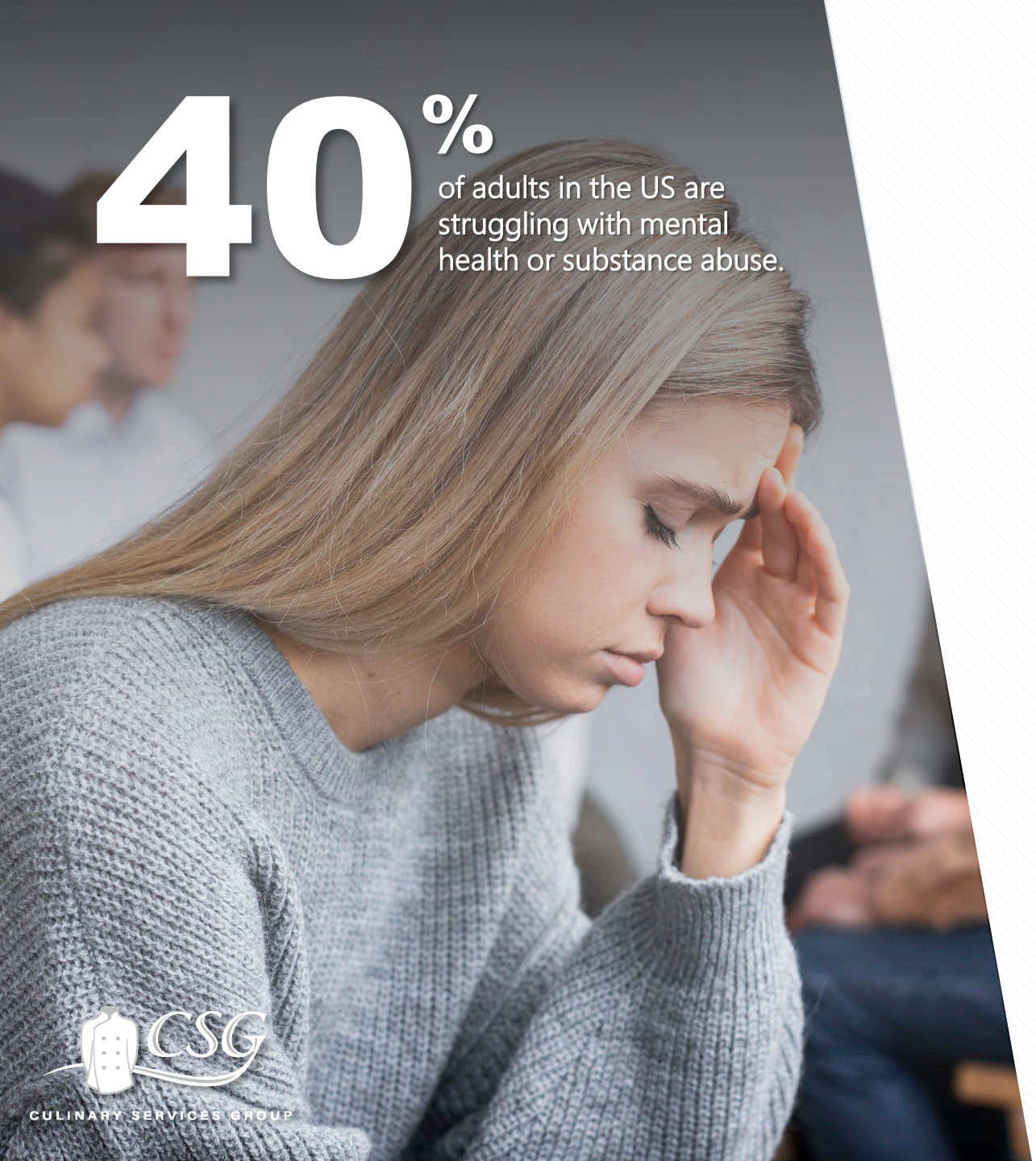
CULINARY SERVICES GROUP

Nutrition & Mental Health

Partnering with a Food Service Team

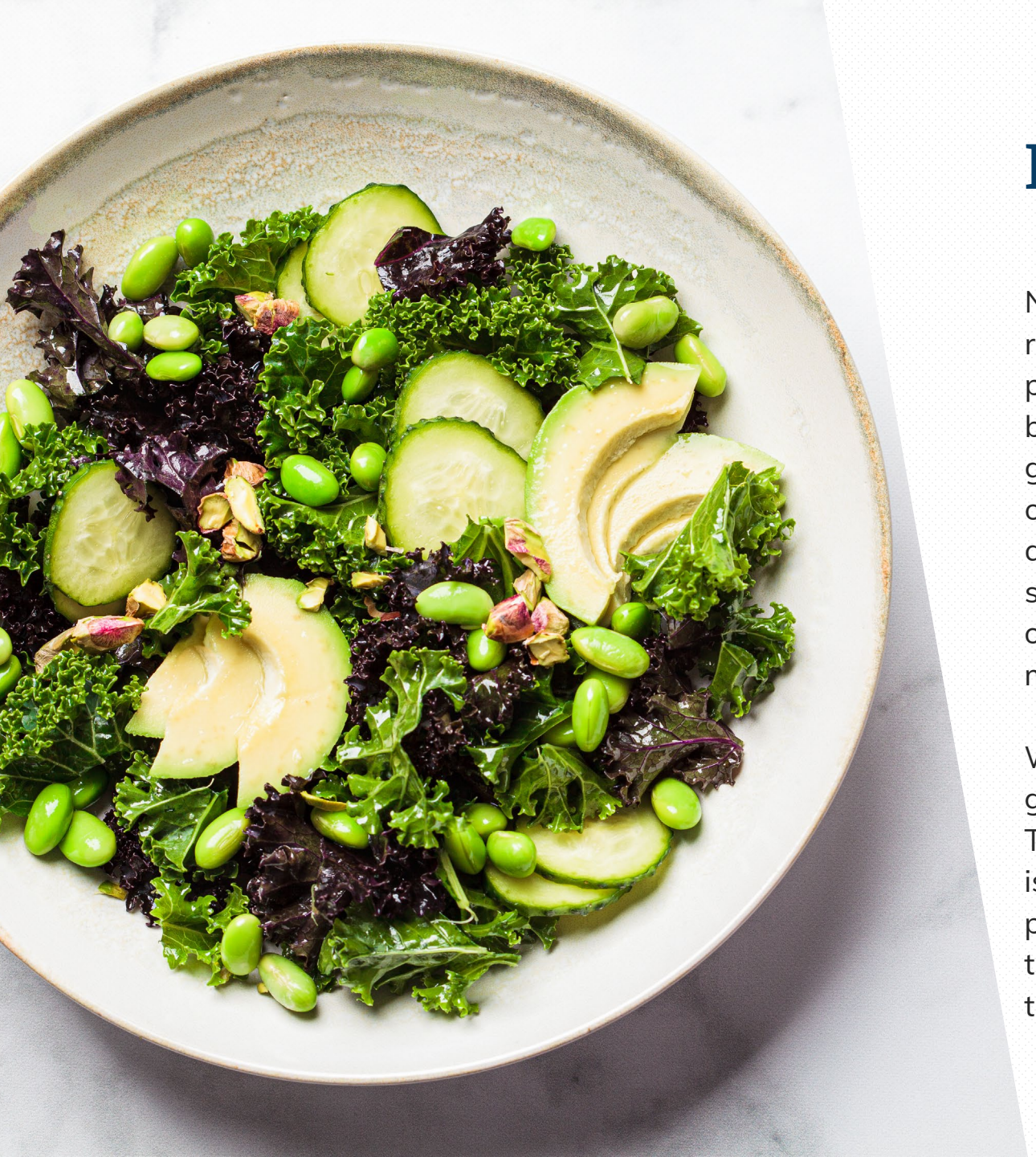




Mental Health: Now More Than Ever

People are seeking out mental health and addiction services now more than ever in the United States. According to a recent survey from the National Council for Behavioral Health 52% of organizations have seen an increase in demand for services in 2020. The CDC estimates that up to forty percent of adults in the United States are struggling with mental health or substance abuse. For those seeking help, the counseling and therapy mental health and substance abuse programs provide can be live changing.

