



ROYAL
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Economic
and Social
Research Council

Therapy Reimagined: The Digital Future for Mental Health

Organised by Helen Pote, Pablo Smithson, Eva Papadopoulou, & Simon Lai

7th November 2025

Festival of Science



The Festival of Social Science is an annual celebration of research and knowledge about humans and society

23rd Anniversary

Events run by researchers from UK universities.



Aims of Conferences

Help the public and professionals understand recent advances in digital mental health and what therapy might look like in the future.

Facilitate discussions on the potential and risks of digital technology and AI in therapy from public and professional

Generate ideas with the public to inform future training for mental health professionals

Conference Outline

Timetable	Topics	Speakers
10.00	Welcome	Helen Pote
10.15	Why digital mental health?	Helen Pote, Alesia Moulton-Perkins, & Hannah Trickey
10.45	Digital future for therapy and AI, its inclusion and democratisation	Kristofer Vernmark
11.15	Break	
11.45	Human vs computer: which would you prefer?	Kate Cavanagh & Eva Papadopoulou
12.30	Keeping safe with AI	Charlie Wells
13.00	Lunch	
13.45	AR gaming and mental health for young people in school setting	Sarah Campell
15.00	Break	
15.30	Mobile EMI for goal pursuit and Future Me, a personalised chatbot for mental well-being	Ciarán O'Driscoll
16.45	Closing	

Speakers:

- Prof **Helen Pote**, Professor of Clinical Psychology at Royal Holloway University of London
- Dr **Alesia Moulton-Perkins**, Course Tutor and Clinical Psychologist at the Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training and Research
- Ms **Hannah Trickey**, Expert by Experience
- Dr **Kristofer Vernmark**, Docent at Linköping University
- Prof **Kate Cavanagh**, Professor of Clinical Psychology at University of Sussex
- Ms **Eva Papadopoulou**, Digital Health Business Lead
- Mr **Charlie Wells**, Founder & CEO of HelloSelf
- Dr **Sarah Campbell**, CEO at Play Well For Life
- Dr **Ciarán O'Driscoll**, Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology at University College London

Housekeeping

- This event will be recorded, by attending you give consent for recording.
- Slides and poll results will be made available during the day
- Poll results may be used for BPS advisory paper.
- We will take questions at the end of each presentation/ workshop
- Type your questions to the Q&A box in Teams
- Upvote questions that you would like to be answered

Support Through the Day

- Moderators of the Online Chat - Pablo & Eva
- Moderators in the room - Alesia
- SHOUT - text 85258 or <https://giveusashout.org/>
- Samaritans - 08457 90 90 90 or 116 123
- NHS111 - or online: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>



Have you used the following tools for supporting your mental wellbeing? (Select all that apply to you)

Tele-therapy or Video Conferencing



Mental Health Apps for Self-Management



Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR)



AI-powered Chatbots



Admin tools for recording/ summarising sessions



RESULTS SLIDE



Do you think it is or would be helpful to integrate the following tools into therapy?

Not helpful at all

Very helpful

Tele-therapy or Video Conferencing



Mental Health Apps for Self-Management



Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR)



AI-powered Chatbots



Admin tools for recording/ summarising sessions



RESULTS SLIDE

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Therapy Reimagined: The Digital Future for Mental Health

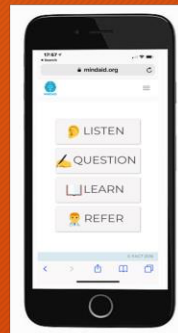
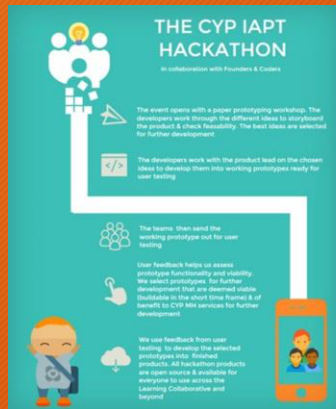


Introduction

Helen Pote
Alesia Moulton-Perkins
Hannah Trickey

Digital Introductions

Helen's digital journey



Alesia's digital journey courtesy of ChatGPT - NOT PERFECT!



