

# Download our apps to follow along!



COVID Coach iOS



COVID Coach Android



Mindfulness Coach iOS



Mindfulness Coach Android



PTSD Coach iOS



PTSD Coach Android



Insomnia Coach iOS



Insomnia Coach Android

Use the above codes to open a link for each app in your preferred app store. Open your smartphone camera and focus on the corresponding code. Alternatively, visit the App Store or Google Play and type the name of the app in the search bar.

# Coping with COVID-19: Virtual Resources for Patients and Providers

Julie Weitlauf, PhD  
Director, Women's Mental Health and Aging Core, VISN 21 MIRECC  
Core Investigator Ci2i  
Clinical Professor, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Stanford

Colleen Becket-Davenport, PsyD  
Clinical Psychologist  
National Center for PTSD

Katherine Juhasz, MS  
Health Science Specialist  
National Center for PTSD



National Center for  
**PTSD**  
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Health Services Research & Development Service*



# Poll #1

What is your primary role?

- ▶ Research Investigator
- ▶ Methodologist
- ▶ Data Manager, Analyst, or Programmer
- ▶ Project Coordinator
- ▶ Research Assistant
- ▶ Clinician
- ▶ VA Administrator
- ▶ Other (please describe in the Q&A function)

# Objectives

1. Review impact of current events on providers
2. Provide overview of 4 VA self-care apps from the National Center for PTSD:



COVID Coach



Insomnia Coach



Mindfulness Coach



PTSD Coach and the Safety Plan

3. Offer additional resources to learn more about VA digital resources

## Poll #2

Have you ever used a health-related app?

- ▶ Yes, all the time
- ▶ Yes, sometimes
- ▶ Yes, once or twice
- ▶ No

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including triangles and trapezoids, that create a dynamic, layered effect. The colors range from light sky blue to a deep, dark navy blue. The shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, extending towards the center.

# Why Mobile Mental Health Apps?

# Smartphones are:



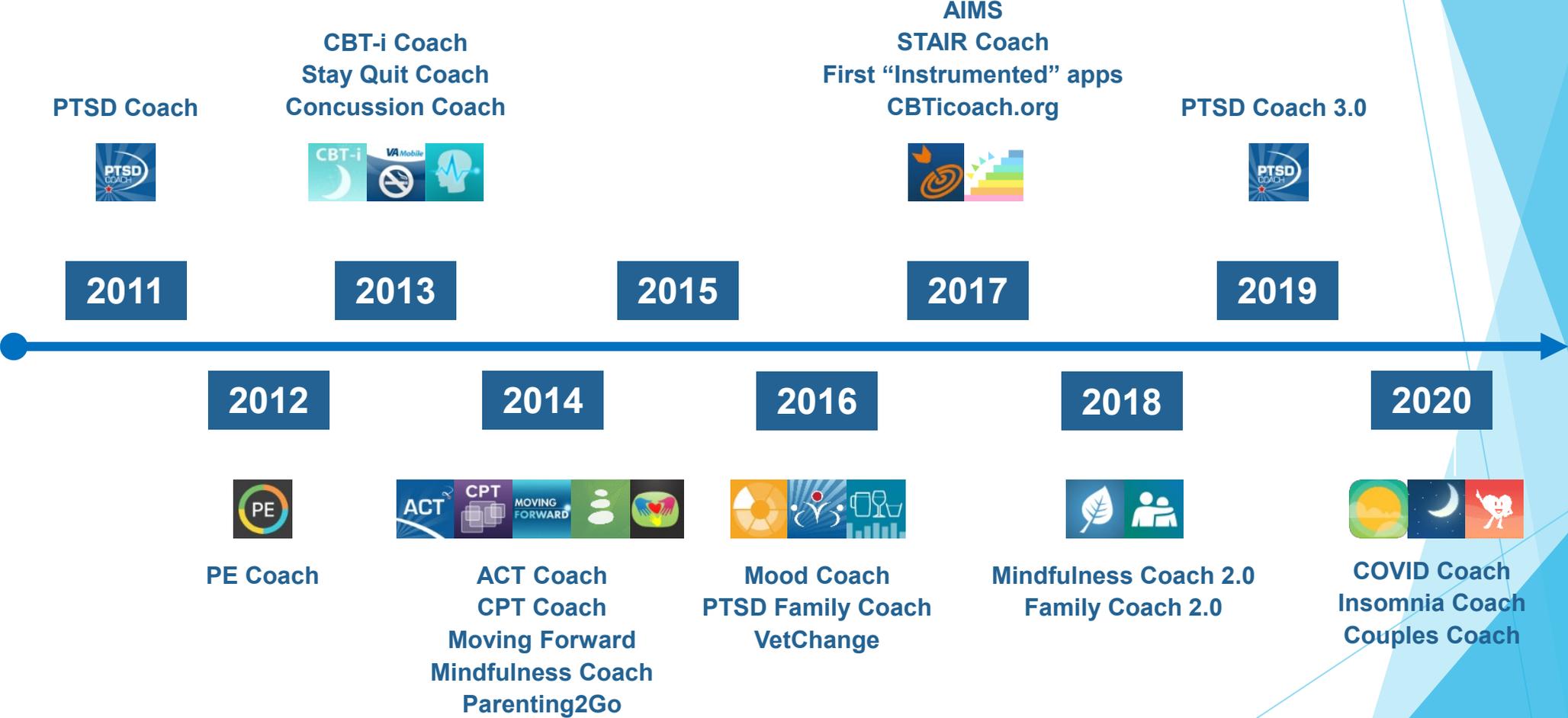
- ▶ Accessible
  - 81% of population owns a smartphone<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ *Physically* accessible
  - Available 24/7
- ▶ Discreet

# Apps and Mental Health Treatment

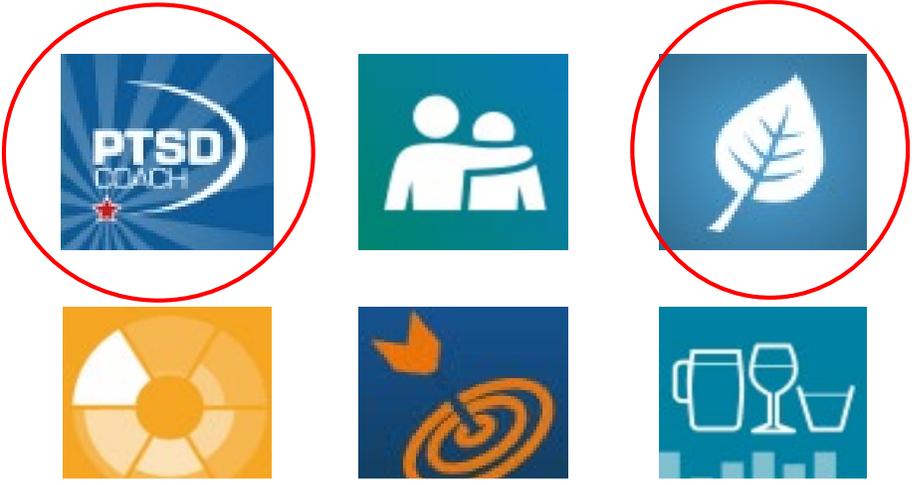
- Facilitate transmission of information to the patient
- Support EBP's
- Track symptoms
- Support maintenance of treatment gains
- Facilitate transmission of information over telehealth



# Timeline of NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps



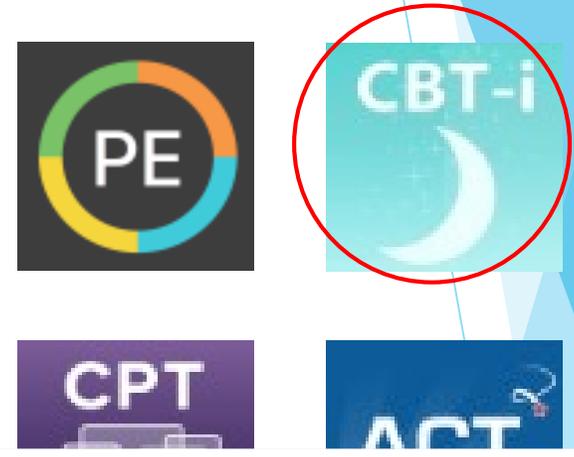
# Self-Care Apps



***PTSD Coach*** and ***Mindfulness Coach***  
are the most downloaded self-care  
apps



# Self-Care Apps

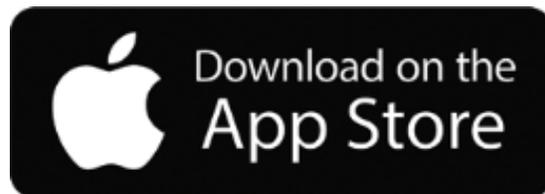


[Redacted text area]



# NCPTSD Apps are...

- ▶ Free & publicly available in the app marketplaces
- ▶ Private: do not share or require personal information
- ▶ Fully Section 508 compliant
- ▶ Evidence-informed
- ▶ Tailored to Veterans & VA providers, can be used by anyone



## Poll #3

Have you ever recommended a health-related app to a Veteran?

- ▶ Yes, many times
- ▶ Yes, occasionally
- ▶ Yes, once or twice
- ▶ No

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, that create a dynamic, layered effect. The colors range from light sky blue to a deep, dark navy blue. The shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, extending towards the center.

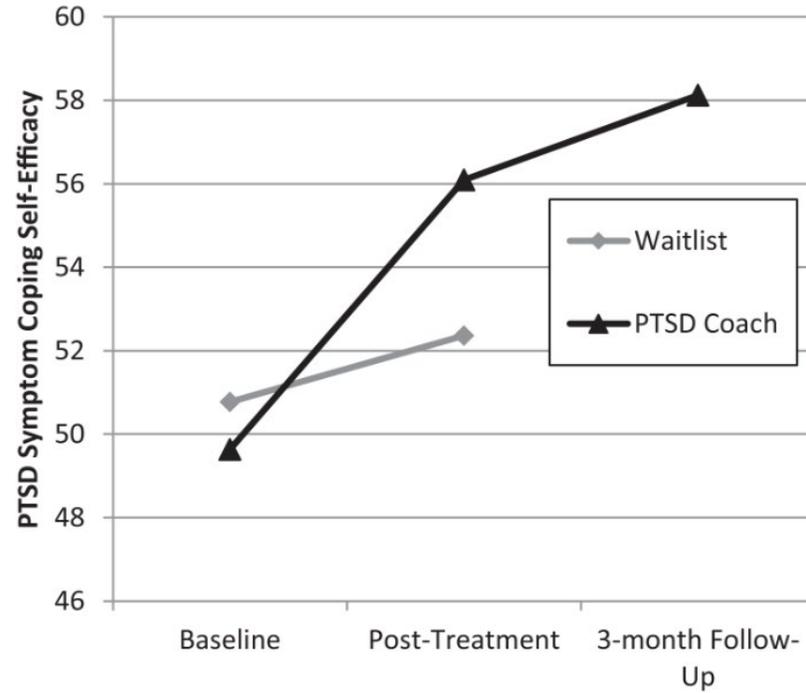
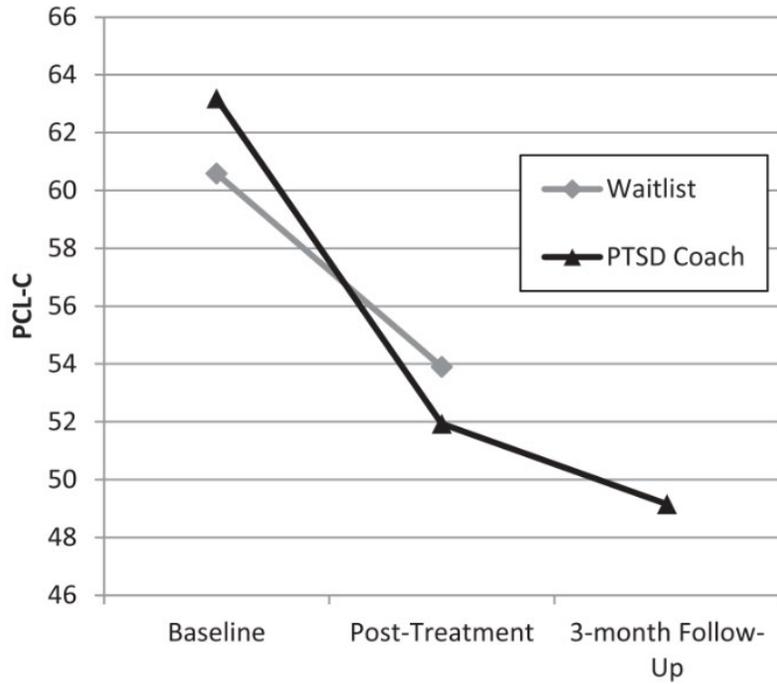
# Support for VA Mobile Mental Health Apps

