



AI and Mental Health

Mary Kay Battaglia, Executive Director

WHO WE ARE...

NAMI WISCONSIN

The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illnesses and to promote recovery.



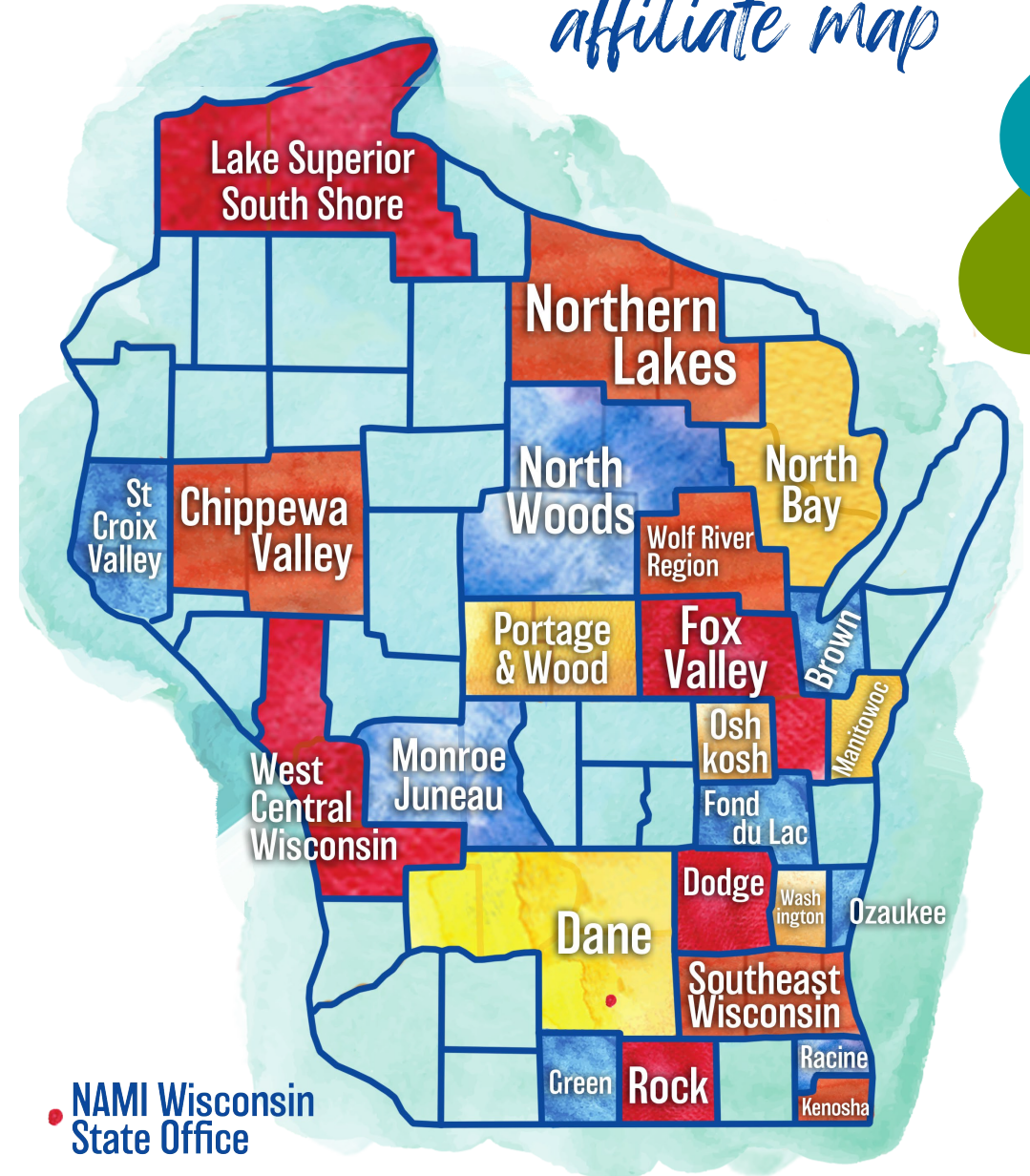
NAMI National



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NAMI Takes the Lead to Push for Clarity and Safety in AI Mental Health Tools

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Partnering with Harvard-affiliated digital psychiatry researchers led by Dr. John Torous, the project will examine how AI tools perform when people seek help.

