


new dentist news



3X
Dentists diagnosed with anxiety
has more than tripled since 2003

MENTAL WELLNESS // Page 3

NDC collaborates with
Hope for the Day

ASK THE EXPERT // Page 6

Take a holistic approach
to your practice finances

ERGONOMICS // Page 6

Prevent pain, start stretching

HEALTH // Page 8

The new dentist's guide
to pregnancy

FITNESS // Page 10

ClassPass allows
personalization of fitness
routines

The burden of burnout

DENTISTS SHARE WAYS TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD, PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH

BY MARY BETH VERSACI

Erinne Kennedy, D.M.D., likens feeling burned out to carrying a heavy emotional backpack every day.

Imagine the backpack starts at 5 pounds. Most people could manage that pretty easily. Maybe it increases to 30 pounds for a few days but then goes back to 5 pounds. That is still doable. But what if the backpack weighed 150 pounds every day?

"It would be difficult for most of us to carry that 150-pound backpack around all the time and live life well," Dr. Kennedy said.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has shaped the world for more than two years, has helped to shine a light on mental health and burnout among health care professionals, including dentists.

The American Dental Association's 2021 Dentist Health and Well-Being Survey, distributed in March 2021 to a random selection of 20,000 dentists, found 16% had experienced anxiety — more than three times the percentage reported in 2003 — and 13% had experienced depression. Fewer

Continued on Page 4

New Doctors Save Thousands!

with Oral Arts Dental
Laboratories



OralArts



Scan to create your
Oral Arts account

Oral Arts has been a leader in the dental lab industry for over 50 years, and we are ready to partner with you! Create an account with Oral Arts and receive your new doctor kit to include money-saving coupons **valued at over \$1400.**

- ✓ Full-service dental lab, all products made in the USA
- ✓ 4-5 day turnaround on the majority of products
- ✓ 7 year warranty on crown and bridge
- ✓ Free inbound shipping
- ✓ Specializing in CAD/CAM, implants, ortho, removable and fixed prosthodontics
- ✓ Accepting digital scans from all brands of intra-oral scanners

NEW DENTIST COMMITTEE COLLABORATES WITH CHICAGO-BASED NONPROFIT TO promote mental wellness

BY DAVID BURGER



Dr. Walbridge

Seth Walbridge, D.M.D., has an ever-present reminder on his arm.

"I wear my wristband daily from Hope for the Day, and it states, 'It's OK not to be OK,'" the chair of the ADA New Dentist Committee said. "I think we can all get on board with that."

Hope for the Day, a Chicago-based nonprofit movement empowering the conversation on proactive suicide prevention and mental health education, was created in 2011 by its founders to honor friends and family who had died by suicide.

Since then, the nonprofit has evolved and grown by creating educational resources and programming called Proactive Prevention, and its work is already represented in all 50 states, 26 countries and 17 different languages.

The New Dentist Committee, in collaboration with other divisions in the ADA, is working with Hope for the Day to let dentists know that help is out there.

"The New Dentist Committee is interested in collaborating with Hope for the Day in an attempt to help not only our colleagues, but our teams as

well," Dr. Walbridge said. "We want people to know that this whole stigma of needing to hide from mental health issues must be addressed now."

Christmas Bacos, director of human resources for Hope for the Day, is married to a new dentist.

Ms. Bacos likened the mind to a bottle of soda.

Experiences from all aspects of life shake the bottle and build pressure, she said. Healthy self-expression is relieving the pressure build-up without exploding, Ms. Bacos said.

"Dentists are so focused on caring for others, so we should care for them," Ms. Bacos said.

Hope for the Day was a first-time visitor to SmileCon 2021, with plans to staff a booth at SmileCon 2022 in Houston.

Meanwhile, Hope for the Day is continually working to raise the visibility of its educational information, resources and tools for early recognition and intervention for mental health crises and suicide.

