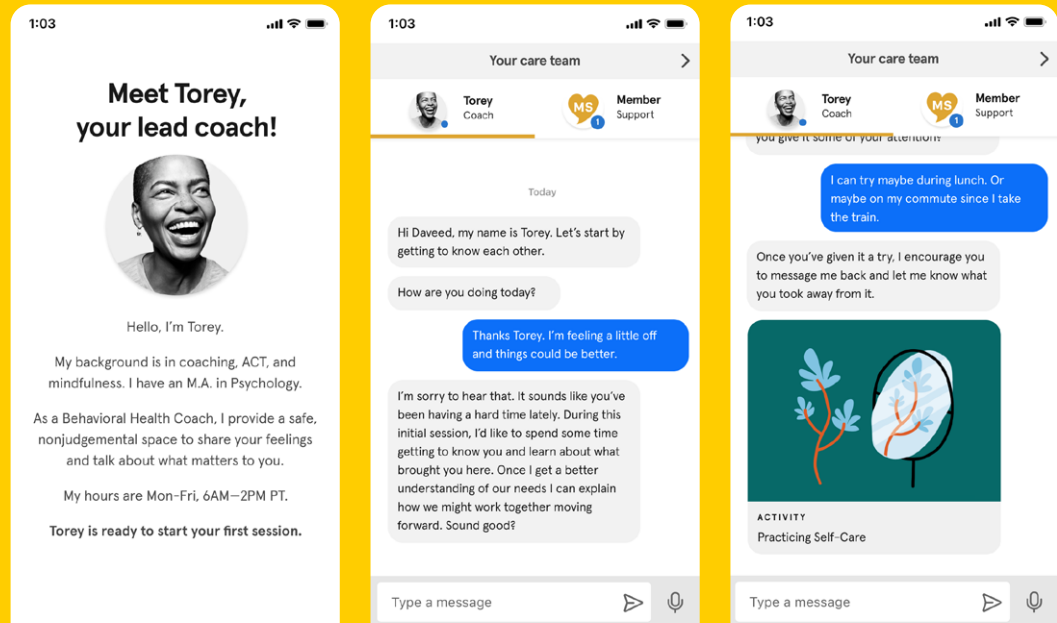


# What is mental health coaching, and how can it support your workforce?



- 3 What is coaching?**
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# What is coaching?

**Mental health coaching tackles a range of life's everyday challenges, from sleep issues and creating healthy routines, to communication and stress management.**

Take this definition from the [National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching \(NBHWC\)](https://nbhwc.org/scope-of-practice/): "Coaches support clients in mobilizing internal strengths and external resources, and in developing self-management strategies for making sustainable, healthy lifestyle and behavior changes."<sup>1</sup>

At its core, mental health coaching focuses on **action** to help individuals work towards their goals.

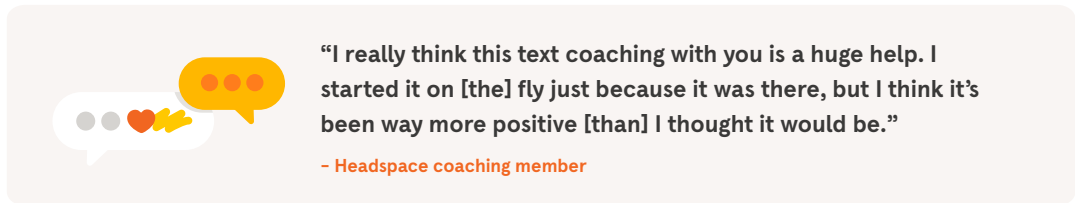
Headspace offers text-based mental health coaching and self-guided resources, plus video-based therapy and psychiatry. With these care options, members receive personalized, quality care that flexes as their needs change. Our care providers, supported by augmented intelligence, work collaboratively to deliver evidence-based care that meets every member's unique needs.

<sup>1</sup> <https://nbhwc.org/scope-of-practice/>

# How is coaching different from therapy?

While therapists focus on treating complex psychological disorders, mental health coaches help members build skills to manage emotions, stress, and anxiety, and incorporate self-care into their everyday lives.

Rather than digging into why a challenge has occurred in one’s life, mental health coaching focuses on the more **immediate need** to create a **strategic action plan** and move forward.



“I really think this text coaching with you is a huge help. I started it on [the] fly just because it was there, but I think it’s been way more positive [than] I thought it would be.”

