Equitable and Informed Digital Mental Health
Skills, Evaluation, and Integration of Apps into Care

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As interest in digital mental health tools, like smartphone apps, expands it is important to ensure equity. Both patients and clinicians today are often unaware of the risks and benefits of using apps, and thus informed decision making remains a challenge. Equally concerning, many people whom health apps are targeted towards have never been taught the skills around downloading and using mobile technology, raising the issue of a second digital divide beyond device or internet access. In this symposium we present the latest evidence around app evaluation and digital literacy in regards to smartphone apps and digital devices for health with a focus on mental health. We also report on three innovative approaches to bridge the digital divide: the Mobile-Health Index and Navigation Database (MIND) for app evaluation, the Digital Opportunities for Obtaining Resources and Skills (DOORS) program to teach digital literacy, and the Digital Navigator Program open to all for training a new team member able to help implement digital health technology into diverse care settings. The symposium will present evidence from all three programs, offer hands-on demonstration, and provide actionable links and tools that audience members can take home and implement immediately.

Keywords: smartphone apps; mhealth; psychiatry; digital health; digital literacy

M-Health Index and Navigation Database (MIND)
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With thousands of mental health apps available today for immediate download, understanding which are safe, effective, and most useful ones for any particular clinical case remains a challenge. In this talk we will review the M-Health Index and Navigation database which is the largest publicly accessible index of mental health apps with over 600 indexed at the time of this presentation. Derived from the American Psychiatric Association’s app evaluation framework, we will explore the process for translation into a database, recent publication utilizing its data, and then explore trends in the app marketplaces. We will also offer a hands-on demonstration to ensure all learners are able to use the database. Recent results around expansion into apps to treat headache, pain, and sleep related conditions will also be highlighted as well as collaborations with Easter Seals Greater Houston around the BridgingApps program towards expanding both offering to reach greater audiences and create toolkits for older adults.

Digital Opportunities for Obtaining Resources and Skills (DOORS)
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While many people are comfortable using their smartphones to download and use mobile health apps, many are not. The DOORS program is specially designed to offer hands-on education, resources, and skills training that will allow participants to become comfortable and engaged around using apps. As an expanding series of pragmatic and interactive lessons designed to develop functional skills for accessing and utilizing the promise of digital health, DOORS aims to offer value to diverse audiences. In this talk we will review the first and second generation of the program, its
The online offering - features surveys to track progress, videos with step-by-step instructions, and calendar to access office hours. We will present the latest data on outcomes for the program for people with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and also present hands-on demonstrations. Finally, discussions of other use cases and adaptations of the program will be shared.

Digital Navigators Towards Implementing Apps in Care

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As attention has focused on hybrid models for implementing digital health tools like apps in care, there has been less attention towards the actual means of accomplishing such. In this talk we review the concept of the Digital Navigator as a new team member able to serve both the patient and the clinician through filling three key roles: 1) Teaching digital literacy (with DOORs) and technology setup/troubleshooting, 2) App evaluation (with MIND), and 3) Engagement support for patients and data aggregation for clinicians. Examples from the Digital Psychiatry Clinic at BIDMC will be shared where digital navigators support a model of hybrid synchronous and asynchronous care facilitated through the mindLAMP app. A second example with digital navigators facilitating a more automated care model will also be presented. This talk will also review the theoretical foundation of the role, detailed training curriculum and learning objectives, and recent data from two teams offering the role in different settings (USA and UK). Examples from a recent training with Easter Seals of Greater Houston focusing on training veterans as digital navigators will also be presented.

Peer Services and Lived Experience Leading Digital Health Adoption

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Certified Peer Specialists or Peer Supporters are people with lived experience who have had training and use their lived expertise of living with a mental health condition and navigating systems to facilitate recovery. Peer Supports Peers can also support the development of digital health literacy curriculum based on the needs of person served in order help people learn basics of technology as well as support use of telehealth platforms, mental health, substance use disorder and other wellness applications. Peers Supporters who serve in roles of “Tech Peers” in a Public Health program in Los Angeles gather information about use of technology, preferences in the type of technology preferred by the people they serves in order to support their overall life and health goals Peer Supporters in this role work alongside other clinicians and may also learn from clinicians the areas in which more support is needed for the people they serve and support clinicians by supporting the service user in challenge areas with peer developed and delivered digital health literacy curriculum and providing technical assistance.