

Choosing a digital mental health service

Digital mental health services offer information, counselling, treatment, or peer support that are accessed through technology such as phones or computers. They 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, reduces the risk of harm and ensures the service is providing quality care.

This guide provides some tips to assist you to choose wisely. It includes a checklist, some key questions you might want answers to before using a digital mental health service, things to look for and some space to make notes when you are making your choice.

Checklist for choosing a digital mental health service

- ☐ Check if the service is accredited
- ☐ Find out who the service is made for
- ☐ Choose services that are based on research
- ☐ Make sure the service has ways to manage harm
- ☐ Check if there are any fees or advertising
- ☐ See if users helped to design the service
- ☐ Understand how your information is used
- ☐ Ask questions if you are unsure
- ☐ Choose based on what is important for you

Tip

An accreditation badge is given to service providers that meet the [Digital Mental Health Standards](#).

The [Medicare Mental Health](#) website shows when a service provider is accredited to these standards to help people choose a digital mental health service.

**Accredited
Service Provider**National Safety and Quality
Digital Mental Health Standards



Check if the service is accredited

What to ask	Have they been assessed to safety and quality standards?
What to look for	Look for services that have been checked for safety and quality. Accredited services follow the Digital Mental Health Standards to protect you and your information.
Notes	

Find out who the service is made for

What to ask	Is the service made for people like me?
What to look for	Different services help with different problems like mental health, suicide prevention, or drug and alcohol use. Some are for everyone, but some are for special groups like young people, parents, or people from certain cultures. Some services can also involve family and friends, but not all do - so check if that's important to you.
Notes	

Choose services that are based on research

What to ask	Has the service shown evidence of it working?
What to look for	Good services are built on real science, not just ideas. They check if what they do really works. It's also good to know how much time you will spend with the service to get the best results.
Notes	



Make sure the service has ways to manage harm

What to ask	Do they put my safety first?
What to look for	The service should have a plan to help if someone is at risk of being hurt or harming themselves. They should listen to feedback and fix problems quickly to keep everyone safe.
Notes	

Check if there are any fees or advertising

What to ask	What will it cost me to use the service?
What to look for	Some services are free or low-cost, but others may ask you to pay money or use your internet data. Some may show ads or try to sell you things, which might not feel good when you are seeking help. Some might even sell information about how you use the service, so check carefully.
Notes	

See if users helped design the service

What to ask	Have they asked people like me how to design the service?
What to look for	The best services are made with help from the people who will use them. This usually means the service is easier and more helpful. You can also read online reviews to see what other people think.
Notes	



Understand how your information is used

What to ask	Do they have a privacy policy that shows how they use my data?
What to look for	Services often collect your information to help you better. They must keep it safe and private. You should be able to choose if you want to share your results with your doctor or someone else — and stop sharing anytime you want.
Notes	

Ask questions if you are unsure

What to ask	Is it easy to find their contact information if I need to?
What to look for	Good services will have clear ways for you to contact them if you have questions or problems. They should also welcome your feedback to help make the service better.
Notes	

Tips on choosing on what service is best for you

There is no simple rule for selecting a digital mental health service. Some of the answers to the questions in this fact sheet might be more important for you. For example, your priority might be a service that offers an anonymous service, or knowing the service is likely to make a difference, or that it's easy and free to use.

If you are unsure, you can speak to a health professional such as a general practitioner to help you better understand what might work for you.

Services that meet the Digital Mental Health Standards have things in place to address safety and quality issues, and ensure that the risk of harm is reduced. Digital mental health services aren't for everyone, but they can provide excellent support when they address safety and quality issues.

For more information

Please visit: <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/DMHS>

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