



# Introducing Digital Mental Health Care





## Welcome to Discovery Health's new **Digital Depression Benefit**

We are proud to bring you the first scheme-funded digital therapeutic in South Africa. From October 2023 we will make an internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (iCBT) platform available to members who are registered for benefits in the management of depression.

### What is internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (iCBT)?

iCBT is cognitive behavioural therapy that is delivered over the internet. It uses the same techniques as face-to-face cognitive behavioural therapy, but these techniques are communicated online to the member through written text, graphics, videos and interactive tools.



iCBT is a digital training course that helps members reduce symptoms of stress, worry, low mood or depression.



iCBT is clinically effective as a stand-alone tool or as an added tool for ongoing treatment.



iCBT integrates the principles and methods of delivering cognitive behavioural therapy into an internet-based course.



iCBT should be used when recommended by a healthcare professional as part of a treatment plan so that a member can fully benefit from the new life tools and coping mechanisms that they learn.



iCBT includes upskilling the member through cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness and positive psychology.



The goal-based courses offer diverse activities, tools, exercises and mindfulness.



It is recommended for a member to use iCBT for 40 minutes per week, for 6 to 8 weeks.

We've partnered with SilverCloud® by Amwell® to give Discovery Health Medical Scheme members access to internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy. SilverCloud is a clinically proven behavioural healthcare solution with verified positive use and good quality of care outcomes.

SilverCloud gives clinicians an evidence-based online therapeutic solution. Their iCBT courses optimise online delivery in care paths and are specifically designed to support and promote behavioural wellness through a blended model of therapeutic modules, technologies and support services. Giving care digitally increases clinical reach and provides effective reporting on clinical outcomes. SilverCloud measures member journeys through outcome data based on trends and changes in recognised clinical screening measures, such as a PHQ-9 and GAD-7.

Members will report symptom severity through a PHQ-9 at continuous intervals throughout the course. This data will be accessible for the treating clinician to view and track clinical progression through HealthID.

## SilverCloud®

by Amwell®

### EXTENDED REACH, EFFECTIVE CARE, LOWER COST




**6 times more**

Engage more patients than in a face-to-face environment




**Evidence-based**

Over a decade of clinical and academic research



**3 times better**

Three-fold increase in engagement. Higher recovery rates.



**Flexible delivery**

Accessible anytime, any place and across all platforms

This is the first licenced iCBT digital therapeutic in South Africa, offered exclusively to Discovery Health Medical Scheme members. To learn more about digital therapeutics for mental health conditions and mental wellbeing, please read this [Nature Reviews Psychology](#) article.

## Why SilverCloud® by Amwell® is the **leading choice for a digital mental health** platform

SilverCloud is a global leader in on-demand mental health platforms with more than 18 years of clinical research and they have already positively affected the lives of over 1 million users. This platform offers effective, evidence-based programmes and tools. In fact, 65% of users experience clinically significant improvements and 56% of members who are diagnosed with depression with symptoms of anxiety were diagnosis-free within three months of using the platform.



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## **What to expect** from our digital mental health course

The SilverCloud CBT course is goal-based and helps reduce symptoms of stress, worry, low mood and depression. Each section is based on cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness and positive psychology and incorporates diverse activities, tools, exercises and mindfulness techniques to help members achieve their goals. The course can be done in conjunction with face-to-face consultations or as a standalone intervention, depending on the severity level of the depression and the doctor's choice.

The course is flexible and easy to use, allowing members access whenever and wherever they are. Members can set their own pace and don't have to stick to rigid appointments, making it ideal for those with long work hours or childcare commitments. The clinical modules are normally completed within 3 to 4 months but members will have access to the information and tool for another 8 to 9 months (12 months in total) so that they can:

- Refresh and review the CBT methods.
- Interact with a wellbeing course that is focused on resilience to maintain and reinforce behavioural change after they have completed the iCBT course.

The course is specifically designed to help members overcome and manage the symptoms of low mood, depression and worry. They will learn to challenge negative thoughts, spot anxious thoughts and face symptoms of low mood and worry step by step. The digital mental health course is the perfect way to manage mental health with clear step-by-step layouts and user-friendly design. The modules are very interactive with videos, quizzes, mood monitors, diaries and other interactive activities.

## What the **role of the supporter** is

Members have access to an online-course supporter to guide them through the programme, identify and encourage course progress and celebrate success. They will review the member's course use weekly and send regular messages on scheduled days.

This concierge-like service is available to:

- Make sure the member engages with the course material.
- Encourage the member to complete the course modules.
- Monitor that homework is completed.
- Offer technical support for the SilverCloud platform.
- Make sure that the member understands the core concepts.
- Make sure that the member is applying what they are learning to their daily life.
- Convey empathy, care and understanding for what the member is going through.

The supporters are all qualified social workers; however, their role is to guide the member through the digital journey and not to offer clinical advice.

## How we **identify high-risk members** and what we do about it

We have partnered with the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) to offer a 24-hour SilverCloud alerting service for suicide or self-harm risk. This offers you as the referring healthcare professional a safety net.

