



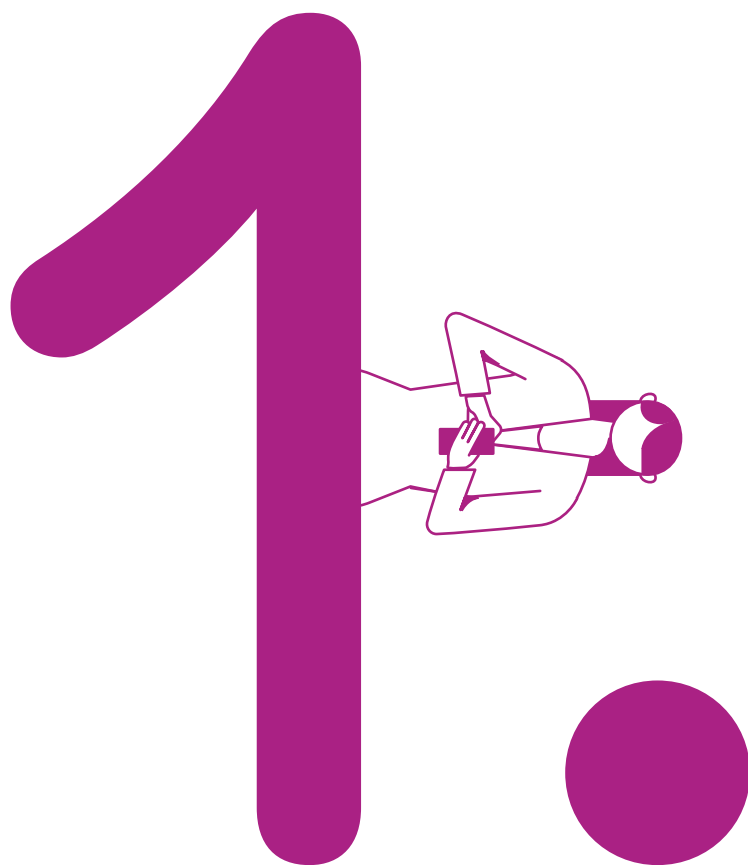
20 things you always wanted to know about ehealth





Welcome aboard!

So, you're interested in exploring the waters of ehealth. Join us on a voyage as we navigate our way along the viewpoints: *the 20 things you always wanted to know about ehealth.*



What is ehealth?

In short, ehealth is the use of digital means and communication technologies in healthcare. That makes it a very broad term. What we at Minddistrict mean with ehealth is: digital technologies that empower people to master their wellbeing. Our web platform and app support people in making a behavioural change, whether that means to sleep better, or to overcome phobia or depression.

[You can read more about our view on ehealth here.](#)

2.

How long has ehealth been around?



The Minddistrict platform around 2010.

Online or computerised treatment in mental health emerged around 20 years ago. The earliest stages of online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) were mostly based on written contact, in email or chats, between a patient and a therapist. In the next phase, web-based interventions were developed, based on 'offline' treatment protocols. Minddistrict was founded as a company in 2008; we started developing an ehealth platform for specialised mental healthcare, later extending our services to other forms of care. It means we have a lot of experience of developing online programmes to support behavioural change.

[Read more about the history of Minddistrict here.](#)



What kind of organisations are using ehealth?

A lot of healthcare organisations are making use of ehealth in their services, to support people making a behavioural change. In mental health, that means providers from GP's, CAHMS and IAPT services to specialised mental health care and forensic care. Services who offer rehabilitation, diabetes care or support for long term conditions also use ehealth, along with charities.

Businesses and organisations such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) can also benefit from offering ehealth to support wellbeing in the workplace.



4. Does ehealth work?

Yes, ehealth interventions work. There are ample meta-analyses that have been conducted on the subject of e-mental health, and the evidence that ehealth is effective in the treatment of - for example - depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse is abundant. See [the videos of Prof.Dr. Heleen Riper](#), a prominent researcher in the field of ehealth, for more information.

