

# Using Apps to Support College Student Mental Health

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# Mental Health Apps – Rapid Growth



# Fit for College Students

- Increased rates of distress and help-seeking
- Abundant barriers to seeking traditional mental health services
- Many students are digital natives





# Apps *can* be effective

- Meta-analytic studies demonstrate that smartphone-based interventions are more effective than control conditions in reducing symptoms of anxiety (Firth et al., 2017a) and depression (Firth et al., 2017b)
- Effects smaller when compared to active control conditions
- Effects larger for interventions which incorporated other human/computerized aspects along the smartphone component



The main challenge:

Finding reliable and accurate digital mental health tools

# How are people finding apps?

## TECHNOLOGY

## The 7 Best Mental Health Apps of 2020

Find peace of mind from your smartphone or tablet

By [Amy Morin, LCSW](#) | [Medically reviewed by Steven Gans, MD](#) | Updated on December 19, 2019



### More in Self-Improvement

Technology

Happiness

Meditation

Stress Management

Spirituality

Holistic Health

Inspiration

Brain Health

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Our editors independently research, test, and recommend the best products; you can learn more about our review process [here](#). We may receive commissions on purchases made from our links.

### Our Top Picks

**Best Overall:** [Moodfit](#)

"Whether you're looking for a mood tracker or a meditation app, Moodfit is designed to help you find the right app for you."

**Best for Learning:** [MoodMission](#)

"MoodMission is designed to help you learn more about your mood and each mission is designed to help you improve your mood."

**Best for Therapy:** [Talkspace](#)

"Talkspace can help you receive therapy from your digital devices."

**Best for Stress Relief:** [Sanvello](#)

"Sanvello teaches mindfulness skills and provides mood and health tracking tools that can be used to improve mental and physical health."

**Best for Meditation:** [Headspace](#)

"Headspace was started by Andy Puddicombe, a Buddhist monk whose mission is to teach meditation and mindfulness to as many people as possible."

Future London > Health

## 8 apps and gadgets to improve your mental health

The mental health tech to help you keep you calm and carry on

AMELIA HEATHMAN | 1 day ago



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



babylon

And  
tha  
Se

symptoms and moderate to severe depression alone. IMPOR

## The Best Depression Apps of 2019

[Moodpath](#) | [TalkLife](#) | [Daylio](#) | [Youper](#) | [Depression CBT](#) | [What's Up?](#) | [Pacifica](#) | [Happify](#)



# How PsyberGuide Works

## Credibility



The **Credibility Score** represents the strength of the scientific research support for the app itself, and the therapeutic interventions the app provides.

## User Experience



Our collaborators use the **Mobile App Rating Scale (MARS)** to assess the design, accessibility of information, and overall experience that the app provides.

## Transparency



The **Transparency Score** represents the clarity of an app's privacy policy in detailing the data storage and collection procedures of a mobile health product and its associated servers.

[Learn more about How PsyberGuide Works](#)



# Credibility

- The Credibility Score is a measure of the research support backing an app or digital tool. This measure aims to give users an idea of how likely it is that it will work.
- Apps are scored based on:
  - the level of research support they have
  - who funded the published paper(s) supporting the app's effectiveness
  - how specific the intervention the app proposes is - is it designed to target a specific condition or symptom, to help with overall well-being, or for tracking and monitoring? The more specific the intervention, the higher an app will score here.
  - Apps also receive scores for the number of ratings in app stores, the level of expert clinical input in their development, and how recently they have been updated.

# User Experience

- The User Experience rating is an app quality score.
- The Mobile App Rating Scale (MARS) is used to assess the quality of the user experience of apps.

## Scoring

App quality scores for

SECTION

A: Engagement Mean Score = \_\_\_\_\_

B: Functionality Mean Score = \_\_\_\_\_

C: Aesthetics Mean Score = \_\_\_\_\_

D: Information Mean Score = \_\_\_\_\_

App quality mean Score = \_\_\_\_\_

App subjective quality Score = \_\_\_\_\_

# Transparency

Rating	Explanation
<b>Acceptable</b>	A product that has been scored as acceptable has an acceptable level of data transparency; the privacy policy of the product provides sufficient and easily accessible information on the policies related to data collection, storage, and exchange. The information provided conforms to standards for collection, storage, and exchange of health information.
<b>Questionable</b>	A product that has been scored as questionable has a privacy policy that is unclear or lacking specific details of policies surrounding data collection, storage, and exchange or is questionable in its adherence to standards on collection, storage, and exchange of health information.
<b>Unacceptable</b>	A product that has been scored as unacceptable either a) does not have a privacy policy, b) has a privacy policy that excludes important information about data privacy, collection, storage, or exchange, or c) has a privacy policy that outlines practices for data privacy, collection, storage or exchange that do not conform to standards for health information.



## Help me find an App

Click the buttons to search for apps related to the specified condition, or treatment type. The results will appear below.

You can click multiple search terms to narrow down the app results by the conditions and/or treatment types that you've clicked.

Once the results have appeared, use the toolbar on the left to filter the results by platform, audience, or cost. You can also sort the results by score or app name using the "sort by" menu in the left toolbar.



Assessments/Screening

Chatbot/AI

Cognitive Behavioral Principles

Cognitive Training

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

Gratitude

Mindfulness

Productivity

Psychoeducation/Information

Symptom Tracking/Self-Monitoring

Borderline Personality Disorder

Chronic Pain

Eating Disorders

Mood Disorders

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Phobias

PTSD

Schizophrenia

Sleep

Stress and Anxiety

Substance Use

Sort By

Credibility ▾

Filter By Platform:

All ▾

Filter By Audience:

All ▾

Filter By Cost:

All ▾

## This Way Up



Available For: 



Credibility

5.00 out of 5.00



User Experience

Not Yet Available



Transparency

Not Yet Available



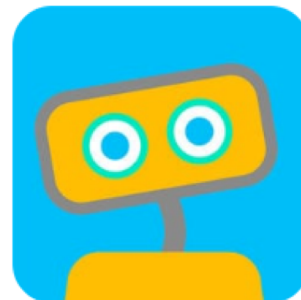
*Expert Review  
Available*

Mood Disorders

Stress and Anxiety

Cognitive Behavioral Principles

## Woebot



Available For:  



Credibility

4.64 out of 5.00



User Experience

4.38 out of 5.00



Transparency

Acceptable



*Expert Review  
Available*

Mood Disorders

Stress and Anxiety

Chatbot/AI

Cognitive Behavioral Principles

Symptom Tracking/Self-Monitoring

# Designing and Implementing Digital Mental Health Tools to College Students

- Working with two Illinois state universities to design and implement a student stress management app
- User-centered design work revealed a rich social ecosystem surrounding mental health
- Students do not want to just connect with peers for mental health support, but they also rely on their peers as referral sources and, more generally, as sources of credible knowledge.
- This context shapes students' interest in and willingness to engage with different types of mental health support.



Let's talk more:

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