You, as the referring healthcare professional, will be alerted and the member will receive an outbound call from SADAG if:

- The member's supporter feels that they are at high risk.
- The member's PHQ-9 flags them as high risk (with a score of >1 on question 9).

## **Who is suitable** for iCBT?

Discovery digital mental health courses are designed for members who are 18 years old or older, who present with signs and symptoms of low mood and depression.

### **THE DATA SHOWS THAT THE FOLLOWING TYPE OF PEOPLE RESPOND WELL TO ICBT**

- Members who present with mild to moderate levels of depression and symptoms of low mood and worry.
- Members who are able to identify clear goals.
- Members who have access to their referring healthcare professional.
- Members with a good literacy level.
- Members who are computer literate.
- Members who believe that the online course can benefit them (possibly have had positive previous experiences).

## **HOW TO 'PRESCRIBE' OR RECOMMEND ICBT**

- When registering a member for PMB psychotherapy cover, select iCBT on the OHDT PMB application form. We will pay for access to the iCBT platform for 12 months from the member's risk benefits in the place of one psychotherapy session.
- When using HealthID to enrol a member on the Mental Health Care Programme, the iCBT option is pre-selected with the option to unselect this option for the member. We will pay for the member's access to the iCBT platform for 12 months from the additional psychotherapy benefits that are included in the member's basket of care for the Mental Health Care Programme.
- If the member is already diagnosed or enrolled for risk benefits, you can send a request to [icbt@discovery.co.za](mailto:icbt@discovery.co.za). Please include:
  - The member's membership number
  - Your practice number
  - A line stating that you are requesting access to iCBT for the member
  - The member's applicable ICD-10 code

### **We will then pay for the member's access to the iCBT platform for 12 months as described above.**

- If there is no official diagnosis but you feel that the member would benefit from iCBT, you can also send through a request. However, we will not pay the cost of the iCBT from risk benefits for these members. We will pay from the available money in the member's Medical Savings Account (MSA) or the member will fund the item themselves (Member-out-of-Pocket or MOP).
- The total cost of iCBT is R1,850 and will be paid according to the available benefits.

## There are **different iCBT courses**

The available clinical iCBT courses are:

- **Space from Depression**
- **Space from Depression and Anxiety**

Both courses focus on depression with the latter course including an added focus on anxiety as a co-morbid symptom.

### **SPACE FROM DEPRESSION COURSE**

The Space from Depression course is designed to relieve the symptoms of depression by:

- Focusing on developing more flexible ways of thinking.
- Increasing awareness and understanding of emotions.
- Increasing activity and motivation in daily life.

The course modules include:

#### **Welcome to SilverCloud**

This module introduces the member to the SilverCloud platform, giving them guidance on how to navigate the course.

#### **Getting started**

Outlines the basics of CBT and depression. It introduces the member to the key ideas behind the course, such as:

- The cycle of depression
- The thoughts, feelings and behaviours (TFB) cycle

#### **Understanding feelings**

The member explores the different aspects of emotions, physical reactions and lifestyle choices, and how they are all connected.

#### **Boosting behaviour**

Uses behavioural activation techniques to encourage the member to consider how doing things a little differently and getting active can have a positive effect on their mood.

#### **Spotting thoughts**

Will teach the member about:

- The role of thoughts in depression.
- The TFB cycle and how to recognise negative automatic thoughts.
- How spotting them allows them to be challenged.

#### **Challenging thoughts**

This is the next step for the member in changing their mood. It helps them to tackle distorted or overly negative thinking patterns using cognitive restructuring techniques.

#### **Core beliefs (unlockable)**

Deeply held core beliefs can have a significant effect on mood and help to maintain depression. This module takes the member through the role they can play, teaching them how to recognise, challenge and balance their negative core beliefs.

#### **Bringing it all together**

In this final module, the member explores how they can bring together all the skills they have learnt throughout the course and makes a plan for staying well in the future.

## THE SPACE FROM DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY COURSE

The Space from Depression and Anxiety course is designed to relieve symptoms of anxiety that accompany depression.

The course is structured exactly the same as the Space from Depression course above, with extra theoretical content on anxiety and this added module:

### Managing worry

This module introduces the member to the role of worry in depression and anxiety. They will learn how to cope with and manage their worry more effectively.

### OTHER TOOLS THAT THE MEMBER CAN ACCESS ON THE SILVERCLOUD PLATFORM

- Core-change methods
- Mood monitor
- Thoughts, feelings and behaviours (TFB) cycle
- Cognitive restructuring with the TFB cycle
- Activity scheduling

## Clinical efficacy of iCBT

To learn more about the efficacy and validity of SilverCloud courses, read through SilverCloud's published literature and findings [here](#).

Read the following [article](#) to [learn more](#) about iCBT and digital therapeutics.

This is what we will be showing our members when they would like to **learn more about SilverCloud** during their course activation.

Learn more on mental health care with Discovery



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