



Momentum

Planning for your financial future

Have a vision for your financial future

Creating a financial plan for yourself and your family can remove a good bit of nagging stress that results from not knowing where you stand financially. It's important to establish a roadmap for your financial future.

- Brainstorm your goals. What would you like your life to look like in five years, 10 years and 20 years? Do you wish to have children, start a new business, purchase a vacation property, etc.? Be specific.
- Follow a budget. Track your income and expenses; document how much you're spending each month on necessities, where you could reduce spending and how much is available for saving and investing.
- Prioritize paying down high-interest debts like credit cards. (Consider a debt consolidation loan, if necessary.) Gradually build an emergency fund that will cover three to six months of expenses.

**Visit MagellanAscend.com
for more information**

Contact your program

24/7/365

for confidential, no-cost help
for you and your household
members.

Live Webinar—Join us Wednesday, March 10 for a webinar you can bank on: *Financial Planning in Uncertain Times*. Register [here](#).

Smart money ideas

Max out tax-free tools. Contribute as much as possible to your employer-offered retirement plan, i.e., 401(k). Use a health savings account (HSA) or other tools to use pre-tax funds to cover qualified expenses.

Watch it grow. Develop an investment plan based on your specific investment goals and personal risk tolerance. Tax-free investment vehicles include traditional or Roth IRAs and 529 college savings plans.

Track it simply. There are many free apps available today that can help you set a budget and log your expenses on the go, such as Mint, You Need a Budget and Goodbudget.

Mind Your Mental Health

March includes National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

During the fourth week of March, this observance aims to counteract myths about substance use and addiction, while educating people about the current science on substance use. Some facts:

- Only about 10 percent of people who need treatment for substance abuse in the U.S. actually receive treatment.
- Traditionally, alcohol and drug problems weren't treated until the individual "hit bottom" after their substance misuse became a crisis. However, mild substance use disorders can also be treated, and early intervention can prevent severe disorders later.
- Although some consider medication-assisted treatments as "substitute addictions," this isn't the case. Studies show that medicines like methadone and buprenorphine reduce cravings and substance misuse, reduce risks of relapse and overdose and help people return to healthy functioning.
- Drug use can eventually lead to dramatic changes in the brain's neurons and circuits. These changes can remain after a person has stopped taking drugs.

Visit www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH or call your program for confidential mental health resources.

Working on Wellness

Follow healthy sleep habits

- Acknowledging Sleep Awareness Month, make sure your children have a comforting bedtime routine and consistent bedtimes. They'll be more ready to learn and succeed socially if they get adequate rest nightly.
- Both you and your kids should avoid late-night screen usage. Cellphones and tablets emit blue light, which suppresses levels of melatonin—often leading to insomnia, irritability and tiredness during the day.

Showing Support

Getting help with problem gambling

- March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month. Compulsive gambling is the uncontrollable urge to continue gambling despite the toll it takes on your life. Stimulating the brain's reward system, gambling can lead to addiction.
- Elements of recovery can include working to avoid triggers (people, places and activities linked to gambling), replacing gambling behaviors with positive ones, participating in support groups, receiving cognitive behavioral therapy and medications.



Managing Work-Life Balance

Access stress busters this season

Tax season can shine a sometimes uncomfortable light on one's financial situation. To cope better, break up the tax filing process into smaller chunks. Utilize tax software or a professional preparer. Incorporate relaxation techniques (e.g., soothing sounds) into your deskwork regimen. Other stress management techniques can include meditation, taking breaks to visit natural settings, using aromatherapy (soothing scents that decrease anxiety and improve sleep) and even vigorous exercise—which keeps you strong and resilient.