**Managing Anxiety with Mindshift CBT (1)**

**Tim:** [00:00:04] Hi there, Tim here from Diversity and Ability and today I'm going to be showing you this tool called Mindshift CBT. So this is an app that you can get for Android and iOS. So that's iPhones and iPads. It's a tool that was developed as you can see by anxiety Canada, but actually it is freely available to anybody across the globe, regardless though it is worth mentioning that at the outset that there are a few features that are a little bit North American centric

so it is worth being aware of that at the onset. But what I'm going to be doing is looking at this tool for, for two main purposes. Number one is for. The quick relief function, because obviously most people, you know, when they, when they suffer from issues with mental health, it tends to be that first initial kind of breaking point that they are looking for assistance with.

But then we can also look at how you can use it to build up a greater level of mental health for a range of different functions, such as being able to sort of monitor anxiety and mood levels and put into practice you know, good strategies to, to help build up those reserves, those better ways of thinking.

Here, we are looking at the application and the quick relief tools are available at the bottom of the screen in this happy smiley face icon just here. So if I tap on that, you can see it pops up with this list of options. Now one of the key things that can be really helpful is this take a breath function.

So if I tap on that

**Mindshift:** [00:01:27] calm breathing .

Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose for one, two ,

**Tim:** [00:01:34] I'm going to press the pause button. You can hear. It's just a two minute exercise helping you to, to maintain a, a a calm breathing Strategy and it just enables you to, to, you know, concentrate on yourself, taking that, you know, those anxiety levels and just kind of reducing them so that you're able to deal with whatever's going on in the moment.

And as you can hear this is playing through through my headset. So it means that you're hearing it as well. And this is something that you can just listen to on, you know, air pods or headphones or whatever you've got attached to your device. Or you can just play it out through the speakers. Okay, moving back to the list of quick relief options.

We've also got shift your thinking. So you can see here, it's just a, a few cards that you can read through that basically, you know, help you to understand what's going on in that moment of anxiety. Perhaps you're suffering an anxiety attack or something similar, and you can just go and read through these various different cards and help remember those, those reminders to

help you keep focused on, you know, what is actually going on for you at that moment in time? Particularly, you know, this one is a good example of how yes, those things could seem incredibly important, but actually when you look at the, the grand scheme of things, maybe it isn't as, as bad as you might think.

And perhaps it's not as much of a catastrophe catastrophe, as you might also anticipate. So if I jump back let's go look at ground yourself. So you can see here, a similar function. We've got these various different strategies that you can go through. You can see there's just three on this one because of the, the way that these are very much focused on that.

Immediately turning the, the, you know, calamatous anxiety into, into something more manageable. So you can see we've got a few different strategies such as counting back slowly from zero to a hundred. And even challenging yourself within it, or you can see looking, looking around kind of concentrating on things that are beyond the, the moment of anxiety and yeah, just connecting, reconnecting with your senses.

Let's go and have a look at, take a small step and you can see in here, you've got a variety of different ways of being able to. Take a small step towards helping, helping manage your anxiety levels. So for instance, if we go look at unwind, you can see it, then just comes up with a suggestion saying, do anything that feels soothing, take a hot shower, listen to relaxing music, do yoga, stretches, cuddle your pet, or have a cup of tea.

So you can see just some helpful reminders that, that, you know, we think of as common sense, perhaps, but in the moment of anxiety, you might not necessarily be able to think of this as a, as a strategy for overcoming it. So it's just as I know, as the name suggests. Very quick and simple steps to helping you overcome that, that extreme moment of challenge and be able to address these concerns in a, in a you know, a more reasonable frame now finally at the bottom, we've got this get help section. And this is one of those instances where it is very north American centric. As you can see, just down in these bottom two sections, we've got if you're in Canada and if you've, if you're in the us or the USA and neither of these steps will work for any of us here in the UK because our Our phone system will not connect to that, but there are some helpful pointers at the top here that can be, could be really useful such as, yeah, being able to take yourself to the nearest hospital or walk-in clinic or something similar.