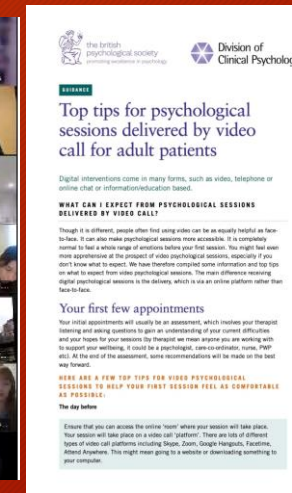
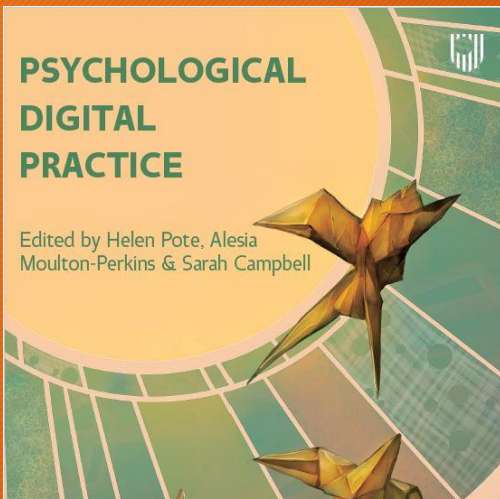
www.digitalhealthskills.com



DCP Digital Health Care Committee

Our Mission:

Supporting competent and confident psychological practitioners to deliver ethical and effective digital practice.



Why Digital Mental Health?

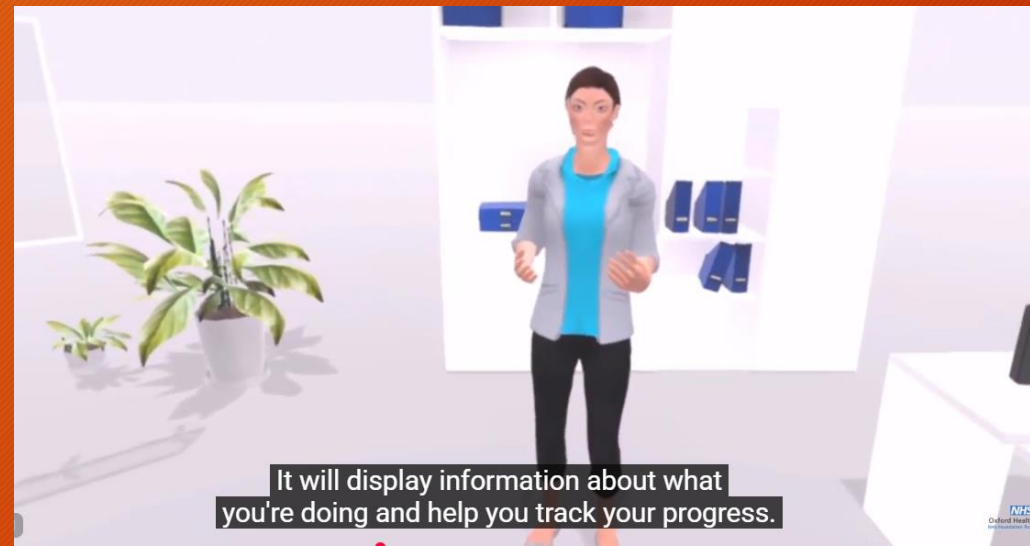
Definition: Digital Mental Health (DMH)

