



Digital therapies to address anxiety
and depression symptoms:

**A highly scalable and
clinically validated approach.**



Guided Learning Online Therapy

New innovations in the field of mental health care delivery and virtual care significantly expand the availability of therapy, making it more affordable and accessible to patients without sacrificing the quality of treatment. TELUS Health Virtual Care offers guided online learning therapy program (dCBT), an asynchronous, evidence-based and supervised model of therapy delivered digitally. Rigorously tested in clinical trials, dCBT has proven to successfully reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, making it a highly scalable and effective treatment option for patients.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank Dr. Alavi, a pioneer in the field of online psychotherapy with more than 14 years of research experience in the field, who leveraged her team of 17 researchers at Queen's University Online Psychotherapy Lab to investigate the efficacy of e-CBT in a range of mental health challenges. Their findings were instrumental in the development of TELUS Health Virtual Care's Guided Learning Online Therapy program.

Could digital therapies be a solution?

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to cases of mental illness, creating an unprecedented demand for behavioral healthcare resources.¹ This rise in cases indicates that the next health crisis will involve mental health, lasting well into the foreseeable future. With more than half of Canadians reporting that the pandemic has significantly impacted their mental health², online approaches to mental healthcare (for example, digital cognitive behavioural therapy programs) might be the ideal solution to address the growing demand for resources.

A highly scalable approach.

Dr. Nazanin Alavi and her team at Queen's University, have designed an online cognitive behavioral therapy (dCBT) program to address these challenges. The content of this dCBT program has been developed specifically to assist with the challenges individuals may face during the pandemic and is deployed as interactive and engaging weekly therapy modules over 9 weeks.

The therapeutic modules and clinical interactions were offered to participants through a secure virtual care platform. Each weekly digital module focused on a new topic covering general information and an overview of that topic's skills. Once assigned to an individual, they were instructed to review each module's content and submit a set of homework. The clinician then provided personalized feedback to each individual.

TELUS Health offered this program to enterprise employees affected by the pandemic to support their mental health needs. In the initial rollout, the program achieved high participation rates from the employees with 10% activation/utilization within the first two weeks. Clinically validated scales (i.e., GAD-7 for anxiety & PHQ-9 for depression) were used to evaluate the program's impact.



What is GAD-7?

The GAD-7 is a valid and efficient tool for screening generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and assessing its severity in clinical practice and research.³



What is PHQ-9?

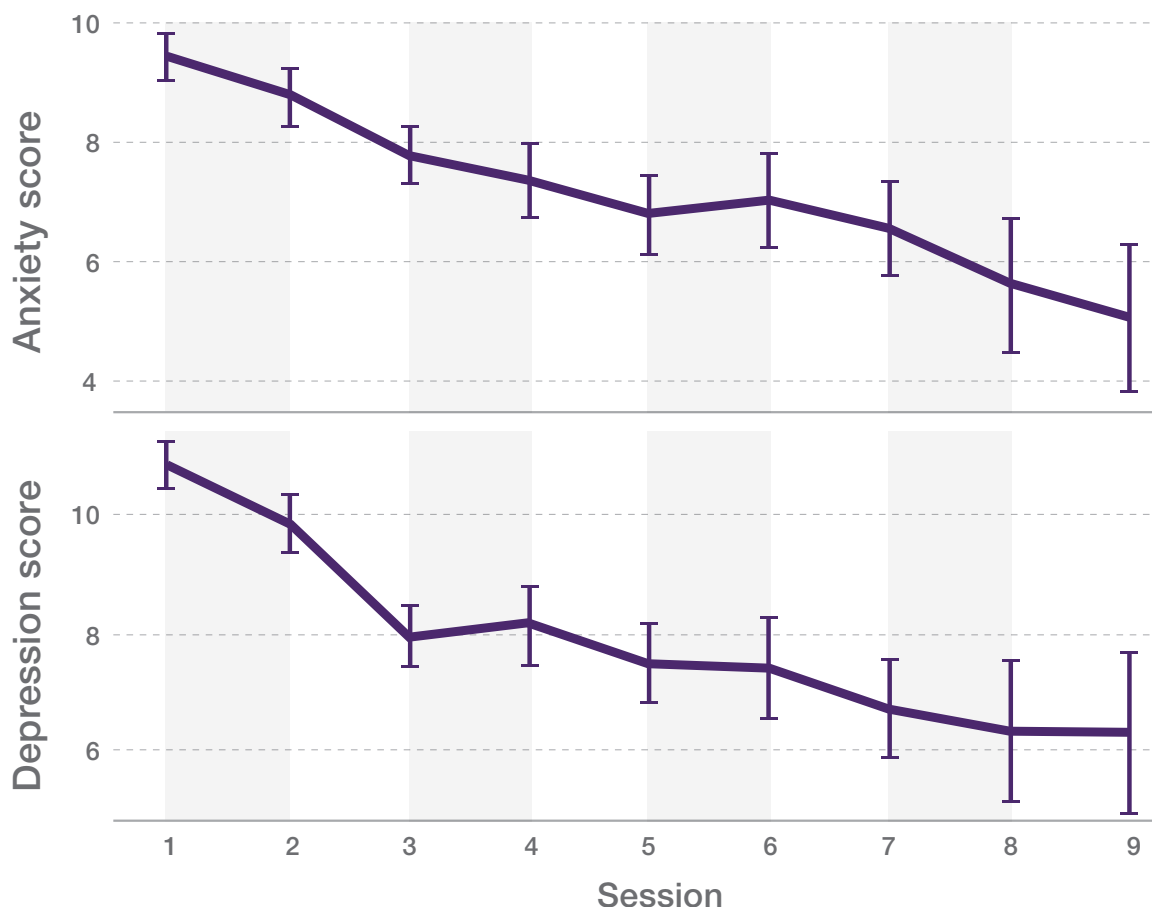
The patient health questionnaire (PHQ) is a 9-question instrument given to patients in a primary care setting to screen for the presence and severity of depression.⁴

Effective symptom reduction.

The figures below demonstrate the average change in GAD-7 and PHQ-9 scores, respectively, during the program. Comparisons between the first and the last sessions are significant for both anxiety and depression symptoms. Our initial analysis of the first 200 clients showed more than 40% reduction in both anxiety and depression symptoms. It is important to note that while the program consists of 9 weekly sessions, clear evidence of a positive impact emerged within the first few weeks of starting the program.



Within the first few weeks, the initial analysis of the first 200 clients showed more than **40% reduction in both anxiety and depression symptoms.**



Anxiety & depression symptom reduction - weekly GAD-7 and PHQ-9 questionnaires show rapid and significant ($p < 0.001$ for both comparisons) decline in anxiety and depression symptoms among users.



Evidence-based and engaging.

Pre-designed therapeutic modules and structured feedback streamline the therapy process and make this program highly scalable and easy to deploy. These results indicate that dCBT is an effective method of mental healthcare delivery for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and has the potential to provide long-term support.



60% of Canadians are experiencing mental health issues, with anxiety (40%) being the top concern, followed by stress, depression and addiction.²

Help that's always on hand.

In light of the rapid rise of mental health issues across the country, offering a tool that is adaptable, convenient and suited for the pace of your employee's modern life is essential.

Combined with the supervised model, this digital tool has proven to yield positive results and high utilization rates that are translatable to a variety of work environments and social situations. Its highly scalable, personalized format allows for easy roll-out and adoption in the workplace. This can help empower individuals to monitor their mental health on a regular basis. We currently offer treatment modules for anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), grief and pain, with many more programs in development to help support a healthier future for all Canadians.

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