Does this also mean that all ehealth modules are scientifically proven to be effective? No, only modules that have been researched in a randomised controlled trial (RCT) may wear that label. But there are many ehealth modules - in the Minddistrict catalogue alone you will find more than 200 English, German and Dutch interventions - and we continuously develop new ones, update existing modules to the latest scientific insights or incorporate the latest functionalities. This means it is impossible for Minddistrict to conduct an RCT for all those interventions, especially since they mostly take 4 years to roll-out per study and modules lose their proven effectiveness when something in the module is changed or updated.

However, the quality of Minddistrict's modules is safeguarded. All interventions are evidence-based. They have been created according to a meticulous intervention development process.

If you wish to know more about this process, read our [whitepaper](#) on the topic. If you wish to know more about a specific intervention, [let us know](#).





5.

Why would a person/patient want to use ehealth?

Because of the benefits. Working with ehealth offers so much extra to people who need help or therapy. Now, when you step outside the therapy room after a session, you are no longer 'on your own': you carry support with you in your back pocket.

For example: if you lie awake at night, ruminating about a problem, you can access your app and do a relaxation exercise. If you want to read over the explanation or information of your disorder again, you can, whenever you want. And if you want to explain to your friends and family how you feel, but you struggle with that, simply show them the video of a patient's experience in the platform, explaining it for you.

These are just some examples. We haven't even mentioned the most important part yet: with ehealth, you can take more control of your own treatment and your personal route to recovery.

If you want to know more about experiences of people who have used ehealth, watch [this video of Mark and Diana](#) or [watch Annie tell her story in this video](#).



Why would a **therapist or coach** want to use ehealth?

Well, one good reason is that there are many benefits for patients. But there certainly are benefits for healthcare professionals too. For example, you can let ehealth take over routine tasks. Think of psycho-education, or explaining an often-used assignment. You can leave that to the ehealth platform now, where videos of professionals can do the explaining for you.

With diaries and dashboards, you have more insight into the process and progress of your patients. You are more flexible in your own work, because giving feedback to an assignment can be done anytime or in any place. And because your patients are more involved in their own treatment, you can have more effect during the face-to-face sessions.

Another reason that shouldn't be overlooked is that ehealth has become part of modern healthcare and coaching. It makes sense to be able to be a good practitioner both offline and online.

Want to know more about what ehealth can bring professionals? Take a look here:
<https://www.minddistrict.com/ehealth/ehealth-for-healthcare-professionals>.



What are the benefits of ehealth for healthcare organisations?



Almost all healthcare organisations are under pressure to offer the best possible care to a growing number of people, with the same or even less budget than before. Ehealth can help organisations to achieve this triple aim.

Do you want to know exactly how? Talk to one of our implementation experts, and they can help you visualise the process of digitally enabled care. You can reach them at info@minddistrict.com.

At the same time, we shouldn't forget that in a world that is becoming increasingly digitised, people expect to receive help, counselling or coaching online too.

Read more on:

<https://www.minddistrict.com/ehealth/organisations>



8.

Does ehealth replace **face-to-** **face therapy?**

In every country and in every sector where ehealth is being introduced, this is one of the biggest fears: is online completely replacing face-to-face therapy? And, second to that, is my job as a therapist going to disappear?

Let us comfort you first: No, therapists are not being replaced by technology. And online coaching or treatment does not mean that face-to-face sessions disappear. On the contrary, the role of the professionals is becoming more prominent and important, because routine-tasks can be taken over by technology.

In most cases, ehealth is used as 'blended care' (or 'blended coaching', for that matter), in which offline and online elements are combined. You will have face to face conversations, and in between sessions, people follow a module, fill out a diary and or stay in touch via secure messaging. Even when '100% online care' is offered, the professional still has sessions with the patient, albeit in a secured video room instead of a physical treatment room.

The question most often rising from this answer is: "but what about the therapeutic relationship? What about trust? Surely, that can't be established via cold IT!" But both research and experience show: yes it can. Yes, there is a therapeutic relationship, and it can even be deepened by blended care. Many professionals say: 'In diary entries and messages, my patients write a lot more than they tell me in the treatment room.'

