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Healthcare Marketer's

Exchange

"Where Healthcare Marketers Connect"

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MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



Craig A. DeLarge, MBA, MPH, CPC
The Digital Mental Health Project

Kathryn Distler
Initiative

Peggy Dougherty Marcus
HBA Co-Founder

Terry Nugent
Terryfic Writing Agency

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Brandon Staglin
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* Compared to total users
[†] Source: M3 MI, 2023 M/S Cubed

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Dear Healthcare Marketer,

This issue is devoted to mental health, a topic that has never been more important, especially with the rollercoaster times we are experiencing. Mental health often gets overlooked in the hustle and bustle of daily life, but it is essential to our overall well-being.

Years ago, my best friend gave me a book called *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* by Dale Carnegie. This book recently popped up on my Facebook feed – the timing was perfect. I've been too consumed by the constant barrage of news, and it's definitely taking a toll on my mental health. I stress over things that are completely out of my control. I need to refocus. So, I decided to purchase this book again and revisit its timeless lessons on managing stress and anxiety.

I'm also at an age where people around me are facing illness. In some heartbreaking cases, they have passed away. This is a stark reminder of how precious and fleeting life is. It's led to being more determined to tick off some items on my bucket list sooner rather than later. And I've taken a deep look at how I can better manage my stress, especially in areas like my sleep habits.

I know I'm not alone in feeling this way, particularly during this time of year when the weather is cold and dreary. The lack of sunlight definitely affects my mood – it's harder to stay positive when everything is so gray. We know seasonal changes can have a significant impact on our mental health. So, it's a reminder to prioritize self-care, especially as it relates to our everyday emotional well-being. Taking time for ourselves, getting professional help when we need it, and creating healthy habits can make a world of difference.

One thing I'm very grateful for these days is that there is much more honesty about many of our mental health struggles. We don't have to feel alone. This issue is proof of that. I'm thankful to everyone who participated, including **Brandon Staglin** (One Mind) who shares his journey with schizophrenia and how this led to One Mind, a nonprofit dedicated to developing innovative and better mental health support. **Craig A. DeLarge**, MBA, MPH, CPC (The Digital Mental Health Project), provides a mental health primer on how to effectively use the many digital tools available. **Jeremy Vannatta** (AbelsonTaylor Group) tells of his personal journey navigating mental health in the wake of losing his wife, along with the support and initiatives AbelsonTaylor Group offers. In the Work from Home (WFH) era, **Kathryn Distler** (Initiative) found a way to combat isolation by creating connection and community through a local nonprofit and utilizing the support Initiative offers.

Pickleball anyone? **Leo Tyska, Jr.** (BioPharm Communications), makes a solid argument for taking up this fun, trending game (and similar activities) for both better physical and mental health. **Peggy Dougherty Marcus** (Retired and HBA Co-Founder) has had quite a wild ride through AFIB over the past several months that has taught her a lot...and she's sharing in hopes of helping others. **Terry Nugent** (Terryfic Writing Agency) takes the lessons he's learned from personal experience and provides steps to take when dealing with depression. And, thanks to **Angelique Ricci** (CheckedUp) for opening up her life in this month's *Personal Exchange*.

If you're feeling like me – stressed, overwhelmed, or just not quite yourself – remember, it's okay to take a step back, slow down, and care for yourself. We can't pour from an empty cup. Caring for our minds is just as important as caring for our bodies.

*Take good care of you,**Nancy***PARTICIPATE IN ONE OF OUR UPCOMING ISSUES!****Digital Trends****Just Tell Us In A Few Paragraphs About One Or More:**

- Favorite binge-worthy series, movie, or documentary on Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, YouTube, etc.
- Apps that make your life easier and how
- Online groups you belong to – health, hobbies, book groups
- AI advances and use, personally and professionally
- Favorite websites and podcasts and why
- Tech gadgets, zoom bloopers, social media connections and experiences

**Humanitarian Recognition****What are you, your colleague(s), or your company doing to make a meaningful impact in your community and beyond?**

Tell us about initiatives you or your company are involved in to create positive change in the world.

- Environmental Sustainability
- Charitable Efforts
- Engagement With Armed Forces
- Personal Volunteer Experiences

**Winner chosen by a random drawing of all participants.**Send your submissions to Nancy at NALeonard@HMEExchange.com or call 973-420-1192 to discuss.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONWARD & UPWARD

promotions • additions

AbbVie has announced the appointments of **Michael Gautsch** as Director, International Marketing and Commercial Operations – Cross Dermatology Lead, and **Molly James-Lundak** as Head of Pipeline and External Innovation Communications. **Molly** can be reached at molly.james_lundak@abbvie.com.

Aro Biotherapeutics has announced the appointment of **Glenn D. Crater, MD**, as Chief Medical Officer.

AstraZeneca has announced the appointment of **Ryan Goldfarb** as Institutional Marketing Director and **Greg D'Antonio** as Marketing Director, Vaccines and Immune Therapies. **Greg** can be reached at gdanto27@gmail.com.

Avalere Health has announced the appointments of **Rodney Sexton** as Chief Strategy Officer and **Mark Timko** as Senior Account Director. They can be reached at Rodney.sexton@avalerehealth.com and mark.timko@avalerehealth.com, respectively.

BGB Group has announced the appointment of **Theresa Lukey** as Vice President, CX Strategy. She can be reached at tlukey@bgbgroup.com.

ConcentricLife has announced the appointments of **Drew Kantor** as Senior Vice President, Client Services, and **Alissa Preston** as Executive Vice President, Account Director. **Drew** can be reached at dkantor16@gmail.com.

Conexiant has announced the appointment of **Lauren Morgan** as Director of Business Development, JADPRO Media Sales. She can be reached at Lauren.morgan@conexiant.com.

