

NEWSLETTER



Feeling Down vs. Depression¹

Everyone feels down from time to time. That's part of life.

Sometimes, though, it can be a sign of a more serious condition like seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or other forms of depression. How do you know if you're just feeling a little blue or if you have depression?

What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. It's more than just feeling unhappy for a few days. Depression often has additional symptoms and may last for weeks, months, or longer.

Key symptoms of depression can include persistent sadness and a loss of interest in things you used to enjoy. It can also come with other symptoms, including:

- Unintentional weight loss or weight gain
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling anxious and restless or slowed down and sluggish
- Decreased energy or feeling more tired
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thinking about death or suicide

Seasonal depression

Seasonal depression is also known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. This type of depression starts as early as late summer or early fall when the amount of daily sunlight begins to decrease. SAD often lasts through winter until spring.

Other kinds of depression

Other types of depression aren't affected by the change in seasons. Instead, they can be caused by hormonal changes (such as postpartum depression), genetics, certain medications, alcohol, or life events.

Depression is very treatable

The good news is that depression can be treated in many cases. Don't put off getting help. Talk to a psychiatrist and/or therapist, and get their advice on next steps. If you're thinking of suicide, call 911 or 988 immediately.

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Tips for Managing Stress

Life's daily demands can cause a surprising amount of stress. Juggling a lot of different responsibilities—parent, employee, spouse, caregiver for a loved one—can make it hard to keep your head above water.

Chronic exposure to stress can contribute to brain changes that may lead to troubles with both body and mind. For example, we know that stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain, heart concerns, and other issues.

Tips for handling stress

Here are some tips for dealing with stress:

- **Change what you can.** If a specific situation is causing stress on an ongoing basis, do what you can to change it. That may mean scaling back on your commitments, asking for help from others, or getting out of a stressful job or relationship.
- **Prioritize.** Sometimes we can feel like we're failing if we don't cross everything off our lists. There are times when some things just aren't going to get done. Focus on what's truly important to you, and let other things slide.
- **Give yourself time away.** Take yourself out of the environment that is causing you stress, even if it's just for a short time. Take a walk, go to the gym, stop in a coffee shop—anything that takes you out of the situation.
- **Try deep breathing.** Deep abdominal breathing helps to bring down stress hormones.
- **Use mindfulness techniques such as guided imagery or meditation.** This helps to calm your body and your mind.

Therapy can help

If you've tried managing stress on your own and it just isn't working, therapy may help. A therapist can help you identify the stressors in your life and create a plan for reducing and managing your stress. Reach out to your insurance provider for help locating in-network therapists or counselors.





Coping with Grief

Whether it stems from the death of a loved one or pet, the last child leaving the nest, the end of a romantic relationship, or another life event, grief can be incredibly painful. That pain can manifest itself not only emotionally but also physically.

The most important thing to remember about grief is that it differs for every person and in every situation. There is no set process or timeline for grief. All you can do is be compassionate to yourself and try to make healthy choices.

Ways to deal with grief

First, give yourself permission to mourn. There is no way around grief. It's something you will have to work through. In fact, trying to avoid the grieving process can actually make it longer and more draining.

Next, embrace memories, both happy and sad. It might be painful at first, but it will help you move forward.

Also, look for healthy activities that help you feel better. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Seek out caring people
- Express your feelings through art
- Exercise
- Take a soothing shower

When to seek help

It's perfectly normal for the grieving process to take time, and there's no rulebook for how much; however, sometimes people do need help to recover from a loss. Reach out for help with your grief if you:

- Can't go to work or take care of your family
- Can't eat or sleep normally
- Feel your grief is getting worse
- Have thoughts of suicide or of harming yourself

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1. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db313.htm>
2. <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/what-is-intuitive-eating.html>
3. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/what-does-intuitive-eating-mean>

A Stress and Anxiety FAQ

How Stress and Anxiety Differ?

While the symptoms can be similar and often intertwined, stress and anxiety are two distinct things. As obvious as it sounds, stress arises from existing stressors—any circumstance or situation that makes you feel angry, frustrated or nervous.