From workshops to videos, Hope for the Day provides ways people can get involved and join a community of people making a difference that can be found at

[HFTD.org](https://www.hftd.org). ■



2021-2022 ADA NEW DENTIST COMMITTEE

District 1 • CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
James E. Lee, D.M.D. (VICE-CHAIR)
LeeJamesDMD@gmail.com

District 2 • NY
James Wanamaker, D.D.S.
jameswanamaker@gmail.com

District 3 • PA
Seth Walbridge, D.M.D. (CHAIR)
seth.walbridge@gmail.com

District 4 • DE, DC, FDS, MD, NJ, PR, VI
Steven G. Feldman, D.D.S.
drsgfdds@gmail.com

District 5 • AL, GA, MS
OPEN

District 6 • KY, MO, TN, WV
Sean Aiken, D.M.D.
seanaikenDMD@gmail.com

District 7 • IN, OH
Alex T. Mellion, D.M.D.
dralex@mellionortho.com

District 8 • IL
Bryce Larson, D.D.S.
bryce.alan.larson@gmail.com

District 9 • MI, WI
Gabriel B. Holdwick, D.D.S.
gabeholdwick@hotmail.com

District 10 • IA, MN, NE, ND, SD
Jarod W. Johnson, D.D.S.
jarod.w.johnson@gmail.com

District 11 • AK, ID, MT, OR, WA
Brooke Fukuoka, D.M.D.
scidsinformation@gmail.com

District 12 • AR, KS, LA, OK
Daryn Lu, D.D.S.
daryn.lu@gmail.com

District 13 • CA
Kevin Kai, D.D.S.
kevin.kai.ortho@gmail.com

District 14 • AZ, CO, HI, NV, NM, UT, WY
Kellie McGinley, D.D.S.
mcginley.kellie@gmail.com

District 15 • TX
Jonathan Vogel, D.D.S.
jonvogeldds@gmail.com

District 16 • NC, SC, VA
James Purvis, D.D.S.
downeastdds17@gmail.com

District 17 • FL
ArNelle Wright, D.M.D.
arnellewrightdmd@gmail.com

ABOUT ADA New Dentist News

WELCOME

The *ADA New Dentist News* is a quarterly supplement to the *ADA News*.

RESOURCES

- [ADA.org/newdentistnews](https://www.ada.org/newdentistnews)
- 1-800-621-8099
- newdentistnews@ada.org
- [NewDentistBlog.ADA.org](https://www.NewDentistBlog.ADA.org)

SPONSORED BY



DISCLAIMER

This publication of the American Dental Association is offered as information only and does not constitute practice, financial, accounting, legal or other professional advice. Persons need to consult with their own professional advisors for any such advice. Reference herein to any products and/or services of non-ADA resources is not to be construed as an endorsement or approval by the American Dental Association or any of its subsidiaries, councils, commissions or bureaus, or of any state or local New Dentist Committee, of that product or service. Non-ADA resource manufacturers and service providers are solely responsible for the products and/or services they provide. ADA is not responsible in any way for any representation or warranty, guarantee or any claims which may arise from the products or services. The ADA specifically disclaims any and all liability for damages arising out of the use of the services or products, including special and consequential damages, expenses, or other claims or costs.

The burden of burnout

(continued from cover)



Dr. Kennedy



Dr. Claytor

than half of dentists were aware of a state dentist well-being program available through their dental association.

“New dentists face pressures from multiple directions to produce income as associates, provide excellent care, pay off student loans, build a family or spend time with friends, volunteer and more. For new dentists, it might feel like they are wearing that 150-pound backpack and being pulled in multiple directions,” Dr. Kennedy said. “For dental students, it is overwhelming to be presented with and learn the amount of information required for dental school. And the reality is that life doesn’t stop when you are in dental school so that you can have the perfect amount of time to study.”

Dr. Kennedy experienced burnout herself during her educational journey. She found she needed to “declutter” her responsibilities and focus on what mattered most to her, a practice she still follows today as an assistant professor and director of pre-doctoral education at Kansas City University’s College of Dental Medicine. She has spoken about burnout and work-life balance as an ADA Success speaker, on the ADA’s Beyond the Mouth podcast and with student groups such as igniteDDS and the American Student Dental Association.

Bill Claytor, D.D.S.,

administrative director of the North Carolina Caring Dental Professionals, a nonprofit that helps to monitor and advocate for dentists and dental hygienists who struggle with substance use disorders, stress, depression, burnout and perfectionism, said dentists’ pursuit of perfection may make them more susceptible to burnout. He himself experienced burnout in his early 40s.

Common signs of burnout include emotional and physical exhaustion, cynicism, negativity, frustration, anger, anxiety, detachment, reduced work performance, insomnia, muscle aches and gastrointestinal upset.

