

# Apps That'll Help You Manage Stress & Anxiety During the Coronavirus Pandemic

These are scary days, and there doesn't seem to be any end in sight. If you're having trouble coping with the stress and anxiety the virus brings with it, know that your iPhone or Android device can actually *help* you, rather than just bring you further down.

## App 1 SuperBetter

SuperBetter isn't your average self-help app. Instead of offering a more clinical approach to addressing your issues, SuperBetter turns your fight against anxiety into a game. It's called gamification — the idea that turning responsibilities or actions into a game will both incentivize you to follow through and make the results that much more successful.

SuperBetter uses four key pillars to make its game work:

The idea here isn't to spend all day playing SuperBetter's games like you would Mario Kart. They aren't really "games" but more like "check here if you did this today" tasks. SuperBetter wants you devoting just minutes a day to the app, but every day. A daily dose of SuperBetter's tasks, in theory, can help you overcome negative thoughts and have a healthier relationship with difficult emotions.

## App 2 Happify

Happify is an app that uses science-based activities and games not just to give you peace of mind, but to help build skills to cope with negative thoughts, stress, and anxiety in your everyday life. The app uses techniques developed by scientists studying positive psych, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and mindfulness, so there's plenty of credibility here.

Happify works to build six key skills that, it claims, separate happy people from everyone else:

- Savor the moment: reduce stress and negative thoughts.
- Thank those who matter: feel better about your life.
- Aspire to meaningful goals: eliminate dead-end thinking.
- Give of yourself: boost self-esteem.
- Empathize with others: strengthen your relationships.
- Revive your health: improve the way you eat, sleep, & move.

Happify tracks these skills as you work through its activities, so you can see where you're excelling and which areas you need to build upon. Each activity is relatively short, taking only one to ten minutes at a time, so you only need to devote a little time each day to get the full experience.

## App 3 Mind Ease

Like Happify, Mind Ease is an app that uses activities to help you cope with negative thoughts and develop thinking skills to improve your overall state of mind. That said, the app takes a different approach, as its activities are less like games and more like exercises you'd find in a CBT session.

Mind Ease's activities all work towards giving you more control over your thoughts and feelings, understanding why you feel a certain way, and how best to overcome the negative. The app will also ask you how you're feeling in three different ranges: "Feeling Good" to "Feeling Bad," "Feeling Worried" to "Feeling Calm," and "Feeling Tense" to "Feeling Relaxed."

## App 4 MindShift

MindShift has a slightly different take on managing stress and worry. The app, created by Anxiety Canada, aims to curtail panic, perfectionism, social anxiety, and phobias, through CBT-based tools. Anxiety Canada is made up of a large committee of scientific contributors, so it's not just another app on the store claiming to solve your problems.

There are ten main ways MindShift aims to help you with your anxiety:

- **Quick Relief:** quick tools to help if you're having trouble this second.

- **Thought Journal:** write down your thoughts and identify patterns of thinking that keep you locked into anxiety.
- **Coping Cards:** helpful statements to ease your mind.
- **Belief Experiments:** teaches you experiments to test beliefs that can trigger anxiety.
- **Facing Fears:** forces you to face your fears, but in small, manageable ways.
- **Expanding Your Comfort Zone:** pushes you to do new and challenging things.
- **Chill Zone:** in-app guided meditation.
- **Check-In:** tracks your anxiety over time, not unlike other apps mentioned here.
- **Healthy Habits:** helps you develop habits that will help improve your headspace.
- **Goal Setting:** you set a goal for yourself, and MindShift enables you to track and keep to it.

## App 5 Sanvello

Sanvello is an excellent all-around package. If you're looking for guided meditation, Sanvello has you covered. If you're looking for an app that checks in on your feelings weekly, Sanvello does that, too. If you're looking for good news at the end of a hard week, guess what, Sanvello's here to help.

## App 6 Moodpath — Depression & Anxiety

If you're super data-driven, Moodpath might just be the app for you. Its core functionality is simple: answer some questions every day (or multiple times a day, if you'd like), and let Moodpath plot that data in your calendar. As time goes on, you can see how your mood changes day by day, week by week.

## App 7 Antistress

Antistress is quite simple but could be quite powerful for you as well. On the surface, it's a collection of what seems like an endless supply of mini-games. Some are as

simple as flicking a switch, while others are a little more complex, like puzzles. All the games are designed to be easy, mindless, and, of course, stress-free.

If you're looking for a rich, deep gaming experience, Antistress isn't the app you want to open. Rather, it's a collection of games to play when you're not feeling well. If stress and anxiety have you overwhelmed, try popping Antistress open and playing a few of the games here. The simplicity might just be what you need, rather than a stressful game of PUBG.

## App 8 Youper

Youper might have a strange name, but it's an app with a noble mission. Think of Youper as an AI therapist, set up like a chat thread. You choose from a preset of responses, and Youper conducts the chat accordingly. It'll ask you all about yourself and your mental health, to paint a picture of how you're doing and what it is you want to achieve.