

THE STAR



Developmental
Disabilities Association

SPECIAL EDITION

FALL 2022

FROM INSTITUTIONALIZATION TO COMMUNITY

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION



Developmental Disabilities Association is a community living agency that provides over 50 community-based programs and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families in Vancouver and Richmond.



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MENTAL ILLNESS IS A REALITY; BAD POLICIES DON'T HAVE TO BE

BY: ALANNA HENDREN
DDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After the school mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas lawmakers justified their guns-for-all position by saying that the problem is not guns but people with mental health problems, even though these very policymakers had been cutting funding to mental health services for years.

Closer to home, the number of police-involved shootings has recently increased in the Lower Mainland. More people with severe mental health problems are attacking police with knives, likely while they are experiencing a major psychotic episode. Homelessness in the Downtown Eastside is correctly attributed to people with mental illnesses, who are living in tent cities, blamed for causing fire hazards. Their only other option is living in rooms where the SPCA would not allow dogs to stay. Increasingly, “mental health” is blamed for many of society’s ills, without anyone offering concrete solutions for the problems of people living with a mental illness.

In 1992, Riverview Hospital, located in Coquitlam, was Canada’s largest psychiatric institution. Plans to downsize and close the institution were developed by the Ministry of Health as work was already underway to downsize B.C.’s three institutions for people with developmental disabilities – Tranquille, Glendale, and, Woodlands. Similarly, the plan was to move mental health services into the community and transfer responsibilities for psychiatric care to local hospitals. The differences between the two downsizing processes were that the closure of Woodlands included a powerful element of organized family advocacy, families who insisted that housing, transportation, and staff support be provided in the community for everyone who left the institution.

In the end, plans to close Woodlands and Riverview were in keeping with the government’s plans to sell off

public property to private developers, and in the case of Woodlands, the government spared little expense paying for group homes, vehicles, special equipment, staff training, staff time, community development and specialized community services, with the intent that they migrate to generic community services over time. It was all about inclusion.

As the federal government downloaded public housing responsibilities to provinces and municipalities began to experience increasing homelessness, people living in Riverview were sent back to their communities at a time when little public housing was available. Because of the disorganized thinking of people with serious mental illnesses, many ended up homeless, living on the street, acquiring additional problems with addictions. Many went without their prescribed medications, so their illnesses became worse. Hospital psychiatric units were mandated to serve people with acute mental illness, but this did nothing for the people who had severe, chronic long-term diagnoses. This did not just happen in B.C., this happened throughout the Western world to a greater or lesser extent. Today, there are not enough psychiatric beds to meet the acute needs of patients with severe mental illnesses, and virtually no long-term inpatient care options.

Since many folks with severe mental illnesses experience social isolation and may have additional substance abuse problems, they are labeled “hard to house” because of their uncontrollable behaviors and potential for property destruction or aggression toward others. With just \$716 per month for rent, they are priced out of the housing market and expected to cope with circumstances that healthy people would have a hard time negotiating.

In 2022, we are experiencing a massive shortage of



psychiatrists, a problem that already existed in 1992 and has only gotten worse. We now also have shortages of nurses and family doctors at a time that demand is growing due to the aging of Baby Boomers. Rates of dementia, autism, ADHD, addictions, depression, anxiety disorders, and other mental illnesses are higher than ever. Blaming “mental health” for society’s ills may give policymakers a temporary scapegoat during times of unpleasant realities but the mental health problems running rampant in Western societies are largely due to the lack of appropriate resources and services to support people who need treatment. In any given year, 20% of Canadians and 26% of Americans experience a mental illness. Some of these illnesses can be treated but many cannot. Schizophrenia, psychosis, serious bipolar disorders, serious substance abuse, and major depression can be fatal. People do not choose to have a mental illness and are not responsible for their life choices because by definition, their thinking is disorganized, and often they are confused by hallucinations.

In spite of modern science and technology, we still have no “cures” for mental illnesses, we only have treatments that will lead to remission at best. Pharmaceutical companies have almost given up trying to invent any new “magic pills” for psychiatric problems because we still know relatively

little about how human brains work. The police are not to blame – they have become the default front line of service to many people with serious mental illness. Prisons have become treatment centers for substance abuse and mental illness but are only available to people who commit crimes.

