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Is there an app for that? Introducing Self-Guided Therapy-Based Mental Health Apps in a Primary Care Setting

Item Type	Presentation;Presentation
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Download date	2026-06-09 20:30:50
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/2681



SELF-GUIDED THERAPY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH APPS

A user-friendly guide including evidence-based mental health apps for patients seeking therapy



One Mind PsyberGuide is a third-party app rating platform that offers an online database based on an independent expert panel to review mental health apps for use, which providers and patients can utilize.¹









Specified Condition / Treatment Type	App	Brief Description & Cost	Credibility (0-5.00)	User Rating (1.00-5.00)	Transparency Score	Professional Review
Depression, Anxiety, Sleep disorders, Eating disorders, Trauma, Addiction	<p>BetterHelp</p>  	<p>BetterHelp offers 24/7 professional help from licensed therapist. With over 20,000 trained, experienced, and accredited therapists covering a wide range of areas –from depression and anxiety to couples therapy – it’s never been easier to receive personal, professional help when needed. After filling a questionnaire, users can match with an available therapist who best fits their needs, schedule live sessions with their therapist or use secure messenger, and gain access to constructive, educational groups. NOTE: Not included in PsyberGuide</p> <p>Cost: Payment required (ranges from \$60-\$90/week)</p>	5.00	4.8	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Many! (i.e. Denise Warren, PsyD)
Stress and Anxiety, Mood disorders, PTSD, Sleep, Psychoeducation/Info	<p>Happify: For Stress & Worry</p>  	<p>Happify aims to help users reduce stress, anxiety and negative thinking, and improve emotional well-being. Users create an account and answer a short questionnaire which helps the app suggest a “track” for the user. “Tracks” are groups of activities and games which help the user achieve their goals. Tracks are based on cognitive behavioral principles therapy, mindfulness and positive psychology and are created by professionals to help clients achieve specific goals.</p> <p>Cost: Free with in-app purchases</p>	5.00	4.59	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Ellen Belluomini, Ph.D. MSW
Mood disorders	<p>Headspace</p>  	<p>Headspace is an app that aims to bring the principles of mindfulness meditation to users’ lives, and hopes to improve concentration and mood, reduce anxiety, and increase productivity. Users can complete a 10-session free trial before deciding to purchase a subscription that provides access to a wide variety of sessions and programs. The Headspace library includes single meditations, session packs, meditations for children, and animated meditations. Users can choose programs and progress through Headspace at their own pace.</p> <p>Cost: Free with in-app purchases</p>	5.00	4.97	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Nancy A. Haug, Ph.D.
Cognitive Behavioral Principles	<p>Woebot</p>  	<p>Woebot is an AI-powered chatbot that uses principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Woebot guides users through managing distressing thoughts and feelings. After creating an account, users’ message with Woebot in the app. Through check-ins, Woebot prompts users to enter their mood and details explaining their mood and responds by suggesting tools, skills, and strategies to help. In addition to messaging, users can view a chart of their mood entries over time and view psychoeducational media. Users can also access guided exercises such as, “challenge negativity” and, “challenge stress”.</p> <p>Cost: Free</p>	5.00	4.64	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Colleen Stiles-Shields, Ph.D.

Table Summary of pertinent mental health apps from One Mind PsyberGuide² (For a more comprehensive list visit PsyberGuide website)

¹APA PsycNet. psycnet.apa.org. Accessed January 11, 2023. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Ffsh0000587>

²App Guide | PsyberGuide. One Mind PsyberGuide. <https://onemindpsyberguide.org/apps/?condition=stress-and-anxiety>



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Mindfulness, Sleep disorders	<p>Calm</p>  	<p>Calm introduces the basics of mindfulness meditation with the “7 Days of Calm,” a guided course featuring 7 sessions of 10 minutes each. Completing a session unlocks the next meditation in the series. After completing the 7 sessions, users can continue to “21 Days of Calm” and the full catalog with a paid subscription. Progress is tracked with statistics on time spent meditating. The full catalog contains multi-day series that focus on specific goals (i.e., managing stress, focus, calming anxiety, sleep, happiness, gratitude, self-esteem). Calm has both guided sessions (e.g., body scan, loving-kindness) from 3 to 30 minutes and unguided meditations, with new programs regularly being developed</p> <p>Cost: Free with in-app purchases</p>	4.67	4.40	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Nancy A. Haug, Ph.D.
Chronic Pain	<p>Super Better</p>  	<p>SuperBetter is a gamified program intended to help users build resilience, defined as “the ability to stay strong, motivated and optimistic even in the face of difficult challenges.” SuperBetter aims to help the user track their goals and achievements, while also providing education about the importance of each activity.</p> <p>Cost: Free</p>	4.67	4.39	Acceptable	Reviewed by: Adam C. Powell, Ph.D.
Substance use or Addiction, PTSD	<p>myStrength</p>  	<p>myStrength is both a web and mobile application offered through healthcare providers, benefit plans, and similar sponsors. The application begins with general questions regarding interests in myStrength and then a more comprehensive questionnaire involving the user’s emotional state to personalize their settings. The Home screen lets the user choose a daily focus such as Drug or Alcohol Recovery or Improving Sleep along with personalized quotes. Below this is the Activities section which holds all the focus areas and topics that will provide the user with related resources like videos, audio, information, and other exercises. The user can track their health, create goals and habits, and set up a sleep program through the Progress section.</p> <p>Cost: Free</p>	4.97	3.86	Not Yet Available	Not Yet Available
Eating Disorders	<p>GG Positive Body Image</p>  	<p>GG Positive Body Image is a mental health app which provides daily exercises to help the user cope with negative thoughts about their body and self. The app is made up of 51 levels (15 free) and expect the user to do 3 levels a day. Each level acts as a game by prompting the user with potential thoughts which they must either accept or reject. There are 3 assessments scattered throughout the levels which quantify the user’s body image with multiple personal questions.</p> <p>Cost: Free with in-app purchases</p>	3.67	3.82	Not Yet Available	Not Yet Available

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¹APA PsycNet. psycnet.apa.org. Accessed December 22, 2023. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Ffsh0000587>

²App Guide | PsyberGuide. One Mind PsyberGuide. <https://onemindpsyberguide.org/apps/?condition=stress-and-anxiety>