

Take charge of your mental health



Stephanie Stewart

Mental Health Awareness Month is observed in May, and many organizations take time to bring attention to emotional, psychological and social well-being. In connection with mental health, National Suicide Prevention Month is in September. Not only should we take charge of our mental health and help others during specified months of the year, but awareness should also exist every day, month and year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the country, with more than 1 in 5 adults living

with some form of mental illness. Mental and physical health are equally important to overall health, and, like physical health, our mental health also can change over time.

Is someone close to you showing a sign of needing help? Perhaps they are embarrassed or afraid to speak up, or maybe they don't know where to turn or whom to ask for help. It could be a co-worker, friend, child, relative or even you.

From behavioral and eating disorders, anxiety, depression and panic attacks to substance use and many other diagnoses, it is so important to know that support is available, and that it's OK to ask for help.

Removing the stigma around mental health starts with getting educated and taking action.

Our partnership through Optum® provides support, information and resources to help address issues affecting your personal life, work and well-being. With more than 363,000 in-network clinicians and 3,796 in-network facilities, there is help for a wide range of mental health and substance use disorder conditions.

Virtual care: Need help, but want to speak with someone from the privacy of your home? The Plan offers convenient access to virtual visits for mental assessments and mental health treatment without going into a provider's office. Providers include psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers.

You can reach out to Optum at 877-468-1016 or visit liveandworkwell.com to find an in-network provider specific to your mental health needs.

Substance Use Disorder helpline: Another great resource available is Optum's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Helpline, which is available 24/7 to our members. You always have im-

mediate access to a licensed clinician. The clinician can arrange for an almost immediate face-to-face evaluation with an in-network expert who can create a unique care strategy. Better treatment outcomes occur when you have a clear individualized treatment plan within your community.

Call Optum at 855-780-5955 to speak with a licensed clinician who can help guide you to an in-network treatment provider or treatment center.

Bend's Behavioral Health Coaching: We are excited to announce that the NALC Health Benefit Plan, in partnership with Optum, began offering Bend's Behavioral Health Coaching Program. This is a live video-based service program that takes a family-first approach to care, with coaches helping to understand and implement powerful techniques aimed at managing a better life. Find help with the smallest to the largest of issues facing kids, teens, young adults and caregivers. Along with age- and symptom-specific care programs, the coaching offers interactive content, resources, parenting tips, tools and peer community support (for caregivers) that members can access to support their progress.

Onboarding and assessment protocols ensure that clinically appropriate care programs are selected, and provide ongoing monitoring of progress, risks and clinical needs. In addition, coaches are supervised by licensed mental health providers at all times to ensure the appropriateness of services and the potential for a higher level of care.

You can expect:

- A 35- to 45-minute welcome and evaluation session
- An evaluation and management plan
- Up to four 30-minute sessions with your coach per month
- Unlimited secure chat messaging
- Monthly measurement of progress

And the best news of all is that Bend Health Coaching is available at no cost to you, with no referral needed. It is a coaching option to support whatever developmental stage in life fits your family's needs. As a member of the Plan, all you need to do is enroll in the Bend Health program online at bendhealth.com/nalc.

You must be enrolled in the High Option Plan to obtain benefits through Optum, the SUD Program or Bend Health Coaching; however, Consumer Driven Health Plan members are offered providers through the Cigna Behavioral Network who are ready to assist you with life's challenges and to provide mental health support. Reach an in-network provider by calling 855-511-1893 or by visiting mycigna.com.

Please don't hesitate if you need help; reach out to someone today.