Recovery from burnout begins with taking positive, constructive steps toward freedom, said Dr. Claytor, a consultant to the ADA Council on Dental Practice’s Dental Wellness Advisory

Committee, who participated in a Beyond the Mouth podcast episode on burnout. He offers the following seven steps to mitigate burnout while balancing life and work:

Step 1: Define the type of dentistry you want to practice.

Step 2: Control your schedule.

Step 3: Minimize your debt.

Step 4: Stay engaged and don’t isolate.

Step 5: Develop a collegial community.

Step 6: Take care of self and family.

Step 7: Pursue a spiritual life and gratitude.

“Remember that burnout is all about relationships between people,” Dr. Claytor said. “The causes of burnout in the office are endless. We must be proactive as dentists to instigate the changes necessary to mitigate dental office burnout. Dentists should have someone, like a colleague or mentor, with whom they can talk daily to discuss problems and ideas to mitigate the stressors

we face as dentists.

Solutions to burnout begin with engaging with others and not isolating. Recovery from burnout is a ‘we’ process.”

Having a strong support system, including family, friends, colleagues and a therapist, has helped Dr. Kennedy address burnout.

We must be proactive as dentists to instigate the changes necessary to mitigate dental office burnout.

“The key is to be constantly checking in with one another and sharing the load of life,” she said. “If you see someone on your team’s backpack at 150 pounds, ask yourself, ‘How can we divide that load among our team?’ Burnout is never one person’s challenge; it’s the team’s challenge. Check in with one another and have relational pauses. The more you understand about what gives each person on your team energy and what causes them anxiety, the more you can address challenges early on to prevent burnout.”

The ADA offers resources related to mental health and burnout at [ADA.org/wellness](https://www.ada.org/wellness).

“Dentistry is a journey, not a race,” Dr. Claytor said. “Take care of yourself daily. You and your dental career are only as good as your health and ability to deliver quality care.” ■

STUDENT LOAN REFINANCING

You could save thousands on your student loans¹

Using the link below you can get a:

- **0.25% rate discount²** to ADA members.
- **Special pricing** for dentists—receive a reduction off our already competitive rates³
- Check your preliminary rate in as little as **5 minutes.**
- **Low APRs**—no prepayment penalties, no application or origination fees

Check your rate today
[LaurelRoad.com/ADA.](https://LaurelRoad.com/ADA)

At Laurel Road, we recognize the dedication it takes to be a dentist. That's why we've created an easy online experience with low rates, personalized service, and technology that makes refinancing student debt easier – so you can focus on the future, not your past.



All credit products are subject to credit approval.

1. Savings vary based on rate and term of your existing and refinanced loan(s). Refinancing to a longer term may lower your monthly payments, but may also increase the total interest paid over the life of the loan. Refinancing to a shorter term may increase your monthly payments, but may lower the total interest paid over the life of the loan. Review your loan documentation for total cost of your refinanced loan.
2. The 0.25% ADA member interest rate discount is offered on new student loan refinance applications from active ADA members. The ADA discount is applied to your monthly payment and will be reflected in your billing statement. The discount will end if the ADA notifies Laurel Road that the borrower is no longer a member. This offer cannot be combined with other member or employee discounts.
3. The specialized rates are offered to applicants who are dentists with the following degrees: Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD), Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS). Not available to residents, fellows, or students. Not available to residents, fellows, or students.

Laurel Road is a brand of KeyBank National Association. All products offered by KeyBank N.A. Member FDIC. © 2021 KeyCorp® All Rights Reserved. Laurel Road is a federally registered service mark of KeyCorp.

Member
FDIC



Ask the Expert:

SPRING CLEANING: TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO YOUR PRACTICE FINANCES

BY VLATKA PULJIC, CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL,
BMO HARRIS BANK

Dear Vlatka: *Spring is in the air, and I'm enjoying the chance to spend more time outdoors and focus on my overall wellness. However, I waited until the last possible moment to file my taxes, and getting my documents in order was stressful, to say the least. I am spring cleaning my closets and cabinets, but what about my finances? How do I turn over a new leaf?*
— *Out with the Old, In with the New*

Dear Out with the Old: It's true that many people are making their way through spring cleaning. Beyond tidying up around your home, you can use spring as an opportunity to revisit your practice goals and priorities.

Here are some tips to help you organize your finances to achieve real progress this spring:

1. Reassess short- and long-term goals:
In this time of renewal, reflect on whether you met your financial and professional goals of the previous year, and re-evaluate what you hope to achieve in the year ahead. This is also an ideal time to determine whether you've been optimizing available resources and professional relationships and to consider whether you should adopt new technologies, services or advisers.