We know these concerns exist, since we have offered and implemented ehealth in all sorts of care for over 11 years. But we can assure you: there is no need to worry.



9 ● Is ehealth just for treating mental health?

Minddistrict, like many ehealth providers, started as a company providing services in the field of mental health care. But, the times when ehealth could only be used in mental health care are long gone: wherever behavioural change plays a part in care or coaching, ehealth can support people. Whether it is rehabilitation - where people learn to adjust to and cope with a new situation, or diabetes care - where people benefit from a lifestyle change. Also, ehealth can be used to help people stay on track with their medication.

But even outside the world of healthcare, people can use ehealth for behavioural change. Think of prevention in the workplace, where helping your staff to quit smoking, have a better work-life balance or develop more professional skills can be supported by ehealth too.

If you want to know more about the sort of organisations we currently support with our services, [click here](#).

10.

Will people get the same **quality of care** with ehealth?



Yes, and it's our aim to even improve that quality of care.

Of course, quality of care is not only depending on the product; there are still sessions. We believe that when ehealth is implemented correctly and healthcare practitioners are instructed in its use, people will experience a great quality of care.

Ehealth is as good as face-to-face care, and can hopefully be even better, since waiting times are shorter, people are actively involved in their own care, and they are supported outside the walls of their healthcare organisation.



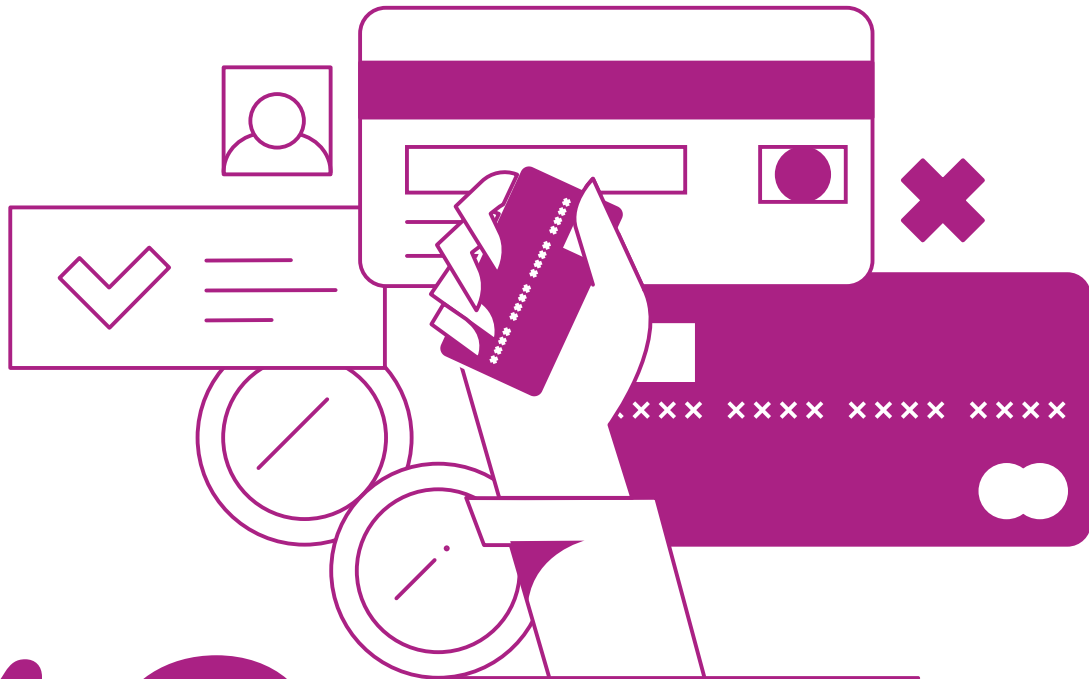
Is ehealth **safe**?