▶ Working Definition of Digital Health Technologies. *NICE, 2022*

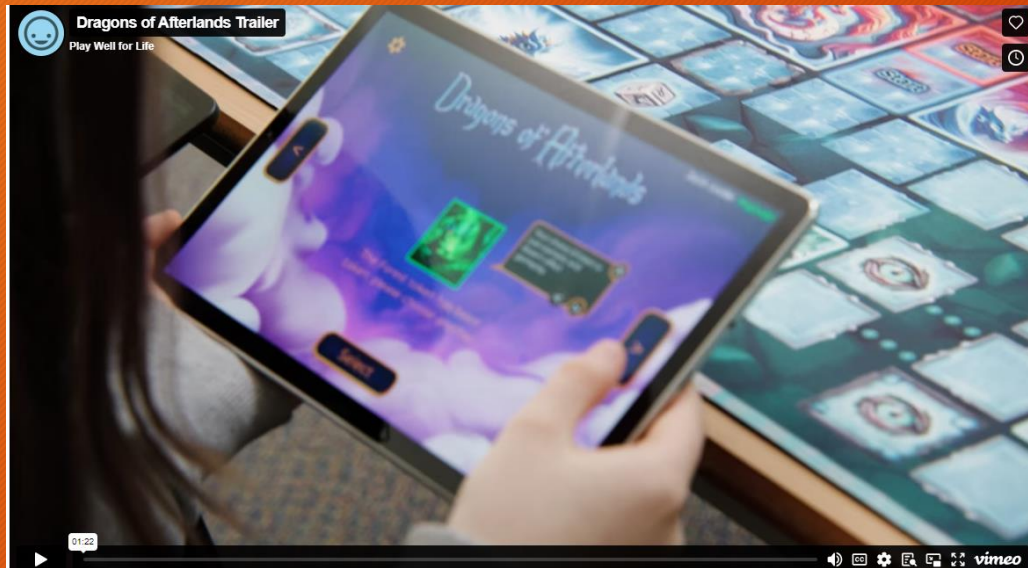
“digital products intended to benefit people or the wider health and social care system. This may include: smartphone apps, standalone software, online tools for treating or diagnosing conditions, preventing ill health, or for improving system efficiencies, and programmes that can be used to analyse data from medical devices such as scanners, sensors or monitors’