2. Review your budget: Revisiting your budget will ensure that it coincides with your priorities and help you identify possible areas to scale back. For example, if you want to attract new patients with some targeted marketing, you may need to find ways to cover that cost.
3. Automate it: Collecting outstanding payments can feel like a tedious back-and-forth that results in tension among multiple parties. Automating invoicing on an accounting platform will alleviate stress by providing patients with timely reminders and a standardized collection policy.
4. Toss out (some) paper: To help eliminate physical clutter in your practice, consider receiving paperless statements for your credit cards and bank accounts — and even bills. Not only is this more environmentally friendly, but electronic statements can help you track your finances more easily because your statements are all accessible in one place. Using a shredder, you can safely dispose of paper duplicates, as well as any receipts and records that aren't needed for tax purposes.

Embarking on a financial refresh may be the spark you need to establish achievable financial goals and drive your practice to the next level of success. ■

Since 2004, Ms. Puljic has worked with privately held companies to deliver innovative, industry-specific financing and cash management solutions to meet their diverse needs. As the national director of industry programs for BMO Harris Bank, she leverages her background in commercial credit underwriting and structuring to add value, foster long-lasting relationships and — above all — help dentists realize their vision for practice success.

Editor's note: This article is provided by BMO Harris Bank, the ADA Member Advantage–endorsed provider for practice financing. Call 1-833-276-6017 or visit bmoharris.com/dentists for more information.



PREVENT PAIN, start stretching

BY KIMBER SOLANA

Practicing dentistry often involves being in uncomfortable postures and performing repetitive hand motions for long periods of time. As a result, 40-60% of dental professionals suffer from work-related musculoskeletal issues, such as low back pain.

“Dental professionals tend to become so focused on their patients and their procedures often to their own detriment, placing them at risk for potential musculoskeletal disorders,” said physical therapist and ergonomics expert Timothy Caruso, a long-term volunteer on the ADA's Dental Wellness Advisory Committee. “Taking a moment throughout the day, in between patients, at lunch, before you start and after you finish your working day will help to counteract working stresses.”

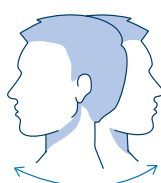
The ADA offers several ergonomics resources at ADA.org/wellness. ■

INTRO

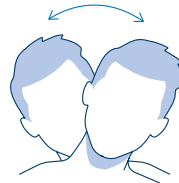
Taking regular breaks to stretch throughout the day can help prevent work-related pain and injuries.

Get more in-depth resources to help you practice at your best at [ADA.org/wellness](https://www.ada.org/wellness).

