

**Investigating ACT-based Active Intervention Elements in Smartphone-based Mental
Health Applications to Reduce Anxiety Symptoms: A Meta-Analysis**

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Abstract

Background: Anxiety disorders are one of the most prevalent mental disorders, with limited access to treatment. Smartphone-based mental health applications could reduce the treatment gap, especially when based on evidence-based therapeutic frameworks such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). As more research is needed to determine which ACT-based active intervention elements contribute to anxiety symptom improvement, this study aimed to examine the association between the ACT-based active intervention elements cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed action and anxiety symptom improvement in smartphone-based mental health applications.

Method: This meta-analysis analysed RCT papers retrieved from PubMed, PsycINFO, and Web of Science that included a smartphone-based mental health application as the intervention, and a validated self-report instrument assessing anxiety, such as GAD-7. After systematic screening of papers, data extraction and contacting authors, univariable mixed-effect meta-regression models were conducted between each ACT-based active intervention element and anxiety outcomes. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to control for covariates time, age, gender, comorbidity, clinical level, adjunctivity, and guidance.

Results: 160 RCTs were included in the analysis ($n = 35,504$). The meta-analysis showed that the active intervention elements cognitive defusion ($g = -0.22, p < .01$), acceptance ($g = -0.14, p < .05$), and present-moment focus ($g = -0.21, p < .001$) were significantly associated with small reductions in anxiety symptoms, while values ($g = -0.14, p > .05$), and committed action ($g = -0.14, p > .05$) were not significantly related with improvements in anxiety. These effects were consistent after adjusting models for various covariates.

Conclusion: The results of this meta-analysis suggest that ACT-based active intervention elements targeting cognitive and emotional processes of anxiety, i.e. cognitive defusion, acceptance, present-moment focus, were the most effective in improving anxiety symptoms when delivered via smartphone-based mental health applications. In contrast, active intervention elements targeting anxiety-related behaviour, i.e. values and committed action, did not show significant effects on anxiety symptom improvement. These findings support the relevance of designing smartphone-based mental health applications that address cognitive and emotional mechanisms of anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety symptoms, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), smartphone-based mental health applications, active intervention elements, meta-analysis.

Introduction

Globally, one-eighth of the population suffers from mental disorders (WHO, 2022). One of the most prevalent disorders is anxiety disorder, accounting for 3895 per 100.000 individuals (Javai et al., 2023). Furthermore, subthreshold anxiety disorders are similarly prevalent, with a 12% lifetime prevalence for subthreshold generalised anxiety disorder (Haller et al., 2014). Although an anxiety response is a natural human threat response, this is considered to become problematic when this response is exaggerated or expressed without a threat being present, and when this becomes persistent (Kennerly et al., 2017). Physical consequences from anxiety could be heart palpitations, fatigue, excessive sweating, trouble concentrating, nausea, or derealisation (Kennerley et al., 2017; WHO, 2023). Anxiety also has negative societal consequences, such as increased work absence leading to negative economic consequences (Kasper, 2006). Moreover, merely 27.6% of people struggling with an anxiety disorder are being treated (WHO, 2023). Thus, the prevalence and consequences of anxiety symptoms combined with the limited accessibility of treatment stress the need for effective and easily accessible treatment.

Smartphone-based mental health applications offer a novel way to provide easily accessible mental health treatment, as 6.5 billion individuals worldwide possess a smartphone (Linardon et al., 2024). There are different types of applications designed to treat anxiety symptoms, which are based on several therapeutic frameworks, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Mindfulness, or Positive Psychology (Linardon et al., 2024). Moreover, various meta-analyses reviewing the effects of smartphone-based mental health applications conclude that they could effectively reduce anxiety symptoms (Firth et al., 2017a), and they could effectively be implemented as either a stand-alone treatment to self-manage anxiety, or as adjunctive treatment to usual mental health care (Lecomte et al., 2020). The meta-analysis by Linardon et al. (2019) examined the efficacy of smartphone-based mental health applications for mental health problems. They indicate that these applications were not significantly different in their effects compared to face-to-face psychological interventions, suggesting that smartphone-based mental health applications are easily accessible treatment options to tackle the limited access to anxiety symptom treatment.

As mentioned above, the content of smartphone-based mental health applications is grounded in specific therapeutic frameworks. The most implemented framework is CBT, which has the largest effect size in treating generalised anxiety with smartphone-based mental health

applications (Linardon et al., 2024). A third-wave CBT treatment framework, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is also implemented in several smartphone-based mental health applications to treat anxiety symptoms. While traditional CBT focuses on challenging unhelpful thoughts and behaviours, the goal of ACT is to foster psychological flexibility, which entails being fully conscious and welcoming about the present moment and adjusting or maintaining behaviours according to one's values, despite challenges one might experience (Harley, 2015). This paper included the following ACT elements: cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed action (Hayes et al., 2006; Kraiss, 2025). Their detailed descriptions are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of Active Intervention Elements based on ACT

| Active Intervention Element | Element Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Cognitive defusion | Learning to observe thoughts without attaching meaning or judgment to them. |
| Values | Identifying what matters to an individual and using those values as a guide for behaviour and decision-making. |
| Acceptance | Embracing uncomfortable emotions, thoughts, and sensations without attempting to avoid or suppress them. |
| Present-moment focus | Being present in the current moment, rather than getting caught up in past regrets or future worries. |
| Committed action | Fostering value-driven actions despite the presence of obstacles or discomfort. |

Although the evidence base for ACT smartphone-based mental health applications is more limited compared to those based on traditional CBT, emerging evidence shows their significant efficacy in treating anxiety symptoms (Linardon et al., 2019). Initially, when comparing ACT with traditional CBT in a randomised controlled trial (RCT), improvement in anxiety symptoms was similar between both treatments (Arch et al., 2012). Additionally, smartphone-based mental health applications developed based on ACT showed promising results in increasing users' psychological flexibility and reducing anxiety-specific symptoms, such as PTSD symptoms (Lu et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023). Therefore, current evidence suggests that ACT is a promising therapeutic framework to include in smartphone-based mental health applications to treat anxiety symptoms.

The content of smartphone-based mental health applications consists of evidence-based psychological elements derived from therapeutic frameworks such as CBT or ACT to foster their users' mental health. In this thesis, these elements are defined as active intervention elements (Cohen et al., 2023). For instance, in the RCT by Zhao et al. (2023), the ACT smartphone-based mental health application was found to be more effective in anxiety symptom treatment compared to the mindfulness-based application and waitlist control. The ACT-based application included the active intervention elements cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed action (Hayes et al., 2006; Zhao et al., 2023). Therefore, identifying the active intervention elements embedded in smartphone-based mental health applications is essential for understanding which active intervention elements effectively treat anxiety symptoms.

Despite the recent systematic reviews that have investigated the overall effectiveness of smartphone-based mental health applications on anxiety symptom treatment, little research has been done on the association between specific active intervention elements and improvements in anxiety symptoms (Firth et al., 2017a; Linardon et al., 2024). For example, the recent meta-analysis by Linardon et al. (2024) assessed the overall effectiveness of CBT, mindfulness, and acceptance-based interventions, which limits the ability to draw fine-grained conclusions about the contributions of individual active intervention elements. This knowledge is important to determine, as in practice, many smartphone-based mental health applications consist of individual active intervention elements from several therapeutic frameworks. For instance, the application *Serene* included mindfulness techniques such as meditation and the traditional CBT active intervention element cognitive restructuring (Al-Refae et al., 2021), while *IntelliCare* included active intervention elements from both traditional CBT and Positive Psychology (Graham et al., 2020). These examples indicate that active intervention elements could occur individually rather than solely in combination with active intervention elements from their original therapeutic framework in smartphone-based mental health applications. Therefore, investigating the individual association between an active intervention element and anxiety symptoms would lead to more insights for researchers and application developers to design more effective smartphone-based mental health applications with an optimal combination of active intervention elements.

To understand how ACT-based active intervention elements relate to anxiety symptom treatment in smartphone-based mental health applications, as mentioned above, this thesis aimed to identify the individual associations between ACT-based active intervention elements

and anxiety symptoms in these applications. Accordingly, the research question of this meta-analysis was the following: What is the association between the ACT-based active intervention elements cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed action and improvements in anxiety symptoms in smartphone-based mental health applications?

Methods

This thesis was part of a larger systematic review project that focused on smartphone-based mental health applications for depression and anxiety, which was registered in PROSPERO on January 17th, 2025 (CRD42025630092). The research protocol of this project can be found on the OSF page (<https://osf.io/vwgty>). Furthermore, this research was prepared and conducted based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

Search Strategy

The electronic databases PubMed, PsycINFO (EBSCO), and Web of Science were used to search for papers that met the inclusion criteria. Papers selected from PsycINFO and PubMed were ensured to be psychological or biomedical sciences papers, while using Web of Science ensured the inclusion of relevant papers from other disciplines as well. Moreover, five meta-analyses about smartphone-based mental health applications were cross-checked to retrieve additional eligible papers (Linardon et al., 2020; Linardon et al., 2024; Versluis et al., 2016; Firth et al., 2017a; Firth et al., 2017b). Grey literatures were not included in this systematic review.

The included search strings were based on the meta-analysis by Linardon et al. (2024), consisting of terms referring to smartphones and mobile technologies, study design (RCTs), and outcomes. The search strings were adjusted according to the format of each database, and the search was done in titles, abstracts, and keywords. If applicable, the search string was also complemented with MeSH terms in PubMed (Kraiss, 2025).

Eligibility Criteria

Studies were included in the systematic review project if they: 1) were an RCT; 2) included a smartphone-based mental health application as the intervention; and 3) included a validated self-report instrument assessing depression or anxiety, such as PHQ-9 for depression and GAD-7 for anxiety. Additionally, trials that conducted an information session, an intake meeting, or one session of psychoeducation were also included. If a study included a digital

intervention as an adjunctive treatment next to usual care, it was also included. Secondary analyses were included only if their findings included data relevant for the meta-analysis that were not reported in the primary RCT study. Studies were excluded if they: 1) were not specifically targeting mental health (e.g. diet, or weight loss); 2) included a text-message only intervention; 3) were not peer-reviewed (e.g. preprints, or white papers); 4) were qualitative or a review; and 5) were conference proceedings, abstracts, dissertations, or study protocols.

Study Selection

Psychology master's students have completed the screening of papers with the screening tool Covidence, to screen titles and abstracts, remove duplicates, review full-texts, and keep an overview of all decisions made during the screening process. Two screeners individually screened titles and abstracts after reaching a Cohen's kappa interrater reliability of 0.72 based on 750 records. Three other students reviewed the full-texts. To ensure consistent eligibility decision-making among all screeners, research supervisors reviewed and discussed discrepancies in the first 10% of full-texts to calibrate their screening decisions. Further uncertainties were discussed with the supervisors until decision-making related to screening reached consensus. Additionally, screeners of titles and abstracts were instructed to include the paper for full-text review in case of uncertainty. Subsequently, full-text reviewers were instructed to apply the eligibility criteria systematically as a standardised and hierarchical checklist, to exclude papers based on the same order of the eligibility criteria. The reviewers marked uncertain full-texts for further discussion and resolution with their supervisor.

Data Extraction

Data extraction was conducted by four psychology master's students. First, the students conducted a pilot data extraction with three papers, one individually and two collaboratively. Their supervisors also extracted the papers to address inconsistencies in data extraction. After reviewing all extraction sheets in a meeting, the research team established a consistent approach to data extraction. The four students proceeded with data extraction individually and asked for the supervisor's feedback if necessary. They used a data extraction template in Microsoft Excel to extract comparable data from each paper (Kraiss, 2025). Extractors continuously received feedback from their supervisors on uncertainties during data extraction.

The extracted data items were divided into study, sample, and intervention characteristics, followed by the active intervention elements. Study characteristics included the study design, such as population description, primary outcome of the trial, and the validated

depression or anxiety measures (Kraiss, 2025). Sample characteristics included mean age and percentage of female participants, number of participants in the trial per arm (intervention and control arms), the dropout rate, and the mean and standard deviation scores for each outcome measure at baseline and follow-up assessments. Lastly, intervention characteristics entailed the type of intervention and control groups, the length of interventions, and specific features of the interventions, such as personalisation, or gamification, and integration of other technologies such as a wearable (Kraiss, 2025).

Element Coding

Next to extracting data from papers, the extractors also sent a survey via Qualtrics to the corresponding authors, for them to indicate the presence of specific active intervention elements in their intervention or control group (see Appendix B). This approach was necessary, as the research team anticipated that many authors would not specify the active intervention elements in their paper, and requesting data directly from the authors in a structured manner ensured a systematic and consistent data collection. If other data were missing in the paper and its supplementary material, such as the mean and/or standard deviation of an outcome measure, this was also requested in the e-mail. However, some authors did not reply or comply with the email request. This resulted in an additional step of another student from the research team reviewing the papers to extract the active intervention elements manually if their descriptions were clearly mentioned in the papers. If neither via e-mail nor manual extraction provided any results, the active intervention elements were coded as “Not available.”

