Nimra Ishfaq

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Researcher with experience in qualitative and statistical analysis, and translating findings into interventions for responsible AI and health studies.

Education

– **The University of Texas at Austin** 2022 - 2024, Austin, TX
MS in Information Sciences (Human-Computer Interaction track, CGPA: 3.9)

– **Kinnaird College** | BA in English Literature (Rank 1st, CGPA: 3.8) 2016 - 2021, Lahore, Pakistan

Publications

– Liu, J., **Ishfaq, N.** and Zhang, Y., 2026. I Talked with AI, So What's Next? Reimagining Responsible AI for Emotion Coping. arXiv preprint arXiv:2609.25311.

– Zhang, A.I., **Ishfaq, N.**, Chandra, M., Lesmes, S.A., Coscia, A., Moon, K.C., Ding, X. and De Choudhury, M., 2026. CliniCIRCA: A Modular LLM Framework for Constructing Longitudinal Mental Health Patient Journeys from Raw EHR Narratives. arXiv preprint arXiv:2609.19585.

– Li, Y.*, Du, C.*, Kuizon, C.C.*, Li, Z.*, **Ishfaq, N.***, Cheng, S., Sun, A.Y., Frank, A.C., Hwang, A.H.C. and Liu, R., 2026. CounselReflect: Opportunities and Challenges for Designing Tools to Support Self-Reflection on Mental Health and Well-Being Conversations with AI. arXiv preprint arXiv:2603.29429. **Equal contribution.*

– Stone A., Dorri A., **Ishfaq N.**, Schnarrs P., 2025. LGBTQ+ Experiences with Authoritarian Parenting Practices During Childhood. PsyArXiv. DOI: 10.31234/osf.io/n967k_v1.

Research Experience

Human-AI Ecosystem Lab, *University of Southern California* June 2026 – Present
Advised by Prof. Angel Hwang Los Angeles, CA

CounselReflect: Self-Reflection Tools for Mental Health Conversations with AI

– Synthesized design guidelines for reflective tools for mental health conversations with AI, using a psychology-grounded auditing plugin and user testing **(co-first author, preprint)**

– Led research protocol design, participant recruitment, qualitative analysis, and literature review

UT Austin & Nanyang Technological University Jan 2026 – Sep 2026
Advised by Prof. Jiaying Liu Austin, TX

Reimagining Responsible AI for Emotion Coping

– Led all phases of research on co-designing AI chatbots for emotion coping through the care ethics framework

– Directed participant recruitment, interviews, and data analysis; authored literature review **(second author, preprint)**

Social Dynamics and Wellbeing Lab, *Georgia Institute of Technology* July 2025 – Present
Advised by Prof. Munmun De Choudhury Atlanta, GA

CliniCIRCA: Constructing Patient Journeys from Raw EHR Narratives

– Designed the data pipeline, evaluative rubrics, and prompts for CliniCIRCA, a multi-stage LLM framework for reconstructing patient timelines from psychiatric discharge summaries; coordinated clinician verification of a gold-standard benchmark of 15,891 temporally tagged events **(second author, preprint)**

Victim-Centered Response Generation for Online Harassment

– Annotated datasets for harassment detection and victim-centered response generation in private messaging; authored the literature review **(second author, preprint)**

Selected Research Activities

– Conducted a scoping review on support norms in online health communities and translated insights into chatbot features for substance use recovery

– Leading regression analysis for a randomized controlled trial on AI-assisted peer support

Pride HEALS Lab, *UT Austin & University of Pittsburgh* Aug 2024 – June 2025
Advised by Dr. Philip Schnarrs & Dr. Amy Stone Austin, TX

- Led mixed-methods research on adverse childhood experiences and LGBTQ health **(third author, preprint)**
- Managed stakeholder coordination, surveys (4,000 responses), interviews, and data analysis

Poster Presentations

- **Ishfaq, N.**, Surendranath, A., & Jain, I. (2025). Exploring How AI-Driven Mental Health Chatbots Impact User Wellbeing. CALD-AI Workshop and AI Symposium, University of California, Irvine, May 2025.

Professional Experience

Product Analyst, *Google via HighSpring — Austin, TX* Oct 2025 – Present

- Synthesized AI design and safety guidelines from literature and internal reports for Gemini tools
- Led usability studies evaluating AI knowledge-seeking workflows, user confidence and citation preferences
- Developed prompts and rubrics to evaluate model behavior, risk signals, and decision accuracy

Research Consultant, *Seed Collaborative — Remote* Jan 2026 – July 2026

- Strengthened program design across 52 LA County agencies through curriculum design and assessments
- Secured multiple engagements by building a proposal pipeline from sourcing through drafting
- Authored four case studies on public sector projects via desk research and partner interviews

Graduate Teaching Assistant, *University of Texas at Austin — Austin, TX* Aug 2022 – May 2024

- Led discussion sections for four courses on research in the humanities and social sciences
- Trained 345 undergraduate students in scholarly research and writing and evaluated final papers
- Identified and addressed barriers to student progress through surveys and personalized mentorship

Social Policy Researcher, *International Commission of Jurists — Remote* Feb 2021 – Aug 2022

- Led mixed methods research on gender-based violence, drafting reports and policy recommendations
- Managed workshops and training sessions on regional and international legislation and treaties

Skills

Research: surveys, interviews, focus groups, literature reviews, observational research, diary studies, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics (t-tests, chi-square tests, A/B tests, ANOVA), data visualizations
Design: wireframing, interface prototyping, design systems, personas, journey maps, affinity diagrams
Tools: Qualtrics, REDCap, NVivo, SPSS, RStudio, Miro, Figma

Honors & Awards

Mary Cleveland Scholarship for Academic Excellence, UT Austin 2022–2024
(awarded every semester, 4 terms – $5,000)
Angoori Gold Medal for Excellence in Humanities & Social Sciences, Kinnaird College 2021
(1/50+ students for highest CGPA across linguistics, literature, and education)