Apps for Mental Health

1.) **Breathe2Relax**

This app comes recommended by the American Psychological Association for stress management, especially amongst those who suffer from anxiety disorders or PTSD.

Breathe2Relax guides you through breathing exercises to help with stabilizing your mood, controlling anger and managing anxiety. It's also user-friendly, and can even be personalized to fit to a pace that's best for you.

2.) **Koko**

In this app's first life, it was a website called Panoply developed by an MIT researcher as a social network for people with depression. And it functions much the same way in its app form.

Users can share problems, feelings, or thoughts with the community, and get feedback from others. How does this help? The idea is based on a form of a well-established cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) technique called "reappraisal," which is a way to help reframe negative thoughts. For example, you can share an experience like having a bad day at work, or a fight with your S.O., and the community might offer alternative readings of that situation to help you not jump to negative conclusions. (Like you're going to get fired or you and your partner are breaking up.)

The best news of all: A 2015 study of the original website found that this approach significantly improved participants depression symptoms after just 25 minutes per week for three weeks.

3.) **Happify**

The main goal of this app is to just "feel happier," and the program gives you plenty of options for working toward that goal. You'll get to choose a path of activities that reflects what that really means for you.

You'll start by taking a test to see where you're at and how you tend to approach tough, stressful spots in your life. Then the app will suggest a path based on your answers. To move along the path, you'll complete gratitude exercises, do a little meditation, and learn a lot about yourself along the way.

4.) **Flowy**

Flowy is a game app created to help those with panic and anxiety disorders. In the game, you'll solve puzzles with your breath. You hold down a button while breathing in and let it go while breathing out, sending your little boat forward along its path.

The goal here is to actually retrain the way you breathe: Rather than taking breaths with your chest muscles, which can cause a similar sensation as an oncoming panic attack (and actually start to make you feel panicked), you'll learn to breathe with your diaphragm. You'll breathe deeper, your heart will slow down, and you'll feel calm on the waves.

5.) **Start**

This helpful app comes to us from the makers of Iodine, a website where patients can share their real-life experiences with different medications. But Start is their app specifically dedicated to helping people manage and keep track of their depression symptoms as well as any medications they're taking. Because it can take weeks for you to notice any changes on antidepressants, the app is designed to help you spot when (or if) you're starting to feel better and whether you're experiencing any side effects.

6.) **In Flow**

Keeping track of your ups and downs is crucial when you're dealing with a mental health issue. Without knowing what's going on, you can't predict an anxiety attack and you can't tell if all that time doing mindfulness exercises is really lifting your mood. Rather than lugging your diary everywhere, try In Flow's mood-tracking system. You can put in a new entry whenever you want, but the app will also prompt you a few times a day to check in. From there, it will show you trends and, if you want, connect you with friends to cheer you up during tough times and celebrate the good ones.

Unfortunately, it looks like In Flow isn't available in the iTunes store anymore. But you can still snag it with Google Playor in the Windows Phone Store.

7.) **Mango Health**

Remembering to take your meds is tough — until you get a little reward for it. Seriously, we've seen gamification of pretty much everything (hello FitBit takeover!), but rarely is it as effective as it is here. Mango Health functions as a medication reminder, but also gives you information about what you're taking and a heads up for how it might interact with anything else in your regimen. Plus, take your meds when you're supposed to and you'll get those precious points, which are entrance into raffles for a chance to win actual rewards — including charity donations and gift cards to places like Starbucks.

8.) **7 Cups Of Tea**

Although there's no substitute for real, live therapy, 7 Cups Of Tea can help you out when you just need someone to talk to, fast. Sign in and the app connects you with a trained counselor (or "listener") to talk about pretty much anything. You can choose a listener based on what you're interested in talking about or their life experience. Whether you want to chat about anxiety attacks with someone else who's been there or you just want to vent about your boss for a few minutes, 7 Cups has your back.

9.) **T2 Mood Tracker**

We won't lie to you, T2 Mood Tracker is the definition of "no frills." But this tried-and-true mood tracker is a classic for a simple reason — it works. Developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, it was originally created to help people in the military to monitor their emotional health. Since then, it's become popular with the rest of us, too. The app will prompt you at certain times of day to tell it where you'd rate your emotional state on a variety of axes. It will also graph your progression over time so you can keep a lookout for any trends.