5 Useful Apps for Persons With Adult ADHD

by Arif K. Mirza, MD
There has been a rapid growth of digital and mobile health applications (apps) for diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and asthma, among other conditions. These smartphone-based apps take advantage of a very capable platform that is computationally powerful, sensor-rich, and equipped to integrate with social media. Harnessing smartphone apps should be considered by clinicians who deliver behavioral health interventions beyond usual treatment for adult ADHD.
Here are useful apps to suggest to patients as an adjunct to other established interventions (eg, medications, therapy) for adult ADHD
I. Awesome Note

Awesome note is an all-in-one life organizer app designed to integrate a patient’s phone, calendar, and to-do list in one place. For someone with adult ADHD, the app provides a snapshot of all activities in folders that can be customized as personal, work, travel, to-do list, etc. This helps to ensure that all commitments are fully completed and work-life balance is not disrupted. A folder can be password protected to store private information. The contents of the app back up automatically to Google Drive or Evernote.
2. 30/30

30/30 is a time management app that can help patients finish a task or a project within an allotted time. A common struggle in adult ADHD is how to budget, pace, and manage time effectively. Once the allotted time for a task has been set (eg, a couple of hours), 30/30 takes over. The user sets up a list of tasks and a length of time for each of them. When the timer starts, it will tell the user when to move on to the next task. One can add a 5- or 10-minute mini-break to allow mental rest, check a text message, or score and return to finish remainder of the task when prompted.
Financial discipline—maintaining a home budget, setting aside savings, and paying bills on time—can be a challenging task for any adult. Adults with ADHD face these challenges and subsequent negative consequences at a much higher rate due to symptoms of impulsivity, disorganization, procrastination, and inattentiveness.

YNAB can be an invaluable tool that allows budget keeping, personal financial planning, and bill reminder all in one mobile app and desktop companion. The app is user friendly and takes a team approach by allowing a person to add his or her spouse in this important process. Practical tutorials are available for support. All relevant data is backed up in dropbox.
4. Sleepio

Sleep difficulties are extremely common among adult ADHD individuals for several reasons. For one, there are changes in sleep architecture due to ADHD itself. In addition, medications, including psychostimulants, may have adverse effects. Sleepio is a “virtual sleep therapist,” a 6-week cognitive behavioral therapy based program. The app trains people to use techniques that address the cognitive factors associated with insomnia, such as the “racing mind,” and to overcome anxiety and other negative emotions that accompany the experience of being unable to sleep.
5. Medisafe

Like other chronic conditions, adult ADHD is often accompanied by the challenge on the part of the patient to comply with treatment recommendations, such as medication adherence. Deficits in attention, disorganization, and procrastination all negatively impact quality of life. Missed doses and medication taken at incorrect times (especially in the case of a stimulant) can cause more harm than benefit. Medisafe is a “virtual pill organizer” that is easy to use and has an attractive user interface. What sets this app apart from others? MedFriend has a feature that allows family or friends to remind patients to take their medication on time.
Conclusion
As digital health apps gain in popularity, it is hoped that they will become a cost-effective means of delivering behavioral health interventions for other mental health disorders.

Reference
About the Author

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