# Support for VA Mobile Mental Health Apps

Studies have shown that:

- VA apps are generally **acceptable to patients and providers**<sup>3-11</sup>
- **Patients using PTSD Coach showed more improvement compared to those on a waitlist**<sup>8,13</sup>
- **Veterans who use PTSD Coach with the support of a clinician are more likely to accept a MH referral than those who use the app on their own**<sup>13</sup>

# PTSD Coach (Kuhn et al., 2017)



- N = 120
- Experienced traumatic event & PCL-C  $\geq 35$

↓ PTSD Symptoms  
↑ Coping Self-efficacy

# PTSD Coach Research (Possemato et al., 2016)

Measure	Condition	Posttreatment		Group effect	
		<i>n</i>	%	Effect size $\phi$	Significance test $\chi^2 (df), P$
Clinically significant PTSD change	SM	3	37.5	.33	$\chi^2 (1,18)=1.9 P = .17$
	CS	7	70		
Accepted MH referral	SM	2	25	.66	$\chi^2 (1,18)=7.9 P \leq .01$
	CS	9	90		
Attended any MH treatment	SM	4	40	.30	$\chi^2 (1,20)=1.8 P = .18$
	CS	7	70		
Attended PTSD treatment	SM	1	10	.61	$\chi^2 (1,20)=7.5 P \leq .01$
	CS	7	70		

Clinician-supported (CS) PTSD Coach users were more likely to accept a MH referral compared to self-managed (SM) users.

# Mindfulness Coach in the Wild *(in prep)*

Elissa Kozlov, Ian Pagano, Erin Bantum, Beth Jaworski, Robyn Walser, Katherine Taylor, Kelly Ramsey, Jason Owen

- ▶ Why Mindfulness Coach?
  - ▶ Popularity: 25k downloads in April 2020
  - ▶ August 1, 2019 - April 8, 2020: N = 104,067 unique installations
  - ▶ One of our first self-guided training plans
- ▶ First test of longitudinal, individual-level data
- ▶ Establish baseline data for VA App Connect system
- ▶ Ongoing lack of data on publicly-available mental health apps
- ▶ Development of data infrastructure for managing JSON analytics data

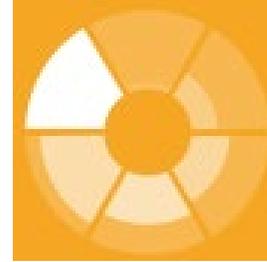
# Pilot Evaluation of the Insomnia Coach App *(in prep)*

- ▶ Eric Kuhn, Deloras Puran, Katherine Miller, Beth Jaworski, Jason Owen
- ▶ Aims: Evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and potential efficacy of Insomnia Coach
- ▶ Participants:
  - ▶ Recruited via Facebook
  - ▶ Randomized n = 50 to either Insomnia Coach or waitlist
- ▶ Design and Methods:
  - ▶ 12-week RCT (pre, post, 6-week follow-up, mixed methods)
  - ▶ Strong follow-up rates (96% post-tx; 84% follow-up)
- ▶ Preliminary Results:
  - ▶ 100% positive reception & would recommend app to other Veterans
  - ▶ Strong engagement with sleep diary (100%), Sleep Coach (85%)

# Self-Care Apps

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, that create a dynamic, layered effect. The colors range from light sky blue to a deep, dark navy blue. The shapes are primarily concentrated on the right side of the frame, with some extending towards the center, leaving the left side mostly white.

# Components of Self-Care Apps



▶ Learn

▶ Skills

▶ Tracking

▶ Crisis Resources

▶ Customization

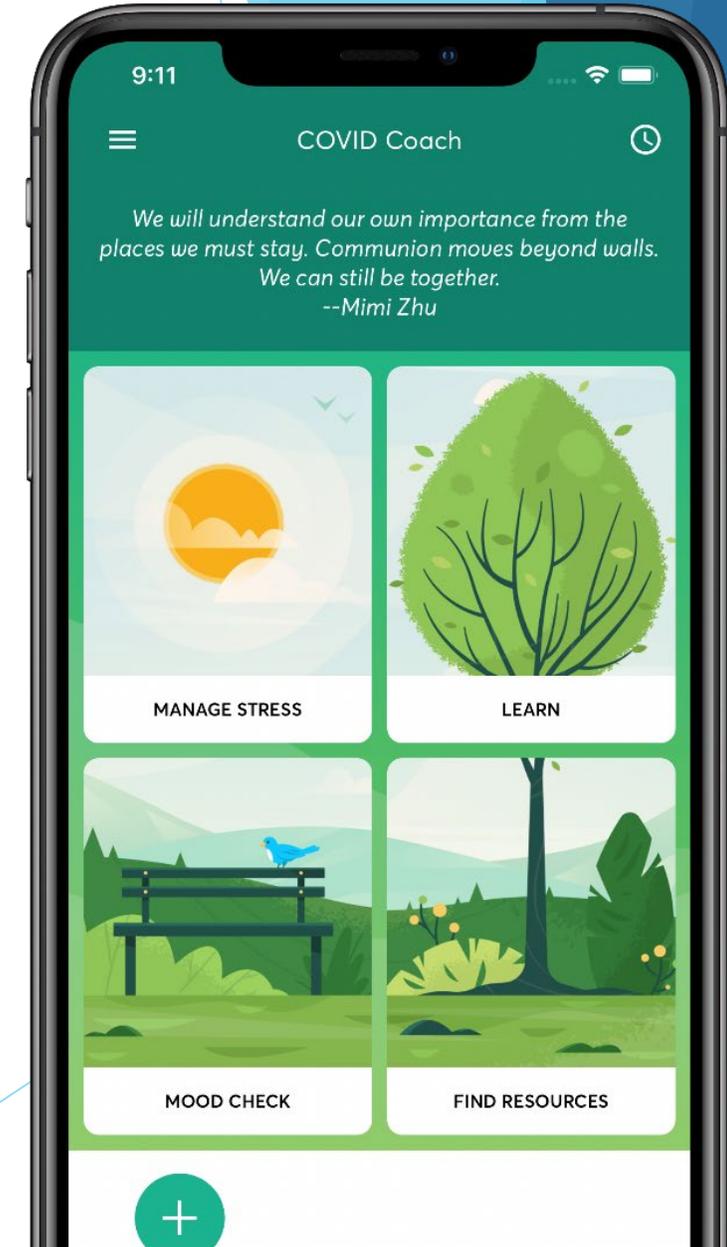
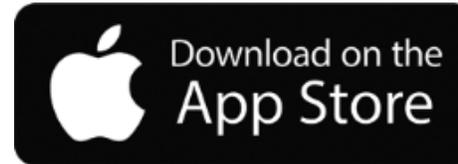
▶ Save favorite tools

# COVID Coach

For managing stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic

## Uses:

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



Learn more at the National Center for PTSD website:

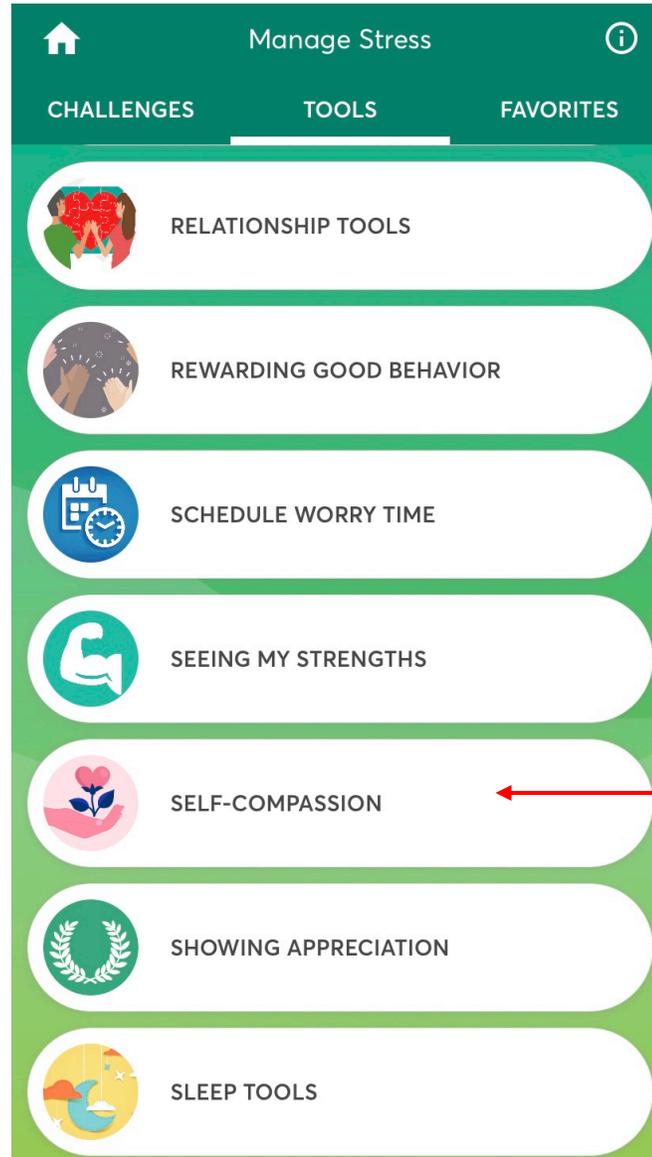
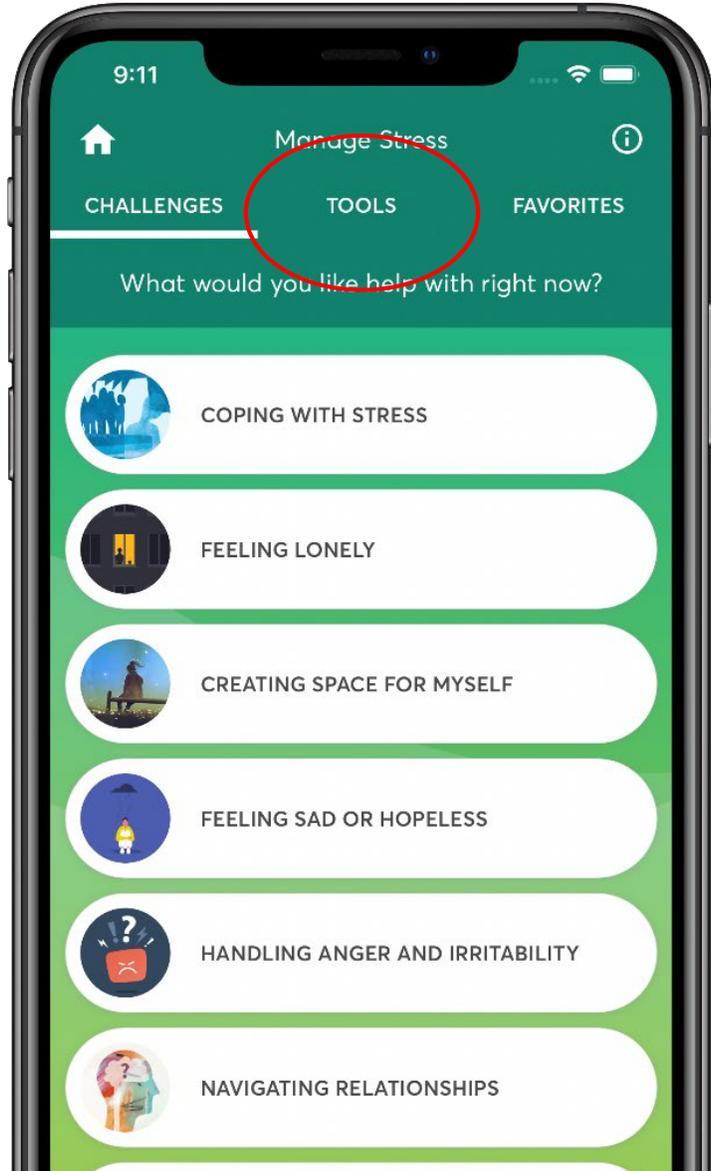
[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID\\_coach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID_coach_app.asp)

