



BHS A.S.S.I.T. Spotlight

September 2020

Your EAP is a free and confidential service, which provides assessment and short-term counseling for a variety of mental health, substance abuse and work/life related issues. To learn more about your available benefits, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800.245.1150.



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Social Support: Tap This Tool to Beat Stress

A social support network is even more important than ever during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Your network can include friends, family and peers. Several studies have demonstrated that having a network of supportive relationships contributes to psychological well-being. A strong social network can be critical to help you through the stress of tough times. You can benefit in the following ways:

Sense of belonging. Spending time with people helps ward off loneliness. Whether it's new parents, dog lovers, fishing buddies or siblings, just knowing you are not alone can go a long way toward coping with stress.

Increased sense of self-worth. Having people who call you a friend reinforces the idea that you're a good person to be around.

Feeling of security. Your social network gives you access to information, advice, guidance and other types of assistance if you need them. It's comforting to know that you have people you can turn to in a time of need.

There are many ways you can reach out to your network for companionship and encouragement while maintaining social distancing standards:

Telephone: Call someone on your support team, whether you are having a good or bad day. You can help each other through the tough times, and celebrate each other's accomplishments.

Video chat: With the various video conferencing options, it's easier than ever to reach out to others. This offers you the chance to see your family and friends, which helps solidify your connection and communications.

Social media: The newest generation of social networking sites can help you stay connected with friends and family. Many good sites exist for people going through stressful times. Be sure to stick to reputable sites, and be cautious about oversharing personal information or arranging in-person meetings.

A successful relationship is a two-way street. The better a friend you are, the better your friends will be. Here are some suggestions for nurturing your relationships:

Stay in touch. Answering phone calls, returning emails and reciprocating invitations lets people know you care.

Don't compete. Be happy instead of jealous when your friends succeed, and they'll celebrate your accomplishments in return.

Be a good listener. Listen when your friends are speaking. Learn what's important to them. You may have more in common with them than you think.

Appreciate your friends and family. Take time to say thank you and express how important they are to you. Be there for them when they need support.



Alzheimer's or Depression: Could It Be Both?

Early Alzheimer's disease and depression share many symptoms, so it can be difficult — even for physicians — to distinguish between the disorders. In addition, many people with Alzheimer's disease are also depressed.

Just as treatment is important for people with depression alone, it's equally crucial for those with Alzheimer's disease and depression to get treatment for their depression.

There are symptoms common to both Alzheimer's and depression including social withdrawal, memory problems, sleeping too much or too little and impaired concentration.

With so much overlap in symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between the two disorders, especially since they occur together. A thorough physical exam and psychological evaluation can help in making a diagnosis.

To detect depression in people who have Alzheimer's disease, doctors must rely more heavily on nonverbal cues and caregiver reports than on self-reported symptoms. If a person with Alzheimer's displays one of the first two symptoms on the following list, along with at least two of the others within a two-week period, he or she may be depressed.

- Significantly depressed mood — sad, hopeless, discouraged, tearful
- Social isolation or withdrawal

- Reduced pleasure in or response to social contacts and usual activities
- Eating too much or too little
- Agitation or lethargy
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or inappropriate guilt
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

It's clear that depression has a strong effect on the quality of life for people with Alzheimer's disease. Depression can lead to:

- Worsening cognitive decline
- Greater disability involving daily living skills
- Increased dependence on caregivers

Treatment options. Several options are available to treat people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and depression, including antidepressants, physical exercise, support groups and counseling, and decreasing social isolation.

Making the diagnosis of depression in people with Alzheimer's disease and getting appropriate treatment can help make life easier and more enjoyable for persons with Alzheimer's, their families and caregivers.

If you are concerned about your loved one's mental health, don't hesitate to seek advice. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150.



Children and Screen Time: How to Guide Your Child

With screens virtually everywhere, controlling your child's screen time can be challenging. To complicate matters, home schooling makes computer time educational, as well as supporting their social development. So how do you manage your child's screen time?

For children under 2 years of age unstructured playtime is more valuable for their developing brain than electronic media. By age 2, children can benefit from some types of screen time, such as programming with music, movement and stories. By watching together, you can help your child understand what he or she is seeing and apply it in real life.

As your child grows, a one-size-fits all approach doesn't work as well. You'll need to decide what's appropriate and how much media to let your child use each day. Consider applying the same rules to your child's real and virtual environments. In both, play with your child,

teach kindness, be involved and know your child's friends and what your child does with them.

To ensure quality screen time:

- Preview programs, games and apps before allowing your child to view or play with them
- Seek out interactive options that engage your child, rather than those that just require pushing or swiping or staring at the screen
- Use parental controls to block or filter internet content
- Make sure your child is close by during screen time so you can supervise his or her activities
- When watching programming with your child, discuss what you're watching and educate him or her about advertising and commercials.

Managing your child's use of screens and media will be an ongoing challenge. However, by developing household rules — and revisiting them as your child grows — you can help ensure a healthy experience.

Easy Seafood Salad

Ingredients: 1 medium orange · 1 medium lemon · 1 medium lime · 1/2 pound peeled and deveined cooked shrimp (31-40 per pound) coarsely chopped · 1/2 pound refrigerated fresh or imitation crabmeat, coarsely chopped · 2 tablespoons finely chopped sweet onion · 2 tablespoons finely chopped sweet red pepper · shredded lettuce · assorted crackers

Directions: Finely grate zest from orange. Cut orange crosswise in half; squeeze juice from orange. Transfer zest and juice to a large bowl. Repeat with lemon and lime. Add shrimp, crab, onion and pepper; toss to coat. Serve on lettuce with crackers.

