

Wellness News

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“You don’t have to control your thoughts. You just have to stop letting them control you.” — Dan Millman



Anthem members: You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone’s camera to download the Sydney Health app.

Healthy Choices

What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.” ~ Glenn Close



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

How Do We Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month?

Each May, we observe Mental Health Awareness Month to increase understanding and diminish shame connected with psychological wellness conditions. Here are a few thoughts to consider this month:

1. **Begin a conversation:** Examine mental health sincerely with friends and family, dear companions, and collaborators. Urge individuals to share their encounters by doing likewise.
2. **Become educated:** Concentrate on the impacts of mental health issues on individuals' lives. Understanding books, watching narratives, attending classes or studios, and exploring web assets are instances of this.
3. **Volunteer:** Support associations that advance mental prosperity and well-being by chipping in. Give your time, capacities, or resources to assist with getting the message out.
4. **Take care of yourself:** Focus on your emotional well-being by caring for your necessities. This can include tracking down procedures to lessen pressure, practicing frequently, getting sufficient rest, eating a decent regimen, and practicing routinely.
5. **Practice self-care:** Elevate change by attempting to modify regulations and attitudes that create stigma towards people with emotional wellness concerns. Advocate for treatment and asset access, stand against misleading data, and back psychological well-being regulation.



Mental Health Awareness Month is observed each year in May to bring issues to light and give training on psychological well-being and prosperity. This month-long celebration strives to lessen the stigma associated with mental health illnesses and emphasize the value of getting help and assistance.

Mental Health America established Mental Health Awareness Month in the United States in 1949. Since then, it has grown into a worldwide movement, with numerous nations observing their mental health awareness months annually.

Emotional Well-being Resources

Change your mind. Change your life.™
With you every step of the way. Take a quick assessment to find the program that's right for you. To access our Emotional Well-being Resources:



Anthem Members: Log into Sydney and select MENU > My Health Dashboard > Featured Programs.



Skillfully Feel Your Feelings

The following steps draw on mindfulness techniques and can help you cultivate the art of leaning into your feelings. Skillfulness with emotion starts as a relational process—if our caregivers did not help us learn how to accept our feelings, then we were left alone and overwhelmed by them, or unable to glean their significance. This is one of the reasons why the therapist-client relationship is so important in psychotherapy. While these steps can be done on your own, a therapist can help you notice the subtle ways you may move away from feelings and create safety as you explore difficult feelings.

Step 1: Name the Feeling

When you become aware of a feeling, pause. You may first notice the general tone of the emotion, either negative or positive. For example, you are feeling vaguely stressed or uncomfortable. See if you can gently name the specific emotion present without judgment (e.g., sad, afraid, ashamed, joyful, excited, delighted).

Step 2: Allow the Feeling Sensations in Your Body

Emotions are called “feelings” because we feel them in the body. See if you can mindfully observe the physical sensations without judgment—how do you directly sense the feeling in your body? Encourage yourself to “allow” the sensations to be present and flow – let them rise and fall without trying to control, reduce, or escape them. If the feelings are difficult, this requires the courage to stay with a scary or aversive experience. It helps to bring curiosity and openness to whatever arises, to give the body permission to feel whatever is present. During this step, be careful not to get lost in your thoughts – keep gently bringing your attention back to the physical sensations. The intention is to keep mindfully accepting what you are feeling in the moment. Ride the waves for several minutes.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/harnessing-principles-change/202010/the-key-skill-we-rarely-learn-how-feel-your-feelings>

Step 3: Investigate What’s at the Heart of Your Feelings

Now gently shift your attention to investigating what is driving the emotion. Maybe you are facing a loss or something threatening. Maybe you’re having an experience of being unseen or excluded. Hold your thoughts lightly as you inquire, remember that your interpretations are colored by your history. Try not to get stuck in a story, analysis, or ruminating about a “scene” in your head. *Keep it simple*: what is at the heart of your pain or joy? If you notice you are blaming yourself or others, this is an avoidance move. See if you can *feel the pain without blame*. It’s helpful to have an image of your initial feelings and thoughts as reactive waves on the surface of the water, where we typically resist and splash around. The goal is to drop into deeper and more vulnerable waters, where the core of your pain and values reside.

Step 4: Bring Compassion to Your Experience

As you allow and investigate your feelings, it is important to bring kindness to your experience, especially if it’s painful. We all know how to speak critically to ourselves – this step is about cultivating the opposite: *bringing a compassionate, caring stance to what we are feeling*. If this is difficult for you to do, think about how you would bring empathy to a family member, friend, or your child. You also deserve that care! You might say to yourself: “I’m so sorry you are feeling this way,” “this is so difficult,” or “I’m with you.” Whatever you are feeling, it is certain that you are not alone—we all get hurt and disappointed in life, we all need a sense of safety, connection, belonging. While our individual experiences are unique, there is something universal in our desires and pain. This step is about recognizing our common humanity and actively bringing a nurturing stance to our own experience.