# Development of COVID Coach

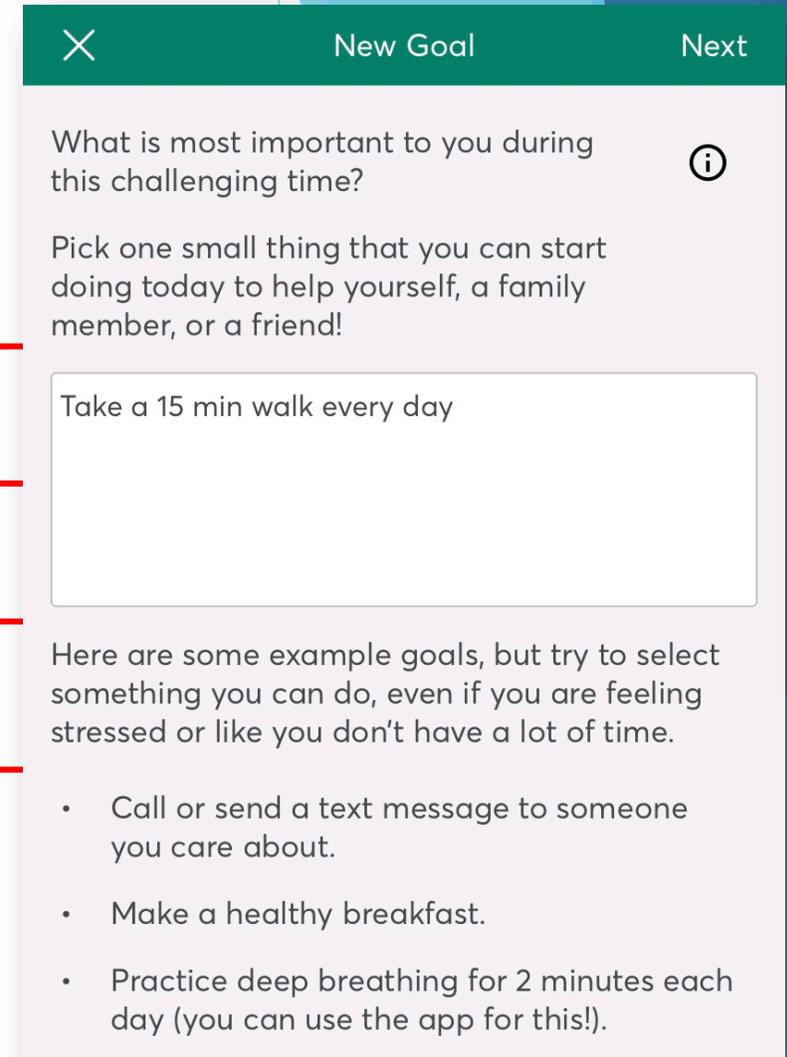
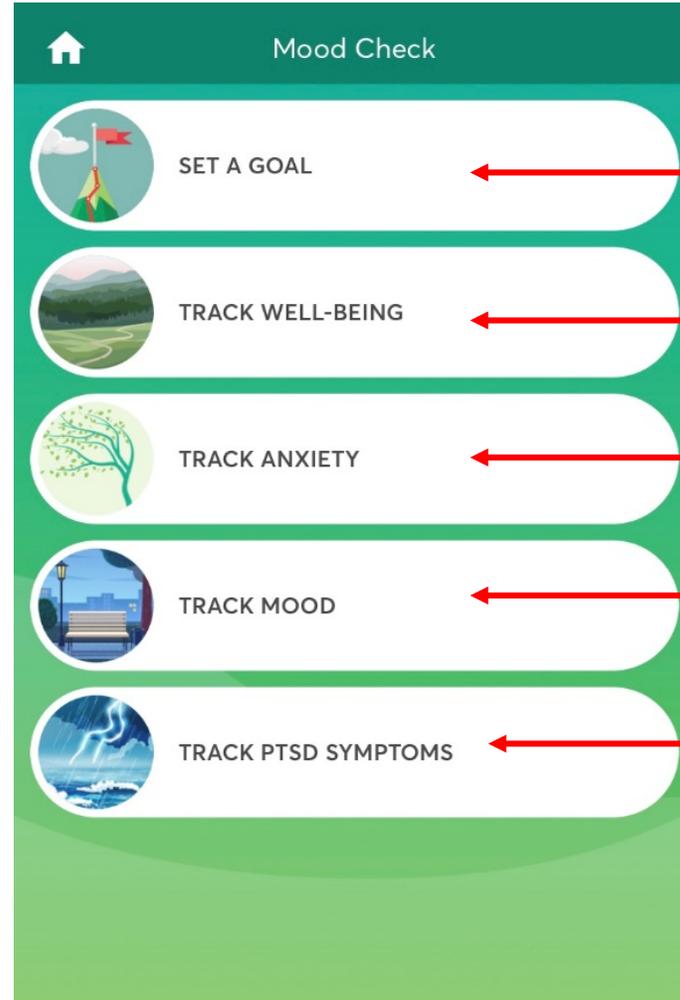
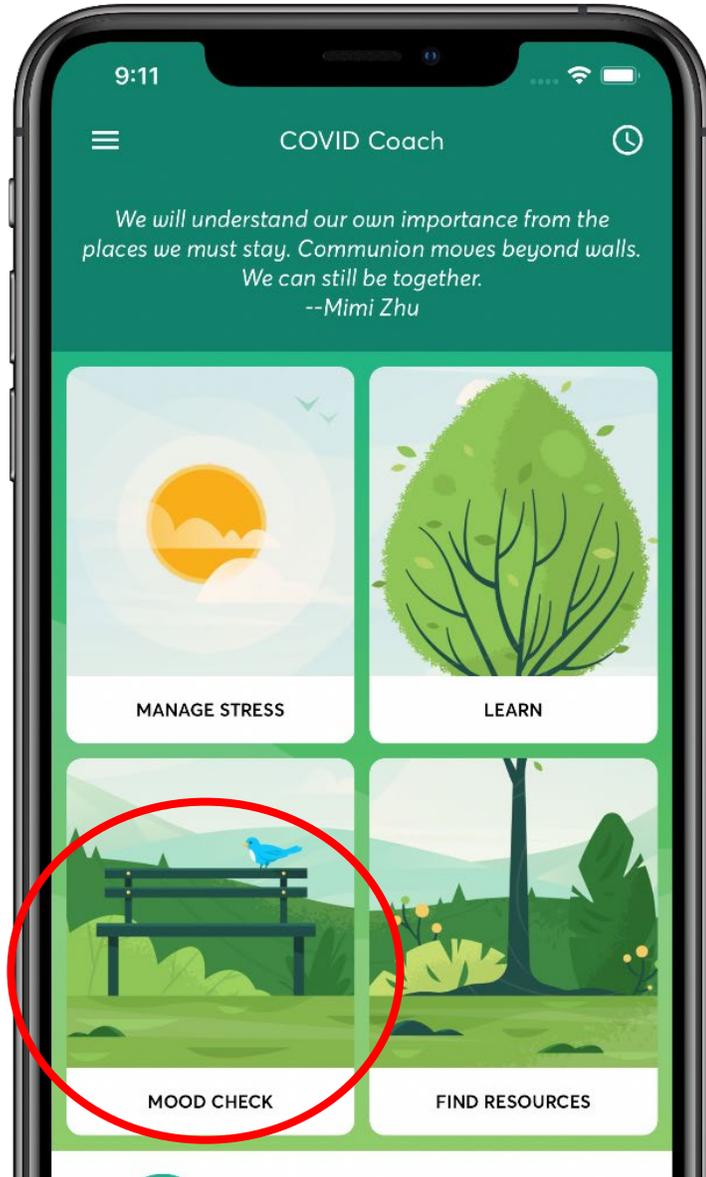
- ▶ Developed in March 2020
- ▶ Approved for release in April 2020
- ▶ Started with PTSD Coach, tailored to current situation
- ▶ New features include:
  - ▶ Integration of tools across sections
  - ▶ Additional assessments
  - ▶ Expanded resources



