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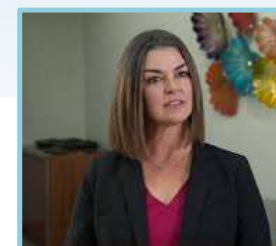


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## From the Desk of Our President



Sharese Hogan

BCBSM LDA President, 2020-2021

Greetings BCBSM LDA Members, This month is the start of my favorite holiday season. The season to be thankful, sharing and caring.

Personally, I have so much to be thankful for including family, friends, my Blue Cross Blue Shield organization teams, our Blue Cross organization executive leadership and the entire BCBSM LDA membership. You are the people who give me joy, share my common interests, make this organization successful and help make my role as President special.

During this time of thanks, I encourage you to:

- Review the [Blue Cross tips for holiday conversations 2020](#)
- Make safe decisions for your family
- Take time to share what you're thankful for with your loved ones
- Remember the people around us who are most vulnerable

Thank you also for attending the October and November events and ordering your fall gifts.

For upcoming events, please check out the events tab on the [BCSBM LDA website](#).

Happy Thanksgiving from my family to yours!

In Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharese Hogan".

Sharese Hogan, 2020-2021 President ▪ BCBSM Leadership Development Association ▪ Chapter #141

*Thankful For You!*



## New Member Corner

Welcome OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Invite your friends and coworkers to join BCBSM LDA. It's a great way to network, make friends and learn about leadership!

*As a member of BCBSM LDA you are now a part of a great group of leaders, striving to live out our theme, "Leading Outside the Box." We encourage you to connect with our members and learn something new about the organization.*



### Member Benefits

- Networking through monthly meetings and mixers
- Professional development through workshops and "lunch and learn" sessions
- Community involvement through events like Bowl for Kids' Sake, walks for cures and causes, Adopt-a-Highway and more!

We have many upcoming events to begin networking and meeting other BCBSM LDA members. Check them out on the *Calendar of Events* page.

We also perform various community involvement services throughout the year. We'd love for you to take part.

For more information about all other upcoming events, please visit BCBSM [LDA's site.](#)

**We look forward to seeing you at the next event!**

Get Acquainted



## Detroit chapter speech contestant wins national competition

*By Barbara Krajenke – communications specialist*

Congratulations to Arthur Harrington who won the NMA National Speech Contest and was awarded a \$4,000 scholarship. Arthur won the BCBSM LDA Chapter 141 contest held in February with his speech “I can, I will, I must be a leader.” The national contest was held October 2020 and open to high school students.

Arthur participated in the speech contest because he was looking for a challenge. He said the speech contest helped to sharpen his speech capabilities and gain insight into connecting with his audience. He said crowd participation was a key that brought his speech to life, as he had the audience repeat, “I can, I will, I must be a leader,” throughout the speech.

Giving a speech can give anyone anxiety at any age or experience. Arthur said he staved off his nerves by taking deep breaths, having confidence and believing in himself. He said practice and repetition helped him prepare to deliver his speech. The preparation and coaching from his [Toastmaster](#) helped his confidence in his delivery.

“I enjoyed being on stage in front of the audience. I enjoyed feeding off of their energy as I presented my speech. I believe the audience betters me as a speaker and presenter.”

Arthur was ecstatic when he won the chapter and national contest, coming up against some other very qualified speakers.

Arthur is hoping that he’ll gain positive exposure as a young African American male making waves in the community as a leader.

“I’m hoping that many scholarships and public speaking opportunities will come from representing the great state of Michigan and the amazing city of Detroit on a national level - and winning.”

Way to go Arthur! Keep shining bright!



**Arthur Harrington**  
2020 winner of the  
NMA National Speech Contest

# Virtual Mixers – Add a pinch of spice to your work week

by Ju Fonda Overton, senior analyst



Add a little fun to your work week and join us for our next Virtual Mixer on December 9. You ask what exactly is a Virtual Mixer? Virtual Mixers are a way we can network, learn new skills, chat via Zoom and mingle with leaders in a casual setting. Mixers also add a little fun by playing interactive games like Music Bingo.



