

# Finding Quality Digital Mental Health Tools For Mental Health Professionals

It is normal to feel a bit overwhelmed or lost when searching for quality digital mental health resources for your clients. It can be hard to know where to start with so many online programs out there. Evaluating whether a program is evidence-based and safe for consumers to use can be time-consuming and challenging for practitioners.

Fortunately, there are some sources that collate and regularly update available digital mental services from trusted Australian service providers, and these are a great place to start. Furthermore, there are several documents developed by the Commonwealth Government assisting clinicians in evaluating the safety and quality of digital mental health interventions to use with their clients.

This guide outlines places to find trusted online mental health services and highlights key documents developed to assist clinicians in their own considerations regarding the safety and quality of digital mental health interventions.



## Services Listing Digital Mental Health Tools

So where do you go to find trusted digital interventions? Take a closer look at these online guides listing digital interventions – most of them are free.

Some services like eMHPrac (us!) and Head to Health review and evaluate programs for evidence and safety prior to listing. These review processes vary, so it can be useful to learn about how each service goes about this.

Some of these services list overseas digital programs. This is important to consider, as you want to be sure that the information is collected and stored by the program in a safe manner.

Here is a brief overview of the services listing dMH:

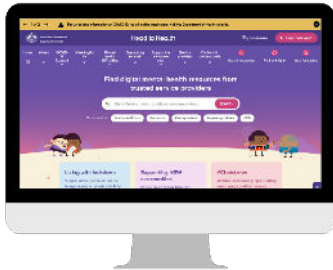
Service	Australian/ Overseas	Subscription Required?
<b>Head to Health</b> <a href="https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/">https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/</a>		
<b>eMHPrac</b> <a href="https://www.emhprac.org.au/">https://www.emhprac.org.au/</a>		
<b>WellMob</b> <a href="https://wellmob.org.au/">https://wellmob.org.au/</a>		
<b>ReachOut - Tools and apps</b> <a href="https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps">https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps</a>		
<b>Digital Health Guide</b> <a href="http://www.digitalhealthguide.com.au">www.digitalhealthguide.com.au</a>		
<b>MIND</b> <a href="https://mindapps.org/">https://mindapps.org/</a>		
<b>OneMind PsyberGuide</b> <a href="https://onemindpsyberguide.org/">https://onemindpsyberguide.org/</a>		

## A Closer Look - Australian Sites

Here we have listed some more detailed information about the services listing digital mental health interventions in Australia.

### Head to Health

<https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/>



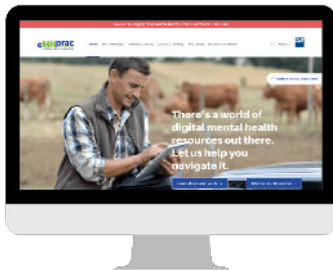
The Australian Government gateway, Head to Health, links practitioners to over 500 free or low-cost, nationally available, publicly funded/evidence based digital mental health resources from trusted Australian service providers.

#### Features:

- A search function
- Sam, the virtual assistant
- Section for health professionals
- Ability to 'save' favourites

### eMHPrac

<https://www.emhprac.org.au/>



eMHPrac lists various Australian online programs, apps, and phone lines that are evidence-based or Government funded, nationally available, free, or low-cost.

#### Features:

- Directory of resources
- Factsheets on various populations and presenting problems
- Links to safety standards, evidence base, and training in dMH

### WellMob

<https://wellmob.org.au/>



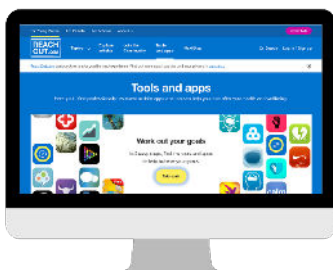
WellMob lists Australian and overseas resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians focusing on culturally safe social and emotional wellbeing resources.

#### Features:

- Culturally safe language
- Search function
- Training resources

### ReachOut - Tools and apps

<https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps>



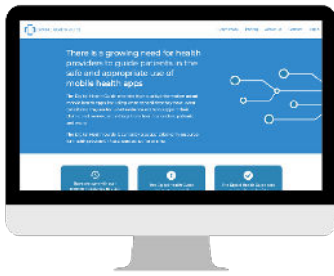
Reach Out - Tools and apps outlines a variety of free and low-cost apps including reviews from mental health professionals and users. Links to Australian and overseas programs.

