



## RAISE MENTALLY HEALTHY KIDS

Just as we watch out for our children's physical health – protecting them from hazards, encouraging good habits and so on – we also need to be aware of their mental health. With depression, anxiety and other concerns on the rise among children, it's imperative that people who care for kids care about their mental well-being. Here are five ways to make that a regular practice.

**Care for your own mental health.** Keep yourself healthy to be better equipped to help your kids. If you're battling a mental health issue, get help.

**Make your child feel safe and loved.** One of the biggest sources of poor mental health among kids is insecurity. Make sure your kids know they are safe, and that you love them unconditionally.

**Be consistent.** One source of security is routine and consistency. Let your kids know what to expect from day-to-day, and be consistent with rules and discipline.

**Encourage friendships.** Having friends around isn't a cure-all, but kids with relationships outside the home are more likely to be mentally healthy.

**Let them know it's OK to feel bad.** Don't scold kids for feeling bad. Sympathize. Talk about it. Let them know that everyone feels bad from time to time.

If your child is suffering with a mental health problem that seems too big for you to address, get help. Contact your pediatrician and ask for a referral for mental health services.

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## Smart Facts

**1 in 5**

American adults experience mental illness each year.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

leading cause of death among kids aged 10-14 is suicide.

**40%**

is the decline in poor-mental-health days among people who exercise.



## MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM OR MOOD?

Everyone has days when they feel sad or tense. That's life. But sometimes those bad days become more than just bad days, they become mental health issues. The challenge is knowing the difference and then dealing with it. "It can be hard to tell what normal fluctuations in mood are versus changes due to something more serious." Dr. Douglas A. Misquitta, a psychiatrist at the Ohio State University told US News & World Report.

Trying to tell if you or a friend is having a "bad day" or a mental health problem? Here are some ways to know the difference.

**Cause.** Sometimes bad moods just sneak up on us, but there's usually an underlying, identifiable cause. A romantic break-up. A stressful day at work. Homefront annoyances. A reminder of loss. Those kinds of things can put your mood in a bad place. But if feelings of sadness or anxiety have no logical cause, it might mean you're having a mental health challenge.

**Duration.** While a "bad day" might not always be 24 hours in length, it is usually relatively short, ranging from a few hours to a couple of days. However, if sadness or anxiety persists for a long time, you might need some mental health support.

**Frequency.** Do your "bad moods" occur regularly or once in a blue moon? If you experience regularly recurring mood problems, your feelings might be more than moodiness.

**Impact.** If your mood slows you down a little, that's to be expected. But if you are truly distracted from what you should be doing, are unable to handle basic responsibilities or activities, or withdraw from your normal life for an extended period of time, you might need help.

If you're still not sure whether you're experiencing moodiness or a mental health problem, try some things that often change your mood and see if they help. Engage in activities you enjoy. Make sure you're getting the right amount of sleep. Get together with friends. Exercise. Eat well. Take time to rest and destress. Think positive thoughts. [Here](#) are a few resources that are meant to help you wherever you are on your mental health journey.

If none of these activities can lift your spirits, if bad feelings persist and restrict your ability to do what you need to do, and if a sour mood affects your relationships, then it might be time to seek professional mental health support. If you're not sure where to turn, contact your doctor or, if you have one, an employee assistance program. Or tell someone who cares about you, and let them help you get the help you need.



*"It can be hard to tell what normal fluctuations in mood are versus changes due to something more serious."*



# TAPPING INTO EMPLOYER-PROVIDED MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

As the stressors of the last few years increased the attention to mental health, many employers realized that they should play the same kind of role in their employees' mental well-being as they do in their physical health. As a result, many have increased coverages for mental health services. In fact, a recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that about 40% of employers have added mental health services to their benefits offerings. Following are some of the benefits that might be available to you through your employer.

**EAP.** This is often the first and most accessible employer-sponsored benefit resource addressing mental health. EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs) usually include free counseling services.

**Wellness benefits.** These sort of umbrella benefits – ranging from paid “mental health days” to workplace screenings and more – seek to support workers' overall well-being. They often are as focused on physical health as mental health, as the two have proven to be complementary.

**Text-based apps.** These have become increasingly popular because they allow individuals to chat with counselors via text, and possibly even via video, without others in their workplace being aware they are seeking mental health services. Some employer benefit programs provide coverage for these apps, and others usually permit health savings account (HSA) funds to be used to pay for them.

**Telehealth and virtual mental health services.** As we've all become more accustomed to telehealth and communicating via Zoom, Teams and their peers, the use of such services for health and mental health services has also increased. These services can be especially helpful for specific, short-term problems, and, while coverages will vary, HSAs usually can be used to pay for sessions.

Make the most of the mental health and wellness benefits provided to you by your employer. If you're not sure what resources are available to you or how you can access them, reach out to your HR department.



## Mental Health Awareness Month

With the increased attention to mental health and mental illness has come increased sensitivity to the needs of those who suffer from mental illness. During Mental Health Awareness Month, learn how to help the countless adults and young people who live with mental illness. Learn more [here](#). If you or someone you know is having a mental health emergency, dial 988 at any time, seven days a week.

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: CHERRIES

What you crave when you have a hankering for fresh cherries depends on where you live. If you're a Midwesterner, you'll probably favor tart cherries; if you live out West, you're probably thinking of sweet cherries. In other parts of the country, the preferences vary.

These choices aren't as random as they might seem. The vast majority of cherries grown in the U.S. come from Michigan or Oregon and Washington, with Michigan growing mostly tart cherries and the Northwestern states growing sweeter varieties.

Whatever kind you like, you'll benefit from them. Cherries carry a big load of fiber, vitamin C, potassium, and other nutrients, and they deliver antioxidants and anti-inflammatory benefits. Plus, some athletes say cherry juice aid recovery after a hard workout, and doctors say the potassium and antioxidants in cherries are good for your heart.



While you can find cherries any time of year, late spring is the best time to get fresh ones. When buying cherries, choose fruits that are plump and shiny, with no splits or pockmarks in the skins. If you're not eating them right away, don't wash them and don't pluck the stems. Instead, remove any damaged fruit and put the cherries in the refrigerator. When you're ready to eat them, rinse them well and enjoy.



## Recipe: Cherry Poppins

### Ingredients:

- 1 12-oz. bag of frozen cherries
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sour cream
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon almond extract
- Pinch of kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup almonds

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°. Spread the almonds on a baking sheet and bake until golden (7-10 minutes). Let cool, then chop. Set aside. Meanwhile, combine the cherries, sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a small pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook, mashing occasionally, to make a chunky syrup (about 8 minutes). Let cool, then stir in the lemon juice. Meanwhile, whisk the sour cream, condensed milk, almond extract and salt in a bowl. Fill 6 pop molds about one-quarter of the way with some of the cherry mixture. (Wipe away drips on the insides of the molds for even layers.) Freeze until just set (about 30 minutes), then repeat with the sour cream mixture, filling the molds about halfway. Freeze again, then add remaining cherry mixture, freeze again and then top with remaining sour cream mixture. Insert wooden sticks into the pops and press chopped almonds around the bottom, and then freeze until completely solid (about 2 hours).

### Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 260; SUGARS: 33G; FAT: 12G; CARBOHYDRATES: 27MG;  
FIBER: 2G; SODIUM: 76MG; PROTIEN: 5G

Sources: Accessed April 5, 2023

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