Digitas Health has announced the appointments of **Brian Lefkowitz** as President, **Allison Ceraso** as Chief Creative Officer, **Morayea Pindziak** as Senior Vice President, Omnichannel Excellence, and **Samantha DiPaolo Turowski** as Vice President, Account Director. **Brian** can be reached at Brian.lefkowitz@digitashealth.com and **Allison** can be reached at Allison.ceraso@digitashealth.com.

Eli Lilly and Company has announced the appointment of **Jennifer (Ocello) Tesoroni** as Associate Director, HCP Omnichannel Media. She can be reached at Jennifer.tesoroni@lilly.com.

Fingerpaint Group has announced the appointments of **Julia Sherry** as Senior Media Planner, **Jonathan Tyler Hayes** as Media Supervisor, and **Emily Marshall** as Engagement Strategist.

Havas Media Network has announced the appointment of **Tracey Sears** as Senior Vice President, HCP Planning. She can be reached at Tracey.sears@havasmedia.com.

Imre has announced the appointments of **Candace Brogren** as Media Director and **Kelsey Dowd** as Account Manager. **Candace** can be reached at candaceb@imre.agency.

IPG Mediabrands has announced the appointment of **Lindsey Lane** as Senior Group Director. She can be reached at Lindsey.lane@mbwww.com.

Merck has announced the appointments of **Andrew Driver** as Director, Channel Strategy and Engagement for U.S. Oncology, and **Chinedu Momah** as Executive Director, U.S. Oncology Marketing Leader for V940/Moderna Alliance. **Andrew** can be reached at Andrew.driver@merck.com.

Phreesia Life Sciences has announced the appointment of **Jessica Foley** as Client Experience Manager. She can be reached at Jessica.foley@phreesia.com.

Publicis Health Media has announced the appointments of **Erica Arkus** as Media Director, **Andrew Zayicsek** as Senior Strategy Associate, and **Max Vignola** as Associate Director, Programmatic. **Andrew** can be reached at andrewzay11@gmail.com and **Max** can be reached at max.vignola@publicishealthmedia.com.

Razorfish Health has announced the appointment of **Joyce Chen** as Media Supervisor and the promotion of **Julie Touchstone** to Associate Creative Director. **Joyce** can be reached at jjchen1019@gmail.com.

Snow Companies has announced the appointment of **Alicia Guldin** as Senior Director, Data and Analytics. She can be reached at aliciaguldin@gmail.com.

Spring & Bond has announced the appointment of **Megan Encarnacion (Christel)** as Director, Search and Social. She can be reached at megan.encarnacion@springandbond.com.

Swoop has announced the appointment of **Kelsey Landauer** as Director of Sales.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

awards • mergers • approvals

Amgen has received U.S. FDA approval for LUMAKRAS® (sotorasib) in combination with Vectibix® (panitumumab) for the treatment of adult patients with KRAS G12C-mutated metastatic colorectal cancer (mCRC), as determined by an FDA-approved test, who have received prior fluoropyrimidine-, oxaliplatin-, and irinotecan-based chemotherapy.

AstraZeneca and **Daiichi Sankyo** has received U.S. FDA approval for Enhertu (trastuzumab deruxtecan) for the treatment of adult patients with unresectable or metastatic hormone receptor (HR)-positive, HER2-low (IHC 1+ or IHC 2+/ISH-) or HER2-ultralow (IHC 0 with membrane staining) breast cancer, as determined by an FDA approved test that has progressed on one or more endocrine therapies in the metastatic setting.

Eli Lilly and Company has received U.S. FDA approval for Omvoh® (mirikizumab-mrzk) for the treatment of moderately to severely active Crohn's disease in adults. Omvoh is now approved for two types of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), following its October 2023 approval as a first-in-class treatment for moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC) in adults.

Novo Nordisk announced the U.S. FDA has approved Ozempic® to reduce the risk of kidney disease worsening, kidney failure (end-stage kidney disease), and death due to cardiovascular disease in adults with type 2 diabetes and chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The Wyanoke Group is celebrating 125 years in medical publishing. **Wyanoke** is the parent company for **Healio**, **Healio LIVE**, **Healio Strategic Solutions**, **SLACK Incorporated**, and **Vindico Medical Education**. As part of the celebration, **Wyanoke** has launched a commemorative microsite that features an interactive timeline looking back at 125 years of achievements and growth. This can be found at healio.com/promo/125years.

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Nothing matters more than the well-being of our employees.

CMI Media Group and Compas advocate for the wellness and happiness of our employees in many ways, including workday flexibility, established Employee Resource Groups, a dedicated onboarding team, collaborative office spaces, and MUCH more.

Want to know more about what a day in life as a **CMI Media Group** employee looks like? Contact us to talk to one of our C.R.E.W. members or reach out to careers@cmimediagroup.com.

We can't wait to surprise and delight you.



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NEXUS
Awards

JOIN US FOR THE
PRESTIGIOUS NEXUS
AWARDS CELEBRATION!

Mark your calendars: **The 2025 Nexus Awards** will be held on **April 30, 2025**, at the **Liberty House in Jersey City, New Jersey**.

Hosted by the AMM, this event honors outstanding contributions throughout the medical publishing industry.

Join us for an evening of recognition, inspiration and celebration as we spotlight the trailblazers shaping the future of medical media. Don't miss this cornerstone event.

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Prioritizing Mental Health: My Journey and AbelsonTaylor Group's Commitment

BY JEREMY VANNATTA

Life's journey has been an intricate balance of creativity, analytical rigor, and personal resilience. One of the most profound challenges I faced came in 2014 when my wife of 17 years was diagnosed with glioblastoma. It was a devastating moment for our family. I found myself juggling work, caring for her during her illness, and raising our three young children.

