



New Research: Talkspace Releases Early Findings that “Text Therapy” Highly Effective for Frontline Healthcare Workers at Onset of COVID-19 Pandemic

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- Of the healthcare workers treated by asynchronous "text therapy" in March of 2020, 601 individuals provided sufficient data with 56% reporting significantly improved symptoms for anxiety and depression in 3 weeks

NEW YORK, Feb. 07, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Talkspace (Nasdaq: TALK), a leading behavioral healthcare company, released early findings of a landmark study in the delivery of asynchronous psychotherapy, which enables the ability to text with licensed therapists, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March of 2020, researchers from Talkspace and leading academic centers recruited healthcare workers (HCWs) from major hospitals across the United States who were experiencing anxiety or depression as they cared for COVID-19 patients during the initial surge. Participants could send unlimited text messages to their therapists and would receive counseling in the form of text messages back from their respective therapists. The population included physicians, nurses at several levels, residents in training, and a small number of nonmedical sanitation workers.

Drawing on anonymized data from 601 HCWs across the United States for a relatively brief period of one month, key findings include:

- 56% reported clinically significant improvements in their anxiety (GAD-7) and depression (PHQ-9) symptoms.
- This sample was more severe at baseline than our historical user base by 5 points, reporting moderately-severe scores for both anxiety and depression on beginning treatment.
- The improvements shown by HCWs translated into a large effect size that puts it on par with effect sizes [reported](#) for traditional therapy.

Additionally, researchers analyzed an expanded subset of subject data (N=820) by leveraging machine learning capabilities called Natural Language Processing (NLP), the ability of a computer to anonymously and securely analyze what was written. Within this subset, researchers wanted to understand more specifically what brought the participants to treatment and how HCWs were engaging with their assigned therapist through the digital app.

Key findings in this controlled group include:

- Analyses showed that roughly half of the HCWs sought care for problems that pre-date COVID, seeing this as an opportunity to ‘finally’ begin treatment.
- For the other half, concerns about 1) bringing COVID home, and 2) experiencing patient deaths were a significant source of stress leading to depression and anxiety.
- Analyses also suggested that most messages contained present-tense verbs, like “am crying” and “is dying” suggesting that messages were sent by HCWs while they were at work, for example in the break room or between patient rounds, discussing events shortly after they happened.

“Message-based care is a promising ‘lifeline’ during chaotic times and for individuals with chaotic schedules. While the uncertainty of COVID may be waning, the lives of healthcare workers and many others are no less challenging,” said Derrick Hull, PhD, Research Director, Talkspace, who leads a growing body of research with more than 23 academic publications on messaging therapy.

“To say that the healthcare industry was rocked to its core is an understatement, and no one knows that better than the physicians and nurses treating patients, trying to contain a pandemic, with dwindling space and resources--all while keeping themselves and their families safe from harm,” said Dr. Jon Cohen, CEO of Talkspace.

“The implications of our study show that one way to alleviate the ongoing distress and disproportionate anxiety and burnout presenting in healthcare workers is by availing a clinically-backed digital delivery system to provide real-time support at the moments where stress may be triggered,” said Cohen.

About Talkspace

Talkspace (NASDAQ: TALK) is a leading virtual behavioral healthcare company committed to helping people lead healthier, happier lives through access to high-quality mental healthcare. At Talkspace, we believe that mental healthcare is core to overall health and should be available to everyone.

Talkspace pioneered the ability to text with a licensed therapist from anywhere and now offers a comprehensive suite of mental health services from self-guided products to individual and couples therapy, in addition to psychiatric treatment and medication management. With Talkspace’s core psychotherapy offering, members are matched with one of thousands of licensed providers across all 50 states and can choose from a variety of subscription plans including live video, text or audio chat sessions and/or unlimited, asynchronous text messaging.

All care offered at Talkspace is delivered through an easy-to-use, fully-encrypted web and mobile platform that meets HIPAA, federal, and state regulatory requirements. Talkspace covered approximately 86 million lives at September 30, 2022, through partnerships with insurance and employee

assistance programs or other network behavioral health paid benefit programs.

For more information, visit www.talkspace.com.

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