Community problems are not the fault of people with chronic mental health disorders, they are the fault of elected officials and bad policy-making based on wishful thinking rather than reality. Rather than complaining about the people who cause problems because they are mentally ill, it’s time for federal, provincial, and municipal governments to help people get healthy so they can become contributing members of society again.

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE: THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION



BY: EVAN KELLY

DDA COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

It is with great pride that we announce the launch of our painstakingly crafted documentary about the history of the Developmental Disabilities Association.

Two years ago we hired award-winning filmmaker, David Ozier. He was tasked with building a new internal training video for new staff members at DDA. What he came up with is so much more. He created a documentary that needs to be seen by everyone.

Doing the Impossible focuses on the innovations that DDA made possible since its inception in 1952. It talks to those who were there, pioneering programs and driving inclusion. It connects with the family of DDA's founder, Bea Purdy, the woman who started it all. It brings into focus the conditions in our former institutions in B.C. and the walls later crumbling down. It shows the impact DDA's innovators had not just in B.C., but across Canada and even around the world.

We are extremely proud of *Doing the Impossible*, and of David's ability to tell our story the way it needed to be told.

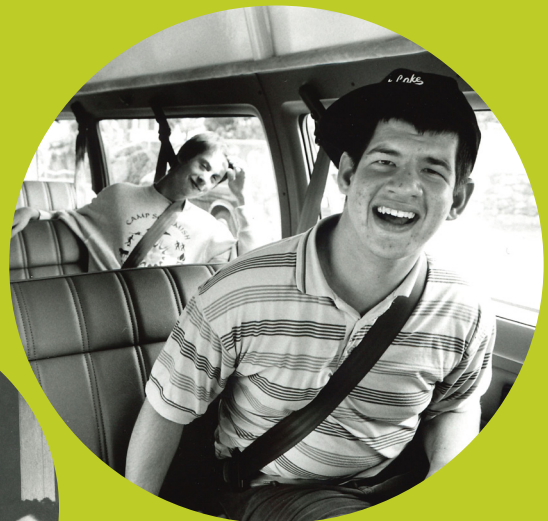




Before he joined the staff at DDA, *Doing the Impossible* director David Ozier's work had taken him far and wide.

"The world is full of amazing stories that need to be told, but you don't always have to get on a plane to find them. Some of the most important and remarkable stories can be found right here at home. The story of the DDA, *Doing the Impossible*, is one of them."

You can see *Doing the Impossible* on our website www.develop.bc.ca, as well as on our YouTube channel. If you are active on social media, we would be extremely grateful if you could share *Doing the Impossible* with your friends. The more people see it, the greater the spread of experience and knowledge. The greater the chance that history does not repeat itself.



JOBS WEST



Crate & Barrel

Crate & Barrel at Oakridge Park, Vancouver - Jobs West 2022 Employer of the Year

Every year Jobs West honours a business that goes above and beyond to foster an inclusive and diverse workforce. This year they have chosen Crate & Barrel at Oakridge Park as the 2022 Jobs West Employer of the Year. Crate & Barrel hired Maxwell, a client of Jobs West, and they could not be more proud of his accomplishments and his inclusion as a hard-working member of the team.

We caught up with Crate & Barrel manager, Elliot Fisher about bringing Maxwell on the team.

Q: What does it mean to Crate & Barrel to get this accolade from Jobs West?

A: Being recognized by Jobs West as their employer of the year is such an incredible honour. Our company mission is to help our customers build a home with purpose, and we believe that diversity of people, thought and voice make life beautiful. We pride ourselves on building a workplace that is inclusive of all races, genders, ages, sexual orientations and abilities. The award from Jobs West is a great reminder that we are on the right path, and a reminder to always strive for a more equal and inclusive workplace and society.

Q: What does it mean to have Maxwell on the team?

A: Having Maxwell on the team is a great joy for myself, and our staff at Crate & Barrel Oakridge. He's such a warm and kind individual who is always excited to come to work and eager to help others (and always willing to laugh at my dad jokes). He is an inspiration to the team, and for a lot of team members their first encounter with disability in the workplace. Many have remarked to me that they are proud to be working for a company that sees the person without focusing on the disability.