The active intervention elements included in the survey were chosen based on validated treatment frameworks, trial protocols and reviews. The systematic review project that this thesis is part of included active intervention elements from several psychological frameworks, such as CBT, Mindfulness and Positive Psychology (Kraiss, 2025). Relevant for this thesis were the active intervention elements of ACT, namely cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed action (See Table 1).

Outcomes

The outcomes of the larger systematic review project were depression and anxiety, which were obtained through validated self-report instruments, such as Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) for depression and Generalised Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD-7) for anxiety. In this thesis, only the extracted outcome measures of anxiety were included.

Additionally, data on the outcomes were extracted from the papers at all follow-up assessments, even if they were not reported as the primary outcome in the study.

Statistical Analysis

All extracted data in separate extraction sheets and results from the survey were merged into one dataset. For the statistical analysis in this thesis, only data from papers were analysed that included anxiety as an outcome. Standardised mean differences were obtained by calculating the difference between baseline and follow-up mean scores, divided by the standard deviation at pre-test. This calculation was done for each outcome, timepoint, group, and trial, which resulted in time-varying within-group effect sizes that are nested within groups and trials. The standard error of the standardised mean differences was adjusted with an assumed pre-post correlation of $r = 0.5$. Additionally, the effect sizes were first calculated as Cohen's d and thereafter corrected to Hedge's g to reduce small sample bias (Harrer et al., 2021a; Lakens, 2013).

Subsequently, univariable mixed-effect meta-regression models were conducted using the `metafor` package in R, version 4.5.0, to investigate the association between active intervention elements of ACT and anxiety outcomes (The R Foundation, 2024; Viechtbauer, 2010). The models accounted for both fixed and random effects. Random effects were specified to account for variability in timepoints within groups, and in groups within trials (Harrer et al., 2021b). In each model, the active intervention elements functioned as the independent variables, while the self-reported anxiety outcome was the dependent variable. The active intervention elements were coded as "1" if present in the intervention or as "0" if absent. Separate univariable models were run for each active intervention element.

Lastly, sensitivity analyses were conducted to control for the following variables by adding them as covariates in the mixed-effect meta-regression models: time in weeks, age in years, gender in percentage of female participants, comorbidity, adjunctivity and guidance as dichotomous variables (0 = absent, 1 = present), and clinical level as a categorical variable with three categories (0 = non-clinical, 1 = sub-clinical, 2 = clinical). These analyses were necessary, as within-group effect sizes would be more highly at risk for confounding effects due to the non-reliance on randomised group effects (Harrer et al., 2021b). Three models were run for each active intervention element. The first model included only the active intervention element. The second model included time as a covariate, while in the third model, the variables age, gender, comorbidity, clinical level, adjunctivity, and guidance were added as covariates next to

time. Time was included as a separate covariate in the second model to control for the natural improvement of anxiety symptoms when receiving an intervention (Cuijpers et al., 2017). This would make observed associations between the active intervention element and anxiety symptoms more likely due to the active intervention element itself and not due to the passage of time.

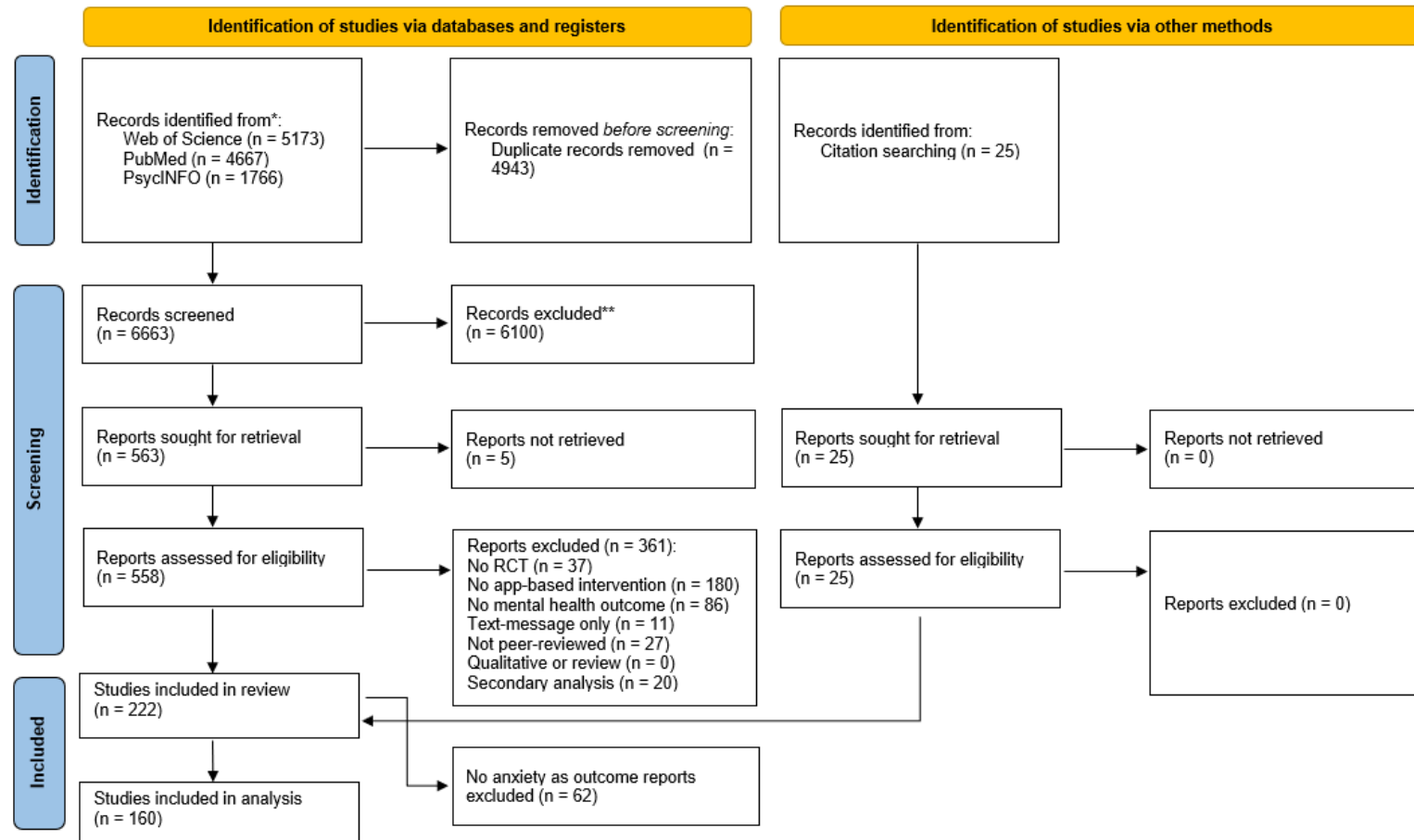
Results

Study Selection

A total of 11,606 papers were identified in the three electronic database searches. After removing duplicates ($n = 4,943$), title-abstract screening ($n = 6,663$) and full-text screening ($n = 563$), 558 papers were assessed based on the eligibility criteria, out of which 197 papers were included in the review. Additionally, through citation searching, 25 papers were included, which resulted in a total of 222 papers being included in the data extraction process (See Figure 1). Specifically for this thesis, as it included only anxiety as an outcome measure and not all papers included anxiety, 160 papers were included in the analysis, with 160 intervention and 159 control groups, and 621 timepoints. Further characteristics of all studies are outlined in Appendix C.

Study Characteristics

The included studies in the analysis were conducted between 2011 and 2024 and were from 28 different countries. The majority of papers were published in the United States ($n = 52$), followed by China ($n = 15$), and Australia ($n = 14$). The most frequent study design was an RCT ($n = 135$), 19 of them were a delayed waitlist RCT, 4 a cluster RCT, and two a crossover RCT. The anxiety outcome was mostly measured by GAD-7 ($n = 62$), followed by DASS-A ($n = 22$), and HADS-A ($n = 21$). The mean length of follow-up in these studies was 8.52 weeks ($SD = 8.20$).

Figure 1*Flow Chart Systematic Review*

*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

**If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

Source: Page MJ, et al. BMJ 2021;372: n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj. n71.

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Population Characteristics

The population of the included studies in the analyses consisted of 35,504 participants, with 18,344 in the intervention group and 17,160 in the control group. Participants' mean age was 33.12 years at pre-test ($SD = 11.64$), and 74.0% of them were female. The majority of the participants consisted of non-clinical individuals (43.5%), hence not having an anxiety disorder diagnosis (clinical) nor having elevated anxiety symptoms (sub-clinical). The remaining participants consisted of sub-clinical (39.8%), and clinical (16.8%) individuals. Moreover, participants mostly did not have a comorbid mental disorder (93.1%), and the average drop-out rate was 23.0%.

Intervention and Element Characteristics

The response rate to the survey about the active intervention elements, which was sent to the corresponding authors, was 45%. The most frequent intervention types were CBT ($n = 48$), followed by Multidisciplinary ($n = 42$), which relates to interventions based on several therapeutic frameworks, and Mindfulness ($n = 41$). Merely six ACT-based smartphone-based mental health applications were present in the study. Additionally, the majority of anxiety-focused interventions were not given as adjunctive treatment (91.6%), most of them did not include guidance from a healthcare professional (78.8%), and the average duration of these interventions was 3.91 weeks ($SD = 3.67$). In Table 3, it is visible how frequently the ACT-based active intervention elements were present in studies and groups. The elements present-moment focus and acceptance were the most frequently present.

Table 3

Active Intervention Elements Frequency Distribution

| Active Intervention Element | Number of Studies (%) | Number of Groups (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Cognitive defusion | 25 (15.6) | 27 (8.5) |
| Values | 19 (11.9) | 22 (6.9) |
| Acceptance | 43 (26.9) | 48 (15.0) |
| Present-moment focus | 79 (49.4) | 92 (28.8) |
| Committed action | 6 (3.8) | 7 (2.2) |

Lastly, based on Pearson correlation analysis (Harrer et al., 2021a), all five active intervention elements showed positive significant correlations (See Table 4). The strongest

correlation was observed between acceptance and present-moment focus ($r = 0.64, p < .001$), while the weakest correlation was between present-moment focus and committed action ($r = 0.26, p < .001$).

Table 4

Correlation Matrix Active Intervention Elements (Pearson Correlation)

| Active Intervention Element | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| 1. Cognitive defusion | 0.08 | 0.27 | — | | | | |
| 2. Values | 0.07 | 0.25 | 0.61*** | — | | | |
| 3. Acceptance | 0.15 | 0.36 | 0.49*** | 0.53*** | — | | |
| 4. Present-moment focus | 0.27 | 0.44 | 0.41*** | 0.44*** | 0.64*** | — | |
| 5. Committed action | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.55*** | 0.54*** | 0.35*** | 0.26*** | — |

Note. *** $p < .001$

Results of Syntheses

Table 5 shows the results of the univariable mixed-effect meta-regression models, investigating the association between all five ACT-based active intervention elements and anxiety symptoms. The analyses were conducted in three models: unadjusted (Model 1), adjusted for time as a covariate (Model 2), and adjusted for the covariates age, gender, comorbidity, clinical level, adjunctivity, guidance, and time (Model 3). In the unadjusted model, cognitive defusion ($g = -0.22, p < .01$), acceptance ($g = -0.14, p < .05$), and present-moment focus ($g = -0.21, p < .001$) had a small significant negative association with anxiety symptoms, while values ($g = -0.14, p > .05$), and committed action ($g = -0.14, p > .05$), had a non-significant small negative association. These associations did not substantially differ in strength or direction when adjusting Models 2 and 3 for the covariates (See Table 5).

Table 5*Results of Univariable Mixed-Effect Models*

| Active Intervention Element | Studies (<i>n</i>) | Groups (<i>n</i>) | Timepoints (<i>n</i>) | Hedges' <i>g</i> (<i>SE</i>) | 95% CI |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Cognitive defusion | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.22 (0.08) ** | [-0.37, -0.06] |
| Model 2 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.21 (0.08) ** | [-0.36, -0.05] |
| Model 3 | 128 | 282 | 582 | -0.18 (0.07) * | [-0.33, -0.04] |
| Values | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.14 (0.10) | [-0.33, 0.05] |
| Model 2 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.12 (0.09) | [-0.30, 0.07] |
| Model 3 | 128 | 282 | 582 | -0.14 (0.09) | [-0.32, 0.03] |
| Acceptance | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.14 (0.06) * | [-0.25, -0.03] |
| Model 2 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.14 (0.06) * | [-0.25, -0.03] |
| Model 3 | 128 | 282 | 582 | -0.13 (0.05) * | [-0.23, -0.02] |
| Present-moment focus | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 138 | 303 | 620 | -0.21 (0.05) *** | [-0.30, -0.13] |
| Model 2 | 138 | 303 | 620 | -0.21 (0.05) *** | [-0.30, -0.12] |
| Model 3 | 128 | 282 | 582 | -0.21 (0.05) *** | [-0.29, -0.12] |
| Committed action | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.14 (0.16) | [-0.46, 0.19] |
| Model 2 | 138 | 304 | 621 | -0.13 (0.16) | [-0.44, 0.19] |
| Model 3 | 128 | 282 | 582 | -0.08 (0.15) | [-0.37, 0.22] |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Model 1 is the unadjusted model, Model 2 includes only time as a covariate, and Model 3 includes age, gender, comorbidity, clinical level, adjunctivity, and guidance next to time as covariates.

