

PTSD Coach

Reference Guide for App Features

***NOTE: App available on iOS and Android devices**

This reference lists many of the PTSD Coach tools available in the **Manage Symptoms** section of the app. The tools in this list are organized by clinician recommendation for specific symptoms and may not align directly with symptoms in PTSD Coach. Providers should review the app for a complete list of tools available or other Menu options.

Anger and Irritability

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Time Out	Time out instructions with alternative activities suggested to use when anger is escalating.	Recommend using when experiencing low levels of symptoms to prevent escalation. Return to Manage Symptoms for doing an activity during Time Out.

Anxiety/Distress

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Ambient Sounds	Background sounds that can be calming (e.g., crickets, dripping water, frogs, marsh, public pool, rain)	Encourage use when feeling distressed.
Deep Breathing	5-min deep breathing exercise that provides a visual and audio guide for relaxation	Assign as scheduled practice (e.g., 1-2x/day) with rationale that as Veteran becomes more adept at the skill, he/she will be better able to use when feeling overwhelmed. Set specific time(s) and length of practice.
Muscle Relaxation	9-min exercise involving progressively tensing and relaxing of muscles throughout the body	Assign as scheduled practice (e.g., 1-2x/day), particularly for those who notice tension in their body.
Positive Imagery: Beach, Country Road, or Forest	Guided relaxation eliciting pleasant nature images	Encourage use when feeling distressed. Use as a pleasant activity or distraction for Veterans experiencing depressed mood.
Safety Plan (available on Menu Screen)	Personalized recognition signs and action plans in the event of suicidal ideation or distress	Assign to all Veterans as part of a safety measure to create an additional tool for extreme distress or suicidal ideation.
Soothe the Senses	Recommendations for self-soothing through different senses	Recommend that Veteran try different soothing exercises within the tool. Provider may help identify which ones worked best. Encourage continued regular practice, even in non-overwhelming situations.

Depressed Mood and Anhedonia

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Leisure Activities	List of leisure activities	Set a goal of doing 2 to 4 activities a day. Use tool to help identify activities. Tap "refresh" to go through different activity suggestions. Could also use tools such as Soothing Audio , Soothing Images , and Soothe the Senses as pleasant activities.
Safety Plan (available on Menu Screen)	Personalized recognition signs and action plans in the event of suicide ideation or distress	Assign as part of a safety measure to create an additional tool for extreme distress or suicidal ideation.
Seeing My Strengths	Journaling of personal strengths to change self-perception	Encourage use for Veterans who need to refocus their self-image and change thinking processes.

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Distraction

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Grounding	Techniques to bring attention to the here-and-now using the different senses	<i>May be particularly helpful for Veterans who tend to become overwhelmed by thoughts/worry/rumination.</i> Try different grounding exercises. Provider may help identify which grounding exercise(s) worked best. Encourage continued regular practice, even in non-overwhelming situations.
Soothing Audio	Personalized collection of songs or audio clips that are soothing	Assist Veteran in identifying audio files/music that are comforting/distracting. Show Veteran how to add audio files/music within the app.
Soothing Images	Personalized collection of pictures that are soothing.	Assist Veteran in selecting pictures that are comforting/distracting (e.g., family, etc.). Show Veteran how to add pictures within the app.

Inadequate Social Support

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Connect with Others	Recommendations for connecting with others	Add contact information for 2-3 people who Veteran can call for distraction or support. Use as part of a safety plan (for Veterans with suicidal ideation). Add contact numbers of treatment program or facility.
Relationship Tools	Strategies for improving communication with a partner	Suggestions can be read alone and then put into practice or done as a couple's activity.

Limited Awareness of Internal Experiences (Mindfulness)

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Body Scan	9-min exercise that helps Veteran attend to different parts of the body	<i>May use to help Veteran recognize physiological experiences associated with worry/rumination.</i> Assign as scheduled practice (e.g., 1-2x/day) with rationale that as Veteran becomes more adept at the skill with practice, he/she will be better able to recognize physical symptoms. Set specific time(s) and length of practice
Mindfulness: Emotional Discomfort	7-min exercise that aims to help Veteran notice discomfort and sit with this discomfort, also providing a space for compassion toward the discomfort	Particularly useful for noticing thoughts and sitting with the discomfort associated with them, as well as making space for kindness.
Observe Thoughts: Clouds in the Sky (Mindfulness)	4-min exercise that helps Veteran notice thoughts, emotions, and feelings by putting them on clouds and letting them float away	Assign as scheduled practice (e.g., 1-2x/day) with rationale that as Veteran becomes more adept at the skill with practice, he/she will be better able to use when feeling overwhelmed. Set specific time(s) and length of practice.
Observe Thoughts: Leaves on a Stream (Mindfulness)	7-min exercise that helps Veteran notice thoughts, emotions, and feelings using leaves on a stream imagery	Assign as scheduled practice (e.g., 1-2x/day) with rationale that as Veteran becomes more adept at the skill with practice, he/she will be better able to use when feeling overwhelmed. Set specific time(s) and length of practice.

Sleep Issues

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Sleep Tools	Techniques and suggestions for practicing good sleep hygiene and falling asleep	Provides suggestions of activities and habits to use for winding down, staying awake, low stimulation activities for when the Veteran can't sleep and activities that encourage wakefulness.

Uncontrollable Negative Thoughts

App Feature/Tool	Description	Recommendations for Use of Feature
Change your Perspective	Positive affirmations/statements and reframes	Review positive affirmations and balanced thoughts when feeling overwhelmed as a way of challenging overly negative thoughts and presenting alternative thoughts.
Inspiring Quotes	Many inspiring quotes	Review positive affirmations and balanced thoughts when feeling overwhelmed to provide motivation to work through thoughts.
RID: Coping with Triggers	Steps to help relax, identify, and decide how to cope with triggers	Provides time to relax, identify, and decide what initiated the trigger and how to deal with it. Use with triggers.
Thought Shifting	Interrupts the unhelpful thoughts by repeating a positive phrase (presented for 5-min)	Use with ruminative thoughts that are particularly difficult to change or reframe.