I'm also so grateful to the Jobs West team for their fantastic support. Everyone I've met and worked with from Edith back in February to Alison just this week have been the kindest and most wonderful people. The focus has always been considering the needs of both the individual and the business, and creating a harmonious relationship. Thank you again.



Canucks Sports and Meinhardt's Fine Foods

This is a special year for a couple of businesses that Jobs West works with to help foster a diverse and inclusive workforce. This year two businesses met important milestones that show their dedication to an inclusive community.

We proudly recognize the Vancouver Canucks Sports and Entertainment organization for being part of the Jobs West program for 15 years. Jobs West client, Nick, has been part of the Canucks team for the entire 15 years! Way to go Nick!

Meinhardt's Fine Foods on Granville Street in Vancouver has reached 10 years with Jobs West. Lenard has been a proud member of staff for ten years as well. Keep up the great work!

These organizations represent the best in B.C. business and understand the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities and encouraging diversity and inclusion.

Jobs West works with employees and employers to create job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Visit www.jobswest.ca to find out more.





Qi-Hong Jefferson Goh

Jobs West would like to congratulate Qi-Hong Jefferson Goh on securing a Canada Summer Jobs Summer paid position as an Image Processing Operator!

Jefferson completed the Retail and Hospitality Careers Program at Vancouver Community College before securing the position. While attending school, he completed an unpaid work experience in December of 2021. Jefferson learned the skills needed to become an image processing operator. These skills included computer knowledge, annotation labeling accuracy and speed, time management, and communication.

Jefferson secured the position before graduating in June and has had an exciting summer working as an Image Processing Operator! His main task has been to accurately label images to collect data for an artificial intelligence project. Jefferson helped label approximately 5000 images this summer! He labelled images by drawing boxes to highlight areas of interest. He showed a high level of motivation and great responsibility in his placement.

Great work this summer Jefferson, your future is bright!



Jerome Baker

Congratulations to Jerome Baker on his paid position with A Better Life Foundation!

Like many others, Jerome lost his position at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Jerome had been a dishwasher at the Save-On-Meats restaurant in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Community and had been a valued team member at Save-On-Meats since March of 2012. Ten years later, Jerome returned as a greeter and busser to help with events held at the Save-On-Meats location this past March.

Save-On-Meats currently works in partnership with A Better Life Foundation to host events called Plenty of Plates. Plenty of Plates is an evening where residents of the DTES community are invited to enjoy a three-course meal in a safe, sit-down, restaurant dining experience. Jerome assists with greeting guests on arrival with enthusiasm, clearing and bussing tables, and assisting with dishwashing.

"It's been lovely to have Jerome with us. He brings such incredible energy to the space the minute he steps in." Garance Thery, Program Coordinator, A Better Life Foundation. Jerome is once again a valued team member, now working for A Better Life Foundation! Great work Jerome!



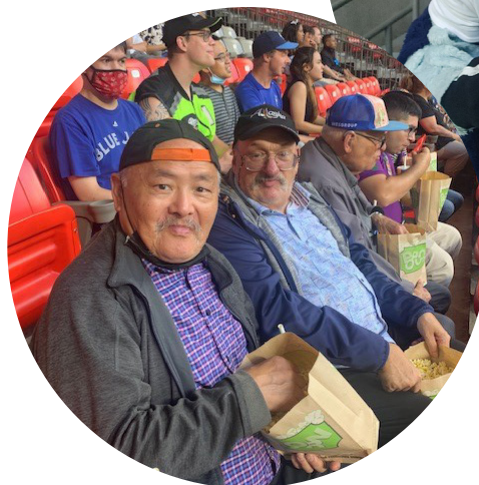
AN EVENING WITH THE WHITECAPS



This year DDA is celebrating its 70th anniversary. To help celebrate, we teamed up with the Vancouver Whitecaps for a fun-filled evening of MLS soccer!

