

The background features a collage of various icons and smartphone screens. At the top, there's a 'BREATHE RELAX' icon with a red 'X' over the word 'RELAX'. To its right is a heart icon with hands. Below these are several smartphone screens: one showing a home screen with various app icons, another showing a clock at 12:00, and others with icons like a bar chart, a sun, and a 'PTSD' logo. The overall theme is digital mental health resources.

# **Innovation and Best Practices in Telemental Health**

**Dr. Janette Mance-Khourey**

**Dr. Marlana Webster**

**Hampton VAMC, PCMHI Co-Directors**

# Objectives

Following this presentation, participants should be able to:

1. Review best practices in telepsychiatry during COVID-19
2. Discuss strategies to innovate delivery of services addressing challenging mental health needs



# Pre-COVID Hampton Practices

- Less than 4% of MHBS staff with approved telework agreements
- October 2018- less than 1% of encounters were video into the home
  - 16% of total workload telephone and clinical video telehealth, site-to-site
- Usage of telehealth from VA site to VA site averaged 76 encounters per day
- Apps and web courses utilized primarily in PCMHI and Trauma Specialty MH programs



# Barriers Encountered with COVID

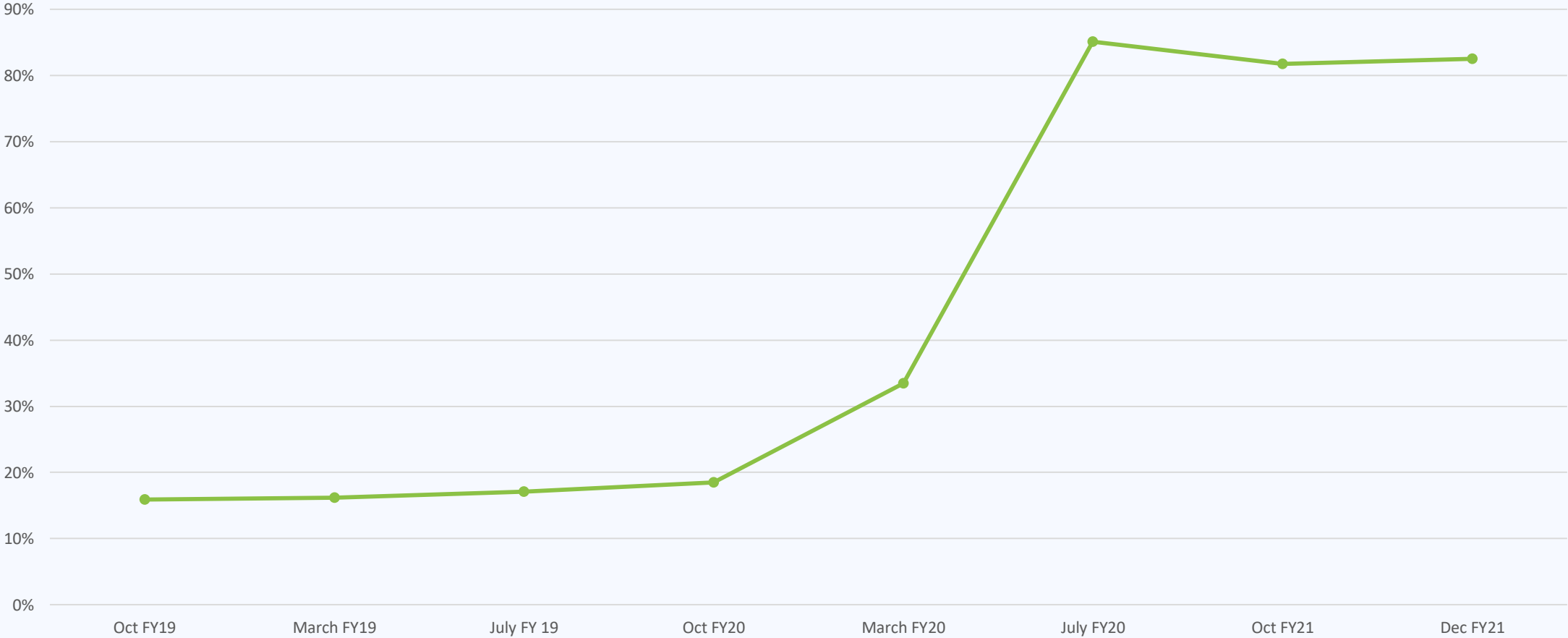


- Cancellation of Face-to-Face care
- Unique challenges for Outpatient Mental Health treatment team meetings
- Limited options for VA-issued cellphones for teleworkers
  - Doximity
  - Google Phone
- Challenges with Virtual Care Manager- VA's Video Telehealth Platform
  - VA expanded approved platforms list to include Google Duo, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc.
  - No TikTok or Facebook Live
- Guidelines for video groups into Veterans' homes in development stage
  - Accelerated for implementation by April 2020
- Dissemination of group materials
  - Postal Mail, secure messaging, blind copy Outlook emails, treatment companion apps



# Trends in Telehealth Usage

Percent Total Telehealth





## Team Huddles & Staff Meetings

- Video calls used for daily Team Huddles and Staff Meetings
- Routine meetings for team leads were used to troubleshoot barriers in coordinating care across programs and teams
- Norm was established early to use cameras to maintain connection



# Benefits of Increased Telehealth & Telework



Risk of COVID exposure reduced for patients and staff

No show rate decreased

Increased access for veterans who have barriers to coming into facility for appointments

Improved parking for veterans and staff

Staff feel safe and supported

# Innovative Practices





care2.va.gov/vvc-app/v2/conference/VAC00682fbb@care2.va.gov?pin=7032463467&name=WEBSTER,MARLANA&callType=video

Access Denied Virtual Care Manag... New Tab Pexip Infinity Conne... Other bookmark

etng  
jects  
t all  
dia devices  
stats  
ipant  
mes  
out  
gency #)

VA  
Confidentiality  
Confidentiality  
Risks and Consequences

Change layout

care2.va.gov is sharing your screen. Stop sharing Hide

8:53 AM

7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for outpatient MH

2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for PCMHI

Variety of Topics:

- **Skills:** DBT, Anger Management, Compassion-Based Mindfulness, Healthy Coping, Healthy Relationships, Problem-Solving; Coping During COVID
- **Depression & Anxiety:** CBT-D, ACT
- **Trauma:** STAIR, CPT, Male MST Trauma Groups, PTSD Psychoeducation
- **Health Psychology:** CBT/ACT Chronic Pain, ACPA Chronic Pain Support Group -Peer Support, CBT for Insomnia
- **Women's Groups:** ACT for OCD & Anxiety; Relaxation, Trauma 101; Hope Group Peer Support, CBT-D; STAIR; CPT; Sexuality & Intimacy; Women's Spirituality; SOS Group Peer Support; Coping During COVID
- **Suicide Prevention Groups** (conducted by Suicide Prevention Team)
- **Peer Support:** Managing Emotions, Chair One Fitness, Peer Warmline; PTSD; Wellness Support; Mood Management
- **Arts & Crafts:** Arts & Crafts; Art for the Heart

# Implementation of VVC Groups: What worked

- Pre-group VVC orientation phone calls and video test calls
- Utilize the Digital Divide Consult
- Repeated reminders regarding confidentiality and group rules
- Enlisting a group assistant to be present at the start of every group to assist with technical difficulties
- Provide psychoeducational materials beforehand via hardcopy and/or email
- Revise presentations as new insights are gained
- Engaging the participants:
  - Slow down and encourage discussion., conduct routine check-ins
  - Provide overview of various elements of VVC application early (i.e., mute button, chat box, etc.)
  - Pay attention to affect and nonverbals
  - Encourage use of the chat box





# Virtual Consultations in Primary Care

## PCMHI Consultation during COVID

### VVC handoff during appointment

This is the preferred method of consultation when you are conducting the visit via VVC. Send an IM to the **VHAHAM PCMHI** team via Skype. After the team responds with guidance, simply copy and paste the VVC link into the Skype box. A PCMHI provider will call into the VVC session, at which point you can disconnect from the session.



### Submit Consult to PCMHI

If a veteran is not willing to speak to a PCMHI team member today, but is ok with a follow-up contact, you can submit a consult to the Primary Care Mental Health Integration Team. This can be found under the consult menu.

### VVC handoff to follow appointment

To use this method, send an IM to the **VHAHAM PCMHI** team via Skype. After the team responds with guidance, simply provide the veteran's email address and a new VVC link will be sent to the veteran immediately. One of our team members will reach out via VVC once you alert us that you have finished your appointment. We are able to meet with the veteran via VVC even if your appointment is via phone as long as the veteran has access to VVC.

### Telephone handoff

If you prefer a telephone warm handoff, send an IM to the **VHAHAM PCMHI** team via Skype. One of our team members will respond with guidance and ask for a phone number at which the veteran can be reached, or provide you with a number to which you can transfer the call.