#### Features:

- A quiz to allow consumers and professionals to identify goals
- Next Step referral guide for consumers
- Health professionals and user ratings
- Screenshots of listed apps
- Links to developer information

## Digital Health Guide

[www.digitalhealthguide.com.au](http://www.digitalhealthguide.com.au)



The Digital Health Guide provides high quality information about mobile health apps, including what capabilities they have, what conditions they are for, what evidence exists, and reviews and ratings from health providers, patients and more.

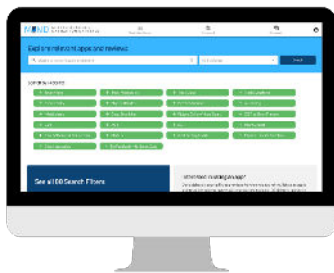
The Digital Health Guide has been designed with an initial focus on content for use in Australia. **Use of the Digital Health Guide requires a subscription fee.**

## A Closer Look - Overseas Sites

Here we have listed some more detailed information about the services listing digital mental health interventions overseas.

### MIND

<https://mindapps.org/>

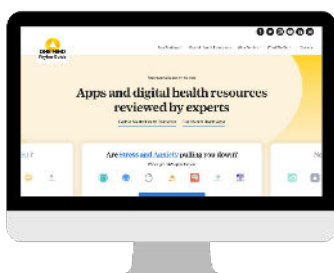


MIND offers an “app library”, allowing users to search from free to subscription services, by features, level of engagement (self-help to network). MIND describes the privacy features for each service.

Each app’s entry in the database is informed by 105 objective questions based on the American Psychiatric Association’s App Evaluation Model, which introduces Accessibility, Privacy & Security, Clinical Foundation, Engagement Style, and Interoperability as major categories to consider.

### OneMind PsyberGuide

<https://onemindpsyberguide.org/>



One Mind PsyberGuide provides expert ratings on the degree of evidence for each listed intervention, user experience, and transparency of data use/privacy conditions, and features written reviews by professionals.

One Mind PsyberGuide lists Australian and overseas resources and fee, low cost and free interventions.

Other places to search for digital mental health intervention include:

- Research institutions/universities
- Government agencies
- Peak bodies/organisations, such as:
  - Black Dog Institute - eMHPrac Hub (<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/education-services/e-mental-health-in-practice/>) offers webinars, podcasts and online training, often featuring specific tools. Maintains a Community of Practice forum.
  - Beyond Blue (<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>)
  - Kids Helpline (<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>)

This usually means that they have either undergone rigorous evaluation (e.g. RCTs) during development and/or are subject to ongoing evaluation in order to maintain their funding. However, it is important that you make your own evaluation before considering a resource to use with a client.

## Evaluating Apps, Programs and Forums

Now that you have located a resource that you would like to use in clinical care, several key documents have been developed to assist clinicians in evaluating the safety and quality of the digital mental health intervention themselves.

**It is critical to make sure that the resources you pick are:**

**Suitable**

Does it suit what the client is looking for and when/where/how they want to access it? Is the client eligible to use it based on age etc? Is there a cost involved?

**Scientifically-based**

Is it based on scientific evidence and can I expect it to be beneficial?

**Safe**

Is it unlikely to cause any harm/detrimental effects?

**Secure**

Is user data kept securely and confidentially?

For more detailed guidance, a series of publications have been developed to guide clinicians and consumers in selecting appropriate and safe resources:



**National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards**

The National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health (NSQDMH) Standards have been developed by the Australian Government and aim to improve the quality of digital mental health service provision, and to protect service users and their support people from harm.

The NSQDMH Standards feature standards and advice around:

- Clinical and technical governance standards
- Partnering with consumer standards
- Model of care standard

**AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE**

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care have also published numerous tip sheets and checklists for clinicians and consumers in selecting a safe and appropriate digital mental health resource.

**For clinicians:**

*Tips for choosing a digital mental health service- Information for clinicians*

**For consumers and their carers:**

*Tips for choosing a digital mental health service - Information for consumers and carers*

*Checklist for choosing a digital mental health service - Information for consumers and carers*

## Evaluating Apps

The **MARS** allows clinicians to address classification (descriptive and technical information about the app) and app quality over four dimensions (Engagement, Functionality, Aesthetics, and Quality of Information) and the subjective quality of the app.

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4376132/bin/mhealth\\_v3i1e27\\_app2.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4376132/bin/mhealth_v3i1e27_app2.pdf)

The **uMARS** was developed to assist consumers and their carers to evaluate the quality and safety of information for a mental health app.

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