Anxiety is a feeling of apprehension or doom that does not have an immediately recognizable cause. It is often felt alongside stress, but also appears without a discernable reason, or lingers after the actual reason for stress has gone. Common signs and symptoms of anxiety include nervousness, a sense of panic or doom, increased heart and breathing rates, trouble concentrating and sleeping, gastrointestinal problems, and weakness or fatigue.

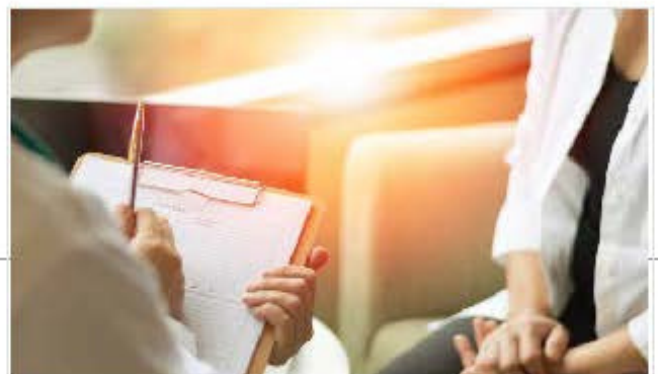
Why Do We Feel Stress and Anxiety?

It's not just your body being obnoxious and it's not all in your head. The physical component of stress is a chemical reaction in your body that is designed to help you survive. When you feel threatened, certain hormones are released into your body. These hormones speed up your heart rate and breathing, sharpen your senses, increase your blood pressure—basically, they trigger the famous “fight or flight” response.

Unfortunately, physical reactions designed to help us survive as cave dwellers aren't always useful in the present day. Even positive change, such as a promotion or a newborn baby, can cause stress that impedes your ability to handle a situation, instead of assisting it.

How Can I Reduce My Stress and Anxiety?

Keep reading for a number of everyday tips you can practice to reduce the effects of stress in your life. But if you are concerned that your stress is bubbling over into anxiety, seek advice from a professional! Unchecked anxiety can lead to any number of anxiety disorders, such as agoraphobia—extreme, life-altering fear of and avoidance of situations that might cause panic—or social anxiety disorder, in which self-consciousness and fear of embarrassment causes a person to avoid social situations. Even more frightening, attempts to cope with undiagnosed anxiety disorders can lead to depression, substance abuse, social isolation and other difficulties.





*Mentor Schools - **A**dapting, **B**alancing, **C**ollaborating*

Simple Solace from Stress

Stress creeps up on all of us, whether we know it or not. Sometimes we recognize the hard times while they're happening; other times we don't realize things are getting out of control until we feel overwhelmed.

Fortunately, people aren't locked into a certain level of stress management at birth—managing, reducing and productively addressing stress are skills that can be learned. Keep these principles in mind and try to practice them every day, even when you feel in control.

Stress Management Tips

1. **Talk to people you trust.** Sharing concerns with someone else helps you feel better, even if the problem can't be solved immediately.
2. **Be physically active throughout the day.** What that means could be different for everyone, but a consistently active lifestyle reduces mental tension and your risk of depression.
3. **Plan and organize.** A little preparation goes a long way. Create to-do lists, plan out your time and prepare in advance to make your day go a little bit smoother.
4. **Sleep—and give up other bad habits.** It really is incredible how much poor habits impact a person's stress level.
5. **Let yourself laugh. Even when you're by yourself.** You don't win any awards for not laughing, so you might as well have a little fun.
6. **Donate time to others.** Helping others is a great way to help yourself. Selfless acts improve a person's immediate outlook and, with regular practice, sense of self-worth.
7. **Keep perspective.** In the long-term, it really doesn't matter if you mow the lawn today. When you feel the tension rising, ask yourself what tasks need to be taken care of and what tasks can wait.
8. **Find time for yourself.** It could be as simple as 5-15 minutes each day. Find a pocket of time where you can be alone, then use that time for quiet reflection, or to practice deep breathing techniques and empty your mind.

