



May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

The latest health and wellness news, tips, and updates from the Lay Benefits Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

LOOKING AHEAD...

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Helpful Tools

Find new techniques to help relieve stress, anxiety, and depression.



“Mental Health is Not a Destination, But a Process”

As most of us know, COVID-19 has disrupted more than just our everyday routines. Parishes started offering virtual and outdoor Masses, many schoolchildren adapted to online learning, making work and life balance more challenging, time with family and friends became limited, and we found ourselves spending time more isolated than usual. The pandemic has had a profound effect on the mental health of people of all ages and demographics. Those particularly at risk have been young adults, those experiencing severe changes to everyday schedules, parents and children, communities of color, and essential workers. The most common mental health concerns in the past year have been anxiety, depression, and substance abuse disorders. According to one [study](#), nearly 1 in 5 adults, over 47 million people, have reported a mental health concern, with over 56% of young adults ages 18-24 and 48.9% of adults ages 25-49 reporting symptoms of anxiety and/or depression during the pandemic. According to the [CDC](#), from August through December 2020, the number of adults who reported symptoms of anxiety or depression increased from 31.4% to 36.9% and 24.5% to 30.2%, respectively.

Not surprisingly, telehealth utilization has increased significantly since the pandemic started. In fact, Archdiocese of Boston Health Plans data collected by Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA indicates that 1,630 enrolled individuals used telehealth services in 2020, with 29% utilizing appointments for behavioral health visits. Prevalence rates for anxiety notably increased to 50% of all mental health diagnoses, with depression and high stress reported as the second and third most common diagnoses. Telehealth services helped to offset the decline of available in-person behavioral health visits, as those seeking outpatient behavioral health services increased 18% from October 2019 to September 2020.

If you have been struggling with your mental health, thoughts, or moods, you are not alone! Learn about coping strategies and how to take advantage of the RCAB Health Plans' telehealth and mental health services.

Available Resources for Mental Health Services

In-person or via telehealth, find out how to schedule a mental health appointment today.

Wellness Webinars

This month's offerings are ready to help you improve your diet, get moving, and develop mindfulness practices.

Open Enrollment Begins May 10

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) - Helpful Tools for At-Home

CBT is based on the idea that our emotions, behaviors, and thoughts are interrelated. This type of therapy can help change unhelpful, disruptive, or intrusive thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors by incorporating new strategies for coping and regulating emotions. CBT techniques vary, depending on the type of mental health concern and diagnosis. Below are some techniques to incorporate into your busy life to help you be proactive in your mental health.

- **Change Perspective:** Using the technique "cognitive restructuring," we can turn our negative thoughts into productive healing! When you're beginning to feel anxious or depressed, ask yourself: "What am I thinking or feeling that is causing me to feel this way right now?" Once you can recognize triggers that lead to these negative thoughts, you can control their impact.
- **Be Kind and Patient to Ourselves:** Change will not happen overnight, no matter how much we would like it to happen. By focusing on the positives throughout the day, creating and attaining small goals, and limiting the amount of self-criticism and negative self-talk, we can help encourage our own brains to cut us some slack for the good things happening for and around us!
- **Schedule "You" Time:** Depression in particular can cause us to lose interest in things we once enjoyed and can impact our ability to engage with others. By purposely scheduling time to do things we love, such as painting, listening to music, spending time with friends, reading, or exercising, we can help improve our wellbeing.
- **Journal:** We all have unused journals or blank notebooks that we could use to document our thoughts and feelings. Writing our thoughts, moods, or worries down can help release tension and help us identify triggers that might influence negative thoughts.



Blue Cross Blue Shield has expanded member access to online mental health programs through **Learn to Live**. The program helps members address mild to moderate mental health conditions and issues like anxiety, depression, insomnia, and substance abuse. Learn to Live is an online, self-directed program based on CBT techniques. The program offers coaching, peer-to-peer support, and is confidential. For more information about the program, please visit <https://www.learntolive.com/>. For more information about how to sign up for free, please email Kara Lavertu, Wellness and Wellbeing Manager, at klavertu@rcab.org.

If you are enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans, you can log into your MyBlue account to find in-network providers to help you on your mental health journey. After logging in, go to the My Care tab, select "Find A Doctor & Estimate Costs" and search "Licensed Mental Health Counselor" to find an in-person counselor near you.

Prefer a telehealth visit? No problem! BCBS offers telehealth therapy sessions and psychiatry services through **Well Connection**. You can choose what day, time, and provider you'd like to see without leaving home or having to wait weeks for an available appointment. Co-pays are lower for telehealth appointments than traditional, in-person services. To sign up and schedule your first appointment, please visit <https://wellconnection.com>.

