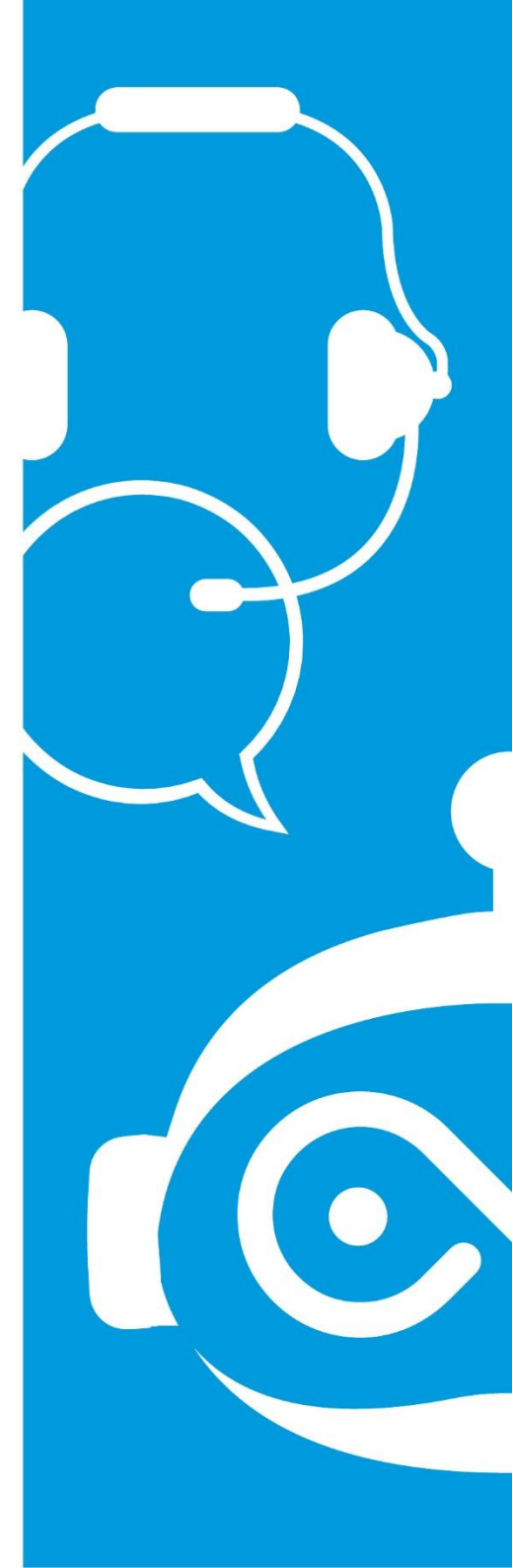




## APPS: MENTAL AND SEXUAL WELL-BEING

### What is it?

Increasingly, when searching for knowledge on a topic, one does not search the internet but downloads an app directly to one's phone (mobile application). Applications related to mental health and sexual well-being are **digital tools** which function to assist users in detecting behavioral patterns or SRH-related issues. Some of them aim to allow patients to find out if they suffer from a particular disorder without the need for consultations. Applications related to sexual health cover a wide range of topics - from hormonal awareness to sexual activity.

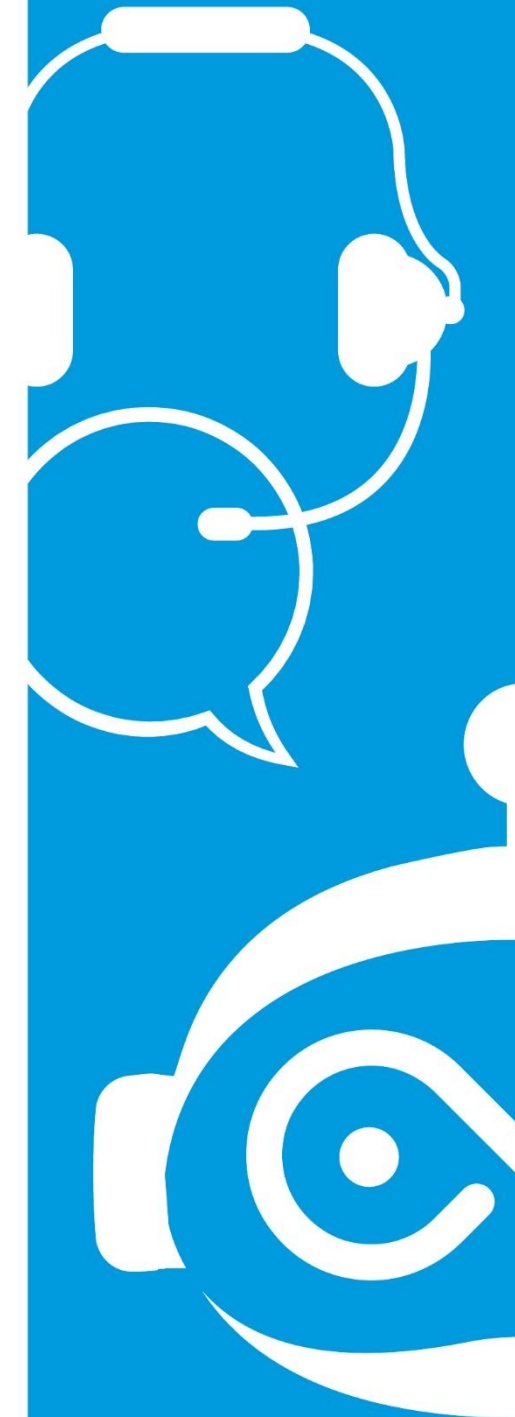


### How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Many available apps can have a positive impact on the SRH and psychological lives of young people. Some of them include exercises and activities linked to renowned psychological methods like cognitive behavioural therapy. Although they don't attempt to replace therapy, they aim to help the user change their unhealthy habits or those that harm their mental health. These apps simulate the entire therapeutic process, including conducting interviews, offering diagnoses, and suggesting treatment.

