



Live Well, Work Well

Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma

Mental health issues and mental illness are common. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), more than 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness each year. Despite the prevalence of illnesses and increasing recognition of [mental health](#) as a critical component of overall well-being, stigma remains a significant barrier to receiving treatment and support. The fear of judgment and discrimination often prevents individuals from seeking help.

NAMI reports that roughly half (52%) of adults with a mental illness go without treatment.

It's imperative to raise awareness and educate others about mental health to [combat stigma](#) and create a more compassionate and supportive society. Stigma grows in silence, so here are some tips for helping break the silence:

- **Educate yourself and others.** Understanding the complexity of mental illness, including substance use disorders, can help dispel misconceptions.

Take the time to learn about mental health conditions, symptoms, and treatments.

- **Talk openly.** Break the silence surrounding mental health by initiating open and honest conversations with friends, family, and colleagues. Sharing personal experiences or listening without judgment can help create a safe space for others.
- **Choose words carefully.** Avoid stigmatizing words and use person-first language, emphasizing the individual rather than their condition.
- **Encourage equal treatment of physical and mental health conditions.** Mental illness is a medical condition, so it should be treated like any other medical condition.
- **Speak up.** If you suspect someone is struggling, send them messages of support or help them get on the path to treatment.

By taking proactive steps to reduce mental health stigma and break down barriers, you can help create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to seek help.

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INTEGRITY CONSULTING GROUP

Employee Benefits Specialists

EWG Releases the 2026 Dirty Dozen List

Each year, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases the Dirty Dozen, ranking pesticide residue levels based on produce samples taken by federal agencies. Nearly 100% of all conventional fresh produce sampled this year tested positive for potentially harmful pesticides, with Dirty Dozen items accounting for 96% of those samples. Here's the 2026 Dirty Dozen list:

1. Spinach
2. Kale, collard and mustard greens
3. Strawberries
4. Grapes
5. Nectarines
6. Peaches
7. Cherries
8. Apples
9. Blackberries

10. Pears
11. Potatoes
12. Blueberries

The EWG also publishes the [Clean Fifteen](#) list. Pineapples, sweet corn, and avocados continue to top the list. Nearly 60% of the Clean Fifteen produce had no detectable pesticide residues.

Whether organic or not, all properly handled fresh produce is considered safe to eat. The EWG stresses that the benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables outweigh the risk of pesticide exposure. Do your best to get your daily dose of healthy produce while still being an informed shopper. If you're still uneasy about pesticides after scrubbing your produce, frozen or canned versions can be a great alternative. Ultimately, it comes down to what works best for your household and budget.

Spring Clean Your Routine

Spring isn't just for cleaning out your closet. It's also a great time to refresh your mind and body. It's important to check in on yourself regularly; a routine refresh can help you avoid illness, reduce stress, and feel in control. Consider the following ways to freshen up your daily routine this spring:

- **Assess your current routine.** The first step in spring cleaning your routine is to take stock of your current habits and activities. Are there tasks or commitments that no longer serve you? Are there areas where you feel overwhelmed or stressed?
- **Declutter your home.** No clothing, equipment, or other belongings are off-limits, so get rid of items you don't use anymore.
- **Create space for self-care.** Prioritize self-care activities or take a few moments each day to relax and recharge.

- **Reset your recipes with seasonal produce.** Spring produce includes vegetables such as asparagus, artichokes, radishes, rhubarb, and peas, as well as fruits like strawberries. In-season produce is picked at the peak of its freshness and nutritional value and is packed with essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that boost the immune system.
- **Establish healthy habits.** For example, you could commit to a regular sleep schedule or incorporate more movement into your day.

Start spring cleaning your routine today to create one that supports your mental health and enables you to thrive in spring and beyond. Log into your [Horizon BCBSNJ](#) member account to find more resources.

Recipe of the Month

Spring Vegetable Saute

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ½ cup sweet onion (sliced)
- 1 garlic clove (finely chopped)
- 3 tiny new potatoes (quartered)
- ¾ cup carrot (sliced)
- ¾ cup asparagus pieces
- ¾ cup sugar snap peas or green beans
- ½ cup radishes (quartered)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. dried dill

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	138
Total fat	1 g
Protein	4 g
Sodium	177 mg
Carbohydrate	29 g
Dietary fiber	5 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Total sugars	4 g

Source: MyPlate

Preparations

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook the onion for two minutes, then add the garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low and cook until almost tender, about four minutes. Add a tablespoon or two of water if the vegetables start to brown.
3. Add the asparagus, peas, radishes, salt, black pepper, and dill. Cook, stirring often, until just tender, about four minutes more.

Summertime Life Events Reminder:

while generally able to change benefit elections only during Open Enrollment, certain life events qualify as an exception. If you experience, for instance, a marriage, birth, or a spouse's loss of coverage over the summer, notify the District benefits contact *immediately* to learn your options.

Learn more about Continuing Coverage at our *Benefits Online* website at warrenhills.org / District / Business Office / Benefits / Health Benefits Site.

Telehealth Reminder: Horizon CareOnline

You have access to Horizon CareOnline telehealth services when you need convenient and flexible care. Learn more at horizonblue.com.

Horizon CareOnlineSM

Convenient medical care – online, anytime.



Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey makes it easier for you to stay in control of your health. You can use **Horizon CareOnline** to talk with a licensed, U.S. board-certified doctor via video, chat or phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week – no appointment is needed.

We work with American Well, a leader in telemedicine, to bring you care that is:

- **Dependable.** 24/7/365 access.
- **Convenient.** No appointment is needed and ePrescriptions can be provided if you need one.¹
- **Confidential.** Private and secure; compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

With Horizon CareOnline, you can be treated for symptoms and conditions such as a cold, flu, fever or rash, abdominal pain, sinusitis, an ear infection and much more.

There are three ways to enroll and use Horizon CareOnline:

- Visit **HorizonCareOnline.com**.
- Call **1-877-716-5657**.
- Scan the QR code at the right to get the Horizon CareOnline app from the App StoreSM or Google PlayTM.



When you first enroll, enter **Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey** as your health plan.

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Spanish (Español): Para ayuda en español, llame al **1-855-477-AZUL (2985)**.

Chinese (中文): 如需中文協助, 請致電 **1-800-355-BLUE (2583)**。

¹ Telemedicine is available in all states except Arkansas and Texas, where video consultations are not permitted under the law.

For more information, visit info.americanwell.com/where-can-i-see-a-doctor-online.

For technical assistance, please email HorizonCareOnline@AmericanWell.com.

Once you are enrolled, you can visit with a doctor on Horizon CareOnline when:

- Your doctor's office is closed.
- You feel too sick to drive.
- You are traveling and need medical care.

This valuable service is offered as a convenience and does not replace your relationship with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) or personal doctor.

How Much Does a Visit Cost?

The amount you pay depends on your plan's telemedicine benefit. Check with your group's benefits administrator or call Horizon BCBSNJ Member Services at the number on the back of your member ID card for details.

It's free to sign-up – enroll today.

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American Well is an independent company that supports Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey in the administration of telemedicine services.

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