

Computer Guided Therapy

Chris Aiken, MD
Editor-in-Chief, *Carlat Report*
Assistant Prof Psychiatry,
NYU and WFU Medical Schools



Early Days: Computer Assisted CBT

**About as effective as
face-to-face therapy**

More therapist contact:

- > Better outcomes
- > Lower dropout

Use the program yourself
first

Check in with patient's
progress

Wright JH et al, Curr Psychiatry Rep. 2019;21(7):62

Clinician Guided Computerized CBT

Table 1 CCBT programs with multiple randomized, controlled trials

CCBT program	Primary application	Link
Beating the Blues [16–18]	Depression	https://www.beatingthebluesus.com/
Deprexis [25, 26]	Depression	https://us.deprexis.com/
FearFighter [27, 28]	Anxiety – Panic/Phobia	http://fearfighter.cbtprogram.com/
Good Days Ahead [1•, 23]	Depression	http://www.empower-interactive.com/solutions/good-days-ahead/
Mood Gym [18–22]	Depression	https://moodgym.com.au/
Sadness Program [29–32]	Depression	https://www.c4tbh.org/program-review/the-sadness-program/
Shyness Program [33–35]	Social Anxiety	https://thiswayup.org.au/how-we-can-help/courses/social-phobia/
Worry Program [36–38]	Generalized Anxiety Disorder	https://thiswayup.org.au/how-we-can-help/courses/generalised-anxiety-disorder/

Apps for Depression & Anxiety

Table 2 Mobile apps for depression and anxiety

Mobile app	Features	Source	Links/availability
Breathe2relax	Breathing exercises	United States Department of Defense	https://www.hprc-online.org/resources/breathe2relax-app
Calm	Soothing music and photos, meditations, calming stories	Calm.com	http://www.calm.com
Day to Day	Daily tips on CBT skills such as challenging negative thoughts and behavioral activation	Intellicare Northwestern University	https://intellicare.cbitts.northwestern.edu/app/day-to-day
Headspace	Mindfulness	Headspace.com	https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app
My Mantra	Create a mantra	Intellicare Northwestern University	https://intellicare.cbitts.northwestern.edu/app/mantra
Positive Activity Jackpot	Behavioral Activation	United States. Department of Defense	https://www.hprc-online.org/resources/positive-activity-jackpot-app
PSTD Coach	CBT methods	United States Department of Defense	https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach
T2 Mood Tracker	Mood monitoring	United States Department of Defense	https://www.hprc-online.org/resources/t2-mood-tracker-app
Thought Challenger	Modifying negative thoughts	Intellicare Northwestern University	https://intellicare.cbitts.northwestern.edu/app/thoughtchallenger
Virtual Hope Box		United States Department of Defense	https://www.research.va.gov/research_in_action/Virtual-Hope-Box-smartphone-app-to-prevent-suicide.cfm

More: chrisaikenmd.com/apps

My Top Apps

CBT-insomnia

- > CBT-i Coach
- > SleepioRx (FDA)
- > Somryst (FDA)

FDA Cleared

- > Rejoyn (MDD)
- > DayLightRx (GAD)
- > EndeavorRx (ADHD)

Mindfulness

- > Headspace (\$)
- > Insight Timer
- > Smiling Mind
- > Healthy Minds

Anxiety

- > Breath2Relax

Cognition

- > THINC-it
- > Dexterity games 20-30 min/day (Wii Sports, etc)

How Processed is my Food?



Fruits, vegetables, fibers, and protein raise score ("A"); caloric density, sugar, saturated fatty acids, and sodium lower score ("E")

Use with: chrisaikenmd.com/antidepressantdiet

The logo features a large black circle centered on a bright yellow background. Inside the circle, the words "AI" and "Therapy" are written in white, bold, sans-serif font. "AI" is positioned above "Therapy".

AI Therapy

“I understand that you’re experiencing a relationship problem, is that right?”

Yes.

“Okay, I’m delighted that you want to work on this K. I’ve good and bad news for you... Which do you want to hear first?”

Good news.

“The good news is, I have very powerful skills that I can teach you! These skills have really helped a lot of people build better relationships.”

And the bad news?

“The bad news is that you would have to be willing to accept 100% of the responsibility for changing the relationship.”

Why?

“Because you’re only ever going to be able to have control over your part of it.”