Our Virtual Mixers have become very popular because it's a way to stay connected while we're unable to meet face-to-face.

There are many benefits in attending a Virtual Mixer:

- There's no commuting required
- It allows everyone to connect, see each other and converse
- The mixers are usually held during lunchtime, allowing us to sign on the event when we're not busy working on our projects

If you'd to learn more about the LDA Virtual Mixers contact Erica Addison at [EAddison@bcbsm.com](mailto:EAddison@bcbsm.com)



**Qunita Williamson, Director**  
State Accounts and Specialty Servicing

*Virtual Mixer – Please join us to discuss*

**Health and Beyond**  
**Praise Often, Self Care & Believing in Yourself**

***Be Ready to enjoy a fun virtual game!***



**Jason Loepp, Director**  
Customer Analytics



Wednesday, December 9, 2020  
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

# November Monthly Member Meeting – Leadership amid a crisis

By David Shelby Jr., team coordinator



**Guest Speaker**

**Darcy Kerr**

*Senior Vice President of Emergent Holdings*

Thanksgiving is right around the corner. In the state I live in, Michigan, however we are advised to cancel it. Really, cancel a day of expressing thanks and gratitude. That's the world we live in, right now. We have seen an uptick in the spread of the COVID-19 virus and are temporarily back on lockdown. As I sit at my kitchen table and plan for a dinner that will no longer include 14 people and prepare for a dinner of two, I'm reminded of the challenges this pandemic has brought.

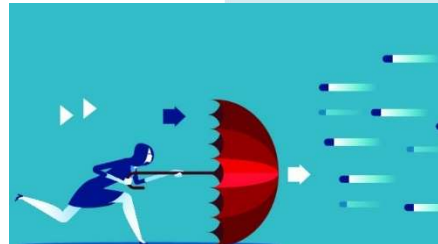
The theme of this meeting was *Leading in the Midst of a Crisis*. Our speaker, Senior Vice President of Emergent Holdings, Darcy Kerr, could not have spoken on a more appropriate topic.

Darcy shared an important reality with us all. Working outside your comfort zone is a reality. The moment you attempt to become comfortable, you are pivoting to a vital change or handling a challenge you are unfamiliar with. The challenges of the pandemic have brought 2020 widespread changes, including lack of entertainment outlets, closed beaches, social distancing from family members, fear for the elderly, a contentious election and now phase two of a pandemic. When has anyone had the opportunity to develop a comfort zone?

Leadership is best defined by not only your ability to lead others but your ability to adapt in the ways in which you lead. Darcy spoke on the workforce changes. Due to the pandemic, the majority of the company workforce is at home. That environment workforce change presents a set of challenges that being on-site would not produce. This requires leaders to adapt to the challenges of their staff and to learn and grow as leader.

For example, working from home offers technical challenges. Pre-pandemic, it was rather easy and expedient to get assistance from IT when they had on-site staff. Now the Helpdesk requires a longer wait to get help and a greater chance at work stoppage. The lesson is even when you feel comfortable, you need to be adaptable. Everything that is planned can change, you must remain flexible.

Darcy gave us one of her favorite quotes from author, Viktor Frankl, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." This is such an appropriate quote for the times we're living in. Many of us have had to look inward due to the current pandemic, change our habits and expectations. With these new challenges of leading and working we must change within ourselves for us to be the best we can be.





# CALENDAR of EVENTS

December  
9

## Virtual LDA Mixer

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Topic: Health and Beyond – Praise Often, Self Care & Believing in Yourself.

Bring your artistic talents for virtual Pictionary

### Facilitators:

Jason Loepp, Director, Customer Analytics, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Qunita Williamson, Director, State Accounts and Specialty Servicing, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

[Register](#)



December  
15

## LDA Book Club Meeting

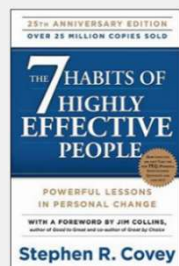
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

We'll be wrapping up our discussion of Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind.