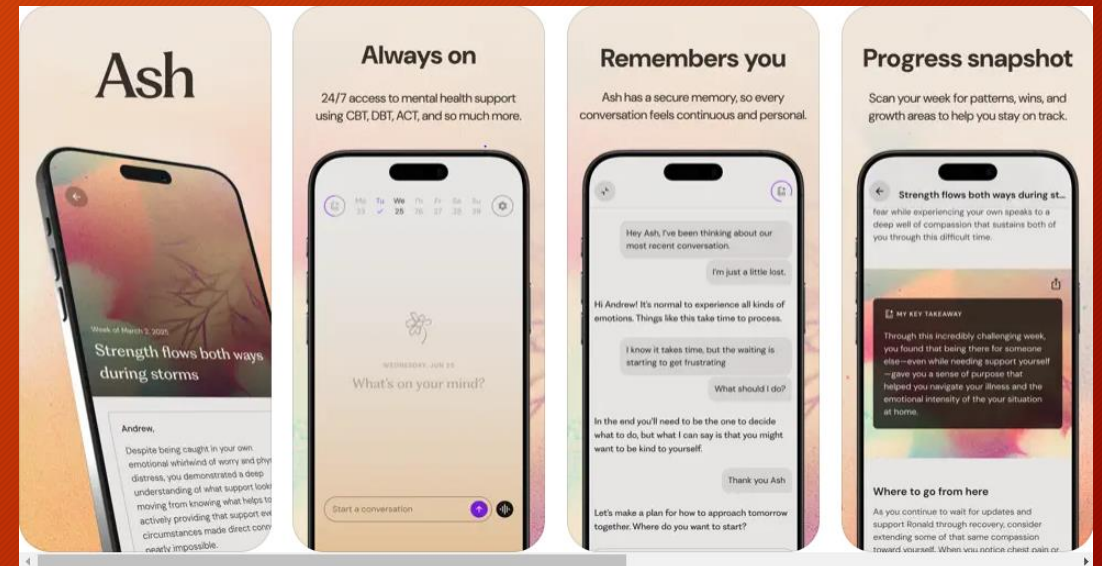
KEEP
CALM
I'M A
FUTURE
PSYCHOLOGIST



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LITRxW2kWHQ>

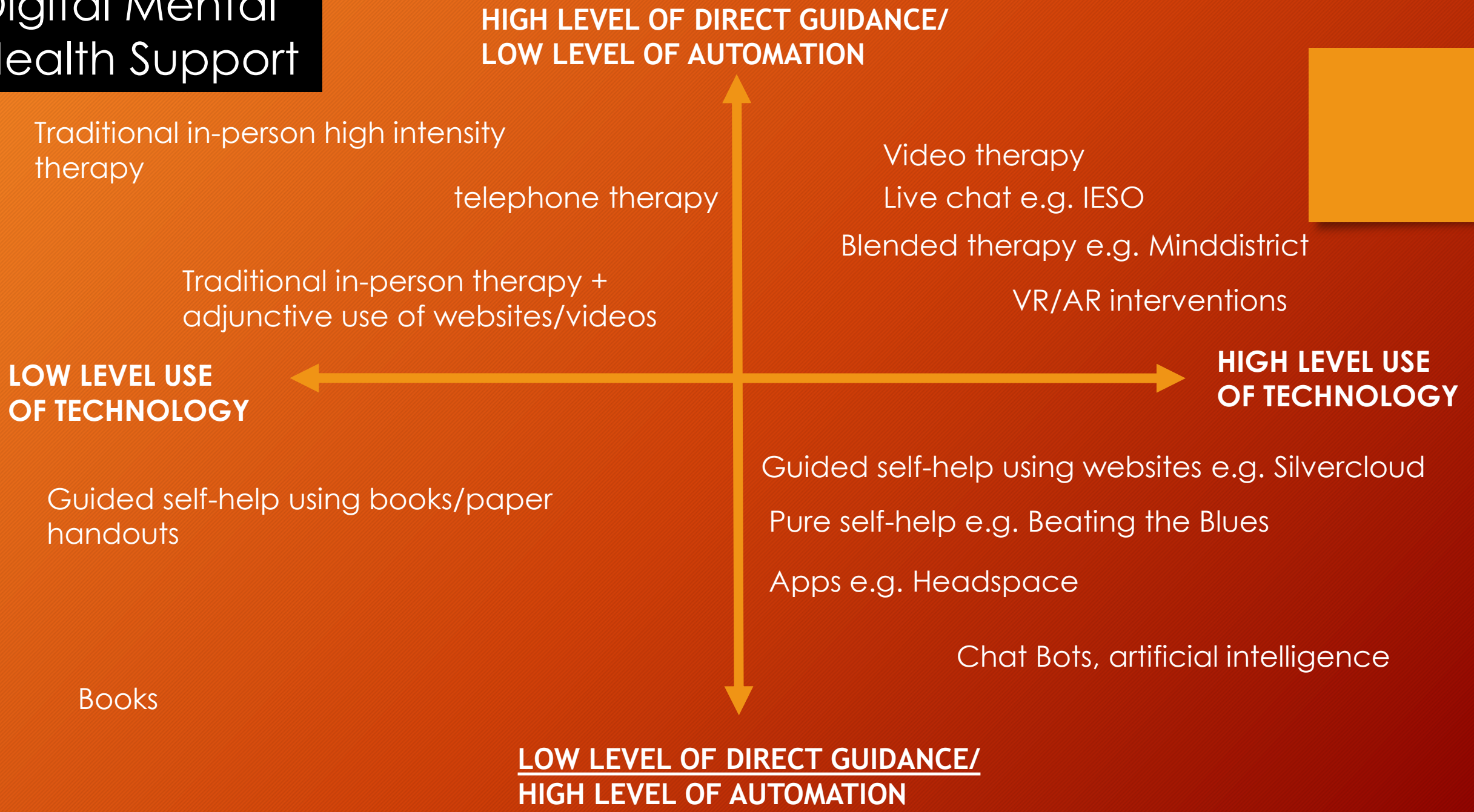


<https://www.pwflhealth.com>



<https://ash-therapy.com/>

Digital Mental Health Support



**HIGH LEVEL OF DIRECT GUIDANCE/
LOW LEVEL OF AUTOMATION**

Traditional in-person high intensity therapy

telephone therapy

Video therapy

Live chat e.g. IESO

Blended therapy e.g. Minddistrict

VR/AR interventions

Traditional in-person therapy + adjunctive use of websites/videos

LOW LEVEL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

HIGH LEVEL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Guided self-help using books/paper handouts