After her passing, I confronted the emotional challenges of grief, adjusting to life as a single father, and providing for my family while continuing to lead and develop my professional career. Through an incredibly difficult time, I still had to find ways to keep going, to show up for my kids, and to maintain a career that could support us. But through it all, I learned how vital our mental health is and why it must be a priority in every aspect of life.

That deeply personal experience reshaped my perspective on resilience and self-care. It also strengthened my commitment to AbelsonTaylor Group's mission to "Help the world choose better health."

A CAREER DEFINED BY ADAPTABILITY AND INNOVATION

My professional journey began with a passion for storytelling. After earning a degree in English and Cinema Studies from Colorado College, I started in the film industry. My path shifted dramatically, however, when I became a coder and data analyst at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.

From there, I developed analytical skills that I paired with an MBA from the University of Chicago. My marketing career took off at TAP Pharmaceuticals, where I thrived on the challenges of launching new products and rebranding initiatives. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to work on groundbreaking product launches and lead transformative business strategies.

Despite the pressures of my personal life, I remained steadfast in my career, drawing on both creativity and analytical skills to overcome obstacles.

MENTAL HEALTH: A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRIORITY

Through everything, I've developed a deep appreciation for the importance of mental health. Looking back, I credit much of my ability to persevere to prioritizing self-care and seeking support when I needed it. You can't pour from an empty cup. I have to be able to be strong mentally before I can tend to others around me. I have to be able to metaphorically put on my oxygen mask before putting them on my kids.

As a member of a rock band, I have found making music to be incredibly uplifting and restorative. Whether it's playing a live show or rehearsing with the band, music allows me to create something new, channel my emotions, and stay grounded. It's a creative outlet that has played a key role in my mental wellness.



Jeremy Vannatta with his children (from L to R) Peyton, Connor, and Avery Vannatta.

In my free time, I'm also deeply committed to giving back. I volunteer for several causes close to my heart, including Movember, which focuses on men's health, in particular prostate and testicular cancer, mental health, and suicide prevention; BirdieLight, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about fentanyl overdoses; and working as a lumberjack removing invasive trees and building hiking trails. These efforts are a way for me to turn my experiences into

action, build communities, and help others navigate their challenges.

At AbelsonTaylor Group, I've become a vocal advocate for our Psychological Safety Initiative. This innovative program fosters a culture where employees feel accepted, valued, and empowered to share ideas without fear of judgment. Psychological safety isn't just about fostering innovation; it's about creating an environment where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work. When we feel supported and respected, we're better equipped to manage stress and prioritize our mental health.

LEADING THE WAY IN MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Mental health is at the heart of AbelsonTaylor Group's workplace culture. Our initiatives champion mindfulness and mental health practices, including:

- Mental Health Awareness Month Programming**
 Every May, we offer guest speakers, meditation sessions, webinars, and articles about recognizing and addressing crises. Activities like gratitude journaling, book clubs, and coloring breaks foster calm and community.
- Psychological Safety Initiative**
 This initiative, part of our DE&I program, helps teams work in inclusive, trusting environments. It's not just about job satisfaction. It's about creating space for people to thrive. In 2023, this program earned the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association's ACE Aspire Award.

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Finding Connection and Community

BY KATHRYN DISTLER

While the rise of remote and hybrid working models in recent years came with many advantages, I have found the lack of daily in-person interaction to be challenging at times. In addition to establishing routines and making sure I am moving my body on those long WFH (work from home) days, it has been extremely important for my mental health to combat isolation by seeking out connection and community close to home.

POST-PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT

As the world started to open back up post-COVID, I became involved with the Community House of Moorestown, a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves as a community hub in my town, joining the Board of Trustees in 2023. In this role, I have run fundraisers and facilitated events like book exchanges and free outdoor yoga classes. Working with other community stakeholders and organizations, we cultivate civic engagement and bring people together in this post-pandemic era that can still feel fragmented and hard to navigate.

The collaborative nature of this work continually revitalizes and reinvigorates me. It also gives me the opportunity to leverage professional skills, like strategic communications planning, in different ways, helping me come to work with a fresh perspective and new ideas.

MAKING IT WORK...

I am grateful to work at a company like Initiative, where we are provided with opportunities to explore our passions outside of work in order to show up as our authentic best selves. In addition to company-sponsored events focused on professional development, health and wellness, and philanthropy, Initiative employees may take one "Wellness Day" per month to rest and recharge or participate in hobbies. We also have a program called "Marinate Cul-

tureship," which awards employees with grants that can be used towards learning and exploration – whether that means anything from becoming a certified scuba diver to learning a new language or taking an art class.

These Wellness Days and a 2024 Cultureship grant empowered me to pursue my extracurricular volunteer projects, affording me both the time I needed to take on this work and helping to defray the costs of putting together this programming.

Check with your company's HR team to learn about their existing philanthropic initiatives or see how they can support you in creating something new!

WE ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS WHO NEED CONNECTION TO THRIVE

I would encourage anyone struggling with loneliness or isolation, looking to make new friends, or interested in exploring a new hobby to volunteer.

Join a committee. Show up for a park cleanup. Volunteer to

help a small organization with their social media or marketing. Sign up to read at a senior center. At worst, you'll have a nice day. You may even find a new passion or group of friends!

For those local to major metropolitan areas, organizations like New York Cares make it easy to find nearby volunteer opportunities that align with your interests and calendar. Township websites and Facebook Groups are another great place to learn more about organizations you can support in your community.



Highlights from a recent community event.



Kathryn Distler is Director, HCP Planning, Initiative. She can be reached at 856-220-1614 or Kathryn.Distler@umj3.com.

Prioritizing Mental Health *(Continued from page 6)*

• Ongoing Support

We provide resources that help employees achieve mental wellness in a stigma-free culture where self-expression is celebrated.

