

# CHOOSING THE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU: NOT ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL

With the onset of COVID-19, the need for virtual mental health resources has never been stronger, and many organizations have answered the call. From training courses to virtual applications to online therapies, there are more mental health support and education options than ever before.

But while many resources claim to improve mental wellness, which ones actually deliver?

To help you make better decisions and feel confident in the tools and supports you choose, consider these questions.

## Choosing training courses: Look beyond what's advertised

- **How has the course been evaluated?** Satisfaction surveys can be helpful, but some training programs meet a higher standard of assessment. Reviews for courses like [Mental Health First Aid](#) and [The Working Mind](#) are based on rigorous pre- and post-evaluation outcome measures and extensive evidence published in peer-reviewed academic journals.
- **Are references available?** It's always a good idea to seek out references or testimonials from participants who can vouch for the training.
- **What does the training claim to achieve?** Course outcomes should be realistic and be backed up by evidence. If a training program seems too good to be true, it likely is. Ask to see the evidence that supports advertised outcomes.
- **Is the curriculum evidence based?** If course content is based on scientific evidence, consider reviewing the relevant research to understand the principles of the training.
- **Is the curriculum right for you?** Courses may be developed for specific purposes or audiences, and some developed for one purpose may be directed toward another. If so, see if other options with a more appropriate application or subject matter are available.

## Choosing mental health apps: Read the fine print

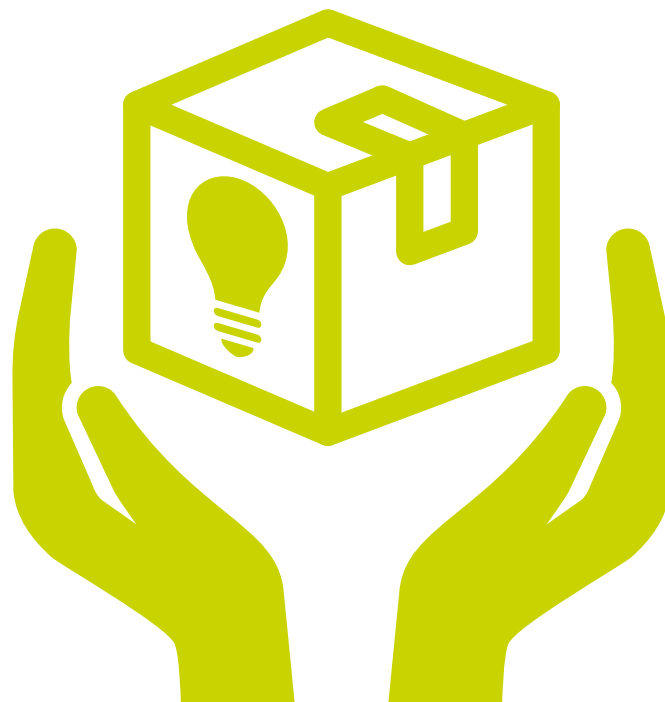
- **What is the goal of the app?** Find out what mental health goal the app is seeking to achieve (teaching you to meditate, helping you relax, etc.). If it's unclear or unrealistic, look for similar apps that have a clear purpose.
- **Has its effectiveness been demonstrated?** Positive user reviews can be encouraging, but they don't paint the whole picture. If an app claims to reduce anxiety, for example, look for sound scientific evidence to support that claim.

- **How secure is your personal information?** When it comes to personal health information, privacy matters. Read the privacy agreement before sharing personal details. Understand how your information is being used and be sure the app's security level is adequate.

Learn more about how to evaluate mental health apps from this [assessment framework](#) by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

## Choosing virtual therapy: Explore your options

- **Is one-on-one therapy necessary?** You don't always need private therapy with a mental health professional to overcome a mental health problem. Talk with your health-care provider about other options. [Stepped Care 2.0](#), for example, provides flexible access to wellness and mental health resources that include e-mental health apps, online self-help services, and behavioural prescriptions, which can either be "stepped up" or "stepped down" based on your current level of distress. And the [Wellness Together Canada](#) portal includes an assessment tool to help you determine your level of need.
- **Could a text-based service help?** Sometimes, talking through a problem with someone you trust is enough to provide relief. If you're looking for immediate support, consider reaching out to the free [Crisis Text Line Canada](#) – by texting **WELLNESS** to **741741**. Their trained staff and volunteers are available to talk 24-7-365 to texters from anywhere in Canada.
- **How can I access private counselling remotely?** If you're looking for one-on-one care, start by asking your primary care provider who they'd recommend. They may know psychologists or psychiatrists who are accepting virtual patients. You can also explore [eMentalHealth.ca](#) for a list of virtual mental health programs across Canada. Their detailed database includes filters to help you find the provider or resource best suited to your needs. If you need private therapy, be sure your provider is a regulated health professional and responsible to a professional governing body in your province.



For more information, visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19)



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