We believe that good nutrition can support the recovery process. There are many factors that can influence mental health such as genetics, life experience, and socioeconomic status. But new research shows that diet can play an important role in mental health. A food service provider that understands the connection between diet, symptoms, and recovery can make a great partner in the success of your patients.



Nutritional Psychiatry

Nutritional Psychiatry is a new field of study that is linking the role of nutrition can play in the treatment of mental health problems. Researchers in this field are building connections between the bacteria in our gut and their effect on our brain. Our gastrointestinal tracts are lined with millions of neurons. In fact, our second brain, or enteric nervous system, is found in the gut and communicates back and forth with our central nervous system. This link is called the brain-gut axis, and the bacteria in our digestive tracts can influence the brain when it comes to mood, cognition, and mental health.

We already know having plenty of good bacteria can help your gut digest food and reduce inflammation throughout our bodies. The idea that gut bacteria can also affect mood and energy level, is gaining traction among researchers. Studies have found that patients with depression had lower levels of certain bacteria and that the abundance of several types of bacteria can correlate to the severity of schizophrenia symptoms.

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The SMILES Trial

Can a dietary change help to treat mental health problems? While current research is quite limited, one trial that examined the role of diet in the treatment of moderate to severe depression showed promising results.

Over 12 weeks, 67 participants in the SMILES Trial received either dietary counseling or social support in addition to their current treatment for moderate to severe depression. The dietary intervention emphasized vegetables, fruits, whole grains, oily fish, extra virgin olive oil, legumes, and raw nuts. It also allowed for moderate amounts of red meat and dairy.

At the end of the study, those in the diet group achieved significant improvements in depression symptoms, including 32% achieving remission. These improvements remained even when scientists accounted for variables such as body mass index (BMI), physical activity, and smoking. In comparison, only 8% of the control group achieved remission.



Good Mood Food

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that regulates a person's emotions. About 95% of the body's serotonin is produced in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Studies have shown that diets high in the amino acid tryptophan can raise serotonin levels and increase positive moods in people. This is because the body converts tryptophan into serotonin.

Foods with a high level of tryptophan include eggs, cheese, turkey, chicken, oats, bananas, and tofu. Diets like Mediterranean or Japanese diets often contain more fruits, vegetables, fish, and leaner meats, as well as other foods that can improve gut health and therefore boost overall health and mood.

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Nutrition & Substance Abuse

Chronic substance abuse can alter our body's ability to maintain proper nutrition. Substances like alcohol, opioids, and stimulants can cause a loss of appetite and change our ability to effectively absorb nutrients from food. For instance, alcohol abuse can cause severe deficiencies in essential nutrients like folic acid, vitamin B6, and thiamine. Lack of these nutrients can cause anemia, dizziness, headaches, shortness of breath, and even increase the likelihood of developing neurological conditions.

When a patient checks into a substance abuse rehab, they not only need to get sober, they will need to retrain their body to accept nutrients correctly again.

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A Food Service Partner

A good food service team can partner with your organization to provide the right nutritional support for mental health and substance abuse patients. While some large food service providers have a one size fits all menu approach, Culinary Services Group can work with you to provide a menu tailored to the nutritional needs of the patients you serve. Our specialized software can help us track patient nutrition on an individual basis, ensuring every client receives the nutrients they need for wellness and recovery support.

We specialize in dining programs in healthcare settings. Our food-first approach to nutrition and wellness align well with recovery goals.

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A Success Story

Woodhaven is a 130-bed drug and alcohol rehab facility located in Dayton, Ohio. When Culinary Services Group first met with them, they wanted a partner who could be flexible in menu selections, provide clinical support, and cost transparency. Some of the patients there required a unique menu and service style. They realized they needed a partner who could provide strong operational support.

CSG was able to provide the leadership at Woodland with the dietary management team and support they needed. As Woodhaven continues to increase in bed size, they can continue to provide flexible menus to patients. With meal service off his plate, our point of contact was able to focus on other areas of the operation including company wide performance improvement. Eventually his ability to focus on these critical tasks led to his promotion to the facility's Director of Operations. Our partnership has helped support the recovery of Woodhaven's patients and helped the organization thrive.

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FOOD MANAGEMENT
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