

June
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NEWSLETTER OF THE
CITY OF TACOMA

HealthVine



Mental Health Awareness

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Considering this, our mental state has the potential to impact all areas of our livelihood. By failing to take care of one’s mental health — physical health, social connections, and emotional/psychological wellness are at risk, too.

According to a recent survey, 45% of individuals with a clinical-level mental problem in the United States do not seek professional help. The top reasons cited among these individuals was the preference for self-help and fear of stigmatization in a face-to-face setting.



The fact that digital-first approach is appealing to many shouldn’t be surprising considering the technological and mobile advances over the past several years. Today, the average American checks their phone 96 times a day, a figure that has more than doubled in the last 5 years. So while nothing can replace clinical-led care in situations where it’s warranted, it’s understandable why a society that lives behind their smartphone might feel intimidated or anxious about working with a provider in a face-to-face setting.

Source: [Koa Health](#)

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

City of Tacoma Mental Health Resources

First Choice Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP): The EAP benefit provides cost-free, convenient, and confidential consultation and work life resources to help manage life’s challenges. The EAP is available 24/7, 365 days a year by phone or their website.

- [24/7 Telehealth Flyer](#)
- [Work-Life Balance Resources and Consultation Flyer](#)

Kaiser Permanente of WA (KPWA): Kaiser Permanente has broad range of self-care resources — tools, tips, activities, and articles — designed to help you thrive in mind, body, and spirit. Kaiser Permanente members also have access to digital tools like myStrength and Calm, which provide mental wellness and mindfulness resources, at no additional cost. Additionally, Telehealth through KPWA is available at 0%.

- [Self Care Promotional Flyer – CALM](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellness](#)
- [Healthy Resources Guide](#)

Regence Blue Shield:

- [Quartet](#) matches Regence members to outpatient mental health resources based on the member’s unique mental health needs and preferences, such as the gender, race, religious affiliation, and/or language of the mental health provider. Quartet’s SmartMatch algorithm and Care Navigation team match members to in-person and telehealth outpatient mental health providers who are in-network, have availability, and offer an array of mental health services including (but not limited to) work-related stress, PTSD, trauma, depression, serious illness, etc. to individuals over broad industries.
- [MDLive](#) is a Telehealth benefit that offers virtual mental health services to members. This benefit allows access to board-certified doctors, pediatricians, and licensed therapists via online video, phone, or mobile app for behavioral health and primary care 24/7, 365 days a year.

... Continued on Page 2



City of Tacoma Mental Health Resources, Cont.

Page 1 offered a snapshot of the City of Tacoma mental health resources, but one of the best ways to learn more about ALL of the resources available for you and your family members is to watch the [Mental Health & Mindfulness Webinar](#). As a bonus, you can earn 250 points towards your wellness incentive for watching the webinar, if you submit a [smart form](#).

Did you Know? Regence and Kaiser Permanente of Washington offer programs that allow you to get discounted gym memberships. [Learn more!](#)

Self-Care Practice Tips

Start a compliments file: Document the great things people say about you to read later.

Scratch off a “lurker” on your to-do list: Complete something that has been there for a while and you may never do.

Do some coloring for about 20 minutes to help you clear your mind and reduce anxiety. Pick a design that's geometric and a little complicated for the best effect. Check out hundreds of free printable coloring pages [here](#).

Take time to laugh. Hang out with a funny friend, watch a comedy or check out cute videos online. Laughter helps reduce anxiety.

Unplug. Switch everything to airplane mode or leave your smart phone at home for a day and disconnect from constant emails, alerts, and other interruptions.

Take another route to work. Mixing up your routine in small ways creates new neural pathways in the brain to keep it healthy.

Go ahead and yawn. Studies suggest that yawning helps cool the brain and improves alertness and mental efficiency.

Fix a small annoyance at home that's been nagging you. This could be a drawer that is stuck, the refrigerator filter that needs to be replaced, or donate a few items of clothing that you no longer wear.

Be selfish. Do one thing because it makes you happy every day.



Spend some time with a furry friend. Time with animals lowers the stress hormone - cortisol, and boosts oxytocin - which stimulates feelings of happiness. If you don't have a pet, hang out with a friend who does or volunteer at a shelter.

Take time to meditate. Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations by taking this [midday energy break](#).

Treat yourself to dark chocolate. The flavanoids, caffeine, and theobromine in chocolate are thought to work together to improve alertness and mental skills.