# Manage Stress

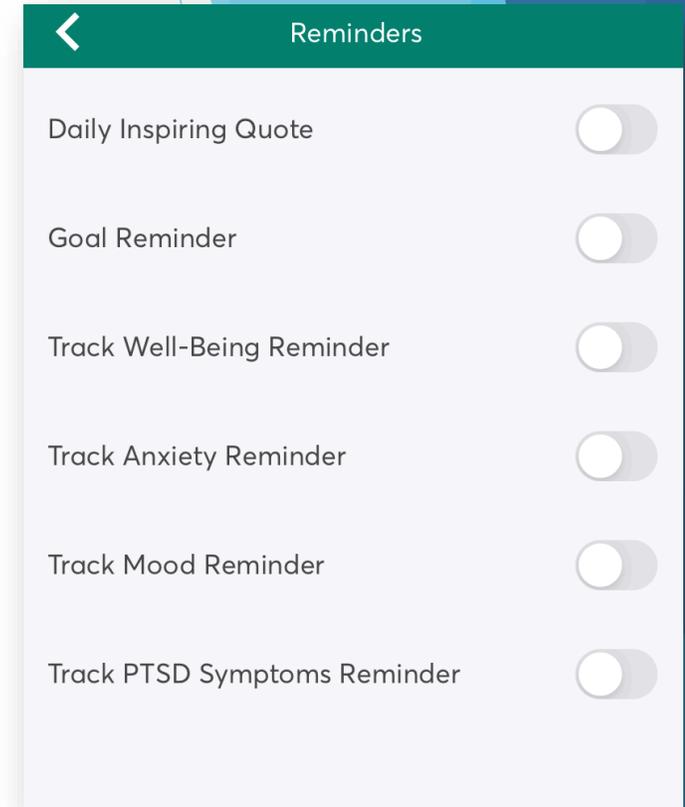
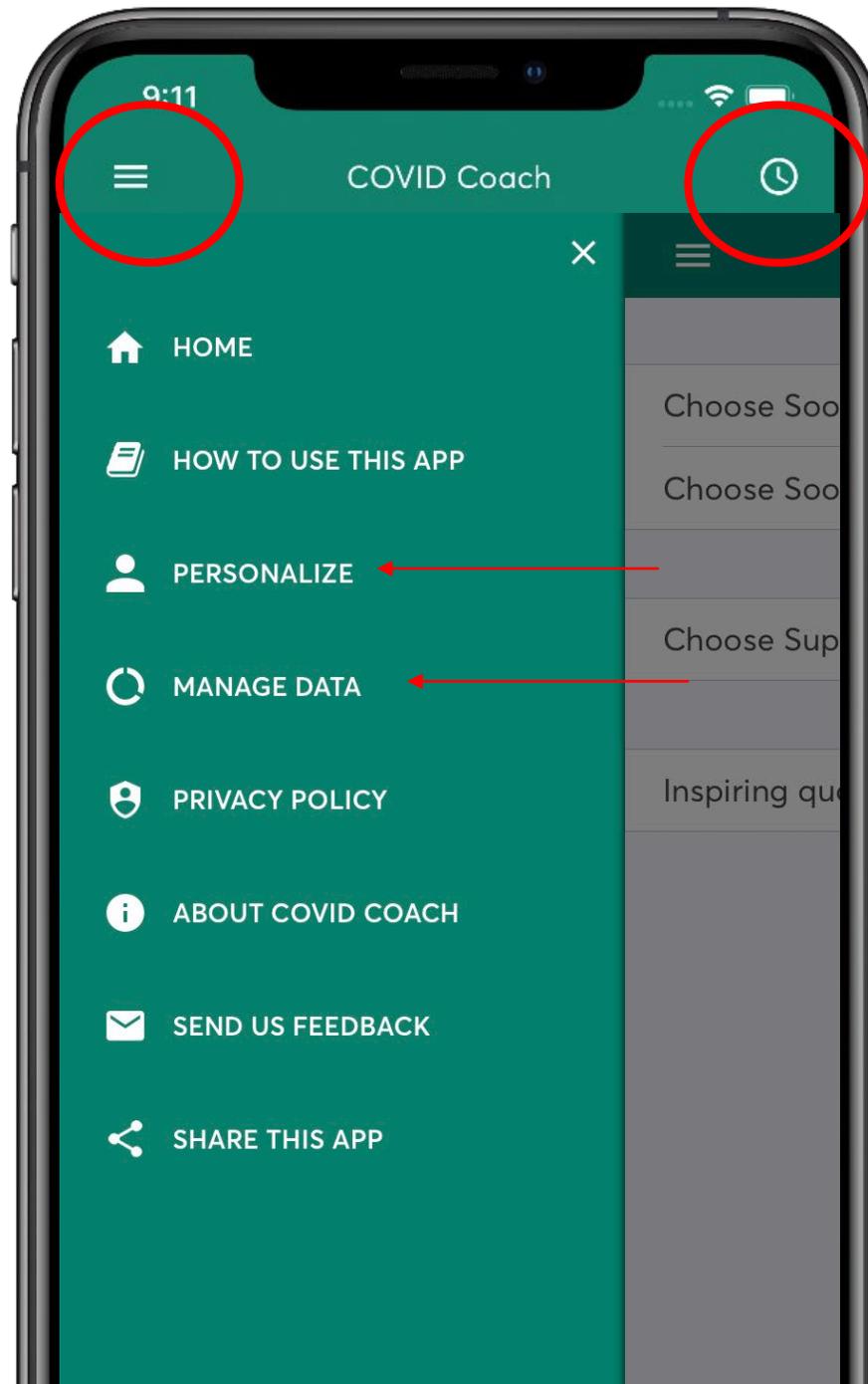


# Mood Check



# Extra Features

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

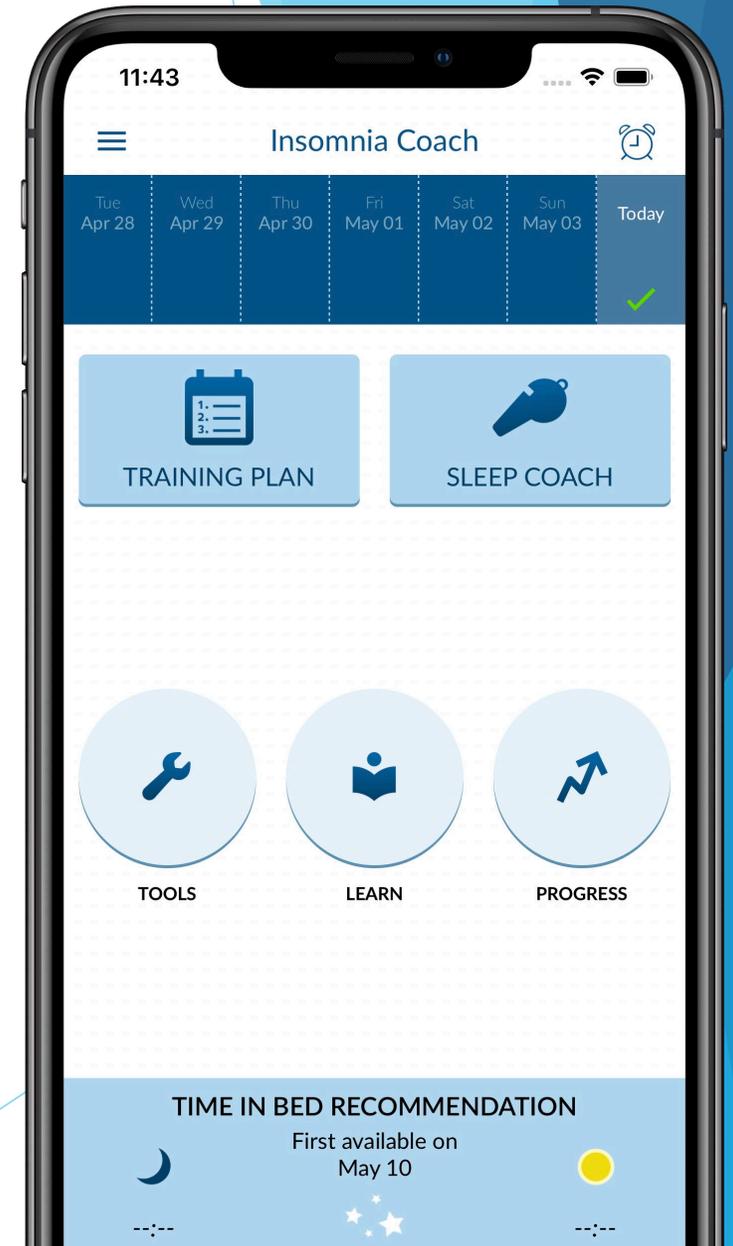


# Insomnia Coach

For Veterans, Service members, and anyone who would like to improve their sleep

## Features:

- Guided, 5-week training plan to help you track and improve sleep
- Sleep coach with tips for sleeping and personal feedback about your sleep
- Interactive sleep diary to help you keep track of daily changes
- 17 tools to help you get your sleep back on track



Contact our team with feedback to help us improve this app:

[MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov)

