



Deep Dive Into

Mental Health and Health Coaching

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Executive Summary

Mental health is maintaining focus within the U.S. healthcare system—and rightfully so. The incidence of mental health conditions across the country is steadily rising, especially as awareness around mental health increases and stigma surrounding conditions across the board decreases. Every year, nearly one in five adults and one in six children in the US experiences a mental illness. Data shows that mental health conditions are more prevalent among women, young adults, and those who report two or more races.

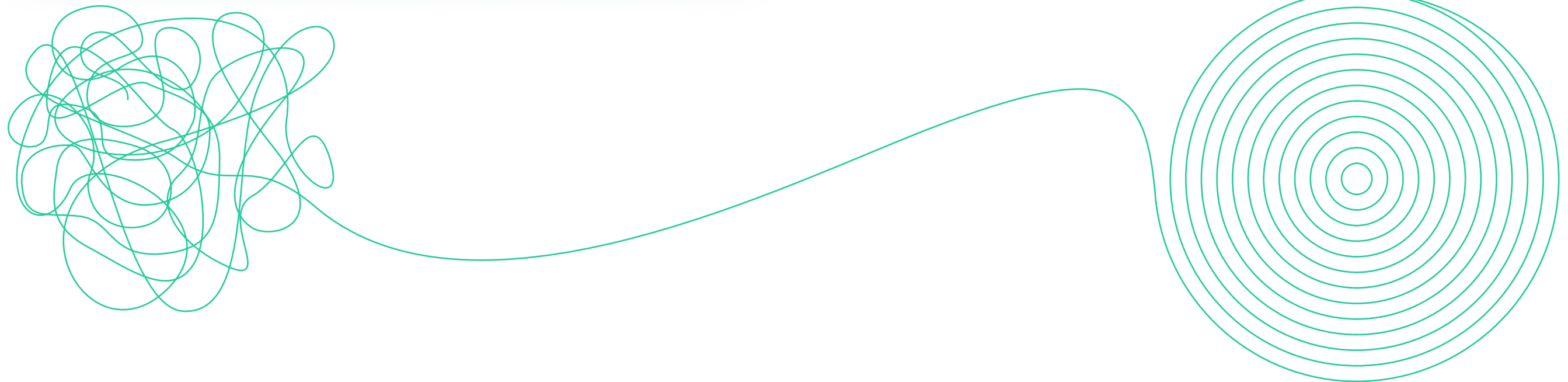
Despite advancements in treatment options in the past several decades, more than half of American adults suffering from a mental illness do not receive the treatment they need. Affordability and lack of insurance coverage, social stigma, lack of awareness and education and inadequate access to mental health services are the main barriers to receiving care.



Executive Summary

Health coaching, a client-centered approach that focuses on behavior change and holistic well-being, can play a valuable role in supporting individuals with mental health conditions and fill some of the gaps caused by an ongoing shortage of mental health professionals. By addressing lifestyle factors, providing education, setting goals, and offering ongoing support, health coaches can assist clients in preventing and managing their mental health challenges.

The effectiveness of health coaching for mental health conditions management and prevention is backed by both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from numerous scientific studies—and the body of research is growing! These findings consistently indicate that health coaching helps reduce anxiety, decrease PTSD, ADHD, and depressive symptoms, increase quality of life, self-awareness, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, social connection, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. Qualitative results show that health coaches are a major factor in adherence to mental health interventions and they have a major impact on empowering clients to achieve their health & wellness goals.



What Is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It encompasses our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and influences how we cope with stress, make choices, and interact with others.

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall health and wellbeing and plays a crucial role in every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

The WHO states that mental health is “**more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities**”. Caring about mental health is not only about managing current and ongoing conditions but also looking at long-term wellness and happiness.



The Importance of Mental Health

Physical health

Poor mental health can have serious implications on physical health and exacerbate problems such as insomnia, fatigue, headaches, digestive issues, and a weakened immune system. For example, depression and both diabetes and heart disease are deeply correlated. On the other hand, good mental health can often promote healthy behaviors such as regular exercise, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep, which are essential for maintaining physical well-being.

Emotional well-being

Mental health impacts our emotional state and our ability to manage and regulate emotions effectively. When our mental health is in check, we experience positive emotions like happiness, joy, and contentment more frequently. It also enables us to cope with and manage negative emotions such as stress, sadness, and anxiety more adaptively.

Cognitive function and productivity

Mental health affects cognitive processes such as attention, memory, concentration, and problem-solving abilities. When our mental health is optimal, we can think clearly, make decisions more effectively, and even process information better. Conversely, poor mental health can impair cognitive function, leading to difficulties in daily functioning and reduced productivity.

Relationships and social well-being

Good mental health is essential for building and maintaining meaningful relationships. It enables us to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and establish healthy boundaries. Good mental health promotes positive social interactions, enhances our ability to form and maintain relationships, and contributes to overall social well-being.

Resilience and coping skills

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, cope with stress, and adapt to challenges. When our mental health is optimal, we are better equipped to handle life's ups and downs, manage stress effectively, and develop adaptive coping mechanisms.

Quality of life

When we have good mental health, we are more likely to experience a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and life satisfaction. We can engage in meaningful activities, pursue our goals and aspirations, and enjoy a higher quality of life.

What are the Most Common Mental Health Conditions?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)



Mental health conditions include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm.

Some common mental health conditions include depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They can vary in severity and can impact a person's daily functioning, relationships, and overall quality of life.

There's no cure for mental illness, but there are lots of effective treatment approaches that may vary based on specific mental health conditions, individual needs, and preferences. With appropriate care and support, many individuals can effectively manage ongoing mental health conditions, lead fulfilling lives, and experience significant improvements to their overall well-being.



What Contributes to Mental Health Conditions?

Mental health conditions have multifactorial causes, which might include biological, environmental, and physical factors, and can vary depending on the specific condition in question. Addressing all factors holistically can promote better mental health, prevent the onset of mental health conditions, and support overall well-being.

Biological Factors

Biological factors include genetics, brain chemistry, and hormonal imbalances. For example, a family history of certain mental health conditions can increase the risk of developing similar conditions. For example, estimates suggest that genetic factors may increase the risk of schizophrenia by up to **80%**. Separately, imbalances in neurotransmitters, which are responsible for generating signals in the brain, can contribute to or be correlated with the development of mental health issues.

Environmental Factors

Early life experiences, such as childhood trauma or abuse, can have long-lasting effects on mental health. Other environmental factors like chronic stress, exposure to violence, socioeconomic status, and access to healthcare and social support can also impact mental well-being.

Social Factors

Supportive relationships, a sense of belonging, and positive social connections can promote mental well-being. On the other hand, social isolation, discrimination, stigma, and lack of social support can negatively affect mental health.

Access to Care

As of today, more than half (**54.7%**) of adults with mental illness in the U.S. do not have access to the mental health treatment they need. Adequate access to affordable and quality mental health services, including therapy, medication, and support programs, is essential for early intervention, diagnosis, and effective treatment.