Link to the virtual meeting will be sent prior to the session.

### Facilitator:

Charles Schultz, LDA VP of Professional Development, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan



December  
17

## December Monthly Member Virtual Meeting

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Topic: Join us 15 minutes before the meeting for a time of virtual networking! Our speaker will be Reverend Faith Fowler, Executive Director, Cass Community Social Services.

Link to the virtual meeting will be sent prior to the session.

### Speaker:

Reverend Faith Fowler, Executive Director, Cass Community Social Services

[Register](#)



Miss the Monthly Member Meeting? No worries.

Here's the link if you want to check it out:

[November](#), [October](#) and [September](#)

# Cheery, bright and staying safe this holiday season

By Michelle Banaszak, communication specialist



With COVID-19 cases rising again, it's more important than ever to be diligent over the holidays. Most years, we mainly worry about flu season, but this year we need to be extra cautious when planning and attending gatherings. The pandemic won't be over soon, but it also won't last forever, we can still enjoy the holidays with friends and family, while minimizing risk.

While this year's holidays are going to look different from what we're used to, we can still find ways to celebrate with those we love. Innovation is key for the next few months:

- If you're planning a holiday party, wedding, funeral, or other large gathering, consider having a small, intimate or fully-online event now, and a larger in-person event in the future.
- Have Zoom parties with your friends and family. This will keep everyone in their own households, while still giving you the fellowship and fun you're looking for.
- If you're celebrating an event, consider having a "drive-by" party with a caravan of cars. If people want to stop, make sure they stay on front porches and sidewalks.
- Shop online over the next few months. We know local businesses are hurting right now, but a lot of them are doing curbside pickup. If they don't have a website, give them a call and find out what their protocol is.
- Spread happiness to others. Send heartfelt cards or letters, buy a funny mask to wear while you're out, or do something nice for someone you know who's been struggling. Some of your family, friends or neighbors may be at higher risk for COVID-19. Consider preparing or picking up food and delivering it to them without person-to-person contact.

Here are some ways you can minimize risk to yourself and loved ones:

1. **Get your flu shot.** By getting a flu shot, you're taking the first step towards a healthy winter. The flu shot can protect not only yourself, but those around you.
2. **Wear a mask.** Wear a mask whenever you are around people outside of your household when it's not possible to be six feet or more away from others.
3. **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds and using hand sanitizer in between washes can help you and those around you stay safe.
4. **Outdoor gatherings are better than indoor events.** We know it's about to get pretty chilly for most of us. Take this fall-to-winter transition time and enjoy gatherings outdoors. This means getting creative with activities, wearing layers and setting up yards and outdoor spaces in new ways. Some restaurants have outdoor seating available, complete with heaters and safety guidelines in place. If you have to have an event indoors, think about opening windows and coming up with creative ways to spread people throughout the space.







## Cheery, bright and staying safe this holiday season

*Continued*

5. **Have a plan for quarantining after the gathering.** In case you or someone in your household has been exposed to COVID-19 at the event, it's important to know how you'll handle it. Find out [where you can be tested](#), think about how you'll implement a 14-day quarantine and how you might isolate and care for an infected person in your home.
6. **Think carefully before traveling.** Traveling brings new risks to the table. If you are thinking about visiting someone or having visitors from another area, here are some things to consider:
  - Driving is safer than flying.
  - Research the area you'll be traveling to or having visitors from. Some areas are "hot spots" for community transmission.
  - Consider asking everyone in your group to get a COVID-19 test about a week prior to the event.
  - Plan for the possibility of a longer stay. If you are exposed at a gathering, you may have to stay in that area for 14 days before you can return home.

