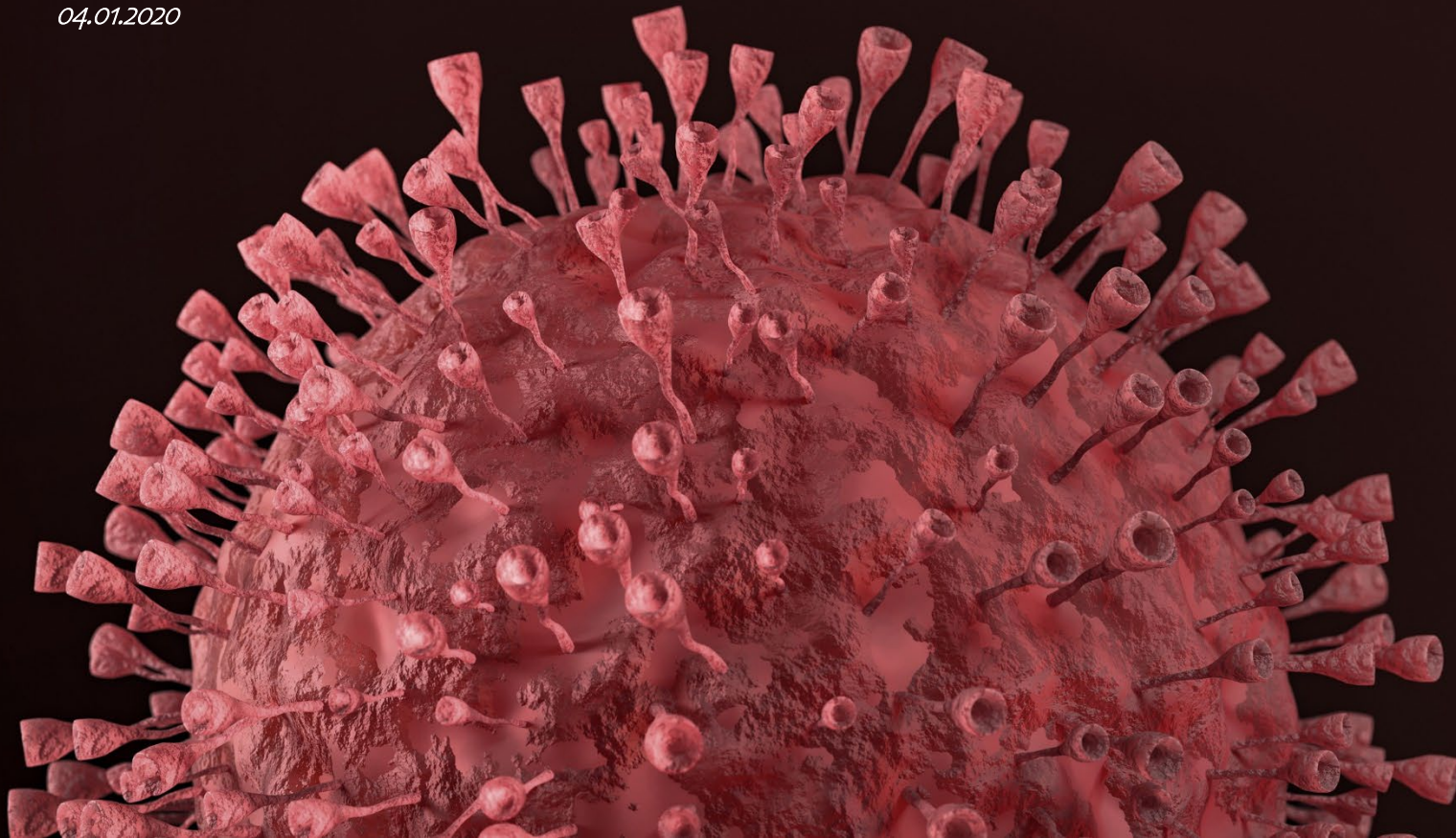


# SELF-CARE & DISTRESS MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

NCCN DISTRESS MANAGEMENT

National Comprehensive Cancer  
Network©

*04.01.2020*



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# SUMMARY

Stay Informed | Manage Distress | Practice Resilience



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## OBTAIN Up-to-Date Information