Anytime you are commuting do a “Beauty Scavenger Hunt”. Find five unexpected beautiful things on your way to your destination.

Help someone. Carry a bag, open a door, or pick something up for your neighbor or friend.

Reflect on your emotions. Write down anything (without judgement) that you are feeling and/or is bothering you.

Plan a date with yourself. Spend some quality time doing something that nourishes you, such as reading, exercising, a hobby, or visiting a local museum or gallery.

Take a quick nap. Ten to twenty minutes can reduce your sleep debt and leave you ready for action.


**Sources: [Tiny Buddha](#) and [Mental health America](#)*

Tacoma Employee Wellness Survey is Coming Soon!

Our work dynamics and wellbeing platform have notably changed since we had our last survey in 2018. Specifically, many employees have adopted telework schedules and we transitioned from the RedBrick Health Portal to a more robust wellbeing platform, Virgin Pulse. So, it is important that we re-evaluate our Tacoma Employee Wellness Program and collect feedback to ensure that we continue to support your health and wellbeing efforts and needs.

We encourage you to participate in this survey whether you participate in the Virgin Pulse Wellbeing Platform or not. All feedback is important as we continue to grow and improve our Tacoma Employee Wellness program.

Please watch for an email from wellness@cityoftacoma.org in mid-June to participate in this short and anonymous survey!





Four Great Ways to Clean Up Your Life and Boost Wellbeing

As the weather warms, we throw open our windows and feel inspired to freshen up our homes. Traditional spring cleaning might include clearing out cluttered closets and vacuuming under the heavy furniture.

But, like many people, you may be reluctant to devote time and energy to this mighty endeavor. Or, in this modern age of us always being on the go, the accumulation of dust bunnies may never even hit your radar.

So, let's forget about the dust bunnies under your bed because there is a far more insidious mess that warrants your attention: Let's call them "must bunnies." Must bunnies dwell in your mind where they generate stressful thoughts, bothersome compulsions, and irrelevant must-do lists full of should's, such as "I should wake up earlier, or "I should help out," or "I should spend time with them," or "I should get over it."

Must bunnies wreak havoc because they impose unnecessary obligations, meaningless distractions, and unrealistic expectations that interfere with your awareness of your authentic self, what you truly want, and how you truly feel. Separated from your true potential, priorities, and feelings, you may feel anxious, overwhelmed, or even depressed. For a new type of spring cleaning, try minimizing the must bunnies, so you can free your mind, cultivate calm, boost your wellbeing, and live your best life.

Rumination Must Bunnies

Rumination means deep and careful thought. In particular, you may ruminate on what happened in the past to make sense of it or extract the lessons. And you may ruminate on what might happen in the future, weigh the options, or make plans. But when rumination is obsessive and stressing about the past (If only I'd done it differently; I should've known better), or worrying about the future (I'm going to fail; I should do more; I'll be all alone), your sense of self-worth and wellbeing falters.

Practice bringing your awareness to the present moment to clear out those must bunnies. Turn your attention to what you see with your eyes, or hear with your ears or your breath. You can observe colors and light, the sounds of music, traffic, or people, or the sensations of your breathing, in and out. Your attention may wander, but you strengthen your ability as you keep bringing it back to the present moment. How does this cast out the must bunnies? When

you mindfully bring your awareness into the present moment, neither the past nor the future matter. Your mind calms and accepts that you can't change what has happened nor predict what will happen. Then, instead of ruminating on what-ifs and shoulds, you can cultivate self-compassion for your mistakes, focus on what you truly want right now, and wonder what will happen next with a curious mindset. This practice cultivates a calm mind and a centered life.

Digital Must Bunnies

Digital intake of news, information, and social media can add to one's life, but for many people, it overtakes life. Yes, world events, updating knowledge, and scanning posts by friends and favorite celebrities can be compelling, but mindfully notice, "How involved am I in living my own life?" With a mostly outward focus, you may feel informed and in the loop, but these "must-dos" and lack of inward focus lead to losing touch with yourself, what you experience, and what you want.

To experiment with this, try going on a run, walk, hike, or bike ride without earbuds, and notice where your mind wanders. As Socrates observed, "The unexamined life is not worth living." And if you're feeling bored or anxious unless you're plugged in, perhaps you've fallen into a modern twist on this truism: "The unlived life is not worth examining." Unplug so you can calm your brain and free your mind to reconnect with yourself. Your life is waiting for you, and it'll be as interesting as you make it.