Okay. Another element that you can use to help take action in the immediate moment of anxiety is if we scroll down, you can see down towards the bottom, middle, we've got the chill zone just here. And if I tap on that, you can see it's saying slow down and take a breath. If I tap on the screen, it then brings up this list of various different meditation exercises that you can go through.

What I really like is the way that it actually lists how long each of them is down this right-hand column. But then you've got yeah, different. Different exercises that you can do for different circumstances. So for instance, let's imagine that I had some form of social anxiety going on. I could choose this one and worth mentioning

you've got a choice of different audio options. So at the moment we've got the male voice selected with audio one, but I'm going to switch it across to audio two and choose social anxiety, social anxiety,

confidence, builder, social anxiety. Find a place to sit where you won't have distractions. Get comfortable and gently close your eyes.

Okay. I'm going to pause that there. But as you can hear, yeah, it's just very similar to the calm breathing exercise though. Obviously this one's much longer and is very focused on that social anxiety aspect and it is just something that you can listen through, either from the speakers on your device or through a pair of headphones or EarPods and be able to work with it.

Okay. So having looked at the various different quick relief solutions, let's think a bit more about how you can kind of use the tool to keep track of your, your anxiety and mood and things like that. So at the top here, you can see we've got this slider saying, how am I doing today? And I can use the slider on the left or the right, sorry to.

To select between these various different mood states. So you know what I'm feeling? Yeah. I'm feeling great right now. So I'm going to submit to it that I'm feeling great. And you can see it's now brought me through to this stage where I can. Choose my anxiety level. So you know what I'm feeling, I'm feeling alright.

You know, a little bit nervous making this video. But nonetheless still, still feeling pretty good. Not, not particularly high anxiety level. And then just here, we've got the ability to add in some reflection. So I'm going to say I I'm making a video, which can be difficult, but it's going okay so far.

Good. And then I can tap done. And then down at the bottom, you can see, you can add in any anxiety, symbols symptoms. Sorry. So you know, I'm going to say racing heart and Yeah, I think that's probably about it. Trouble concentrating though. That is a normal standard for me. Anyway, let's tap save, and you can see that it's been added to the list and now I can tap submit

and it says your check in has been saved and you can see, I can click on this summary button just beneath it. So I'm going to go look at that and you can see it then plots out each time that I've interacted with the app and shows each of the different Yeah, interactions that I've had, so we can see yet today I'm feeling great.

Last week I was feeling awful and middle of last week I was feeling bad and then I could even, you know, go in and see the, the, the things that were going on then and we can go back and look at what, what we put in there is even the space for me to edit it. Should I wish. Okay. So another helpful tool for when you are monitoring your, your anxiety levels and keeping track of, of how things are going is down at the bottom here, we've got healthy thinking.

So if I tap on that, you can see we've got a thought journal. And if I tap on that, you can see that I've already added in back in October of last year, I added in the a a negative thought I was having, which is that the tools that I'm trying to work with keep going wrong. And if I drill down into that, you can see it, then asks me to analyze what manner of thinking I was going through.

So I had a negative brain, brain filter. I was mind reading and it was black and white thinking that was going on. And then it asks me to balance my. And I said, well, you know what, actually, these, these tools, yeah. They, they go wrong from time to time, but they are constantly being updated and it's more than likely that the developer will, will release a fix for it soon.

So yeah. Helps you to, to, you know, manage those thoughts and think about them in a more healthy way. And in fact, if I just go into adding a new one just here, so you can see it saying, right, you know, we want you to define your worries. So I can put in something about this video. Isn't going to make sense.

Good. And then I can tap next and then it comes up saying, right, these are the various different thinking traps that you might encounter. And I am, yeah. I'm fortune telling here and I'm overestimating the danger and I am catastrophizing. So if I click next, that's got those logged and then I can balance that thought-out with I can edit it.

To make it more useful. Oops. If I could type it

good. And then tap done and tap, submit, you can see it's another way of being able to keep track of these things. And then at a later date, I could come back and review these things and go, oh wow. Yeah. I was really worried about that video, but actually it went. Another helpful way that you can keep a track of, of what's going on for you and how your thoughts have been, you know in the past and more to the point how you can reflect on them and, you know, improve on that.