- Consult reliable and reputable sources of information
  - When in doubt, consult your physician or local health department
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## MANAGE Distress

- Stress during a pandemic is expected and normal; however, when excessive it can affect your functioning
  - Behavioral activation, mindfulness, and seeking help for distress from mental health professionals, when needed, can help.
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## IMPROVE Resilience

- Maintain optimism
  - Learn from resilient role models
  - Get support from your friends and family
  - Be flexible
  - Problem solve
  - Accept the situation for what it is. Face your fears.
  - Help others
  - Exercise
  - Use your faith, life, or moral compass as a support
  - Keep your sense of humor!
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# RELIABLE & UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

During the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic, it is critically important to be aware of recent developments such as grocery store hours, public transportation changes, area closings, shelter-in-place orders, etc. in your local community.

## WORD OF MOUTH

Trust but verify. Please do not share information until you have verified it. Rumors can have a significantly negative effect on the health of a community.

## CDC, COUNTY & STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

These websites are being updated regularly. Information is prepared by professionals and based on best available knowledge and resources. In this pandemic that's affecting different parts of the country differently, County and State health departments are an excellent resource.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

People are spending more time than ever on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and several others.

These sites increasingly serve as sources of valuable information. However, it is important to verify the COVID-19 related information found on social media.

## PRINT & ONLINE MEDIA

Newspapers are extensively covering the pandemic and have up-to-date information. Online editions are updated frequently.

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# DISTRESS MANAGEMENT

Behavioral Activation and Self-Management is an effective approach. It has three components.

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- Cardio (walking or running on a treadmill, using indoor rowing and elliptical machines, swimming, high-intensity interval training, etc.) at least three times a week
  - Strength training at least once a week
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- Staying home can result in social isolation especially for the elderly population. Use FaceTime or other similar services, video conferences, or group chats to socialize.
  - Local gyms and some exercise instructors have live workout sessions.
  - Play online video games with friends or make new friends!
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- It is important to continue to participate in pleasurable activities/hobbies.
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1  
PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITIES

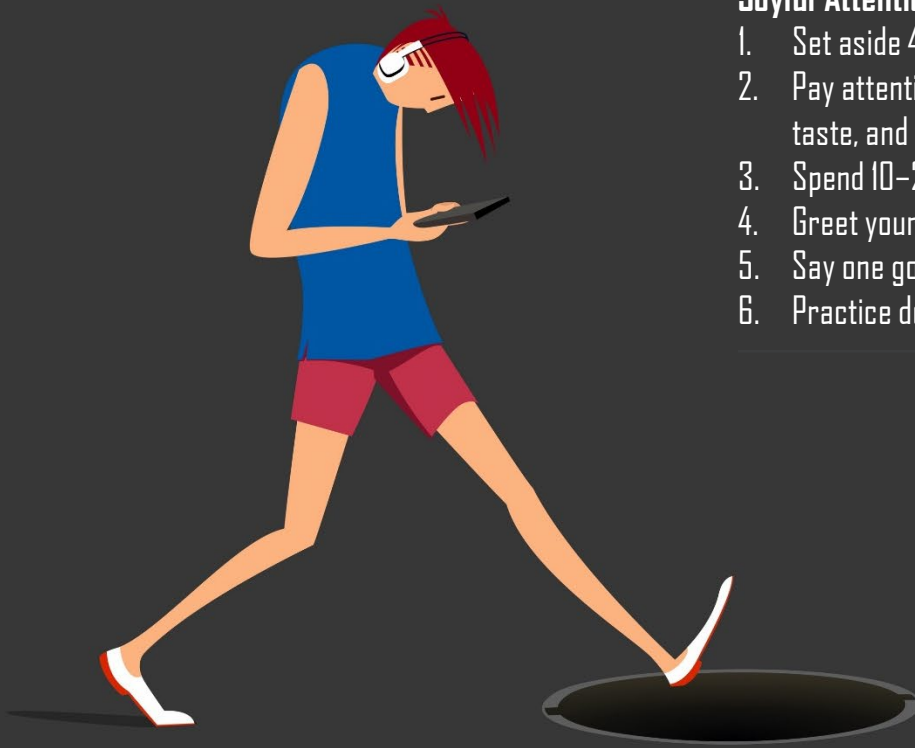
2  
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