Recipe

BLUEBERRY BAKED OATS

Ingredients

- 500 milliliters almond milk
- 200 grams jumbo porridge oats
- 2 tablespoons almond butter
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 small ripe banana, mashed
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- 450 grams blueberries, plus extra to serve
- 30 grams whole, skin-on almonds, roughly chopped
- milk or fat-free yogurt and honey, to serve (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/392°F. Mix all of the ingredients together in a large bowl.
2. Tip the mixture into a 2-liter ovenproof dish, then bake for 30-35 minutes until piping hot in the middle. Serve warm with a little milk or yogurt, honey and extra blueberries, if you like.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Servings
5 minutes	35 minutes	6



Nutrition Facts

Calories	386
Total Fat	22g
Sodium	.3g
Carbohydrate	34g
Total Sugars	10g
Dietary Fiber	6g
Protein	10g

Mentor Public Schools



Bringing evidence-based theories and concepts to our employee population, the Mentor Schools Health Coach will support you in building the habits needed for improved behavior change in all areas of wellbeing.

This dedicated coach will use psychological practices proven to align wellbeing to the things that matter most to you, supporting your individual goals.

With a holistic and broad understanding of healthy living, the health coach will partner with employees who are seeking self-directed, lasting changes aligned with their values, which promote health and wellness and, thereby,

enhance wellbeing.

Introducing Bridget Eastep

Senior Health Coach/ Wellness IQ

Bridget is an experienced facilitator and human performance & life coach with a demonstrated history of designing and delivering highly engaging employee training programs driven towards changing behavior. Bridget brings over 12 years of training experience to WellnessIQ.

She began her career at a Cleveland based software company that was among the Fortune 100 Best Places to Work list for six of the ten years she worked there. Within the L&OD and Internal Training teams, Bridget designed, implemented and facilitated an onboarding program that successfully welcomed 1,300+ technology professionals around the world.

Bridget is proud to have facilitated over 4,500+ hours of content for participants both in-person, virtual, recorded and live. As a certified Life Coach through the Academy of Modern Applied Psychology, and Human Performance Coaching through Theory of Me, the more recent years of her career have given her the opportunity to create life-changing coaching programs and instill sustainable behavior change in thousands of individuals. Bridget's passion for learning what drives and inspires her participants leads to a highly engaging experience.

Bridget's strengths are creating and maintaining meaningful connections rooted in empathy, adapting to situations while accepting them in a positive way with a commitment to make the best of them, and never leaving a good dose of humor out of things.

Why Would I Visit the Health Coach?

Topics of support:

- Goal setting- Sustaining improved behavior change, Finding purpose in health and wellness
- Physical Health - Movement, Nutrition, Sleep & Recovery
- Emotional Health - Stress management, Resiliency, Recognizing toxicity in your life, Emotional Health State & Action Plan
- Family Health & Wellness support & planning

Below are a few examples of why you might visit the health coach. However, anything related to improved behavior change around physical and emotional health is a worthy reason to make an appointment!

- To meet a specific wellness goal, such as run a marathon
- To develop my “why” behind improved behavior change
- To learn what healthy behaviors can improve my biometric screening numbers
- To learn how to implement a healthier diet
- To learn new cooking techniques for healthier meals
- To focus on time management for supporting my health and wellbeing
- To learn the benefits of a wellbeing activity such as meditation
- For support and accountability in my wellbeing journey
- To identify wellbeing challenges in and blind spots in my life
- To implement healthy sleep and regular recovery patterns
- To build a foundation for improved health and wellbeing for myself and/or my family
- To implement a healthy exercise routine