Discussion

Interpretation and Review of Results

This meta-analysis investigated the association of five ACT-based active intervention elements with anxiety symptom improvement in smartphone-based mental health applications. Based on 160 studies and 35,504 participants, the results indicated that cognitive defusion, acceptance, and present-moment focus have a small, significant effect on anxiety symptom improvement, while values and committed action showed a non-significant, small effect. These results were also consistent when adjusting for various covariates.

The finding that cognitive defusion, acceptance and present-moment focus had significant effects on anxiety symptoms could be clarified by the theoretical perspective of ACT. To treat anxiety symptoms and achieve behavioural adaptation, ACT primarily targets reducing cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance by developing cognitive defusion, acceptance, and mindfulness (present-moment focus) strategies. These developments target individual's cognitions and emotions, while elements such as values and committed action focus more on the behavioural domain of ACT, encouraging value-based actions (Arch & Graskie, 2008; Hayes, 2016). This prior emphasis on cognitive defusion, acceptance, and present-moment focus aligns with anxiety symptom treatment, as the nature of anxiety is rooted in negative thinking patterns and heightened emotional responses (Kennerly et al., 2017). Therefore, these findings suggest the importance of ACT-based active intervention elements that address internal experiences in anxiety symptom treatment, which is consistent with the cognitive and emotional nature of anxiety (Twohig & Levin, 2017).

Building on these explanations, it is possible that implementing cognitive and emotional active intervention elements cognitive defusion, acceptance, and present-moment focus, serves as a prerequisite to effectively engage in value-based action, hence to implement the behavioural active intervention elements values and committed actions. This would further highlight the significance of these cognitive and emotional active intervention elements in treating anxiety symptoms, aligning with the results of the current meta-analysis. Therefore, to encourage a more user-centred design based on these findings, it could be most effective to first include cognitive and emotional ACT active intervention elements, followed by the behavioural elements such as values and committed action in designing smartphone-based mental health applications for anxiety symptoms (Mohr et al., 2017).

Although limited research is available to compare the current findings, in the RCT conducted by Lu et al. (2023), they conclude that anxiety symptoms could be improved by enhancing the ACT-elements cognitive defusion and values, and the overarching element psychological flexibility. Additionally, cognitive defusion and values functioned as mediators for treating anxiety symptoms in their study (Lu et al., 2023). On the one hand, these findings align with the significance of cognitive defusion in treating anxiety symptoms in the present study. On the other hand, it contradicts the insignificant effect of values on anxiety symptoms in the current study. A possible explanation is that value-based exercises were delivered in a guided way in the intervention of Lu et al. (2023), while the interventions included in the present meta-analysis were mostly unguided (78.8%). This guided delivery might have contributed to

the active intervention element values having a larger effect on anxiety symptom treatment than in other studies. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight that the findings of the present meta-analysis were based on a large number of studies, resulting in more robust evidence for its current findings.

Additionally, although the current study's findings indicate the importance of cognitive defusion, acceptance, and present-moment focus, it is crucial to acknowledge that they were primarily included in interventions based on frameworks that overlap with the concept of ACT, namely traditional CBT and Mindfulness. Since ACT is considered a third-wave CBT, and the ACT element present-moment focus is closely similar to Mindfulness principles (Hayes et al., 2006; Twohig & Levin, 2017), including ACT-based active intervention elements in traditional CBT- or Mindfulness-based interventions might make it challenging to establish whether the observed effects on anxiety symptoms are specifically related to ACT-based active intervention elements. To discover the specific effects of ACT-based active intervention elements, future research could investigate whether these elements function as mediators for anxiety symptom treatment. Mediation analyses would help establish whether improvements in anxiety symptoms are caused by changes in the ACT-based active intervention elements, which would provide stronger evidence for their effectiveness and inform their application in the design of smartphone-based mental health applications (Macri & Rogge, 2024).

Furthermore, the fact that all included ACT-based active intervention elements had similar small effects on anxiety symptom improvement could be partly explained by their significant moderate intercorrelations (see Table 4). These intercorrelations indicate the moderate co-occurrence of these elements in smartphone-based mental health applications. Consequently, the univariable mixed-effect models conducted in this meta-analysis may not have assessed the individual effects of the active intervention elements on anxiety symptoms, but possibly their collective effect. This suggests the measurement of an underlying latent factor of ACT, possibly psychological flexibility (Hayes et al., 2006; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). This possibility reflects the interrelated structure of ACT's core elements, which was further outlined in the meta-analysis by Macri and Rogge (2024). Their findings suggest that the interrelated ACT-elements function as mediators for anxiety treatment, further confirming the collective mechanism of ACT-elements. However, as the intercorrelations were merely moderate, it would indicate that these elements did not always co-occur, highlighting the need for further research on the individual contribution of the ACT-based active intervention elements on anxiety symptom improvement.

To disentangle the individual effects of these ACT-based active intervention elements on anxiety symptoms, future research could examine these with micro-randomised trials that include ecological momentary assessments (Pham et al., 2016; Smith & Juarascio, 2019; Thomas et al., 2023). This method would help in determining the real-time effects of specific active intervention elements on anxiety symptoms. For instance, the ACT-specific modules in the smartphone-based mental health application of Lu et al. (2023) could be tested separately, resulting in more precise data on how and in what context the ACT-based active intervention elements contribute to anxiety symptom improvement. Ultimately, insights from micro-randomised trials would support the development of personalised and context-specific smartphone-based mental health applications.

Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of this study is the systematic data extraction process, which consisted of contacting authors and receiving the information about active intervention elements and possible missing data from them. This increased the accuracy and completeness of the data used in the meta-analysis, as oftentimes the active intervention elements are not described in great detail in the studies (De Bruin et al., 2020). Moreover, to the researcher's knowledge, this study was the first meta-analysis that investigated the association of smartphone-based mental health applications at the level of active intervention elements, providing new insights into the specific associations of ACT-based active intervention elements to treat anxiety symptoms within smartphone-based mental health applications.

Despite the abovementioned strengths of this study, the limitations should also be considered. First, a common assumption of pre-post correlation $r = 0.50$ was made when calculating standardised mean differences. On the one hand, this assumption was supported by literature, but on the other hand, it could also result in estimation bias in the analysed models (Hamman et al., 2018). Second, the probability of having publication bias should also be considered, as unpublished studies with non-significant results would be underrepresented in the databases from which the articles were retrieved, possibly resulting in an overestimation of effect sizes (Walker et al., 2008). Third, because the response rate of corresponding authors was merely 45%, a member of the research team extracted active intervention elements manually from the rest of the papers. This might have increased the subjectivity in extracting the active intervention elements and possibly underrepresented them, particularly because most papers did not include clear descriptions of active intervention elements.

Implications and Conclusion

This meta-analysis ensured a more thorough understanding of how individual ACT-based active intervention elements cognitive defusion, values, acceptance, present-moment focus, and committed actions are associated with anxiety symptoms in smartphone-based mental health applications. The findings revealed that cognitive defusion, acceptance, and present-moment focus had a small but significant effect on anxiety symptom improvement, while values and committed action did not show significant effects. These findings set the first steps in underlining the relevance of ACT-based active intervention elements that target cognitive and emotional experiences related to anxiety symptoms in the design of smartphone-based mental health applications, aligning with the cognitive and affective nature of anxiety. Proceeding research on digital interventions at the level of active intervention elements could further enable the development of more effective smartphone-based mental health applications by identifying and incorporating active intervention elements that target the needs of its users. Eventually, the availability of effective smartphone-based mental health applications would increase access to mental health care for individuals experiencing anxiety symptoms and potentially reduce the overall prevalence of anxiety.

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Appendix A

AI-Statement

During the preparation of this work the author used ChatGPT in order to brainstorm, and receive feedback on the structure or formulation of the text. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

Appendix B

Survey Active Intervention Elements

Meta-analysis clinician questions V2

Information and Consent Dear researcher, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. As part of a systematic review project, we are currently collecting information on intervention elements in mobile mental health interventions. In this survey, you will be asked about which intervention elements were used in each arm of your trial. This questionnaire will take you between 5 to 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate your effort and contribution. If you would like to take part in this survey, please indicate so via the button below. You can withdraw from this survey at any time. For further information, you can contact the researchers: Jannis Kraiss (j.t.kraiss@utwente.nl), Jorge Piano Simoes (j.pianosimoes@utwente.nl), and Felix Fiß (f.m.fis@utwente.nl)

Consent, please indicate whether you would like to participate in this survey.

- ☐ Yes, I would like to participate. (1)
- ☐ No, I do not want to participate. (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Please indicate whether you would like to participate in this survey.
= No, I do not want to participate.*

What is your personal identifier code? You can find this information in the invitation email we sent to you.

How many arms did your trial have? *Note:* The term "arm" refers to the number of groups or conditions in your trial. *Example:* A trial in which participants were randomized to receive either a mobile mental health CBT intervention or be placed on a waiting list has 2 arms.

- ☐ 2 (1)
- ☐ 3 (2)
- ☐ 4 (3)
- ☐ 5 (4)
- ☐ 6 (5)

Could you please label the **first** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU,). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Could you please label the **second** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU,). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Could you please label the **third** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU...). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Could you please label the **fourth** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU,...). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Could you please label the **fifth** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU,...). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Could you please label the **sixth** arm of your study? This can be the specific name of the smartphone app evaluated in this trial or a general label (e.g., CBT, mindfulness, resilience app, waitlist control, TAU,...). Please ensure that the label you provide clearly distinguishes this arm from other arms within the trial.

Indicating intervention elements (*The following questions were asked for each arm in the study*).

The following questions concern the arm "\${arm1/ChoiceTextEntryValue}". Please indicate for each intervention element in the table whether it was included in the arm "\${arm1/ChoiceTextEntryValue}" by selecting "yes". If the arm "\${arm1/ChoiceTextEntryValue}" did not include any intervention elements because it was, for example, a waitlist condition, then you can leave the default response "no" for all elements and proceed.

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Functional analysis A technique in which antecedents (triggers, causes) and consequences of | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

behavior are examined to identify the factors that maintain a problematic behavior. (1)

Exposure in vivo

Confronting stimuli that are feared without showing avoidance behavior. (2)

Imagery-based exposure

Repeatedly visualizing feared or distressing situations to reduce emotional reactivity and maladaptive avoidance behaviors. (3)

Interoceptive exposure

Intentionally eliciting and confronting physical sensations associated with anxiety to decrease fear of those sensations. (4)

Desensitization

A gradual process of exposing individuals to feared stimuli or situations, often combined with relaxation techniques. (5)

Problem solving

A structured approach to defining a problem, finding potential solutions, evaluating options, and implementing the best solution. (6)

Goal-setting

Defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives to guide behavior and track progress. (7)

Self-monitoring

Systematically recording and tracking one's behaviors, thoughts, or emotions, for example through daily diaries or mood charts. (8)



Journaling

Writing down thoughts, emotions, and experiences to identify. May happen in a reflective or informal way. (34)

**Cognitive restructuring**

Identifying and challenging irrational or maladaptive thoughts and replacing them with more constructive ones. (9)

**Thought record**

A cognitive-behavioral tool that helps individuals identify, evaluate, and reframe negative or distorted thoughts. (10)

**Self-reinforcement**

Rewarding oneself for achieving specific goals or exhibiting desired behaviors. (11)

**Social skills**

Teaching and practicing strategies to improve interpersonal interactions, relationships, and communication. Assertiveness is a central part of this element. (12)

**Activity scheduling**

Planning and scheduling activities that are likely to be enjoyable, meaningful or provide a sense of accomplishment. (13)

**Behavior experiment**

Testing out new behaviors or challenging beliefs in real-world situations. (14)

**Self-compassion**

Fostering self-kindness in the face of difficulties or personal shortcomings. (15)



Mental imagery

Visualization techniques to create mental pictures of positive outcomes, desired behaviors, relaxing scenes, or safe spaces. (16)

**Worry exposure**

A specific variant of imaginal exposure, in which cognitive avoidance is addressed by being imaginably exposed to the most feared outcome for a longer period. (17)

**Relaxation**

A method to decrease physiological and psychological tension through techniques like deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation. (18)

**Behavioral activation**

Encouraging individuals to engage in meaningful and enjoyable activities. (19)

**Psychoeducation**

The provision of information and resources to help individuals understand their mental health condition, its symptoms, and effective coping strategies. (20)

**Graded tasks**

A strategy to break down complex or overwhelming goals into smaller, manageable steps. (21)

**Stimulus control**

A behavioral intervention that strengthens associations between specific cues and desired behaviors while weakening associations with interfering behaviors or emotions. (22)

**Externally-focused attention**

Direct attention to external stimuli in an adaptive way, allowing individuals to effectively engage with their environment and manage anxiety. (23)

Cognitive defusion

Learning to observe thoughts without attaching meaning or judgment to them. (24)

Values

Identifying what matters to an individual and using those values as a guide for behavior and decision-making. (25)

Acceptance

Embracing uncomfortable emotions, thoughts, and sensations without attempting to avoid or suppress them. (26)

Present-moment focus

Being present in the current moment, rather than getting caught up in past regrets or future worries. (27)

Committed action

Fostering value-driven actions despite the presence of obstacles or discomfort. (28)

Mindfulness

Paying non-judgmental attention to the present moment, observing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations with openness and acceptance. (29)

Gratitude

Recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life. (30)

Savoring

Fully enjoying and



prolonging positive
experiences. (31)

Optimism

Fostering a positive and
hopeful outlook towards life
and the future. (32)

Personal strengths

Identifying and using one's
talents and abilities. (33)



You have reached the end of this questionnaire. Thank you for providing additional information about your trial! If you are interested in receiving the results of our review, feel free to send an email to: meta-analysis-mmh@utwente.nl.

