American Psychological Association

Technology, Mind & Society
2021 Conference Proceedings

© 2021 American Psychological Association
http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xxxxxxx
ISBN:

Abstracts of the 2021 Technology, Mind, & Society Conference

Which online modules are most well-received? Comparing the perceived utility of online behavioral activation, cognitive restructuring, and gratitude modules.

Emma H. Palermo (University of Pennsylvania)
Joshua S. Steinberg (University of Pennsylvania)
Akash R. Wasil (University of Pennsylvania)
Robert J. DeRubeis (University of Pennsylvania)

Digital mental health interventions (DMHIs) are a promising method of alleviating the burden of mental illness in young adults, half of whom suffer from a psychiatric disorder (Blanco et al., 2008), and relatively few of whom receive treatment, especially in low- and middle-income countries (Rathod et al., 2017). Although DMHIs are effective, even in a single session (Schleider et al., 2019), it is unclear which content is most well-received by users. Given that many DMHIs demonstrate poor user engagement, it is important to understand which content users find most helpful (Berry, 2016). We examined ratings of perceived utility (i.e., helpfulness, engagement, and practicality) across three modules: behavioral activation (BA), cognitive restructuring (CR), and gratitude. Data come from a randomized controlled trial of the *Common Elements Toolbox*, a single-session DMHI that has demonstrated significant ameliorating effects on depressive symptoms (Wasil et al., 2021). Participants (N = 229) from two Indian universities rated the perceived utility of the modules after completing each one. We performed hierarchical linear models (HLMs) to evaluate differences in utility between modules. HLMs revealed that gratitude (beta = 0.43, $p < 0.001$) and BA (beta = 0.31, $p < 0.001$) were rated as significantly more useful than CR. There was no significant difference in perceived utility between gratitude and BA (p = 0.25). These findings indicate that the BA and gratitude modules were more well-received than CR. Future research is needed to examine how online CR modules can be improved and for whom these modules are most effective.