# Integration of mHealth Resources in Care

- mHealth Resource: mobile mental health applications and web courses
- Potentially reduce gaps in care
- Improve reach of MH service, accessible to anyone
- Support self-management
- Allow providers to get foot in the door for mental health
- Facilitate transmission of information over telehealth
- Encourage symptom tracking and mindfulness





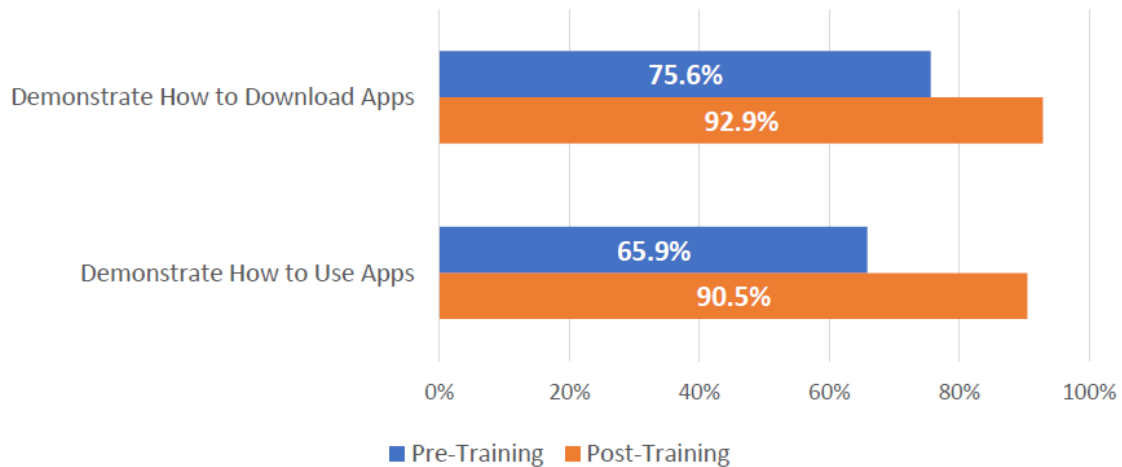
# REACH 25 INITIATIVE

- Hampton was to selected to represent VISN 6 for the NCPTSD quality improvement project, "Expanding Reach of VA/DoD Mobile Apps to Improve Coping and Reduce Suicide Risk."
- Goals of the on-site training (Feb. 2020):
  - Train at least 25 staff of diverse disciplines in how to integrate mobile mental health (mHealth) apps into the care they provide
    - Each staff is expected to reach 25 veterans by the end of 2020 (Total Goal: 269 uniques)
  - Sustain integration of mHealth apps into care at Hampton across disciplines and departments
  - Disseminate mHealth information and training across the VISN

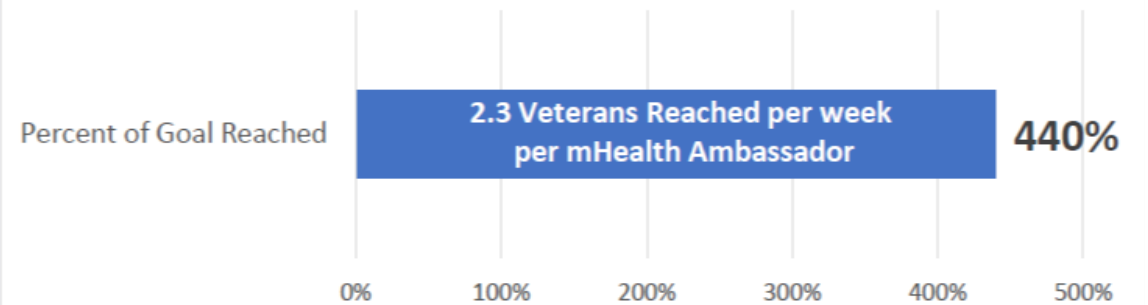




**Figure 9. Possesses Basic Skills to Demonstrate Apps to Veterans**

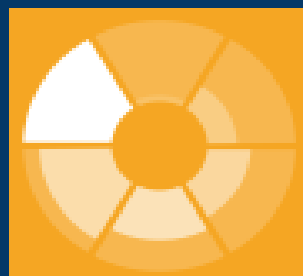


**Figure 11. Percentage of REACH25 3-month Goal Met**



# 3-month Follow-up Results

# NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps



## Core Features:

- Learn
- Skills
- Tracking
- Crisis Resources
- Customization
- Save favorite tools



**National Center for  
PTSD Mobile Apps**  
Includes both self-help and  
treatment companion apps

# Self-Management Apps



**The Virtual Hope Box** is designed to help you with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking



**Moving Forward** teaches problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. Can be used alone or with the Moving Forward web course



**Mood Coach** is an app to learn and practice behavioral activation skills for depression and improving mood



**AIMS** teaches tools to help manage and overcome anger and irritability.



**Vet Change** is designed for anyone who wants to cut down on their drinking. Can be used alone or with the [VetChange webcourse](#)



**The Mindfulness Coach** provides tools and guided exercises to help you practice mindfulness



**Parenting 2 Go** provides convenient tools to strengthen parenting skills. Can be used alone or with the [Parenting webcourse](#)



**Breathe2Relax** contains breathing exercises designed to help with mood, anger and anxiety



# Treatment Companion Apps



**ACT Coach** provides mindfulness exercises, tools to help identify values, and logs to keep track of useful coping strategies



**PE Coach** offers breathing exercises, assessments to track and record your progress, and in-app recording that can be used in session.



**CBT-I Coach** provides a sleep diary for logging of sleep habits,



**PFA Mobile** designed to assist responders who provide psychological first aid to adults, families, and children as a part of an organized response effort.



**CPT Coach** provides assignments for each CPT therapy session, digital worksheets



**STAIR Coach** includes readings, interactive tools for emotion and behavior management, customizable reminders, and quick links to support.



**QUIT Coach** includes plans and tools for coping with urges to smoke, motivational messages, personalized information about the benefits of staying quit. It also offers coping tools for those who smoke after their quit date and reminders and take any medications or nicotine replacement therapies.





# VA ONLINE PROGRAMS

## SUPPORT YOU CAN ACCESS ON YOUR OWN



The Department of Veterans Affairs online programs provide help, education, and support to Veterans and Servicemembers.

Ask your doctor or therapist if you should add an online program to your treatment plan. These programs do not replace professional care – they are an additional resource available to you.

### WHY TRY VA ONLINE PROGRAMS?

Free & designed for Veterans & Servicemembers

Easy to use: Explore one step at a time

Engage with videos and games

Lots of additional resources available

#### VETCHANGE



Take control of your drinking and learn to manage PTSD symptoms without using alcohol.

[www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change)

#### PTSD COACH ONLINE



Cope with upsetting thoughts and reduce the symptoms of PTSD.

[www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline)

#### ANGER AND IRRITABILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS (AIMS)



Manage your anger and develop self-control over your thoughts and actions.

[www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims)



#### MOVING FORWARD

Improve your problem-solving skills to overcome stressful obstacles and meet your goals.

[www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward)

#### PARENTING FOR VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS

Strengthen your parenting skills and reconnect with your children.

[www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting)

#### PATH TO BETTER SLEEP

Improve your sleep habits and get more rest.

[www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia)

Use the QR code reader on your phone to scan a code. You will be taken directly to the website listed.

Questions or suggestions about these online programs?  
Contact [MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov)



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



# COVID Coach

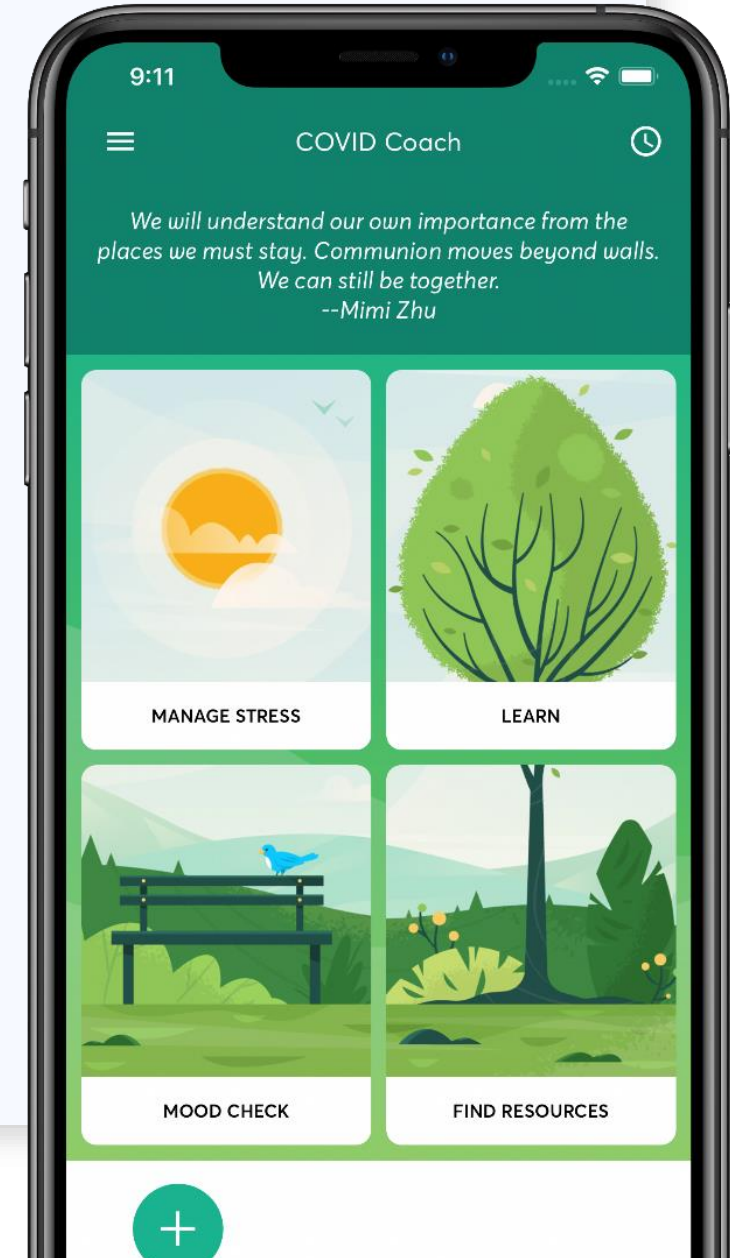
For managing stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic

## Uses:

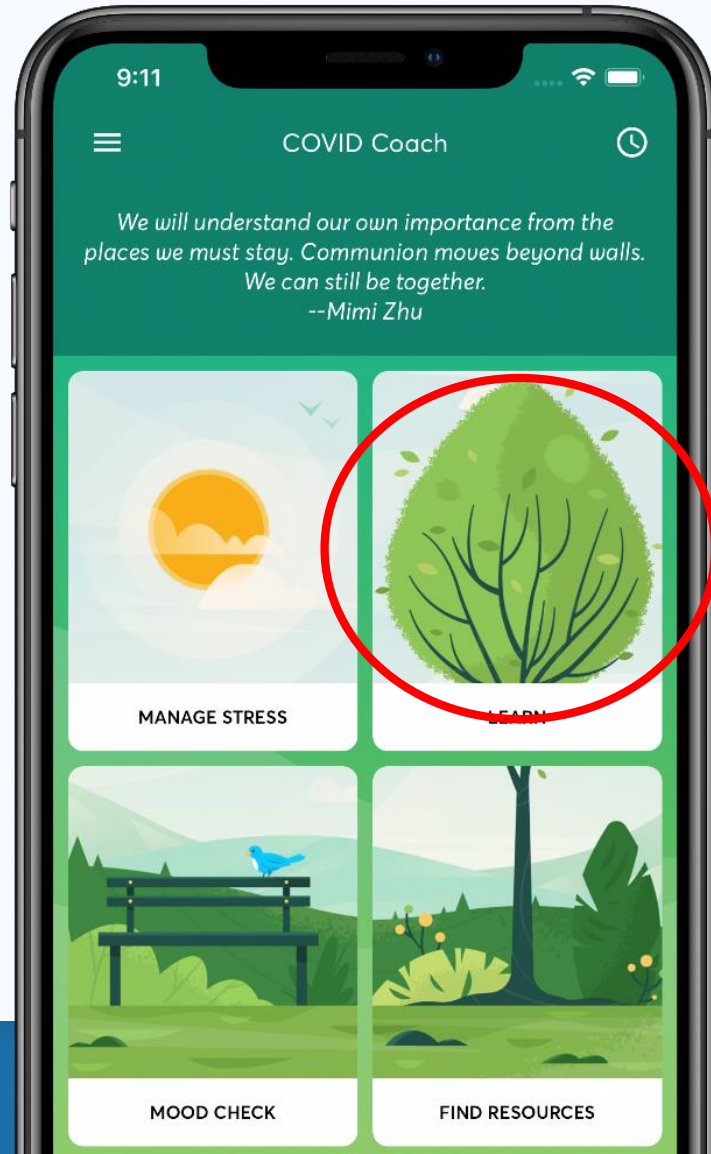
- Learn ways to improve well-being during this global pandemic
- Use trackers for mental health and personal goals
- Find tools for coping and self-care
- Follow links to additional resources

Learn more at the National Center for PTSD website:

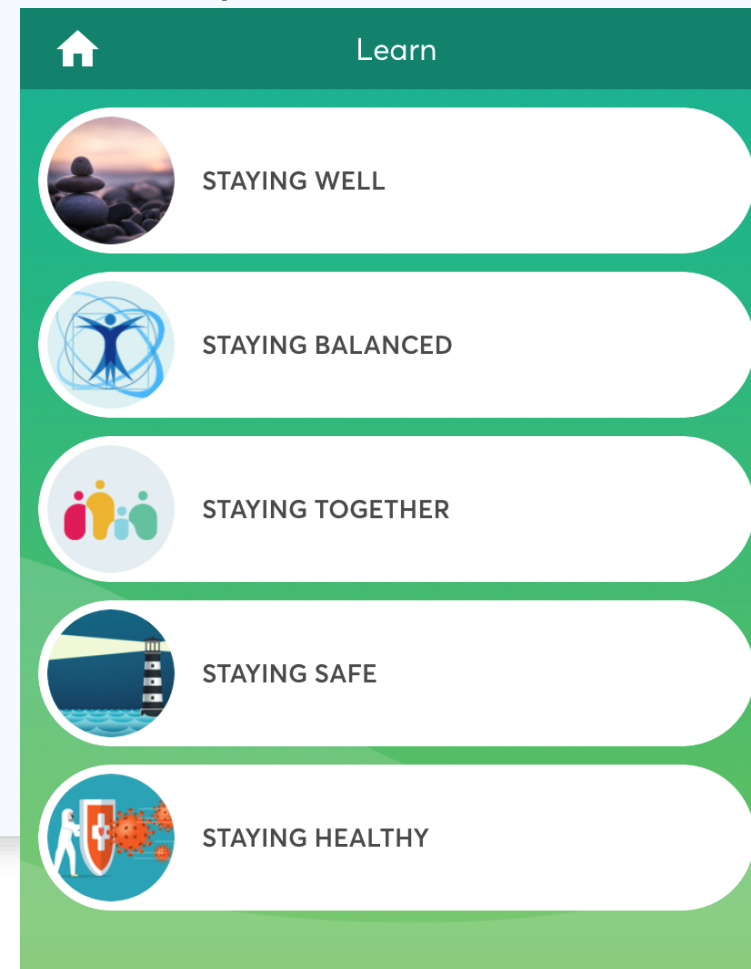
[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID\\_coach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID_coach_app.asp)



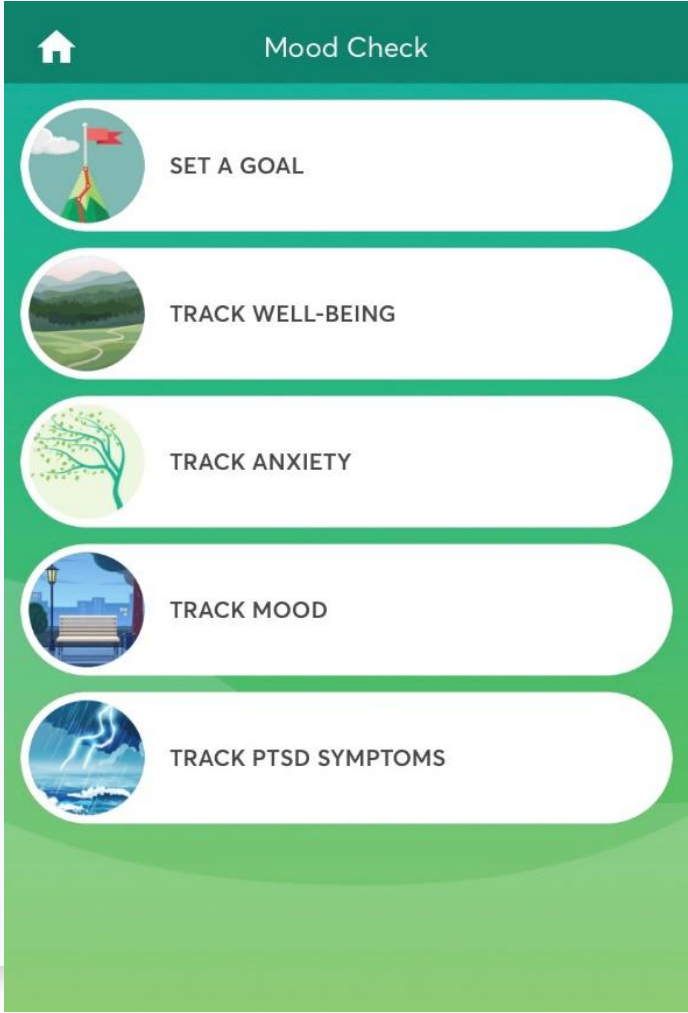
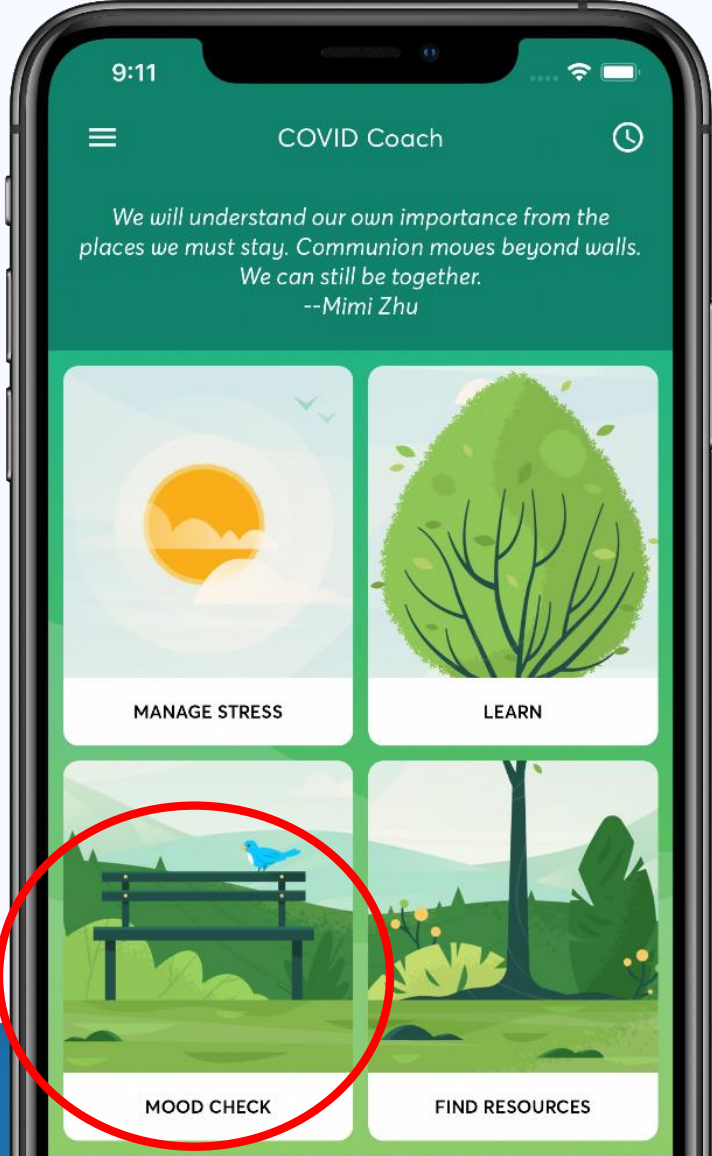
# Learn