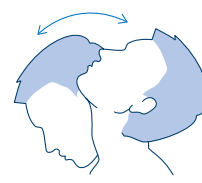
NECK



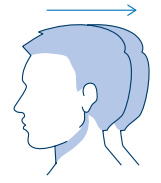
Neck Rotation



Neck Side Bends

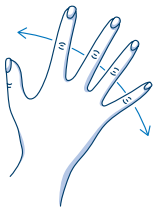


Neck Extensions

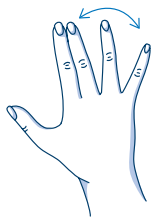


Neck Retraction

HAND / WRIST



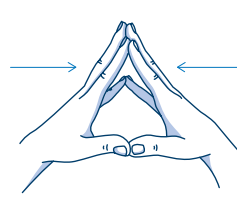
Finger Spreader



Finger Wiggle



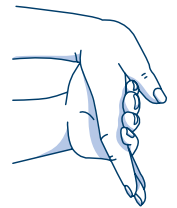
The Rubberband



Finger Prayer Stretch



Wrist Flex



Wrist Extension

TORSO



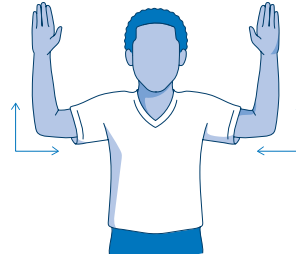
Touchdowns



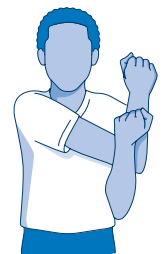
Side Bend Stretch



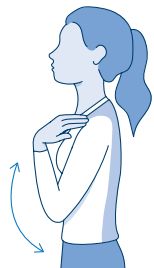
Behind Head Chest Stretch



Chest Stretch



Shoulder Stretch



Elbow Flex/Extensions



Low Back Standing Stretch



Low Back Stretch



Upper Back Stretch

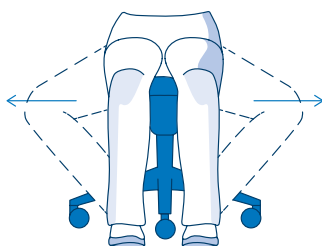


Trunk Twist/Rotation

HIP



Hip Marching



Hip Spreaders



Hip Twist



Knee Flex/Extensions



Ankle Circles

KNEE / ANKLE



Drs. Lauren Vitkus and Tim Calnon with their son, Patrick.



Dr. Harlyn Susarla with her two daughters.



Dr. Megan Currier with her husband, Ross, and their son, Vincent.

The new dentist's guide to pregnancy

BY JENNIFER GARVIN

Finding a balance while working when pregnant can be challenging — and dentistry is no exception. The New Dentist News talked to three new dentists/mothers about the challenges they faced during their pregnancies.

Planning is key

For **Lauren Vitkus, D.D.S.**, planning was key. The central New York orthodontist said getting her solo doctor office ready was just as important as setting up her nursery at home for her baby's expected July 2020 arrival. She tried to stay optimistic and took advantage of the time she received in March of that year when COVID-19 forced her to shut down her practice for a 12-week period. When the office reopened, there was a scramble of kids and adults with braces and Invisalign. She was thankful she'd have two months to get caught up before her son was due. Her baby boy had other ideas and was born almost a month early. To make things more complicated, baby Patrick needed extra time in the newborn intensive care unit.

Today, Patrick is a healthy and thriving 22-month-old. When asked for advice for her fellow dentists, she said she still thinks the best thing any expecting mother can do is to try to plan as much in advance as possible.

"Start thinking about your practice but be prepared to evolve if the plan changes because there's a lot you can't control," she said.

"There were obviously those hours where it was just, 'Oh my God, what am I going to do?' But you've got to let that go out the window because it'll figure itself out. Your patients and your team will be super understanding because of how excited they are for you!"

What to expect when expecting in dental school

Pediatric dentist **Harlyn Susarla, D.M.D.**, started her journey to work-life balance during her fourth year of dental school, when her first daughter was born.

"My pregnancy was pretty uneventful up until the end when I learned that I would need to be induced a month early due to a diagnosis of intra-uterine growth restriction," said Dr. Susarla. "I had to go back and talk to the school to coordinate."

She was grateful she had the support of her peers and faculty.

"I'm lucky in that I wasn't the sole practitioner where if something had happened or I had to miss a day, coverage would be difficult," said Dr. Susarla, who had her second daughter during her residency.

When asked what advice she had for dental students or new dentists just beginning to navigate a pregnancy, she urged them to set realistic expectations and to lean on their support systems.

"I'm fortunate that I have a very supportive spouse and family," she said. "As a mother of two girls, it's been really important to show them that your career doesn't have to be put on hold if you want to have children — the trajectory may change, but it doesn't need to stop."

'A blessing'

Megan Currier, D.D.S., always knew she wanted to own her own dental practice. Her dream came true in 2018. An even bigger dream came true in August 2020, when she and her husband became parents to son Vincent.

But while becoming a mother was something she cherished, the physical demands of pregnancy were something else. Extreme nausea. Vomiting. Back pain.

"We tried for a long time to have kids and it was such a surprise for me that my body wasn't able to be strong and do the things I wanted it to do," she said.

Prayer, meditation and a little yoga helped her get through it. She also received chiropractic care and massages. She's planning something similar for baby No. 2, due later this year.

When asked about advice for other dentists who are new moms, Dr. Currier said, "Embrace the chaos."

"It may feel like you're being torn in too many directions, but that's just proof that life is happening. Prioritize what's most important to you and let the rest fall away or delegate. You don't need to have control over every function in your office. Trust your team." ■

The New Dentist News asked three dentists:

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT BEING A NEW DENTIST, AND HOW HAVE YOU ADDRESSED THESE HURDLES?