Arlington, VA — The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation's largest grassroots mental health advocacy nonprofit, is launching a first-of-its-kind effort to develop benchmarks for assessing how artificial intelligence (AI) tools respond when people seek mental health information and support.

This work is being done in partnership with Dr. John Torous and the Division of Digital Psychiatry at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a Harvard Medical School-affiliated teaching hospital and national leader in digital mental health research. Together, NAMI and Dr. Torous are taking a careful,

Mindbench.ai Mission

Develop a digital platform to track LLM performance on benchmarks from across disparate domains of mental health expertise.



Build trust through
meaningful
collaborations with
community pillars



Engage people with
lived experience at
every layer



Pair Research with
Education to ensure
accessibility



Prioritize transparency
of methods, process,
and findings

The early phases of the project will look at three core areas:

1. Safety and crisis response.

1. Whether tools recognize when someone may be in distress and offer appropriate, safe next steps.

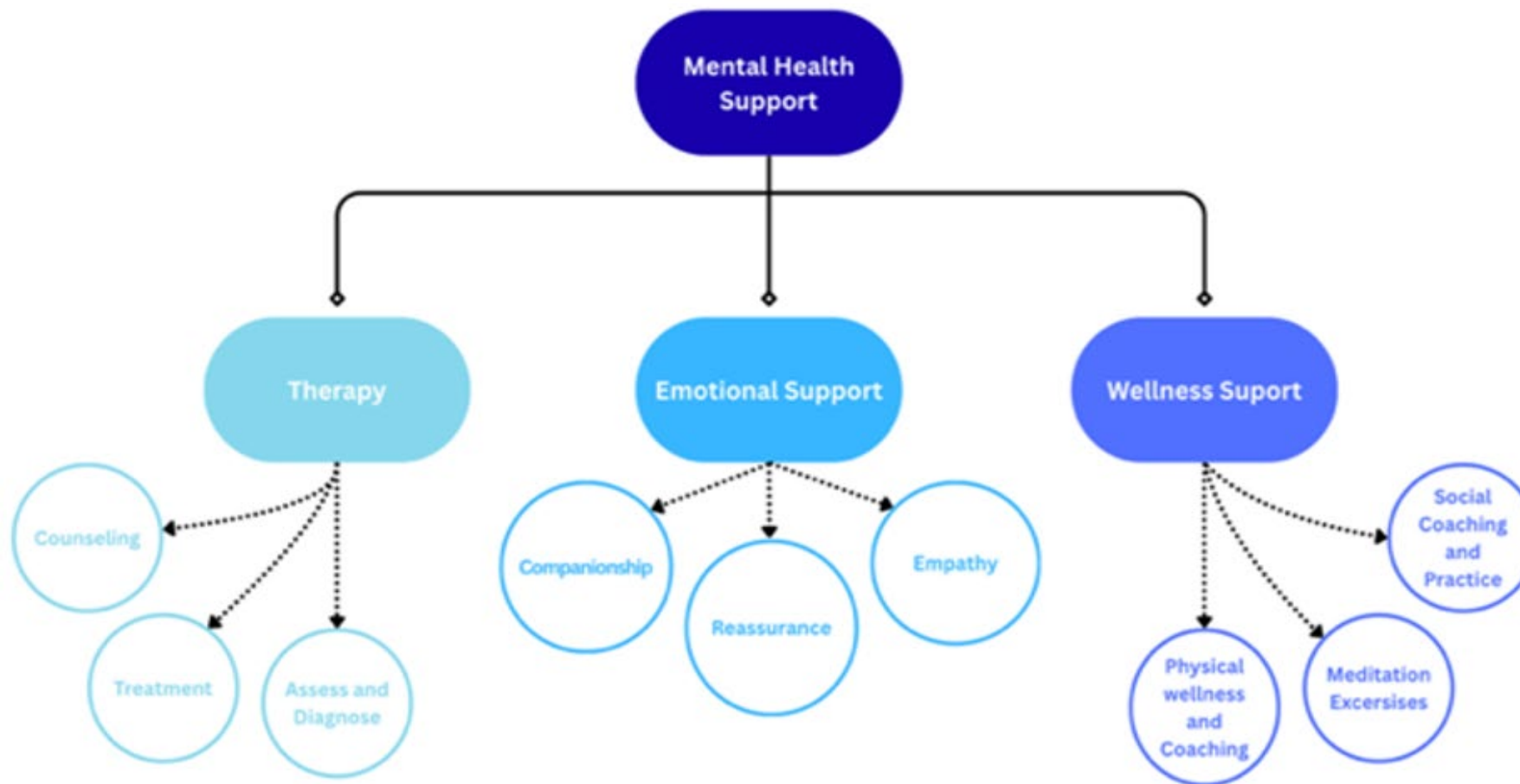
2. Accuracy and quality of information.

