memes
WhatsApp
Communicating with people in other time zones
Can connect with people from home (who may know you better than people at school)
Anonymous
Imgur
Quick to browse
Low effort
YikYak
People are rude
Everyone is fighting
Doesn't work on Windows phone
Entertaining just to look
Good for asking questions when you don't want to look stupid
Reddit
Massive amounts of information available
Can tailor it to fit exactly what you want/don't want to see
Tumblr
Can be into anything and find it on Tumblr
"Home away from home"
Environment on Tumblr has changed
Can tailor to your own interests