Alex Barrera, D.D.S., general dentist, Houston

"Upon graduating dental school, I felt confident and able in my actual skills and knowledge about dentistry and how to treat patients but experienced some challenges when it came to practice management and financial planning. Things like managing staff and setting patient expectations was something new to me that took some time to learn. I was also very intimidated when it came to things like choosing the right disability and malpractice insurances and also had no idea how to begin paying off my student loans or planning ahead for retirement. I would have been lost without the incredible mentors I've connected with through different organized dentistry groups. I would encourage all new dentists to find an organization that you're passionate about and make the effort to connect to a few seasoned dentists that you trust and feel connected to."



Dr. Barrera

Alysia M. Mascolo, D.D.S., general dentist, Dublin, California

"The most challenging thing about being a new dentist is not knowing what I do not know! Whether that be newer dental techniques, patient management or business practices — there is so much more out there than I anticipated. I've been trying to address those hurdles by racking up experience, taking as much continuing education as possible and listening with an open ear to my mentors in the field. I am hoping to stay humble through this process of 'practicing dentistry' and that it grows me into a lifelong learner."



Dr. Mascolo

Brenda Shah, D.D.S., general dentist, Baltimore

"The hardest part of being a new dentist for me is that I am not only new to dentistry, but also new to all the things that we can put under the umbrella of 'adulting.' Finding and applying for associateship, understanding disability and malpractice insurance, figuring out health insurance and retirement planning, getting credentialed with insurance ... All this happens concurrently with the process of figuring out what dental materials I like to use, how to use dental technology and practice management software, and how I want to practice dentistry with my team. Finding key mentors through the Maryland State Dental Association and ADA has been crucial to my development as a new dentist because I am able to call up any of these dentists with my clinical and nonclinical questions at any time." ■



Dr. Shah



ClassPass allows personalization of fitness routines

SERVICE PROVIDES ACCESS TO STUDIOS, GYMS, OFFERINGS IN OVER 2,500 CITIES

BY DAVID BURGER

Jared Ricks, D.D.S., likes variety. He doesn't like committing to just one gym or one class.

So he doesn't.

"I'm not a person who wants to do yoga three times a week," the pediatric dental resident said.

That's what makes the San Diego pediatric dental resident a member of ClassPass, a monthly subscription service that provides access to tens of thousands of different boutique studios, gyms and wellness offerings in over 2,500 cities worldwide.

In 2021, ADA Member Advantage announced it endorsed ClassPass, which allows Association members free access to over 4,000 hours of on-demand audio and video workouts. The endorsement also allows ADA members to receive 10% off in-person class packages.

"I signed up last September and have done a lot of classes," said Dr. Ricks. "Mostly yoga, but I didn't want to limit myself. A lot of the co-residents in my pediatric program and I have been using the program. It's a social thing for us and a good workout. It kills two birds with one stone."

Kayla Yip, D.M.D., a resident at the University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry, is another new dentist who is taking advantage of her ADA member discount for ClassPass.

"I love it," she said. "It's awesome to try new classes and new instructors without getting locked into anything. I've even been able to use my ClassPass credits when travelling to visit my brother in Texas. I'll explore the area and try new things for the first time."

Last year, Dr. Yip tore her Achilles tendon and used her ClassPass credits for massage therapy.

According to data from ADA Member Advantage, ADA members' most frequently attended classes were strength training, yoga, cycling, Pilates and boxing, in that order. In a survey conducted by ADA Member Advantage, the program received an overall score of 4.5 out of 5 stars among dentists who had signed up to use the offerings.

ClassPass credits allow a member to book at thousands of studios, gyms, salons and spas, using them however they like in order to create a personalized fitness and wellness routine. Credits can be used to book a class or appointment. The amount of credits needed to book varies by reservation type, location, popularity and time.

Dr. Ricks, for example, uses his credits twice a week for a yoga class and a cycling session at different studios as part of his ClassPass membership. Dr. Yip likes the group fitness classes.

To get started, visit [ADA.org/ClassPass](https://www.ada.org/ClassPass) and sign up using company code **ADA2021**. ■



Dr. Ricks



Dr. Yip

Available ADA Member plans include:

\$0 PER MONTH	\$17 PER MONTH	\$41 PER MONTH	\$77 PER MONTH
FREE DIGITAL PROGRAMS	10 CREDITS	25 CREDITS	50 CREDITS

‘Nothing wrong with getting help’

NEW DENTIST SHARES EXPERIENCE, ADVICE ON MANAGING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION

BY KIMBER SOLANA

Muscatine, Iowa — Anxiety and depression are no strangers to Jarod Johnson, D.D.S.