Appendix C

Full Overview of Study Characteristics

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Outcome measures | |
|----------------------|---------------|---|---------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | | | | | Depression | Anxiety |
| Abbasalizadeh (2024) | Iran | ICU nurses with at least 6 months experience working in an ICU | 29.58 (4.68) | 28.33 | Resilience | Psychoeducation | General mental health | mHealth (30) | Control Group (30) | 20 | - | DASS-21 |
| Abbott (2023) | United States | Adults with elevated anxiety symptoms | 24 (9) | 80.4 | Headspace | Mindfulness | Anxiety and worry | Headspace (97) | Waitlist (66) | 4, 8 | - | BAI |
| Aboody (2020) | Israel | Female college students who speak Hebrew and have an active social media account | 23.51 (1.45) | 100 | GGBI | CBT | General mental health | GGBI (48) | Waitlist (42) | 2, 4 | DASS-D | - |
| Abramovitch (2024) | United States | Undergraduate adult students at a large public university in the southeastern United States | 18.78 (0.97) | 85.70 | GG-OCD app | CBT | Perfectionism | GG-OCD app (35) | Waitlist (35) | 2, 4 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Ahorsu (2020) | Iran | Individuals diagnosed with epilepsy and having moderate to severe insomnia | 38.18 | 58.44 | CBT-I APP | CBT | Insomnia | CBT-I APP (160) | Information resources (160) | 4, 12, 24 | HADS-D | HADS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Akechi (2023) | United States | Breast cancer patients between 20-49 years | 43.95 (4.53) | 100.0 | PST and BA app | CBT | Concern about recurrence disease | PST and BA app (223) | Usual care (224) | 8, 24 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Akin-Sari_a (2022) | Turkey | Adults with high COVID-19 distress | 23.48 (7.8) | 79.6 | iApp | Cognitive training | COVID-19 distress | iApp (25) | dApp(22) | 1.71, 3.43 | PHQ9 | - |
| Akin-Sari_b (2022) | Turkey | Adults (aged between 18 and 65) speaking Turkish as their first language with a subclinical level of OCD | 25.27 (9.67) | 67 | iApp (immediate-app use) | Approach avoidance modification n training | OCD | iApp (28) | Waitlist (27) | 2, 3.5 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Al-Refae (2021) | Canada | Residents of Canada aged 18 and above | 25.24 (8.74) | 79 | Serene app | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Serene app (127) | Waitlist (118) | 4 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Anastasiadou (2020) | Spain | Patients older than 12 years, diagnosed with an eating disorder | 18.06 (6.04) | 91.4 | TCApp | CBT | General mental health | F2F therapy and TCApp (53) | F2F therapy (53) | 12 | BDI-2 | STAI |
| Araya (2021) | United Kingdom/Peru | Adults from Brazil with clinically significant depressive symptoms who were being treated for hypertension and/or diabetes | 56 | 86.5 | Digital intervention (CONEMO) | Behavioral activation | Depression | Digital intervention (CONEMO) (440) | (Enhanced) usual care (440) | 12, 24 | PHQ9 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Araya (2021) | United Kingdom/Peru | Adults from Peru with clinically significant depressive symptoms who were being treated for hypertension and/or diabetes | 59.7 | 81.5 | Digital intervention (CONEMO) | Behavioral activation | Depression | Digital intervention (CONEMO) (217) | Enhanced usual care (215) | 12, 24 | PHQ9 | - |
| Arean (2016) | United States | Adults with mild to moderate depression | 33.9 (11.84) | 79.9 | Cognitive control app (Project: EVO) | Cognitive training | Depression | Cognitive control app (Project: EVO) (209) | Information resources (206) | 4, 8, 12 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| | | | | | Problem-solving therapy app (iPST) | Problem-solving therapy | | Problem-solving therapy app (iPST) (211) | | | | |
| Bakker (2018) | Australia | NR | 34.20 (12.10) | 80 | MoodKit, MoodPrism, MoodMission | CBT | General mental health | MoodKit (56), MoodPrism (56), MoodMission (50) | Waitlist (64) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Barroso (2020) | United States | Adults with H and chronic fatigue | 51.2 (9.9) | 63.3 | CBSM | CBT | Fatigue | CBSM (15) | Placebo App (15) | 5, 10, 22 | BDI-2 | STAI-S STAI-T |
| Bear (2022) | New Zealand | Mothers of children between 0-1 months | 31.16 (4.83) | 100.0 | Smiling Mind | Mindfulness | Postnatal distress | Smiling Mind (49) | Placebo app (50) | 8, 12 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Bell (2023) | Australia | Young people (aged between 16 and 25) from the general population who were experiencing | 20.60 (2.7) | 62 | Mello app | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Mello app (29) | No intervention (26) | 3, 6 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Ben-Zeev (2018) | United States | Adults with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder or major depressive disorder | 49 (9.95) | 39 | FOCUS | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | FOCUS (82) | Group treatment WRAP (81) | 12, 24 | BDI-2 | - |
| Ben-Zeev (2021) | United States | Adults with bipolar disorder, MDD, schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder | 37.92 (11.61) | 83.8 | CORE App | Nonspecific | General mental health | CORE App (154) | Waitlist and delayed CORE App (161) | 4, 8 | BDI-2 | GAD7 |
| Bhayee (2016) | Canada | People with "healthy" levels of stress | 32.65 (9.2) | 46.2 | N-tsMT | Mindfulness | General mental health | N-tsMT (20) | Math training (23) | 6 | BSI-D | BSI-A |
| Birney (2016) | United States | Working adults with mild-to-moderate depression | 40.65 (11.39) | 76.7 | MoodHacker | Multidisciplinary | Depression | MoodHacker (150) | Bibliotherapy (150) | 6, 10 | PHQ9 | - |
| Birrell (2023) | Australia | Year 9 students visiting Australian secondary schools | 15.2 (0.4) | 43.4 | Mind your Mate Intervention | Nonspecific | General mental health | Mind your Mate Intervention (88) | Education program (78) | 24, 48 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Boettcher (2018) | Sweden | Patients diagnosed with SAD | 35.40 (12.25) | 77.00 | Challenger App | CBT Self-Help and Exposure | Social Anxiety | Bibliotherapy + Challenger App (70) and Bibilotherp | Waitlist (69) | 3, 7, 10, 14, 16, 52 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) y + delayed App (70) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Borjalilu (2019) | Iran | University students with elevated levels of stress | 24.29 (3.21) | 71.00 | Aramgar | Minfulness | Stress | Aramgar (20); Face-to-face therapy + Aramgar (28) | Usual care (20) | 6 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Bostock (2016) | United Kingdom | Employees from a Fortune 500 company | 33.6 (6.01) | 33.30 | Sleepio | CBT | Insomnia | Sleepio (135) | Waitlist (135) | 8, 22 | PHQ2 | GAD2 |
| Bostock (2019) | United Kingdom | Employees at two UK companies | 35.50 (7.70) | 60 | Headspace | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (128) | Waitlist (110) | 8 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Brouwer (2019) | The Netherlands | Adults with recurrent MDD | 46.0 (10.8) | 74.6 | mCT | Cognitive training | Depression | mCT (132) | Usual care (132) | 12, 96 | HRSD-17 | - |
| Bruehlman-Senecal (2020) | United States | Incoming first-year students (aged 18-25 years) at a large public university in the US not living with their parents | 18.68 (0.35) | 59.30 | NodApp | Multidisciplinary | Loneliness | NodApp (100) | Waitlist (121) | 4, 8 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Bruhns (2021) | Germany | Adult students at a German university | 22.98 (3.36) | 89 | MCT & More | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | MCT & More (208) | Waitlist (215) | 4 | PHQ9 | - |
| Bruhns (2023) | Germany | Individuals with a diagnosis of depression (ICD-10 and DSM-5) | 39.04 (12.90) | 55.40 | MCT & More | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | MCT & More + info video (47) and MCT & More + no info video (32) | Waitlist (80) | 4 | PHQ9 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|---------------|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Bröcker (2024) | South Africa | Trauma-exposed adults with PTSD, scoring ≥ 23 on the CAPS-5 | 37.40 (11.35) | 88.71 | PTSD Couch app (counsellor-supported) | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | PTSD-Couch – CS (32) | Usual care (30) | 4, 8, 12 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |
| Børøsund (2020) | Norway | Cancer patients | 52 (11.2) | 72.00 | StressProff en | CBT | Stress | Stressproffen (87) | Usual care (88) | 12 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Børøsund (2022) | Norway | Adult Cancer survivors 1 year or less after their treatment | 52 (11.3) | 82 | Stressproffen | Multidisciplinary | Stress | Stressproffen (87) | Usual Care (88) | 24, 48 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Cardi (2022) | Italy | Adults with episodes of binge eating | - | 95.7 | Food ICT Group | Nonspecific | Eating disorder | Food ICT Group (44) | Waitlist (50) | 2, 3 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Carl (2020) | United Kingdom | Individuals diagnosed with GAD, aged ≥ 18 | 30.90 (10.70) | 68.36 | Daylight | CBT | General mental health | Daylight (128) | Waitlist group (128) | 3, 6, 10 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Carli (2022) | Italy and Portugal | Cancer patients | 59.40 (10.68) | 44.24 | NEVERMI ND | Multidisciplinary | Depression | NEVERMI ND (213) | Usual care (212) | 12, 24 | BDI-2 | - |
| Catuara-Solarz (2022) | Spain | Adults working in the United Kingdom | 40 (6.10) | 54 | Foundations app | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Foundations app (95) | Waitlist (95) | 2, 4 | - | GAD7 |
| Cerea (2020) | Italy | University students scoring above the clinical threshold on ROCD symptoms, aged 20-24 years | 22.00 (1.32) | 76.00 | GGRO | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | immediate-use App/iApp group (25) | delayed-use App/dApp group (25) | 2, 4 | DASS-21 | DASS-21, SIAS |
| Cerea (2022) | Italy | Italian women at high-risk of developing Body Image | 22.82 (2.11) | 100.00 | GGBI | CBT | General mental health | immediate-use App/iApp group (47) | delayed-use App/dApp group (48) | 2, 4 | - | SIAS |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------|---|--|------------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Chan (2021) | China | Disorders (BIDs), aged 20–30 years Individuals with comorbid depression and insomnia, who scored ≥ 10 on the PHQ and ≥ 8 on the ISI | 27.30 (7.20) | 73.00 | CBT-I Intervention | CBT | General mental health | CBT-I Intervention (167) | Waitlist Group (153) | 6, 12 | CESD | HADS-A |
| Comtois (2022) | United States | People who were unemployed because of COVID-19 or were COVID-19–designated essential workers | 31.1 (9.5) | 56.1 | COVID Coach | Nonspecific | General mental health | COVID Coach (212) | Mood monitoring (Beautiful mood) (213) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| | | | | | Calm | Mindfulness | | Calm (204) | | | | |
| | | | | | 7 Cups of Tea | Positive Psychology | | 7 Cups of Tea (209) | | | | |
| Cox (2019) | United States | Intensive Care Unit patients | 49.50 (15.10) | 44.00 | mMT, tMT | Mindfulness | General mental health | mMT (31), tMT (31) | Education program (18) | 4, 12 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Cox (2023) | United States | Patients with a cardiopulmonary diagnosis | 49.30 (13.20) | 60.00 | Blueprint with therapist, Blueprint without therapist | CBT | General mental health | Blueprint with therapist (16), Blueprint without therapist (14) | Usual Care Control (15) | 4, 12 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Dahne (2019) | United States | Latinx adults with limited English proficiency | 36.05 (sd) | 66.7 | Aptivate | CBT | Depression | Aptivate (22) | iCouch (9) Usual Care (11) | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 | BDI-2 | - |
| Dahne (2019) | United States | Adults with depressive symptoms | 43.79 (sd) | 84.60 | Moodivate | CBT | Depression | Moodivate (24) | MoodKit (19) Usual Care (9) | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 | BDI-2 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Outcome measures | |
|----------------------|----------------|---|---------------|------------|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | | | | | Depression | Anxiety |
| Danieli (2022) | Italy | Active workers aged over 55 years experiencing stress symptoms and mild-to-moderate anxiety | 55.58 (5.08) | 78 | SMT-CBT, SMT-CBT + PHA, PHA only | CBT, CBT, Chatbot | General mental health | SMT-CBT (16), SMT-CBT + PHA (16), PHA only (14) | Waitlist (14) | 4, 8, 20 | SCL-D, PHQ8 | SCL-A, GAD7 |
| De Kock (2022) | United Kingdom | Health and social care staff working in NHS | - | 88.2 | My Possible Self (MPS) | Multidisciplinary | Psychological well-being | NHS Highland Staff Wellbeing Project (NHSWBP) (51) | Waitlist (58) | 2, 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Deady (2022) | Australia | Working Australians in male-dominated industries | 40.26 (10.63) | 25.8 | HeadGear | Multidisciplinary | Depression | HeadGear (1128) | Mood monitoring (1143) | 5, 12, 52 | PHQ9 | - |
| Deady (2023) | Australia | Adult Australian residents who are employed and feel stressed | 42.96 (10.07) | 71 | Anchored | Multidisciplinary | Depression | Anchored (1056) | Psychoeducation (1056) | 4, 12, 24 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Dennis-Tiwary (2018) | United States | Women in their 19th–29th week of pregnancy | 32.97 (5.52) | 100 | ABMT | Attentional bias modification training | General mental health | ABMT (15) | Placebo app (14) | 4 | DASS-D | DASS-A, HAM-A |
| Depp (2015) | United States | Outpatients diagnosed with either Bipolar Disorder 1 or 2 | 47.50 (12.80) | 58.50 | PRISM | Psychoeducation | Mood symptoms | PRISM (41) | Mood monitoring (41) | 6, 12, 24 | MADRS | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Outcome measures | |
|-----------------|---------------|---|---------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | | | | | Depression | Anxiety |
| DiNardo (2022) | United States | Veterans with type 1 or 2 diabetes | 60.7 (10.6) | 8.3 | Mind-STRIDE | Mindfulness | General mental health | Mind-STRIDE and diabetes self-management education and support (65) | Diabetes self-management education and support (67) | 12, 24 | PHQ8 | - |
| Dingwall (2021) | Australia | Indigenous Australians undergoing hemodialysis | 55 (9.4) | 71.8 | ALMhi Stay Strong App | Nonspecific | General mental health | ALMhi Stay Strong App (62) | Hep B Story App and delayed ALMhi Stay Strong App (61) | 12, 24 | PHQ9 | - |
