

NEEKAAN SEAN OSHIDARY

Research-Trained Product Leader • Mental Health & Humane AI

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FOCUS AREAS

- Tech-related Psychological Harms & Human-AI Interaction
- Attention, Emotion Regulation & Cognitive Offloading
- Mental Health AI & High-Trust Sociotechnical Systems
- Ethical & Humane Technology Design
- Applied AI Governance, Trust Repair & Harm Mitigation
- Research-to-Practice Translation & Field-Building

INTELLECTUAL THROUGH-LINE

Research-trained product leader examining how intelligent, persuasive, and “supportive” technologies shape attention, emotion, belief, and human agency — and how design choices can mitigate or amplify psychological harm. Trained across neuroscience, cognitive science, psychological anthropology, contemplative science, communication, and ethics, with close to a decade of experience translating research into real-world technical and AI systems in mental health and other high-trust domains. Longstanding focus on unintended psychological harms, meaning-making, and responsibility in sociotechnical systems — from early social media environments to contemporary LLM-based care technologies.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Stanford University 2010 – 2012

M.S., Symbolic Systems (Cognitive Science)

- Thesis: High School on Facebook: An Ethnography of “Always-On” Teenagers and Psychosocial Risk
- Advisors: Terry Winograd (Computer Science; philosophy of technology, ethics, language & cognition), Tanya Luhrmann (Psychological Anthropology; mental illness, culture, religious experience & meaning-making)
- Focused study in philosophy of technology and ethics; language, computation, and cognition; philosophy of mind and neuroscience; theory of mind; belief formation; and the psychology of religious and spiritual experience
- Research examined how always-on, socially mediated technologies reshape identity, attention, interpretation, and psychological wellbeing — anticipating later mainstream discussions of unintended digital harms
- Conducted related work on humane and calming technology design through Stanford research and design labs, integrating contemplative science and ethical design principles

University of California, Santa Barbara 2017 – 2019

M.A., Communication — Psychological Wellbeing & Media Use

- Self-designed graduate specialization focused on media multitasking, attentional health, cognitive load, and psychological wellbeing
- Thesis: The Intersection of Media Multitasking and Procrastination in Academic Performance
- Research explored how fragmented media environments affect focus, self-regulation, and academic performance among college students

- Formal coursework in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), examining ethical responsibility of technology organizations beyond compliance
- Teaching assistant in emotion, emotional intelligence, and communication studies

Stanford University 2006 – 2010

B.A. with Honors, Psychology (Focus in Neuroscience)

- Honors thesis in James Gross's affective neuroscience and emotion regulation lab: Nondual Meditation, Negative Emotion Reactivity, and Cognitive Dissonance
- Independent research on contemplative practice, emotion, and cognitive dissonance
- Research and coursework in affective neuroscience, psychology of meditation and compassion, and positive psychology

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Calming Technologies — ACM SIGCHI Workshop on Personal Informatics (2011), co-author

Introduced the field of calming technologies, examining how interactive systems can reduce stress and reactivity rather than amplify arousal or dependency.

High School on Facebook: An Ethnography of “Always-On” Teenagers and Psychosocial Risk

M.S. Thesis, Stanford Symbolic Systems.

Ethnographic research examining identity formation, attention, social pressure, and psychological wellbeing in adolescents living in always-connected digital environments.

The Intersection of Media Multitasking and Procrastination in Academic Performance

M.A. Thesis, UCSB Communication.

Empirical research on attentional fragmentation, self-regulation, and academic outcomes in college students.

The Spark That Became the Fire

Author. Book exploring contemplative themes grounded in mythology, spiritual traditions, and modern psychology.

Imagining Inner Peace Innovation — TEDxHayward

Public talk exploring the intersection of technology, inner experience, and psychological risks.

Always-On Life of High School Teens — Invited Talk, Inflection

Translation of academic research on psychosocial risk into an industry technology context.

Wise & Well — Founder & Host

Podcast and thought-leadership project dedicated to living wisely and well in the digital age.

APPLIED AI & PRODUCT LEADERSHIP

Mental Health, High-Trust Systems, and Humane AI Deployment

AI Psychological Research Coalition (AIPRC) February 2026 – Present

Ecosystem Lead

- Helping create the emerging field of cognitive and emotional defense against psychological risks posed by AI
- Ecosystem lead driving product innovation, governance standards, and responsible AI frameworks and design principles

Modern Health July 2024 – Dec 2025

Senior Product Manager — Artificial Intelligence, Personalization & Sustainable Care

- Product lead for AI, personalization, and sustainable care strategy across member and provider experiences in a large-scale mental health platform
- Led deployment of LLM-based session summaries and AI-assisted tooling in clinical and coaching workflows, operating in high-trust, high-risk care environments
- Navigated an initial rollout that surfaced provider concerns around trust, workflow disruption, and clinical appropriateness; took ownership of repair and recovery
- Led live provider forums, Q&As, and follow-ups; incorporated therapist and coach feedback directly into system redesign and rollout strategy
- Re-established and deepened provider trust, shifting toward a co-creation model for AI-assisted care informed by frontline clinicians
- Defined requirements and tradeoffs for AI-driven care navigation, triage, escalation logic, and next-best-action systems
- Led early strategy and concept development for an AI care assistant focused on personalization without substituting human clinicians or coaches
- Product lead for human-led mental health communities and discussion groups, emphasizing relational support alongside technology
- Led internal education and discussion groups on responsible and humane AI, grounded in the Center for Humane Technology's Foundations of Humane Technology framework

