Why NOW?

Since the pandemic,

our world has shifted and changed. Most likely we will not understand the true impact until many years to come. Ultimately, what worked for us before is not necessarily relevant today. The February 2024 National Health Statistics Report, "Living Alone and Feelings of Depression Among Adults Age 18 and Older" states:

"Adults who reported never or rarely receiving social and emotional support and living alone were almost twice as likely to report feelings of depression than those never or rarely receiving social and emotional support and living with others."
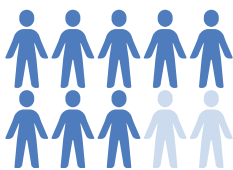
Some additional statistics regarding mental health provided by Lighthouse, our benefits partner:

1 in 5 US adults experience mental illness each year.

55% of adults with a mental illness receive no treatment.

8 of 10 people with a mental health condition say that shame and stigma prevent them from seeking help.

33% of Americans experience stress, anxiety, or depression

46% of Americans will meet the criteria for mental illness in their lifetime

So *NOW* the question is, "How can we make a difference?"

Since May is Mental Health Awareness Month, it's a great time to consider how we can help ourselves and others. One way we can make a difference is to promote self-care and inclusion. By taking care of ourselves, we create space so we can have meaningful interactions with our co-workers, friends and family. We may not be able to change the world, but each one of us can choose to be kind and understanding of one another.

The National Institution of Mental Health suggests the following as a means to help you live well and manage daily stress:

- Get regular exercise. Just 30 minutes of walking every day can boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.
- Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated. A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Pay attention to your intake of caffeine and alcohol and how they affect your mood and well-being—for some, decreasing caffeine and alcohol consumption can be helpful.
- Make sleep a priority. Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.

- Try a relaxing activity. Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy, such as listening to music, reading, spending time in nature, and engaging in low-stress hobbies.
- Set goals and priorities. Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to appreciate what you have accomplished at the end of the day.
- Practice gratitude. Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down or replay them in your mind.
- Focus on positivity. Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- Stay connected. Reach out to friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.

If you are looking at these suggestions and feeling overwhelmed, remember, perfection is not the goal. In fact, perfection is impossible because it is subjective. Instead, look at just one small thing you feel would improve your self-care, and do it.

You don't need to move mountains! Something simple like taking a moment at the end of the day to be grateful for something, walking the dog in the morning, or recognizing a coworker can make a difference in how you feel. We all have a different view of what wellbeing means and individual ways to get there.

NOW is a path.

NOW is a way to get started or continue our self-care while having some fun! Here are some ways you can earn points in the NOW wellbeing program:
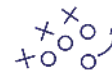
Coach a Sports Team

Annual Walking Challenge

Post on Schupan Strong

401k Advising

Sign up NOW! If you haven't already, go to your wallet in the HealthJoy App for your login instructions.

Contact your TMR partner if you need assistance!

NOW

BE WELL. BE YOU. BE THERE.