Social Must Bunnies

Having a vibrant social life is important, but when social "must do's" are wearing you out or keeping you from your priorities, it's time to tidy up. This entails reducing the amount of time you spend with people you don't really care about or people you find draining. Then you can increase the amount of time you spend, preferably face-to-face, with people you enjoy, who fill you up and energize you. You can also carve out more alone time, letting your mind wander or pursue what fulfills you

Time Sink Must Bunnies

We all have responsibilities that need tending. And a key responsibility is to unload the "shoulds" that waste your time or energy and keep you from meeting the responsibilities that really matter and doing what you really want to be doing. Now, you may worry that if you only do what you want, you'll stay in bed and eat chocolate for the rest of your life.

And if that's what you truly desire, go for it. But after a time, maybe even a couple of minutes (or maybe a whole weekend), even this indulgence gets tiresome. And actually, doing what you want includes doing what's necessary to live your best life, which, yes, means you actually want to do the laundry, file your taxes, walk the dog, and meet important deadlines. That's because meeting these responsibilities holds intrinsic rewards you value

By Deborah L. Davis Ph.D, [First Choice Health EAP](#)



Spring Clean Your Diet

Seasonal food is fresher, tastier and more nutritious than food consumed out of season.

Purchasing locally grown foods helps support local farms and maintains farmland and open space in your community. It also helps to support the local economy. The money you spend on products from local farmers and growers stays in the community and is reinvested with other local businesses. Below are some in-season, local produce that you should try to incorporate into your meal planning this summer!

Arugula: Arugula has many antioxidants, which can protect against or reverse damage to your cells. Arugula also has glucosinolates. These natural substances, which give arugula its bitter taste and strong scent, may protect you against certain cancers, including breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancers. Arugula may also fight inflammation. It has ample vitamin K, which is good for your bones and may help prevent osteoporosis.

Asparagus: Low in fat and high in fiber, these tender stalks are a good source of iron, B vitamins, and vitamin C. Asparagus are at their peak from March through June but can be purchased year-round. Once harvested, asparagus deteriorate rapidly, so place them in cool storage to retain freshness and nutrition.

Beets: Beetroots are a great source of fiber, folate (vitamin B9), manganese, potassium, iron, and vitamin C. Beetroots and beetroot juice have been associated with numerous health benefits, including improved blood flow, lower blood pressure, and increased exercise performance.

Cherries: Cherries are low in calories and provide vitamins C, A, and K. They also deliver fiber, potassium, magnesium, calcium, beta-carotene (an antioxidant), and the essential nutrient choline.

Eggplant: Eggplant has antioxidants like vitamins A and C, which help protect your cells against damage. It's also high in natural plant chemicals called polyphenols, which may help cells do a better job of processing sugar if you have diabetes.



Fava beans: Fava beans are a tasty and nutritious addition to soups, salads, or main dishes. They are a good source of vitamin B1, copper, iron, magnesium, phosphorous, and potassium. They are an excellent source of fiber, folate and manganese.

Raspberries: Raspberries pack a lot of nutrition into a small space. They provide potassium, essential to heart function, and proven to lower blood pressure. The omega-3 fatty acids in raspberries can help prevent stroke and heart disease. They also contain a mineral called manganese, which is necessary for healthy bones and skin and helps regulate blood sugar.

Radishes: A root vegetable that is delicious raw, but it can be a flavorful addition to soups, condiments, and cooked dishes as well. You can also eat the green tops, which lends a peppery taste to salads. One cup of sliced red radishes provides 30% of your daily vitamin C requirement in less than 25 calories.

Rhubarb: Although technically a vegetable, rhubarb is often used as a fruit and is a good source of vitamin C, potassium, and manganese. Rhubarb stalks (the only part of the plant that should be eaten) are very tart but when sweetened, give rich flavor and texture to sauces and pies. Rhubarb can also be blanched, diced, and added to salsas and salads.

Sprouts: While the specific ratio of nutrients varies depending on the type of sprout, they generally contain high levels of folate, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamin K.

Zucchini: Zucchini is packed with fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which can help prevent oxidative stress and help regulate blood glucose.