The Employee Assistance Program through the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston also offers additional health and wellness resources! Visit http://catholicbenefits.org/PDF/other_benefits/eap.pdf to find out how to access the resources online through your personal portal. Some of the wellness resources available to all RCAB employees through EAPEssentials include topics on emotional well-being, grief and loss, personal growth, stress, and anger management.

Wellness Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *ahealthyme* program will earn \$20 into their HealthEquity HRA accounts for attending a wellness webinar. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year.

Create Mental Well-being with Everyday Mindfulness Practices

Wednesday, May 5th @ 4:30pm

Presented by Cheryl Jones from The Mindful Movement, you will be introduced to new wellbeing skills to reduce stress and build resilience through mindfulness. Explore easy-to-implement ways to incorporate mindful awareness into your day and feel empowered with actionable steps you can take to feel better immediately.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Detoxifying Your Diet

Monday, May 10th @ 12:15pm

Participants learn how eating and lifestyle habits directly impact the environment. Topics for discussion include information on foods and carbon footprints, what you can do to reduce environmental impact, and the benefits of organic produce and products.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Fitness Class with James Parker-Ashley

Wednesday, May 19th @ 5pm

James is back with a high energy, exhilarating step rhythm class! Come join us after work and get your body moving to some great music.

[Click Here to Access Zoom Class](#)

Please email Kayla Fuller at kfuller@rcab.org to report your attendance.

Healthy APPetite

Tuesday, May 25th, @ 4:30pm

Participants will find out more about the numerous apps and tools that claim to be the answer to your weight management and health-related goals. Attend this session to learn the best from the experts and which Apps are actually worth your time!

[Click Here to Register](#)



In Case You Missed It...

You can still view the recorded webinars from April listed below. After viewing these webinars, please self-report your viewing to Kayla Fuller, Benefits Assistant, at kfuller@rcab.org and you will earn 20 HRA dollars if you are registered in *ahealthyme* and have not yet exceeded the maximum number of wellness webinars/family activities for the current Plan Year (max of 5).

Women's Health: From Life Balance to Hormone Balance

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Depression During Challenging Times

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Financial Health: Under 50

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Metabolism Makeover w/ Anne Dwyer from Health and Harmony

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

OPEN ENROLLMENT IS HERE!

The annual Open Enrollment period for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Health and Dental Plans is Monday, May 10 to Friday, June 11, 2021. During this period, you may review your Health and Dental Plan options and make changes to your elections based on your family's needs without a qualifying life event or the need to submit supporting documentation.

During Open Enrollment, examples of election changes include, but are not limited, to the following:

- ✓ Enrolling or terminating enrollment in the Health and/or Dental Plans
- ✓ Switching to or from the Blue Cross Basic and Enhanced Plans or the *new High Deductible Health Plan*
- ✓ Changing between Individual, Family, and Individual +1 coverage
- ✓ Adding or removing a dependent

Open Enrollment packets should arrive in your mailboxes by May 10.



TIAA has new webinar options to help you take control of your money, keep financial goals on track, and plan for the future! TIAA Live Webinars are available to all employees working at locations that participate in the RCAB 401(k) Plan.

Click [here](#) to register for a TIAA Live Webinar

- 💰 **Halfway There: A Retirement Checkpoint.** How to conduct a mid-career financial checkup to evaluate your current savings, create a plan to help you achieve your savings goals and manage competing financial priorities. *Webinar Date: Tuesday, May 11 at 12 p.m. (ET)*
- 💰 **Responsible Investing: Portfolios with Purpose.** Did you know that responsible investing allows investors to align both their social and environmental principals with their financial goals? Learn the factors that make an investment socially responsible and ways for individuals to incorporate RI into their investment strategy. *Webinar Date: Wednesday, May 12 at 12 p.m. (ET)*
- 💰 **Money at Work 2: Sharpening Investment Skills.** Feel more secure in your savings strategy by verifying you're on the right track. And if you're off track, know what adjustments you need to make. Learn how to plan your investments and hold on to as much of your nest egg as possible. *Webinar Date: Wednesday, May 12 at 3 p.m. (ET)*
- 💰 **The 411 on 529 College Savings Plans.** You can learn how 529 college savings plans work and how to invest in one for a child, grandchild, yourself or other loved one. *Webinar Date: Thursday, May 13 at 12 p.m. (ET)*



On this Memorial Day (May 31, 2021), let us express our gratitude to those who have fought for and dedicated their lives to our country. We remember your sacrifice today and every day. Thank you for your service!

In good health,
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Benefits Department

 **ahealthyme**[®] Everything to live a healthier life