Guided self-help using websites e.g. Silvercloud

Pure self-help e.g. Beating the Blues

Apps e.g. Headspace

Chat Bots, artificial intelligence

Books

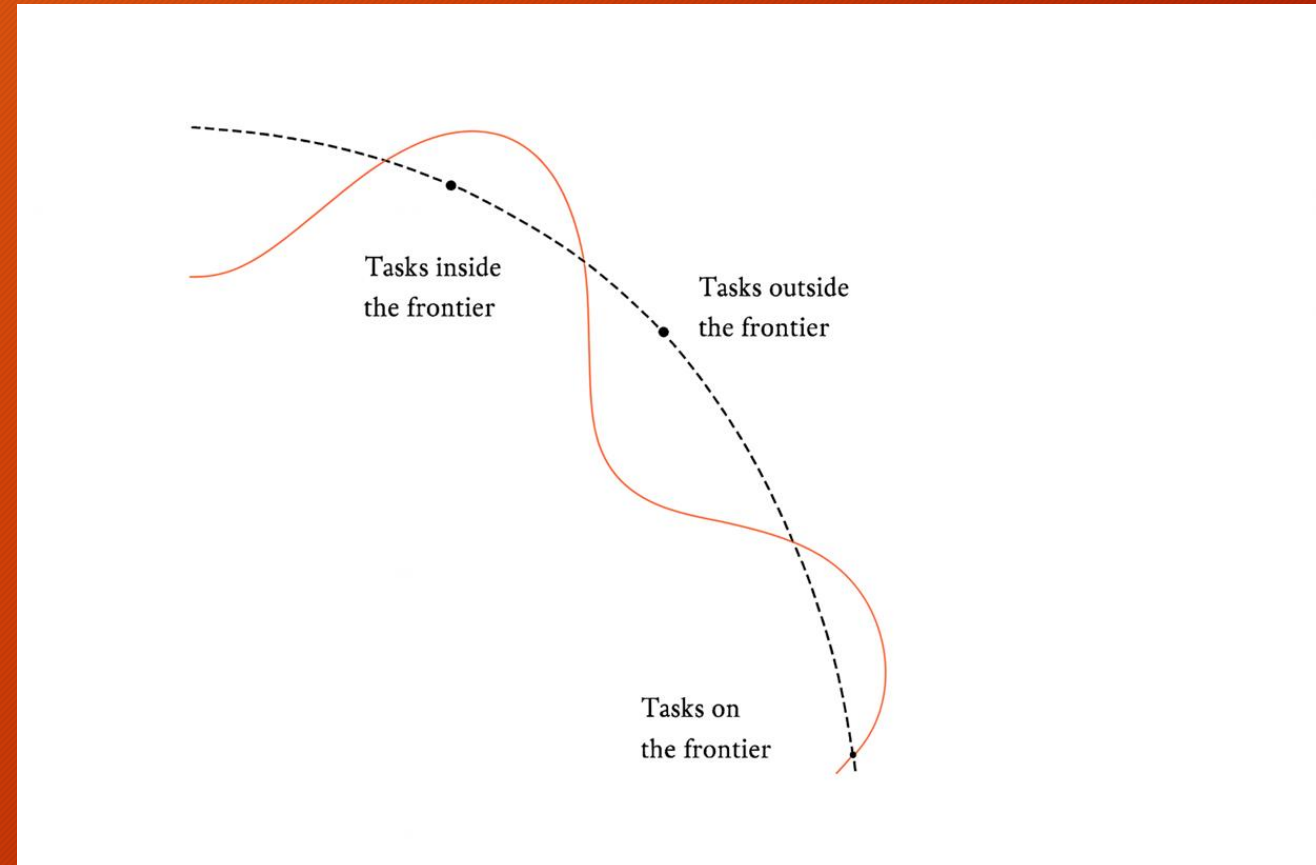
**LOW LEVEL OF DIRECT GUIDANCE/
HIGH LEVEL OF AUTOMATION**

Digital Tools as a helper: The jagged frontier

Wow this is amazing! I love it!