LESSONS IN RESILIENCE

As healthcare marketers, we face immense demands. My journey and AbelsonTaylor Group's initiatives are a powerful reminder that mental health is a shared responsibility. By embracing mindfulness, fostering psychological safety,

and offering robust support systems, organizations can create environments where employees thrive – both professionally and personally.



Jeremy Vannatta is Vice President, Account Director, AbelsonTaylor Group. He can be reached at Jeremy.Vannatta@abelsontaylorgroup.com or 312-894-5575.



THE JOURNEY OF ONE MIND TO MANY Healing the Self to Healing the System

BY BRANDON STAGLIN

Since a terrifying summer evening 35 years ago when my first psychotic episode began, I have lived with schizophrenia. As a young man dealing with tidal waves of delusions and a difficult care system, a sense of my identity, future, and self-esteem had been sucked into oblivion. As a result, suicidal thoughts closed in. Every morning when I opened my eyes, I faced the challenge of living one more day. Since then, my life and career have evolved in unexpected directions, and now I feel stronger because of my experiences. Where once healing myself seemed beyond reach, now I reach for healing the system.

Self-doubt gnawed at me as I began to recover thanks to science-based early care, my family's loving support, and staying involved with my community to rebuild my sense of purpose. Was I falling irretrievably behind my peers in experiences, accomplishments, and maturity? When a second episode struck six years after the first, the setback it dealt devastated my confidence. Though new medications helped to manage my symptoms, would I ever regain my focus, motivation, and ability to form satisfying relationships?

FINDING MUSIC

I discovered music as a fun creative outlet, and soon learned it could offer much more. As I practiced guitar over the years, I found it restored my ability to concentrate, to feel genuine emotions, and to connect fluently with others.

These experiences, which I shared with my family, inspired us in 1995 to found One Mind, a nonprofit that has since grown into a powerhouse change-agent for mental health. Fittingly, we launched One Mind with a fundraising event called The One Mind Music Festival. Now, this annual celebration has become a definitive anchor event, featuring leading artists such as Jennifer Hudson, Sheryl Crow, and One Republic, along with talks by leading scientists and innovators including three past National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) directors.

A MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT

Today, One Mind leads a transformative movement in mental health, delivering innovative solutions to address critical gaps in mental health research, care, workplace

wellness, and public perception. With science as our cornerstone and people at the heart of all we do, our programs are setting new standards and redefining the future of mental health.

Our programs form a pipeline to develop better supports for mental health, from discovery to development to distribution. Our Rising Star Awardee scientists annually discover new biomedical pathways toward better mental illness treatments. We support them so they can commercialize their discoveries

through industry partnerships and entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurs who we support through our One Mind Accelerator program work to scale such treatments and services through their start-ups. Our One Mind at Work program supports hundreds of member companies with innovative tools, resources, and guidance to promote, protect, and provide for their

employees' mental health. Finally, our One Mind Lived Experience Initiative, which I chair, connects leaders from all of these programs with expert advocates who have personal mental illness experience to guide those leaders to understand and address the needs of the communities they serve.

TRUSTED EXPERIENCE

The One Mind Lived Experience Initiative aims to heal a debilitating rift in the mental healthcare system. In a world where trust in that system is ebbing, we envision a brighter future where people with lived experience (PWLE) of mental illness are more than just participants. They are essential partners whose unique insights and perspectives drive transformations, promoting a more inclusive and empathetic approach to mental health research, innovation, and services. Science shows that involving PWLE in the design of mental health research and services enhances the quality, accessibility, and creativity of solutions while empowering PWLE, decreasing stigma, and deepening trust. Though interest in this field is growing in Europe, the U.S. has been slow to catch on. By guiding and forming rapport with our supported scientists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and – soon – federal policymakers, our Lived Experience Council will restore the trust and mutual support between stakeholders throughout the system.

(Continued on page 11)



Brandon Staglin, with parents and co-founders Shari and Garen Staglin, welcomes guests to the 30th One Mind Music Festival.



The Result of Ignoring Warning Signs

BY PEGGY DOUGHERTY MARCUS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30 – I am out doing my weekly grocery shopping, put my groceries in my car, drop my cart off, and – WHAM! – I wake up in the Sarasota Memorial Hospital ER with a heart rate of 197, surrounded by techs of all kinds, IVs being started in both arms, X-rays, multiple exams...I hear the whirring of a machine near my head, the machine you see on TV, with the doctor yelling, “200 CLEAR,” and then the electric charge.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31 – They perform a “Paddles” procedure on me in the OR, trying to shock my erratic heart rate into sinus rhythm. They tell me I have AFIB and they are going to put me on multiple drugs and discharge me the next day.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 – My first visit to my new cardiologist and they do an EKG prior to him coming in. He looks at the scan and says, “You do not belong here,” opens the door, yells for a wheelchair, and says, “Call the ER, we are bringing Peg over.” My heart rate was 177. Meet the cardio electrophysiologist in the ER who tells me he has cleared his schedule for a cardiac ablation. Now comes more IVs, CTs with contrast scans for my groin and internal body. The doctor calls my husband Bob after the surgery to tell him I had plaque on both pulmonary veins into my heart and the lower part of my heart and he has burned it away. More drugs added to the regimen. Discharged Friday, November 8. Now I am becoming really worried as I am asymptomatic and cannot predict or feel these episodes coming on. I buy an Apple 10 watch with Heart Rate and EKG apps.

THE SAGA CONTINUES

Fast-forward to four more ER visits with five total admissions, due to this aggressive AFIB, with the last one being Saturday, December 21, with an ER heart rate of 151. The liver ultrasound comes back with incredibly high (bad) numbers for my liver, gallbladder, kidneys, and I’m highly anemic. I am now freaking out, trying to remember if I have all of my affairs in order. And what about my older husband, Bob, who I am a caregiver to? What about him? My mind never shut down. The fear was real that I was in true danger. The mental stress was unlike anything I have ever experienced. Trying to breathe, clear my head, stay calm. This did not work! The high lab numbers were thankfully ALL attributed to the medication they had me on.