Contact Bridget at beastep@wellnessiq.net

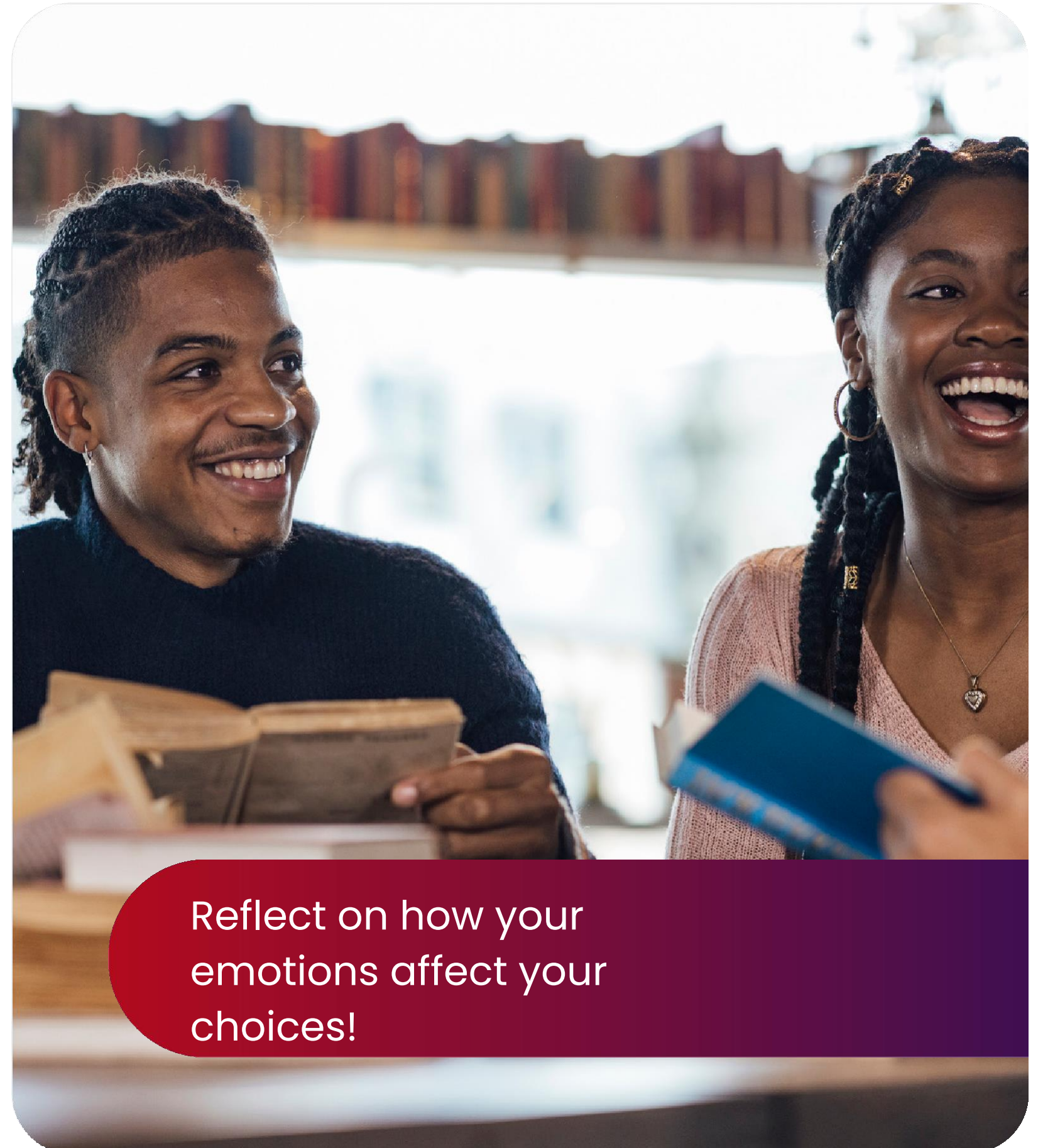
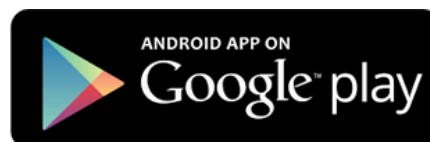
Emotions and Decisions

February 13 – 19, 2023

This week, work on self-reflection. Did you notice how your emotions affected your decisions? Taking a few moments to think through your decisions rationally will help you make the best possible decision in any situation!

1. Go to **Challenges** to join.
2. Get easy, step-by-step advice.

Looking to join? Go to join.virginpulse.com/mentorschools or the Virgin Pulse mobile app



Reflect on how your emotions affect your choices!



Resource Advisor is here with help for life's issues

Receive personalized counseling, financial, and legal help

Resource Advisor is a member assistance program that's included with your life and/or disability benefit. It provides resources and services to support you and your household family members when you may need it.

