

# Cystic Fibrosis Research News

**Title:**

Pilot RCT of a telehealth intervention to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in adults with cystic fibrosis.

**Lay Title:**

“Coping and Learning to Manage Stress with CF” a Telehealth Pilot Intervention

**Authors:**

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**What was your research question?**

We evaluated the effectiveness of a six-session telehealth stress management intervention called CALM: Coping and Learning to Manage Stress with Cystic Fibrosis (CF). The goal of CALM is to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety among adults with CF who have at least mild depression and/or anxiety symptoms.

**Why is this important?**

Depression and anxiety symptoms are common in adults with CF but there are not many studies using psychological interventions to reduce these symptoms in adults with CF. Untreated mood symptoms have been associated with worse health outcomes, such as lower lung functioning, lower body mass index, more pulmonary exacerbations, poorer adherence to treatments, poor coping, and earlier mortality. Therefore, it is important to find effective ways to decrease depression and anxiety in adults with CF.

**What did you do?**

Thirty-one adults with CF reporting at least mild depression and/or anxiety were randomized into receiving the telehealth CALM intervention or treatment-as-usual, which meant they did not receive the CALM intervention but had access to mental health resources as part of routine clinical care. The CALM intervention focused on understanding the effects of stress on our mind and body, increasing relaxation, challenging unhelpful thoughts, improving



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communication and social support, prioritizing self-care and healthy habits, increasing coping, and goal setting. Surveys about mood, quality of life, and coping were completed at baseline, after the intervention, and at a 3-month follow-up.

## **What did you find?**

Adults with CF that received the CALM telehealth intervention reported reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety and improved coping and health-related quality of life compared to those in the treatment-as-usual group. The intervention was feasible to deliver, easy to set up, and required very few rescheduled visits because telehealth increased access to care. Those that received CALM reported satisfaction with the intervention and would recommend the program to others with CF.

## **What does this mean and reasons for caution?**

Telehealth is a useful tool to deliver stress management skills and CALM could be one intervention recommended to adults with CF reporting at least mild depression and/or anxiety symptoms. There were only 31 adults with CF in this study. Studies with a larger number of participants are needed before we can make firm conclusions about the benefits of CALM.

## **What's next?**

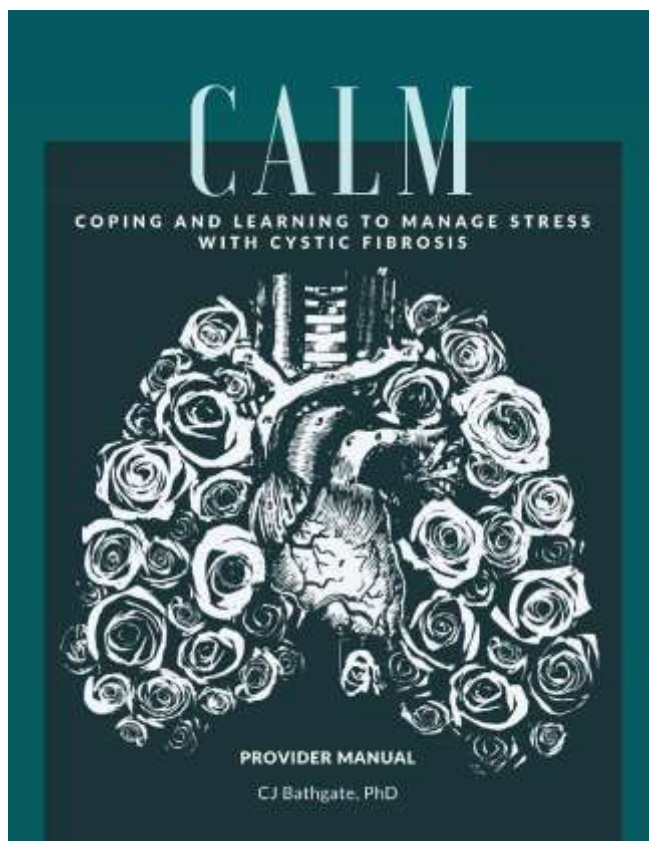
Future studies could examine CALM in a larger sample of adults with CF at different sites, comparing those receiving CALM to those receiving different psychotherapeutic interventions, delivering the telehealth intervention to a group, adapting CALM for younger age groups and caregivers, and utilizing therapists with differing professional backgrounds.

## **Original manuscript citation in PubMed**

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34366282/>

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Picture to include:



The cover artwork for CALM's provider manual and workbook was created by Lauren Kuhlman, an adult living with cystic fibrosis. We are proud to showcase her art and share it with others.