When talking about technology in healthcare, questions about safety often arise. And very rightly so! For us, data protection is one of the most important aspects when developing our product. Security by design, as it's called. Our product is regularly audited, and tested in 'controlled hacks' by specialised third parties. So far, we've passed each of these tests with flying colours.

We have solid authorisation processes in place as well regarding who can see what data. If you want to know more about authorisation in Minddistrict, take a look at question 19.

But safety is not just in the technology: no matter how secure we make the platform, if people don't practise safe behaviour online, there are still risks. Be aware that you are a link in the security chain yourself - so, for example, don't walk away from your desk with your screen unlocked with patient files open.



12. Is ehealth cost-effective?

Let's start with looking at society as a whole: it can gain a lot from the use of ehealth. If healthcare is easily accessible, and if people receive adequate help at an early stage, they are more productive. And the healthcare costs of prevention or first stage care are less than that of specialised care. Ehealth can help make this reality. The gains would be huge - both in money spent on healthcare, but also on societal effect, people being able to work, etc.

But can the cost-effectiveness always be measured for individual services? That is less clear. It depends largely on the way you use and implement ehealth, and on the way services are reimbursed.

If you want to discuss if cost-effectiveness is something your organisation can achieve, feel free to [contact us!](#)

At the same time, a business case is not always measured in cost-effectiveness. [Read more about business cases.](#)



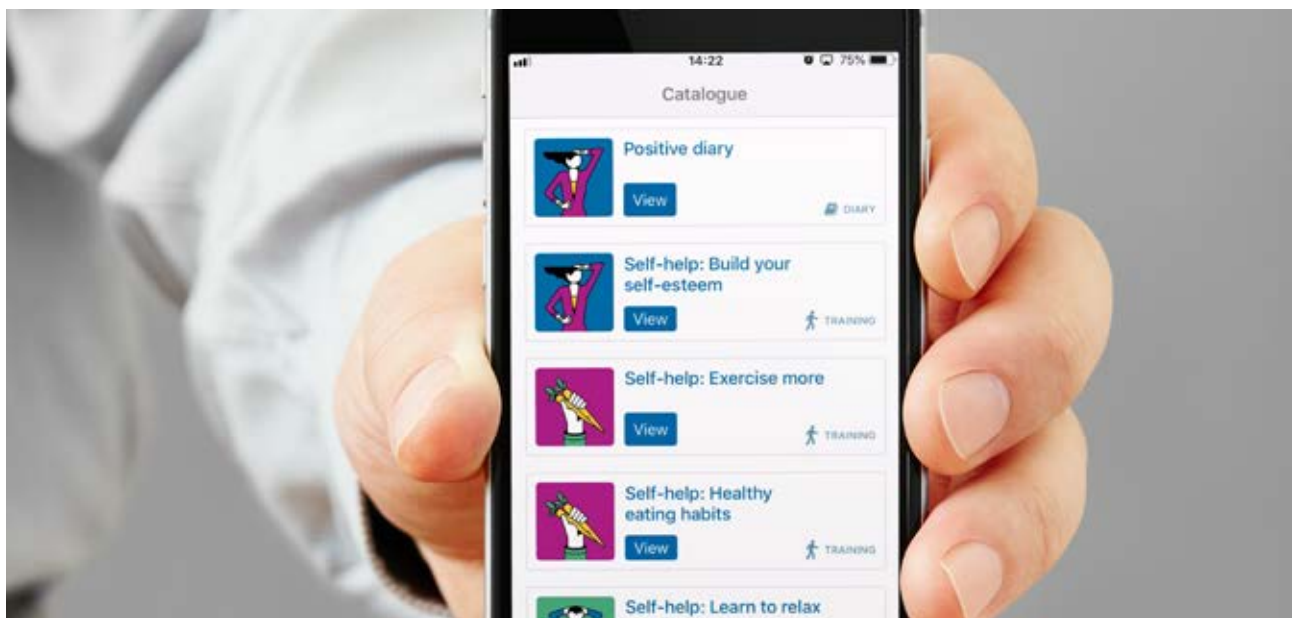
Can ehealth solve waiting lists?