PACEMAKER

I am in uncontrolled AFIB for 40 hours when on Sunday, December 22, the decision is to perform an emergency pacemaker implant for Tuesday, December 24, at 5:00 a.m. The device is new and called the Biventricular CRT. I am wheeled into the “Cath” lab, something out of a NASA launch room. I wake up to my left chest heavily bandaged and I am flat on my back. They had to do a second procedure through my groin so I could not sit up for six hours.

Before I left the hospital, a Patient Advocate came to see if I needed anything once I got home – Nurse, OT, or PT. I told him that no one in all of my discharges asked me how I was dealing with the mental stress of this ordeal. They all said deep breathing, meditation, and gummies work. Thank you – but don’t know how and won’t take them. My mental health is in shambles. A behavioral therapist arrives to talk to me. She recommends I read the Bible, particularly the passages on “Anxiety”...Please discharge me!

UPDATE AS OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025!!!

I am home resting, watching the colors of the rainbow wash all over my body from the bruising and hematomas, but so incredibly grateful to God, my surgeon, and cardiologist for not waiting. They said I had the most aggressive AFIB they had ever seen. They believe it was stress induced. The latest stress and fear came from not knowing when these episodes would hit. I could not drive and had to have someone around in case of another fit. I didn’t know if the next one would cause a stroke or worse scenario, fatal.

I spent a lot of time alone in my hospital bed, thinking about my long 74 years, and how I am going to have to change my ways. Stepping back from tons of volunteer work, saying “NO,” which is very hard for me. I realize now that I got several warnings in August and September, which I blew off as nothing important – mini fainting spells, blurred vision, rough heartburn, asthma flare-ups. I was given Warning Signs for months and ignored them.

On January 21, I am being connected to the Sarasota Memorial Hospital cardiac wireless system so they can track my pacemaker. I am enrolled, starting in early February, for a three-times-a-week rehab program for cardiac and pulmonary. Both my heart and lungs are weakened from the intense heart rate, but I do not have a heart muscle issue. They call that a plumbing issue. I had an electrical

(Continued on page 11)



Me and my pacemaker...The area is still extremely swollen after six weeks.



Overcoming Depression

BY TERRY NUGENT

Many, if not most, people are fortunate enough not to relate to those suffering from depression. That's no offense against them.

With all due respect to veterans, depression is a little like combat in this and perhaps only this respect: If you know, you know. If you've been there, you understand. If you haven't, you can't possibly imagine what it's like. I wouldn't wish that understanding on my worst enemy.

I've been fortunate not to have any serious physical illnesses (yet). But someday I will, and I'll be curious to see how it compares to mental illness in general – and depression in particular.

TWO WAYS OUT – AND ONE IS REALLY BAD

There are two ways out of depression, and one is really bad – not so much for the person suffering, but for those left behind.

So, the first challenge is avoiding the easy way out. Lots of people don't make it past Option 1, to coin a euphemism. Almost every suicide is a depression case. You may recall the song *Suicide is Painless*, the theme song from M*A*S*H. Depression isn't. To survive, the depressed must resist the temptation to end the pain and live to be delivered from the disease.

My family has a history of depression. I had two great uncles kill themselves and many others who self-medicated to death.

Certain professions tend to have higher suicide rates – dentists, veterans, police officers. What ties them together? Chronic stress, trauma, emotional burnout, and isolation. These professions demand emotional toughness, leading to stigma around seeking help. PTSD, substance abuse, and access to lethal means further increase risks. Dentists face perfectionism and isolation. Veterans struggle with reintegration and combat trauma. Police officers endure violence and scrutiny. Addressing these issues requires improved mental health programs, peer networks, and stress-relief training.

We all have lessons to learn from their struggles.

OPTION 2 – STAYING ALIVE IN 3 PHASES

Now that we've ruled out Option 1, let's talk about Option 2. It's a lot more fun. Okay, not a lot, but definitely *more* fun.

I've divided it into 3 phases.

Phase 1

The first step to surviving depression is to give yourself a break. Depression is not your fault. It's a tragic genetic legacy passed down like original sin.

One of the worst parts of being depressed is the shame that comes with it, which makes you more depressed – a doom loop. Bail yourself out of it. The truth is, you're probably the only one blaming yourself. Everybody else knows and wants you back. Help them help you.

Phase 2

The next step is to hang in there until it ends, like COVID or the Great Depression.

Many of us in pharma know about depression's connection to serotonin – a chemical that keeps us content. Stress or setbacks can deplete serotonin, shutting the brain down, like a Tesla with a drained battery. From an evolutionary perspective, this may have

been protective. If early humans failed to hunt repeatedly, they might have needed to retreat to avoid further danger. Similarly, depression forces us to stop and reset.

Let serotonin levels replenish until you get back to yourself. Modern pharmaceuticals, especially SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), can help. Get a referral and see a psychiatrist. Today's psychiatrists rarely do talk therapy. You may only meet via telemedicine. After an initial visit, you'll likely get a prescription – often generic, so don't stress about finances. If the first one doesn't work, supplements like Abilify (now generic) may be added.

Caveat: These drugs take weeks to work, and things may get worse before they get better. Suicidal thoughts can increase initially. Be aware of that.

However, these drugs can also work miracles. If depression returns, novel therapies may be needed, but the pipeline is robust. This is a well-served area, as many of you know from marketing.

Phase 3

What else can be done?

- Keep slogging through. Fake it until you make it back to the land of the living. Keep up daily activities as best you can.
- Do the simple things. Take cold showers, walk in the woods or by water. Commune with nature.

