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How Freespira Helps Teens Fight Panic Attacks and PTSD in Just 28 Days: a Chat with CEO Joe Perekupka

MENTAL HEALTH

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BY [BHOOMI JOBANPUTRA](#)

Being a teen is seriously overwhelming. It's not only about trying to ace our classes or figuring out social circles anymore. We are relentlessly drowning in social media feeds, carrying the weight of global headlines, or just feeling swamped by the uncertainty of the future. On top of that, past difficult struggles or experiences sometimes linger, turning even simple, ordinary days into significant challenges.

When anxiety escalates into full-blown panic or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), it makes everyday life feel impossible. Finding relief or peace at the time can feel isolating and incredibly hard in this chaotic world. Because of this over piling of stress, teens are always trying to find the newest hacks, such as the "glow-up" strategy for the summer or perfecting study plans for all the endless exams. There are tons of tips out there for feeling better.

But then, when you're actually stressed, trying to Google stuff seems to only make everything more confusing. You look up symptoms, and suddenly, you're panicking, wondering why feeling okay has to be so complicated.

Here is where Freespira comes in. Freespira, a new FDA-approved non-drug treatment for dealing with PTSD and anxiety, can help reduce panic attacks and help regulate one's breathing in just 28 days.

The Teen Magazine spoke with Freespira CEO Joe Perekupka to learn more about the company. Having worked with mental health startup companies for over a decade, Joe brings expertise to his role, and has served as CEO for over 3 years.

What is Freespira?

Freespira is a device that patients use for 28 days to decrease their panic attacks and PTSD symptoms. This device is used twice a day, 17 minutes per day, and tracks respiration rate and exhaled CO2 levels to help users with breath regulation.

With both audio and video cues, the device instructs the user when to inhale and exhale, allowing them to easily stabilize their breathing patterns. For the last five minutes of each session, audio cues are removed so patients can help build muscle memory by remembering their breathing patterns with the aid of visual cues only.

Each patient will also have a coach assigned to them for the 28 days to help track goals and check in weekly, which can help break a lot of barriers for people struggling to get treatment.

As Joe says, "Almost 50% of the country lives in what's called a mental health provider shortage area." The statistics show that there are not enough providers to help those in need of treatment. Freespira technology gives access to those struggling to find help.

What makes Freespira different?

Unlike other methods to deal with mental health struggles, Freespira is a one-time treatment that, after 28 days, gives lasting results.

Every patient who uses the program first takes a patient assessment survey, which includes the panic disorder severity scale (PDSS) or PCL-5 for PTSD. These surveys are taken again after the treatment to assess improvement. "On average, 80% of the people that go through Freespira achieve the minimum requirements or what we call clinically significant response rates," says Joe.

With its extremely high success rate, Freespira is a revolutionary technology that helps decrease these symptoms for good after under a month.

Advice to Those Struggling

It can be intimidating to ask for help when struggling with a mental health issue for a variety of reasons. Whether it's scared of being judged or just unclear about actual struggles, letting out true feelings and seeking aid is a tough thing to do.

"Stigma is a real issue, so we're trying to tear down all those factors and provide people with different options where they can engage in any kind of health care," said Joe.

But the important thing to remember is that you are not alone. No matter how much it feels like you are, there is always someone who is there for you and wants to reach out a hand and guide you. Whether it's finding treatment options or simply being an ear to talk to, these trusted people can truly make a difference.

"Whether it's a friend, a parent, or even your doctor," said Joe, "people really do want to help you, and there's so many different options out there."

Future of Freespira

Right now, Freespira is determined to get this product into the hands of as many people struggling as possible in order to make a difference. "There are so many people who are suffering. Right now, roughly 40 million people in this country have panic attacks on an annual basis or are diagnosed with PTSD."

They are also thinking about expanding to other mental health disorders. Currently, one they are researching is a social anxiety disorder. "That affects adolescence, especially in people in their early 20s, a lot."

Additionally, they have seen that addressing panic disorder has also shown improvements in other struggles, like mental health-triggered asthma due to similar symptoms.

Keep Up with Freespira

To keep up with what Freespira is doing next, check out their website freespira.com or follow them on Instagram [@freespira](https://www.instagram.com/freespira). Thank you Joe for the interview!