



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

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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.



Nurturing Your Mental Health

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Nurturing Your Mental Health

Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health. Here are some key ways to take care of your mental health so you have the resilience to cope with life's ups and downs, adapt to change and maintain healthy relationships.

Accept yourself. Every person is different, and no one is perfect. Accept yourself for who you are, and take pride in your unique strengths and quirks. When you find yourself being self-critical, pause and reflect on what's good about you—why your friends love and appreciate you and all of the things you do well. If negative self-talk (the critical voice inside your head) is holding you back and making you unhappy, consider talking with a professional counselor to learn new skills for weakening that negative voice and strengthening your positive self-image.

Strengthen social connections. Social connections—your friends and family, the people you spend time with and talk to—are a key element in your mental health. Make time for the people you care about, especially the people with whom you're able to discuss your emotions. Pay attention to who in your social network lifts your mood when you're feeling down and who is open and honest with you when you're seeing things in an unrealistic way. Cultivate these connections, and strengthen them by providing the same emotional support in return.

Calm yourself. When you're dealing with a stressful situation or feel your body growing tense, take time out to calm yourself. Learn stress-reducing techniques like deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness, and use the ones that work for you to relax your body and your mind. Physical activity, healthy sleep habits and time with friends can all help to reduce your stress.

Practice healthy thinking. Build your emotional resilience by adopting positive habits of thought. Practicing gratitude is one way to do this. Take time every day to think about what you are grateful for, and write it down. Positive reframing is another way. When you have a negative reaction to something, step back and reconsider things in a positive light, looking for the opportunity in the situation or the good in the other person and yourself. Work to solve problems, one step at a time.

Talk about how you feel. When you're sad, worried or upset, talk about what you're going through with someone you trust. When you hold those feelings inside yourself, they can build, becoming more intense and uncomfortable. When you talk about them, you begin to process your emotions, understand what lies behind them and find ways to solve the problems you're facing. A phone call or a cup of coffee with a friend may be all it takes. For deeper or longer-lasting emotional challenges, it may help to talk with a professional counselor.

Find purpose and meaning in life. It can be through spirituality or religious practice, caring relationships with others, helping people in need or doing work that in some way makes the world a better place. If you don't find purpose and meaning in your job or your daily life, look for other ways to find this satisfaction. Consider volunteering, paying more attention to the relationships in your life, exploring your spirituality or simply looking for new ways to be kind.

When you're suffering emotionally and nothing seems to help, reach out for support. Your employee assistance program (EAP) can direct you to a professional counselor who can help you cope with the challenges you're facing. Contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.



Your Child's Mental Health: Tips for Parents and Caregivers

As a parent or caregiver, you want the best for your children or other dependents. You may be concerned or have questions about certain behaviors they exhibit and how to ensure they get help.

What to look for It is important to be aware of warning signs that your child may be struggling. You can play a critical role in knowing when your child may need help. Consult with a school counselor, school nurse, mental health provider or another health care professional if your child shows one or more of the following behaviors:

- Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Experiencing sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- Getting in many fights or wanting to hurt others
- Having intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Experiencing extreme difficulty controlling behavior, putting himself or herself in physical danger or causing problems in school
- Using drugs or alcohol repeatedly
- Having severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Showing drastic changes in behavior or personality

Because children often can't understand difficult situations on their own, you should pay particular attention if they experience:

- Loss of a loved one
- Divorce or separation of their parents
- Any major transition (new home, new school, etc.)
- Traumatic life experiences
- Teasing or bullying
- Difficulties in school or with classmates

How to talk about mental health Do you need help starting a conversation with your child about mental health? Try leading with these questions. Make sure you actively listen to your child's response:

- Can you tell me more about what is happening? How you are feeling?
- Have you had feelings like this in the past?
- Sometimes you need to talk to an adult about your feelings. I'm here to listen. How can I help you feel better?
- Do you feel like you want to talk to someone else about your problem?

When talking about mental health problems with your child, you should:

- Communicate in a straightforward manner
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to a child or adolescent's age and development level
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable
- Listen openly, and let your child tell you about their feelings and worries

What to do. If you are concerned about your child's behaviors, it is important to get appropriate care. You should talk to your child's doctor, school nurse or another health care provider, and seek further information about the behaviors or symptoms that worry you.

If you are concerned about your child's behaviors, it is important to get appropriate care. Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to see what options are available. Your designated Care Coordinator can be reached at 800-245-1150.



Tips for Staying Mentally Healthy in the Workplace

Take a break

Physically remove yourself from stressful situations.

- Walk around the block
- Go out for a break or lunch
- Switch to an unrelated task
- Find a “quiet spot” and do some stretching or breathing exercises

Take stock of your stress-creating habits

Look at what you do that makes things more stressful.

- Are you a perfectionist?
- Do you worry too much?
- Do you try to control things around you?
- Do you exaggerate or ignore things?

Take action

If the stressors are within your control, take action.

- Practice time management
- Try new ways of dealing with difficult people
- Learn new job skills
- Know your “hot buttons” and decide to change your ways of reacting

Take it as it is

If the stressors are not within your control, change the way you react to them.

- Put the stressor into perspective
- Focus on the “big picture” rather than getting bogged down on a detail
- Learn to accept what you cannot change

Take care of yourself

To better cope with life’s stressors, learn to care for yourself.

- Eat right
- Exercise
- Get enough rest
- Avoid abusing alcohol and other substances
- Do something good for yourself

Take time to ask for help

Accept help from others.

- Talk to your trusted coworkers, supervisor or HR
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit information, available counseling, referrals to mental health professionals and more

EASY SNACK RECIPE: Strawberries and Yogurt Whipped Cream

24 strawberries, stemmed and halved; 2 tablespoons sugar, 1/3 cup chilled whipped cream, 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract, 1/3 cup 0% plain Greek yogurt

1. Place the sugar into the mixing bowl and add the chilled whipping cream & vanilla extract.
2. Hand whisk until the cream and vanilla reaches stiff peaks; whisk in the yogurt until incorporated.
3. Place strawberries in 4 glasses or bowls and top with cream.

<https://www.skinnytaste.com/strawberries-and-cream/>