- Headspace coaching member

Mental health coaching is both collaborative and interdisciplinary. Coaches use tools like motivational interviewing and behavioral change theory to meet members where they are, and guide them to their own path forward. And when needed, coaches are highly trained to refer members to the appropriate clinical care. By partnering with a coach, members can better navigate life’s challenges and build resilience to become their happiest, healthiest selves.

## What’s the Difference Between Coaching, Therapy, and Psychiatry?

	Headspace provider qualifications	Who is this for?	How is it delivered?	Ideal outcomes	How long is a typical session?
<b>Coaching</b>	Advanced degree (Master’s or higher) in a mental health-related field and/or completion of an NBHWC-approved health coaching program	Members who would like support and tools to work towards goals  Members working with a clinician; coaches can support members and help them practice skills between sessions	Text-based	Building skills and resources to respond to everyday challenges	Average of 30-60 minutes  Members often work with a coach for a couple months and sometimes return to check in
<b>Therapy</b>	LCSWs, LMFTs, LMHCs, LPCs, PhDs, PsyDs, or MDs	Members who are identified as needing a higher level of care than coaching (Shown on PHQ-9/ GAD-7 or as recommended by coach)	Video-based or in person*	Exploring past behavior and experiences to affect change in the present or future	Sessions vary based on complexity of need  On average, members attend 6-8 sessions
<b>Psychiatry</b>	Board-certified MDs and NPs	Members with clinical mental health needs that may require medication management	Video-based**	Exploring ways to make changes and whether medication is an appropriate intervention	Sessions vary based on complexity of need  On average, members attend 30-minute sessions every 2-4 months

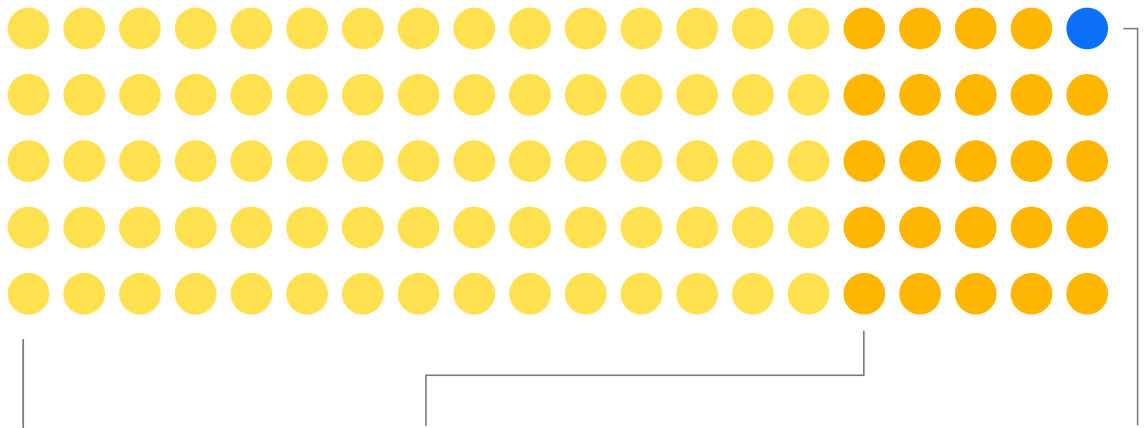
\*In-person therapy available via our EAP. \*\* Psychiatry only available in the U.S.

# Who is coaching for?

**Coaching is great for members seeking support to address challenges in their lives and accomplish their goals.**

Many people think of jumping right to therapy or psychiatry, but coaching can often act as the first level of care a member needs to improve their well-being. One size doesn't fit all, and finding the right care plan for an individual creates more substantial results. Research shows that, on average, 75% of employees only need support that fosters mental wellness – mental health coaching is just that.

