

## EAP Newsletter – February 2026

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### How to Beat the High Cost of Healthy Eating

You shouldn't have to choose between your bank account and your health. But all too often, Americans are feeling squeezed.

A recent survey of more than 2,000 people confirms it: 59% of respondents said cost was a major barrier to adopting healthy habits.

When it comes to eating well, there are some things- like the price of groceries - that you can't change. But understanding the challenges to buying and eating nutritious food is an important first step. That way, you can adopt strategies to overcome these obstacles and improve your own health and your family's while sticking within your budget.

**The problem:** Living in a food desert. You're miles from the nearest grocery store and may lack reliable transportation to get there.

**What you can do:** If possible, shop at farmers markets or look for healthy options at small stores or bodegas. When access to fresh produce is limited, buy canned or frozen items. They're less expensive and last longer. Look for packages without syrup, butter, or cream sauces, which add sugar and salt.

**The problem:** Targeted marketing of unhealthy foods. Studies show that ads for junk food and fast food target people who are low-income, Black, or Hispanic.

**What you can do:** Cut back on family TV time, especially while you're eating. This can reduce exposure to ads for unhealthy foods. That's particularly important for children, who are easily swayed.



**The problem:** Food insecurity, which is the inability to afford or access safe, nutritious foods.

**What you can do:** Check your eligibility for assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Stretch your grocery budget by planning recipes ahead of time and shopping with a list. Add nutrient-rich but economical options like lentils, lettuce, bananas, apples, eggs, peanut butter, and canned fish. Purchase items like beans or grains in bulk, and for packaged goods, choose store brands - they can slash your bill by 20% to 30%.

## Thriving in the Face of Uncertainty

Many people struggle with anxiety, stress, and worry about the future at different times in their life. Yet it is still possible to relish the good in life and accomplish goals you set for yourself, even during stressful times. The reality is there will always be uncertainties when it comes to the future.

Trust in yourself and your resiliency to get through difficult times and be stronger because of it. Challenges can serve as learning experiences, opportunities to better yourself, and reminders about what really matters in life. Here are some tips to help you not just survive but also thrive during uncertain times.

- You don't have to pretend that everything is perfect all the time—that has a way of backfiring. Instead, acknowledge your fears and doubts. It can be therapeutic to reach out to a friend and talk or spend some time writing down how you feel in a journal.
- Practice what Dr. Marsha Linehan, psychologist and author, refers to as radical acceptance. This is the act of letting go of what you wanted or how you wanted things to be in any given moment and accepting what is.
- Avoid what Dr. Sarah McKay, Oxford neuroscientist, refers to as a “mental rehearsal” of worry thoughts—this is when we get so good at worrying, that our brains automatically go to worst-case scenario thinking. Whenever you have a worry thought, try to redirect yourself and reframe the thought. Focus on the facts and what you do have control over.
- A little gratitude can go a long way. Each day, take even just a few moments to remind yourself of the positive in your life and what you are grateful for, no matter how seemingly small.
- If you are starting to feel overrun with anxiety or worry, make yourself a to-do list. Add even small tasks to it. You could also break a big project into smaller steps, or as McKay says, “move the goalposts closer.” By crossing items off once completed, this will help build positive momentum.
- Stick to a routine as much as you can. McKay refers to daily routines as a “secret weapon” when it comes to anxiety. She explains, “Setting a daily schedule automatically provides structure amidst chaos and anchors your mind to the present moment.”
- Don't forget to take care of yourself—body and mind—which is the foundation for thriving, no matter the situation. As much as you can, try to eat healthy foods, keep yourself hydrated, and move your body. Physical activity can often help put worry thoughts into perspective and make you think more clearly.