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors and mental health are deeply symbiotic. Negative thought patterns, low self-esteem, excessive self-criticism, and poor coping skills can increase vulnerability to mental health conditions. Conversely, having good emotional regulation, resilience, and healthy coping mechanisms can contribute to positive mental health.

Lifestyle Factors

Regular exercise, a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and stress management practices can positively affect mental well-being. Poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to mental health problems. Long-term substance abuse, in particular, has been linked to anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

The State Of Mental Health In the U.S.

Data:

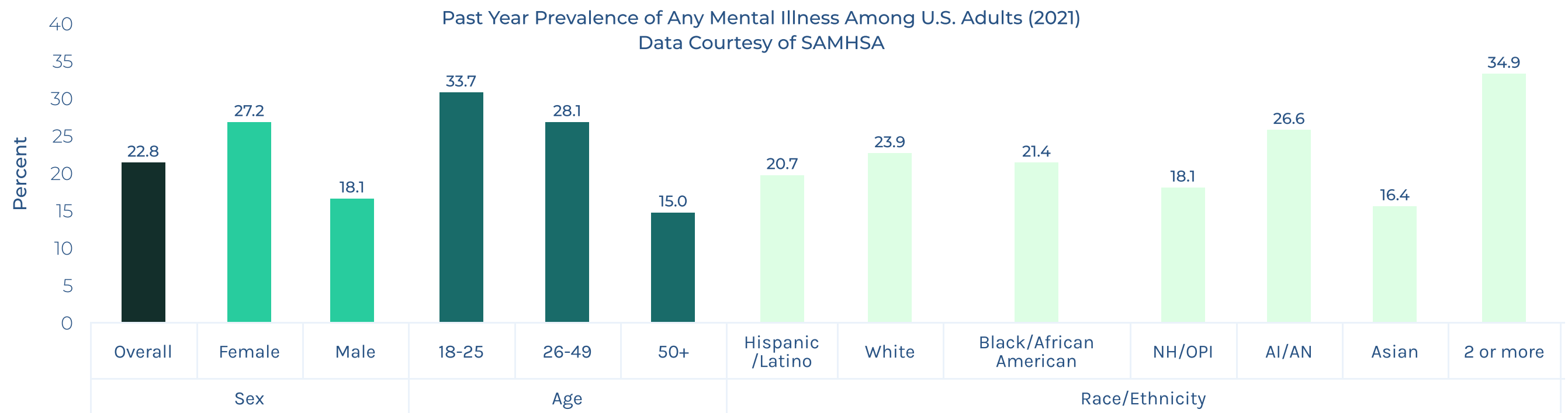


1 in 5 U.S. adults *live* with a mental illness.

Mental health conditions are prevalent in the United States. According to [Mental Health America's 2023 Report](#), nearly one in five adults in the U.S. experiences a mental illness in any given year. Additionally, one in six children aged 2 to 8 has a diagnosed mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder.

Mental health disparities exist across different populations. Factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual orientation can influence the prevalence, access to care, and quality of mental health services.

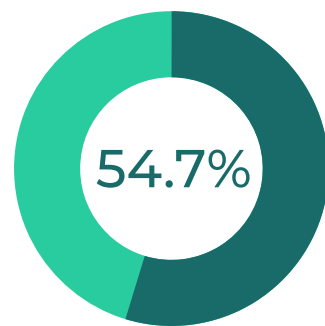
Data shows that the prevalence of mental illness *is higher* among young adults aged 18-25 years and among adults reporting two or more races. In terms of gender, females report mental health symptoms more frequently than males. Studies [found](#) that women *are twice as likely* to suffer from anxiety and almost *2 times more likely* to suffer from depression than men.



Source: [2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#) conducted by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

Access to Care & Existing Stigma

Data:



More than half (**54.7%**) of adults with mental illness in the U.S. do not receive the mental health treatment they need.

Access to mental health care is crucial to helping individuals receive the necessary support to address their illnesses. However, today in the U.S., more than half of adults with mental illness (a total of **27 million** people) do not receive the mental health treatment they need. Below are some of the most common barriers:

1 | Financial barriers to mental health treatment

Many individuals may struggle to pay for treatment costs, including therapy sessions, medications, and hospitalization. In a [recent survey](#) conducted by [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#), 42% of adults with mental illness reported they were unable to receive necessary care because they could not afford it.

Insight: *There are an estimated 350 individuals for every one mental health provider in the U.S., according to the [The State Of Mental Health In America 2023 Report](#).*

2 | Lack of mental health care professionals and services

Inadequate access to mental health services, particularly in rural or underserved areas, can pose a significant barrier for a large portion of the population. This includes a shortage of mental health professionals, long wait times for appointments, and limited mental health facilities or resources. According to data from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#), 163 million Americans (half the U.S. population) live in federally-designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas.

3 | Limited mental health education and awareness

Limited education and awareness around mental health conditions, [available treatments](#), and the importance of seeking help [can prevent](#) individuals from recognizing their own symptoms and understanding the benefits of professional support. Ultimately, if a person doesn't know something is wrong, they're unlikely to seek treatment.

4 | Social stigma of mental health treatment and conditions

Stigma [refers](#) to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that society holds towards mental health conditions and those seeking treatment. Stigma can be internalized by individuals experiencing mental health challenges causing them to feel shame, self-blame, and a diminished sense of self-worth. Studies [have found](#) that the stigmas associated with mental illness often [prevent](#) people from seeking treatment.

5 | Lack of representation within healthcare

According to 2015 data [by the APA](#), 84% of psychologists, 67% of social workers, and 88% of mental health counselors are white. Some individuals might be less likely to seek help if they think their mental health practitioner can't understand or empathize with their background, cultural differences and experiences. A CDC [survey](#) found that white adults (23%) are more likely than Black (13.6%) and Hispanic (12.9%) adults to seek and receive mental health treatment.

Anxiety

Data:







1 in 5 American adults suffer from an anxiety disorder.





Anxiety disorders are mental health conditions characterized by excessive and persistent feelings of worry, fear, or unease that significantly interfere with daily life. They involve a heightened and prolonged state of anxiety that goes beyond what is considered typical or appropriate in a given situation.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. Over 40 million adults in the U.S. (19.1%) have an anxiety disorder. Moreover, 7% of children aged 3-17 experience issues with anxiety each year. Most people develop symptoms before age 21.