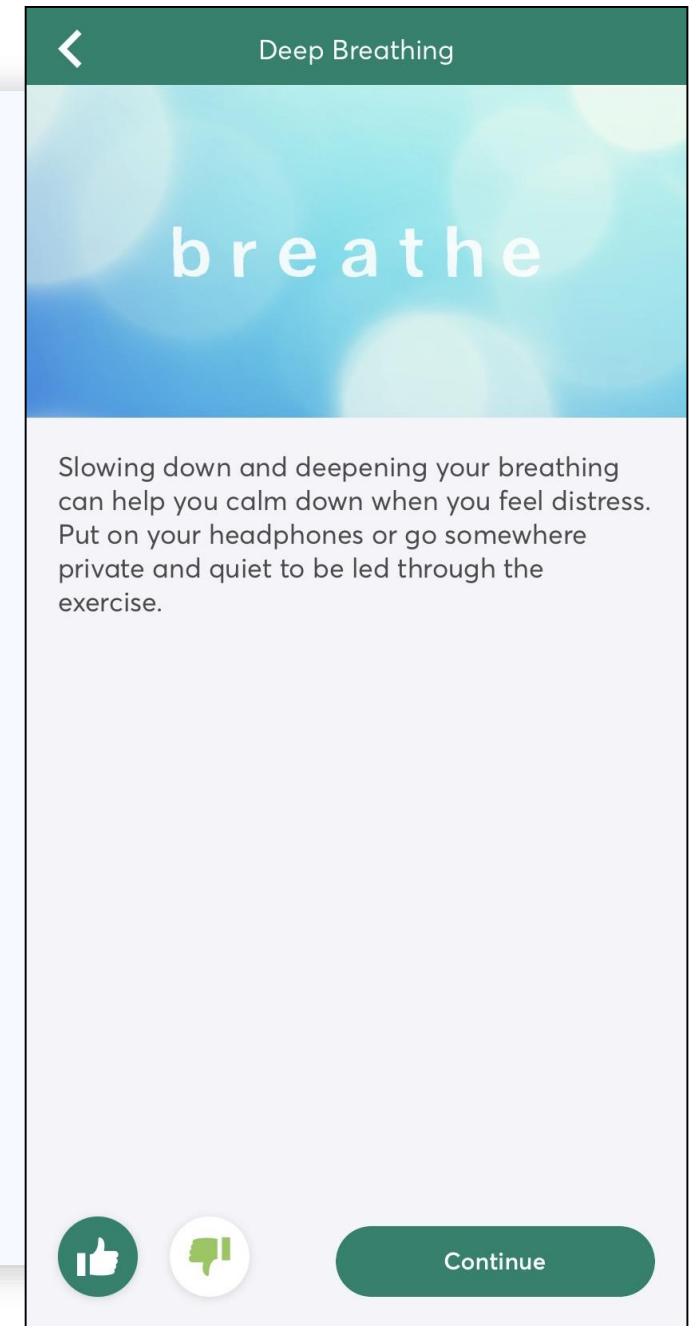
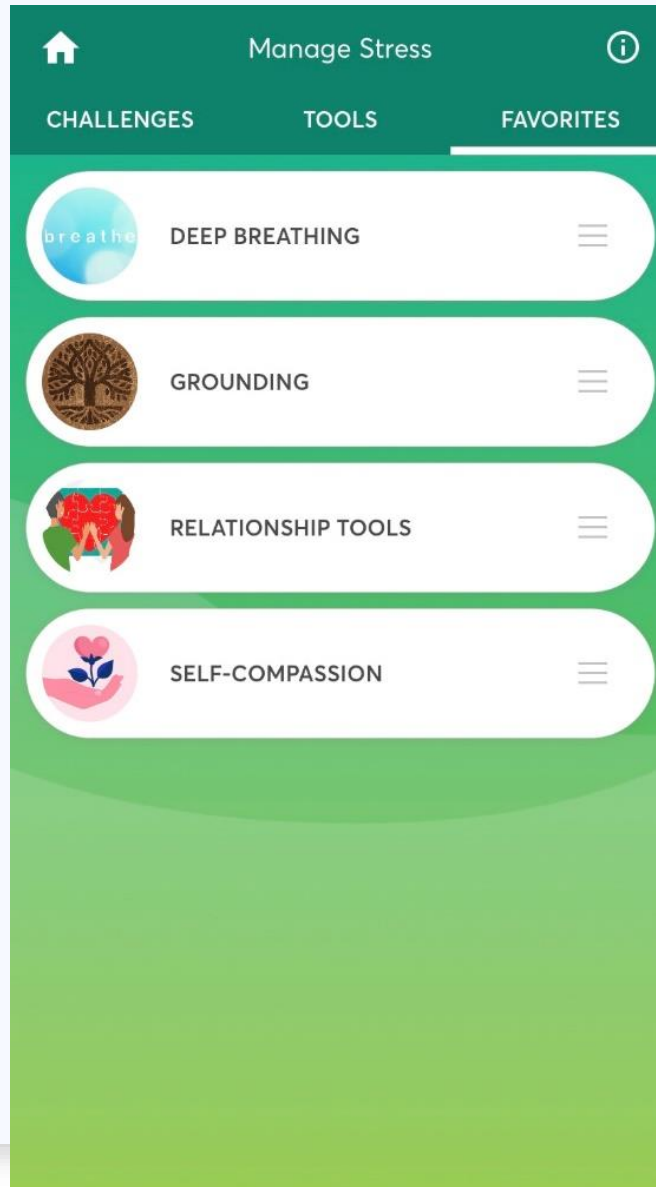
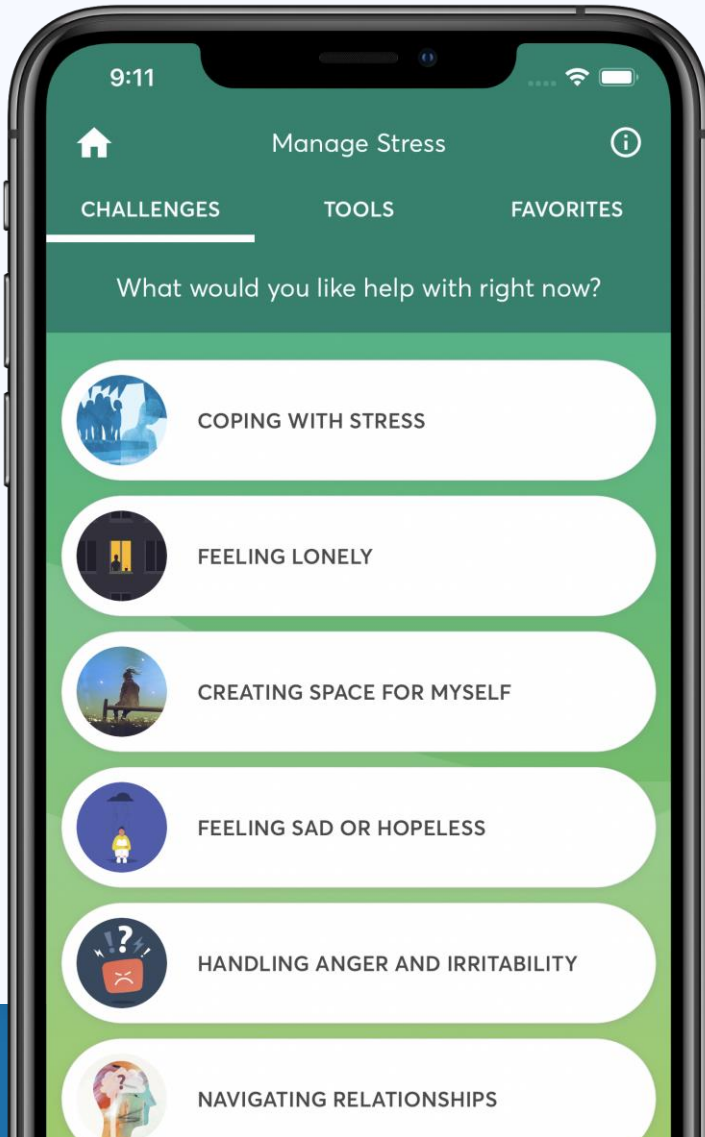
Readings organized into 5 learning topics:



