

Online Resources for Youth Mental Health

Intro

The last few years have been a bit of whirlwind. The combination of the pandemic, climate change, strained international relations and a cost of living crisis have left people feeling drained and dejected. Young people have been hit especially hard. The combination of constant pressure from social media and a period of increased isolation due to COVID has left many young people looking for answers.

Mental health struggles haven't stopped after the pandemic 44% of teenagers reported feeling sad or hopeless in 2022 according to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Parents are also concerned—according to Pew Trust Research Center, 67% of parents wish they had been more vigilant about their child's mental health.

Luckily, conversations around mental health have become more open in recent years and there is an innovative suite of toys and online-focussed tools to help.



There is no mental health magic wand, but such tools can act as valuable support systems, especially when access to traditional care is limited. Both the volume and range of new interventions available seem like bastions of hope in a landscape that can feel pretty bleak.

Children's mental health is a topic that is important to us, so we compiled this debrief to showcase the wide range of the mental health related apps and toys that have caught our attention.

Calm Tonie



What is it?

A special edition of Tonie offering meditation modules, sleep stories and breathing exercises.

Who is it for?

3+

How does it work?

Tonies are small figurines that are put on top of Toniebox—a box-shaped speaker to play their content. Many Tonies created by the brand are for relaxation purposes. The Calm Tonie was created in collaboration with Calm—the leading mental wellbeing brand to create mindfulness activities, breath work meditations, and sleep stories in a format suitable for kids.

Tellmi



What is it?

Tellmi is a 100% moderated, anonymous social support app.

Who is it for?

Teens

How does it work?

Users can log on and chat about their problems with other users, as well as find resources. In addition to moderators, Tellmi even has in-house counsellors on hand to help. Tellmi encourages its users to talk about anything, whether it be depression, self-esteem or even dating. The app creates a safe, moderated environment for young people to share about their struggles. An independent UCL study confirmed its positive impact on young people's well-being and reducing feelings of isolation.



Molehill Mountain

What is it?

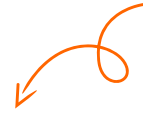
Molehill Mountain is an app designed to help young autistic people manage, recognise and understand their anxiety.

Who is it for?

Young autistic people

How does it work?

It lets users log their emotions to help identify anxiety triggers. Molehill Mountain uses approaches focused on challenging unhelpful thoughts, beliefs and attitudes to help users understand and manage their anxiety through features such as tracking mood, tips and breathing exercises. Created by autism experts, this app is among the few resources dedicated for anxiety specifically in autistic people.



Social-Emotional Task Cards

What is it?

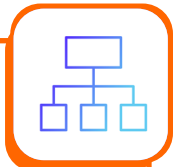
A set of 64 task cards supporting emotional development education.

Who is it for?

Two versions of cards - 3+ and 8+

How does it work?

Each card includes an age-appropriate, hands-on activity that can be done by individuals, pairs, or small groups. The areas covered by the cards include emotions, kindness, diversity, problem solving, goals & growth, mindfulness, regulation and empathy.



Combined Minds

What is it?

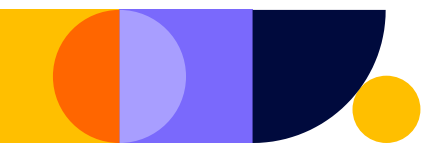
Combined Minds helps families and friends support young people with mental health conditions.

Who is it for?

Friends and family of those with mental health conditions

How does it work?

The app was developed by the charity stem4 and uses a strength-based approach to support friends and family of those with mental health problems through useful guides, creation of a safety plan and activities to try. The focus of Combined Minds is unique: friends and family of individuals that need support are groups often neglected by other services.



Chill Panda



What is it?

Chill Panda is a mobile game in which the player explores an island while completing tasks to ensure the main panda character remains calm.

Who is it for?

Under 8s

How does it work?

The tasks teach about relaxation techniques based on the four pillars of relaxation identified by clinical psychologists.

The app focuses on children under 8, addressing the lack of options specifically designed to aid them in recognizing and managing anxious emotions. It aims to provide a supportive platform that empowers young children to navigate their anxiety from an early age.

Smiling Mind



What is it?

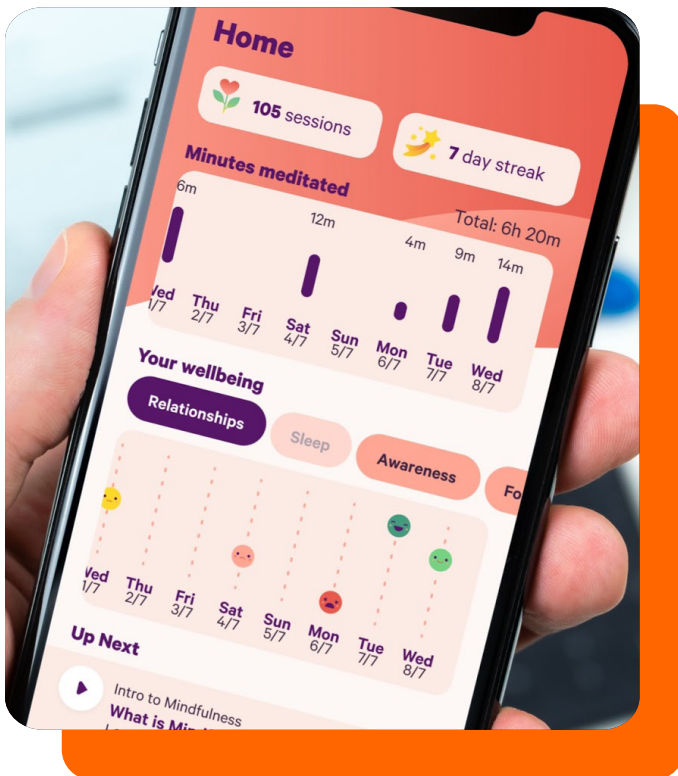
Smiling Mind is a free Australian app created by a non-profit organisation.

Who is it for?

Adults and kids above the age of 3

How does it work?

The app offers over 300 different meditations, split into categories including adults, kids, youth, families, and school. Programs in the app are underpinned by mindfulness and positive psychology strategies and designed to build mental fitness and resilience. Many reviews praise the ease of incorporating it into everyday life.



Calm Harm



What is it?

Calm Harm is an app that uses various techniques to distract the user from the urge to self-harm and encourage dealing with the problem in a different way.

Who is it for?

12+

How does it work?

It has different activities in the following categories: Comfort, Distract, Express Yourself, Release, and Random. The app is created by a children's mental health charity, stem4, and is free to use. Developed by clinical psychologists in collaboration with young people, the app follows DBT principles. It has received approval from the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps and has won several awards, including the "Best Healthcare App of the Year".

Sources

- » www.hand2mind.com/item/social-emotional-task-cards-ages-3
- » tonies.com/en-gb/creative-tonies/calm/
- » autistica.org.uk/molehill-mountain
- » combinedminds.co.uk
- » tellmi.help

- » chillpanda.co.uk
- » smilingmind.com.au
- » calmharm.co.uk/ finkcards.com/products/conversations-about-mental-health-with-children-and-young-people