Emotional symptoms:

-  Feelings of apprehension or dread
-  Feeling tense or jumpy
-  Restlessness or irritability
-  Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger

Physical symptoms:

-  Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath
-  Sweating, tremors and twitches
-  Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
-  Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

Anxiety

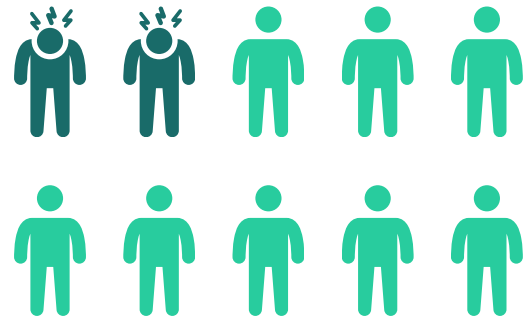
Anxiety disorders can manifest in various forms, including:

Type	% of the U.S. population	Is characterized by...
<u>Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)</u>	3.1%	Excessive and chronic worrying about a wide range of everyday concerns, such as work, health, finances, or relationships. The worry is often <u>difficult to control</u> and may be accompanied by physical symptoms like restlessness, fatigue, muscle tension, and difficulty concentrating.
<u>Panic Disorder</u>	2.7%	Recurrent and unexpected panic attacks, which are intense episodes of fear or discomfort that arise abruptly and reach their peak within minutes. Panic attacks are <u>often</u> accompanied by physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, and a fear of losing control or having a heart attack.
<u>Social Anxiety Disorder</u> (Social Phobia)	7.1%	Social anxiety disorder <u>is characterized</u> by an intense fear of social situations or performance situations where the individual fears being judged, embarrassed, or humiliated. It often leads to avoidance of social interactions, which can significantly impact personal and professional life.
<u>Specific Phobias</u>	9.1%	Excessive and irrational fear of a specific object, situation, or activity. <u>Common phobias</u> include fear of heights, spiders, flying, needles, or certain animals. The fear is disproportionate to the actual danger posed by the phobic stimulus.
<u>Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder</u> (OCD)	1.2%	Intrusive, unwanted thoughts or obsessions, often accompanied by repetitive behaviors or compulsions. <u>These compulsions</u> are performed in an attempt to alleviate anxiety or prevent feared outcomes.
<u>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</u> (PTSD)	3.6%	PTSD <u>can develop</u> after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. It involves symptoms such as intrusive memories, nightmares, flashbacks, avoidance of triggers, heightened arousal, and changes in mood and cognition.

These are just a few examples of anxiety disorders, and each disorder has its own specific diagnostic criteria. Early intervention and professional treatment can lead to significant improvements in managing symptoms and overall well-being.

Depression

■ Data:



In April 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 2 in 10 adults (22%) were experiencing symptoms of depression during the past month.

Depression is more than just feeling down or having a bad day. Symptoms must last at least two weeks and must represent a change in functioning in order for someone to be diagnosed with depression.

Depression (also known as major depressive disorder, or clinical depression) is a common but serious mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, low mood, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities.

■ Data:

Depressions costs the U.S. economy

\$210 billion ↗

per year



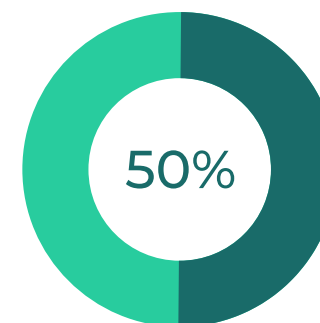
Depression

Some key symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling or appearing low, empty inside, or irritable most of the day every day
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite or weight—eating more or less; gaining or losing weight
- Changes in sleep—either not being able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Feeling exhausted even when you seem to be getting enough sleep
- Changes in activity—feeling restless inside or feeling sluggish
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Postpartum depression is a more severe, long-lasting form of depression. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, and fatigue that can significantly impact a mother's well-being and ability to care for herself and her baby. Postpartum depression can develop within the first few weeks after delivery, but it can also occur up to a year following childbirth.

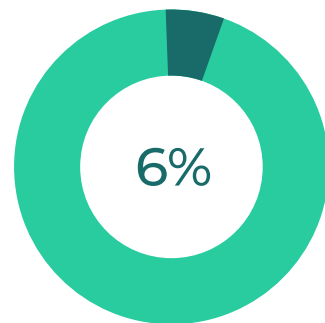
■ Data:



Nearly 50% of mothers with postpartum depression are not diagnosed by a health professional.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

■ Data:



About 6% of the U.S. population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can develop when a person has experienced or witnessed a scary, shocking, terrifying, or dangerous event. These stressful or traumatic events usually involve a situation where someone's life has been threatened or severe injury has occurred.

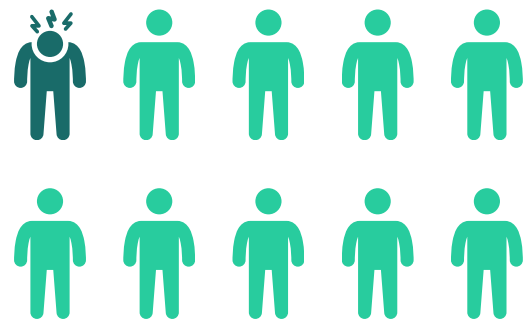
According to the National Institute of Mental Health, a doctor who has experience helping people with mental illnesses, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist, can diagnose PTSD. Treatment focuses on reducing symptoms, improving coping skills, and enhancing overall well-being. Many individuals have experienced improvement to their condition thanks to current interventions.

Symptoms of PTSD may last months to years and may include:

- Flashbacks, or feeling like the event is happening again
- Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- Feeling alone or detached from others
- Losing interest in activities
- Frightening thoughts
- Having trouble concentrating
- Having physical pain like headaches or stomach aches
- Avoidance of memories, thoughts, or feelings about what is closely associated with traumatic events
- Problems remembering
- Negative beliefs about themselves or others

ADHD

■ Data:

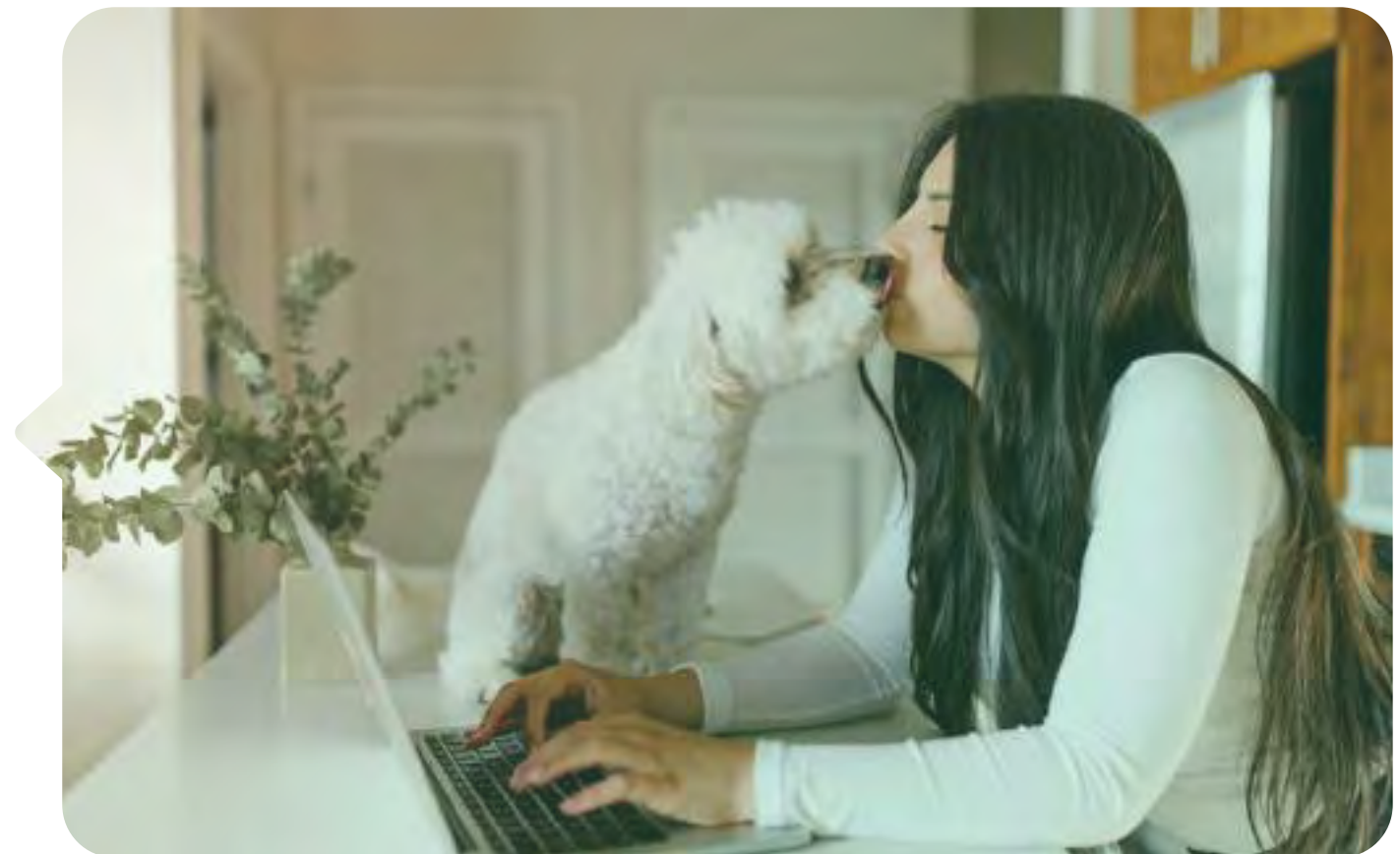


1 in 10 children (9.8%) aged 3-17 years in the U.S. have ADHD.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common mental disorders affecting children. ADHD is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that can interfere with functioning and development in various areas of life.

It is more commonly diagnosed among boys (13%) than girls (6%) given differences in how the symptoms present. However, this does not mean that boys are more likely to have ADHD. Boys tend to present with hyperactivity and other externalizing symptoms whereas girls tend to have inactivity.

ADHD is considered a lifelong condition, but with appropriate support and treatment, individuals can learn strategies to manage their symptoms effectively. The diagnosis can be made by a mental health professional, like a psychologist or psychiatrist, or by a primary care provider, like a pediatrician. Treatment approaches may include a combination of behavioral interventions, and, in some cases, medication.



ADHD

The symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can be categorized into 2 types of behavioral problems:

Inattentiveness

- Having a short attention span and being easily distracted
- Making careless mistakes – for example, in schoolwork
- Appearing forgetful or losing things
- Being unable to stick to tasks that are tedious or time-consuming
- Appearing to be unable to listen to or carry out instructions
- Constantly changing activity or task
- Having difficulty organizing tasks

Hyperactivity and impulsiveness

- Being unable to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings
- Being unable to concentrate on tasks
- Excessive physical movement and talking
- Being unable to wait their turn
- Acting without thinking
- Interrupting conversations
- Little or no sense of danger

Research suggests that ADHD is becoming more diagnosed in adults. While ADHD has long been associated with children, it is now widely recognized that it can persist into adulthood and have a significant impact on various aspects of adult life. Moreover, the diagnostic criteria for ADHD have expanded to include symptoms commonly experienced by grown-ups. For example, in adults, hyperactivity may occur as extreme restlessness or wearing out others with their activity.

Eating Disorders

■ Data:

9% of the U.S. population, or

28.8 million ↗

Americans, will have an eating disorder in their lifetime.

Eating disorders are a group of mental health conditions characterized by abnormal eating behaviors and distorted attitudes toward food, weight, and body shape. These unhealthy disorders are characterized by low self-esteem, body image discrepancies, poor coping skills, and severe underlying psychosocial stressors that might lead to bingeing and purging.

Eating disorders affect up to 9% of the population. They typically develop in adolescence and young adulthood, and more frequently among women between the ages of 20 and 35.

■ Data:

The economic cost of eating disorders is

\$64.7 billion ↗

Several factors can increase the risk of developing an eating disorder, including genetics, psychological traits like low self-esteem and perfectionism, cultural influences emphasizing thinness, engaging in dieting or weight-related behaviors, experiencing life transitions or traumatic events, and having co-occurring mental health conditions. While these factors contribute to vulnerability, they do not guarantee the development of an eating disorder.

Eating Disorders

The three main types of eating disorders are:

Anorexia Nervosa

Individuals with anorexia nervosa have an extreme fear of gaining weight and a distorted body image. They severely restrict their food intake, leading to significant weight loss and, in some cases, malnutrition. They may also engage in excessive exercise and have a relentless pursuit of thinness, often despite being underweight.

Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia nervosa is characterized by episodes of binge eating followed by compensatory behaviors to avoid weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives or diuretics, fasting, or excessive exercise. Individuals with bulimia nervosa often experience feelings of guilt, shame, and lack of control over their eating behaviors.

Binge Eating Disorder

Binge eating disorder involves recurrent episodes of uncontrollable overeating, where large amounts of food are consumed within a relatively short period of time. Individuals with this disorder often experience a loss of control during these episodes and may feel distressed, guilty, or ashamed afterward. Unlike bulimia nervosa, binge eating episodes are not followed by compensatory behaviors.

How Health Coaches Can and Do Help

Health coaching uses an evidence-based approach that can be leveraged to manage, prevent or improve ongoing health conditions and support overall health and wellbeing. At the heart of health coaching is a holistic approach, which considers the person as a whole, rather than focusing on an individual illness or health concern.

Health coaches maintain a client-centered approach, wherein the client is the expert and choose their goals, engages in self-discovery or active learning processes, and self-monitor behaviors to increase accountability, all within the support and help of the health coach, until the desired outcome will be achieved. Rather than telling clients what they should or shouldn't do, coaches help clients discover their own power and path to change.

Although health coaches **can and do work alongside patient care teams or in collaboration with other health care professionals** to help clients enact health change day-to-day, it's important to understand their scope of practice.



A Health Coach is **NOT** ...



A health coach is NOT a Nutritionist or Dietitian

Health coaches can help clients establish action plans for generalized healthy eating behaviors, whereas nutritionists and dietitians can prescribe meal plans and give specific nutritional advice to clients according to their medical needs or goals.