This tool is stupid! It can't do anything!

Ok, it is pretty useful but I now know what it's strengths and limitation are and I reckon I can work round them



NHS policy says 'The Future's Digital'

20



NHS Long Term Plan (2025)

Cure to
Prevention

Hospital to
Community

Analogue to
Digital

Independent
Investigation of the
National Health
Service in England

The Rt Hon. Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham OM KBE FRS FMedSci HonFREng

September 2024



The NHS Long-term plan (2025): Digital

Increased use of
the NHS app
'2028 full front
door'

Digital:
New single patient
record (SPR) -
interoperable

Digital:
Data, AI, Wearables
and Robotics for
transforming care

Digital:
Healthstore with
approved apps

AI to support staff
productivity

Many services are already using digital therapy methods effectively

Hard to determine how many NHS services are currently trialing digital interventions. The range includes online therapy programs, mental health apps, text-based services, AI-driven chatbots, and virtual therapy platforms, e.g. Togetherall, SilverCloud.

Some good examples of chatbots being used in the NHS: WYSA, TESS, Your Mind Matters

Talking Therapies - over 50% of primary care mental health services are now providing digital mental health options, and this number continues to grow

Later presentations will consider the evidence base in more detail

Public are already using digital tools for mental health

- Open AI Data (2025) shows that of ChatGPT's each week
 - Over 1.2m people talk to ChatGPT about suicide
 - 560 000 are showing signs of psychosis or mania
- Giray (2025) looked at Reddit posts and found people were also using it for coping with grief and loss, simulating conversations with deceased loved ones, seeking emotional support, developing social skills, managing ADHD symptoms, and serving as an on-demand mental health resource

Benefits of Digital Mental Health

Availability

- 24/7
- Remote access
- No geographical limitations

Scalability

- Overcomes limited workforce
- Personalised at scale

Anonymity

- Tackling stigma
- Encouraging early access

Democratisation of therapy



Ethics and risks of Digital Mental Health

- CHOICE - It is not for everyone
- CONFIDENTIALITY - Data security
- INCLUSIVITY
- Patient RISK
 - Open AI says its tools are trained to direct people to professional resources such as crisis helplines, but this doesn't happen 9% of the time.
 - Recent cases of family suing Open AI for negligent mental health support

Parents of teenager who took his own life sue OpenAI



THE RAINE FAMILY

Nadine Yousif
BBC News

27 August 2025

Successful Implementation



Training the workforce to work safely & effectively with digital tools

Digital Competences Framework for the Psychological Professions

www.digitalhealthskills.com

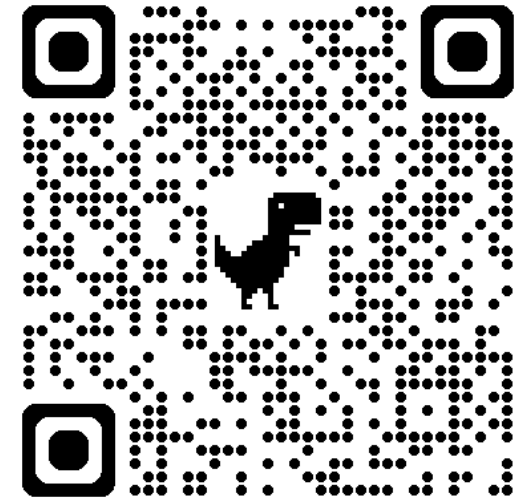
These digital competencies are applicable to all applied psychologists and psychological practitioners working online and via telephone (the core and advanced subcategories to the competencies can be found in the supplementary material).

