

Samiha Essakhi

Service Designer & UX Researcher

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Award-winning Designer with a passion for improving digital products. Adept in leading qualitative and mixed-method research, running co-design workshops, and shaping products that align with user needs and business goals.

WORK EXPERIENCE

User Experience Designer | UHN Connected Care

May 2025 – Present

Toronto, ON

- Designed and facilitated usability tests, interviews, and feedback loops to validate product decisions and inform service improvements.
- Synthesized data into compelling research reports and stakeholder presentations to guide product strategy.
- Designed and built a Power BI reporting dashboard based on a SQL database to visualize engagement trends and program metrics, enabling data-informed decisions by frontline teams and leadership.
- Engaged stakeholders across clinical, community connectors, and ops teams to ensure insights shaped cross-functional decisions.
- Guided non-research team members through moderated research, survey design, and interpreting insights.

Service Designer | NORC Innovation Centre

January 2024 – April 2025

Toronto, ON

- Scoped and led foundational research across 15 sites to inform a platform serving 3,783+ older adults.
- Conducted in-depth 1:1 interviews, socialized insights through storytelling artifacts (maps, reports, presentations).
- Aligned cross-functional teams through co-design and service blueprinting workshops.
- Delivered clear, prioritized recommendations balancing user needs with organizational constraints.

Service Designer | Bridgeable

September 2023 – December 2023

Toronto, ON

- Created user journey maps and service blueprints to align teams and surface hidden process barriers.
- Prototyped and tested service concepts, iterating based on feedback from usability tests.
- Socialized findings through slide decks, annotated workflows, and high-level strategy recommendations.

UX Research Assistant | University of Toronto

July 2023 – November 2023

Toronto, ON

- Conducted digital ethnography, stakeholder interviews, and social listening to identify key service gaps.
- Designed and led usability testing sessions and built scalable evaluation frameworks.

UX Project Assistant | University of Toronto

May 2023 – August 2023

Toronto, ON

- Led remote, task-based usability testing sessions with over 20 students to evaluate the assistant's accuracy and user experience.
- Identified usability issues and synthesized findings into actionable design recommendations.
- Refined the virtual assistant responses and uncovered functional gaps, contributing to the expansion of its scope into a new specialty area.
- Helped enhance content accuracy and increase student engagement with the assistant.

UX Designer | UTEST, University of Toronto

May 2023 – August 2023

Toronto, ON

- Conducted accessibility audits using manual and automated tools to identify violations of WCAG 2.1 and AODA standards.
- Presented clear, prioritized compliance recommendations to leadership, helping mitigate legal and operational risks.
- Performed heuristic evaluations and conducted stakeholder interviews to surface usability issues and experience gaps.
- Delivered actionable design suggestions that informed future iterations and improved overall platform usability.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Inspector | Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale

January 2018 – December 2021

Morocco

- Conducted field investigations and interviews with employees and employers to gather qualitative data and assess compliance.
- Collaborated with multiple stakeholders (companies, employees, external departments) to investigate complex cases of fraud or health coverage disputes.
- Produced detailed reports and recommendations that informed organizational decisions and ensured alignment with national policies.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto

Master in Information, User Experience Design

Ecole Nationale de Commerce et de Gestion

Master in Management, Finance & Accounting

AWARDS, SKILLS & PUBLICATIONS

Awards:

- **Service Design Award | Service Design Network** **2024**
Won the Service Design Network award for Best Student Project that reimagines support services for older adults living in naturally occurring retirement communities.
- **Student mHealth App Competition | Human Factors and Ergonomics Society** **2024**
Runner-up for Cura app, a comprehensive tracking application designed for effective eczema management and care.

Skills:

- **Design Tools:** Figma, FigJam, Miro.
- **Design Skills:** Information architecture, Wireframing, Prototyping.
- **Research Skills:** Usability Testing, Persona Development, Heuristic Evaluations, WCAG Accessibility Testing, Ethnographic research, Service blueprints, Journey mapping.
- **Development:** Power Fx.

Publication:

"Tensions in Emerging Contexts of Care: Naturally-Occurring Retirement Communities as a Liminal Space for Design"

Futures of Care Work, CSCW 2024 Workshop

Co-authored paper exploring service design in healthcare contexts, showcasing the role of digital technologies in supporting frontline health workers.