A health coach is NOT a Doctor

Health coaches can not diagnose or prescribe. Health coaches are integral members of the health and care team and work with patients in helping them reach their health & wellness goals and adhere to a plan prescribed by their doctor.



A health coach is NOT a Personal Trainer

While health coaches encourage physical activity, they focus on many other aspects of a person's wellbeing including emotional and mental wellness. They do not typically create fitness regimens in the same way that personal trainers do. However, some health coaches do hold fitness certifications and can help those who are seeking both a health coach and a personal trainer.



A health coach is NOT a Therapist

Health coaches don't need to be therapists or psychologists, and great coaches don't try to mimic what a mental healthcare professional does. These professionals can complement one another and often work together.

A Health Coach **is** ...

- ✓ A highly skilled and certified professional
- ✓ Knowledgeable in human behavior, motivational techniques and health outcomes
- ✓ A change agent helping clients set and achieve health goals and build new habits
- ✓ Trained in helping a client maintain a positive and healthy mindset while working towards health and wellness goals by focusing on their strengths



How Health Coaches Can and Do Help:

Education and Awareness

Health coaches can educate clients about their specific mental health conditions, including symptoms, triggers, and available treatment options. By enhancing clients' understanding, health coaches empower them to make informed decisions and actively participate in their own care.

Guiding

Health coaches can work with clients to set realistic and achievable goals related to their mental health. These goals may include improving self-care habits, managing symptoms, enhancing coping strategies, and adopting healthier lifestyle behaviors. Coaches can help clients break down these goals into actionable steps and provide guidance on how to implement and sustain positive changes.

Behavioral Change Support

Health coaches can help clients identify and address any barriers or challenges they may face along the way. Regular check-ins, progress tracking, and feedback from the coach can motivate clients and encourage them to stay committed to their mental well-being.

Lifestyle Modification

Health coaches can assist clients in making lifestyle modifications that promote mental well-being. This may involve developing a balanced and nutritious diet, establishing regular exercise routines, improving sleep habits, managing time effectively, and incorporating relaxation techniques into daily routines.

How Health Coaches Can and Do Help:

Stress Management Techniques

Health coaches can teach clients various stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, deep breathing exercises, meditation, and relaxation exercises. These techniques can help clients reduce anxiety and manage stress more effectively.

Referral and Collaboration

If a client's mental health condition requires additional support, a health coach can refer the client to mental health professionals such as therapists, psychiatrists, or counselors. They can also collaborate with healthcare professionals to ensure comprehensive and coordinated care for the client.

Emotional Support

Health coaches can provide a compassionate and non-judgmental space for clients to express their emotions and concerns related to their mental health. By actively listening and offering empathy, coaches can help clients feel supported and validated in their journey toward better mental well-being.

Building a Supportive Network

Health coaches can assist clients in building a strong support network that can greatly contribute to their mental health journey and provide them with additional resources and understanding. Coaches can also guide clients in establishing healthy boundaries and effective communication within their relationships, fostering a positive and supportive environment and a stronger, more supporting social network.

Coaching and Psychotherapy

According to a 2022 longitudinal observational study, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of health coaching were shown to be comparable to therapy in terms of patient relationships and outcomes. According to the study, both groups that used teletherapy or telecoaching services through an employer-sponsored mental health solution reported high ratings and similar results.



While there are some similarities between health coaching and psychotherapy there are also many differences. Though both draw from the same research and approach, coaching and psychotherapy require different training and each have unique client expectations, processes, and structure. Depending on the client and their needs, health coaches and psychotherapists can often work in tandem.

Coaching and Psychotherapy

Similarities

Positive Psychology

Both health coaches and psychotherapists lean on learnings from positive psychology, where the focus is on the possibilities rather than causes and issues.

Mindfulness

Both health coaches and psychologists may propose mindfulness to reduce stress, depression, anxiety, or pain.

Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing, also known as OARS (Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries), is an evidence-based approach to behavior change and a guiding communication style often used by both health coaches and psychotherapists. It's designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by empowering the person's reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.

Insight: [Motivational interviewing 101](#)

Differences

Structure

In psychology as well as health coaching, an individualized approach is essential; however, there are some core differences. In health coaching, the client always knows the session flow and what's coming next. Goal-setting techniques and action plans are the foundation of any coaching program. In psychotherapy, each session may look very different depending on what is uncovered and what the goal of that session is.

Psychotherapy diagnoses and intervenes, while coaching evokes and mentors

According to the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#), psychology's main purpose is "understanding the behavior." Psychotherapists diagnose and identify issues and conditions to be managed in therapy. They are carriers of essential and expert knowledge that can be shared with clients suffering with depression, trauma, PTSD and other ongoing mental health issues.

In health coaching (as a non-clinical profession), partnership & mentorship are key. The client is the expert, which puts the coach in a non-authoritative position. Coaches focus on facilitating the client's accountability process in defining their goals and action steps.

Coaching and Psychotherapy

Similarities

Strengths-based Focus

The strengths-based approach comes from positive psychology and focuses individuals on self-determination and positive qualities, motivating and supporting them when challenges appear.

Solution-oriented Focus

According to psychoanalyst Michael Bader, DMH, there is an understanding that therapists work with the past while coaches work with the future. In Bader's opinion, “good psychotherapy may be short term and have very clear goals, both behavioral and emotional”, which makes it similar to goal-oriented coaching

Professional Conduct and Ethics

Both health coaches and psychotherapists hold to professional standards, principles, and ethics. Mental health professionals must be licensed by a regulating body and health coaches must follow [the code of ethics from NBHWC](#).

Differences

Education and Training

There is a significant difference between the length, intensity, and methodology in training between health coaches and therapists. While psychotherapists hold a master's degree and require a set number of hours of supervised clinical interventions, health coach training varies vastly from 6 weeks to graduate programs.

Establishing Trust and Boundaries

Since therapists work with clients affected by conditions such as depression, anxiety, trauma, personality disorders, attention deficit/attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and many others, it is essential “to help the person reduce the distress so as to enable the emergency of the new order” - seeking and establishing a comfort zone and working within it is compulsory.

Health coaches, in their non-clinical role, may push clients outside their comfort zones by asking powerful and direct questions while remaining attentive, empathetic and sensitive once trust is obtained and established.

Coaching and Psychotherapy

Differences

Client Expectations

Psychotherapy *is often stigmatized* as it is difficult for people to acknowledge the presence of mental illness and the need for interventions by a therapist. Normalization, recognition, support and empathy are essential for clients, while depth and interconnection between feelings, emotions, beliefs, past experiences and physical health are expected. Individuals usually seek a health coach once they recognize the need for change and assistance in accomplishing their health goals.

Motivation analysis, long- and short-term goal setting, drawing up an action plan and transparency are expected. Somatic and/or psychological symptoms, relational problems as well as past trauma can be observed and should be addressed carefully and empathetically but not profoundly explored and diagnosed. “When in doubt, refer out!”