3  
PLEASUREABLE  
ACTIVITIES

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# DISTRESS MANAGEMENT

Mindfulness-based strategies can be quite helpful. Developing skill for intentional and trained attention is a critical first step. You can get better at this non-critical and compassionate type of attention with practice.



## Joyful Attention:

1. Set aside 4–8 time blocks of 10–20 minutes to train attention.
2. Pay attention to your surroundings while walking and eat while focusing on smell, taste, and texture of food.
3. Spend 10–20 minutes with nature and pay attention to your surroundings.
4. Greet your family and friends as if you are meeting them after a long absence.
5. Say one good thing about people you meet.
6. Practice deep breathing.

## Kind Attention:

1. When you see others, be compassionate, accept them for who they are, delay judgment, and try to ignore minor inconveniences they may have caused you.

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# DISTRESS MANAGEMENT

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Eat small and healthy meals and snacks spaced throughout the day.



Avoid or limit use of alcohol and caffeine. If you have dietary restrictions, stock specialty food items (eg, low-salt, sugar-free, or gluten-free items) as they may not be easily available.

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Health, diet, and restful sleep can significantly reduce stress.

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Practice good sleep hygiene.

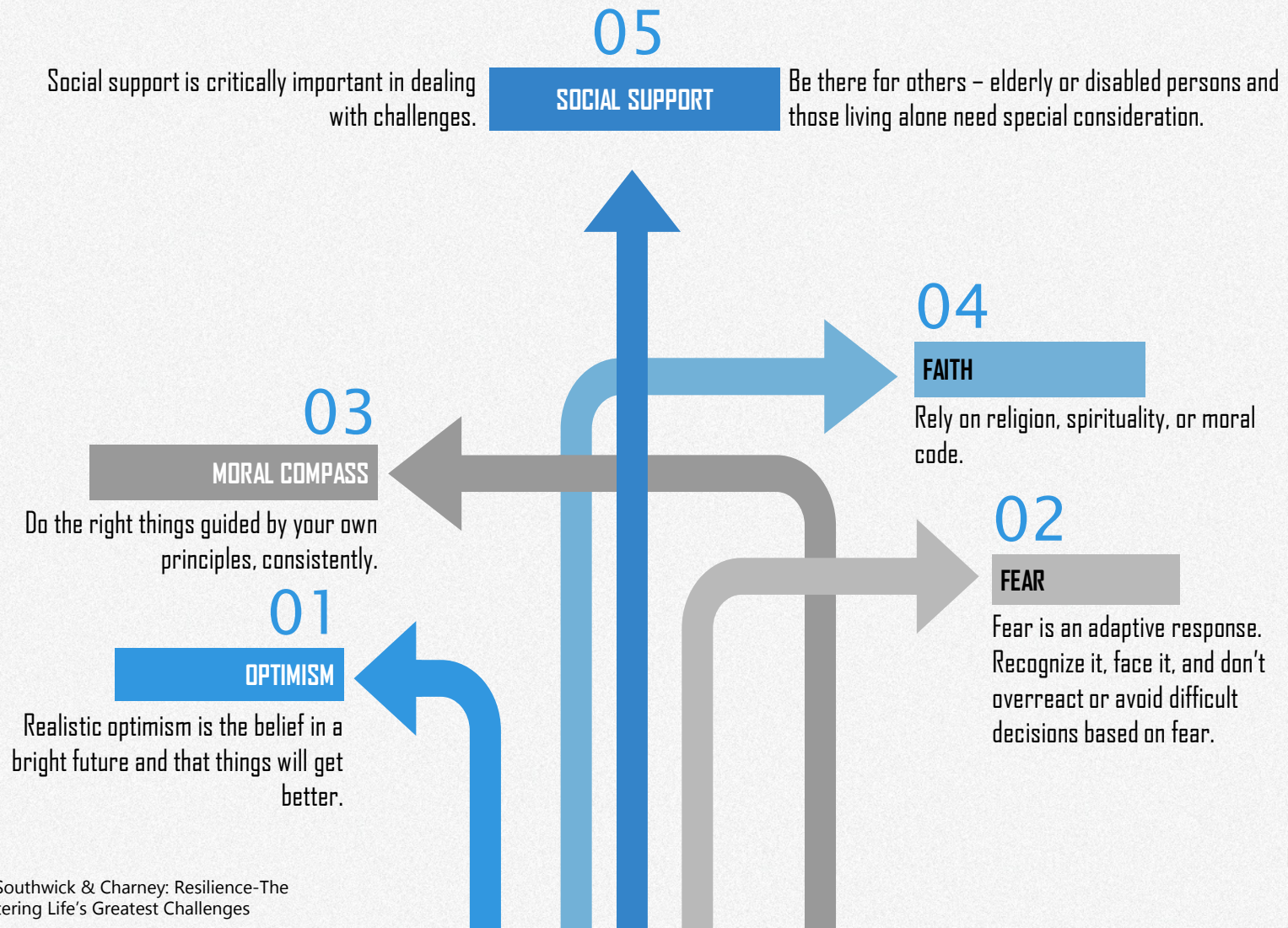


Sleep at consistent times in a quiet and dark room maintained at a comfortable temperature. Remove TVs and smart devices from your bedroom. Be physically active during the day and avoid meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.

<http://www.sleepeducation.org/essentials-in-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits>