**Not everyone needs therapy, but everyone needs care**



**75 in 100 employees**  
 Only require support that fosters mental wellness

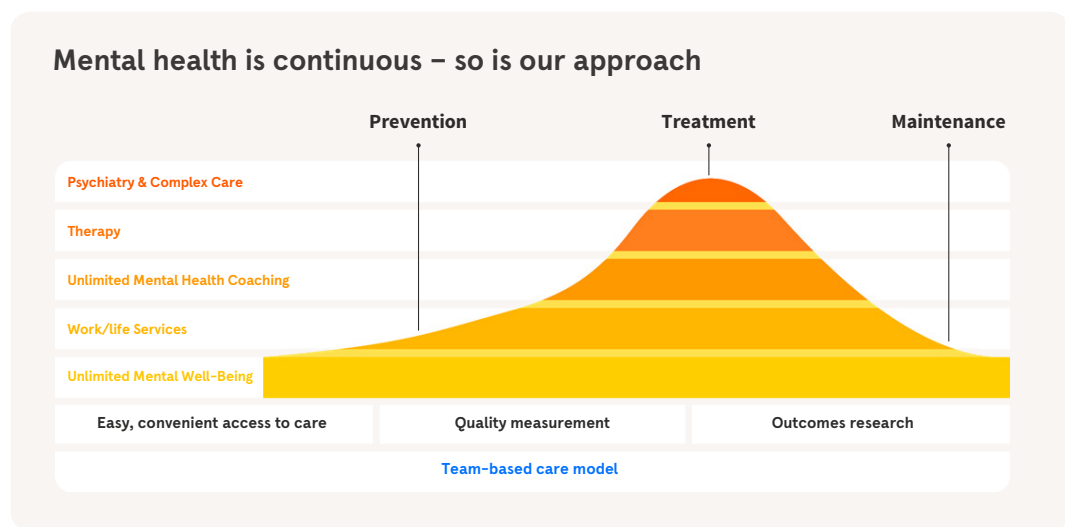
**24 in 100 employees**  
 Require mental wellness support and have moderate needs such as counseling or therapy

**1 in 100 employees**  
 Require mental wellness support and have acute needs that may require intense services or treatment

# How can coaching and therapy work together?

The Headspace model of care operates from the experience that clinical care is most effective when paired with coaching. Our coaches are trained to escalate members into therapy or psychiatry when a higher level of care is needed, while also providing ongoing support between those appointments.

For example, a member working with a therapist and coach may make faster progress than if they were to work with a therapist alone, saving time and money while driving better member outcomes.



In Headspace’s integrated system, coaches collaborate with each other in addition to therapists and psychiatrists to provide the right level of team-based care to members. Collaboration ensures that the coaching plan aligns with the therapy and/or psychiatry treatment plan, that there’s a shared understanding of members’ needs and goals, that progress can be evaluated across different levels of care, and that members can be triaged from one level of care to another when needed. Our team-based approach is proven to decrease symptoms of anxiety.<sup>2</sup>



## TAKE KATIE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO IS FEELING OVERWHELMED BY BALANCING WORK AND CHILDCARE

01

Katie feels overwhelmed and is losing sleep due to her stress. She learns about Headspace from her employer and downloads the Headspace app to get support.

02

Katie onboards and schedules a 1:1 coaching session at a time her kids are sleeping. Together, Katie and her coach work on strategies for better balancing work and life.

03

After the session, Katie's coach reviews her GAD-7 clinical assessment and sees that she has mild anxiety. She recommends that Katie starts therapy in tandem with coaching and connects her with a therapist.

04

Katie begins therapy and engages with her coach between session. After 6 sessions, she begins to feel more in control over her feelings.

05

After showing significant symptom improvement, Katie's therapist identifies that coaching and content are a best fit for her needs moving forward but that the therapist is here whenever unexpected challenges arise.

06

With a steady schedule of her nightly sleep meditations and regular coach check-ins, Katie feels like the best mother, colleague, and friend she can be.

<sup>2</sup> <https://formative.jmir.org/2021/1/e24662>

# How are coaches trained?

## HEADSPACE COACHES HAVE ADVANCED DEGREES

Our coaches have an advanced degree (Master's or higher) in a field related to mental health and/or an accredited coach certification. In addition, they have at least two years of experience and six months of direct supervision under a qualified, credentialed, and/or licensed supervisor.

## TRAINED FOR A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Our [Training Institute](#) was designed to train the next generation of mental health coaches and clinicians to provide care in a fully virtual setting. This program provides multidisciplinary training, support, and mentorship based on a foundation of inclusion, diversity, belonging, equity, and access.

In 2022, our training institute [was designated](#) an Approved Health and Wellness Coach Training and Education Program by the NBHWC.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DEIB ON OUR CARE TEAM

Headspace's diverse Care Team is here to support any member of any community. Our program emphasizes culturally responsive and identity-affirming care rooted in a member's environmental and societal realities. Coaches develop an awareness and integration of their own intersecting identities, and in turn, help their members to do the same, through social justice and health equity frameworks.

