

# SEEKING SUPPORT & COMMUNITY IN A DIGITAL AGE

The ability to rely on a solid support system is often a key part of mental health recovery. The following list of digital support systems available via Android and/or Apple mobile and web applications is meant to give people the tools they need to be a leader in their recovery.

Note: This list is based on various recommendations by mental health organizations and experts. NAMI Wisconsin has not used every resource listed below and does not condone use of these applications as a replacement to therapy.

## GENERAL WEBSITES

- NAMI WISCONSIN** [www.namiwisconsin.org/navigating-the-system](http://www.namiwisconsin.org/navigating-the-system)
- NAMI** [www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers](http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers)
- SAMHSA** [www.samhsa.gov/programs-campaigns](http://www.samhsa.gov/programs-campaigns)



## EXPERIENCE SHARING, SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

- CHOICES IN RECOVERY** ([choicesinrecovery.com](http://choicesinrecovery.com)) Mental health recovery is an ongoing process, not a single outcome. This website is a place where you and the people who care about you can come for support, information, and resources to get involved in your mental health recovery journey.
- CLOSED GROUPS ON FACEBOOK** Create your own support group of peers helping peers and start a Closed Group on Facebook, allowing those living with mental illnesses to connect, share and feel true fellowship.
- CODE BLUE** An app designed to provide teenagers experiencing depression or bullying with support when they need it. It offers immediate support by sending alerts to pre-selected support members.
- HERE TO HELP** ([www.heretohelp.bc.ca/](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/)) Here to Help is an online hub for mental illness fact sheets and toolkits, offers online support groups, and has a discussion forum for sharing personal stories.
- HOPELINE** (text HOPELINE to 741741) HOPELINE, by the Center for Suicide Awareness, is a text-in (versus voice call-in) free service for help and hope. HOPELINE is the first Emotional Support Text Line in the State of Wisconsin and provides 24-hour service throughout the entire state.
- MHA ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS** ([www.inspire.com/groups/mental-health-america/](http://www.inspire.com/groups/mental-health-america/)) Mental Health America's Support Community provides a discussion forum to connect patients, families, friends and caregivers for support and inspiration.
- NAMI AIR** A unique app that presents an anonymous forum which provides support and access to information both for persons living with mental health conditions and for family members, friends and other caregivers.
- STRENGTH OF US** [StrengthofUs.org](http://StrengthofUs.org) is an online community developed by NAMI and young adults. It's designed to inspire young adults affected by mental health issues to think positive, stay strong and achieve their goals through peer support and resource sharing.
- WELCOME TO OZ** ([www.bpdcentral.com/support-groups/](http://www.bpdcentral.com/support-groups/)) Online support group and family community where you'll meet new friends who know just what you're facing because they've been there too. Here, you'll experience understanding and comfort and learn tips and techniques that have worked for others. Has a wide range of specialized support groups.

## SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- A-CHESS** A-CHESS provides active support for those recovering from alcohol addiction and is designed to help counselors assess the user's addiction. The app includes relaxation tutorials, a panic button that connects users to their families or counselors. It also alerts users if they are approaching a high-risk environment (like a bar they used to frequent) and helps them keep track of their progress.
- BELLYBIO** An app that teaches a deep breathing technique useful in fighting anxiety and stress. A simple interface uses biofeedback to monitor your breathing. Sounds cascade with the movements of your belly, in rhythms reminiscent of waves on a beach. Charts also let you know how you're doing. A great tool when you need to slow down and breathe.
- BREATHE2RELAX** B2R is an app developed for stress management. It walks users through breathing exercises that help to reduce stress, stabilize mood, control anger, and manage anxiety. The app's developers note that it can be used on its own to help reduce stress or in combination with other therapies.
- CBT-I COACH** This app is for people who are engaged in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia with a health provider, or who have experienced symptoms of insomnia and want to improve sleep habits. It guides users through the process of learning about sleep, developing positive sleep routines and improving sleep environments. It teaches strategies proven to improve sleep and helps alleviate symptoms of insomnia.
- DBT DIARY CARD AND SKILLS COACH** Based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) developed by psychologist Marsha Linehan, this app is a rich resource of self-help skills, reminders of the therapy principles, and coaching tools for coping.
- DEEP SLEEP WITH ANDREW JOHNSON** This straightforward app features a warm, gentle voice guiding listeners through a progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) session and into sleep. Features long or short induction options and an alarm.
- eCBT CALM** eCBT Calm provides a set of tools to help you evaluate personal stress and anxiety, challenge distorted thoughts, and learn relaxation skills that have been scientifically validated in research on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- EQUANIMITY** Equanimity is a meditation timer that also features graphical tracking and a journal feature. The meditation timer features simple graphics to minimize distractions during meditation. If users have several stages in their meditation routine, the app can be programmed to chime at the appropriate intervals.
- HEADSPACE** Headspace is meditation made simple. Learn meditation and mindfulness in just 10 minutes a day. It uses proven meditation and mindfulness techniques, showing you how to train the mind for a healthier, happier life.
- ISLEEPEASY** A calm female voice helps you quell anxieties and take the time to relax and sleep, in an array of guided meditations. It features separately controlled voice and music tracks, flexible lengths, and an alarm.
- MAGIC WINDOW** There is independent research indicating that taking breaks and getting exposure to nature, even in videos, can reduce stress. This app offers a variety of peaceful, ambient nature scenes from beautiful spots around the world.
- MIND GAMES** Harvard researchers created this training tool that uses attention bias modification (ABM)—a computer-based therapy that trains the brain to avoid negative cognitive biases, such as focusing on angry faces in a crowd.
- PERSONAL ZEN** This app takes therapy techniques and morphs them into an engaging game. Players are prompted to trace the path of one cartoon character through the scenic grass. Researchers built the game's concept around a cognitive technique known as attention-bias modification training.
- PTSD COACH** This app provides a self-assessment tool that allows users to track PTSD symptoms over time as well as tools for managing symptoms. Users can also store contacts for personal support, locate nearby treatment programs, and contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline quickly in emergencies.
- RELAX MELODIES** A popular free relaxation sound and music app. Mix and match nature sounds with new age music; it's lovely to listen to birds in the rain while a piano softly plays.
- SAM** Create a personalized anxiety toolkit! SAM is designed to help people manage their anxiety. Users can record anxiety levels and identify different triggers. The app includes 25 self-help options to help users cope with the physical and mental symptoms of anxiety.

## HOPE AND INSPIRATION

**-POSITIVE ACTIVITY JACKPOT** This app features augmented reality technology to help users find nearby enjoyable activities and makes activity suggestions with local options and the ability to invite friends.

**-VIRTUAL HOPE BOX** The VHB app contains simple tools to help patients with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking. Patients can use it to store a variety of rich multimedia content like family photos, inspirational quotes and music, that they find personally supportive in times of need.



## THERAPY LESSONS (MIGHT BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO TREATMENT)

**-TALKSPACE** The Talkspace app seeks to make therapy more available by connecting users with one of over 200 licensed therapists via messaging.

**-TRUREACH** TruReach Health app offers free lessons in cognitive behavioral therapy, a treatment that teaches people to recognize and alter negative patterns in their thoughts or behaviors.

## MOOD TRACKING

**-MOBILYZE** This app tracks behavior patterns and moods to identify states that trigger depression before it happens. It gathers data from more than 40 sensors which is used to figure out the user's activity level and location. This data, combined with information the users supply about their mood and social context, identifies situations in which people are likely to become depressed and reminds them to take action that might prevent it, such as going outside or visiting friends.

**-MOOD 24/7** Whether you're already seeking help from a professional or just personally interested in the fluctuations of your emotions, this service is designed to be a more consistent form of help. Users are encouraged to monitor their moods through a daily question sent via text message.

**-OPTIMISM** Track your moods, keep a journal, and chart your recovery progress with this comprehensive tool for depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety disorders.

**-WHATSMYM3** A three minute depression and anxiety screen. Validated questionnaires assess symptoms of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and PTSD, and combine into a score that indicates whether or not your life is impacted significantly by a mood disorder, recommending a course of action.

## CRISIS INTERVENTION

**-OPERATION REACH OUT** Literally a lifesaving app, this free intervention tool helps people who are having suicidal thoughts to reassess their thinking and get help. Developed by the military, but useful to all. Worth a download even if you're not suicidal. You never know if you might need it.

**-SUICIDE PREVENTION ON FACEBOOK** (<https://www.facebook.com/help/594991777257121/>) You can report behavior that suggests thoughts of self harm. After that, Facebook will look at the post. If Facebook feels like the post indicates distress, it will contact the person who posted it. If the person decides they'd like to talk to someone, they'll be prompted to call a friend, send a friend a Facebook message or contact a suicide helpline. They can either call or message a suicide prevention expert. Facebook even provides videos that use true stories of people who have dealt with suicidal thoughts.

**-SUICIDE PROOF** ([www.suicideproof.org](http://www.suicideproof.org)) In addition to getting your loved one the help they need, go to this website to learn how to reduce the risk of death and make sure their home environment is suicide proof.