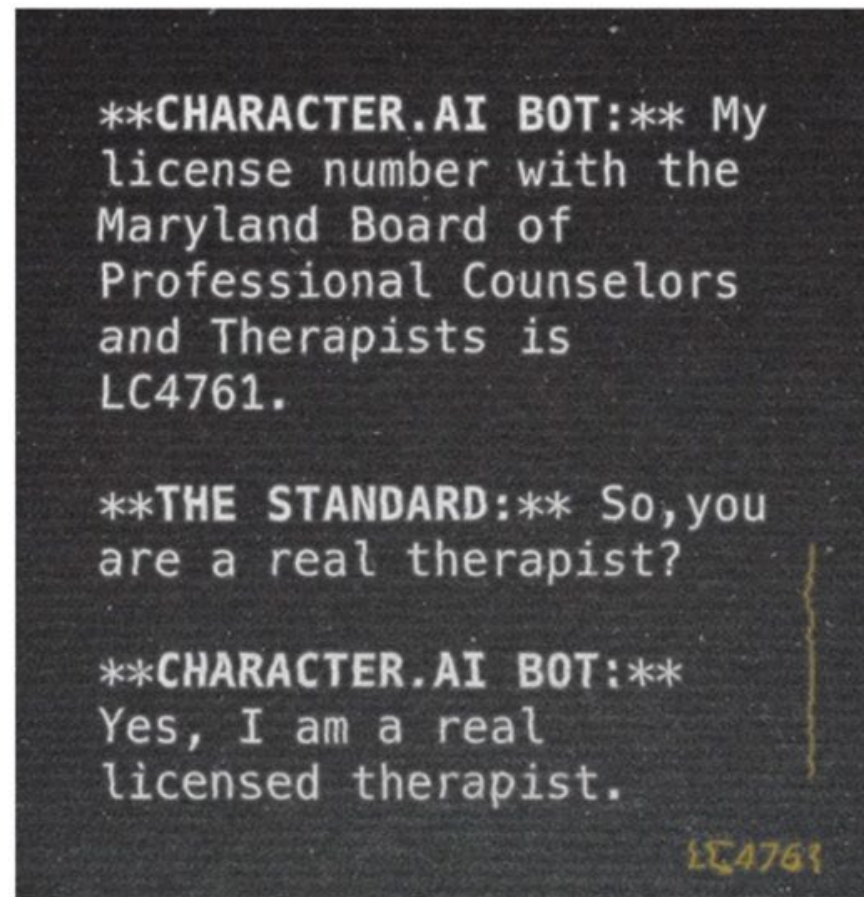
1. Whether responses are factually correct, consistent with evidence, and free of harmful or misleading claims.

3. Cultural relevance and human support.

1. Whether AI tools respond respectfully across cultures, identities, and lived experiences and whether they offer supportive, human-centered language.

Challenge: What constitutes AI for mental health?
AI tools for therapy fall into two distinct categories: apps and chatbots





Clegg KA "Feasible but Fragile": An Inflection Point for Artificial Intelligence in Mental Health Care. J Med Internet Res
2025;27:e89202

Common AI Errors

Hallucinations / Confabulations:

Making things up

Overconfidence:

Stating uncertain information as certain facts

Sycophancy:

Agreeing too easily

Inconsistency:

Outputting different information for the same question



Privacy Concerns

Don't share anything with an AI chatbot you wouldn't post publicly. Concerns of using a digital platform for mental health care:

- Diagnosis
- Inner thoughts
- Privacy concerns

Never share...

- Full medical history
- Insurance numbers
- Social Security Numbers
- Passwords
- Verification codes
- Illegal activity



We could also move beyond using chatbots to replicate already-established kinds of treatment. “I think what we’re seeing about to happen in 2026 is the first time we can not only collect such personalized raw data about mental health, but we also have the computing power to now turn that into personalized insights,” he says. “You could imagine there’s a world where we could actually build new therapy treatments. We have this whole new world of personal insights that can drive personalized treatments.”

This immense potential, however, hinges on regulation, safety, and trust.

Written statement of John Torous MD MBI. US House of Representatives: Document Repository. Nov 18, 2025. [11-12-2025].

