

Live Well, Work Well

May 2026

Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma

May is Mental Health Month, a national health observance dedicated to shedding light on mental health conditions and fostering understanding and support for those experiencing them. 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.

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.

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

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.

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