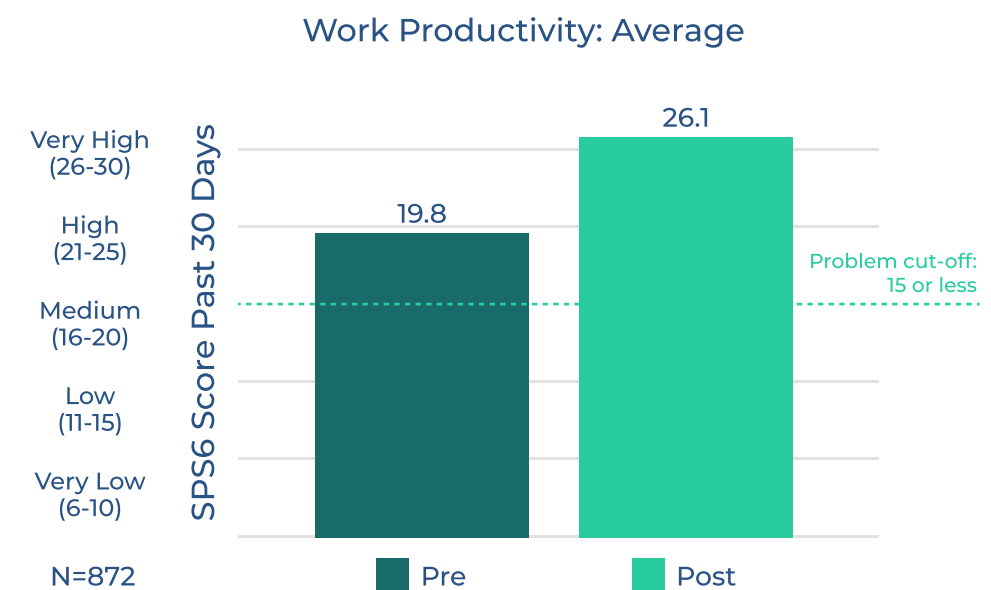
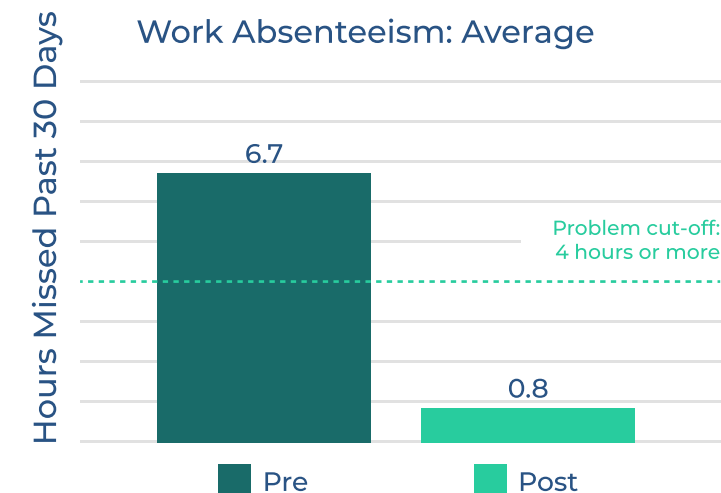
The Science of Health Coaching

Anxiety and Depression

A recent study, published in February 2023 in [*the International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*](#), provides encouraging results around changes in work and clinical outcomes for employees after using individualized mental health coaching services. The data was collected from 872 employees at CuraLinc Healthcare from 2020 to 2022 with a pre- and post-measurement research design.

After five weeks of online health coaching interventions, significant improvements were observed: work absenteeism hours were reduced by 88%, productivity level was increased by 32%, and severity of depression symptoms was reduced by 66%.

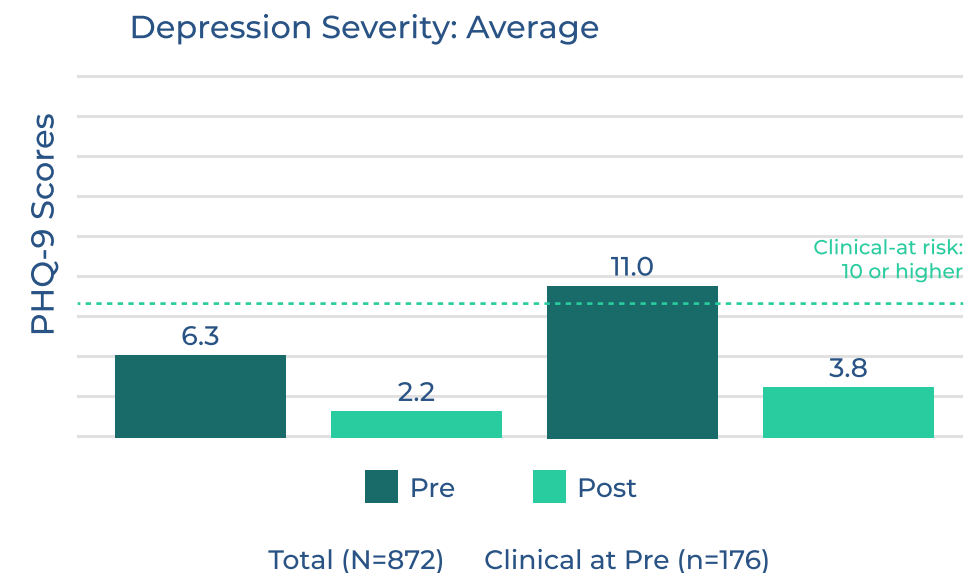
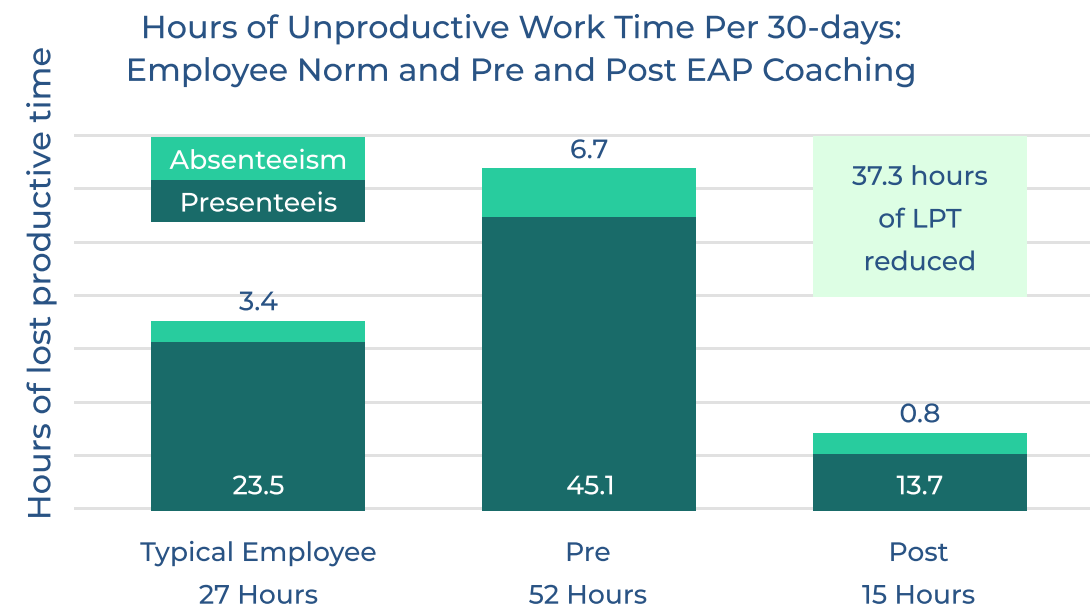
The average total hours of absence and lost work productivity combined was reduced from 52.8 hours at Pre to 14.5 hours at Post measurement. The percentage of all employees at-risk for clinical depression was reduced from 20% at Pre to zero at Post.