We invest in cultural competency and ongoing training for care providers, and the entire company, on subjects like LGBTQ+ identity, racial trauma, veterans, traditionally underserved groups, economically disadvantaged groups, and more.

## MEET A HEADSPACE COACH

**Caitlin Boyd,**  
Senior Mental Health Coach



**“Our platform at Headspace goes around the world, in your pocket. This allows me to serve our members whenever, wherever. I like knowing that I am supporting others in this fast-paced world. Headspace allows me to bring a sense of calm to our members and offer them support in their growth journey.”**

NBC-HWC; B.S., Health Sciences & Healthy Lifestyle Coaching

Years practiced: 5

Focus: Strength & Value Focused, Sustainable Lifestyle Habits, Stress Management, High Achieving Women

# Does Headspace coaching really work?

**There’s growing evidence that text-based coaching has similar effectiveness to traditional, in-person care, and may even offer additional benefits in convenience and reducing stigma.<sup>3</sup>**

Our chat-based model adds a layer of privacy for the member so that they can chat with their coach day or night and in any setting. In addition, a chat-based approach helps meet member preferences, particularly for those who may not feel comfortable with video-based or in-person support. Chat may help some individuals feel more comfortable being open and vulnerable, which enables coaches to better support them.

At Headspace, our data shows that members who consistently work with their coach see mental health improvements.

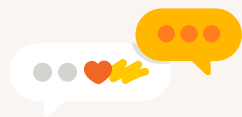
**85%**

of Headspace members engaged in coaching and/or clinical care experienced improvement in depression symptoms after 6-16 weeks.

**83%**

of Headspace members engaged in coaching and/or clinical care experienced improvement in anxiety symptoms after 6-16 weeks.

Data also shows the value of our collaborative care model. Our evaluations show improvements across all types of care – meaning that coaching, therapy, and psychiatry are all equally likely to improve outcomes. Our collaborative model, which utilizes teletherapy and coaching, delivers the highest likelihood of anxiety and depression symptom improvement.

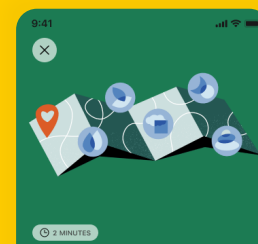


**“My coach is awesome, very informative, positive, and encouraging. I always look forward to my appointments. She communicates well and sets expectations, so I always know what to expect. I feel like I'm more hopeful and focused than I've been in a long time. The texting and app are perfect for me because I wanted mental health support, but not the intensive and involved experience of traditional in-person therapy. Having it for free through my health insurance has given me a much better opinion of my health insurance provider.”**

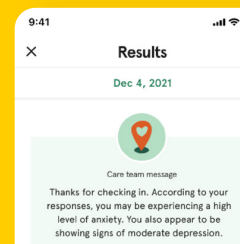
- Headspace member

**4.8/5**  
average Headspace  
coach rating

<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.7023>



**Anxiety & Depression Check-in**



Anxiety  Moderate





**Torey**  
Coach



**Anne**  
Coach



**Marc**  
Coach

# What does the future of coaching look like?

At Headspace, we're always focused on making sure we're delivering the best possible care and support for our members. Looking forward, this means:

## ENHANCING CARE TECHNOLOGY

We're continuing to enhance our care platform to make collaboration easier and more efficient between coaches, therapists, and psychiatrists. This makes it possible for our care team to deliver care more efficiently and work together to provide the best possible support for our members.

## INVESTING IN TRAINING

Our mental coach training institute has a 10-month program that aims to transform students through the self-discovery of their unique strengths, values, meaning, and purpose, so that they can guide members in doing the same work. Our program reflects the strategies needed to help people prioritize their mental and emotional well-being in our rapidly changing world, and we are continually evolving the program with best practices to meet the needs of our members.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

Our Coaching Quality Assurance (QA) program is focused on shaping meaningful mental health coaching work that's rewarding for members and coaches. We've expanded our QA team to evaluate coach work and provide feedback on a more personalized, consistent basis. While helping coaches celebrate their individual successes and hone their skills, the QA team also works with other teams to improve care collaboration for a better experience for both members and providers.

Interested in learning more about Headspace's mental health coaching and its role in our end-to-end mental health solution?

Contact us [here](#).

