



Student developing smartphone app to prevent and treat anxiety and depression

Doctor of Psychology student, David Bakker, is developing a smartphone app, MoodMission, which uses an intuitive and engaging interface to help users learn better ways of coping with low moods and anxious feelings.

Mental health and well-being apps are being used ever widely with users of all ages and mental health needs. Australian app Smiling Mind has received international acclaim for bringing mindfulness meditation to almost 1 million users' phones. It is now being used widely in schools and organisations around Australia.

The project is now seeking financial support through crowdfunding site Pozible. Funds raised will go towards coding the software with help from Spark Digital, which is the same app development firm behind Smiling Mind.

David, and supervisor Associate Professor Nikki Rickard, have been working on MoodMission for the past 18 months. David and Nikki are part of a team that has developed another mental health app, MoodPrism, which is due for release on the app store in the coming months.

MoodMission is designed to be used by anyone, whether they have a clinically significant anxiety or mood disorder, or just want to find ways of coping with day-to-day feelings of anxiousness or low moods.

Mental health smartphone apps are powerful tools in the prevention and treatment of mental illness. Apps enable users to easily access help without geographical, financial, or social restrictions. This is particularly relevant to young people, who may be a lot less likely to seek help through traditional means. Public surveys have revealed that up to 85% of smartphone users would consider downloading a mental health app.

MoodMission is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and other evidence-based treatments for anxiety and depression. The app will be experimentally validated via randomised controlled trialling to ensure that it is effective. No other mental health and well-being apps currently available on the app store have been validated by randomised controlled trialling.

The app will be free to download when released, scheduled for next year, if crowdfunding is successful.

For more information about the project visit:

www.moodmissionapp.com

www.pozible.com/moodmission