

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Life in the military community comes with a lot of big moments and big stressors. From deployments and frequent moves to transitioning into civilian life and juggling family responsibilities, it's normal to feel overwhelmed at times. There is good news; mental health support is available, effective, and part of your benefits through CHRISTUS Health. Understanding how mental health works, knowing when to ask for help, and using resources available to you can help you feel your best.



### Get Help Sooner

When it comes to mental health, sooner is better. Early identification and treatment lead to better symptom control, fewer complications, and improved long-term outcomes.

**Keep an eye out for possible early warning signs, such as:**

- **Ongoing mood changes**
- **Trouble sleeping**
- **Pulling away from family or friends**
- **Difficulty focusing**
- **Feeling more irritable than usual**

If something feels "off," trust your instincts. You can start by talking with your primary care provider to help coordinate mental health care and referrals based on your needs.

### Helpful Self-Care

Small, consistent habits really add up. Try incorporating these evidence-based strategies into your routine:

- **Stick to healthy routines:** Regular sleep, nutritious food, and physical activity help regulate mood and manage stress.
- **Practice stress-busting techniques:** Mindfulness, deep breathing, and relaxation exercises can calm the mind and body.
- **Stay connected:** Strong relationships and peer support protect mental health.
- **Set healthy boundaries:** Saying no sometimes helps prevent burnout.
- **Ask for help early:** Using USFHP-covered mental health services is a proactive step.

## Resources Available to You

As a USFHP beneficiary, you have access to a range of mental and behavioral health services, including:

- Outpatient therapy
- Inpatient treatment when needed
- Complimentary Calm subscription
- Telebehavioral care from the comfort of home with Talkiatry

Taking care of your mental well-being is a sign of strength. Most individuals who seek care see lasting improvements in their daily lives and overall happiness.



### Calm

Calm is a trusted wellness app used by millions worldwide to support mental and emotional health. With expertly designed content for everyday life, Calm makes it easier to pause, breathe, and reset—no matter how busy your day gets.

#### How to Activate Your Free Subscription

1. Visit <https://www.calm.com/b2b/christus-health-plan/subscribe> (Activation must be completed in a web or mobile browser—not directly in the app.)
2. Sign in to your existing Calm account or create a new one.
3. When prompted, enter the group code: **CHRISTUSHealth2024**
4. Download the Calm app and log in to unlock your Premium content.



Want to share Calm with others? Add up to 5 dependents (family or friends ages 16+) from the Manage Subscription page inside your Calm account.

### Talkiatry

Talkiatry is an online mental health practice that provides high-quality psychiatric care from the comfort of home. Members can connect with board-certified psychiatrists for personalized treatment plans, including medication management and support for various mental health conditions.

#### Why people love Talkiatry



Virtual visits



Flexible scheduling



Medication management



Choose your psychiatrist

To get started with Talkiatry, take a quick online assessment by visiting [www.talkiatry.care/christus](http://www.talkiatry.care/christus) and answer a few questions about your medical history and what you are looking for in a provider.

## Provider Spotlight: Dr. Ruben P. Martinez, PhD, LPC

Greetings, my name is Ruben P Martinez, PhD, LPC and I have been working in the mental health field since 1986. I started an independent practice in 1997 with a focus on mood disorders, working with adults, adolescents, as well as with couples and families, and cognitive-behavior therapy. For approximately 30 years, my office was just south of Houston, TX, right near Ellington Field. This is where my connection to providing mental health services started for active-duty military, reserve military members and retired military members and their families. Through further training and expertise, a sub-specialization for the treatment of PTSD also developed during this time due to the client population I was treating. Currently, my office is in Houston as I continue to serve USFHP service members and their families.



### Need Help Finding a Provider?

Click below to find an in-network provider in your area today.

[Click Here to Find a Provider](#)

### Care for Every Part of You

Mental health is as vital as physical health, influencing how we think, act, and navigate daily life. While it's normal to feel stressed after major life events, persistent symptoms of common, treatable conditions like anxiety or depression may signal a need for support. We prioritize whole-person care, recognizing that your mind and body are deeply connected.

One case that illustrates the value of USFHP's broad service spectrum involves a patient I have treated for several years. Following the onset of COVID-19, this patient became more consistent with her mental health treatment once telehealth treatments became available. This was vital, as she lives 45 minutes from my office and suffers from a debilitating autoimmune illness that severely limits her mobility. Her challenges intensified after the sudden passing of her husband, a retired military member, and the added responsibility of caring for a medically fragile family member. Due to her own health, she eventually became unable to drive, making it nearly impossible to attend her medical appointments. By coordinating with the USFHP Care Management department, I was able to expand her existing services to include more medical transportation as well as in-home physical therapy and nursing care. While navigating care requires significant time and effort, USFHP can help so you don't have to do it alone. I am appreciative of this organization and proud to serve our retired military members and their families as a USFHP provider.

## Recipe Highlight: Dark Chocolate Blueberry Bark



A dark chocolate and berry bark is an excellent brain-healthy treat. It combines flavonoids and antioxidants that improve memory and communication between brain cells.

Pumpkin seeds and cinnamon provide vital minerals like zinc and magnesium, which help regulate nerve signaling and stabilize blood sugar.

### Ingredients

- 1 bar of 70% (or higher) dark chocolate.
- ½ cup fresh or freeze-dried blueberries.
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds.
- A sprinkle of sea salt and a dash of cinnamon.

### Instructions

1. Gently melt the dark chocolate using a double boiler or in the microwave in 20-second intervals.
2. Line a small tray with parchment paper and spread the chocolate in a thin layer.
3. Press the blueberries and pumpkin seeds into the wet chocolate. Sprinkle with cinnamon and a tiny bit of sea salt.
4. Place in the freezer for about 30 minutes until solid. Break into shards and enjoy.

### Additional Resources

Service	Phone Number / Text	Best For...
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	9-8-8	Immediate mental health or suicide crisis support, available 24/7.
Texas 2-1-1 (Option 8)	2-1-1	Local referrals for food, health, and mental health services.
Crisis Text Line	Text <b>TX</b> to 741741	Text-based support for any emotional crisis.
Texas Youth Helpline	800-989-6884	Youth and parents seeking help with family or domestic issues.
Veterans Crisis Line	9-8-8, then press 1	Specialized mental health support for veterans and their families.
OSAR Referral Line	877-541-7905	Help starting treatment for drug or alcohol use.
SAMHSA	1-800-662-HELP (4357)	Immediate substance use support, available 24/7.