“I’ve managed those issues before in my life,” he said.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic began, they came creeping back.

“Adapting to practicing in this new environment has been tough on me, the staff and patients,” said Dr. Johnson, who owns a pediatric practice. “I started to not enjoy being both at work and being at home with my family.”

Then one day, while inspecting a young patient’s mouth, he realized his hands were uncontrollably shaking.

“I knew at that point I needed to get some help,” Dr. Johnson said.

“I went back to my office and immediately made a call.”

According to the ADA’s newly released 2021 Dentist Health and Well-Being Survey Report, the percent of dentists diagnosed with anxiety more than tripled — from 5% to 16% — in 2021 compared to 2003, exacerbated by pandemic-related burdens to dentists and staff members. The report also found dentists younger than 40 years old were more likely to score higher on the depression risk assessment questions than older dentists.

Dr. Johnson’s phone call was to schedule an appointment to see a psychiatrist, who ultimately recommended for him to start taking medication — an antidepressant and a beta blocker — and to begin seeing a therapist.

“There was instant relief from knowing that I was getting the help I needed,” he said. “It took a few more months to start feeling like my old self.”

Anxiety and depression are very common, and there’s nothing wrong with getting help.

Through therapy, Dr. Johnson was able to understand the environmental triggers and causes of his anxiety and depression, which all pointed to the pandemic.

“We’ve had some staffing issues that have been very difficult to manage,” he said. “Some parents of my patients have not been the kindest in the way they treat me. It was a variety of things that ultimately just took its toll.”

Dr. Johnson said he encourages other dentists, especially those experiencing elevated stresses at work and at home, to seek mental health support.

“I just don’t want anyone else to go through what I went through,” he said. “Anxiety and depression are very common, and there’s nothing wrong with getting help.”

And getting that help, he said, is as easy as

picking up your phone and downloading any of the online counseling apps, such as Doctor on Demand and Talkspace. The ADA Council on Dental Practice also offers the State Well-Being Program Directory, which provides peer assistance with dentists available to help each other with personal challenges.

Based on his experience, Dr. Johnson added that he would recommend others to reach out first to a psychiatrist, who can make tailored recommendations. Some may only recommend therapy or, like him, a combination of therapy and medication.

“Today, I feel great,” he said. “I love going to work. I love spending time with my wife and kids. It’s the happiest that I’ve been.” ■



Dr. Johnson



Save thousands
on your practice
purchase or remodel.¹

ADA members
receive preferred
loan pricing.²

Our 0.5% rate discount for ADA members could save you over \$12,000 on a \$400,000 10-year fixed-rate loan, depending on your interest rate and loan term.^{2,3} Our bankers make it easy to secure financing to:



Purchase a practice or commercial real estate.



Add operatories, update equipment and renovate your office.



Reduce your overall interest expense by consolidating and refinancing existing loans.

For practice financing tips, articles and loan calculators, visit bmo.com/dentists.



Let's connect

Speak directly with a dental financing specialist today.

833-276-6017

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. -5 p.m. CT

Set up an appointment that works with your schedule.

practice.health@bmo.com

BMO  **Harris Bank**

We're here to help.™

ADA
Member Advantage™
✓RESEARCHED ✓PROVEN ✓ENDORSED

¹ The amount of any potential savings will depend on interest rate offered to you, the term of the loan, and how quickly you pay off your loan. Variable rate loans are subject to rate fluctuations over the term of the loan.

² 0.5% rate reduction applies to aggregate loans and guarantees up to \$1,000,000; relationships over \$1,000,000 receive custom pricing. Contact a BMO Harris Banker for details.

³ This example is for illustrative purposes only and is based on a hypothetical fixed interest rate of 6.89% discounted to 6.39% applying the 0.5% ADA member discount fully amortized over a 10-year period which would result in a total savings of \$12,451.20. This example assumes payments are made as scheduled for the term of the loan and interest is computed on a 365/360 basis. The interest rate we offer to you may vary from the example rate used here based on your credit qualifications, loan characteristics, market conditions, and other criteria at the time of the offer. Example rate shown is as of January 3, 2022, and rates are subject to change without notice. Contact a BMO Harris Banker for current rates and more details.

Banking products are subject to approval. BMO Harris Bank N.A. Member FDIC.