# Track your mood

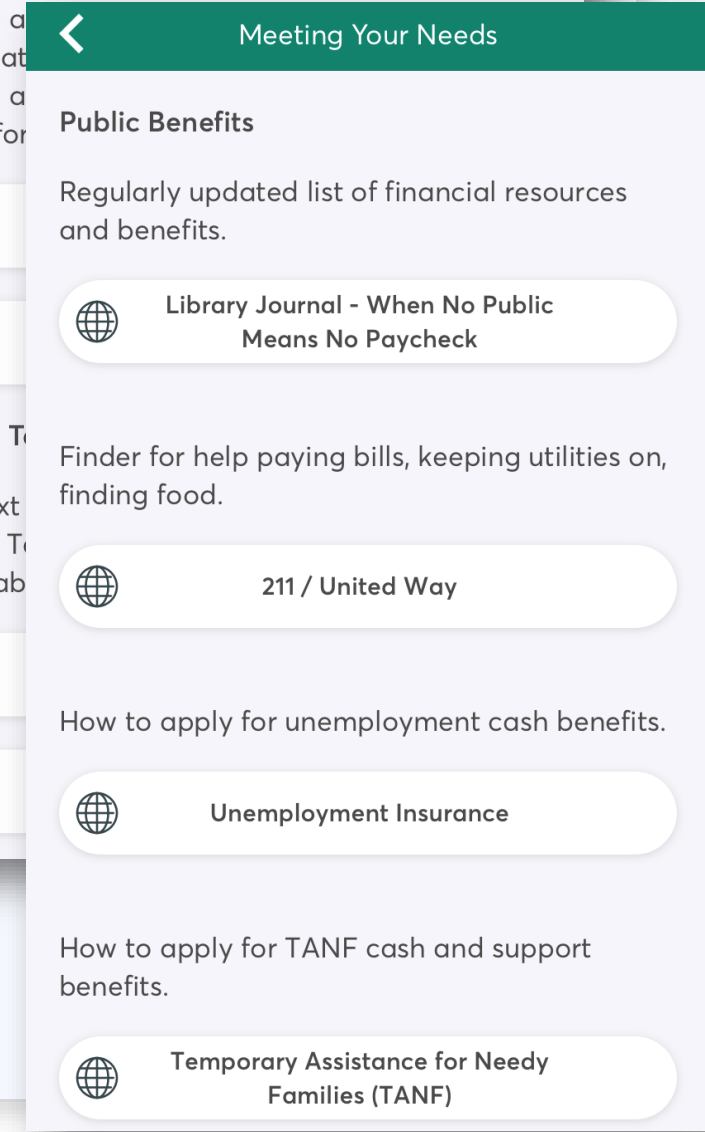
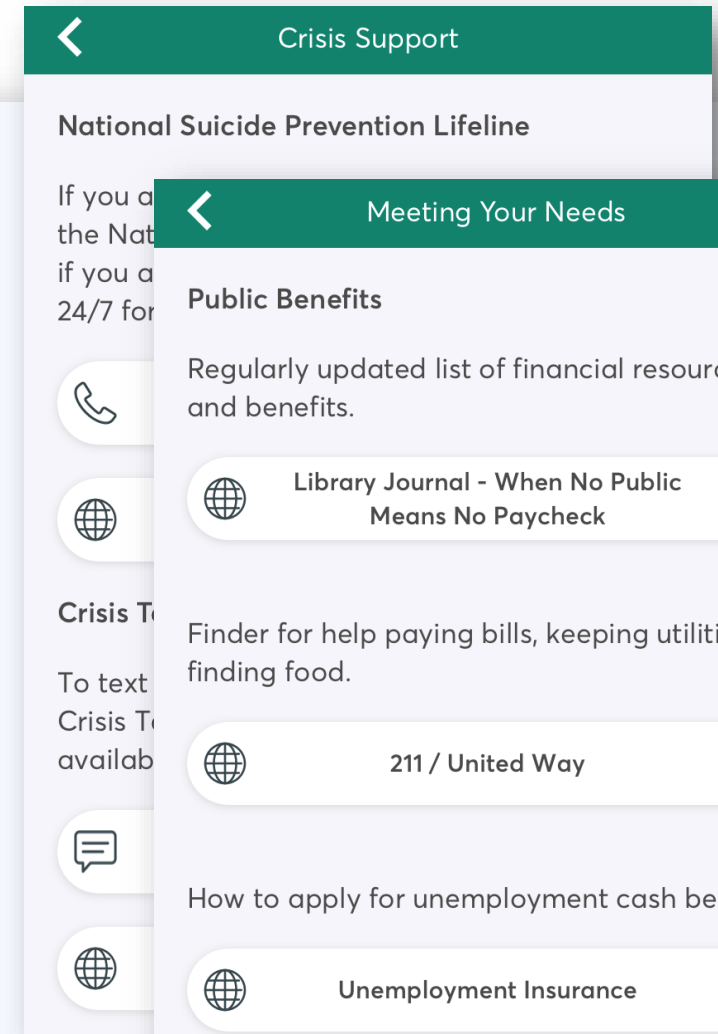
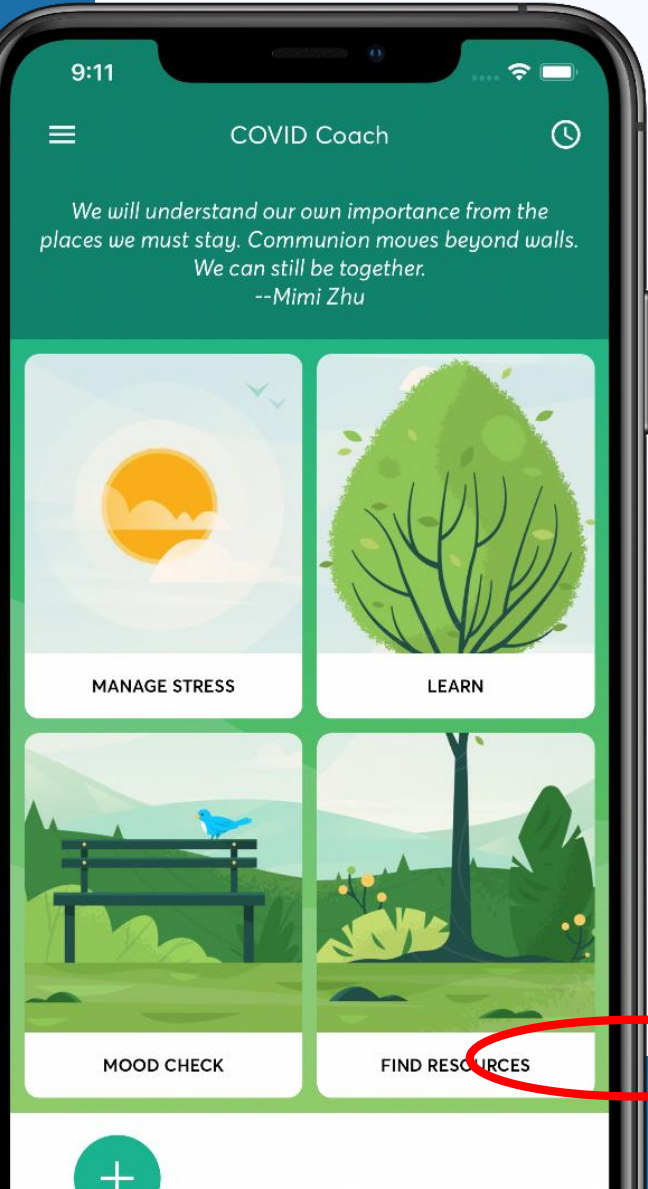


