We’re living in a “high-tech” era, in which new technologies have permeated our lives, changing the way we interact with those around us. Technological advances have already impacted—and will continue to affect—the field, including how psychologists practice.

As a field, we have a critical role to play in not only the use of, but also the design, evaluation, and implementation of emerging technologies. Psychologists have the skills and expertise necessary to develop and modify technologies to align with high-quality psychological science, and to evaluate and recommend technologies based on their scientific rigor and effectiveness in helping people. We can also be experts in the appropriate use of technology in clinical settings, responsibly incorporating relevant and emerging technologies into our work.

I believe embracing relevant technology—such as mobile apps addressing mental health needs, telepsychology, and electronic health records—will ensure that practicing psychologists stay in step with the most contemporary and efficient ways to improve public health.

The mobile app market, for example, has hundreds of apps designed to help users manage their mental health. Some apps are intended to help users to find peace through meditation or mindfulness exercises; others are designed to help people reduce stress or build resilience. Other apps even feature a conversational agent or therapeutic “chatbot”—a computer application programmed to generate appropriate responses—helping some individuals find relief through talking about their emotions.

But with more than 10,000 mental health apps available for download, selecting ones that are safe and effective is imperative. Psychologists are uniquely qualified to evaluate the usefulness of these apps and determine those based in strong psychological science. Different areas of the field, such as clinical psychology, human factors, and social psychology, have valuable perspectives to contribute to these efforts, which allow us to help the public navigate and understand these mental health technologies and ultimately improve their well-being.

The intersection of technology and human behavior is psychology’s domain—whether it’s shaping the ways that technologies are developed, informing standards around ethical and responsible use of technology, or addressing the clinical needs of society resulting from technological advances. By also embracing technology, utilizing it to improve how we practice and treat patients, we can maximize our impact to benefit society and improve people’s lives. •