Counseling by phone, face-to-face, or LiveHealth Online video chat

If you're feeling stressed, worried, or going through a tough time, you may want someone to talk to. You and your household family members can call Resource Advisor anytime, 24/7, and talk with a licensed counselor:

- **By phone:** Call **1-888-209-7840**.
- **In-person:** You can call to set up face-to-face sessions and then schedule appointments directly with your counselor.
- **Video visit:** You can talk with a counselor from the convenience of your home or wherever you have internet access and privacy using LiveHealth Online. To set up a LiveHealth Online visit, call Resource Advisor. You will receive details about how to schedule a visit, along with a coupon code that gives you LiveHealth Online visits at no extra cost to you.

You can review a therapist's background and qualifications to help choose one who is available and right for you.

You and your family members are eligible for up to three counselor visits for each issue or concern, at no extra cost.

Counselors can help with:

- Stress
- Parenting
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Issues that affect your well-being
- Dealing with illness
- Relationship or family issues
- Help finding child care
- Elder care issues and resources

Support when you need it

Contact Resource Advisor:

- **Phone:** **1-888-209-7840**
- **Online:** **www.ResourceAdvisor.Anthem.com**
(Log in with program name AnthemResourceAdvisor.)

Helpful resources you can count on

Financial planning

Call Resource Advisor to set up one-on-one financial counseling with a certified professional financial planner. They can help with issues like retirement planning and saving for a child's education.

Legal services

With a call to Resource Advisor, you can schedule a consultation with an attorney over the phone at no charge. If you want to meet with an attorney in person, the legal consultant can set up an appointment at a discounted fee.

Identity theft recovery and monitoring

Resource Advisor has fraud resolution specialists who can help if your identity is stolen. They can work with creditors, collection agencies, law firms, and credit reporting agencies for you for up to one year. You can sign up for ID monitoring, receive credit report reviews, and place fraud alerts on credit reports no matter how many times your identity is compromised.

Call 1-888-209-7840 for financial, legal, and identity theft recovery and monitoring services.

Online tools to help with life's issues

The Resource Advisor website has tools to help with life's challenges, such as:

- Creating a will
- Parenting
- Aging
- Healthy living
- Household support
- Referrals
- Funeral planning

To access resources, visit www.ResourceAdvisor.Anthem.com and use the program name "AnthemResourceAdvisor."

**We're here to help with concerns
— no matter how big or small**

**Call 1-888-209-7840 or visit
www.ResourceAdvisor.Anthem.com to receive
support and guidance, whenever you may need it.**

1. The range of preventive care services covered at no cost share when provided by plan doctors is designed to meet state and federal requirements. The Department of Health and Human Services decided which services to include for full coverage based on U.S. Preventive Services Task Force A and B recommendations, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and certain guidelines for infants, children, adolescents, and women supported by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Guidelines. You may have additional coverage under your insurance policy. To learn more about what your plan covers, see your Certificate of Coverage or call the Member Services number on your ID card.

2. Prescriptions determined to be a "controlled substance" (as defined by the Controlled Substances Act under federal law) cannot be prescribed using LiveHealth Online. Psychiatrists on LiveHealth Online will not offer counseling or talk therapy.

3. LiveHealth Online appointments are subject to availability. Online counseling is not appropriate for all kinds of problems. If you are in crisis or having suicidal thoughts, it's important that you seek help immediately. Please call 800-273-8255 (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) or 911 for help. If your issue is an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. LiveHealth Online does not offer emergency services.

LiveHealth Online is the trade name of Health Management Corporation, a separate company, providing telehealth services on behalf of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Note about eligibility: This program is for active employees and their household family members. All benefits end at retirement.

Resource Advisor services are not a part of the certificate, policy or trust agreement and do not modify any insured benefits. Resource Advisor additional services are provided based on negotiated agreements between the insurance company and certain service providers. Although the insurance company endeavors to make these services available to all policyholders and certificateholders as described, modifications to our agreements with service providers may require that services be periodically modified or terminated. Such modification or termination of services may be made based on cost to the insurer, availability of services, or other business reasons at the discretion of the insurer or service providers.

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