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## Look to Your ADA, MDA for Health, and Wellness Help

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By Michelle C. Dziurgot, DDS  
Editor-in-chief

# Look to Your ADA, MDA for Health and Wellness Help

**T**here is so much anguish and sadness in the world today. It is difficult for some to get a good night's rest, wake up, and greet the day. Why? What has happened

to make mankind so depressed? Why do things seem so difficult these days?

And, how about your well-being? Are you a happy dentist who jumps out of bed and cannot wait to huddle with your team and start the day? Do you still enjoy your workdays, maintaining and restoring smiles to your patients? Or do you dread driving to your office? When discussing the patients on your schedule, do you sometimes just want to crawl into a hole?

The ADA and MDA understand the pressures dentists face. Both offer programs for members that can provide real assistance — even help prevent suicide. In a 2021 Dentist Health and Well-being Survey, 54% of dentists checked both the medium and high levels of depression boxes. If you are experiencing depression, or think you are, how can you help yourself? Do not ignore these feelings. Talk to someone — your significant other, your parents or in-laws, your tried-and-true friends and colleagues, or a wellness professional.

The ADA on its website has a guide indicating signs and symptoms of depression. According to that guide, a person may be depressed if he or she:

- Does not seem to care about anything anymore.
- Is uncharacteristically sad, irritable, short-tempered, critical, or moody.
- Has lost interest in work, hobbies, and other pleasurable activities.
- Talks about feeling “helpless” or “hopeless.”
- Expresses a negative outlook on life.
- Frequently complains of aches and pains, such as headaches, stomach problems, and back pain.
- Complains of feeling tired and drained all the time.
- Has withdrawn from friends, family, and other social activities.
- Sleeps less than usual or oversleeps.
- Eats more or less than usual, and has recently

gained or lost weight.

- Has become indecisive, forgetful, or disorganized.
- Drinks more or abuses drugs, including prescription medications.

You can contact the ADA Health and Wellness Program any time confidentially through email at [dentalpractice@ada.org](mailto:dentalpractice@ada.org). More resources from the ADA can be seen on the opposite page. They are there for you. Visit [ada.org/resources/practice/wellness](http://ada.org/resources/practice/wellness) for additional wellness information and next steps.

Likewise, the MDA offers its own wellness services. The MDA Member Assistance Program offers member dentists access to free, confidential short-term counseling by licensed master's-level counselors. This program is available to you and your immediate family members and was detailed in our February issue of the *Journal*. You can access up to four individual or family counseling sessions. The MDA Member Assistance Program can help with mental health counseling, family conflict, relationships, substance abuse, anxiety, and depression. Work-life resources include adoption, elder/adult care, parenting, child care, special needs support, and wellness.

More information on the Member Assistance Program is available at [michigandental.org/Assistance](http://michigandental.org/Assistance). Other MDA and ADA wellness resources can be found at [michigandental.org/Well-Being](http://michigandental.org/Well-Being). You can email [care@michigandental.org](mailto:care@michigandental.org) or call 517-643-4171 for additional information.

Mental and emotional issues are increasingly being recognized as a true health concern. You should never be ashamed of feelings of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness. Instead, realize that help is available. The stress of the pandemic and its after-effects continues. People are burned out, stressed, and sometimes just overwhelmed.

If you need support, please take advantage of what your ADA and MDA have to offer. ●

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*What do you think? Contact Editor Dziurgot at [mdziurgot@michigandental.org](mailto:mdziurgot@michigandental.org).*