Ethical Statement:

In using these digital competencies and working digitally with clients and other professionals it is important that practitioners adhere to the usual professional and ethical guidelines that guide their practice. When working digitally practitioners should pay particular attention to issues of client consent and participation, equity of access and choice.

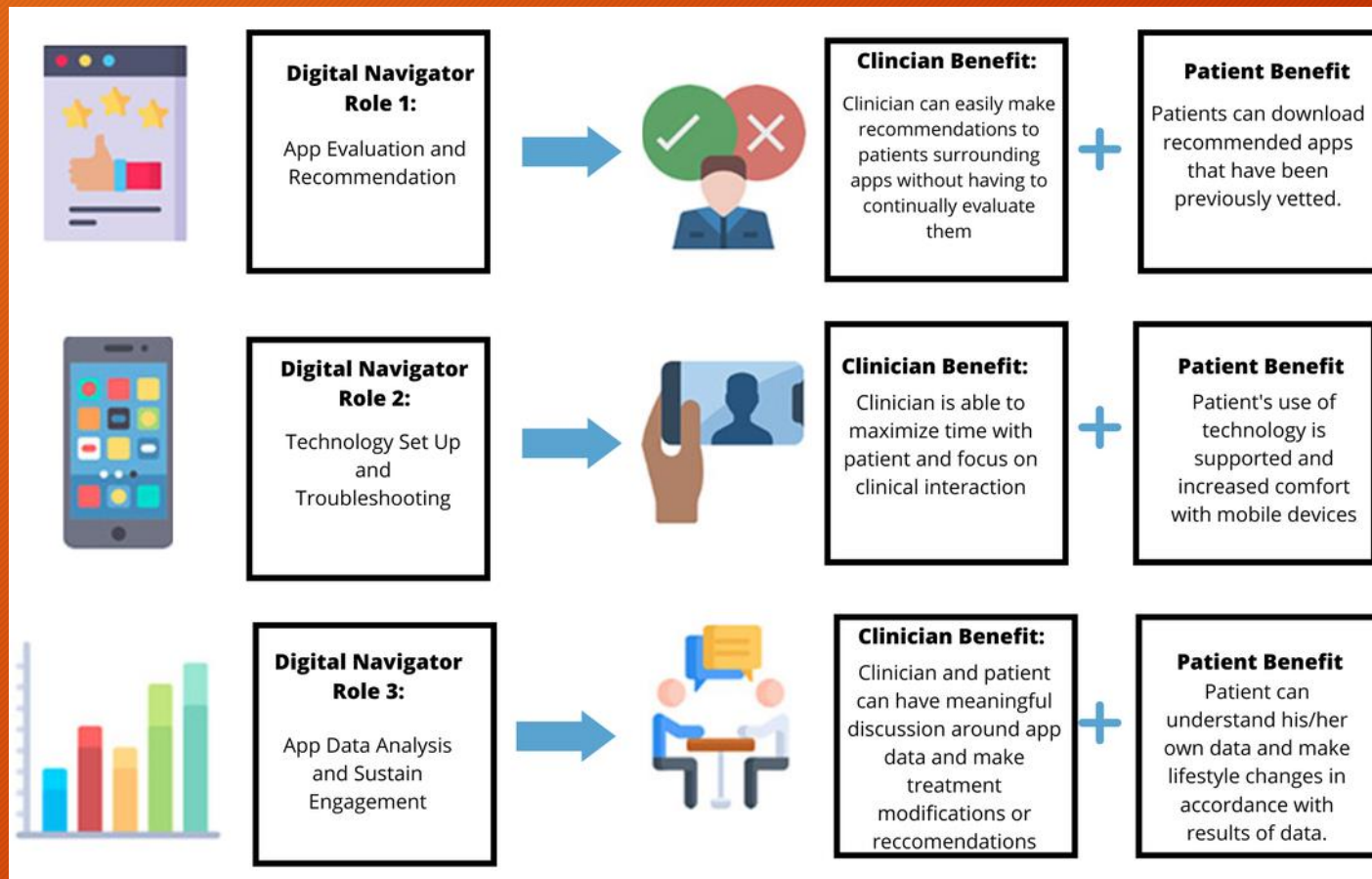
Pote, H., Moulton-Perkins, A., Latchford, G., Holloway-Biddle, C., Rides, G., Raczka, R., Jacques, C., Papadopolou, E., Thew, G., Read, R., Clarkson, L., Griffith, E., Priest, P., Cavanagh, K. (2020). Competence Framework for Digital Clinical Practice: Psychological Practitioners. British Psychology Society, Division of Clinical Psychology, Digital Healthcare Committee. Launched 26-05-2020. Available online <https://digitalhealthskills.com/digitalcompetencies/>

