

How We Review Caregiver Apps and Tech Tools

Image



VirginiaNavigator began by completing a comprehensive literature review to help us ensure we met the unique needs of family caregivers. Then we launched a content audit, working with partners to complete a detailed review of all the information we received. We narrowed down our app/ technology choices based on specific criteria: expert recommendations, existing reviews, and appropriateness for caregivers and older adults.

Who were the reviewers?

Reviewers brought a rich background in aging and health, with all of them having previous or current caregiving experiences. Many anticipated being caregivers in the future, too. Their experiences varied from caring for spouses and parents, to providing care for someone with a physical disability or significant healthcare need, to caring for someone with Alzheimer's/dementia. Many had provided in-home care and/or had provided care for more than one person at the same time, and over a third had provided long-distance caregiving.

What were the review criteria for the tools?

The reviewers used multiple criteria important to family caregivers to provide feedback on most of the tech tools, with the exception of those reviewed by our partner Alz You Need. Our final selections for the [Caregiver Tech Tool Finder](#) were

based on ratings and comments about whether the technology was:

- Easy to use
- Helpful in meeting caregiver needs
- Reasonably priced (if fees were involved)
- Likely to be recommended to other caregivers

Then reviewers provided an overall star rating using a 5-point scale. All apps and technology included in the tool received high ratings on all criteria, as well as an overall rating of 3.5* or higher, and had positive comments.

For the Alz You Need technology reviews, these trusted partners created a vetted list of “Featured Technology,” all falling within three of the categories on our Caregiver Tech Tool Finder: Remote Monitoring/Companion Technology, Smart Home Devices, and Wearable Personal Tech. The information on these tech tools will be different from what is provided in the other categories, but still extremely helpful! We encourage you to check out the [Alz You Need website](#) for more information and tools.

What additional criteria were considered?

We also determined whether the app or technology met other needs, such as navigating community services, finding health resources, promoting caregiver self-care, dealing with stress, managing competing caregiver demands, decreasing social isolation, and/or ensuring safety.

What should users know about caregiving apps and technology?

We learned a great deal during this process and wanted to share a few of our findings.

- **Caregiver apps and technology are constantly changing.** Features like navigation, design, content, compatibility, and website interface may not stay the same for long, so users have to adapt.
- **Apps and technology are frequently updated.** Regularly check for updates to get key bug fixes and new content and features.
- **Apps and technology with modest fees are sometimes worth it.** Some healthcare and caregiving apps may charge a fee for a more user-friendly experience, no advertising, and/or greater access to app content and features.

- **Apps and technology aren't always around forever.** Some apps may change their scope or features, or may not be supported on older devices.

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