Many of these applications are free, which can encourage people to seek help even if they cannot afford traditional therapy with an in-person mental health practitioner. They serve as a way to introduce users to concepts from therapy so that they may be able to decide whether they would like to later pursue face-to-face therapy sessions. Many individuals who are unfamiliar with the topic of mental health and have limited knowledge in this regard may start using these applications and then decide that conventional therapy is right for them. These apps typically also include mechanisms to enhance adherence to the methods proposed in traditional therapy. Therefore, they are very helpful as a supplementary tool for many patients who attend traditional therapy.

However, young people should approach some aspects of these applications with caution. One of the risks is related to the overwhelming number of such applications and their lack of standardisation and regulation. Many apps related to mental and sexual health are actually based on credible and reliable research with expert contributors; however, others disseminate information that could prove harmful to impressionable and vulnerable users who use them.



### What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

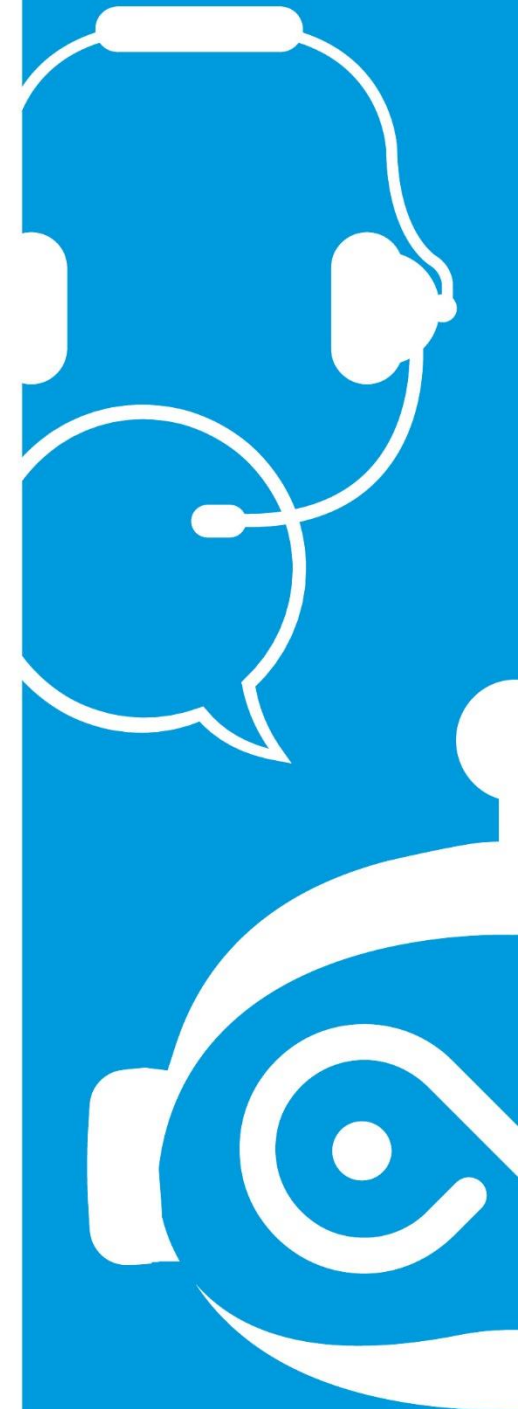
- Advise youth that, if they decide to use an app to address mental or sexual health concerns, they should first critically analyse all references and research related to the application.
- Shine a lens on applications that are created by companies seeking financial gain, mostly those who are not supported by expert contributors and do not offer a free version to use.
- Remind youth that apps can serve as a supplement to but cannot replace traditional therapy, and encourage them to speak to a licensed professional if they feel overwhelmed.

*We have added a list of helpful apps in the Further reading section of this sheet, which may help provide you with some relevant references and inspiration.*

### Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Apps: Period/fertility tracking
- Online crisis hotlines
- Apps: Whatsapp and other IM apps



### Further reading:

- “Intimately Us.” Get Your Marriage On. <https://getyourmarriageon.com/intimately-us/>.
- “Life After Pornography Coach.” Get Your Marriage On. <https://getyourmarriageon.com/life-after-pornography-coach/>.
- “Meditation and Sleep Made Simple.” Headspace. <https://www.headspace.com/>.
- “Pleasure: Sexual Wellbeing App.” R-stream Labs. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=love.learn.sex.app&hl=en>.
- “Relationship Happiness App.” Blueheart Health. <https://www.blueheart.io>.

