



The Form of Being Met: Mental Health Support in the Age of AI Companions

Presented by: Nick Taylor, PhD

Delivery method: On-Demand

Instruction level: Intermediate

Sponsored by: NCS Pearson, Inc.

Course Description

One in eight U.S. adolescents now turns to AI chatbots when struggling, drawn by constant availability, patience, and lack of judgment. As demand for mental health support outpaces the human workforce, AI is increasingly filling the gap while reshaping expectations of what it means to be understood.

Drawing on original research co-authored with Unmind's clinical and well-being leaders, Dr. Nick Taylor examines the human-AI encounter through an ethical decision-making lens, including transparency, privacy, boundaries, safeguards, and pathways to human support. This session presents a framework for evaluating AI companions so they support, rather than replace, human connection.

Learner Outcomes

After completing this learning track, participants will be able to:

1. Describe at least three factors influencing why people may turn to AI companions for mental health and emotional support, including accessibility, immediacy, and perceived privacy
2. Differentiate between the experience of relational connection with an AI companion and a human therapeutic relationship, including the opportunities and limitations associated with empathy, trust, therapeutic alliance, and human connection
3. Apply ethical decision-making principles to evaluate responsibly designed AI-supported mental health experiences, including psychometric measurement, transparency, privacy, professional boundaries, appropriate safeguards, risk escalation, and referral pathways to qualified human support

Time-Ordered Agenda

5 minutes	Introduction: Mental health support in the age of AI
7 minutes	Why people are turning to AI
10 minutes	The form of being met: The human-AI encounter
10 minutes	Connection vs. simulation
10 minutes	Psychometrics, not mimicry
8 minutes	AI as a bridge to human connection
10 minutes	Q&A

About the Presenter

Dr. Nick Taylor is CEO and Co-Founder of Unmind, the workplace mental health platform helping organizations create healthier, happier, and more human workplaces. A clinical psychologist by training, Nick previously worked across the NHS and Mind, supporting people with a range of mental health needs. He founded Unmind in 2016 with a belief that everyone has mental health, all of the time, and that with the right tools and support, everyone can strengthen and improve it.

Disclosure

Financial: Dr. Nick Taylor is employed by Unmind and receives compensation from Unmind.

Non-financial: Dr. Nick Taylor is the co-founder of Unmind and is a contributor to original Unmind research discussed during this presentation. He is receiving a stipend from Pearson for this

NCS Pearson Inc., the sponsor of this learning track, develops and distributes assessments and intervention tools for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

References

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