

A "Silver" Lining for Life's Sometimes Dark Cloud

Access is key to new OSF HealthCare mental wellness app

Just like the weather, our lives can't always be sunny. But, when those times of personal overcast become more frequent, it would be nice get some help to part the clouds.

Providing that immediate assistance is what OSF HealthCare's "Silver Cloud" tool is all about. This app, available by phone, tablet or internet browser, can be a digital solution for the management of moderate depression, anxiety or stress.

"Silver Cloud" is designed to provide support for people finding it difficult managing these conditions. The app similar to having a counseling session and even outlines strategies for improving these conditions.

"The app will help the user with tools and skills for managing those conditions." says Luke Raymond, Manager of Behavioral Health for OSF HealthCare. "So, things like guided relaxation and thought feeling behavior matching and cognitive restructuring - basically changing these irrational thoughts into more rational interpretations of difficult situations in their lives. Really just to help them interpret and redefine some of the challenges they're experiencing."

Raymond says, however, "Silver Cloud" is not a self-diagnosis, nor crisis intervention tool. "Silver Cloud" helps address the often challenging issue of accessing behavioral health and mental health programs. But it can be used on a person's own time and privately.

"Silver Cloud will provide users with different screening instruments," says Raymond. "One of those is a depression screening, there is an anxiety screening. And if those levels exceed certain thresholds, the behavioral health navigator in the region - the supporter will be notified and that supporter can provide outreach and support in connection with that individual."

It's that connectivity to a live supporter, as well as resources that makes "Silver Cloud" different.

"Those navigators really understand the system in their local region and can help the patient identify what types of services they need," says Raymond. "They can help them identify the costs that they're going to experience and where to go."

Raymond says, so far, "Silver Cloud" has proven valuable in already providing hundreds of people a much needed outlet. It's even registered improvement in the well-being and functionality of some users.

To access the "Silver Cloud" app go to www.osfhealthcare.org/silvercloud.