Source: Dr. Mark Attridge, David Pawlowski and Sean Fogarty (2023); *Mental Health Coaching from Employee Assistance Program Improves Depression and Employee Work Outcomes: Longitudinal Results from CuraLinc Healthcare 2020-2022; International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP) 13(02)*

The Science of Health Coaching

Anxiety and Depression

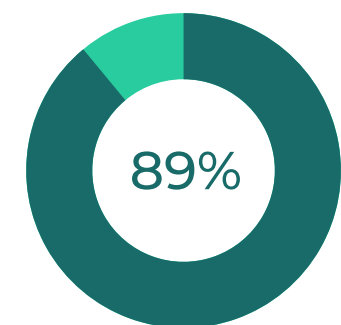


Source: Dr. Mark Attridge, David Pawlowski and Sean Fogarty (2023); Mental Health Coaching from Employee Assistance Program Improves Depression and Employee Work Outcomes: Longitudinal Results from CuraLinc Healthcare 2020-2022; International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP) 13(02)

Results from a [2021 study](#), which included 1496 participants from the U.S., showed significant decreases in symptoms among clients with moderate levels of anxiety and depression during initial weeks of coaching.

Data:

89% of study participants with anxiety and/or depression demonstrated significant improvements in the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 scale (anxiety) or Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (depression) after working with a health coach.



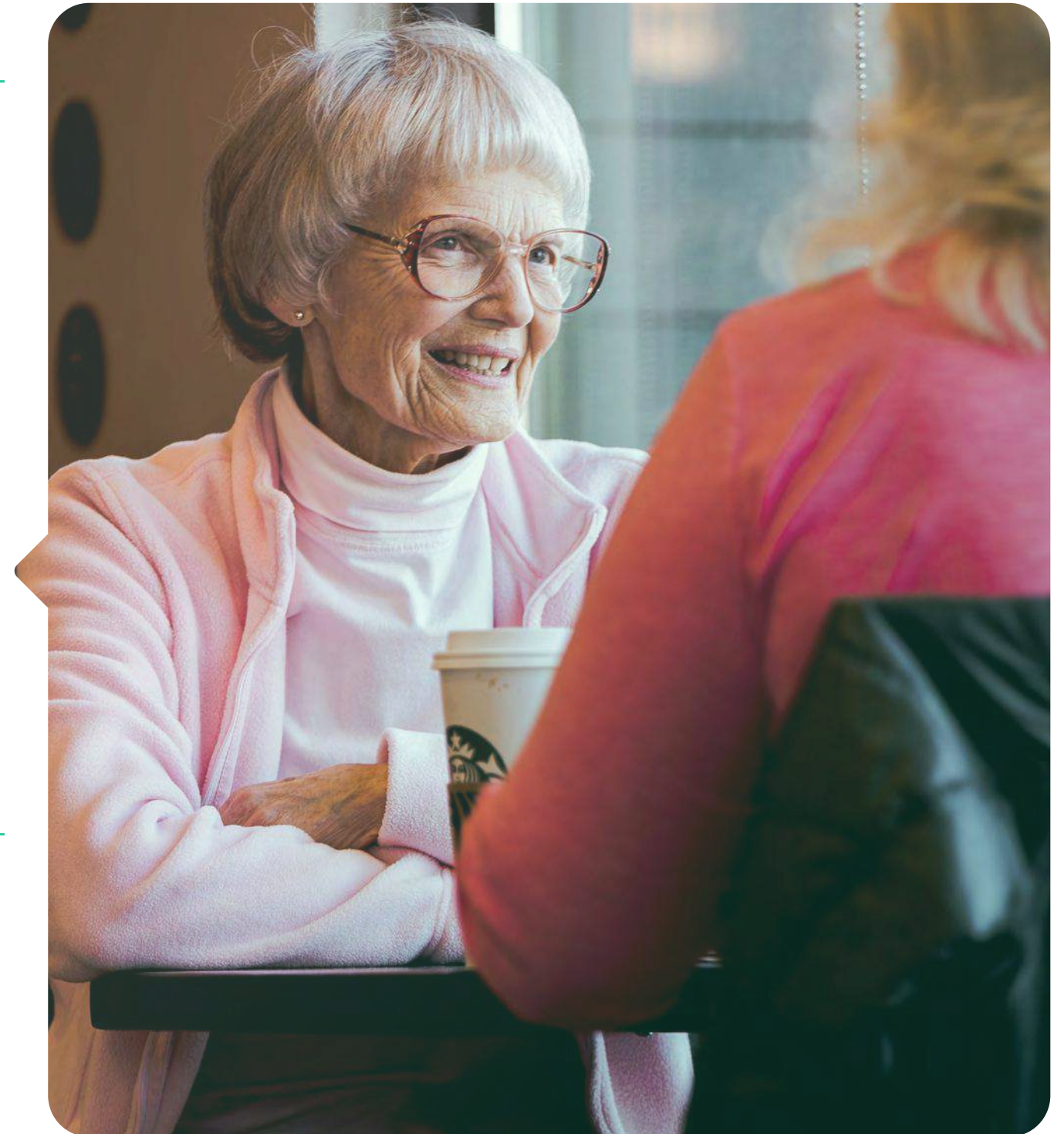
The Science of Health Coaching

Anxiety and Depression

A recent 2023 randomized controlled trial demonstrated decreases in symptoms of depression (-26%) and anxiety (-36%) among women with mild to moderate postpartum depression and/or anxiety after working with a health coach.

2019 randomized control trial aimed to examine the effect of coaching and weekly recommendations delivered digitally on depression, anxiety, and app use proves coaching effectiveness in anxiety reduction and improvement in depression symptoms.

A 2012 study demonstrated significant improvements from baseline in depression (PHQ-9 scores) and HbA1c levels among rural-living older adults with diabetes and depression after 6 months participation in behavior health coaching intervention.



The Science of Health Coaching

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

A 2021 study with the purpose to examine the impact of the VA Whole Health Coaching program showed significant improvements over baseline in mental health, stress, and perceived health competence. Other results related to participants' feedback contain positive assessments of both effective program components and improvement opportunities.

