

# Tips for choosing a digital mental health service

Digital services may offer information, counselling, treatment, or peer support and be delivered on the computer, via SMS (text), apps, telephone or videoconferencing.

Digital mental health services can make access easier, and some can be accessed anonymously. However, it can be a challenge to decide if a service is right for you.

This guide provides some tips to assist you to choose wisely. It includes some key questions you might want answers to before using a digital service. You can also use the [\*Checklist for choosing a digital mental health service\*](#) alongside this guide.

## 1. Is this service for me?

You know what help you are seeking. You need to know what the digital service is offering before deciding if it meets your needs.

## 2. Will I benefit if I use this service?

You want to use a service that works. There are many digital mental health services informed by up to date knowledge. However, beware, because some services may not be effective.

Take the time to look at whether there is any proof that the service can help people who use it.

## 3. Could this service do me harm?

Some services could be harmful if they provide incorrect advice or do not work as they claim.

## 4. Should I trust this service?

Putting your trust in a service is a big step. Some things you might want to consider include:

- The service's business model
- Where its funding comes from
- If the service is promoting a particular product.

You may also ask trusted friends, peers, clinicians or family members for their opinions.

## 5. Is the service easy to use?

A good indication that a service will be user-friendly is if consumers and carers played a key role in the planning and design of it. You can also read online reviews to assist with your choice.

If a service is hard to use or doesn't hold your attention, then it's unlikely that you will keep using it long enough to get any benefit from it.

## 6. Who will have access to my personal data?

Most digital services will record some information about you, but a key question is what they do with it.

You may want to check what steps a service takes to protect your information and whether there is any risk to your privacy if you use the service.

## 7. Do I know who to contact if I have any questions or concerns?

Services should provide contact information – a website, an email address or telephone number – to get answers to some of these questions or to provide feedback.

## Conclusion

There is no simple rule for selecting a digital mental health service. For example your priority might be:

- A service that offers minimal risk in terms of privacy and data security
- Knowing the service is likely to be of benefit
- An easy to use service.

Regardless of your preference, these tips will help you to be more informed and may help you to decide which digital mental health service is most appropriate for you.

## Questions?

You can find more information on National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards at: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/dmhs](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/dmhs)

You can access a range of free and low-cost services on the Australian Government's digital mental health gateway: [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)