| Ditton (2023) | Australia | Medical students | 24 (5.48) | 61.5 | ACT app | ACT | General mental health | ACT app (individualised) (37) | Usual care and delayed ALMhi Stay Strong App (33) ACT app (nonindividualised) (36) | 5 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Domar (2023) | United States | Men who were each part of a couple experiencing infertility | 33.70 (4.5) | 0 | FertiStrong | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | FertiStrong (20) | Waitlist (35) No intervention (19) | 4 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Donker (2019) | Netherlands | Dutch adults from the general population with acrophobia symptoms | 41.33 | 66.84 | OPhobia VR | CBT | Acrophobia | OPhobia (96) | Waitlist (97) | 3, 12 | PHQ9 | BAI |
| Donker (2022) | Netherlands | People from Dutch general population with | 42 (12.15) | 83 | VR-CBT-App | CBT | General mental health | VR-CBT-App (77) | Waitlist (77) | 6 (12, 24) | PHQ9 | BAI |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Outcome measures | |
|------------------------|----------------|--|---------------|------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | | | | | Depression | Anxiety |
| Economides (2022) | United Kingdom | aviophobia symptoms Working adults in the United Kingdom with an active account on Prolific | 44.60 (14.3) | 52 | Unmind CBT and ACT-based intervention for stress; Unmind CBT-based intervention for worry and anxiety; Unmind CBT and ACT-based intervention for resilience | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Unmind CBT and ACT-based intervention for stress (94); Unmind CBT-based intervention for worry and anxiety (97); Unmind CBT and ACT-based intervention for resilience (98) | Waitlist (94) | 2, 6 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| El-Jawahri (2023) | United States | Patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) | 60.12 | 36.7 | DreamLand | Nonspecific | General mental health | DreamLand (29) | Usual care (31) | 3,6 | HADS-D, PHQ9 | HADS-A |
| Enock (2014) | United States | Individuals aged between from 18 and 68 | 34.8 (11.4) | 52.2 | CBM-A | CBM | Social anxiety | CBM-A (206) | Control training (CON) (187) | 4, 8, 16 | DASS-D | - |
| Everitt (2021) | Australia | General population, aged 18-69 | 32.97 (10.92) | 85.50 | MoodTracker, ImproveYourMood, ImproveYourMood+ | Mood monitoring, Mindfulness | General mental health | MoodTracker (58), ImproveYourMood (62), ImproveYourMood+ (60) | Waitlist (36) Waitlist group (55) | 3, 7 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Faurholt-Jepsen (2021) | Denmark | Patients with bipolar disorder discharged | 42.69 (13.48) | 49.9 | Monseo System | CBT | General mental health | Monseo System (47) | Usual care (51) | 12, 24 | HDRS-17, BDI, HDRS-6 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Fiol-De Roque (2021) | Spain | from hospitalization Adult health care workers who provided health care to patients with COVID-19 | 41.37 (10.4) | 83.20 | PsyCovid App | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | PsyCovid App (248) | Information resources (234) | 2 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Fish (2019) | United States | University students | 21.00 | 96.00 | Headspace Mindfulness | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace Mindfulness (47) | Usual care (44) | 2 | PHQ9 | - |
| Fitzpatrick (2017) | United States | Students who self-identify as having symptoms of anxiety and depression | 22.20 (2.33) | 67.00 | Woebot | CBT | General mental health | Woebot (34) | Information resources (36) | 2 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Flett (2019) | New Zealand | Undergraduate university students | 20.08 (2.8) | 70 | Headspace, Smiling Mind | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (72), Smiling Mind (63) | Placebo app (75) | 1.5, 4 | CESD | HADS-A |
| Forman Hoffman (2024) | United States | Adults living in Colorado | 37 (12.79) | 95 | Meru Health Program | Multidisciplinary | Depression | Meru Health Program (54) | Waitlist (46) | 6, 12 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Fuller-Tyszkiewicz (2020) | Australia | Australians (adult) supporting a friend or relative with a physical or mental condition | 39.64 (6.13) | 95 | StressLess | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | StressLess (73) | Active control: self-monitoring (110) | 5, 12 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Gao (2022) | United States | Individuals with elevated worry (PSWQ > 40) and | 41.41 | 80.28 | MT + TAU | Mindfulness | General mental health | MT + TAU (40) | Usual care (40) | 8, 16 | - | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Gao (2024) | China | insomnia symptoms University student athletes | 19.4 (1.5) | 62.8 | WeChat | Mindfulness | Anxiety | WeChat (150) | Education program (138) | 6 | - | Dispositional Anxiety |
| Ghaemi (2022) | United States | Participants with moderate acute psychotic exacerbation in schizophrenia | 44.7 (11.29) | 34.5 | PEAR-004 | Nonspecific | General mental health | PEAR-004 (56) | Placebo app (56) | 4, 8, 12, 16 | BDI-2 | - |
| Ghanbari (2021) | Iran | Women with breast cancer | 46.45 (9.29) | 100 | BCSzone | Nonspecific | General mental health | BCSzone (41) | Waitlist (41) | 5 | - | STAI |
| Gnanaprasamsam (2023) | England | NHS-affiliated members of staff | 44.3 | 84.3 | Foundations App | Multidisciplinary | Psychiatric morbidity | Foundations App (502) | Usual care (500) | 4, 8 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Goldberg (2020) | United States | Adults with little meditation retreat experience | 41.74 (12.52) | 84.5 | HMP | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Awareness & Connection from HMP (121); Awareness & Insight from HMP (107) | Waitlist (115) | 4, 8 | PROMIS-D | PROMIS-A |
| Graham (2020) | United States | Adults with elevated depression or anxiety levels | 42.3 (13.8) | 82 | IntelliCare | Nonspecific | General mental health | IntelliCare (74) | Usual care (72) | 4, 8, 12, 16 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Greer (2019) | United States | Incurable cancer patients with clinically significant anxiety symptoms | 56.45 (11.30) | 73.8 | CBT mobile app | CBT | Anxiety | CBTmobile app (72) | Education program (73) | 12 | HADS-D, PHQ9 | HAM-A, HADS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | | | | Outcome measures | | |
|----------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Grubbs (2022) | United States | Veterans with anxiety or depression diagnosis | 46 | 74.6 | Moving Forward | Problem solving therapy (PST) | General mental health | PST+ Moving Forward (33) | PST + Workbook (33) | 6, 12 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Guo (2020) | China | Adults in China with HIV from an outpatient clinic | 28.30 (5.8) | 7.70 | Run4Love | Multidisciplinary | Depression | Run4Love (150) | Usual care (150) | 12, 24, 39 | CESD, PHQ9 | - |
| Ha (2020) | South Korea | Individuals with elevated worry (PSWQ > 40) and insomnia symptoms | 21.44 | 70.21 | Spring | CBT | General mental health | Spring (34) | Waitlist group (34) | 2 | BDI-2 | STAI-T |
| Ham (2019) | South Korea | Cancer patients who scored ≥ 16 on the BDI-2 and/or ≥ 39 on the STAI | 44.17 | 85.71 | HARU Today | CBT | General mental health | HARU Today (21), Attention Group (21) | Waitlist Group(21) | 10 | BDI-2 | STAI-S, STAI-T |
| Hanssen (2020) | Netherlands | Individuals with a schizophrenia spectrum disorders (SZ) diagnosis | 39.00 | 36.00 | Smart App: Personalized Feedback | Nonspecific | General mental health | Smart App: Personalized Feedback (27) | Smart App: No Feedback (23) | 3 | CAPE | - |
| He (2022) | China | College students with depressive symptoms | 18.78 (0.88) | 37.2 | Chatbot XiaoE | CBT | Depression | Chatbot XiaoE (49) | Bibliotherapy (49) | 1, 4 | PHQ-9 | - |
| Heim (2021) | Switzerland | Lebanese and displaced people living in Lebanon affected by adversity | 27.3 (7.9) | 67.4 | Step-By-Step Intervention | CBT | General mental health | Step-By-Step Intervention (67) | Placebo App (50) Information resources (71) | 8, 20 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|----------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Hensler (2022) | Sweden | Adults with exposure to potentially traumatic event in the past 2 years, and mild to severe posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 total score ≥ 10) | 42.78 (10.90) | 91.60 | PTSD Coach | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | PTSD Coach (89) | Waitlist Group (90) | 12 | PHQ9 | - |
| Hilt (2023) | United States | Adolescents in the United States reporting moderate-to-high levels of rumination | 13.78 (0.89) | 59 | Mindfulness + Mood monitoring | Mindfulness | Rumination | Mindfulness + Mood monitoring (72) | Placebo app: Mood monitoring (80) | 3, 6, 12, 26 | CDI | MASC |
| Hirshberg (2022) | United States | School system employees | 42.58 (10.67) | 88 | Healthy Minds Program (HMP) | Mindfulness | General mental health | HMP (346) | Waitlist (320) | 1, 2, 3, 4, 16 | PROMIS-D | PROMIS-A |
| Horsch (2017) | Netherlands | Adults with relatively mild insomnia disorder | 39.66 (13.44) | 62.30 | SleepCare | CBT | Insomnia | SleepCare (74) | Waitlist Group (77) | 6, 12 | CESD | HADS-A |
| Howells (2016) | United Kingdom | Adult authentic happiness seekers | 40.70 (10.6) | 88 | Headspace Mindfulness | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace Mindfulness (97) | Catch Notes: Placebo app (97) | 2 | CESD | - |
| Huberty (2021) | United States | Adults with elevated insomnia symptoms | 44.5 (14.6) | 74.6 | Calm App | Mindfulness | Insomnia | Calm App (113) | No intervention (127) | 4, 8 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Huberty (2022) | United States | Employees of a large consumer | - | 50.3 | Calm App | Mindfulness | General mental health | Calm App (585) | Waitlist (444) | 2, 4, 6, 8 | DASS-D | DASS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Hunt (2021) | United States | electronics retailer Adults with IBS | 32 (10.2) | 75.2 | Zemedy | CBT | IBS | Zemedy (62) | Waitlist (59) | 8 | DASS-D, PHQ9 | DASS-A |
| Hur (2018) | South Korea | Individuals diagnosed with Other Specified Depressive Disorder | 23.71 (3.26) | 88.24 | Todac App | CBT | General mental health | Todac App (17) | Mood monitoring (17) | 3 | BDI-2 | STAI-X2 |
| Hwang (2019) | Korea | Nurses employed at college hospitals in Seoul | / | 95 | Test group | Nonspecific | Stress | Test group (30) | No intervention (30) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Hwang (2022) | Korea | Individuals experiencing work-related stress | 37.94 (9.31) | 80.2 | BetterLife program | Multidisciplinary | Perceived stress | BetterLife program (63) | Waitlist (63) | 10 | BDI-2 | BAI |
| Imamura (2021) | Vietnam | Full time nurses in a large general hospital | 33.10 (6.78) | 85 | Program | CBT | Not specified | Program A (a free-choice, multimodule stress management) (317); Program B (a fixed-order, internet cognitive behavioral therapy, iCBT)(316) | Treatment as usual (316) | 12, 28 | DASS21-D | DASS-21 A |
| Jannati (2020) | Iran | Mothers with Postpartum depression (PPD) aged ≥18 | 27.52 | 100.00 | Happy Mom | CBT | Postpartum depression | Happy Mom (38) | No intervention (37) | 8 | EPDS | - |
| Järvelä-Reijonen (2020) | Finland | Working-age adults with psychological distress | 49.57 (7.24) | 83.8 | Oiva | ACT | General mental health | Oiva (85); Face-to-face ACT (84) | No intervention (85) | 10, 36 | BDI-2 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|--|---------------|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Kageyama (2021) | Japan | Adult university students with subthreshold depression | 20.06 (1.24) | 34.40 | SPSRS | Cognitive Bias Modification | Depression | SPSRS (16) | Waitlist (16) | 5 | CESD | GAD7 |
| Kauer (2012) | Australia | Young adults between 14-24 years with emotional mental health issues | 18.04 (3.2) | 72.9 | Mobietype | Nonspecific | Depression | Mobietype (69) | Placebo app (49) | 3, 6 | DASS-D | - |
| Keng (2022) | Singapore | Health care workers in Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic | 30.18 (6.19) | 90 | Headspace | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (40) | Placebo app: Lumosity (40) | 3, 7 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Kenny (2020) | Ireland | Students aged 15-18 years | 16.05 (0.76) | 62 | CopeSmart | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | CopeSmart (385) | No intervention (175) | 4, 8 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Kerber (2023) | Germany | Adults with clinically relevant symptoms of internalising disorders | 38.3 (11.19) | 73.6 | MindDoc | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | MindDoc (523) | Usual care (522) | 8, 24 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Kim (2024) | Korea | Individuals with a history of panic attacks | 34.95 (12) | 73.9 | Digital app for panic disorder | Multidisciplinary | Panic disorder | Digital app for panic disorder (25) | Information resources (25) | 4 | - | HAM-A, GAD7 |
| Kirykiewicz (2023) | South Africa | Adults working in a | 33.4 (3.8) | 58.8 | COVID Coach | Nonspecific | General mental health | COVID Coach (16) | No intervention (18) | 4 | CES-D | STAI-S |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Kloos (2022) | Netherlands | government healthcare facility in the Western Cape Dutch and Flemish adults in the general population who felt they suffered from reduced well-being due to the corona crisis | 52.90 (15) | 80 | ZENN-Gratitude app | Gratitude | General mental health | ZENN-Gratitude app (424) | Waitlist (425) | 6, 12 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Kollei (2017) | Germany | Students with elevated body image problems (FKB-20 >17 for men, FKB-20 >18 for women) | 21.64 | 92.45 | MT-BD app | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | MT-BD app (26) | Waitlist group (27) | 2, 6 | ADS | - |
| Kosasih (2023) | Singapore | Adults aged ≥18 | 22.05 (4.06) | 74.58 | Intellect App "Anxiety and Worry" | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Intellect App "Anxiety and Worry" (160) | Intellect "Procrastination" (163) | 2, 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Krafft (2019) | United States | Adults interested in phone-based self-help | 21.79 | 70.4 | Simple matrix app and Complex matrix app | ACT | General mental health | Simple matrix app (33); Complex matrix app (34) | No intervention (31) | 2, 4 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Kubo (2019) | United States | Cancer patients receiving chemotherapy | 58.3 (14.34) | 68 | Headspace | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (54) | Usual care (43) | 8 | HADS-D | HADS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | | | | Outcome measures | | |
|-------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Kubo (2024) | United States | Informal caregivers of cancer patients | 57.6 (17.65) | 58 | Headspace | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (17) | Usual care (14) | 8 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| | | Patients with metastatic solid malignancies or hematologic cancers. | 66.44 (9.59) | 69.9 | Headspace | Mindfulness | General mental health | Headspace (52) | Usual care (51) | 6, 12 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Kuhn (2017) | United States | Adults having been exposed to a traumatic event more than 1 month ago who do not receive treatment | 39 | 69 | PTSD Coach App | Multidisciplinary | PTSD symptoms | PTSD Coach App (62) | Waitlist (58) | 12, 24 | PHQ8 | - |