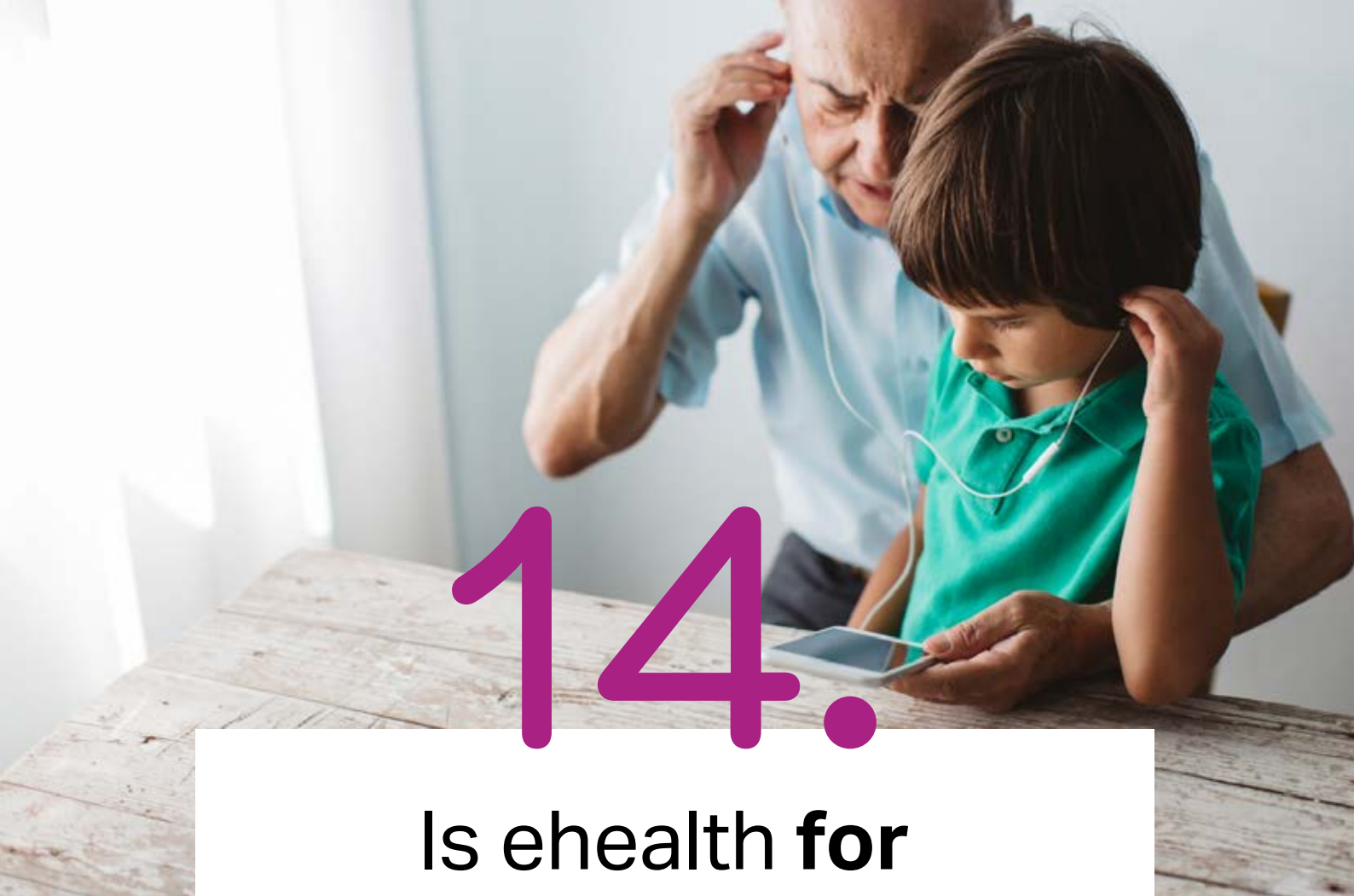
This is an important question, since waiting lists can be very long, and people's situations can further deteriorate whilst they're waiting to start care. Yes, if implemented efficiently, ehealth can help to shorten waiting lists. We know for instance that when organisations create a digital clinic - a stand-alone service that offers 100% online care - waiting lists can disappear altogether.