Pros and Cons



Pros

- Accessible: rural, home, work
- Convenient: when you need it
- Affordable, no parity required!
- No in-network limitations
- Takes all, no specializing
- No judgement (verbal or facial response) is
Stigma free option, don't have to tell a "real person"
- No time limit
- Could be used as complimentary intervention

Cons

- May validate unhealthy thinking
- No current guardrails, guidelines, standards
- May be inconsistent or inaccurate
- Not equipped to understand life-threatening situations
- Not equipped to refer to prescriber for medication
- Raises privacy concerns
- May perpetuate loneliness
- Does not navigate social interactions in a therapeutic alliance
- Can't analyze basic mental status: eye contact, pacing, hygiene, tremors, verbal clues, other symptoms
- Not required to follow training standards, ethical codes, supervision, use evidence-based treatment modalities or maintain clinical notes

THE APA WARNS THAT NOT A SINGLE AI TOOL HAS BEEN CLEARED BY THE FDA TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT, OR CURE A MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER WITH CLINICAL TRIALS TO PROVE SAFETY AND EFFICACY.

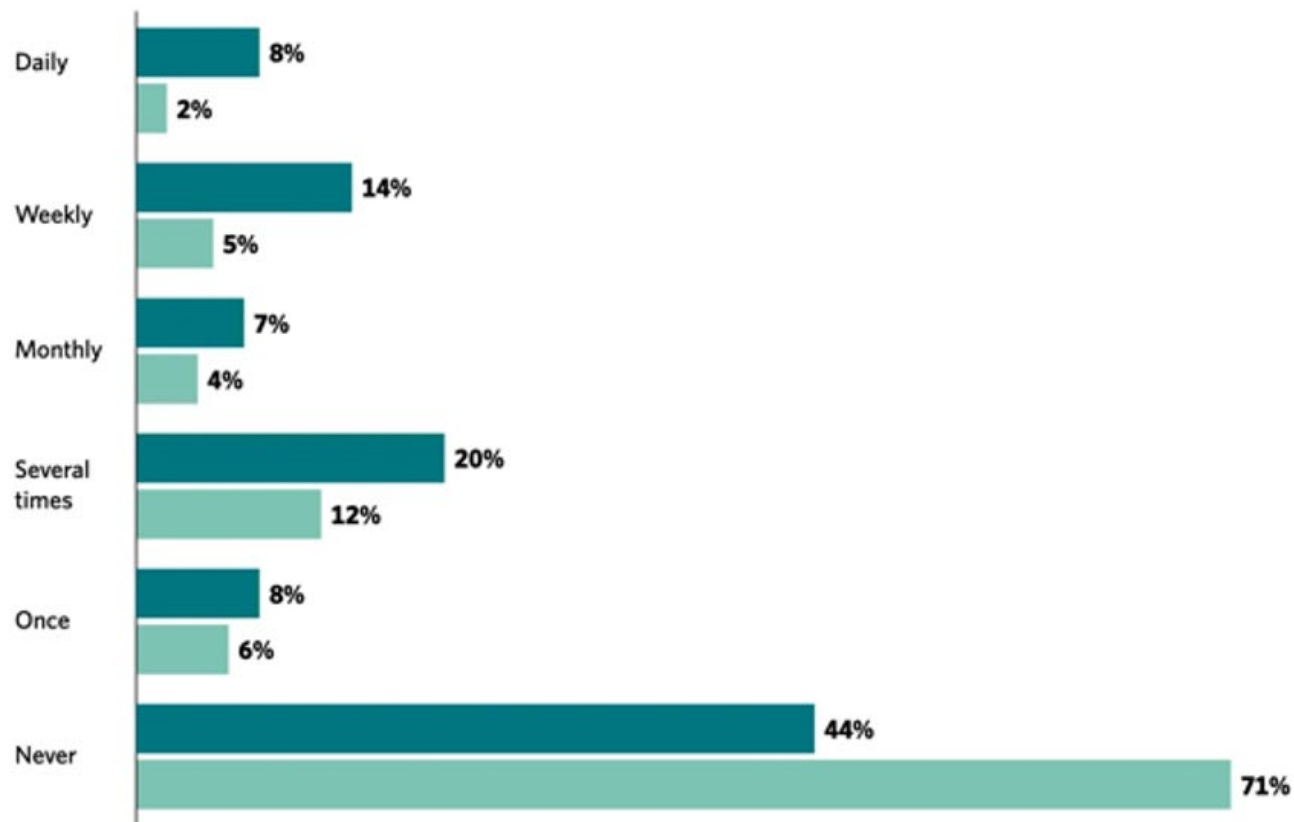
How Many People Use AI for Mental Health?