The team kindly donated more than 50 tickets so staff and clients could watch the 'Caps take on the Houston Dynamo. Much popcorn and drinks were had and our clients stood and cheered when the Whitecaps put the winning goal in the back of the net in the dying minutes of the game! Blake was given the final 'bill' by Spike, the team's mascot.

The Whitecaps invited us back next year! See you then!



ENCOURAGING ABILITIES PODCAST

This year DDA Communications branched out and developed a new podcast. The Encouraging Abilities podcast content and branding were created by DDA's communications team, and communications manager, Evan Kelly is the host.

Evan is no stranger to the mic since he worked in Vancouver radio for several years before getting into corporate communications. DDA's new Communications Coordinator, Alex Antrobus, has been active in helping produce the content and connect with guests. So far, our episodes have covered topics such as self-advocates going into business for themselves, neurodiversity dating, music therapy, and more.

Encouraging Abilities can be found on several podcast hosting platforms like Spotify and iHeartRadio, but exists primarily on Podbean.com. Follow the link: <https://communicationsz8.podbean.com/>

If you have any ideas or topics you'd like the team to expand on, send an email to communications@develop.bc.ca.



THE MINORU HOUSE BAND

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown being a challenging time for all of us, there has been unexpected positive outcomes. In residential, we navigated the many restrictions and measures that were put in place to keep residents and staff safe. At the Minoru residential program in Richmond, we began to think creatively as what would be a new activity or hobby to reduce the amount of screen time, the residents were logging up, with the limited community activities available to them.

The three men that live at Minoru have an interest in music and so the manager offered to play the guitar. We experimented with a musical 'jam session' of sorts. Each person tried a few different percussion instruments until they found their niche. Then the hard part was playing in time, so we added a keyboard that had a synthesizer to assist in keeping the beat, whether it was with a latin, rock, or country sound. So during the 'pandemic lockdown', a musical band was born! We are now known as the 'The Minoru House Band!'

We have practiced a repertoire of instrumental songs, and have even played a few live performances over the past year. We are planning and looking forward to playing more live gigs. Our first live concert was an event for Indigenous heritage month last June at Arlington. Our band member Dan, who is indigenous, played his native drum and sang one song in his native tongue, which really added to the occasion. At another live event, another band member, Paul shouts out 'this is fun!' in the middle of a song as he didn't miss a beat on his wooden Guiro. We recently were quite proud of playing a private concert for Alanna Hendren, in the Minoru party room of the apartment complex we live in. We look forward to more live concerts and welcome people to join in and play along!



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

Residential and Supported living attended two wonderful National Indigenous Peoples Day events to learn more about the rich, diverse cultures, voices, experiences and histories of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. On June 19th the Skwachays Lodge hosted an event with music dancing and drumming. Free Bannock and cake was handed out.

On the summer solstice, June 21st in the evening we attended the inclusive Ambleside Park Indigenous Day celebrations. There was canoe rides, drumming, traditional storytelling, live bands, Indigenous workshops, art and great food. The setting was beautiful and the event was well attended. All of the DDA participants received a small bag of appreciation filled with treats, arts and crafts.



FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Did you know DDA hosts 5 different Family Support Groups, for families who have a child/family member with a developmental disability? As it did with everything else, Covid brought challenges for these groups. However we are happy to report the groups are planning to return to in-person meetings and workshops again this fall! If none of the groups listed meet your needs, please reach out to Angela Gagne (agagne@develop.bc.ca) as we can form new groups or provide one-on-one family support as always.

Chinese Family Support Group (interpreter provided at meetings)

Meets the third Saturday of the month at 6:30pm-8:30pm in East Vancouver (Fraser). Guest speaker, refreshments, and childcare provided.

Want to join, or more information? Contact Katherine at katsalon@hotmail.com

Vietnamese Family Support Group (interpreter provided at meetings)

Meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:30pm in East Vancouver (Kaslo). Guest speaker, refreshments, and childcare provided.

Want to join, or more information? Contact Jessica at crystalrain_05@yahoo.com

Twinkle Stars (Japanese) Family Support Group (interpreter provided at meetings)

Meets the last Saturday of the month at 10:00am in East Vancouver (Kaslo). Guest speaker, refreshments, and childcare provided.