	Knowledge	Ability
Meta-competencies	Knowledge of ethical practice, opportunities and limitations of digital practice related to access and efficacy	Ability to practice digitally, including establishing and maintaining a positive therapeutic alliance in online work



Complete our international survey on your current digital competencies

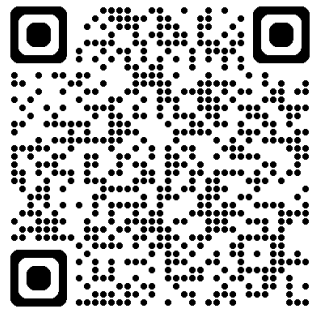
Supporting the public to access digital mental healthcare



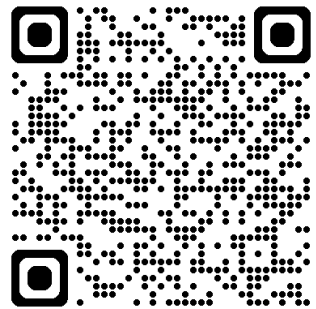
Digital Navigator
John Torous

DCP Digital Healthcare
Committee
www.digitalhealthskills.com

Free
Elearning
4 Modules



Learn.bps.org.uk



Digitalhealthskills.com

E-Learning

Developing competencies for digital clinical practice

Moulton-Perkins, A., Pote, H., Latchford, G., Rides, G., Raczka, R., Jacques, C., Papadopolou, E., Thew, G., Read, R., Clarkson, L., Griffith, E., Priest, P., Saunders, T., Dowzer, D., Cavanagh, K. (2022). Developing Competencies for Digital Clinical Practice: ELearning (2022). British Psychology Society, Division of Clinical Psychology, Digital Healthcare Committee.

Launched 12-5-2022. Available online <https://digitalhealthskills.com/elearning/>





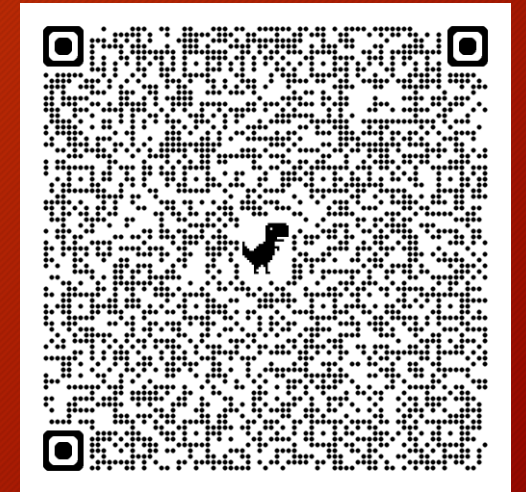
Psychological Digital Practice: The Basics and Beyond (2025)

Editors Prof Helen Pote, Dr Alesia Moulton-Perkins
& Dr Sarah Campbell.

Paperback and eBook.
Open University Press- McGrawHill
Amazon



OPENUP
20 20%
discount
code



Stay in touch...

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Event Feedback Survey



<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mmn9LiZaU62ARCACNKKLIP9FusLy6JMuQvbam9-UuZUMDUU1RTOUhRQVpXQU1IMDZQRkM1TjZFOS4u>