

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE



FEBRUARY 2023

Prioritizing Mental Health Amid Inflation-related Anxiety

Financial stress can be a burden and negatively impact your mental health. During this period of increased inflation, it is essential to understand the relationship between financial and mental wellness so you can apply strategies to help you improve both areas of your life.

According to an American Psychiatric Association poll, 87% of Americans are anxious or very anxious about inflation. Luckily, there are ways that you can manage your anxiety to help mitigate these effects. Consider the following tips:

- **Reframe your mindset.** Shifting your perspective on inflation can be helpful. Try thinking about it like the weather: You may not be able to control the weather, but you can dress for it.
- **Lean on family and friends.** Talking with those close to you can help you stay grounded and reduce anxious feelings. Inflation can affect anyone, so it may help to discuss these struggles.
- **Seek professional help.** Waiting to get help when you need it will only lead to

worse mental—and possibly physical—health. Talk to your doctor or a licensed mental health professional.

- **Work with a financial planner.** Planning out your spending with a professional, if feasible, can help eliminate uncertainty around managing your money.
- **Connect with the community.** Community-based organizations can help connect those who qualify with programs that provide food, rent assistance, financial guidance and other resources.
- **Avoid negative media.** Consuming too much negative content can increase feelings of anxiety. Set a limit for how much news-related information you consume each day.

To deal with the current economic uncertainty, focus on what you can control. Talk to your supervisor about available financial and mental health resources.

Beat the Winter Blues

As the winter days get shorter, your mood may become as dark as the late afternoon. These feelings are often referred to as the “winter blues;” however, the medical name for this winter depression is seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

Try one of the following strategies to help you relax, unwind and make the long winter months more manageable:

- **Change your mindset.** Refocus your thoughts on wintertime pleasures by making a list of things that you enjoy about the season. Some ideas include getting cozy with a book, cooking comfort food and listening to wood crackle in a fireplace.
- **Get outside.** Make it a point to get outside daily for fresh air or a quick 15-minute walk, especially before the sun sets.
- **Increase the amount of light in your home.** If you cannot go outside, open the blinds to allow more sunlight into your space.

- **Declutter or organize.** Organizing and getting rid of clutter can be energizing. While it can feel draining to clear clutter, commit to doing a little bit at a time. If it takes less than a minute, do it right away.
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical exercise helps relieve stress and anxiety, which can worsen SAD.

If you're feeling blue this winter, and if the feelings last for several weeks, talk to a health care provider.