Want to join, or find more information? Contact Chigusa at twinklestars2017@hotmail.com

Vancouver Parents Transition Group

A support group for parents of youth with disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood.

Meets monthly on Wednesday evenings (alternating locations) at 6:30pm. Guest speaker and refreshments provided.

Want to join, or more information? Contact Liz and Yuko at transitionparents@gmail.com

Upside Down Family Support Group

A social support group for parents who have children with Down Syndrome.

Meets the 4th Saturday of the month at 10:00am in East Vancouver (Kaslo) and North Vancouver (alternating locations). Refreshments provided.

Want to join, or more information? Contact Aileen at amluyt@gmail.com or Danielle at danigibbons@hotmail.com

VANCOUVER'S ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

BY: TASIA ALEXIS

The first ever Vancouver Accessibility Strategy Phase One passed unanimously on July 19, 2022. The Vancouver Accessibility Strategy is the assurance to support the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs, and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers. The strategy emphasizes the City's acknowledgment and commitment to the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within Vancouver. It reinforces the ability to nurture a culture of equity and inclusion that values and includes everyone.

More than one in five Vancouver residents lives with a lifelong disability, representing at least 107,000 people in the city, and as the city's population ages, the number of persons with disabilities will continue to increase. For people with disabilities, the lack of physically accessible spaces, services, and supports is a daily challenge. Barriers impede many thousands from experiencing life to the fullest, inhibiting their individual autonomy, freedom of movement, and being able to fully participate as a citizen in their community.

Until now, the City of Vancouver did not have an Accessibility Strategy. The new strategy will target the removal of barriers and prevent new ones from forming, with overarching policies that are aligned throughout the city. It will have a multi-year action plan with goals and outcomes that are measurable, as well as a strong framework for accountability.

Phase one of the Strategy identified 8 focus areas to address accessibility strategically:

Focus Area 1 – Built Environment and Public Spaces

Focus Area 2 – Transportation Services, Policies, and Programs

Focus Area 3 – Housing Policies, Programs, and Design

Focus Area 4 – Information and Communication

Focus Area 5 – Employment

Focus Area 6 – Governance and Engagement

Focus Area 7 – Capacity and Collaboration

Focus Area 8 – Advocacy and working with other Orders of Government along with Agencies





Community Engagement Sessions

The City's Community Engagement process was very important in the development of the strategy. To ensure people with disabilities guided the process, the City worked with the Accessibility Task Force committee members of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC), and Persons with Lived Experiences (PWLE). The City consulted community networks, including the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods, Community Living BC, Developmental Disabilities Association, MOSAIC, Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility, and citizens.

When you improve services for people with disabilities you improve services for everyone. The overarching Accessibility Strategy will require keen focus, trust and vulnerability, collaboration with people with disabilities and City staff, determination, persistence, and a plan of action with goals and outcomes that are measured and transparent.

Phase two of the Accessibility Strategy will include a broader engagement and multi-layer action plan.

- Conducting broad community engagement
- Creating and establishing an Accessibility Committee
- Developing an ongoing monitoring and evaluation structure, which will include a public feedback process
- Developing a financial and delivery strategy for the phase

We want a City where everyone belongs and feels included. We want to love Vancouver not for its promise, but for its practice. We need a government that leads by example. We need accessibility all of the way!

SUMMER FUN



BY: CAROLINE MULLEN

This summer the Fostering Early Development Program and The Safe Babies Program ran a “Training and Support Group” at many different parks around the Lower Mainland. In two months we visited seven parks, saw 14 different caregivers and around 20 children who are currently in care!

The FED team and Rachel Douthwaite from Safe Babies wanted to facilitate a program for foster caregivers to socialize while also having the opportunity to have respite. This program encouraged children to meet and play with one another and caregivers to share stories and mingle. Some highlights include playing in the water parks on hot summer days, drawing with chalk on the sidewalks and playing on park structures. It was also an opportunity to meet some families in person for the first time; after using video conferencing for the last two years!

It was a great to see families in a different capacity from our typical screenings; we hope to run this program again in the summer of 2023!