And thinking in a more healthy way about these things is this belief experiment section at the bottom of healthy thinking. So if I navigate into that, you can see that Back in October of 2019 I had this thought experiment, which was the experiment was, I will say the wrong thing in front of a group of strangers.

And the prediction was that they will laugh at me. Now I did try that on, on that day and I can say I tried this. And in fact, actually no one actually noticed, oops, the mistake. As I immediately corrected myself.

Good. And so it then asked me beneath it did your prediction come true? And, or was it the outcome? Was the outcome as bad as you thought it would be? And I'm going to say no, it was not as bad as I thought it was going to be. And then it asked me to reflect on it beneath here and I can say yeah, presentations.

Aren't always bad. And then tap, submit, apologies for the spelling. Good. And you can see that it's been now

I'm logged in there and I can tap. And we can see that now my belief experiments have have all been answered and I can go back and review the ones that, that I have. And you can see that. Yeah, my, my belief was inaccurate and that actually things didn't go as, as terribly as I thought they would go.

Good something else that the tool offers as well as that monitoring and reflection side of things is the ability to learn and think about anxiety and how it's affecting you and, and hopefully spot the signs that you are sort of building an anxiety levels and that perhaps you may need to, to stop and take a moment to, to sort this out or to, to seek help.

If, if that isn't helpful, if that doesn't work. So yeah, down at the bottom left here, we've got this learn function. And if I tap on that, you'll see it then comes up with this list of variety of different questions that you might have such as what is anxiety. And you can see it just gives you some information.

Now it's worth mentioning you know, the, the formatting of this text isn't necessarily the easiest to read for those of us who might struggle with scotopic sensitivity. But luckily it does interact with the the built-in speak screen function on my iPad. So if I start that,

what is anxiety? Anxiety is our body's natural response to perceived danger.

And so you can have it red light to you instead of needing to read it yourself. And that in and of itself can be really helpful for, for managing those anxiety levels. Another area of the tool that can be really helpful for building on your knowledge base of what anxiety is and how it can impact upon you.

Is this my anxiety section? Just here so you can see we've got a range of different anxiety types to choose from. Let's imagine that, that, yeah, I was encountering some perfectionism, so I'm going to tap on that. And you can see it's then giving me details of, of what perfectionism is yet.

Again, I could use the speak screen function to read through this to me. But then it also gives you specific and you know, environments in which that might happen. And then at the bottom you can see, we can even see examples. And if I tap on that, it then breaks these down into different bullet points of, of instances that you might be encountering

if I close that we can then go across to signs and it gives you these, these three different areas, the body mind, and behaviors aspects of, of what you might be encountering, you know, the sort of the physical symptoms, the thoughts, the feelings, all those different things. And then if we go across this tip section, you can see it then gives you some, some active strategies that you can use to try and overcome these things.

Some of these are just pointing you back towards the app for instance and sayinglet's do a daily check-in just so that you've got that to, to keep track of it, keep monitoring it. And then other other things that might be beyond the application itself. And yet again, we've got a learn more function at the bottom, which gives you yeah.

More specific ways of addressing these, these particular points that it's making. One thing that this tool really tries to push wholeheartedly is the idea of taking active steps to overcome the anxieties, the fears, the various different things that you might be troubled by. And if we scroll down, you can see we've got this taken actions section.

Now, one of the things that I'm going to focus on here is the

One of the things that I'm going to focus on here is facing fears. So if we jump into that, you can see, right. We've got some completed ones and I have this strategy for delivering webinars. And what it asks you to do is to set up a, a a ladder of different steps. So you can see, I was worried about delivering webinars.

So I, first of all, my first step was to deliver a talk to my partner. And that was just, you know, level one. There's very little fear. She was not going to mock me for any mistakes that I might make. Then I might try delivering it to my colleagues and you know, they are good friends. I trust them wholeheartedly, so it wasn't too much anxiety.

And then I could actually deliver the the webinar for the, the organization themselves. So hopefully you've been able to see that whilst you might not have liked every single one of the strategies or techniques that are listed in this tool. You can see that, that it can be useful in that there are a few different strategies that you could download the tool and make use of quite effectively.

So, and yeah. I've been Tim from Diversity and Ability and I'll see in the next video.