



Live Well, Work Well

May 2024



MAY IS
**MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS
MONTH**

The month of May has been recognized as **Mental Health Month** every year since 1949.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):

- **1 in 5** people live with a diagnosable mental illness each year
- **1 in 7** children or teenagers have this illness as well
- **Every day**, approximately 123 Americans die by suicide

An individual's mental health impacts every part of their life including their work, relationships and well being. It may be surprising to know that there are more than 300 different conditions that are identified as mental illness.

Unfortunately, there continues to be stigma attached to mental illness, causing discussions around this topic to be kept secret or even nonexistent. That's why hundreds of organizations are focused on providing information to raise awareness on this important issue.

The following information is meant to help bring awareness to what has become an epidemic in our country and educate you about how your VITAL WorkLife Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help.

What are some of the factors that contribute to mental illness?

- Life experiences, such as stress or having a history of childhood abuse
- Chemical imbalances in the brain
- Having a traumatic brain injury
- An exposure to viruses or toxic chemicals during pregnancy
- Family history and genes

Common warning signs of mental illness

- Days or weeks of extreme sadness or lowness
- Problems with concentrating and/or focus
- Excessive worrying or fear
- Mood changes including feelings of depression, euphoria, anxiety or uncontrollable highs
- Increased irritability or anger
- Isolating and/or withdrawing from friends and social activities
- Changes in sleep habits or feeling unusually fatigued
- Changes in eating habits -weight gain or weight loss
- Difficulty perceiving what is real
- Physical ailments that do not have an obvious cause
- Extreme self-consciousness
- Thoughts of suicide or self-injurious behaviors

Getting help

Help is only a phone call or message away and there's no stigma when you use your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources because it's confidential. We owe it to ourselves and to the ones we love to get help. Reach out to your VITAL WorkLife EAP to ensure that you and your loved one is getting the help that you/they deserve.

As part of your EAP, you have access to **in-the-moment behavioral health support (phone counseling)** and **face-to-face or virtual counseling** that can help you navigate whatever challenges, experiences or stressors you are going through. Your counseling benefit is available on a per incident basis, which means you can access it now, and again in the future for another issue.

Contact us at **800.383.1908**, through your **VITAL WorkLife App** or send a message to us [here](#).

Your EAP includes a wealth of **information to support your mental health and well being** and is available at **no cost** to you or your family members. **You do not need to be alone in this.**

The Mental Health Benefits of Farmers Markets

June 2, 2023 | Anxiety, diet, health, healthy diet, mental health, Mental well-being, nutrition



In today's fast-paced and convenience-driven society, where processed and unhealthy foods dominate our diets, it is crucial to recognize the mental health benefits that farmers markets offer. Farmers markets are more than just a place to purchase fresh, locally-grown produce; they serve as a sanctuary for fostering mental well-being. In this article, we explore the relationship between farmers markets, diet, health, and mental health, highlighting the profound impact these vibrant community spaces have on our overall well-being.

1. Connection with Nature

One of the fundamental aspects of farmers markets is the connection they offer to nature. Unlike traditional grocery stores, these markets are often held outdoors, surrounded by natural elements. Research consistently shows that spending time in nature has a positive effect on mental health. The presence of trees, fresh air, and sunlight in farmers markets can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while promoting a sense of tranquility and well-being.

2. Nutrient-rich Diet

A healthy diet plays a vital role in maintaining good mental health. Farmers markets provide access to a diverse range of fresh, nutrient-rich foods. Unlike processed foods found in supermarkets, the produce at farmers markets is typically harvested at peak ripeness, ensuring maximum nutritional value. The availability of organic and locally-grown fruits, vegetables, and other wholesome products allows individuals to prioritize a balanced and nourishing diet, which is known to support mental well-being.

3. Social Interaction and Community Engagement

Farmers markets serve as lively social hubs, bringing together farmers, artisans, and local residents. Engaging with others fosters a sense of belonging and community, essential factors for positive mental health. The social interactions that take place at farmers markets provide an opportunity for people to connect, exchange stories, and build relationships. Such connections contribute to reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation, promoting overall mental well-being.

4. Mindful Shopping Experience

The act of shopping at farmers markets is often a slower, more intentional process than rushing through the aisles of a supermarket. It encourages individuals to practice mindfulness, focusing on the present moment and being aware of their choices. This conscious shopping experience can lead to a greater appreciation for the food we consume, enhancing our relationship with what we eat and promoting a positive attitude towards our overall health.

5. Support for Local Economy

Farmers markets are vital for supporting local farmers and artisans. By purchasing directly from them, individuals contribute to the growth of their community's economy. This sense of giving back and supporting local businesses fosters a sense of pride and fulfillment, which positively impacts mental well-being. Knowing that their choices have a direct impact on the livelihood of others can boost self-esteem and provide a sense of purpose.

6. Educational Opportunities

Farmers markets are not just about shopping; they offer valuable educational opportunities. Many markets organize workshops, cooking demonstrations, and informational sessions on topics related to nutrition and sustainable farming. Engaging in these activities expands knowledge, empowering individuals to make informed choices about their diet and lifestyle. Education and awareness contribute to a sense of control and empowerment, positively influencing mental health.

7. Sensory Stimulation and Well-being

Farmers markets engage our senses in a unique way. The vibrant colors, enticing smells, and varied textures of fresh produce create a sensory experience that can be uplifting and invigorating. This multisensory stimulation can have a positive impact on mood and overall well-being. Immersing ourselves in this sensory-rich environment can help reduce stress and improve mental focus.

Farmers markets offer far more than just a convenient shopping experience. The mental health benefits they provide through their connection with nature, access to nutrient-rich foods, social interactions, mindful shopping experiences, support for the local economy, educational opportunities, and sensory stimulation are invaluable. By prioritizing farmers markets as a regular part of our lives, we can enhance our overall well-being and promote a healthier, happier society.

So, the next time you have the opportunity to visit a farmers market, take a moment to immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere and appreciate the mental health benefits it offers. Let us embrace the wholesome goodness of fresh produce, the joy of community engagement, and the tranquility of nature. Together, we can nurture our diet, health, and mental well-being, one farmers market visit at a time.



“There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind.”

—MISTER ROGERS

Balance is a feeling derived from being whole and complete; it's a sense of harmony. It is essential to maintaining quality in life and work.

~ Joshua Osenga



Mark your calendar!



Physical & Mental Wellness

Tai Chi
May 24 at 12:30 p.m.
(Asheboro)



Financial Wellness

Check-in with Braxton Towery:
June 24 & 25 (High Point)
June 26 (Asheboro)

Emotional Intelligence

HOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Emotional intelligence, also known as EI or EQ, refers to the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. It involves skills such as empathy, self-awareness and effective communication, which are essential for building strong relationships and achieving success in both personal and professional spheres.

While traditional intelligence (IQ) is important in determining an individual's cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence is equally crucial in determining one's emotional well-being and social competence. Developing and improving emotional intelligence can have a significant impact on an individual's overall quality of life and success.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in maintaining good mental health. **It enables individuals to understand and regulate their own emotions**, as well as perceive and respond to the emotions of others in a constructive manner. By having a strong grasp of emotional intelligence, individuals can effectively manage stress, anxiety, and depression, which can significantly improve their overall well-being. Additionally, emotional intelligence can enhance social relationships by enabling individuals to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Ultimately, developing emotional intelligence can lead to greater success and fulfillment in both personal and professional aspects of life.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE >](#)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Wellness Committee values your opinions and ideas!
To contact us, send an email to:

wellness@hospiceofthepiedmont.org