(Continued on page 13)





Journey of One Mind *(Continued from page 8)*

SHIFTING CARE

At One Mind's convening of over 60 leading scientists from academia, industry, and government institutions last September, the participation of our Lived Experience Council shifted the conversation constructively toward strategies to design innovations from "the ground up," enabling true person-centered care. Many of the leaders present spontaneously promised to incorporate lived experience guidance in their ongoing programs. The advent of this kind of partnership hails a new era in mental health system design. Understanding that this shift is underway makes me smile!



Brandon Staglin and Garen Staglin auction singer Martina McBride's guitar at the 29th One Mind Music Festival.

Learn more about how you can get involved with One Mind by visiting our website at www.onemind.org. Working together, we can improve lives throughout our communities.



Brandon Staglin is Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer and Co-Founder, One Mind. He can be reached at brandon.staglin@onemind.org and 707-963-4038.

Warning Signs *(Continued from page 9)*

issue with my heart. They plan to start with very simple steps, walking, pool workouts, nothing straining. I have an appointment coming up with a local therapist who specializes in stress, anxiety, and deep breathing techniques. But the last 10 days have been sleeping, napping, and resting. It feels good...

If this article can help even one reader pay attention to their bodies and physical warning signs, I am thrilled! Check it out immediately with your doctor if this happens to you. AFIB is not a joke...and it affects much younger people today. Wishing you all a most HEALTHY and HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Peggy Dougherty Marcus is retired and a proud Co-Founder of the HBA, residing in Sarasota, FL. She can be reached at mspegy@gmail.com or 808-341-9793.

Pickleball

10 REASONS TO PLAY

BY LEO TYSKA, JR.

Admit it. I have a pickleball problem. It's addicting – and right about the time I'm ready to go home, someone says, "One more game (OMG)."

When you first start to play pickleball, you just try to get the ball over the net. Then, you learn how to aim and you begin to strategize about how to beat the other team. It's very strategic just like chess.



Pickleball is mind good, mind clearing.

If you Google mental health benefits to exercising/playing pickleball, you will find a lot of great information. Here are a few benefits:

1. Exercise, including pickleball, helps lower cortisol levels (the stress hormone) and releases endorphins, which are mood elevators.
2. Physical Activity increases function to the brain, improving memory and focus. The strategic aspect challenges the brain, keeping it sharp and engaged.
3. Frequent Exercise has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. It also can provide a mental time-out from daily stressors.
4. Physical Activity distracts you from negative thoughts and emotions.
5. If you achieve a fitness goal or get better at a sport like pickleball, it can enhance confidence.
6. Pickleball is often played with a partner. This encourages teamwork and camaraderie.
7. The social interaction of pickleball helps combat feelings of loneliness and isolation.
8. Exercise provides a buffer against stress.
9. Exercise helps regulate sleep and can help you fall asleep easier.
10. Learning a new skill or handling a challenging match can build mental toughness.

Activities like pickleball and exercise in general promote good mental health by combining physical activity, social interaction, and mental stimulation. If you decide to try pickleball for the first time, just warning you, it's fun and addicting.



Leo Tyska, Jr., is Vice President, Client Solutions, BioPharm Communications. He can be reached at Leo.tyska@biopharmcommunications.com or 847-971-9860 (c).



TECH-ENABLED WELLNESS: Tapping Into the Power of Your Digital Lifestyle

BY CRAIG A. DeLARGE, MBA, MPH, CPC

Modern life's pace, coupled with the ever-present demands of the digital age, has led to an epidemic of stress and distress. Burnout, anxiety, depression, and even violence have become too commonplace. The need for accessible effective strategies to manage stress and promote well-being has never been greater. Fortunately, a solution is right at our fingertips – our own digital devices.

While often associated with negative health impacts, digital technology, when used intentionally and skillfully, can be a powerful force for wellness. **“Tech-enabled Wellness” is defined as the deliberate and skillful use of digital technology to enhance mental, physical, and social health.** The beauty of this approach lies in its accessibility and cost-effectiveness, as it leverages technology we already own and have integrated into our daily lives.



THE DOWNSIDE OF DIGITAL: ACKNOWLEDGING THE RISKS

Before we delve into its benefits, it's essential to acknowledge the downsides of digital technology when it is not used skillfully. Excessive screen time, social media overload, and the constant influx of information contribute to stress, anxiety, sleep disruption, and a decline in overall mental, physical, and social well-being. Furthermore, data privacy and security breaches are legitimate digital technology concerns. The potential for addiction to, or over-reliance on, digital tools is another risk to watch out for. To navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively, **it is crucial that we develop digital literacy skills** that enable us to use technology in a way that benefits, rather than harms, our well-being, as well as that of our families and communities.

SHIFTING THE PARADIGM: DIGITAL AS A FORCE FOR WELLNESS

Just as a hammer can be used to build a house for good or to break a window for harm, digital technology is capable of the same. Its impact is determined by the user's intention and skill. Tech-enabled Wellness is about reclaiming control over our digital lives and using technology mindfully and skillfully to support, rather than detract from, our wellness.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF HEALTH: A FRAMEWORK FOR TECH-ENABLED WELLNESS

To understand how digital technology can enhance our well-being, consider the Five Pillars of Health: Sleep, Diet, Movement, Relaxation, and Relationships. Each pillar plays a crucial role in overall health and wellness. Digital tools can be used to cultivate positive outcomes in each area.

1. Sleep

Quality sleep is essential for physical and mental wellness. Digital tools such as sleep-tracking apps like Sleepio and wearables like FitBit and Apple Watch can provide valuable insights into sleep patterns, helping us identify sleep disruptions and improve sleep hygiene. Blue light filtering (which is part of most smartphones and laptop computers) can reduce exposure to sleep-disrupting blue light from screens, while relaxation apps like Insight Timer and Calm offer calming techniques to promote good sleep hygiene.