# Manage Stress





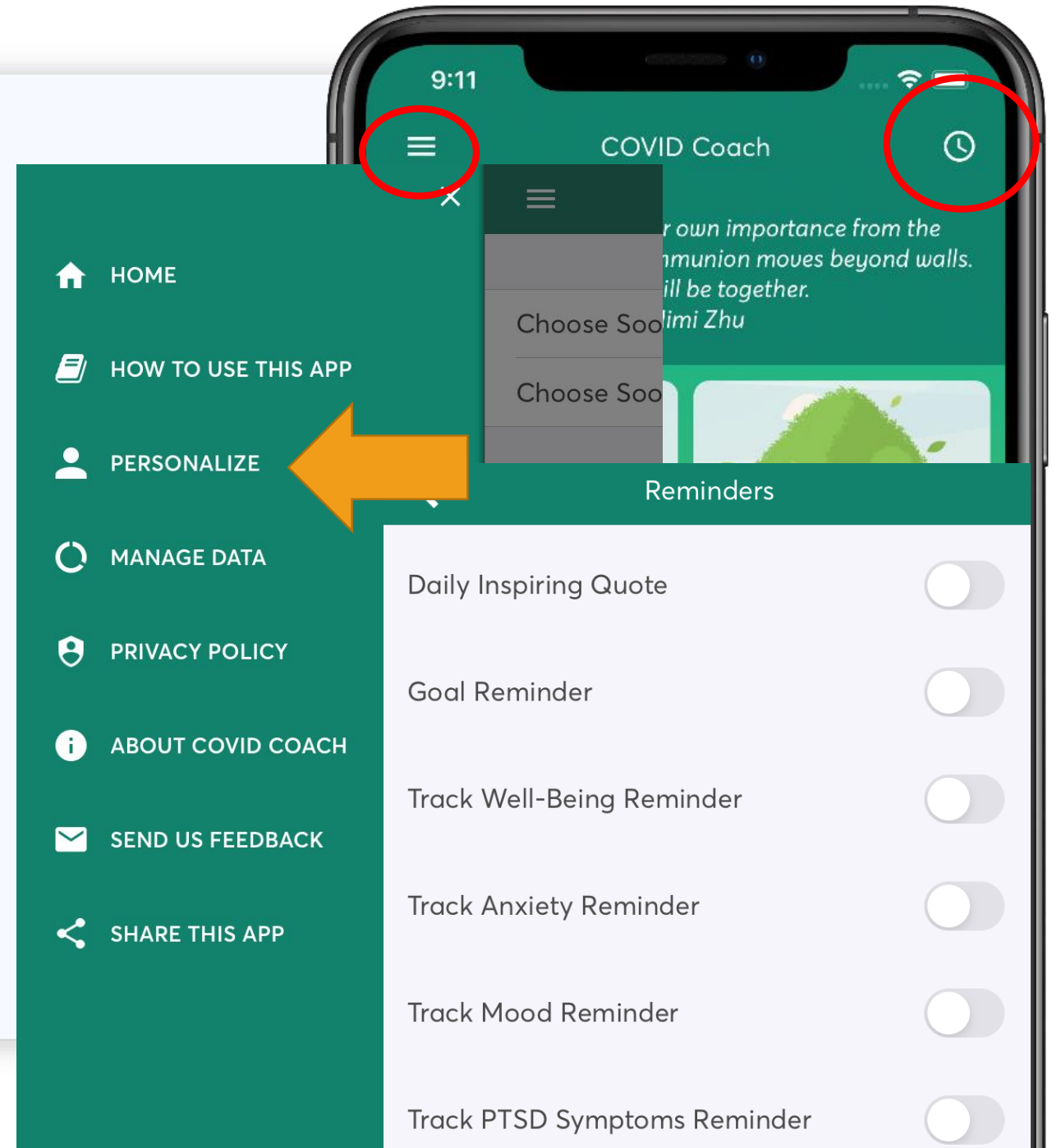
# Find Resources





# Extra Features

- Personalize with photos, music, and supportive contacts
- Export assessment data
- Set Reminders

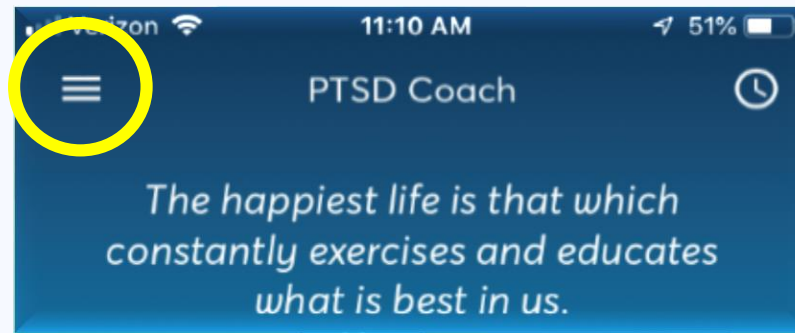




# Safety Plan now in PTSD Coach!

## To access the Safety Plan:

1. Download\* and open PTSD Coach
2. Tap the lateral menu
3. Tap Safety Plan



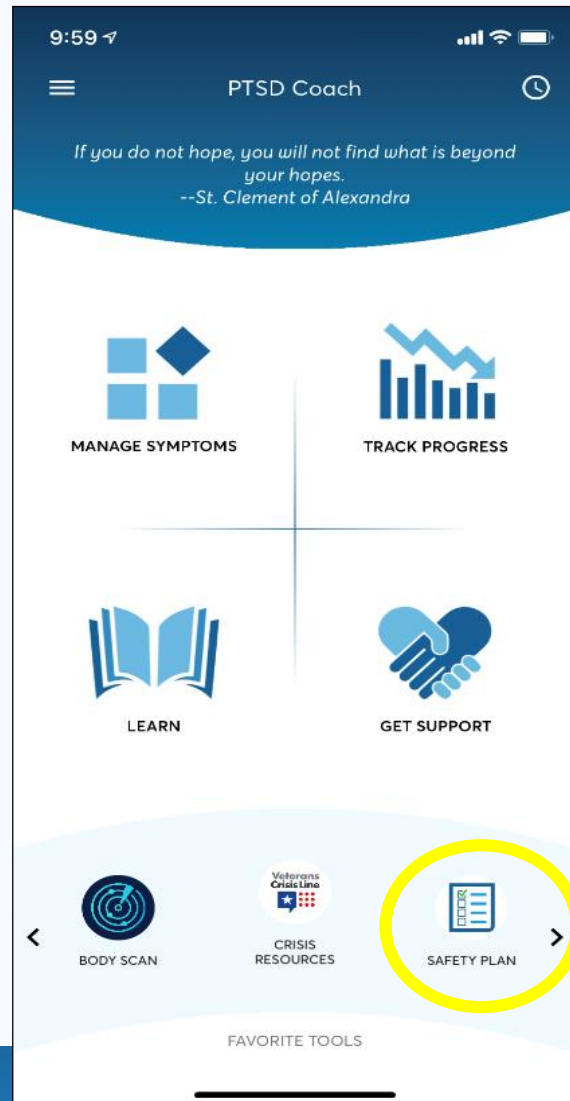
\*If you have previously downloaded PTSD Coach, you may need to update it from the App Store/Google Play. For some, it may update automatically.

## National Center for PTSD website:

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/ptsdcoach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/ptsdcoach_app.asp)



# Quick access to the Safety Plan in PTSD Coach



- Users can add the Safety Plan to their list of favorite tools – it will then appear on the PTSD Coach home screen “Favorites” for quick access
- This should be recommended to all users to ensure they can access the Safety Plan as easily and quickly as possible
- Users can also set a reminder to review their plan

# Exporting the Safety Plan from PTSD Coach



Android  
export icon



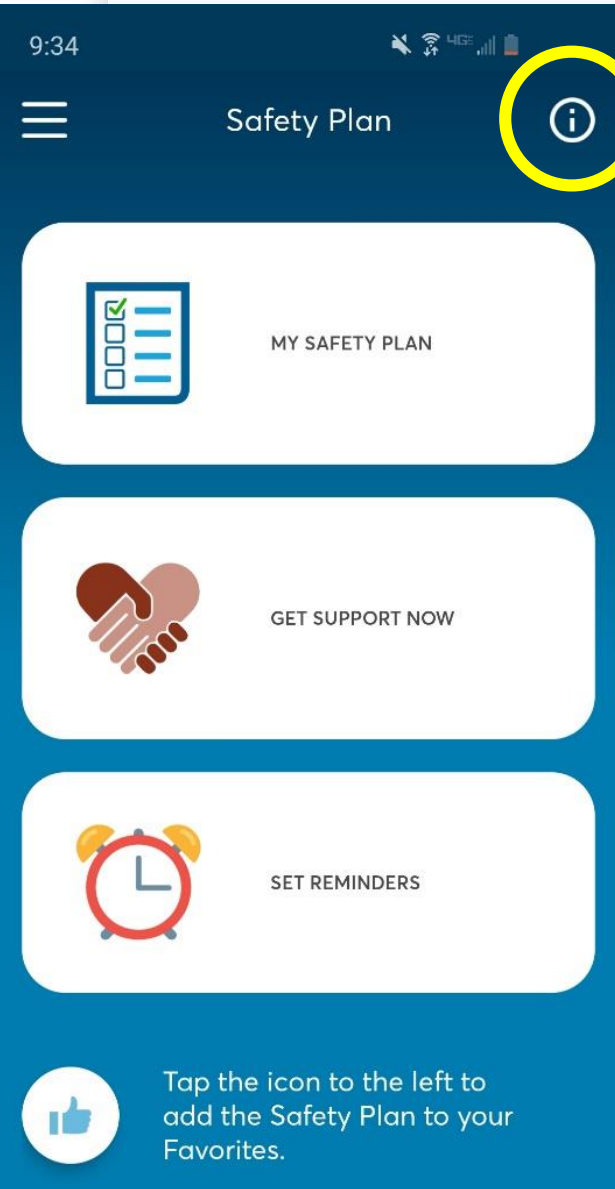
iOS export  
icon

- To protect privacy, data from the app is not transmitted anywhere – it stays on the user’s device.
  - We recommend that users *export* their plans and save a copy for themselves, in case they lose or replace their device. This can be printed or kept electronically.
  - The Safety Plan PDF can also be shared with providers via secure messaging or email.

