

Stem4

Innovative Mental Health Intervention

Stem4 is a UK-based charity dedicated to supporting the mental health of children and young people. Founded by Dr. Nihara Krause, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist, stem4 combines clinical expertise with cutting-edge digital innovation to deliver accessible, evidence-based support. Its award-winning apps—Calm Harm, Clear Fear, Combined Minds, Move Mood, and Worth Warrior—have been downloaded millions of times globally and are recommended by healthcare professionals, schools, and the NHS. stem4's approach integrates early intervention, education, and digital tools to empower young people, families, and educators. stem4's impactful work has significantly advanced youth mental health support, helping to break stigma and provide timely help through scalable, cost-effective solutions. Through partnerships with schools, health services, and corporate supporters, stem4 continues to drive forward innovation with measurable outcomes, shaping a more responsive and inclusive mental health landscape for young people.

Children and young people are facing a mental health crisis. In the UK, 1 in 5 children aged 7–16 now has a probable mental health disorder¹, and over 50% of mental health conditions begin before the age of 14². Anxiety is among the most common issues, yet access to timely, effective support remains limited, with young people often waiting weeks or even months for help, if they receive any at all.

This is where stem4 makes a vital difference. stem4 is an award-winning charity that champions young people's mental health through clinically informed education, early intervention, and cutting-edge digital innovation. One of its flagship tools is Clear Fear — an evidence-based app that helps users manage anxiety using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques. Developed by a clinical psychologist and co-designed with young people, Clear Fear has been downloaded over 1.13 million times in 226 countries and is recommended by the NHS and in educational settings.

What makes Clear Fear truly innovative is its evidence-based, accessible, and stigma-free approach. It empowers young people with instant support, available 24/7 on their smartphones - a lifeline when traditional services fall short. In an independent evaluation, 84%³ of participants said they found the app easy to use, with 92% reporting a reduction in anxiety symptoms after regular use.

In a world where mental health needs are rising faster than services can respond, stem4's digital tools offer a transformational, scalable solution — delivering real help, at the right time, in the right way.

1. NHS Digital, *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England*, 2023
2. WHO, *Adolescent mental health fact sheet*, 2021

3. Samele et al (2025) Evaluation of the Clear Fear Smartphone App for Young People Experiencing Anxiety: Uncontrolled Pre- and Post-Follow-Up Study, JMIR, Vol. 9

stem4, is a small, but nationally and internationally recognised youth mental health charity, that has far exceeded third-sector expectations by developing the Clear Fear app—a clinically informed, free in the UK, and accessible app designed to help young people manage anxiety using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) strategies.

At a time when 1 in 5 Children and Young People (CYP) are presenting with increased anxiety;* Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) are under pressure, and NHS wait times for mental health support remain unacceptably long, Clear Fear provides immediate, scalable support to young people in crisis.

Clear Fear is available 24/7, offering vital early intervention for those awaiting professional help, whilst on a waiting list or unable to access support. Digital delivery ensures reach, affordability, personalisation and scalability.

Unlike many charities operating with limited budgets, stem4 has invested in high-quality clinical input, co-creation with young people, a robust and published research study investing the benefits of the app use over a 8-week period, real life impact in terms of its use in health and education and continuous technological updates to ensure the app remains current, relevant, and effective.

The app also protects user anonymity and data privacy, going above and beyond legal requirements to safeguard its vulnerable user base. The Clear Fear app stands out as one of the first mobile apps in the UK specifically designed to target anxiety in adolescence.

(*NHS Digital, *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England*, 2023)

Clear Fear is one of the UK's first mobile apps specifically created to help children and young people (CYP) manage anxiety, offering a clinically sound, engaging, and culturally inclusive digital intervention. Drawing on evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), it innovatively translates complex therapeutic principles into an accessible, mobile-first experience, co-designed with young people and clinical psychologists to ensure both relevance and impact.

At its core, Clear Fear introduces the unique "Face Your Fear and Fly" metaphor to help young users understand and confront anxiety. This is supported by a suite of interactive tools from personalised mood tracking, cognitive restructuring and journaling to graded exposure exercises and breathing regulation. However, what truly sets the app apart is its integration of cutting-edge adaptive technology: Clear Fear responds in real time to user mood logs and behaviour, predicting anxiety triggers and offering proactive, tailored strategies before escalation occurs, whilst also signposting to help through a safety net.

Unlike many digital health tools, Clear Fear doesn't rely on a one-size-fits-all model. Its adaptive, gamified design includes avatar-led journeys, multisensory regulation tools, and some neurodiverse-friendly features. The app supports young people holistically, with encouragement, affirmations and inspirational quotes as well as crisis escalation options, and optional support for family and educators to strengthen care networks.

Committed to access and equity, Clear Fear includes offline capabilities for those with limited internet access, and customisable interfaces to support neurodiverse users. All data practices are designed with transparency, anonymisation, minimisation, and consent at the forefront, in full alignment with GDPR standards.

In a saturated mental health tech landscape, Clear Fear stands out as a pioneering intervention, blending evidence-based care, user-first design, and real-world integration to empower adolescents with tools that are as effective as they are engaging.

Clear Fear, stem4's clinically developed anxiety management app for young people, has demonstrated sustained impact over the past two years, underpinned by strong data, ongoing engagement, and trusted integration across health and education systems.

Since 2023, users have completed over 60,000 in-app activities, with 92% finding them helpful—equating to more than 55,000 anxious thoughts managed. The app has delivered around 14,000 hours of support, including nearly 100,000 instances of help provided outside standard hours for 43,000 UK users. These outcomes reflect its role as a round-the-clock mental health tool.

Globally, the app has surpassed 1.13 million downloads across 226 countries/territories, with ongoing uptake in 203 countries over the last two years. 89% of users report reduced anxiety symptoms after each use, and feedback regularly highlights the app's immediate effectiveness and reassurance as well as being a tool to build resilience.

Clear Fear is widely recommended by NHS Trusts and NHS platforms such as Good Thinking and The Waiting Room, as well as schools, colleges and universities. Clear Fear is currently being integrated into school wellbeing strategies via a whole school approach. A trial programme involving several schools and a new schools' dashboard is being piloted to enable educators and parents and carers to cohesively support student mental health.

"Having a clinically validated resource like Clear Fear makes a real difference." –
Amanda Collyer, Howard of Effingham School

"Clear Fear bridges an important gap in care delivery... providing support between appointments" – Dr Amit Seyan, GP and stem4 Trustee

User feedback includes *"It makes me calm just knowing I have this app available at my fingertips to use when I need it."* Another shared, *"It's great for instant anxiety relief as well as helping you to understand, manage and cope with your anxiety."*

Independent studies back its clinical effectiveness. A 2025 JMIR Formative study found Clear Fear to be *"usable, acceptable, safe and effective in helping young people manage anxiety, depression, and emotional difficulties."* A 2022 systematic review ranked it among the top three standalone anxiety apps out of 30 analysed.

stem4 ensures Clear Fear's continued relevance through regular updates and adaptations - for example, COVID-19 anxiety (including translations), Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), Needle anxiety/Phobia and helping manage trauma experiences in schools. It is sensitive to digital poverty, offering offline use, and provides support and training in strategic school engagement.

stem4's sustained success in providing youth and clinical led effective digital support was recognised in the 2024 Third Sector 'Small Charity of the Year' Award.

Clear Fear's impact is not only measured in numbers -it's evident in lives improved and crises averted, making it a vital, long-term mental health tool.