2. Diet

A balanced and nutritious diet, as well as mindful eating hygiene, are fundamental to wellness. Digital tools can be invaluable for meal planning, calorie tracking, finding healthy recipes, and making informed food choices. Apps like MyFitnessPal and LoseIt help us track our dietary intake, while grocery delivery services like Instacart can make it easier to access fresh and healthy local ingredients.

3. Movement

Regular physical activity is vital for both physical and mental well-being. Fitness trackers, smartwatches, and fitness apps can motivate us to move more, track our progress, and set fitness goals. Apps like Nike Training Club and Peloton offer a wide range of workout options, while countless YouTube channels provide free movement routines for all fitness levels, ranging from yoga and Animal Flow to running and rowing to dancing.

4. Relaxation

Breathing and relaxation techniques are essential for mental well-being. Meditation apps like Headspace, Calm, and Insight Timer, and guided breathing apps like Breathwrk can be effective in regulating stress, anxiety, and fatigue. Nature sounds, ambient music (easily found on YouTube), and virtual reality experiences, like NatureTrek, are additional applications that contribute to relaxing and de-stressing.

5. Relationships

Healthy relationships are essential for social, mental/emotional, and even physical well-being. Digital technology can facilitate the development and practice of communication and social connection skills. Video calls, messaging apps, and online communities can help us stay connected with supportive people. In this area, it is important to resist the temptation for tech to become a substitute for deep human connection rather than a facilitator to arrange time for those connections. There are also

(Continued on page 13)



Tech-Enabled Wellness *(Continued from page 12)*

technology platforms like VirtualSpeech and Replika, virtual and augmented reality platforms where one can practice public speaking, social interactions, emotional intelligence, soft skills, peer support and learning, and growth mindset.

BUILDING YOUR TECH-ENABLED WELLNESS PORTFOLIO: A PERSONALIZED APPROACH

A Tech-Enabled Wellness portfolio should be highly personalized and tailored to one's individual needs, preferences, and existing digital lifestyle. Building such a portfolio involves a mindful approach, using digital tools thoughtfully and integrating them into our wellness routines. Going about this involves:

1. Self-Assessment – Begin by examining your current digital lifestyle, which consists of the digital devices, channels, and content you most use.
2. Identify Wellness Goals – Identify specific health pillars you want to focus on and set goals in each.
3. Explore Available Tools – Research digital tools and resources that align with your wellness goals.
4. Experiment and Integrate – Experiment with a few tools, gradually integrating them into daily wellness routines and adjusting as you learn.
5. Track Progress and Make Adjustments – Track your experiment's progress and be open to making adjustments to your portfolio as you learn and grow.

My work as a digital health professional and mental health advocate and educator has developed my interest in this area of tech-enabled wellness over the last decade. I have seen how it empowers individuals to use everyday digital technology to enhance their wellness. I also know

Overcoming Depression *(Continued from page 10)*

- Address your problems. Many depressions are reactive – bad events lead to bad feelings, which spiral downward.
- Depression tends to hit people with above-average intelligence and ambitions. Think Icarus flying too close to the sun.

When you're depressed, it's hard to think straight, but try to persevere. Don't be afraid to ask for help – good friends will be there.

Think of it as drowning. People care and want to help. Those who don't are probably part of what you're reacting to.

HELPING OTHERS

If you're not depressed, chances are you know someone who is. You may wonder what to do. Persistence is key. The person you're trying to help may avoid you to keep from opening up. Secretly, they want you to save them from their agony and the risks they're taking by coping alone.

Gently, but firmly, keep at them. That may mean getting them outdoors, to a doctor, or even into the shower via telephone motivation. Salespeople are particularly good

that too few citizens are taking advantage of this approach. I encourage you to give this a try and model it for your family and community.

THE FUTURE OF TECH-ENABLED WELLNESS

The future of tech-enabled wellness is brimming with possibilities, both good and cautionary. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and personalized medicine hold immense potential to revolutionize well-being. Ongoing research, innovation, and collaboration between technology developers, healthcare professionals, and citizens will be key to creating a future where digital technology empowers everyone to achieve their full health potential. It is also important to note that we as citizens will only be able to rightfully influence this evolution as we are committed to continually upgrading our digital wellness literacy.

CALL TO ACTION

Take an active role in your health and well-being by exploring the possibilities of Tech-Enabled Wellness. Experiment with different digital tools, build a personalized tech-enabled wellness portfolio, and leverage the power of technology to support your wellness journey. Technology, when thoughtfully designed and ethically implemented, can be a powerful force for enhancing our well-being.



Craig A. DeLarge, MBA, MPH, CPC, is a Digital Mental Health Researcher and Educator, The Digital Mental Health Project. He can be reached at Craig@WiseWorking.com and 1-267-367-9867.

at this – persuasion is their profession. It's not easy, but you'll have a place in heaven if you do it. And you'll be thanked later when they come out of it.

EPILOGUE

Disclaimer: These are my opinions, not medical advice. If you're struggling, call 911 or seek professional help.

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

It took me decades to write this. It seemed like the right time, as I near the twilight of my career, to address a topic still stigmatized today. It also repays a debt. Years ago, a boss helped me through "the black dog" Churchill described. I hope this serves as payment in full.

If this article helps even one person, I'll declare mission accomplished. If you or someone you know needs help, feel free to reach out.

Dedicated to Kathy. IYKYK.



Terry Nugent is Principal, Terryfic Writing Agency, delivering writing worth reading since 2018. He's also putting the "I" in AI content development. He can be reached at 773-849-9313 or terrinnugent@outlook.com.

Angelique Ricci

Birthplace: Indianapolis, Indiana

Job Title: Vice President, Sponsorship Sales
CheckedUp

Years in Industry: 28

College: New York University

"Do not let the day pass in vain – accomplish something, great or small!"