Loon Lake Trip

BY: LORILL ESTAR

We departed the Main Street Drop-In at noon on August 17th with eight CAP Clients and two CAP Staff. Our first stop was the Coquitlam Centre Food Court where everyone could choose their meal and enjoy it in air-conditioned comfort.

We arrived at Loon Lake and stayed in the 3 story log building called Arbutus Lodge. The male clients on the ground floor and the female clients and staff on the second floor. We were thrilled that all the meals with dessert was included in our price as well as linens. Plus, life jackets for any of us interested in taking dips in the lake.

The forest was so serene and the views spectacular. We did need to use bug spray as the mosquitos, that one of the CAP clients called blood drillers, were numerous and visited occasionally.

After dinner, we had an ice breaker game compliments of Teresa – the skittles game. Then we continued to get acquainted by sharing a fond memory or funny story for each decade of our lives. This was instrumental in facilitating group bonding with plenty of laughter. One client commented they were still giggling when they went to bed.

Thursday after breakfast, we did the walk around the lake that culminated with using the pulley ferry to get back to the lodge. Meals were fabulous and all served buffet style





Above images courtesy of Berwick Child Development Centre



Tug of war at Loon Lake

in the Bentley Family Building.

Some folks swam, some played Bocce and other games on the field, others napped and after our roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding dinner, we played more games. Mexican train dominos on the main floor of the lodge and rousing or shall I say rowdy games of UNO downstairs.

Our final morning after breakfast we did a meditation style walk around the lake and stopped at each station and did some type of unique exercise: deep breathing, leaning against a tree in the forest to feel the energy of it, a yoga asana, gentle movement EDGU, pranayama, Omring and more.

We packed up straight after breakfast to give cleaning staff access to Arbutus Lodge, filled our water bottles, then enjoyed a pizza and salad lunch before departing. CAP clients kept saying how much fun it was, and they wish we could have stayed longer. Overall, it was a wonderful adventure. We were so pleased with the experience; we have a spot-on hold for early September 2023.

BY: CURZON TEAM

Curzon is very thankful to DDA's Keegan Newberry who performed a First Nations smudging ceremony at Curzon House –Alyssa was very thrilled and was looking forward to this day!

The day started with decorating flags, making a tepee, setting up the table, baking the special bread called Bannock, cooking salmon, and eating lots of fruits and nuts. Smudging is a tradition, common to many First Nations, involving burning one or more medicines gathered from the earth.

The four sacred medicines used in First Nations' ceremonies are tobacco, sage, cedar, and sweet grass. Smudging is used for physical, spiritual, or mental cleansing. Smudging ceremonies might be performed when healing is needed or when one seeks to refocus their energy and their spirit. Sage or other sacred medicines are burned and the smoke is then wafted around oneself to clear the air of any negativity. Sacred plants and medicines are a crucial part of any Indigenous culture and can be attuned to the needs of the user through sacred rituals.



TOP 5 GRAB & GO SELF-REGULATION APPS

BY: KEEGAN NEWBERRY

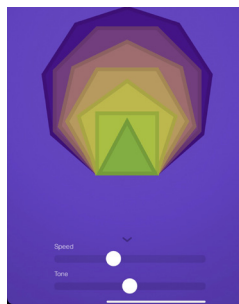
Self-regulation (also called emotional regulation) is the ability to recognize when you are not calm and use strategies to return yourself to a state of calm. Apple's AppStore has thousands of self-regulatory support apps, and with so many choices out there, it can be challenging to find the right app for yourself and the individuals you may support. A good self-regulation app needs a few key features:

1. It needs to be simple – navigating a complex series of screens or trying to understand written instructions when upset can lead to frustration.
2. It needs to be 'grab & go' – avoid apps that require logins, account creation, or lengthy manual adjustment of settings. When your body is dysregulated, waiting becomes an increasingly difficult skill.
3. It needs to be accessible – the type of screen interactions required should be quantity limited, use only the most basic iPad gestures, and there should be multiple ways to engage your sensory system for those with differing needs and abilities.

The apps included in the following countdown list meet all these requirements, have been field-tested, and are highly recommend.