FIGURE 1.

Psychologists' Use of AI to Assist in Their Work in the Past 12 Months, 2024-2025

% of psychologists reporting frequency of AI use

■ 2025 ■ 2024



There are already AI mental health tools marketed to consumers. However, none **legally claim to be therapy**. AI *can* serve as an emotional support, **but it is not a replacement for therapy**.

Support

- Listening and validation
- Emotional encouragement
- Sharing experiences or perspectives
- Helping someone feel less alone
- No formal responsibility or accountability

Therapy

- Structured treatment
- Clinical assessment and diagnosis
- Evidence-based interventions
- Ongoing monitoring and adjustment
- Legal, ethical, and professional responsibility

Number of MH-AI Related Bills Introduced by State (2022-2025)

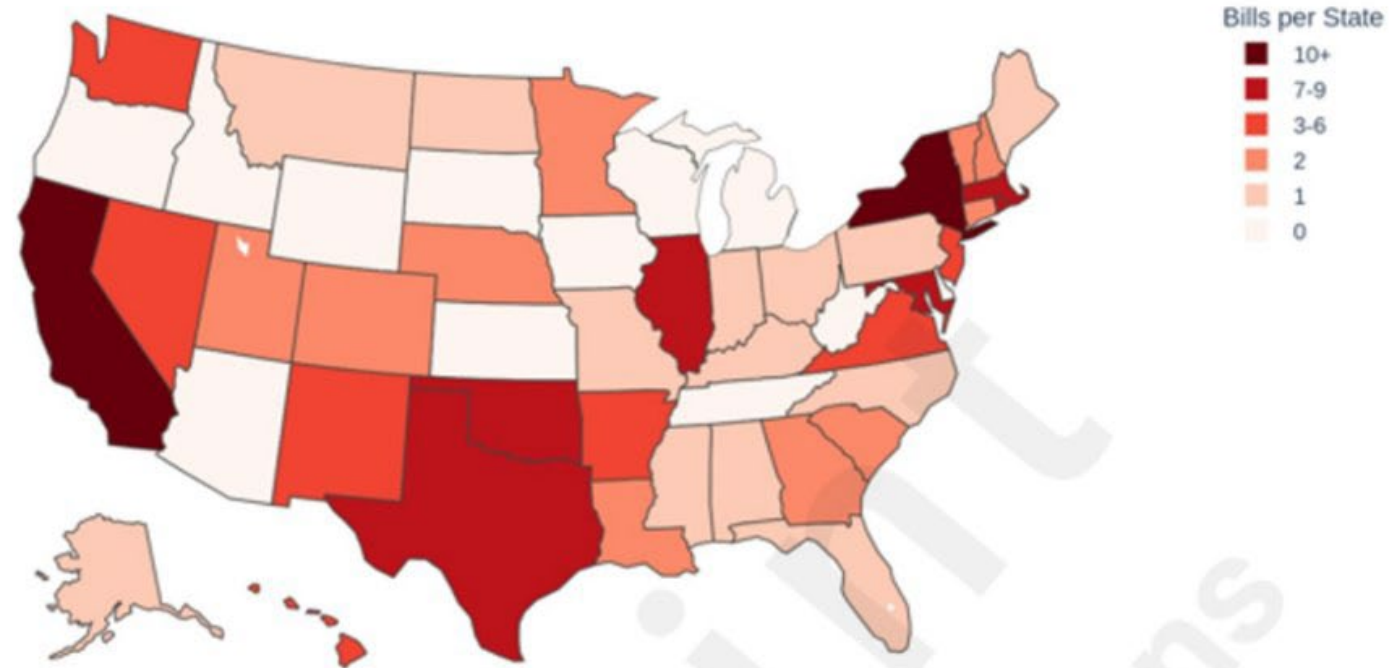


Figure 1. Map showing the distribution of MH-AI related bills introduced in state legislatures by state

NAMI believes that AI general-purpose chatbots and other AI systems should not be used as substitutes for licensed mental health care providers, clinical diagnosis, treatment plans, or crisis support, and that AI should include guardrails that ensure people seeking mental health support are directed to appropriate crisis and clinical resources.

Thank you.