— Buddha



WHO IS YOUR MENTOR AND HOW DID HE/SHE IMPACT YOU?

Carl Giuseppone is a mentor and a friend. Carl shared his wisdom and leadership in business and his heartfelt friendship.

WHAT ARE TWO THINGS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Skydiving, bike riding, and wine tasting through France – Burgundy and Provence.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE YOU HAVE OVERCOME?

The sudden passing of my mom, Pat Ricci, in 2022, was the single most difficult experience of my life. I realized I was unprepared for the grief, for the raw emotions, and total loss.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Waiting tables at Mac Menamin's Irish Pub in The Seaport NY was a definite learning experience!

DO YOU HAVE ANY PETS?

Oliver, an adopted orange tabby.

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANY PERSON, LIVING OR DEAD (OTHER THAN A RELATIVE), WHO WOULD IT BE?

The Dalai Lama for his wisdom.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE INDUSTRY?

I was managing my father's Art Gallery and saving to go back to school for my master's degree when my friend convinced me to come and meet the owner of her company. He offered me a job on the spot and invited me to come work at the office the next week as a pilot to see if I liked it. My first day was a walk-through at Pfizer, when all of a sudden he literally pushed me into the office of the product manager running Zyrtec, Karole Oleksey. Slamming into her desk, embarrassed, shocked, and startled was actually one of the craziest but best moments of my professional career. Karole and I forged a great professional relationship and a lifelong friendship. I was hired to manage the Pfizer account and quickly became enthusiastic about the role, the clients, the brands, and the pharma space – growing our business year over year. The rest is history!

WHAT THREE ADJECTIVES BEST DESCRIBE YOU?

Tenacious, Energetic, Giving.

WHAT IS THE LAST GOOD BOOK YOU'VE READ?

"Black Ops – The Life of a CIA Shadow Warrior," by Ric Prado – highly recommend it.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN TO DO?

Surf!

DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES?

Photography, Scuba Diving, Travel.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Be patient.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SERIES TO BINGE-WATCH?

"Ozark," "Money Heist," "Outlander," "Luther."

WHAT ONE LITTLE THING ALWAYS MAKES YOU HAPPY, OTHER THAN YOUR FAMILY?

Staying connected with friends and making new ones.

CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE?

Diving with sharks.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A BRUSH WITH FAME?

Meeting Jack Nicholson – that was a blast – Princess Caroline of Monaco, Nicole Kidman, Spike Lee, Roger Staubach.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING US TODAY?

Diversity and equity in healthcare.

WHAT WAS THE BEST PRESENT YOU EVER RECEIVED?

My sister, we are just 11 months apart. She is my best friend.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE?

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." – Einstein

IF YOU COULD WORK DOING ANYTHING IN THE WORLD, REGARDLESS OF THE INCOME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I'd be a doctor in a third world country, helping those in need.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT?

The Italian Riviera, Côte d'Azur, any place lying on a beach with the ocean waves nearby.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

A doctor.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU RETIRE?

Travel so many places – Myanmar, Australia, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Indonesia, Africa, Cambodia (again).



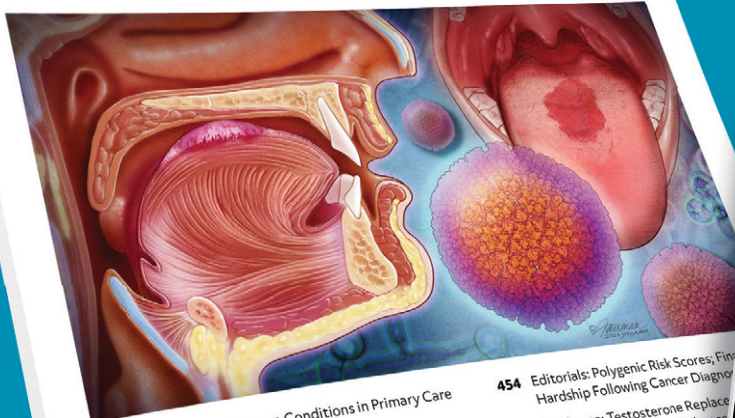
Angelique and her mom, Pat Ricci.

Angelique Ricci is Vice President, Sponsorship Sales, CheckedUp. She can be reached at angelique.ricci@getcheckedup.com or 917-855-5080 (c).

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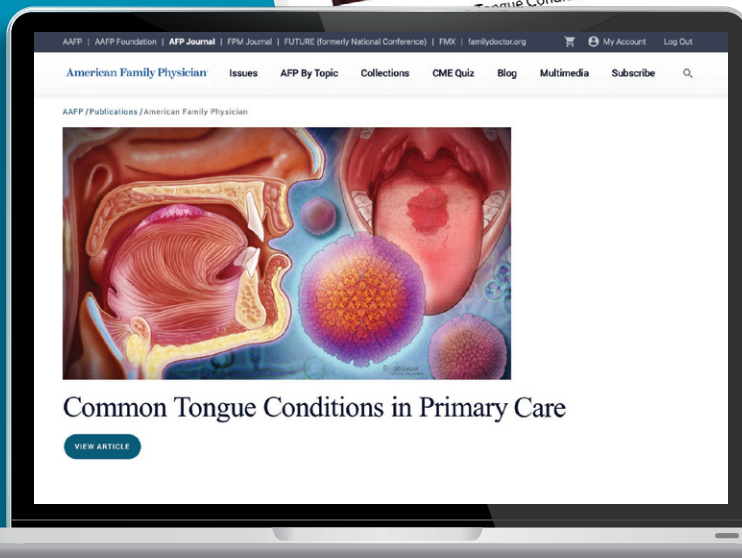
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Common Tongue Conditions in Primary Care

VIEW ARTICLE



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*Source: Medical/Surgical Media Measurement, 2024, Table 402 Average Issue Readers and Average Page Exposures.