Results of a second 2021 study show health coaching is associated with increased and sustained goal achievement in some veterans with PTSD. Another study showed that health coaching for veterans with PTSD increases engagement and satisfaction with intervention programs and identified coaching as a helpful approach to making progress on individualized wellness goals.

A 2015 pilot randomized controlled trial demonstrated clinically significant reductions in PTSD symptoms among study participants who used PTSD Coach mobile applications in primary care. Among other results, the study ranked highly when it came to intervention retention, clinician fidelity, and satisfaction.



The Science of Health Coaching

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

While future research is needed and ongoing, these initial results from completed clinical trials suggest health coaching is effective in maintaining psychological health and improving mental health outcomes.

	Telephone-based Motivational Coaching sessions	Standard of care
Overall Number of Participants	140	140
Depression (scores 0-27)	9.4	11.1
Anxiety (scores 0-4)	1.2	1.3
Panic (scores 0-4)	0.6	0.7
PTSD (scores 0-80)	25.1	29.7
Quality of life - psychological health (4-20)	13.4	12.7
Quality of life - social relationships (4-20)	13.3	12.1

Source: [Motivational Coaching to Enhance Mental Health Engagement in Rural Veterans](#) Randomized clinical trial, 2019

The Science of Health Coaching

ADHD

A comprehensive descriptive literature review of studies examining ADHD coaching outcomes concluded that coaching supports improved ADHD symptoms and executive functioning among college students. Out of the 19 studies included in the analysis, researchers found positive outcomes in:

- 1 | Well-being improvements
- 2 | Maintenance of gains
- 3 | Goals accomplishment
- 4 | Participant satisfaction

Results from a 2016 study conducted in Spain provide information on the potential benefits of coaching as a complementary treatment for children with ADHD. After 6 months of coaching, clinical improvements were observed in 80% of participants aged between 6 and 12 years old with a 34.6% mean reduction in symptoms.

A study examining the efficacy of ADHD coaching for adults concluded that ADHD coaching had a positive impact on the lives of adults with ADHD. Analyzing data from 45 study participants, researchers reported statistically significant improvements in all 5 factors related to 22 areas of concern.

A 2019 case study examining the collaboration between ADHD-focused health and wellness coaching and psychiatric care showed improvements in self-efficacy and various functional impairments, including organizational skills and academic achievement. The client maintained behavioral changes for more than 6 months and achieved her goal of resuming graduate studies, successfully accomplishing her program. The study concluded that



Health and wellness coaching can be effective in supporting beneficial outcomes and can be useful in the multimodal management of ADHD

The Science of Health Coaching

Quality of Life & Well-being

A [2022 randomized controlled study](#) showed significant improvements in the scores of menopausal symptoms, depression symptoms, and quality of life among perimenopausal and postmenopausal women who participated in health coaching intervention compared to control groups.

A [study](#) on wellness coaching for improving quality of life among 100 employees, conducted by Mayo Clinic in 2014, found that 12 weeks of wellness coaching led to improvements in overall quality of life, the five domains of quality of life, depressive symptoms, and perceived stress levels.

- Stress levels decreased from a mean of 14.3 at baseline to 11.0
- Depression scores (PHQ-9) also decreased from a mean of 4.6 to 2.1
- The percentage of participants in the moderate to severe range decreased from 12% to 1%, and in the mild range decreased from 32% to 11%
- The number of participants who reported having at least one troubling symptom on the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 at baseline was also reduced by half at 12 weeks.

Another [study](#), published April 2022, confirms the significance of telecoaching on employee mental health that was delivered as part of an employer sponsored platform.

- After 2-3 sessions with a health coach, well-being scores significantly increased by an average of 2.12 points, and after 4+ sessions - by 5.27 points
- Among participants who began care with elevated levels of burnout, there was a significant decrease (21%) in burnout
- Other results showed significant reductions in presenteeism and absenteeism among those who worked with a health coach

Another [study](#), published April 2022, confirms the significance of telecoaching on employee mental health that was delivered as part of an employer sponsored platform.

A 2022 [case study](#) describes the positive effect of health coaching for both patients and caregivers. After 8 coaching sessions over the phone, caregivers showed improvements in quality of life and self-efficacy scores, while patients experienced no readmissions, and had better mood, quality of life scores, and readiness in participation.

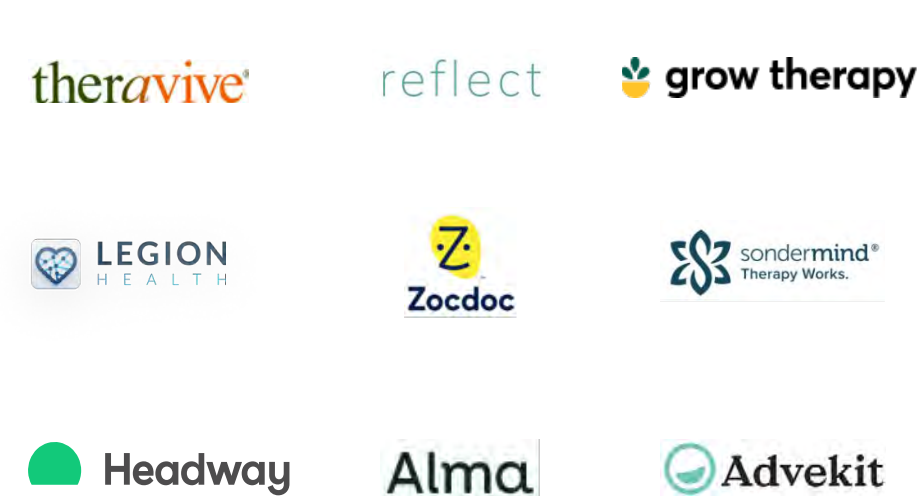
US Market Map: Mental Health Solutions

Below is just a small sampling that has been compiled by our friends at HealthXL of digital health, virtual care and digital therapeutic companies delivering solutions related to mental health broadly.

DIGITAL THERAPEUTICS AND SERVICES



NETWORKS



CHATBOT



VOICE DETECTION



About YourCoach

[YourCoach.Health](#) is the only operating system for behavior change, powered by health coaches. Our industry partners entrust us to stand up or augment their health coaching operations utilizing our APIs, widgets and tech-augmented army of validated and credentialed health coaches to surround their existing product or service. We're the premier virtual home for health and wellness coaching, an ecosystem built to empower health coaches while expanding access to their services through our industry partnerships. Join us on the Health Coaching Revolution as we strive to deliver the power of health coaching to the 8.5 billion global population by 2030.



Health Coaching
Industry Report V2.0



Our mission

By the year 2030 our mission is for the projected 8.5 billion people in the world to have access to Health Coaches, creating even more Happy and Healthy Humans.

We are here for you!

We stand up, scale and operate best-in-class health coaching services for the health and care industry via our easily and seamlessly embedded technology, powered by the largest army of validated health and wellness coaches. If you are a health and care company looking to integrate or scale health coaching around your product or service, we are here for you!