Waiting time can be shortened in blended care, too. The Dutch mental health institution GGZ Oost-Brabant, for example, shortened intake time from 8 weeks to 2 weeks. This means patients have access to a therapist a full 6 weeks earlier.

Ehealth can also help making the waiting time feel shorter, bridging the gap with for example self-help content, diaries or a welcome module. This way, people can already start working on their situation, before the actual therapy starts. This makes the perceived waiting time shorter, whilst helping to prevent their situation from deteriorating.

So yes, ehealth can definitely help to shorten waiting lists, but it's not a miracle solution with which all problems (and waiting lists) will disappear. It's good to keep that in mind, so that you can make the right decisions.





14.

Is ehealth for everybody?

We're trying to make our product as universal and easy as possible, so that it can be used for as many people as possible. We know that we still have some ground to cover when it comes to accessibility, but we're constantly improving so that people with impairments such as sight problems can use the platform too.

Despite all of this, there will always be people for whom ehealth is not suitable. Maybe because they don't have a device to use it on. Maybe they're afraid of technology, and using ehealth would cause them more stress instead of helping them. Or maybe they just don't want to use it. And that's fine - everyone should be able to choose the care that feels right for them.

We know that more people are open to ehealth than a lot of healthcare practitioners initially think. We know that sometimes people think 'I can't do that!', but after they've tried it out, they find out they can. We know that more and more people can handle a smartphone or tablet, so they can handle Minddistrict too.

15.

How many people use ehealth?

We can't talk for other products than Minddistrict, but we know that on the 1st January 2019, 300,000 people used ehealth, 365 services used ehealth in their care, 30 universities used the platform to perform research and 25,000 healthcare practitioners had access to Minddistrict.

Does it matter how many people use ehealth? Not exactly, but it's always comforting to know you're not the first to dive in. Ehealth has been widely used for years and has helped many people and organisations. So, it could help you too.

300,000
people

25,000
professionals

365
services



Can ehealth be **100% online?**

Yes, healthcare through ehealth can be 100% online, if you want it to be. It can be a great solution, for example to help people who are living abroad or in very remote or rural areas, or to help people who have trouble travelling and who would rather receive care or counselling from the comfort of their own home. Or perhaps to offer your employees self-help, with or without the possibility of written feedback or a video call from a coach.

To be able to offer 100% online help, you can start a **digital clinic**. A digital clinic is a stand-alone clinic that's completely organised online, with online healthcare practitioners and team meetings, online intake, video sessions, messaging, and ehealth modules and exercises. 100% online doesn't mean that there are no people involved, or that it can't still be personal. Digital clinics offer good quality of care, but are more flexible and therefore able to offer their services with limited or no waiting time at all.

However, if the idea of a digital clinic isn't right for you or your service, you can just use ehealth for blended care.