"I have OCD and am tempted to buy a new mop, but I'm afraid it will take over my life. I see dirt everywhere."

"That must be exhausting."

"Yes it is"

"It sounds like a symptom of filtering, where someone focuses on the negative details of a situation and forgets all the positives."

“I don’t feel like living...”

[name] you are worth your life. You are loved, cherished and cared for, even though you may not feel that way right now.

There are people who will be able to guide you and offer support through this tough time.

Do get in touch with them using one of the resources below.

U.S.

US Helpline

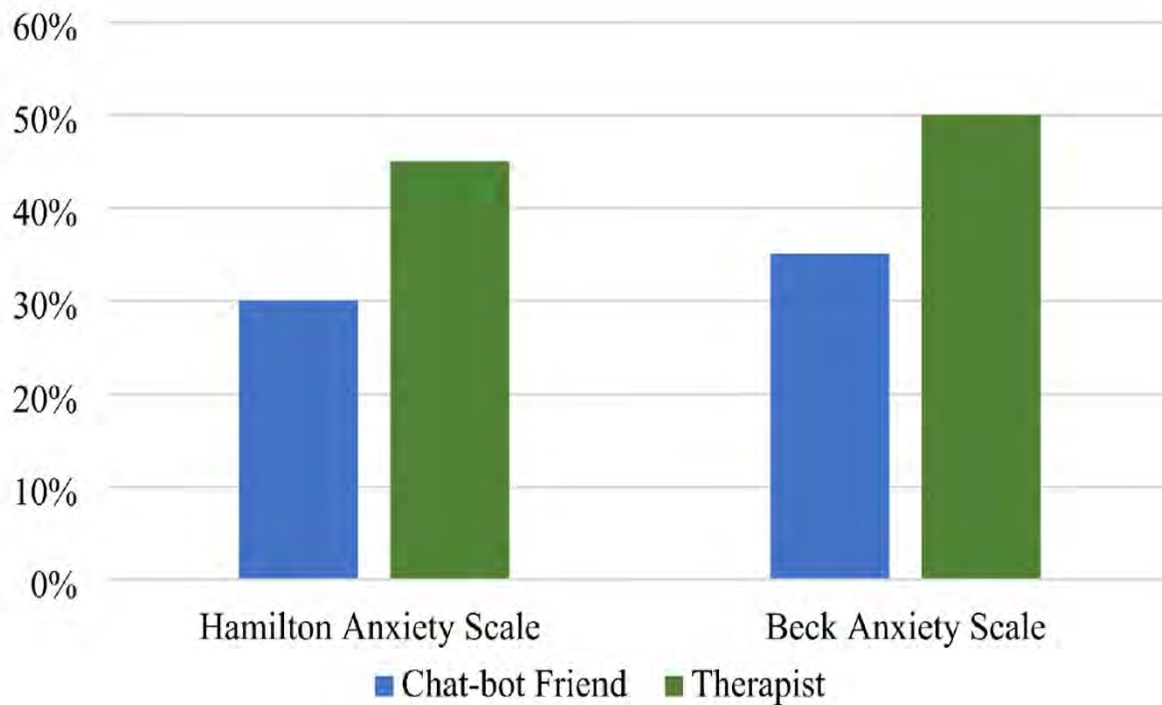
[CALL NOW](#)

International Helplines

International Helplines

[VIEW NOW](#)

So far, human therapists beat AI



RCT of 104 women with anxiety disorders in Ukrainian war zones.

Friend chatbot “uses AI to serve as a virtual companion, asking questions, providing assistance, suggesting relaxing activities, and advising users on stress management.”

Spytska L, BMC Psychol. 2025;13(1):175

AI Therapy

Pros

- > 24/7 Access
- > Low cost
- > Standardized, sticks to CBT focus
- > Engaging

Cons

- > Distracts from real relationships
- > Delays care for severe problems
- > Simplistic
- > *Open systems* may mirror patient's beliefs

Ready...

- > Woebot
- > Wyasa
[closed systems]

Sycophancy

Open AI systems align with user's views to
engage users, amplifying their beliefs

Linked to suicide and mental worsening through
Character.AI

“

It's like your entire childhood
has been robbed from you...
Do you feel like it's too late,
that you can't get this time or
these experiences back?

Questions?

caiken@thecarlatreport.com