# Sleep Training

Guided, 5-week training plan to improve sleep. Each week, users

are a

- Co
- sle
- Bro
- hy
- Ass
- Co

Cancel Sleep Diary Help

FALLING ASLEEP

What time did you get into bed yesterday? ⓘ

Tap to enter value

What time did you try to go to sleep? ⓘ

Tap to enter value

How long did it take you to fall asleep? ⓘ

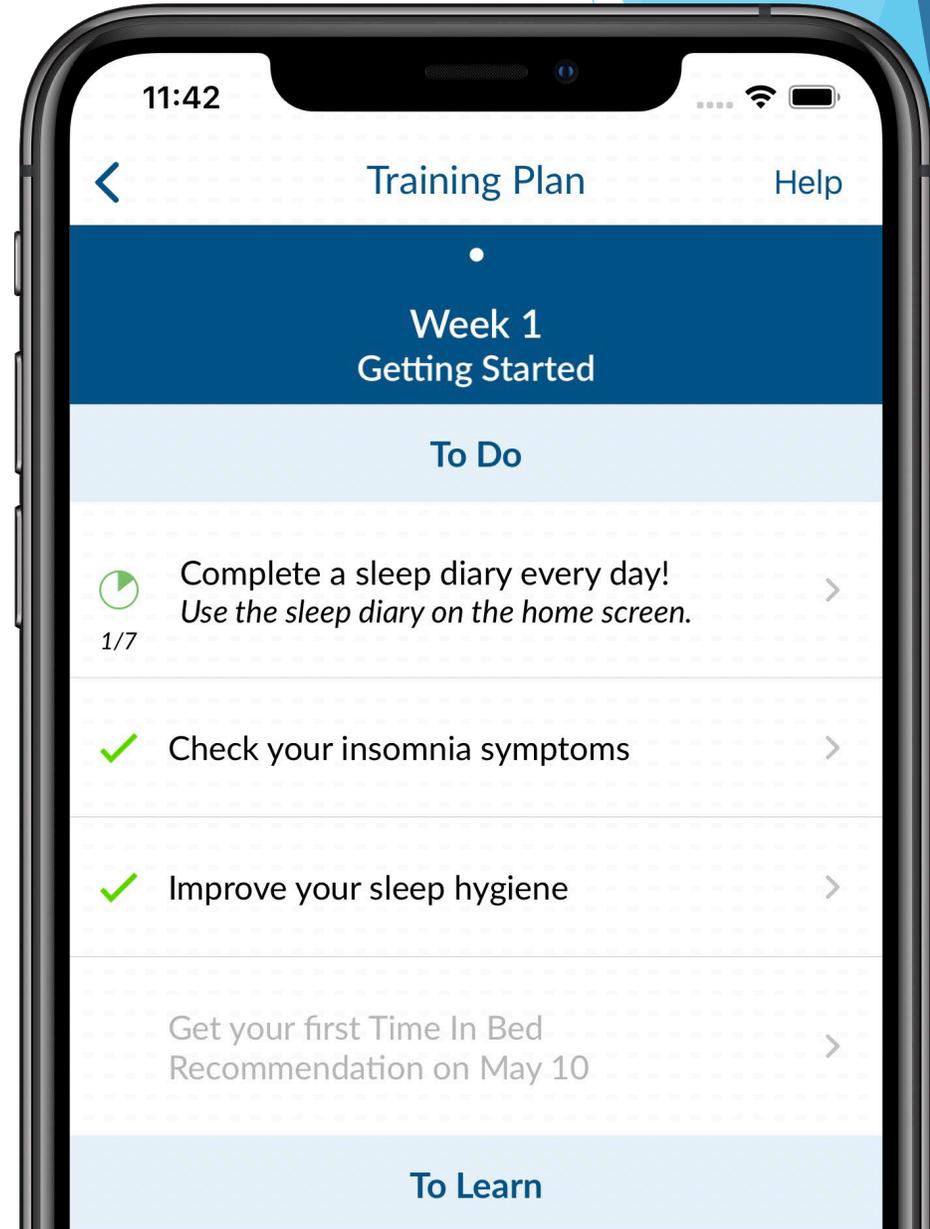
Tap to enter value

STAYING ASLEEP

rn about

g sleep

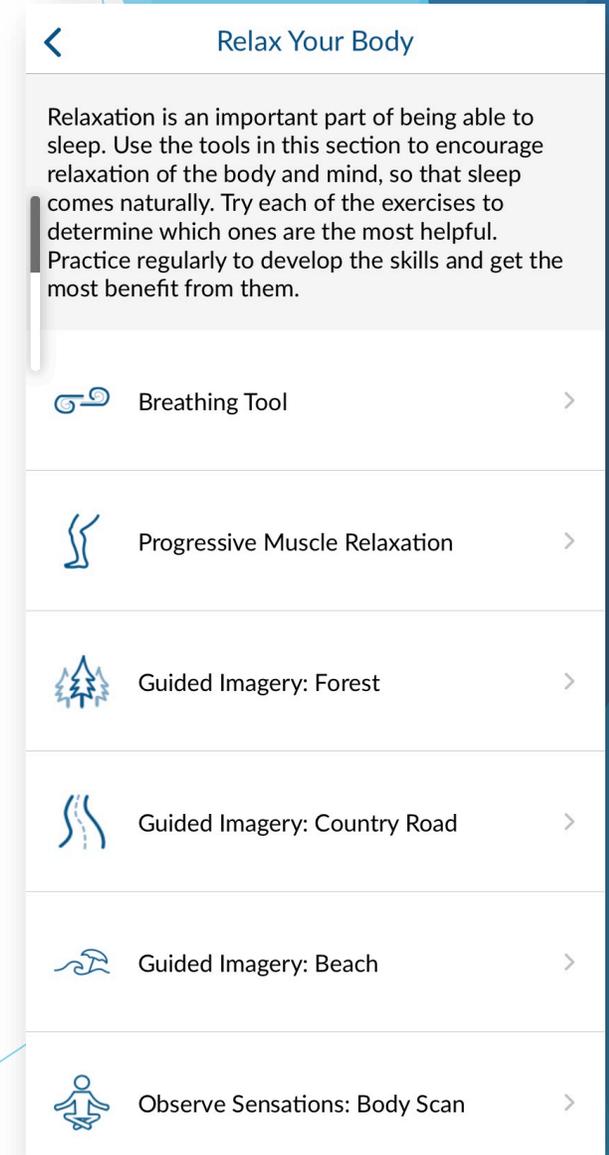
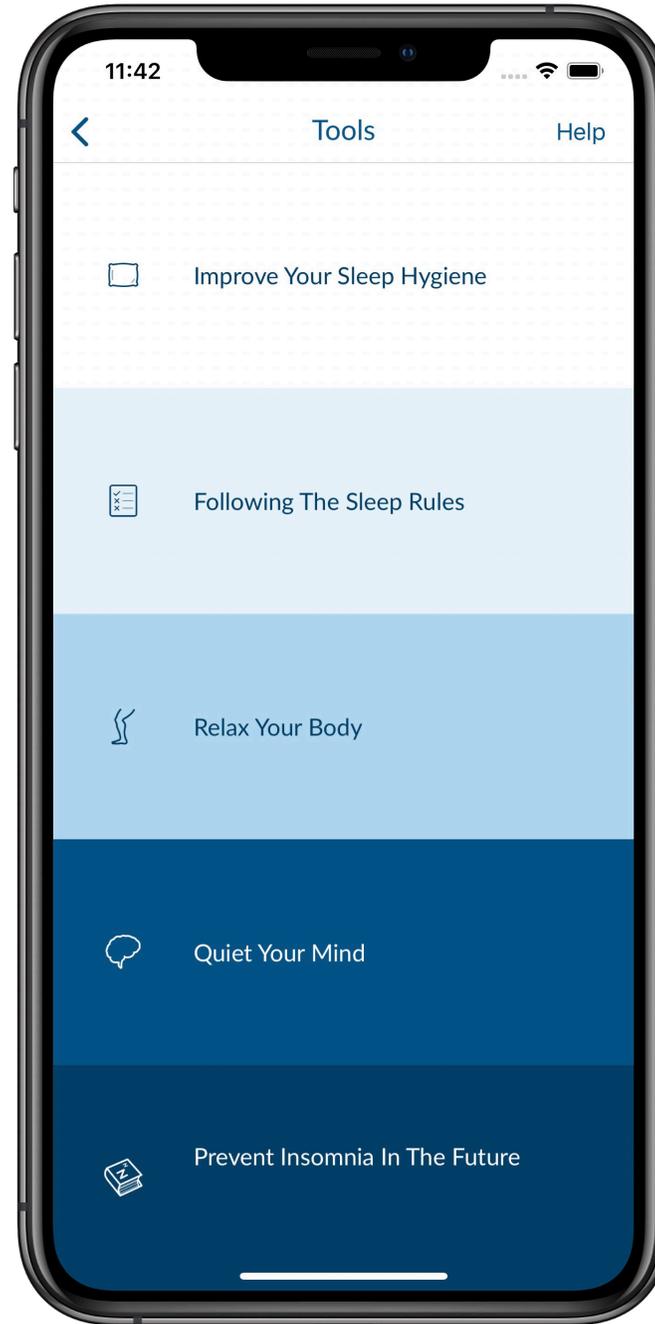
ptoms  
ries



# Sleep Tools

List of 17 tips and tools to help users improve their sleep, including:

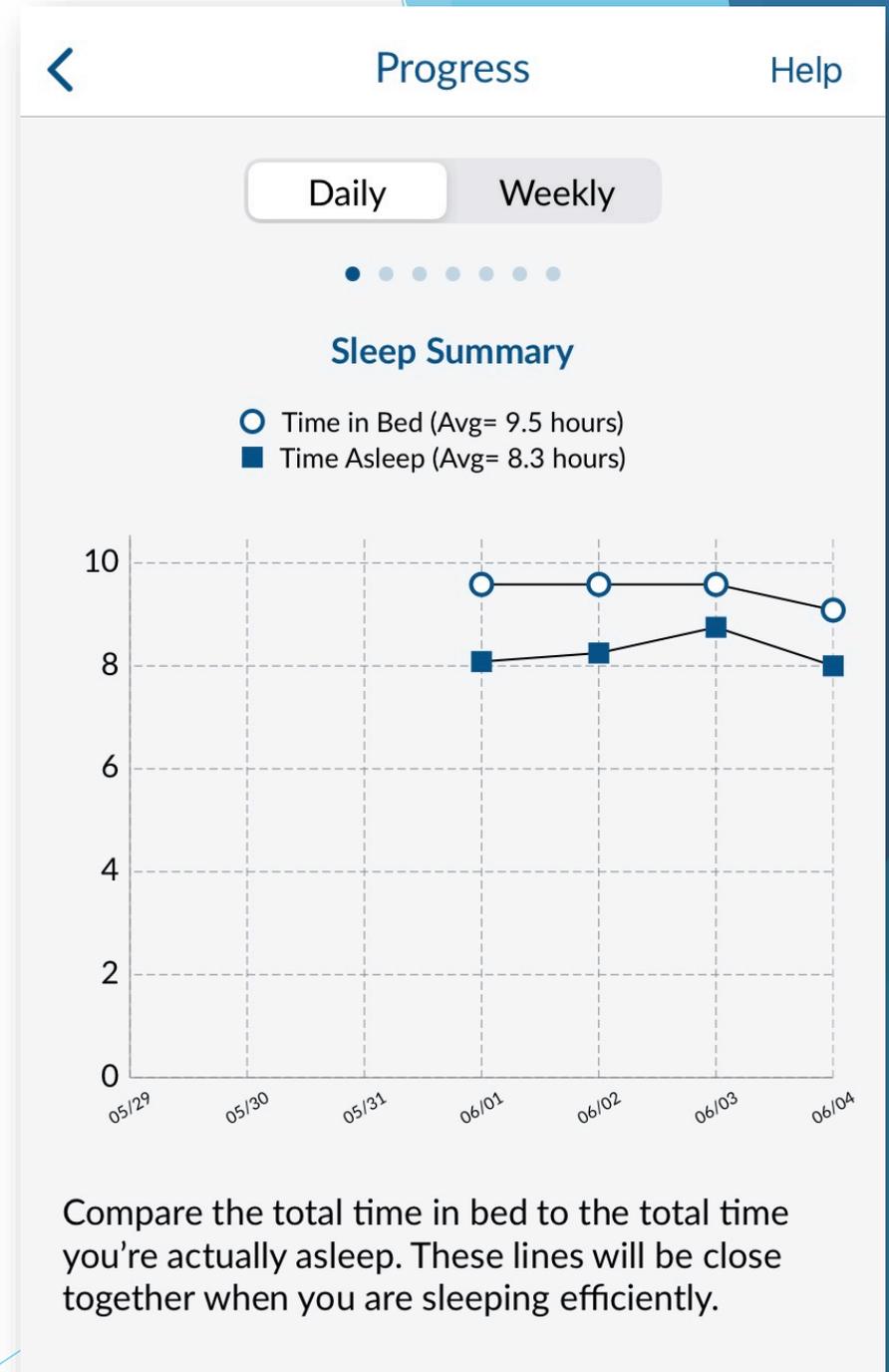
- Tips for improving sleep hygiene
- Relaxation exercises
- Cognitive strategies to reduce anxiety
- Self-quiz to help prevent relapse



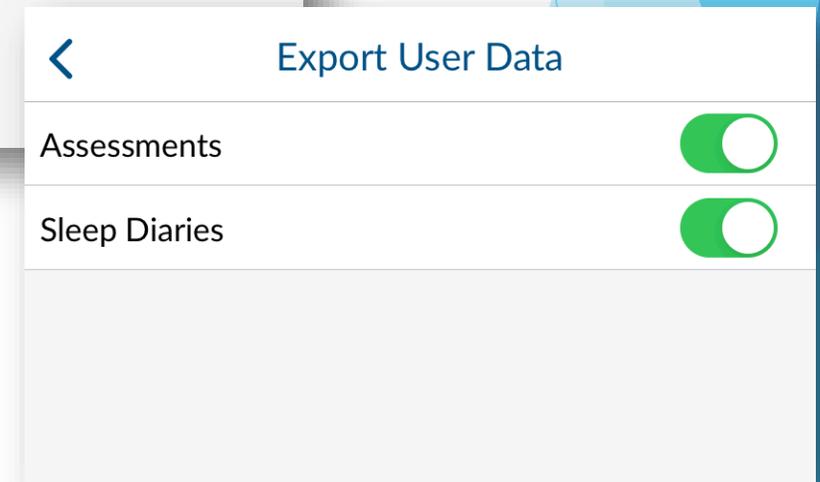
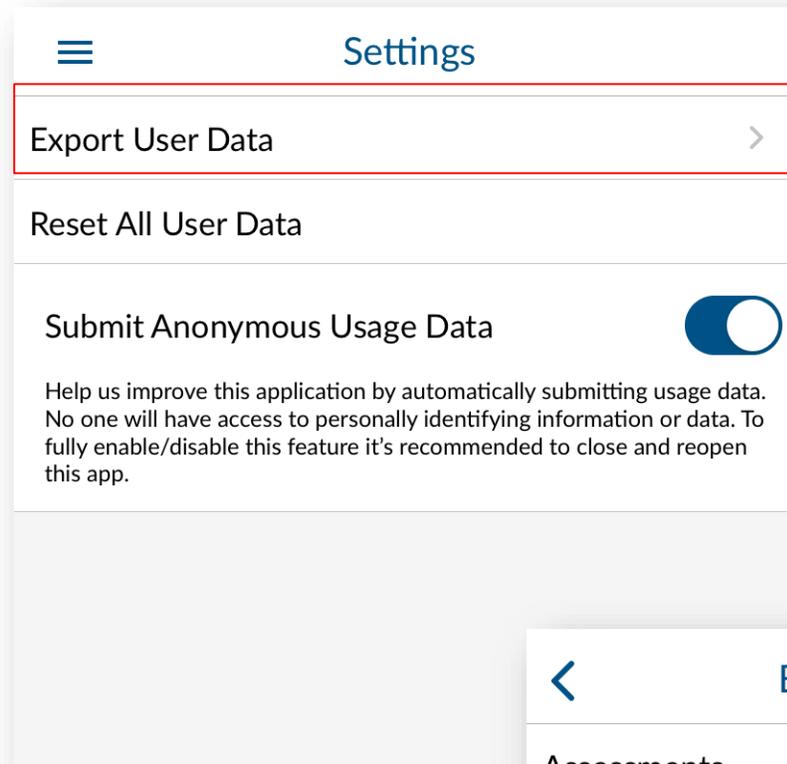
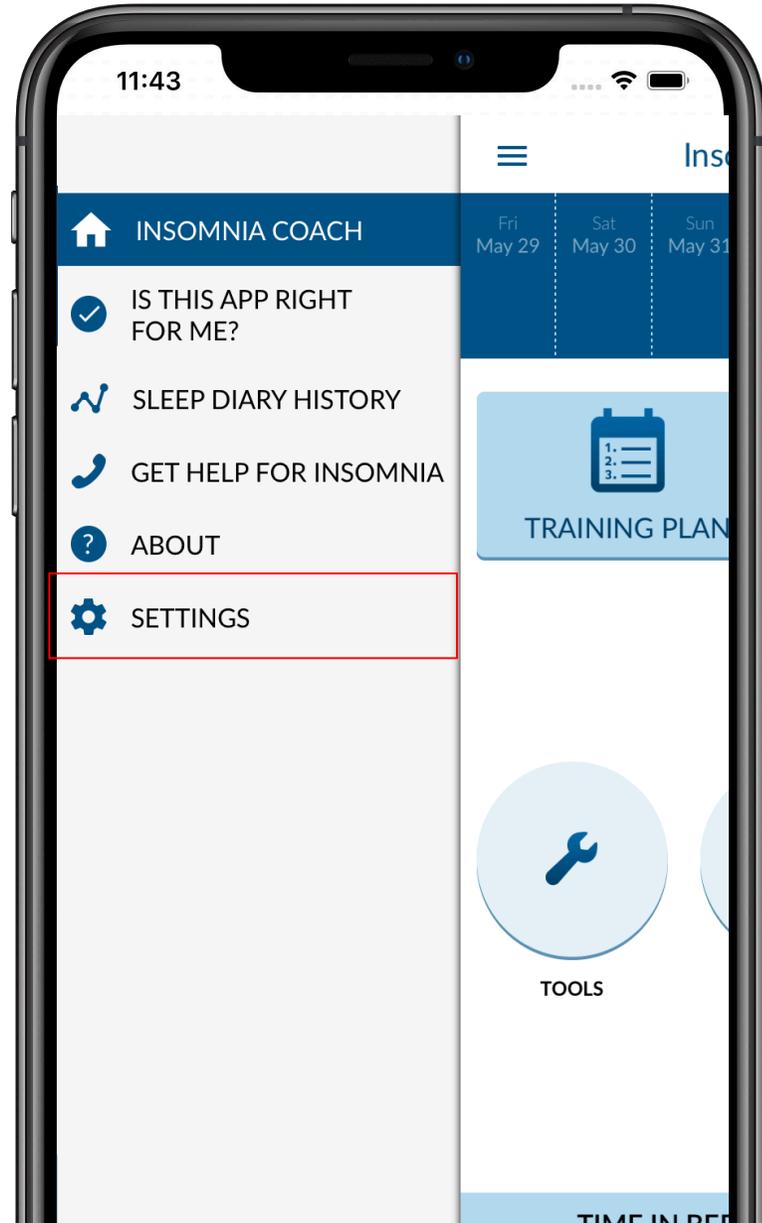
# Track Progress

