

# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

## *Major Research Area Paper Presentation*

*A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed: Investigating the Quality of Training Data from Peers for Auto-generating Empathetic Textual Responses to Non-Sensitive Posts in a Cohort of College Students*

by

*Ravi Sharma*

*For the Ph.D. degree in Computer Science and Engineering*

*In the pursuit of personalized care, digital mental wellness apps gather information through questions. However, not all users require follow-up due to mood problems. This study proposes an alternative approach using peer-generated training data for non-sensitive posts in college settings. The focus is on contextual, empathetic, and terminal responses (no follow-up questions). Using real app data, we find the model trained with peer data offer desirable responses, unlike those from state-of-the-art Empathetic Dialogue datasets (Facebook's) that seem intrusive with numerous follow-up questions. We emphasize the need to avoid presuming mood problems in app users and consider intrusiveness perceptions during design. Peer-generated datasets hold potential for enhancing college mental wellness apps, a topic yet to be explored.*

Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

1:00 PM

Online ([Microsoft Teams](#))

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED

### Examining Committee

Sriram Chellappan, Ph.D., Major Professor

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