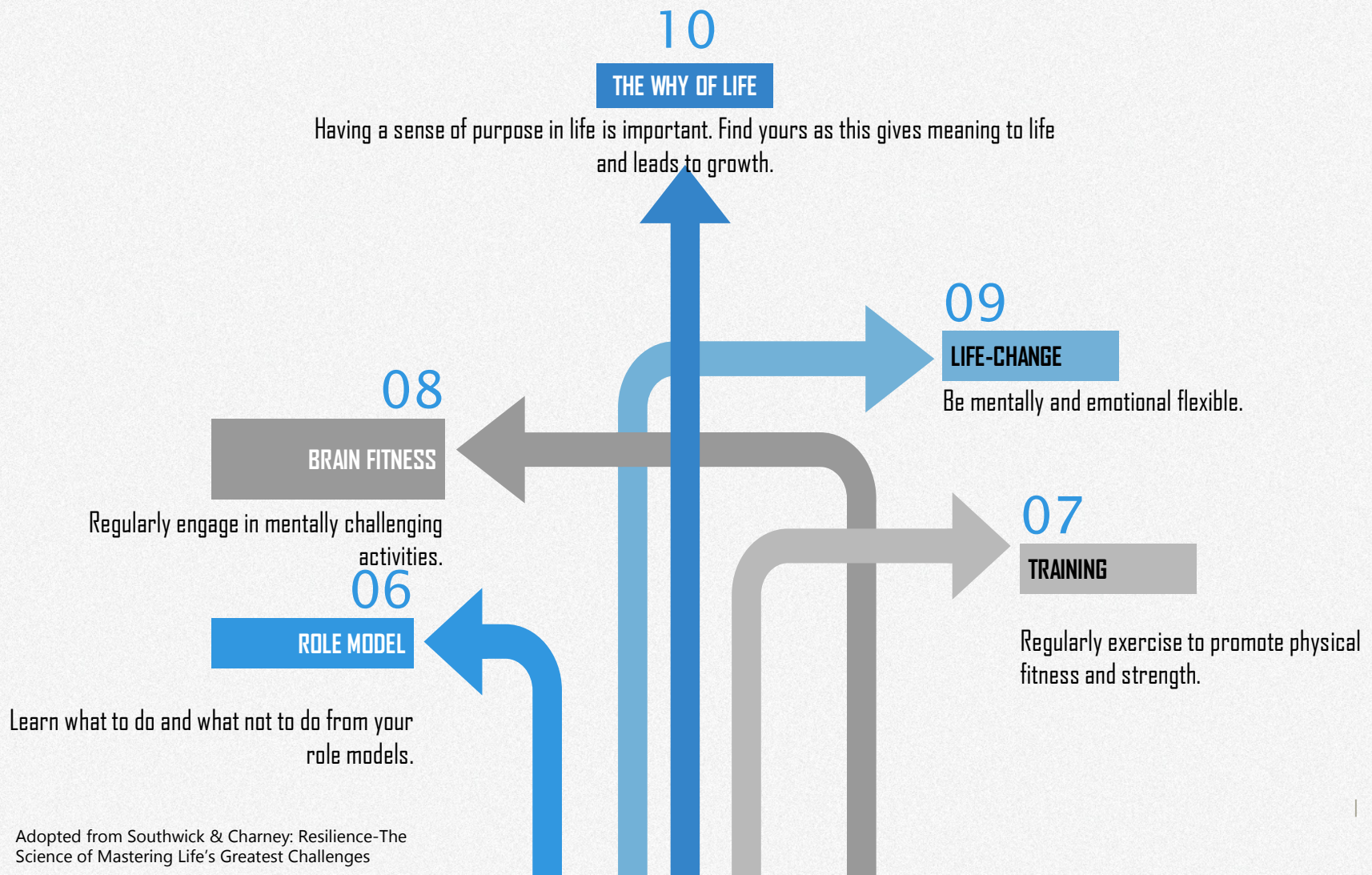
# IMPROVE RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to bounce back after a challenging time.



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FURTHER  
READING,  
APPS, &  
RESOURCES

WEBSITES

APPS

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# WEB

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## **COVID-19 Resources:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en>
  - State & Territorial Health Department Websites  
<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>
  - New York Times Live Updates  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/world/coronavirus-news-live-updates.html>
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## **Anxiety and Mood Management:**

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
[www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)
  - Anxiety Canada  
[www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com)
  - Living Life to the Full  
[www.llttf.com](http://www.llttf.com)
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## **Sleep Management:**

- American Academy of Sleep Medicine, Sleep Education  
<http://sleepeducation.org/essentials-in-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits>
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# APPS

## Reviews for Mental Health Apps:

**PsyberGuide** <https://psyberguide.org/apps/>

## Anxiety and Depression Association of America

<https://adaa.org/finding-help/mobile-apps>

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### Artificial Intelligence/ChatBots & Self Monitoring:

- Woebot
  - Youper
  - T2 Mood Tracker
  - CBT Thought Diary
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### Resilience and Mindfulness

- Mindfulness Coach (VA System)
  - Psychological First Aid
  - SuperBetter
  - Happify
  - Personal Zen
  - Breathe2Relax
  - Headspace\*, Pacifica\* (free version and options for in-app purchases)
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### Anxiety and Depression

- PTSD Coach, CPT Coach, PE Coach (VA System)
  - MindShift CBT (Anxiety Canada)
  - Worry Knot, Thought Challenger, Social Force (IntelliCare)
  - Mood Mission
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Contributing Institutions: Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center, Moffitt Cancer Center, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine, University of Colorado Cancer Center, University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, and added thanks to consultant Rev. George Handzo