**New Innovations**

**Thomas Tsakounis**

**Apps: Technology Driven Mental Health Resources**

Those who facilitate healing understand the importance of empowerment. Working diligently to nurture, support and create an environment conducive to self-actualization is the goal in so many of those healing modalities. It would seem reasonable to include the mental and behavioral health modalities in these assertions and as a licensed clinical professional counselor I will address the rest of the article from that perspective.

Alfred Adler was a pioneer in mental health in the late 1800s and developed the concept of social interest, which in a nutshell means that a person’s own health is deeply vested in their connection to the community. While the concept was developed by him, the idea of involvement with community probably existed long before Adler. Those of us in the mental health community recognize that people need to be as engaged outside of the therapeutic session as they are in the session - some may even argue that the client should be even more engaged outside the session. Many therapists would probably agree that in fact a bulk of the work is done outside of the therapeutic session. The challenge lies in getting the client to do that very hard work once they leave the office.

I would dare say that many health professionals seek to empower their clients, as well as share resources that help their clients achieve their long-term goals. It has long been a practice to literally share resources with clients as part of the therapeutic session. Resources have included: journaling; breathing exercise; mindfulness exercises; all forms of tapping techniques; books; yoga poses; aromatherapy; flower essences; exercise…; the list is practically endless. Interestingly, as technology has evolved so too have the resources, which are delivered to clients utilizing that technology.

I practice in a suburban area just outside the USA’s capital and to demonstrate my point, I am sharing a list of apps, in no particular order, used by some of the mental health professionals in this area. Next to each title is the cost of each app.

1. Stop Breathe and Think (*free*)
2. Calm (*free*)
3. Nature Melody (*variety of 20 different sounds from nature* - *free*)
4. Simply Being *($1.99*)
5. Headspace (*first ten - free, monthly fee thereafter*)
6. Mindfulness App (*$1.99 for the app and then a small fee for meditations*)
7. Virtual Hope Box (*not just mindfulness - free, upgradeable*)
8. MentalWorkout (free, can upgrade)
9. Breathe2Relax
10. Insight Timer (free)

Some of the apps above have companion websites and some do not. Here is a list of websites that I visited and some notes:

**TaraBrach.com**

Tara continues to be an amazing resource and her website highlights this fact. Her website is incredibly rich with resources including meditations and Dharma teachings. Her recordings are akin to what a client might receive in a session where the therapist shares a guided meditation or visualization - in other words no music or nature sounds. A lot of free stuff, donations welcome!

**MeditationOasis.com**

Great place for the beginner as well as the seasoned meditator! The site is chock-full of classes, compact discs, mp3s, mindfulness apps for smartphones, and more.

**Calm.com**

Calm.com is exactly that a place of calm and simplicity. Free, easy to navigate and simply beautiful! Truly a favorite!

**HealthJourneys.com**

If you’re looking for an online store to supply your meditation needs then HealthJourneys.com is it.

**InnerHealthStudio.com**

This broad spectrum resource is definitely a highlight of the website. They offer resources for kids and adults for issues ranging from anger management to panic, anxiety, stress, relaxation and so very much more. Coping skill worksheets are a nice addition and in my opinion invaluable. Most the resources on this site are free.

The resources mentioned here are in no way an exhaustive list. I encourage people to explore until they find the resource that feels right and meets your level of need and expertise.

In the next issue we will take a look at other Apps that support the therapeutic process.

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