## Resources:

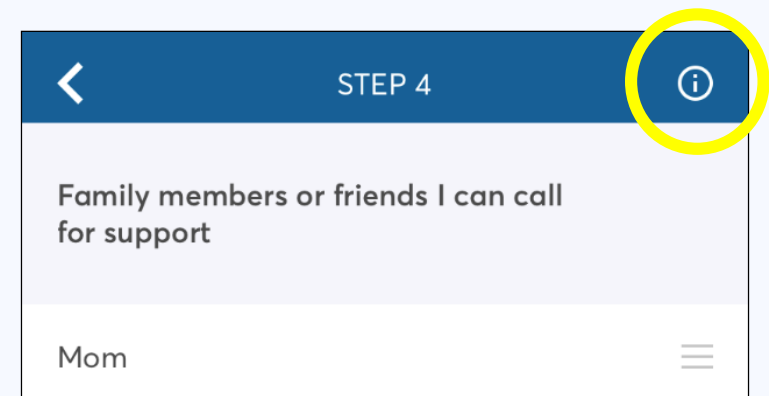
- “How to export” instructions: <https://www.myvaapps.com/flyers>
- Tech into Care SharePoint (on VA network only): <https://tinyurl.com/Tech-Into-Care>
  - Look in the Document Library under “The Basics” for handouts on secure messaging using My HealtheVet

# “i” buttons provide lots of additional information



Users should tap the small “i” icon to get additional information

Each of the 6 steps (and some items within a step) has an “i” button





# Integrating Apps into Clinical Care

- Groups and individual interventions:
  - Coping with COVID
  - AIMS
  - Moving Forward
  - CBT-I
  - CPT
- Care Management
- Educating primary teams on available resources

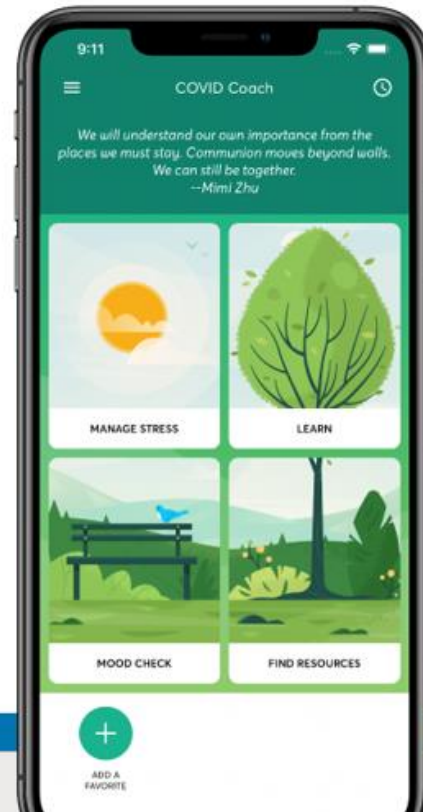
## COVID Coach



For managing stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic

### Uses:

- Learn ways to improve your well-being during this global pandemic
- Use trackers for mental health and personal goals
- Find tools for coping and self-care
- Follow links to additional resources



Integrated the use of apps in groups and individual appointments  
Coping with COVID

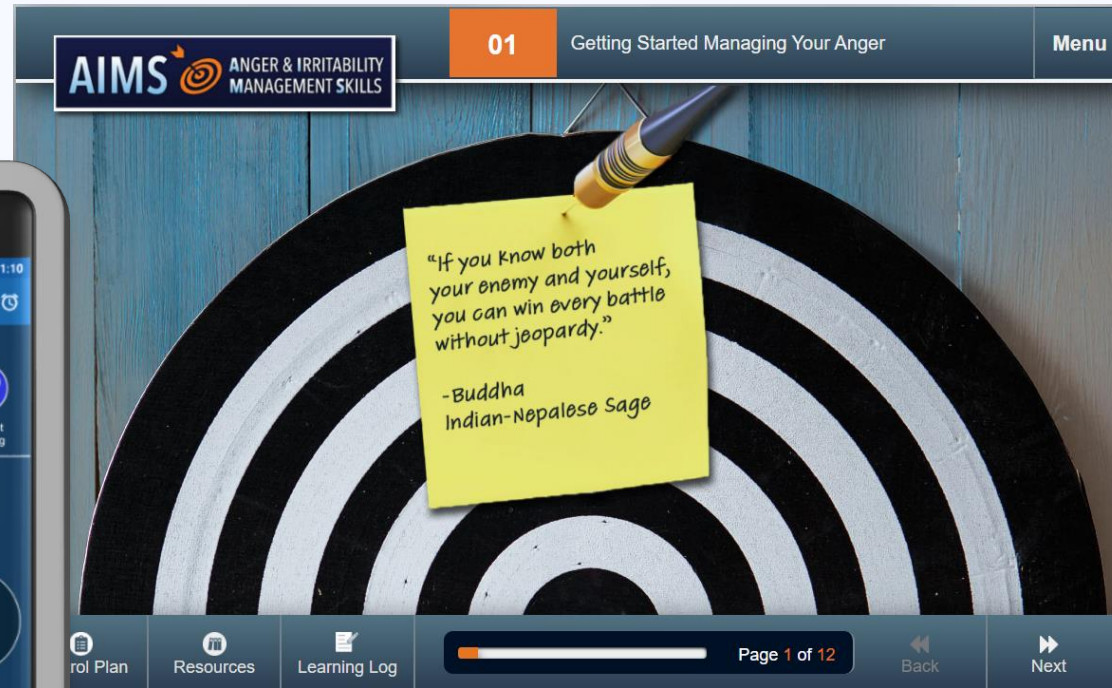
Learn more at the National Center for PTSD website:

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID\\_coach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID_coach_app.asp)



# COVID Coach App

## Local Implementation Strategies

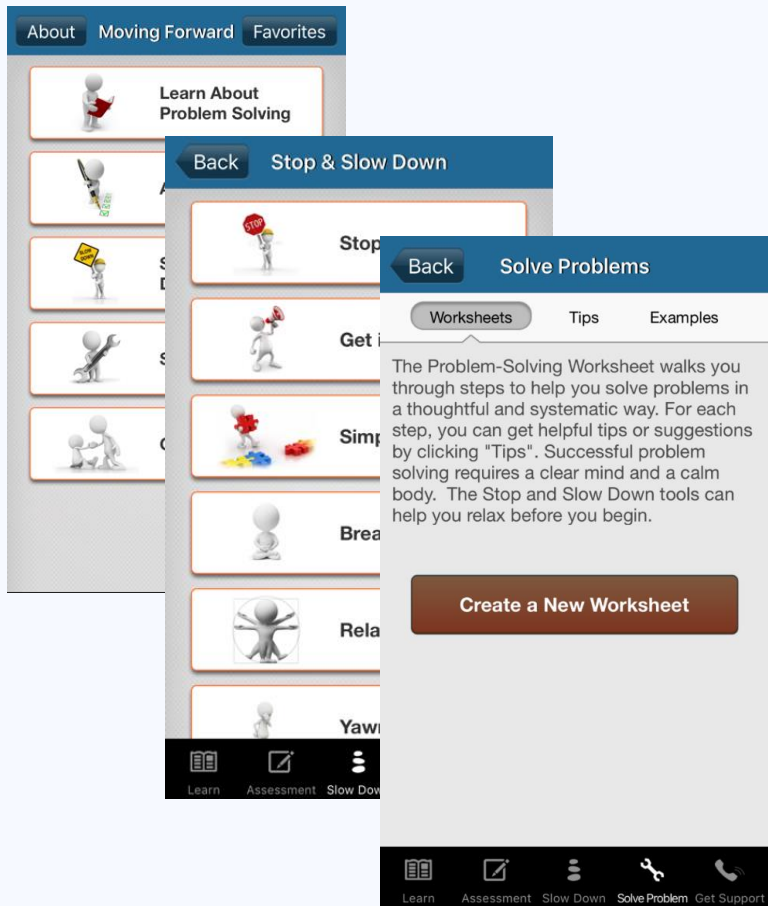


Integrated the use of apps in groups and individual appointments  
Anger and Irritability Management Skills