| Kuhn (2022) | United States | U.S. military veterans (aged 18-55 years) with a subclinical level of insomnia | 44.48 (7.9) | 42 | Coach | CBT | Insomnia | Coach (25) | Waitlist (25) | 6, 12 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| Kulikov (2023) | United States | Adolescents with self-reported symptoms of depression, aged 13-21 | 17.51 | 78.00 | Spark | CBT | General mental health | Spark (35) | Active Control Group (25) | 5 | PHQ8, MFQ-Ps | GAD7 |
| Kusumadewi (2023) | Indonesia | Students with elevated anxiety symptoms | 20.45 (0.71) | 78.79 | GAMA-AIMS | CBT | Anxiety | GAMA-AIMS (43) | Usual care (43) | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 | - | TMAS |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Lacey (2023) | New Zealand | Adults with specific phobia | 42.2 (13.2) | 80.0 | oVRcome | CBT | Specific phobia | oVRcome (63) | Waitlist (63) | 6, 12 | PHQ9 | - |
| LaFreniere (2023) | United States | Students aged 18 to 24 with symptoms of GAD | 18.66 (1.14) | 90.6 | SkillJoy Ecological Momentary Intervention | Positive Psychology | Generalized anxiety disorder | SkillJoy Ecological Momentary Intervention (41) | Placebo App (45) | 1, 4 | BDI-2 | - |
| Lahtinen (2023) | Finland | University faculty, staff, and students | 34.68 (10.77) | 83.24 | Mindfulness Intervention | Mindfulness | General mental health | Mindfulness Intervention (282) | Psychoeducation (279) | 4, 12 | BDI | GAD7 |
| Laird (2022) | United States | Middle-aged adults (40-65 years) with elevated stress levels | 51.45 (6.8) | 65.5 | Calm App | Mindfulness | Perceived stress | Calm App (39) | Placebo App (POD) (35) | 4 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Lee (2018) | Canada | Undergraduate students | 20.62 | 63.19 | DeStressify | Mindfulness | General mental health | DeStressify (102) | No intervention (104) | 4 | QIDS-SR | STAI-S, STAI-T |
| Lee (2023) | Korea | Office workers with elevated levels of perceived stress | 35.2 (8.49) | 78 | Mobile app-based stress management intervention mSMI | Multidisciplinary | Perceived stress | mSMI (39) | No intervention (43) | 6 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Levin (2018) | United States | Adults high in self-criticism | 22.76 (7.02) | 68.90 | Cog. Defusion, Cof. Restructuring | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Cog. Defusion (30), Cof. Restructuring (29) | Waitlist group (28) | 2 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |
| Levin_a (2019) | United States | University students 18+ | 21.9 (5.47) | 68.1 | ACT app | ACT | General mental health | Tailored ACT app (23); Random app (22) | No intervention (24) | 4 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Levin_b (2019) | United States | University students on the waitlist for the Counseling and Psychologic | 20.43 (2,46) | 100.00 | SBT App | Mindfulness | General mental health | SBT App (10) | No intervention (13) | 2, 4 | CCAPS-Depression | CCAPS-General Anx, CCAPS-Social Anx |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--|---------------|------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Lewis (2020) | United Kingdom | al Services center (CAPS), aged ≥18 Individuals with severe mental illness | 34.5 | 33.3 | ClinTouch | Symptom monitoring | Psychotic symptoms | ClinTouch (40) | Usual care (41) | 6, 12 | CDS | - |
| Li (2019) | China | HIV or AIDS patients | 27.5 | 7.7 | Run4Love | CBT | Depression | Run4Love (15) | Education program (150) | 12, 24 | CES-D | - |
| Li (2022) | Hong Kong | Individuals with distress related to pain | 41.35 (14.56) | 83.8 | WhatsApp-based MBi | Mindfulness | Pain | WhatsApp-based MBI (118) | Waitlist (117) | 3, 7, 15 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Li (2022) | Hong Kong | Individuals with distress related to dysregulated eating | 36.03 (11.59) | 89.7 | WhatsApp-based MBI | Mindfulness | Dysregulated eating | WhatsApp-based MBI (177) | Waitlist (174) | 3, 7, 15 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Li (2022) | Hong Kong | Individuals with distress related to insomnia | 42.13 (13.33) | 79.6 | WhatsApp-based MBI | Mindfulness | Insomnia | WhatsApp-based MBI (167) | Waitlist (166) | 3, 7, 15 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Li (2024) | United States | Chinese immigrant women residing in the United States who are in a relationship and had experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) in the past year | 36.16 (9.89) | 100 | SHE Intervention | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | SHE Intervention (25) | Information resources (26) | 7, 15 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Lim (2023) | Malaysia | Medical practitioners (faculty staff, | NA | 64.20 | ThoughtFull Chat App | Nonspecific | Reducing the symptoms of self- | ThoughtFull Chat App (167) | No intervention (167) | 12 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Outcome measures | |
|-----------------|----------------|--|---------------|------------|---|------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | | | | | Depression | Anxiety |
| Linardon (2022) | Australia | students, or corporate staff) aged >18 Individuals who self-reported the presence of binge eating | 28.95 (8.17) | 93.00 | Break Binge Eating | CBT | reported Depression, Anxiety, and Stress General mental health | Break Binge Eating (197) | Waitlist group(195) | 4, 8 | PHQ4 | PHQ4 |
| Linardon (2023) | Australia | Adults who are binge eating | 33.85 (9.83) | 93.8 | Break Binge Eating and Break the Diet Cycle | 'CBT | Binge eating | Break Binge Eating (199); Break the Diet Cycle (199) | Waitlist (202) | 4, 8 | PHQ4 | PHQ4 |
| Litvin (2020) | Germany | Bosch UK employees | / | 37.70 | eQuoo | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | eQuoo (222) | Control group: Multidisciplinary (269), Waitlist (218) | 2, 5 | - | One-item Anxiety Scale |
| Litvin (2023) | United Kingdom | Adult college/university students | - | 76.5 | eQuoo | Multidisciplinary; CBT | General mental health | eQuoo (389); Sanvello Mental Health App (384) | No intervention (392) | 5 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| Liu (2022) | Taiwan | Women aged 25 to 40 in the postpartum period | 31.81 (5.36) | 100 | We'll App | Nonspecific | Postpartum depressive symptoms | We'll App (65) | Waitlist (65) | 8 | EPDS | - |
| Liu (2022) | China | University students above the age 18 with elevated depressive symptoms | 23.08 (1.76) | 55.4 | XiaoNan | CBT | General mental health | XiaoNan (41) | Bibliotherapy (42) | 16 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Liu (2023) | China | Individuals with spinal cord injury | 41.71 (12.14) | 17.35 | Together | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Together (49) | Usual care (49) | 12, 24 | BDI-2 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---|---------------|------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|---|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| LooGee (2021) | Australia | Adults with elevated social anxiety symptoms | 28.7 (12.4) | 81 | EMI App | CBT | Social anxiety | EMI App (28) | No intervention (27) | 4 | PHQ2 | GAD2 |
| Lu (2023) | China | Nurses with anxiety or depression symptoms | 35.36 (7.22) | 97.20 | Rain Classroom | ACT | General mental health | Rain Classroom (72) | Waiting control group (73) | 2, 3, 4, 5, 17 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Luangapichart (2022) | Thailand | Medical personnel suffering from burnout and stress | 33.4 (7.92) | 84.4 | Mindful Senses Program | Mindfulness | General mental health | Mindful Senses Program and psychological self-help articles (45) | Psychological self-help articles (week 1-4) and delayed Mindful Senses Program (week 9-12) (45) | 4, 8, (12, 16) | Thai HADS-D | Thai HADS-A |
| Lukas_a (2021) | Germany | Individuals with heightened depression, scoring ≥ 10 on the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) | 24.69 (4.47) | 81.00 | MT-Phoenix + Psychoedu | Approach avoidance modification training | Depression | MT-Phoenix + Psychoedu (5) | Waitlist Group (11) | 2, 4 | PHQ9 | - |
| Lukas_b (2021) | Germany | Adults with elevated depression levels | 29.93 (11.61) | 82.00 | MT-Phoenix | AAMT | Depression | MT-Phoenix (40) | Waitlist (37) | 2, 12 | PHQ9 CES-D | - |
| Luo (2021) | China | Parents of children diagnosed with cancer | 33.60 (5.2) | 69.90 | device-based resilience | Nonspecific | General mental health | device-based resilience (52) | Information resources (51) | 8, 24 | SDS | - |
| Lüdtke (2018) | Germany | Adults with a subjective need for an intervention to reduce depressive symptoms | 42.89 (11.19) | 78.40 | Be Good to Yourself | Multidisciplinary | Depression | Be Good to Yourself (45) | Waitlist (45) | 4 | PHQ9 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|--|---------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| MacKinnon (2022) | Canada | Mothers of preschool children (aged 18–36 months old) with moderate to severe depression | 33.84 (5.34) | 100 | BEAM | Nonspecific | General mental health | BEAM (33) | Usual care (32) | 10 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Mak (2018) | China | Adults in the general population | 33.64 (12.08) | 72.88 | MBP, SCP, CBP | Mindfulness, Self-compassion, CBT | General mental health | MBP (739), SCP (748), CBP (795) | NA | 4, 12 | ACS | ACS |
| Mantani (2017) | Japan | Adults (aged 25–59 years) with a primary diagnosis of major depressive disorder without psychotic features who are antidepressant-resistant after taking one or more antidepressants at an adequate dosage for 4 weeks or more | 40.90 (8.7) | 53.40 | Kokoro App | CBT | Depression | Kokoro App (81) | Usual care (83) | 9, 17 | PHQ9; BDI-2 | - |
| Mao (2023) | China | High social anxiety adolescents (≥ 40 on SAS-A, age 14–17) | 15.13 | 64.29 | CBM-I App | Cognitive bias modification training | Social anxiety in adolescents | CBM-I App (14) | Waitlist group (14) | 4 | - | SAS-A |
| Marciniak (2023) | Switzerland | University students with lowered reward | 21.50 (2.3) | 80.00 | Imager App Group | Nonspecific | General mental health | Imager App Group (51) | No intervention (44) | 1 | BDI-2 | STAI |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--|---------------|------------|---|--|------------------------------|---|--|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| | | sensitivity scores | | | | | | | | | | |
| McCloud (2020) | United Kingdom | University students | 24.3 (6.76) | 85.1 | Feel Stress Free App | CBT | General mental health | Feel Stress Free App (84) | Waitlist (84) | 2, 4, 6 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| McGillivray (2023) | Australia | Adults between 18-25 years with suicidal thoughts the past year | 21.5 | 84.6 | LifeBuoy | Multidisciplinary | Suicidal ideation | LifeBuoy (228) | Education program (227) | 6.14, 18.86 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Miklowitz (2023) | United States | Youth with bipolar and depressive disorders | 15.8 (1.6) | 72.3 | My Coach-connect | Nonspecific | General mental health | My Coach-connect (32) | Placebo App (33) | 9, 18, 27 | - | SCARED |
| Min (2023) | South Korea | Hospital employees with elevated stress levels | 38.64 (10.87) | 90.22 | Neuro-feedback assessed mindfulness; mindfulness only | Mindfulness | Stress | Neuro-feedback assessed mindfulness (30); mindfulness only (33) | Education program (31) | 4, 8 | PHQ9 | - |
| Min-Hung (2019) | Taiwan | Patients diagnosed with GAD | 21.49 (1.78) | 74.4 | HD-ABM | Attentional bias modification training | Generalized anxiety disorder | HD-ABM (31) | Placebo App (31) | 2, 3, 4, 8 | BDI | BAI, STAI |
| Mistretta (2018) | United States | Health care workers working at Mayo Clinic in Arizona | 46 (12.6) | 87 | MBRT Int. (Mindfulness-based) | Mindfulness; Nonspecific | General mental health | MBRT Int. (Mindfulness-based) (22); Smartphone resilience int. (23) | Waitlist (31) Control group: self-monitoring (15) | 6, 18 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Moberg (2019) | United States | Adults scoring between 5-14 on the PHQ-8 or between 5-14 on the GAD7 | 30.20 | 54.80 | Pacifica | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Pacifica (253) | Waitlist (247) | 4, 12 | DASS-21, PHQ8 | DASS-21, GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---|---------------|------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|---|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Moritz (2024) | Germany | Adults aged between 18 and 85 years | 30.45 (10.09) | 84.5 | COGITO App | Nonspecific | General mental health | COGITO App (108) | Waitlist (105) | 6 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Mutter (2023) | Germany | University students struggling with procrastination | 26.21 (5.3) | 60.0 | StudiCare Procrastination | CBT | Procrastination | StudiCare Procrastination (116) | E-coach CBT (117) | 4, 8, 12 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| Newman (2021) | United States | Undergraduate students with self-reported GAD | 21.40 | 77.00 | self-help mobile program | CBT | General mental health | self-help mobile program (50) | No intervention (50) | 12, 26 | - | STAI-T |
| Nicol (2022) | United States | Adolescents aged 13 to 17 years with moderate depressive symptoms | 14.7 (1.7) | 88.2 | WGenZ (Woebot-based application) | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | WGenZ (10) | Waitlist (8) | Depression: 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 Anxiety: 4, 8, 12 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Niles (2020) | United States | Participants with elevated PTSD symptoms | 32.1 (9.9) | 80 | ABM Training | Attentional bias modification training | PTSD | Personalized ABM (336) | Placebo app (342) | 3, 5 | DASS-D | STAI |
| Nishi (2022) | Japan | Pregnant women at 16–20 weeks' gestation, aged ≥ 20 | 30.44 (4.6) | 100 | Luna Baby app | CBT | General mental health | Non-personalized ABM (323) iCBT - Luna Baby app (2509) | No intervention (2508) | 16, 22, 33 | EPDS | - |
| Oh (2018) | South Korea | Adults in their 50s and 60s with subclinical memory problems | 59.30 (5.09) | 52.8 | SMART | Cognitive training | Memory improvement | SMART (18); Fit Brains (19) | Waitlist (16) | 8 | CESD | STAI-S |
| Oh (2020) | Korea | Adult patients with mild- | 41 (11.55) | 51.2 | Todaki Chatbot | CBT | Panic disorder | Todaki Chatbot (23) | Information resources (22) | 4 | HADS-D | HADS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|---|---------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|---------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Orosa-Duarte (2021) | Spain | to-severe panic symptoms University students | 23.00 (4.16) | 84.52 | REM Volver a casa, IMBP group | Mindfulness | | REM Volver a casa (54), IMBP group (51) | No intervention (49) | 8 | - | STAI-T |
