University of Brighton

Want a healthier relationship? Pick up your phone

- Apps proven to have a positive impact on relationships
- Users of Paired couples app see relationship quality improve by 36% over 3 months
- Relationship care is a key emerging trend in mHealth

March 2021 - Apps have redefined the way we date and look for love. Now, for the first time, research published by The Open University and the University of Brighton demonstrates the significant role technology can play once you have swiped right and are in a relationship.

The study, which was funded by The Open University as part of its ongoing research into couple relationships, sought to understand the impact digital interventions can have in matters of the heart. Over a three-month period, researchers evaluated the relationship app Paired, with data from more than 4,400 users. Paired is a new and innovative research-based app for couples designed to encourage open dialogue between partners, through daily expert tips and conversation starters.

The research, which demonstrates that an app can be effective in supporting behaviour change in romantic relationships, comes at a time when the use of smartphones to maintain and track health and wellbeing around the world is booming. The global mHealth app market was valued at USD 40.05 billion in 2020, and is predicted to rise to USD 149.3 billion by 2028, growing 17.7% each year. Apps specifically targeting those in relationships are also on the rise.

Researchers developed a rigorous measurement of overall relationship quality to analyse the impact of technology on relationship behaviour. They found improvement in the way app users conversed and connected with their partner, and saw relationship quality increase by over a third (36%) after 3 months usage, with benefits improving the longer and more frequently the app was used.

The study found that sustained, regular use of the app significantly impacts on key areas of relationships: communication, dealing with conflict, feeling connected, and comfort with discussing sex life.

After 3 months, 98% of Paired users agreed that they openly communicated with their partner, with 81% of users crediting the app for improving their communication as a couple, rising to 85% for those using Paired daily.

Researchers found that Paired users were 3 x more likely to be confident that they can discuss and resolve arguments, after using the app for 3 months. Emotional connection also benefited with 4 in 5 users strongly agreeing that they enjoy a positive emotional connection to their partner.

The study additionally found that technology can help with even the most intimate of areas in relationship, sex. Recognised as one of the most challenging topics for couples, after 3 months use 8 in 10 users of Paired felt comfortable discussing their sex life with their partner.

Use of the app also prompted regular relationship care, with nearly three-quarters (72%) of users remembering to do something for their relationship on the days they used Paired.

Professor Jacqui Gabb, Professor of Sociology and Intimacy at The Open University says: *'mHealth is expanding rapidly with more than 200 new health apps coming onto the market each day. We're all familiar with how technology can help us date and find a partner, but this new research clearly demonstrates that there's an equally important role for tech once we are in a relationship. Small, daily interactions are the key to happy and healthy relationships and apps are the perfect tool to prompt much-needed relationship care.'*

Paired is an app for couples designed to open-up communication between partners and help them learn more about each other and their relationship. It draws upon the expert advice of leading clinical psychotherapists and academics across the field of relationship science, conveniently offering users access to relationship insights and tools wherever they are. Research-based daily questions are designed to strengthen each couple's relationship and encourage open dialogue between partners, with expert tips and conversation starters to help users compare and discuss their answers.

Paired is available globally and is free to download from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, with a monthly or annual subscription required to access the full range of content and support.

- Ends -

An executive summary of the research can be viewed [here.](#)

The Open University and University of Brighton study used a mixed methods approach, and gathered data from over 4,400 users of Paired, from October - December 2020.

About Paired

Paired is a new relationship app that launched globally in October 2020. Its mission is to make relationships happier and healthier by prompting daily conversations between couples. Fun questions and quizzes combined with expert tips and insight allow couples to find out more about each other, and their relationship. Paired was founded in 2019 by Kevin Shanahan and Diego López, who previously worked at leading language learning app Memrise. Dr Jacqui Gabb, Professor of Sociology and Intimacy at The Open University, is the Chief Relationships Officer at Paired. The app is free to download with a Premium subscription priced at £49.99 per year for two people, offering access to a full library of content and support for a more bespoke experience.
www.getpaired.com

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