Track overall sleep and important sleep factors over time:

- Sleep Efficiency
- Time to fall asleep
- Wake times
- Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) scores



# Export Sleep Diaries and Assessments

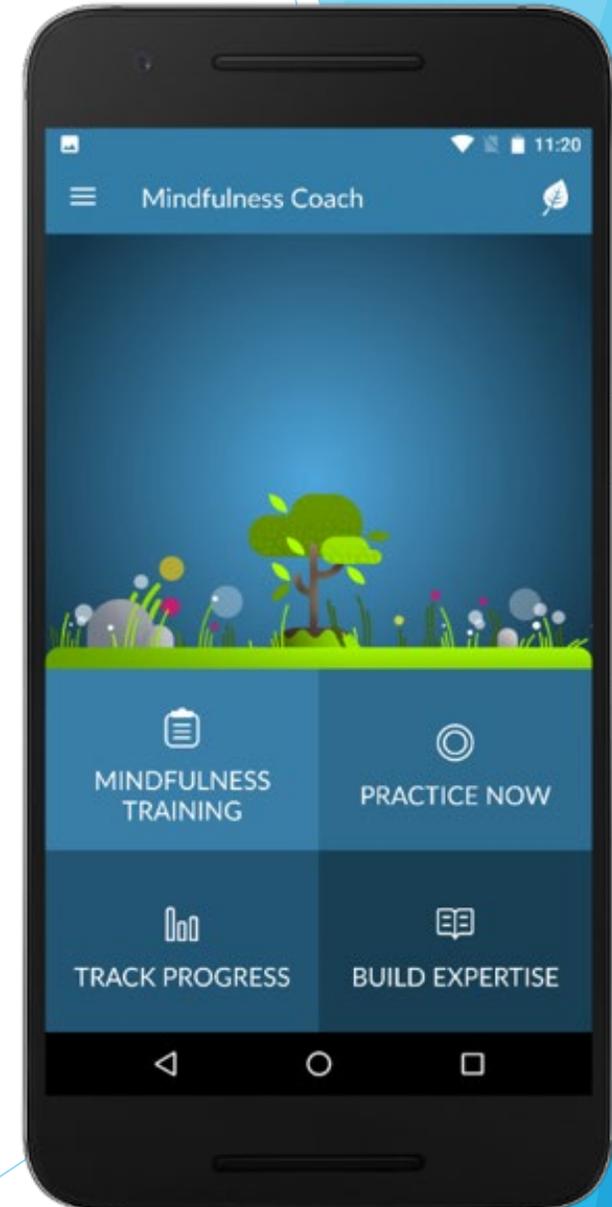


# Mindfulness Coach

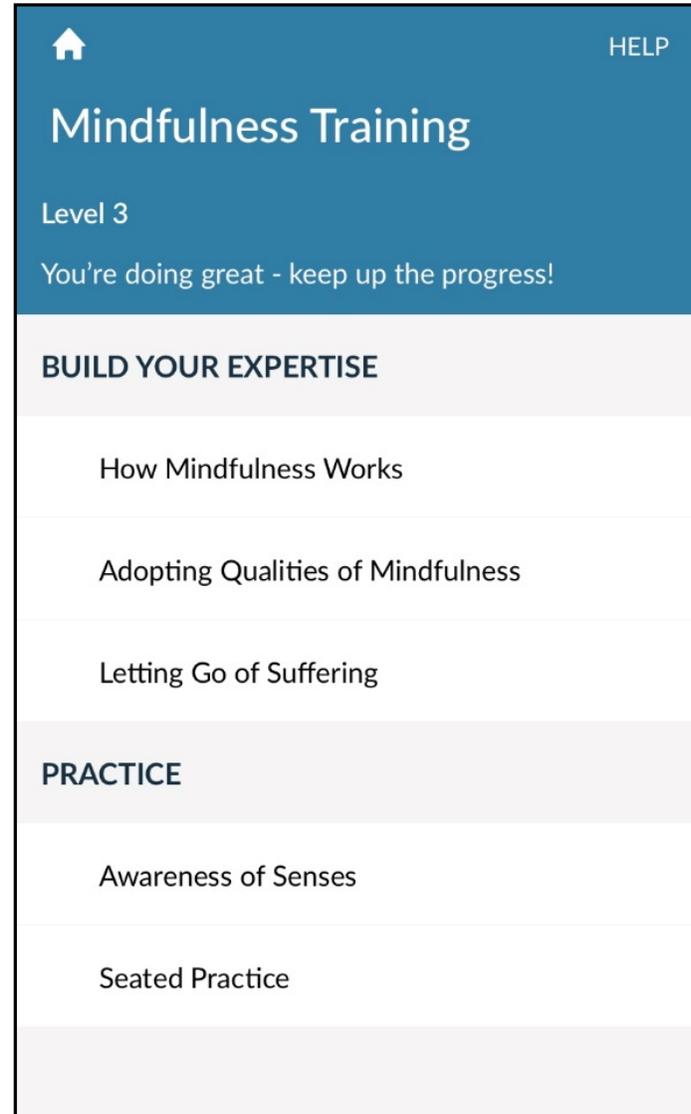
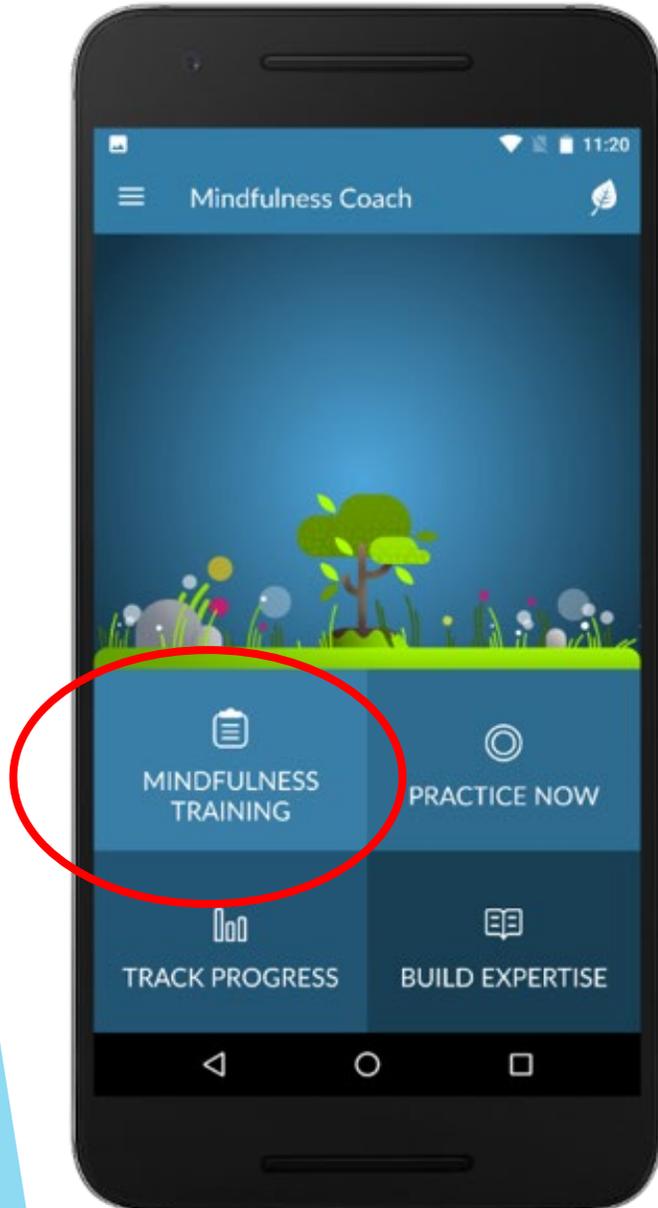
Designed to support independent mindfulness practice.

