

Walmart is an early mover with digital mental healthcare for caregivers —but the price of its new app could be too steep

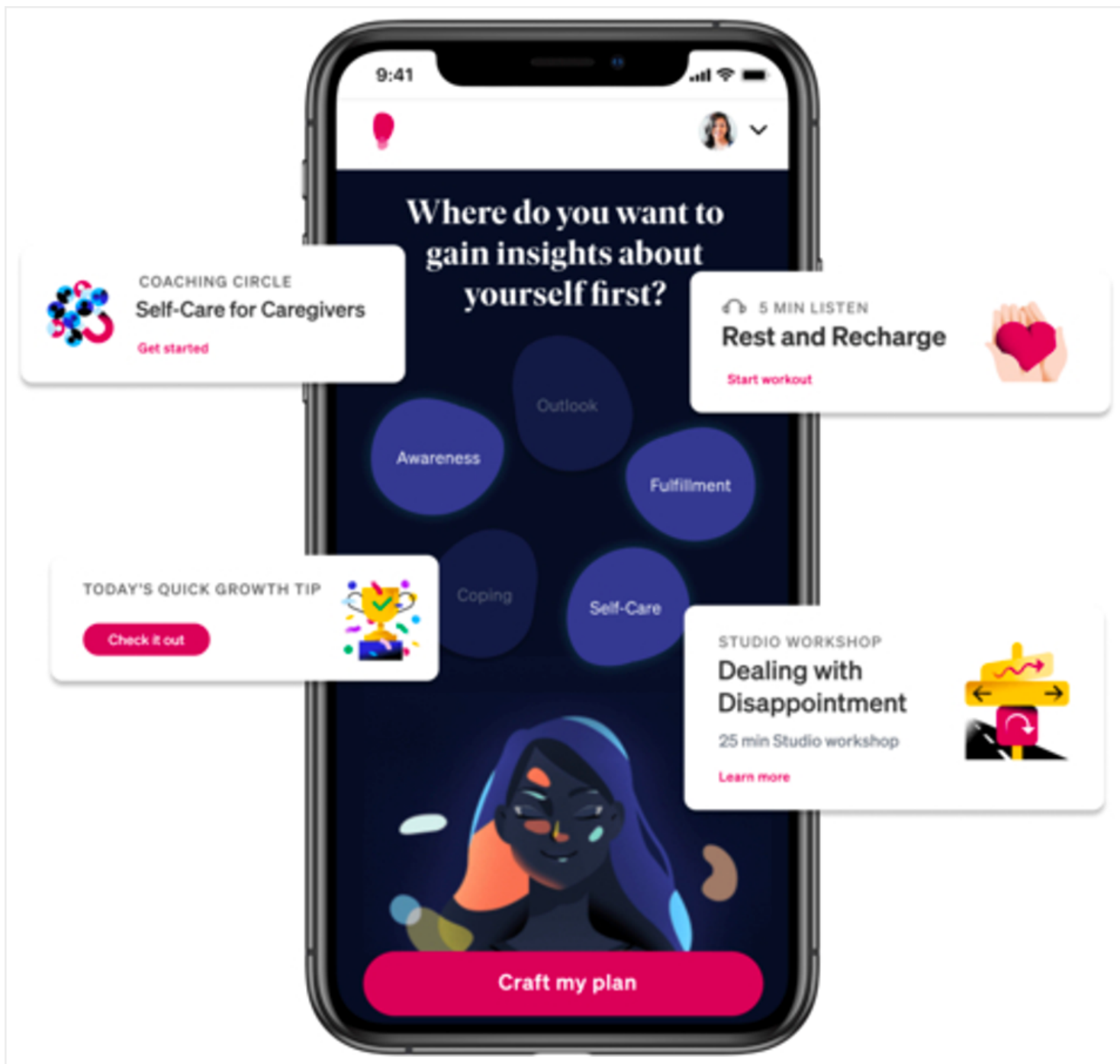
Article

The news: Walmart is teaming up with health tech company **BetterUp** for its caregiver-focused mental health platform, dubbed **BetterUp for Caregivers**.

- The platform offers a coaching and wellbeing management subscription service that will be available exclusively through Walmart's Wellness Hub.

More on BetterUp: The platform combines AI tech, behavioral science, and an online community to provide mental wellness resources to caregivers.

- Users can take an assessment that helps them build a tailored plan for mental health and community-based support.
- It then allows them to access personalized tools, like group coaching and online classes, interactive wellbeing exercises, and confidential 24/7 access to resources.



The bigger picture: Caregivers are facing high rates of stress and burnout—and they don't always have the resources to address it.

- While US employers have been stepping up to tackle the mental health crisis, caregivers are mostly excluded from this movement.

- Many US caregivers aren't even employed or paid for their service—they're family caregivers: **Nearly 1 in 5 caregivers are providing unpaid care**, [per](#) a 2020 AARP survey.

The big takeaway: As demand for caregiving rises alongside the aging population, and more of healthcare moves into homes, Walmart is taking steps to be an early entrant in this nascent, yet growing market.

What's the catch? Even though BetterUp's service is bypassing insurance, it's still expensive. **It costs consumers \$124.99 per month to use**, per its website. Some caregivers could be better off using any private or public insurance they have.

To add, since it's direct-to-consumer (D2C) offering, caregivers may not even know that this kind of service is available to them via Walmart. There are other competitors offering the same thing, too. So the question is, how does Walmart-BetterUp's marketing strategy differ from others to capture caregiver consumers?

- [Iana Care](#) offers caregiver support through **both a free app and employer-sponsored benefits**. In addition to providing mental health support, it also offers practical support, like getting help with errands, groceries, child and pet care, and transportation.
- In 2021, [Avanlee](#) launched a D2C all-in-one app for caregivers that enables care coordination with doctors, combines real-time health tracking, scheduling healthcare appointments and medications, and offers caregiver support. The startup offers tiered subscriptions, **starting at \$0/month and going up to \$19.99/month** at its most expensive.
- Even larger companies like [Best Buy \(Best Buy Assured Living\)](#) and [Amazon \(Alexa Together\)](#) have been developing tech-enabled solutions for making the jobs of caregivers easier.

What's next? All things considered, scalability for this new service might be hard, so Walmart could look to partner with home health agencies that are experiencing high rates of turnover among their caregiver employees.

Types of Resources* that US Caregivers Have Used vs. Want, Oct 2021

% of respondents

	Used	Want
Direct access to the doctor for questions	45%	41%
Caregiver training	13%	27%
Caregiver-specific websites	11%	26%
Caregiver support groups	11%	23%
Advocacy group resources	8%	17%
Digital tools for medical management	8%	17%
Caregiver blogs and/or books	8%	11%
Financial support	7%	28%
Medication training for caregivers	7%	13%
Caregiver online chat forums	5%	10%
Caregiver support phone line	4%	14%
None of these	38%	24%

Note: wanted n=1,973; used n=1,778; *designed specifically for caregivers

Source: Phreesia, "Engaging, equipping and supporting caregivers," Nov 1, 2021

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