| O’dea (2020) | Australia | Adolescents aged 12-16 | 14.82 (0.93) | 86.53 | WeClick | CBT | General mental health | WeClick (98) | Waitlist (95) | 4, 12 | PHQ-A | SCAS |
| O’Toole (2019) | Denmark | Individuals referred to out-patient suicide prevention treatment | 28.75 (9.47) | 41.9 | LifeApp’tite | Nonspecific | Suicide risk | Usual care and LifeApp’tite (60) | Usual care (69) | 8, 16 | MDI | - |
| Peake (2024) | United States | Adolescents aged 13 to 21 years with self-identified depression symptoms | 16.84 (2.55) | 63.1 | Spark app | CBT | Depression | Spark app (74) | Placebo app (79) | Depression: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Anxiety: 5 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| Pham (2016) | United Kingdom | Adults with at least moderate anxiety symptoms | - | 49.1 | Flowy App | Mindfulness | Anxiety | Flowy App (31) | Waitlist (32) | 2, 4 | - | GAD7 |
| Ponzo (2020) | United Kingdom | University students | 19.96 | 65.85 | Biobase app | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Biobase app (59) | Waitlist Group (64) | 4, 6 | PHQ9, DASS-21 | STAI |
| Possemato (2016) | United States | VA primary care veterans with PTSD symptoms | 42 (12) | 80 | PTSD Coach | CBT | PTSD symptoms | PTSD Coach (Clinician support) (10) | PTSD Coach (Self-managing) (10) | 8 | PHQ9 | - |
| Possemato (2023) | United States | Veterans enrolled in primary care within VA healthcare systems in New York and California | 50.92 (15.43) | 9.80 | Clinician supported PTSD Coach | Nonspecific | PTSD | Clinician supported PTSD Coach (115) | Usual care (119) | 8, 16, 24 | PHQ9 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---|---------------|------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Pratap (2018) | United States | with PTSD symptoms who do not receive PTSD treatment Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino adults with depressive symptoms | 34.90 (10.91) | 77.1 | EVO(1) and iPST(2) | Cognitive training(1) and Problem Solving Therapy(2) | Depression | EVO (83); iPST (112) | Education program (79) | 4, 12 | PHQ9 | - |
| Qin (2022) | China | Chinese-speaking women who recently (0-3 days postpartum) gave birth at a public hospital in Shanghai | 31.90 (3.62) | 100 | CareMom + Usual Care | CBT | Depression | CareMom + Usual Care (57) | Waitlist (55) | 1, 2, 3, 4 | EPDS | GAD7 |
| Raevuori (2021) | Finland | Patients with clinical depression in a Finnish university student health service | 25.10 (4.5) | 73 | MeruHealth | Multidisciplinary | Depression | MeruHealth + TAU (63) | TAU (61) | 4, 8, 20, 32 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Rajabi Majd (2020) | Iran | Adults having an insomnia disorder who speak Persian | 35.75 (5.79) | 55.80 | CBT-I App | Multidisciplinary | Insomnia | CBT-I App (156) | Information resources (156) | 10, 18, 30 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Reid (2011) | Australia | Patients aged 14 to 24 years from rural and metropolitan general practices | 18.10 (3.2) | 72 | Mobiletype | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Mobiletype (69) | Placebo app (49) | 3, 9 | DASS-D | DASS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | | | | Outcome measures | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|-------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Riordan (2024) | United States | Undergraduate student with mild or severe mental health issues with elevated anxiety and/or depression symptoms | 20.17 (1.58) | 77.8 | Healthy Minds App | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Healthy Minds App (massed) (176) | Healthy Minds App (spaced) (175) | 2 | PROMIS-D | PROMIS-A |
| Rocamora González (2022) | Spain | Patients newly diagnosed with colorectal cancer | 35.4 | Mindfulness | General mental health | Calm App (52) | Usual care (50) | - | HADS-D | HADS-A | | |
| Roepke (2015) | United States | Individuals with clinically significant depression (CES-D \geq 16) | 40.15 (12.40) | 69.60 | CBT/PPT SuperBetter, General SuperBetter | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | CBT/PPT SuperBetter (93), General SuperBetter (97) | Waitlist Group (93) | 2, 4, 6 | CESD | GAD7 |
| Roncero (2019) | Spain | Psychology students | 21.56 (6.15) | 81.4 | GGRO | CBT | OCD | Immediate use (iApp) (51) | Waitlist (dApp) (46) | 2, 4 | DASS-D | - |
| Roy (2021) | United States | Individuals with GAD | 41.95 | 90.48 | TAU + unwinding anxiety app | Mindfulness | Anxiety | TAU + unwinding anxiety app (28) | TAU (33) | 4, 8 | - | GAD7 |
| Röhr (2021) | Germany | Syrian refugee adults with elevated posttraumatic stress symptoms | 33.33 (11.20) | 38.3 | Sanadak | CBT | Posttraumatic stress | Sanadak (65) | Education program (68) | 4, 16 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Sawyer (2019) | Australia | New mothers | 31.66 | 100.00 | eMums Plus | CBT | Depression | eMums Plus (54) | Usual care (57) | 32, 48 | EPDS | - |
| Schwob (2023) | United States | Adults with social anxiety | 19.40 (0.64) | 53.66 | Imaginal Exposure | Exposure | General mental health | Imaginal Exposure (39) | Self-monitoring (43) | 1, 4 | - | SPDQ, SIAS |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Seo (2022) | South Korea | disorder (SAD) New mothers with elevated depression symptoms (EPDS ≥ 9) | NA | 100.00 | Happy Mother App | CBT | General mental health | Happy Mother App (50) | Information resources (50) | 8, 20 | EPDS | - |
| Sharma (2022) | Canada | Psychiatric inpatients between 18-65 years | 31.83 (8.0) | 24.75 | Mindshift CBT | CBT | Anxiety | Mindshift CBT (9) | Usual care (11) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Smith (2020) | United States | Employees from a large technology corporation | 33.2 (7.8) | 55 | Wearable-based treatment | Mindfulness | General mental health | Wearable-based treatment (107) | Waitlist (108) | 4 | MASQ-D | MASQ-A |
| Smith (2021) | United States | Obstetrics and gynecology patients during the COVID-19 pandemic | 36.21 (11.3) | 100 | Meditation App (CALM) | Mindfulness | General mental health | Mediation App (CALM) (50) | Usual Care (51) | 2, 4 | HADS-D | HADS-A |
| Smith_b (2021) | United States | Students enrolled in their third semester of physician assistant (PA) school | NA | 78.57 | 10% Happier | Mindfulness | General mental health | 10% Happier(8) | Waitlist Group (8) | 8 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Soltani (2024) | Iran | Iranian patients with MDD | NA | 76.56 | Yara App | Nonspecific | General mental health | Yara App (32) | Usual Care (32) | 12 | - | STAI |
| Stiles-Shields (2019) | United States | Adults with moderate depressive symptoms | NA | NA | Boost Me; Thought Challenger | CBT | Depression | Boost Me (10); Thought Challenger (10) | Waitlist (10) | 3, 6, 10 | PHQ9 | - |
| Stolz (2018) | Switzerland | Adults who speak German and are diagnosed with Social | 34.76 | 63 | PC-based treatment; Mobile treatment | CBT | Social Anxiety | PC-based treatment (60); Mobile treatment (60) | Waitlist (30) | 12, 24 | BDI2 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---|---------------|------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Sun (2019) | China | anxiety disorder Chinese undergraduates with high level of social anxiety | 21.26 (2.18) | 81.58 | CBM-I (cognitive bias modification for interpretation) | Cognitive bias modification | Social anxiety | CBM-I (22) | Placebo app (19) | 4, 8 | - | STAI-T |
| Sun (2021) | China | Pregnant adult women from an obstetrics clinic | 29.91 (4.02) | 100 | Spirits Healing App | Mindfulness | Depression | Spirits Healing App (84) | Attention control group (84) | 4, 8, 18 | EPDS | GAD7 |
| Sun (2022) | China | Chinese university students in quarantine | 22.21 (2.67) | 74 | Mindfulness based mHealth | Mindfulness | General mental health | Mindfulness based mHealth (57) | Placebo app: Social support based mHealth (57) | 4, 8 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Taylor (2022) | United Kingdom | Health care workers | 40.53 | 83.18 | HeadSpace | Mindfulness | General mental health | HeadSpace (1095) | MoodZone: Psychoeducation (1087) | 6, 18 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |
| Taylor (2023) | United Kingdom | UK-based working adults experiencing mild to moderate depressive symptoms | 36.90 (9.5) | 54.80 | Activate your mood; Mind your mood; Finding happiness | Behavioural activation; CBT; ACT | Depression | Activate your mood (102); Mind your mood (101); Finding happiness (100) | Waitlist (102) | 3, 7 | PHQ8 | GAD7 |
| Thabrew (2022) | New Zealand | New Zealand residents aged between 16 and 30 years | 23.68 (3.81) | 87.80 | Whitu | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Whitu (45) | Waitlist (45) | 4, 12 | CESD | GAD7 |
| Tighe (2017) | Australia | Indigenous Australians aged 18–35 years | 26.25 (8.13) | 63.9 | ibobbly App | ACT | General mental health | ibobbly App (31) | Waitlist and delayed ibobbly App (30) | 6 | PHQ9 | - |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Toh (2022) | Singapore | Undergraduate university students | 22.50 (5.41) | 71 | Stress-coping | CBT | Psychological stress | Stress-coping (135) | Cooperation: Placebo app (129) | 1, 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Torok (2022) | Australia | Young adults from Australia experiencing recent suicidal ideation, aged 18-25 years | 21.50 (2.18) | 85 | LifeBuoy | DBT | Change in suicidal ideation | LifeBuoy (228) | LifeBuoy-C Control: Placebo app (227) | 6, 18 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Tønning (2021) | Denmark | Adult patients with a diagnosis of unipolar depressive disorder | 43.94 | 52.50 | Smartphone-based CBT | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Smartphone-based CBT (59) | Usual care (61) | 12, 26 | HDRS-17, HDRS-6, BADS, BDI, HAM-D6 | - |
| van Aubel (2020) | Netherlands | Individuals aged 16 to 25 with subthreshold depressive and/or psychotic complaints | 21.01 | 72.73 | ACT-DL Con. | ACT | General mental health | ACT-DL Con. (27) | FILM Cond. : Group treatment (28) | 6, 26, 52 | MADRS, IDS-SR, SCL-D | STAI-T, SCL-A |
| van Stolk-Cooke (2023) | United States | Adult family members of veterans with PTSD | 39 (8.44) | 97 | PTSD Family Coach | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | PTSD Family Coach (104) | Psychoeducation-only app (96) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Vereschagin (2024) | Canada | University students | 20 | 70.3 | Minder App | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Minder App (743) | Waitlist (746) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Versluis (2018) | Netherlands | Individuals reporting work stress | 43.23 (11.39) | 71 | MovisensXS, VGZ mindfulness coach application | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | MovisensXS, worry-reduction training, VGZ mindfulness coach application (46) | Moodmonitoring (Movisens XS) (48) Waitlist (42) | 2, 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Vollert (2023) | Germany | individuals who wish to improve their sleep, age ≥ 18 | 37.30 (14.24) | 62.80 | Refresh | CBT | General mental health | Refresh (186) | Waitlist Group (185) | 8, 24 | PHQ9 | - |
| Vásquez (2023) | Spain | Caregivers with elevated depressive symptoms | 50.0 (9.8) | 92.6 | CBIA | CBT | Depression | CBIA (58) | CBIA + conference call (54); Attention control group (63) | 5 | CES-D | - |
| Wang (2022) | China | Undergraduate nursing students | 22.50 (1.50) | 85.10 | Intervention Group | Nonspecific | General mental health | Intervention Group (57) | Usual care (57) | 8, 32 | - | STAI |
| Watson-Singleton (2023) | United States | African Americans | 36.06 (12.29) | 54.10 | BlackFULLness | Mindfulness | General mental health | BlackFULLness (84) | Waitlist (86) | 12 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |
| Watts (2013) | Australia | Adults self identifying as suffering from mild to moderate depression | 41 (12.38) | 80 | Get Happy | CBT | Depression | Get Happy-Mobile (22) | Get Happy-Computer (30) | 8, 12 | PHQ9; BDI2 | - |
| WernerSeidler (2023) | Australia | Adolescents (ages 12–16) experiencing insomnia symptoms | 14.71 (1.21) | 71.30 | SleepNinja | CBT | Insomnia | SleepNinja (131) | Active Control: Text message tips (133) | 6, 14 | PHQ-A | GAD7 |
| Wilhelm (2022) | United States | Adults living in the United States with a primary DSM-5 body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) diagnosis | 27 (9.6) | 83.75 | App-based CBT | CBT | Body Dysmorphic Disorder | App-based CBT (40) | Waitlist (40) | 6, 12 | QIDS-SR | - |
| Winslow (2022) | United States | Active duty military personnel with diagnosis or complaint | 37.4 (7.7) | 20 | mHealth App | CBT | General mental health | mHealth App (10) | CBT alone (10); Asymptomatic group (10) | 12 | DASS-D | DASS-A |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--|---------------|------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| | | of stress and anger | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wong (2021) | China | Hong Kong residents aged 18 years or older | 35.69 (12) | 77.36 | Lifestyle Hub | Multidisciplinary | General mental health | Lifestyle Hub (53) | Waitlist (53) | 8, 12 | DASS-D | DASS-A |
| Yang (2023) | South Korea | Individuals with ASD aged 15–35 and had a total score of ≥ 39 on the STAI | 20.97 (5.06) | 10.00 | HARU ASD | CBT | Anxiety symptoms | HARU ASD (15) | Waitlist Group (15) | 9.43 | - | STAI |
| Yoon (2022) | South Korea | Stressed employees | 37.04 (9.25) | 48.9 | InMind App | Mindfulness | Stress | InMind App (22) | Waitlist (23) | 4, 8 | MBI | MBI |
| Zainal (2023) | United States | Clients with GAD and no treatment | 20.80 (5.41) | 85.5 | Mindfulness EMI | Mindfulness | GAD | Mindfulness EMI (68) | Placebo app (42) | 2, 4 | - | GAD-Q-4-Dimensional |
| Zainal (2024) | Singapore | Adults with elevated levels of social anxiety symptoms | 21.84 (3.37) | 78 | Mindfulness ecological momentary intervention (MEMI) | Mindfulness | Social anxiety disorder | MEMI (96) | Mood monitoring (95) | 2, 6 | BDI-2 | GAD-Q-4 |
| Zhang a (2023) | China | Women who were 12-20 weeks pregnant with psychological distress | 30.29 (4.29) | 100 | Digital mindfulness-based intervention (Digital MBI) | Mindfulness | Maternal psychological distress | Digital mindfulness-based intervention (Digital MBI) (80) | No intervention (80) | 8, 24, 30, 36, 48 | EPDS | GAD7 |
| Zhang b (2023) | China | Adults from China with insomnia | 49.67 (14.49) | 74 | DCBT-I - Resleep | CBT | Insomnia | DCBT-I - Resleep (41) | Control group: information resources (41) | 6, 10, 18, 30 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |
| Zhao (2023) | China | Chinese individuals with elevated | 25.12 (6.4) | 75.6 | ACT program | ACT | PTSD | ACT program (78) | Mindfulness (76) Waitlist (67) | 4 | PHQ9 | GAD7 |