5. BreatheSonic

BreatheSonic is a guided breathing app developed by Studio Amplify. The app is advertised as a "music led breathing practice" and is available for free on the AppStore. BreatheSonic holds a 5/5 rating, but with only seven AppStore reviews, it comes at number five on the countdown. The app offers three breathing exercises: classic (for beginners), box breathing (for stress reduction and calmness), and 4-7-8 breathing (for relaxation and sleep). It uses an expanding/contracting breathing graphic to help guide the user through each of the patterns.



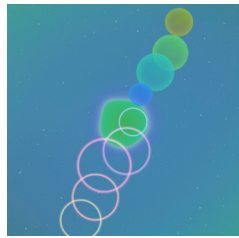
4. Lull

Lull ranks at number four on our list with a 4.9/5 AppStore rating and 37 reviews. Developed by Nish Singh, Lull is a gamified meditation app that uses sound and haptic feedback (vibration and tactile sensations) with a search-and-find style gameplay. The user attempts to find a target on the screen by tapping and dragging while feeling/listening for changes in the feedback. The stronger the vibrations, the closer you are to the target. When the target is reached, it is indicated by a popping sound and then the game repeats with a new target location. As haptic feedback is a feature currently not available on iPad models, this app is best used on iPhones, though it works on both devices. Lull is available for free on the AppStore with an optional in-app purchase to unlock additional soundscapes.



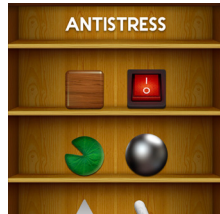
3. Chillscape – Sonic Meditation

Chillscape – Sonic Meditation is the second app on this list brought to you by Studio Amplify. The app is designed to “focus, relax & enhance mood” through user-guided soundscapes. Users tap, hold, and swipe the screen at their own pace to create randomly generated melodies overtop the gentle background music. Chillscape holds a 4.8/5 rating with limited (8) AppStore reviews. Though the app is by far the most accessible app on this list, it is also the only paid app (at a cost of \$2.79), bringing it to number three on the countdown.



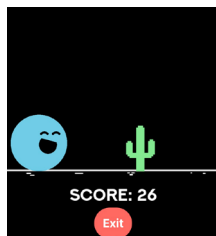
2. Antistress

Antistress – developed by Moreno Maio – is the most frequently recommended app included on the countdown. In the number two position, this app is modestly advertised as “relaxing stress relief toys”, though it offers a total of 146 mini-games using a wide variety of touch interactions and sensory stimulation. Antistress is updated regularly and currently has 99 games available in the free version with an additional 47 games that can be unlocked through the in-app purchase. This app has been thoroughly field-tested with 8.9K AppStore reviews and a 4.8/5 rating.



1. Tappy

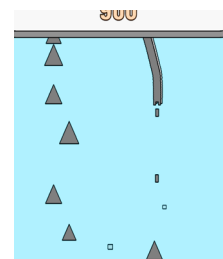
Topping the charts at number one, Tappy is a multi-functional app developed by Cameron Nazemi to help users “relax, fidget, tap, [and] journal”. This free app offers a large assortment of free features with a more extensive pro-version available through a one-time in-app purchase. 11 arcade games, 32+ fidget toys, and 25+ feelscapes (like a soundscape but with haptic feedback to enhance the sound) earn it a 4.8/5 AppStore rating with 5.1K reviews. Tappy includes classic games, such as Snake, Tetris (called Tap-Tris), and Four in a Row, all with a haptic twist. Much like Lull, Tappy works best on an iPhone to get the full sensory experience but can be used on an iPad with a few limitations.



Bonus! Pluck It: Hairs and Emotions

Pluck It: Hairs and Emotions – by the Feeling Game Company Ltd. - is truly as advertised: “a weird game about emotions”. With a whopping 40.2K reviews and a 4.7/5 AppStore rating, this app has rightfully earned a place on the countdown but belongs to a category of its very own. Each level of Pluck It is based on a specific emotion. The player solves simple logic puzzles to complete each level by discovering different ways to (you guessed it) pluck out hairs. The engagement lies in the simple pinch and drag interactive gestures combined with a large serving of absurdity, all wrapped up as a story. Embrace the weirdness – it is well worth the free download.

Images: App Icon; Emotion Level “Fun”



NEWSLETTER

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