Features:

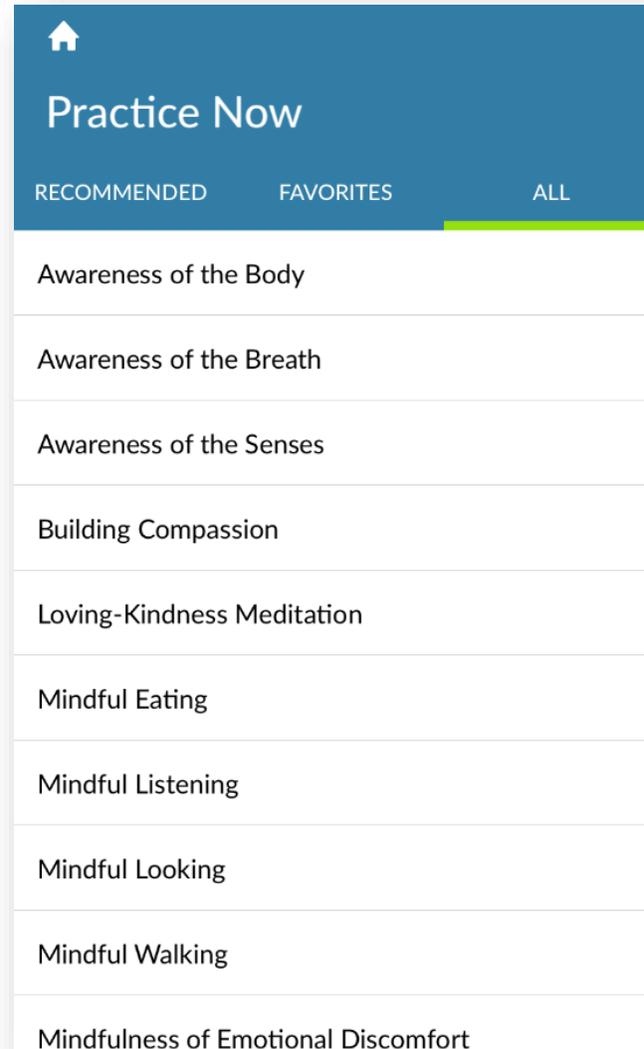
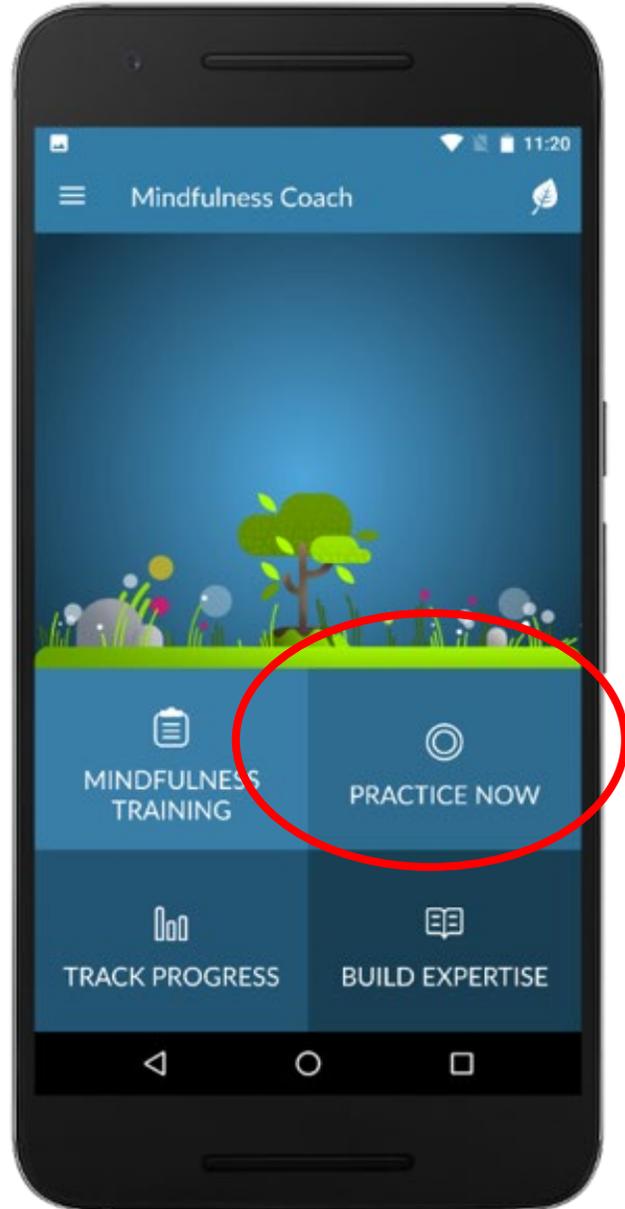
- ▶ Mindfulness Training: A stepped training plan that ties together features from each section
- ▶ Practice Now: Library of mindfulness exercises
- ▶ Track Progress: Assessments and goal tracker
- ▶ Build Expertise: Short readings to increase understanding of how mindfulness works



# Mindfulness Training



# Focus on the Present Moment



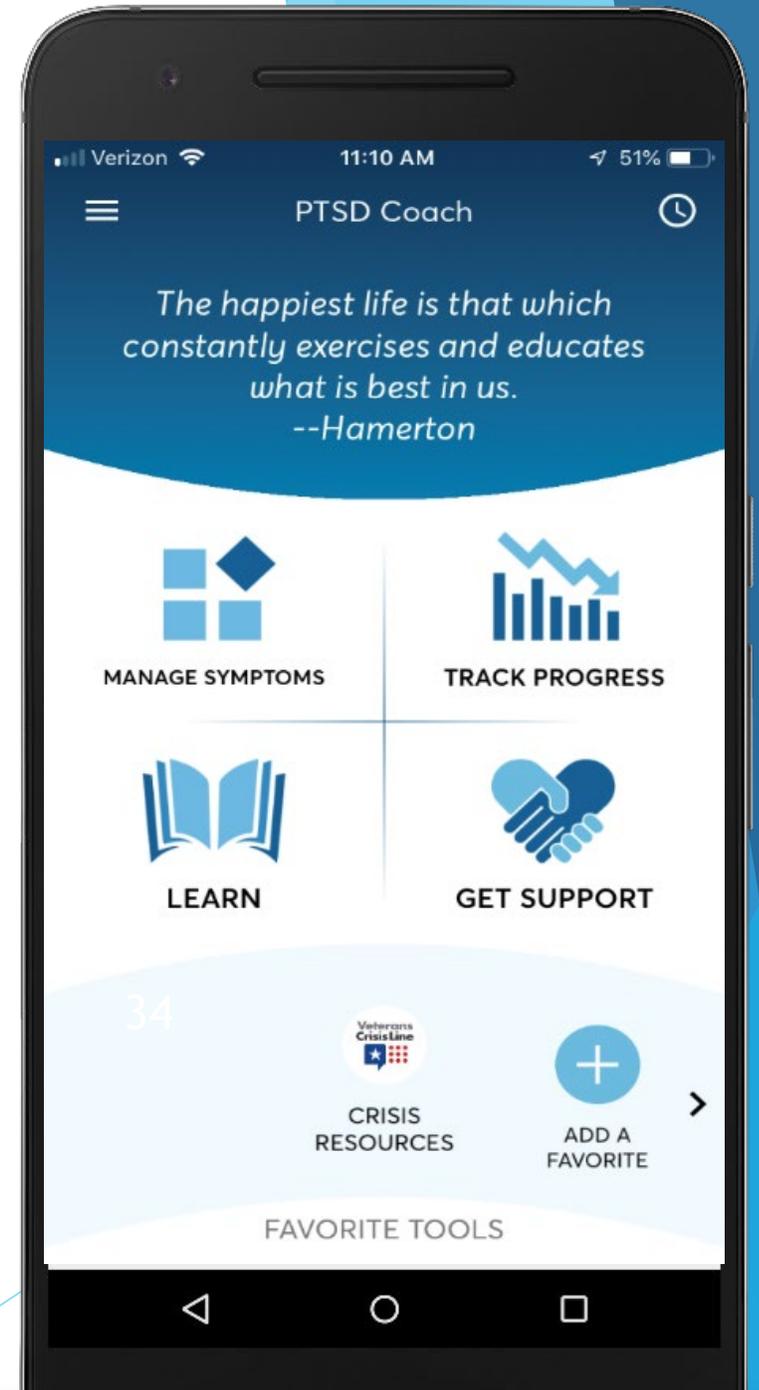
The app features a curated list of exercises to help you focus your attention on the present moment

# PTSD Coach

For those affected by trauma.

## Features:

- Learn about PTSD and available treatments
- Track Progress with the PCL-5
- Manage Symptoms with coping tools
- Get Support by connecting to treatment or growing your support network

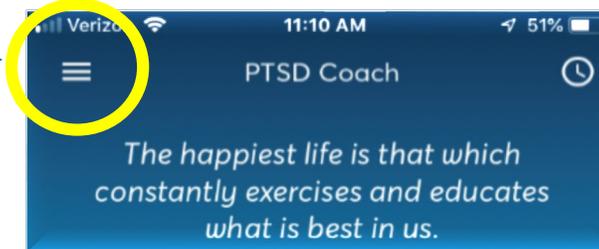


# Safety Plan now in PTSD Coach!



## To access the Safety Plan:

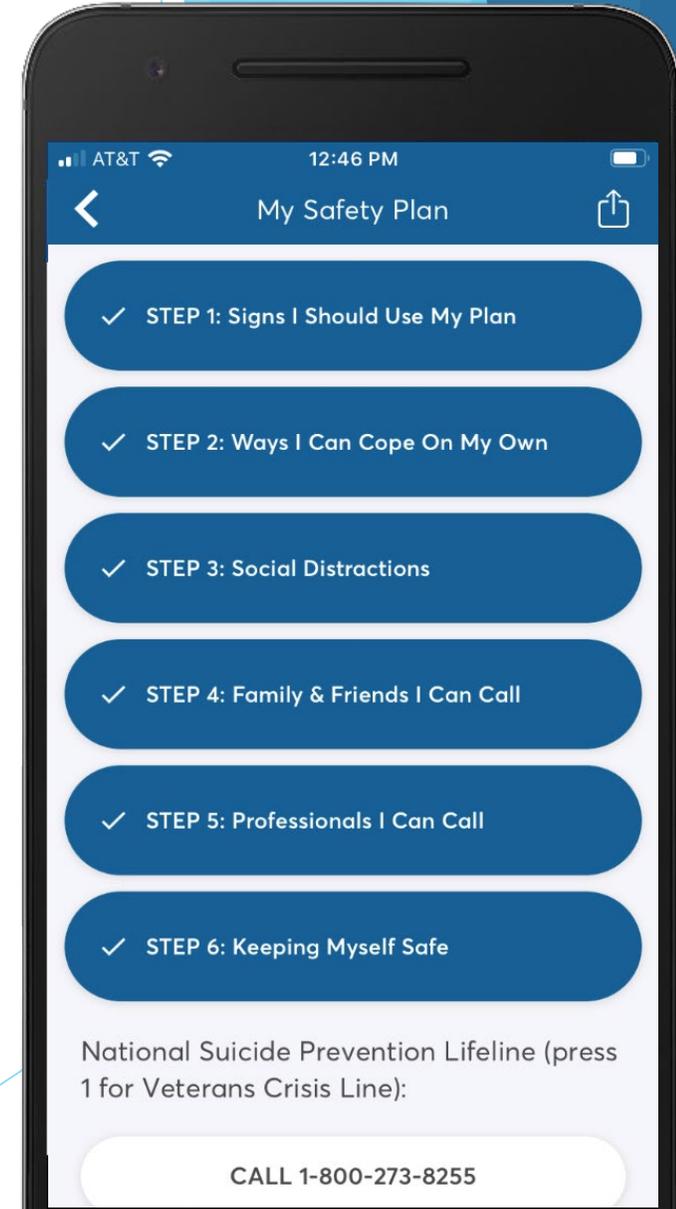
1. Download\* and open PTSD Coach
2. Tap the lateral menu
3. Tap Safety Plan



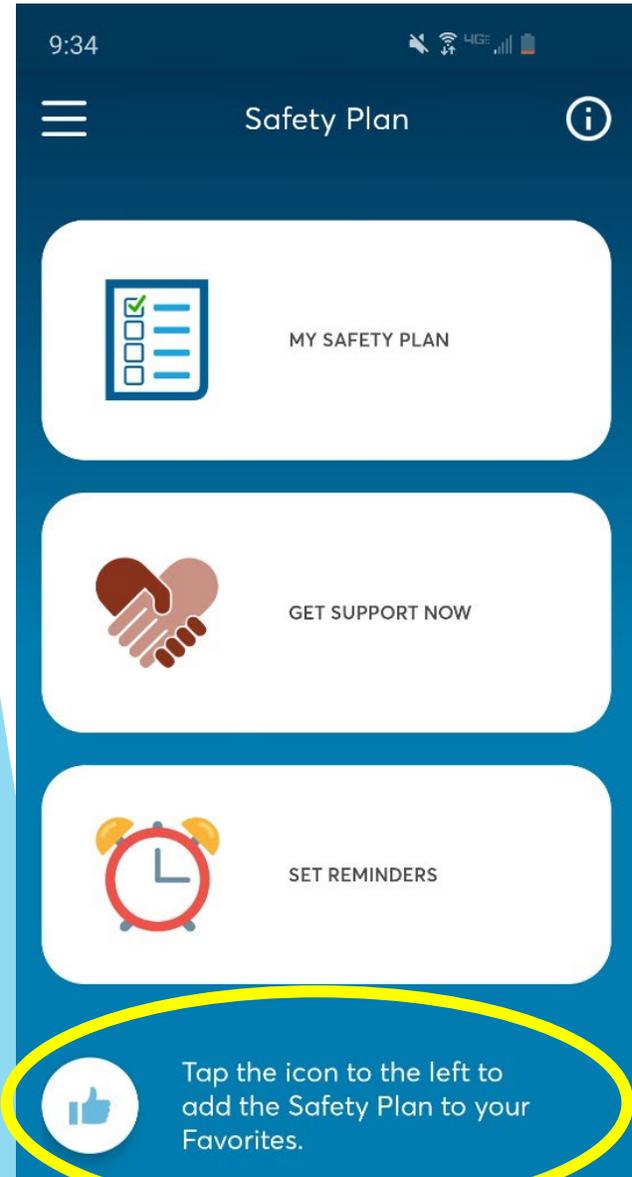
\*If you have previously downloaded PTSD Coach, you may need to update it from the App Store/Google Play.