One of the most important keys to enjoying the holidays is practicing gratitude. This year has been difficult on all of us, but remembering to be thankful is key. Whether you're thankful to still have a job, when many have lost theirs, thankful for your health, when so many have been affected by the virus and other health issues, or thankful for daily commodities like having a place to live or food on the table, take time each day to practice gratitude. Studies have shown that gratitude can help your health and well-being. Research suggests that grateful people may have better sleep, healthier hearts, fewer aches and pains, and potentially even counteract depression. Take a look at these articles about how being thankful can benefit you:

- [Why is it good for your health to practice gratitude?](#)
- [Is gratitude good for your health?](#)
- [Giving thanks can make you happier](#)

The blueprint team wishes you a happy and healthy holiday season. Send a picture of your holiday decorations, festive pets, or safe family and friend gatherings to Barbara Krajenke at [Barbara.Krajenke@advantasure.com](mailto:Barbara.Krajenke@advantasure.com) and Michelle Banaszak at [MBanaszak@bcbsm.com](mailto:MBanaszak@bcbsm.com) by December 21 to be featured in our January issue!



# PD Exchange

## The importance of saying no

By Michael Laurence, business application developer



An important lesson I learned in my early career was learning how to say no. This was something that I originally struggled with when I entered the workforce, I felt the pressure to never want to say no. The issue with not being able to say no is the risk of overwhelming yourself and having to let people down. The biggest benefits I've gained from learning how to say no is respect from my employers and prioritizing quality over quantity.

Most of the time when I say no now, it is due to having more pressing issues already in my workload. Learning to say no is about leaving room in your time to accomplish the workload you already have before taking on more work.

**I've learned that you can gain more respect by prioritizing the work you've been assigned rather than trying to prioritize everything.**

Along with being able to prioritize my current workload, I've learned that taking on more work risks the quality of my work. I found the more work I took, the less quality of work I was putting out because I was trying to accomplish everything instead focusing on completing the current work with high detail. I had originally thought that the more work you put out the better you look. But I've learned that you can gain the same respect by putting out quality over quantity.

Overall, learning how to say no in my career has benefitted myself more than I would've thought. I've been able to gain respect in the quality of work I produce. Nobody can do everything, focus on putting out quality work over quantity. Learning this skill is a step towards becoming a better professional.



### BCBSM LDA Code of Ethics

- I will recognize that all individuals inherently desire to practice their occupations to the best of their ability.
- I will assume that all individuals want to do their best.
- I will maintain a broad and balanced outlook and will recognize value in the ideas and opinions of others.
- I will be guided in all my activities by truth, accuracy, fair dealing and good taste.
- I will keep informed on the latest developments in techniques, equipment, and process. I will recommend or initiate methods to increase productivity and efficiency.
- I will support efforts to strengthen the management profession through training and education.
- I will help my associates reach personal and professional fulfillment.
- I will earn and carefully guard my reputation for good moral character and good citizenship.
- I will promote the principles of our American Enterprise System to others, by highlighting its accomplishments and displaying confidence in its future.
- I will recognize that leadership is a call to service.

### Statement of Principles

BCBSM LDA is dedicated to managerial excellence, personal and professional growth, and leadership development. The following principles identify Blue Cross LDA's core beliefs and provide the basis for the Association's Mission Statement.

- We believe in the highest standards of personal and organizational integrity and respect for the individual.
- We believe in lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and the development of a workforce capable of sustaining a competitive posture in the global economy.
- We believe management is a creative, dynamic, and essential process enabling people to achieve personal and organizational objectives.
- We believe that managerial responsibility is shared among all individuals at all levels of the organization and that leadership is critical to management success.
- We believe that individuals and organizations have a community and civic responsibility.

### blueprint team

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Dustin Freeze, Internet public domain

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### BCBSM LDA Board Officers

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VP of Professional Development: Charles Schultz

### NMA National Mission Statement

NMA offers leadership development products and opportunities that maximize the potential of our members, sponsoring organizations and communities.