# AIMS Online Course and App

Local Implementation Strategies

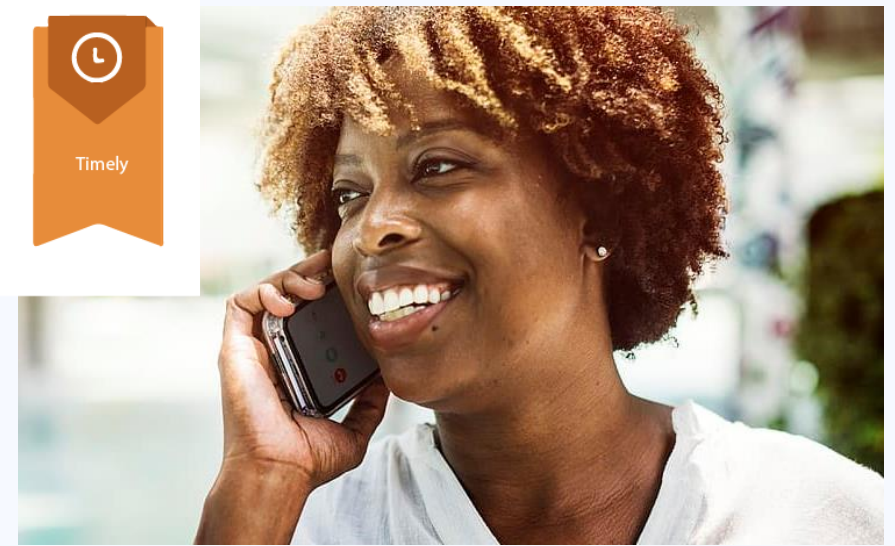
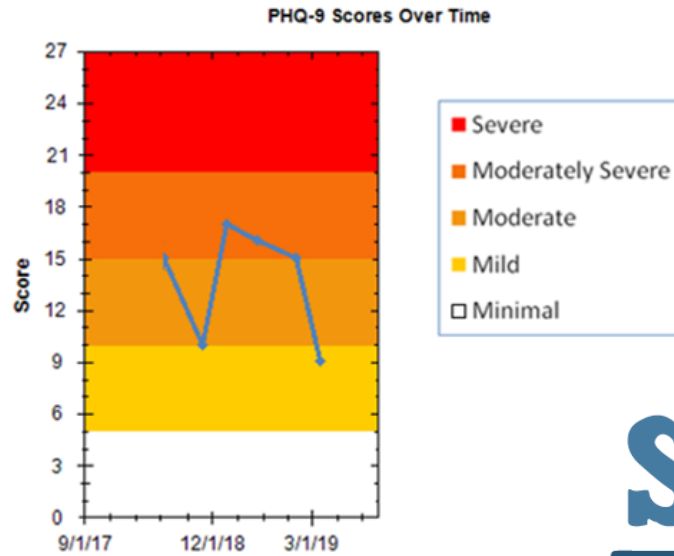




Integrated the use of mHealth Resources and Web Courses in groups and individual services

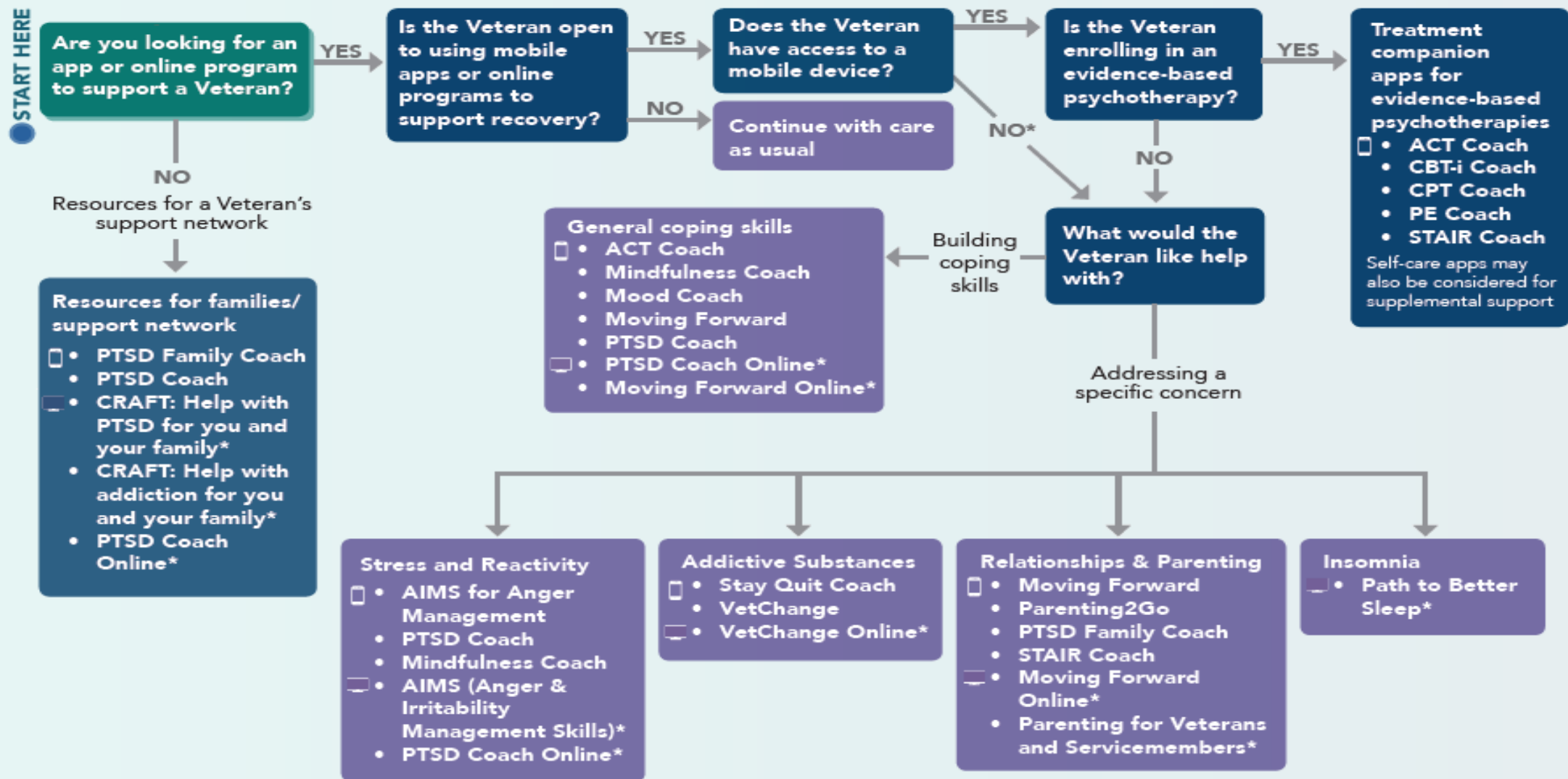
# Moving Forward Online Course and App

# Care Management



# VA MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH DECISION TREE FOR PROVIDERS

VA mobile applications (apps) and online programs provide self-help, education, and support. Use this chart to decide which apps and online programs best meet your patient's needs.



\* Online programs - recommended when someone does not have access to a mobile device or prefers the additional features of an online program



Search

Your status is set to do not disturb. You'll only get notifications for urgent messages and from your priority contacts. [Change settings.](#)

HAM PCMHI - PACT 15 Chat Files PCMHI Information 1 more +

File Home Insert Draw View Help Open in browser Tell me what you want to do

Calibri Light 20 B I U A Styles Tags abc

### Additional Resources

- VIRTUAL HOPE BOX**  
The Virtual Hope Box is designed to help you with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking
- Mood Coach**  
Mood Coach is an app to learn and practice behavioral activation skills for depression and improving mood
- Vet Change**  
Vet Change is designed for anyone who wants to cut down on their drinking. Can be used alone or with the VetChange web course
- Parenting 2 Go**  
Parenting 2 Go provides convenient tools to strengthen parenting skills. Can be used alone or with the Parenting web course

**National Center for PTSD Mobile Apps**  
Includes both self-help and treatment companion apps

**MOVING FORWARD**  
Moving Forward teaches problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. Can be used alone or with the Moving Forward web course

**AIMS**  
AIMS teaches tools to help manage and overcome anger and irritability.

**The Mindfulness Coach**  
The Mindfulness Coach provides tools and guided exercises to help you practice mindfulness

**BREATHE RELAX**  
Breathe2Relax contains breathing exercises designed to help with mood, anger and anxiety

**Moving Forward** **Veteran Parenting** **Veteran Training Online Web Courses** **Anger & Irritability Management Skills** **Path to Better Sleep**

**Veteran Training Online Web Courses**  
Free to use and you do not need to create an account to access the information

Transition to MS teams has allowed for further dissemination of information via unique chat groups set up between Integrated MH providers and each individual Primary Care team

# Educating PC teams on mHealth Resources

# Training Resources for the Safety Planning Intervention

## For VA employees

- 1-hour TMS Course, #36232: Suicide Safety Planning Training
- Advanced Training in the Safety Planning Intervention (ASPI) SharePoint: <https://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/OMHS/CBTAdvSafetyPlanning/layouts/15/start.aspx#/>
- For more information about ASPI: Wendy H. Batdorf, Ph.D. ([wendy.batdorf@va.gov](mailto:wendy.batdorf@va.gov))

## For the general public

- [http://suicidesafetyplan.com/Home\\_Page.html](http://suicidesafetyplan.com/Home_Page.html)
- <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/patient-safety-plan-template>
- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown-StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf>

# Where to learn more

- NCPTSD PBI Mobile Mental Health Lecture Series ([Link](#))
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 12-1pm
  - CEUs offered for those who preregister
  - Email [MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov) to receive invites
- Tech Into Care COP Lecture Series ([Link](#))
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, 12-1pm
  - Previous Presentations (under Community of Practice PPT Slides)
  - Email [MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov) to receive invites
- Tech Into Care Video Series ([Link](#))
  - Provides video examples of how to introduce and integrate mobile resources into clinical care
- [VA Mobile Apps- Patient FAQ](#)
- [VA Mobile Apps- Provider FAQ](#)
- [SAMHSA Tip 60: Using Technology Based Therapeutic Tools in Behavioral Health Sciences](#)
- [APA Telepsychiatry: Practice Guidelines](#)
- [APA: Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology](#)