Anthem members: Connect with virtual behavioral health support using Sydney Health and Anthem.com



Improve Your Mood with Food

We all feel blue from time to time, and food can play an important role in helping us lift our mood and improve our outlook on life. Open the fridge and poke through the pantry, where you'll find a wide array of mood boosting foods that are healthful, satisfying and delicious.

There are a couple of key dietary strategies to help you improve and balance your mood with food:

- **Balance blood sugar levels.** Skipping meals, eating erratically or eating sugary meals and snacks can send our blood sugar levels out of whack. This leads to an imbalance of hormones – including stress hormones – and can make us irritable, cranky or 'hangry'. Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is linked to depression and anxiety. Consuming complex carbohydrates, protein, fat and fiber with each meal and snack will help your blood sugar levels stay on track.
- **Consume nourishing fats.** Fats are essential to the nervous system. Our brains are about 60% fat and good fats help support brain function and integrity, aid the production of neurotransmitters and reduce inflammation.
- **Eat your amino acids (protein).** Certain amino acids, which are the building blocks of protein, are the precursors to brain neurotransmitters that help balance and better our mood.
- **Get the B vitamins.** The spectrum of B vitamins helps soothe stress and support the nervous system. Many of the B vitamins are also co-factors in aiding brain health and formulating neurotransmitters. B vitamins can be found in many vegetables, like dark leafy greens and gluten-free whole grains.

16 Mood Boosting Foods

When you're feeling down, it can be tempting to turn to food to lift your spirits. However, the sugary, high calorie treats that many people resort to have negative consequences of their own. Nonetheless, certain foods have been shown to improve overall brain health and certain types of mood disorders. Here are 16 healthy foods that may boost your mood.

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| 1. <i>Salmon</i> | 10. <i>Fermented foods</i> |
| 2. <i>Dark leafy greens</i> | 11. <i>Almonds</i> |
| 3. <i>Chia seeds</i> | 12. <i>Chocolate</i> |
| 4. <i>Turkey</i> | 13. <i>Sunflower seeds</i> |
| 5. <i>Lentils</i> | 14. <i>Sweet potato</i> |
| 6. <i>Eggs</i> | 15. <i>Ghee</i> |
| 7. <i>Sardines</i> | 16. <i>Culinary Adaptogens</i>
(such as <i>Ashwagandha</i> ,
<i>Maca</i> , <i>Reishi</i> , <i>Chaga</i> ,
<i>Rhodiola</i> , <i>Licorice root</i> ,
<i>Asian Ginseng</i>) |
| 8. <i>Avocado</i> | |
| 9. <i>Bell peppers</i> | |

Source: <https://www.culinarynutrition.com/mood-boosting-foods/>



Anthem members: To learn more, log-in to Sydney and select **MENU** on the bottom navigation bar > **My Health Dashboard** > **Featured Programs**

Spring Pea Salad with Strawberries

As delicious as it is beautiful, this spring pea salad recipe is a potluck or dinner party stunner.

Servings per recipe: 4

Ingredients:

- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 1 cup snow peas and/or snap peas, trimmed
- ¾ cup sliced strawberries
- ½ cup shelled fresh peas
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper



Directions:

Arrange greens, snow (or snap) peas, strawberries, shelled fresh peas and feta on a serving platter. Whisk mint, oil, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a small bowl and drizzle over the salad.

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 179 Fat: 13g Carbs: 12g Protein: 5g

*Eat the Rainbow
Make Half Your Plate Colorful*



Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/251390/spring-pea-salad-with-strawberries>

What's in Season?

Spring Vegetables

Artichokes		Leeks	
Asparagus		Morels	
Cabbage		Nettles	
Carrots		Peas	
Fava Beans		Radish	
Fiddleheads		Ramps	
Garlic Scapes		Rhubarb	
Green Garlic		Scallions	
Greens: arugula, dandelion greens, pea shoots and watercress			
Herbs: chives, parsley and dill			



Spring Fruit

Apricots
Cherries
Honeydew Melon
Kiwi
Pineapple
Rhubarb
Strawberries



Anthem members: Be sure to check out the **Nutrition Tracker** and unlock the power of intelligent nutrition. Log into Sydney and select Menu > My Health Dashboard > featured programs.