Employee Testimonial

**Magreta Felt, Business Services Analyst,
Environmental Services**

I wanted to share with you that I am very happy we have the Virgin Pulse program — the discount provided on my monthly premium is such a great benefit! The goals are achievable and the information is very informative and relevant.

2024 Wellness Incentive Period (Ends Sept. 30, 2023)

There are a variety of different ways for you to [earn points](#) in [Virgin Pulse](#) (VP), but below are some recommendations to help get you to the finish line (**25,000 points**).

Journeys: You can complete up to 12 Journeys each program year. Additionally, you can earn 30 points for one step per day. We recommend that you only participate in one to two Journeys at a time to ensure that you are maximizing the experience and available points.

My Care Checklist: In addition to getting your [annual physical](#) (2,500 points), you can also earn 500 points if you complete three preventive care activities, including (but not limited to) eye exams, dental check-ups, flu shots, mammograms, prostate exams, colon screenings, etc.

Personal Challenges: One of the great features of VP is being able to create your own personal challenge(s) and to invite family and friends to join you along with you (if you'd like). A personal challenge is worth 150 points.

Shout Outs: You can earn points for giving and/or receiving a shout out (100 points each) once a month.

Sleep: Whether you manually track or wear a device to track your sleep, you can earn at least 2,900 points a month for tracking 7+ hours of sleep daily.

(NEW) Voucher Option: Earn voucher points for participating in a community physical activity-related event during the program year (10/1/22—9/30/23).

- You can receive **up to six vouchers** throughout the program year for participating in a 5k—9.99k and/or 10k+ event for 200 and 400 points each, respectively.
- Email wellness@cityoftacoma.org to share proof of participation in a community physical activity-related event and then you will be emailed a unique voucher code that you will redeem on [Virgin Pulse](#) under 'Rewards'.
- Don't forget that you can also earn points for the physical activity exerted during these events!

Setting Your Interests: These interests drive the content provided on the Daily Cards that you complete each day and personalize your experiences in the platform. As a bonus, you can earn 100 points each quarter for modifying your wellbeing topics of interest.

Daily Cards: Daily Cards show you personalized content based on the interests you selected on your Virgin Pulse account. You'll get two new cards each day with new content. Since Daily Cards are unique each day, you will not be able to complete the Daily Cards for previous days. Here is how your points can add up by viewing this personalized content:

- Read two daily cards (20 points each; 40 point daily total)
- Complete 10 daily cards in a month (100 points)
- Complete 20 daily cards in a month (200 points)

Example: If you read two cards every day in July (31 days), you can earn up to 1,540 points for the month. This takes you less than a minute to do each day!

If you are seeing cards that you'd rather not see, get rid of them by clicking 'reminder' and select 'never'; you will no longer see that card each day.

Health Check: This is a 10-minute survey that helps guide your recommendations in the Virgin Pulse platform. Completion of this survey is worth 2,500 points.

Healthy Habits: You can track three healthy habits per day for a total 30 points (10 points each). You can also earn bonus points for tracking 10+ days a month.

Example: If you track three healthy habits every day in July (31 days), you can earn up to 1,430 points for the month. This takes you less than a minute to do each day!

UPCOMING EVENTS*

| Date | Event | Location |
|---------|--|----------------|
| 6/10/23 | Sound to Narrows | Tacoma, WA |
| 6/10/23 | Evergreen Half Marathon & 5 Mile | Snohomish, WA |
| 6/11/23 | Light @ the End of the Tunnel Marathon | North Bend, WA |
| 6/17/23 | Seattle Solstice Run (5—15K and Kids dash) | Seattle, WA |
| 6/17/23 | Super Fast Half | Snoqualmie, WA |
| 6/17/23 | Super Marathon | Snoqualmie, WA |
| 6/17/23 | Gravel Unravel: Bon Jon Pass Out | Quilcene, WA |
| 6/17/23 | Millersylvania Trail Races | Olympia, WA |
| 6/18/23 | Orenda Wine Run 5k | Carnation, WA |
| 6/24/23 | Snoqualmie Valley Half | Carnation, WA |
| 6/24/23 | Tiger Peak Challenge | Issaquah, WA |
| 6/25/23 | Defeat Myeloma | Seattle, WA |
| 6/25/23 | Here & Now Project 5k for Today | Puyallup, WA |

Find many more races in or around Tacoma [here](#).

*The City of Tacoma is not sponsoring nor contracting with any of these events. The list provided is a summary of events happening within 50 miles of Tacoma.