Lark Health 2021 – 2024

Product Manager — Patient Experience, Outcomes & AI Coaching

- Owned patient-facing digital coaching and conversational AI features across chronic condition and mental health-adjacent programs
- Led design and delivery of psychologically sensitive features including questionnaires, follow-ups, and escalation workflows for mental health, stress, and medication adherence
- Oversaw features addressing social determinants of health (SDOH), delivering targeted support to users experiencing food, housing, or transportation insecurity
- Led early exploration and prototyping of LLM-powered coaching features, emphasizing ethical guardrails, user agency, and harm avoidance
- Initiated and facilitated company-wide discussions on ethical and humane AI, institutionalizing principles beyond individual features
- Managed and improved large-scale notification and engagement systems with attention to cognitive load, tone, and behavioral impact

Inflection 2012 – 2016

Product Management — Growth, Privacy, Trust & Safety

- Progressed from Associate to Senior Product Manager across growth, privacy, and trust domains
- Led development and rollout of privacy-oriented features and trust and safety initiatives spanning identity, public records, and ethical risk in large-scale technology products
- Initiated and co-led a cross-functional effort to open communication channels around organizational “sacred cows,” leading to company-wide town halls addressing morale, cultural friction, and business model ethics
- Contributed to values-focused discussions supporting Inflection's transition to a B-Corporation

CONSULTING & ADVISORY WORK

Karma Staff January 2026 – Present

Product and AI Advisor

Product and AI advisor to a financial business intelligence startup serving SMBs. Part of an active consulting practice at the intersection of AI product strategy and development.

Lark Health March 2024 – June 2024

Consultant

Led leadership and product team discussions on the Foundations of Humane Technology course (Center for Humane Technology), advising on ethical, compassionate AI in digital health.

Stealth Coaching Startup April – May 2024

Consultant

Advised founder on product strategy for an AI-assisted platform for life coaching and personal development.

ETHICS, CONTEMPLATIVE SCIENCE & INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Center for Compassion and Altruistic Research (CCARE), Stanford University

Co-created and facilitated a student-initiated course on compassion meditation taught by health psychologist Kelly McGonigal; organized and supported His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Stanford; collaborated on development of an 8-week Compassion Cultivation Training program.

Interdisciplinary Lecture Series Initiative, Stanford University

Initiated a proposed interdisciplinary lecture series on emerging psychosocial risks of social media and always-on technology, with faculty support across psychology, humanities, and STS; designed to help undergraduates critically engage with technology, ethics, and wellbeing.

Ethics Studies, Stanford University

Formal study spanning contemplative traditions (Buddhist, Zoroastrian, and Abrahamic) and social and ethical issues in neuroscience, medicine, and human responsibility.

Mind and Life Institute — Summer Research Institute Attendee (2x)

Participated in interdisciplinary research institutes exploring contemplative science, affective neuroscience, and psychology; deep engagement with the work of Francisco Varela on embodied cognition.

Ethics & Humane Technology Leadership (Industry)

Led ethics-focused discussion groups, reading groups, and internal forums examining the psychological and ethical implications of persuasive systems, AI-assisted care, and LLM-mediated interaction.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS, TALKS & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Scholarly & Research Publications

- Nabi, R. L., Walter, N., Oshidary, N., Endacott, C. G., Love-Nichols, J., Lew, Z. J., & Aune, A. (2020). Can emotions capture the elusive gain-loss framing effect? A meta-analysis. *Communication Research*, 47(8), 1107–1130.
- Calming Technologies — ACM SIGCHI Workshop on Personal Informatics (2011)
- High School on Facebook: An Ethnography of “Always-On” Teenagers and Psychosocial Risk — M.S. Thesis (2012)
- The Intersection of Media Multitasking and Procrastination in Academic Performance — M.A. Thesis (2019)

- Nondual Meditation, Negative Emotion Reactivity, and Cognitive Dissonance — Undergraduate Honors Thesis (2010)
- HIT: A Versatile Proteomics Platform for Multianalyte Phenotyping of Cytokines, Intracellular Proteins, and Surface Molecules — Nature Medicine (2008)

Invited & Public Talks

- Imagining Inner Peace Innovation — TEDxHayward
- Always-On Life of High School Teens — Inflection

Books & Writing

- The Spark That Became the Fire — Author
- Wise & Well — Podcast on technology, wellbeing, ethics, and contemplative practice
- 10 Lessons from Wisdom 2.0: A Twitter-Sized Ethnography

Additional writing, talks, and research available at neekaan.com