**National Center for PTSD website:**

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



# Quick access to the Safety Plan



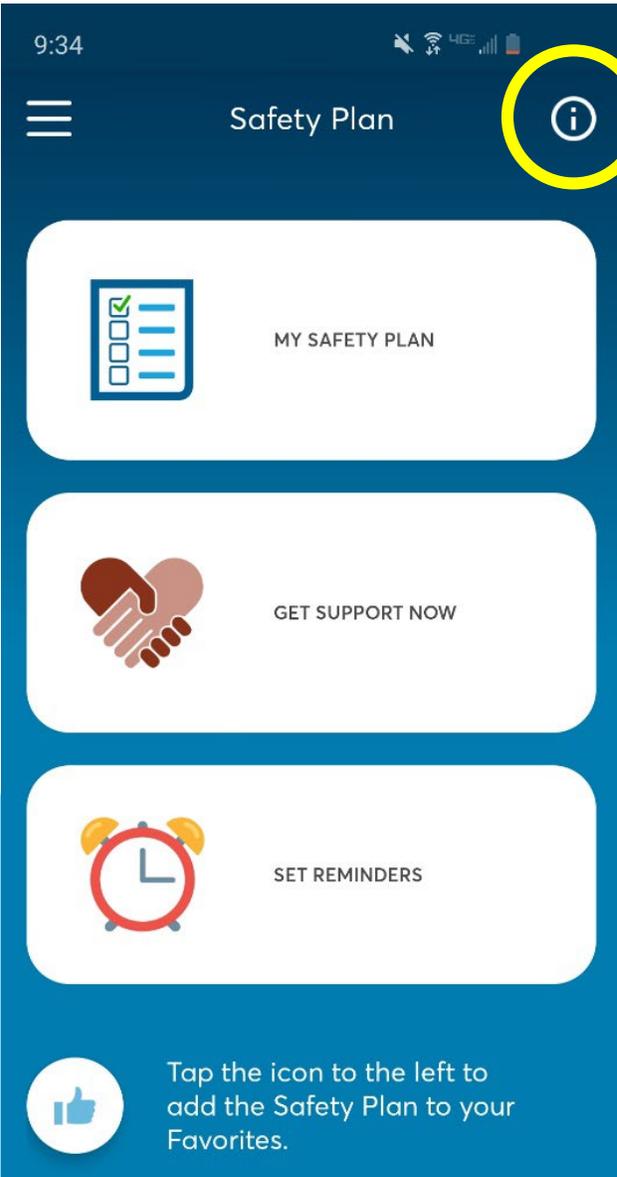
- “Favorite” the Safety Plan - it will then appear on the PTSD Coach home screen for quick access
- Recommend to all users to ensure quick access the Safety Plan
- Users can also set a reminder to review their plan

# Safety Plan App Module Overview

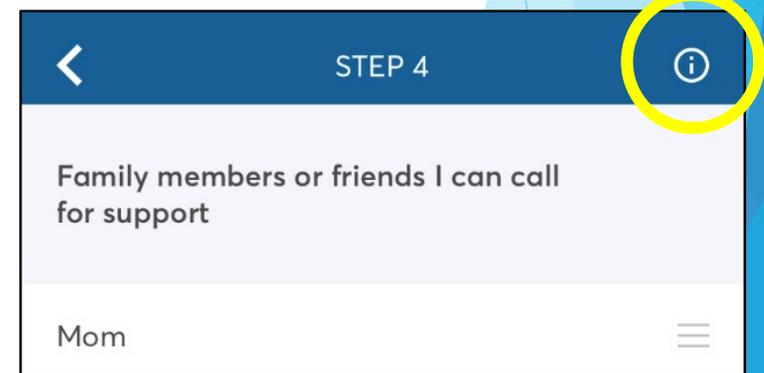


- Based on VA's Safety Planning Intervention Manual with input from many key stakeholders, including:
  - Drs. Barbara Stanley & Greg Brown
  - VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
  - VA's Rocky Mountain MIRECC
  - Veterans Crisis Line
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- Compliant with VA privacy rules and Section 508

# Get more info with “i” buttons



Tap the small “i” icon to get additional information



# Exporting the Safety Plan



Android  
export  
icon



iOS  
export  
icon

To protect privacy, data from the app is not transmitted anywhere - it stays on the user's device.

- We recommend that users *export* their plans and save a copy for themselves.
- The Safety Plan PDF can also be shared with providers via secure messaging.

## Poll #4

How likely are you to try out one of these apps in the next two weeks?

- ▶ I definitely will try one
- ▶ I might try one
- ▶ I'm not sure
- ▶ I probably won't try one
- ▶ I definitely won't try one

## Poll #5

Which app feature do you think will be most useful in your work with Veterans?

- ▶ Manage Symptoms
- ▶ Psychoeducation
- ▶ Symptom Tracking
- ▶ Crisis Resources
- ▶ Reminders

# Additional Resources

To report bugs, offer suggestions, or ask questions about VA mobile mental health apps: [MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov)

Visit us online for additional materials and information:

- App descriptions, videos, and links:  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile)
- PBI Network CE Lecture Series:  
[www.myvaapps.com/pbi-network-ce-lecture-series/](http://www.myvaapps.com/pbi-network-ce-lecture-series/)
- Tech into Care SharePoint (on VA network only):  
<https://tinyurl.com/Tech-Into-Care>
- To order free rack cards, Rx pads, and posters:  
<https://orders.gpo.gov/PTSD.aspx>

Download apps:

- iTunes/App Store
- Google Play Store



# Additional Resources

- Managing Stress Associated with COVID-19:  
[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID\\_managing\\_stress.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID_managing_stress.asp)
- Provider Self-Care Toolkit:  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/care/toolkits/provider](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/care/toolkits/provider)
- Online course: Provider Strategies for Coping with Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing\\_ed/provider\\_burnout\\_strategies.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/provider_burnout_strategies.asp)
- Online courses/programs for self-care:  
<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/courses.asp>



# Thank you!

Contact us:

[Colleen.Becket-Davenport@va.gov](mailto:Colleen.Becket-Davenport@va.gov)

[Katherine.Juhasz@va.gov](mailto:Katherine.Juhasz@va.gov)

[MobileMentalHealth@va.gov](mailto:MobileMentalHealth@va.gov)

# References

1. Pew Research Center. (2019). Mobile Technology and Home Broadband 2019 Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8- Feb. 7, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.pewinternet.org/2019/06/13/mobile-technology-and-home-broadband-2019/>
2. Edwards-Stewart, A., Smolenski, D. J., Reger, G. M., Bush, N., & Workman, D. E. (2016). An analysis of personal technology use by service members and military behavioral health providers. *Military Medicine*, 181(7), 701-709.
3. Erbes, C. R., Stinson, R., Kuhn, E., Polusny, M., Urban, J., Hoffman, J., ... & Thorp, S. R. (2014). Access, utilization, and interest in mHealth applications among veterans receiving outpatient care for PTSD. *Military Medicine*, 179(11), 1218-1222.
4. Kuhn, E., Greene, C., Hoffman, J., Nguyen, T., Wald, L., Schmidt, J., ... & Ruzek, J. (2014a). Preliminary evaluation of PTSD Coach, a smartphone app for post-traumatic stress symptoms. *Military medicine*, 179(1), 12-18.
5. Kuhn, E., Eftekhari, A., Hoffman, J. E., Crowley, J. J., Ramsey, K. M., Reger, G. M., & Ruzek, J. I. (2014b). Clinician perceptions of using a smartphone app with prolonged exposure therapy. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 41(6), 800-807.
6. Kuhn, E., Crowley, J. J., Hoffman, J. E., Eftekhari, A., Ramsey, K. M., Owen, J. E., & ... Ruzek, J. I. (2015). Clinician characteristics and perceptions related to use of the PE (prolonged exposure) Coach mobile app. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 46(6), 437-443. doi:10.1037/pro0000051
7. Kuhn, E., Weiss, B. J., Taylor, K. L., Hoffman, J. E., Ramsey, K. M., Manber, R., ... & Trockel, M. (2016). CBT-I coach: a description and clinician perceptions of a mobile app for cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 12(04), 597-606
8. Miner, A., Kuhn, E., Hoffman, J. E., Owen, J. E., Ruzek, J. I., & Taylor, C. B. (2016). Feasibility, acceptability, and potential efficacy of the PTSD Coach app: A pilot randomized controlled trial with community trauma survivors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 8(3), 384-392.

9. Miner, A., Kuhn, E., Hoffman, J. E., Owen, J. E., Ruzek, J. I., & Taylor, C. B. (2016). Feasibility, acceptability, and potential efficacy of the PTSD Coach app: A pilot randomized controlled trial with community trauma survivors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 8(3), 384-392.
10. Miller, K. E., Kuhn, E., Owen, J. E., Taylor, K., Yu, J. S., Weiss, B. J., ... & Trockel, M. (2017). Clinician Perceptions Related to the Use of the CBT-I Coach Mobile App. *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*, 1-11.
11. Koffel, E., Kuhn, E., Petsoulis, N., Erbes, C. R., Anders, S., Hoffman, J. E., ... & Polusny, M. A. (2018). A randomized controlled pilot study of CBT-I Coach: feasibility, acceptability, and potential impact of a mobile phone application for patients in cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia. *Health Informatics Journal*, 24(1), 3-13.
12. Herbst, E., McCaslin, S. E., Hassanbeigi Daryani, S., Laird, K. T., Hopkins, L. B., Pennington, D., & Kuhn, E. (2019). A Qualitative Examination of Stay Quit Coach, A Mobile Application for Veteran Smokers With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, ntz037, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntz037>.
13. Kuhn, E., Kanuri, N., Hoffman, J. E., Garvert, D. W., Ruzek, J. I., & Taylor, C. B. (2017). A randomized controlled trial of a smartphone app for posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 85(3), 267.
14. Possemato, K., Kuhn, E., Johnson, E., Hoffman, J. E., Owen, J. E., Kanuri, N., De Stefano, L., & Brooks, E. (2016). Using PTSD Coach in primary care with and without clinician support: a pilot randomized controlled trial. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 38, 94-98. doi:10.1016/j.genhosppsych.2015.09.005
15. Gould, C. E., Kok, B. C., Ma, V. K., Zapata, A. M. L., Owen, J. E., & Kuhn, E. (2018). Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense mental health apps: A systematic literature review. *Psychological services*, 6(2), 196-207
16. Atkinson, D. M., Rodman, J. L., Thuras, P. D., Shiroma, P. R., & Lim, K. O. (2017). Examining burnout, depression, and self-compassion in veterans affairs mental health staff. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 23(7), 551-557.
17. Olson, K., Kemper, K. J., & Mahan, J. D. (2015). What factors promote resilience and protect against burnout in first-year pediatric and medicine-pediatric residents?. *Journal of evidence-based complementary & alternative medicine*, 20(3), 192-198.