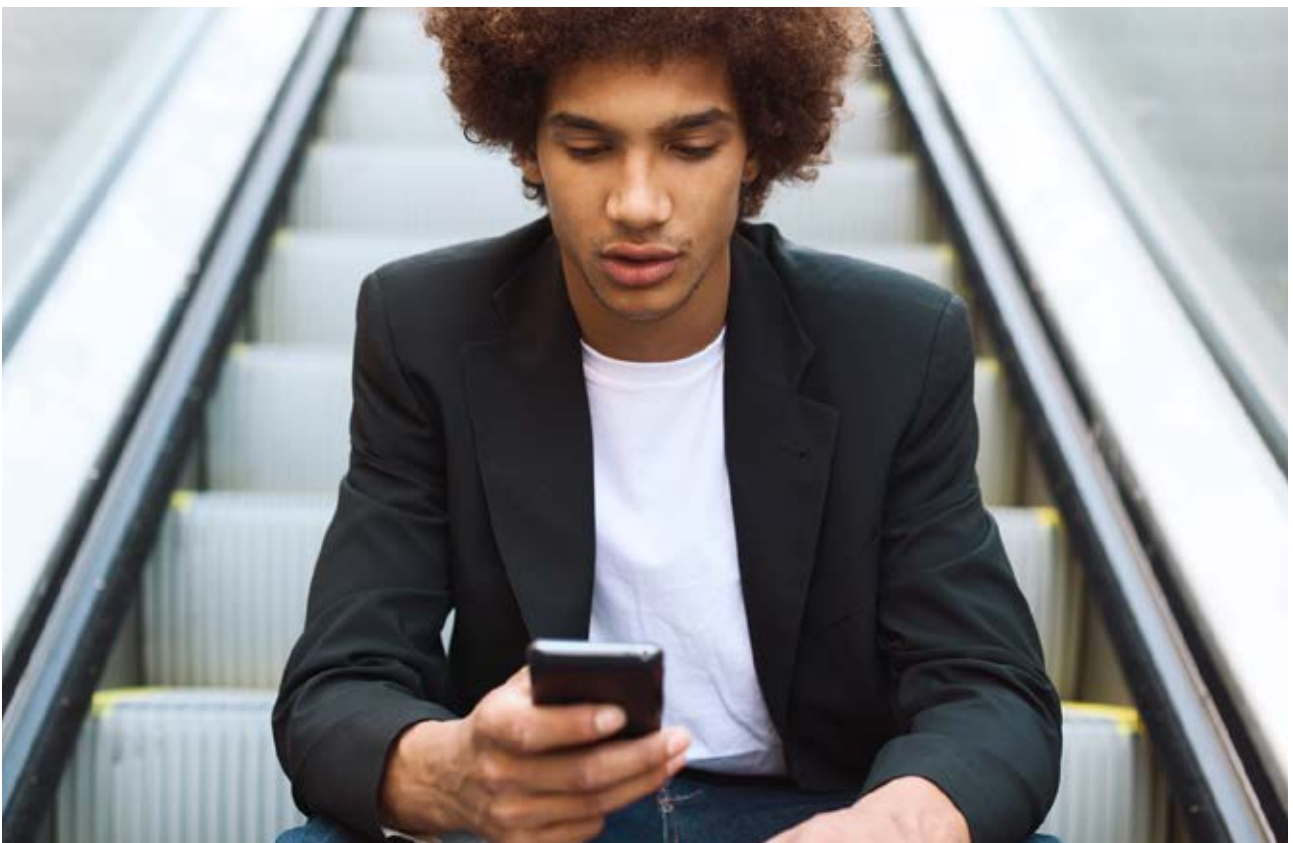
17.

Can ehealth be used for self-help?

Every person with a Minddistrict account has access to his or her very own 'self-help catalogue', from which they can choose which topics they want to work on, right here and now. Or they can choose a diary they want to keep to gain insight into their sleeping habits, for example. People are used to having a choice and immediate service. The self-help catalogue does just that: people can choose whatever they want to work on, and start right away.

So yes, if you're looking for a solution to be able to offer self-help, Minddistrict could be right for you.

[Read more about self-help.](#)