| First Author | Country | Population | Mean age (SD) | Female (%) | Mental health app | | Outcome measures | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|---|---------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| | | | | | Name | Technique | Primary Target | Intervention Group (n) | Comparison Group (n) | Follow-up (weeks) | Depression | Anxiety |
| Zhou (2023) | China | PTSD symptoms High school students in grades 10 and 11 | 16.80 | 43.52 | Coping Camp | CBT | General mental health | Coping Camp (275) | No intervention (265) | 11, 19 | DASS-21 | DASS-21 |

Note. Primary target: Primary target of the intervention. This can be different from the primary outcome if the intervention is primarily targeted to improve a different outcome than depression or anxiety (e.g., PTSD, insomnia, well-being). It was coded as "General mental health" if the primary target was not described. Technique: Primary therapeutic framework the intervention or control group is based on.

Outcome measure questionnaire abbreviations: ACS = Affective Control Scale; ADS = General Depression Scale; BADS = Behavioral Activation for Depression Scale; BAI = Beck Anxiety Inventory; BDI = Beck Depression Inventory; BDI-2 = Beck Depression Inventory-2; BDI-FS = Beck Depression Inventory Fast Screen; BSI-A = Brief Symptom Inventory - Anxiety subscale; BSI-D = Brief Symptom Inventory - Depression subscale; CALS = Child and Adolescent Life Satisfaction Scale; CAPE = Community Assessment of Psychic Experiences; CCAPS-Depression = Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms 34-item version - Depression subscale; CCAPS-General Anxiety = Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms 34-item version - General Anxiety subscale; CCAPS-Social Anxiety = Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms 34-item version - Social Anxiety subscale; CDI = Children's Depression Inventory; CDRS-R = Child Depression Rating Scale-Revised; CDS = Calgary Depression Scale; CES-D = Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale; CGAS = Children's Global Assessment Scale; DASS-21 = The Depression Anxiety Stress Scales – 21; DASS-A = Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale - Anxiety subscale; DASS-D = Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale - Depression subscale; EPDS = Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale; GAD2 = Generalized Anxiety Disorder-2; GAD7 = Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7; GAD-Q-4-Dimensional = Generalised Anxiety Dimensional; GADQ-4 = Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire – fourth edition; HAM-A = Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale; HAM-D6 = Hamilton Depression Self-rating Scale 6-item; HADS-A = Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale - Anxiety subscale; HADS-D = Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale - Depression subscale; HRSD-17 = Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression-17; IDS-SR = Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology, Self-Report; LSAS-SR = Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale; MADRS = Montgomery Asberg Depression Rating Scale; MASQ-A = Mood and Anxiety Symptoms Questionnaire; MBI = Mibeong Index; MFQ-Ps = Mood and Feelings Questionnaire - Short Parent Version; MASC = Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children; Mini-SPIN = Social Phobia Inventory; PHQ2 = Patient Health Questionnaire-2; PHQ4 = Patient Health Questionnaire-4; PHQ8 = Patient Health Questionnaire-8; PHQ9 = Patient Health

Questionnaire-9; PHQ-A = The Patient Health Questionnaire for Adolescents; PROMIS-A = Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System Anxiety; PROMIS-D = Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System Depression; PSRs = Psychiatric Status Ratings; QIDS-C = Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology; QIDS-SR = Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology - Self Report; RADS2 = Reynold's Adolescent Depression Rating Scale - 2nd Edition; SAS-A = Social Anxiety Scale; SCARED = Screen for Child Anxiety and Related Emotional Disorders (subscale generalised anxiety only); SCAS = Spence Children's Anxiety Scale; SCL-A = Symptom Checklist-90-R - Anxiety subscale; SCL-D = Symptom Checklist-90-R - Depression subscale; SIAS = Social Interaction Anxiety Scale; SDS = The Self-Rating Depression Scale; SOPHS = Social Phobia Screener Scale; SPDQ = Social Phobia Diagnostic Questionnaire; STAI = State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; STAI-S = The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory - State anxiety subscale; STAI-T = The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory - Trait anxiety subscale; STAI-X2 = The situation-dependent trait version of State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; TMAS = Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale.

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