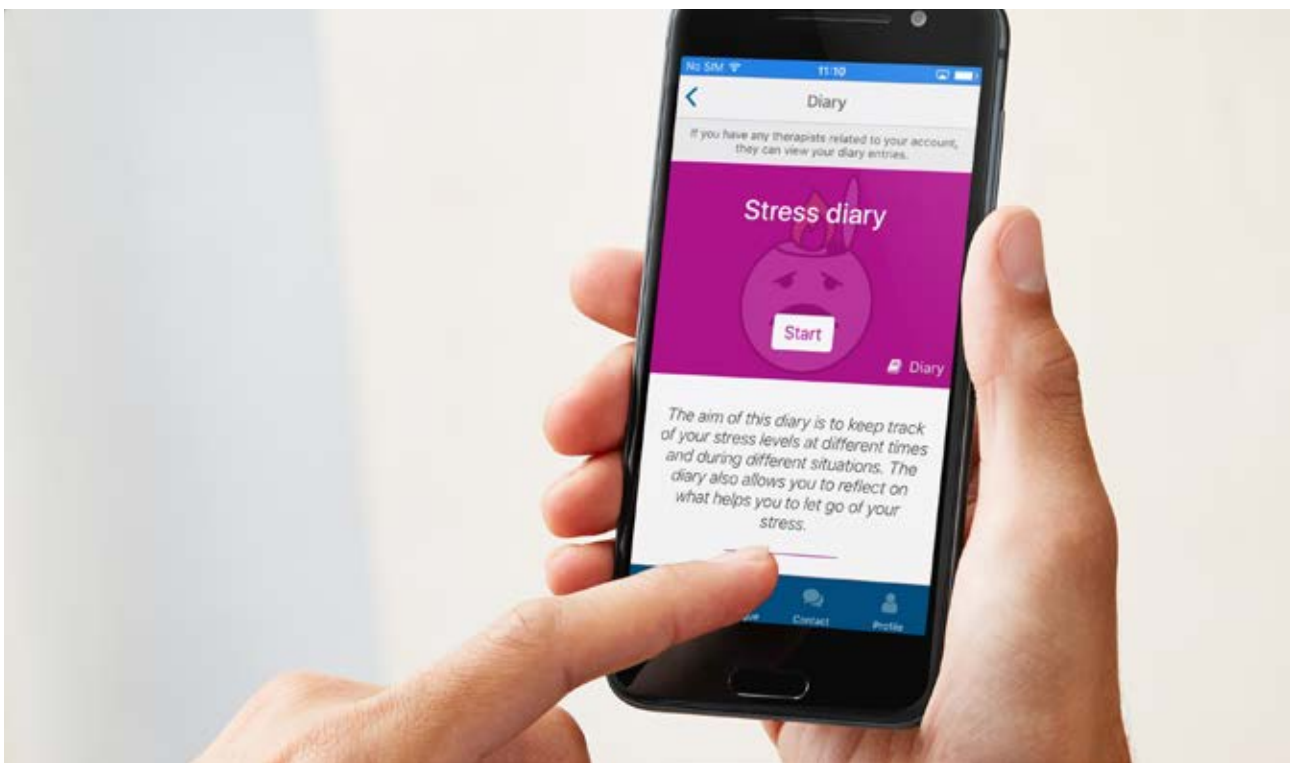


Can ehealth be used on a mobile phone?

Yes, absolutely. The Minddistrict app works on both Android and iPhones. Modules, diaries, plans, self-help, video calls and messaging can all be used in the mobile app. Not all modules in the vast Minddistrict catalogue are currently suitable for mobile use, but we're working towards making all of them being mobile-friendly.

For now, only patients can use the Minddistrict app. But an app for healthcare professionals, with which they can chat and have video calls too, is in development.

Both practitioners and patients can also log into the platform with a browser on their phone, but it's easier for most people to just tap the app and go ahead.





19.

Who can see a patient's data in ehealth?

The authorisation of our product has been very well thought through. Because as a patient, you'd want your therapist or coach to have access to the data they need to help you, but you wouldn't want anyone else to have access too. That's why there are several specific roles in the platform that have their own rules and levels of access.

As an overview, a patient's data can only be seen by themselves and the therapist they're working with. No one else has access to their data, except when an emergency situation occurs - then a special secured protocol can be followed to gain insight into a patient's activities in Minddistrict. All actions are being logged, and all logs can be viewed by the patient. Of course, patients always have the right to request a removal of all their data from Minddistrict.

If you want to know more about the subject of authorisation, please get in touch with one of our ehealth specialists.

20.

How do I **get started** with ehealth?

Ready to set sail? Or, do you want to explore the digital seas further? Get in touch to ask any questions and find out how we can help you on your journey.



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