

- 1) Health
- 2) Communication
- 3) Self-Care
- 4) Work/Life Balance

BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN HEART MONTH THE HEAD/HEART CONNECTION



For years, doctors thought the connection between mental health and heart health was strictly behavioral – such as the person who is feeling down seeking relief from smoking, drinking or eating fatty foods.

That thinking has started to change. Research shows there could be physiological connections, too. The biological and chemical factors that trigger mental health issues also could influence heart disease.

“The head-heart connection should be on everyone’s radar,” said Barry Jacobs, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist and director of Behavioral Sciences at the Crozer-Keystone Family Medicine Residency Program in Springfield, Pa. “It’s not just being unhappy. It’s having biochemical changes that predispose people to have other health problems, including heart problems.”

Depression and Other Issues

Many forms of mental health issues can affect heart disease. There’s the temporary state of depression or a more severe, clinical case. You can also have varying levels of anxiety and stress, just to name a few of the most well-known problems.

Research does not firmly link stress and heart disease, but there’s a growing belief that it’s an additional risk factor, and maybe even more dangerous than some others, said Nieca Goldberg, M.D., medical director for the

Joan H. Tisch Center for Women’s Health at NYU’s Langone Medical Center.

“Stress can increase hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, and can impact your blood pressure and heart rate,” she said.

Heart, Stroke Patients Must Be Wary

Having heart disease or stroke can cause anxiety or depression. It is important to handle these in a healthy way.”

“It’s not just that they want to smoke and eat,” Dr. Jacobs said. “They don’t have the energy to get out of bed and go to rehab and do the things they need to regain their physical health.”

It makes sense that someone might think, “I just had a heart attack, I should be depressed.” But minimizing their sadness, and dismissing it, could start them down a slippery slope.”

What should be done?

Start by discussing how you are feeling, both physically and mentally, with your healthcare provider. He or she will be able to help, or refer you to the most appropriate care or provide the best place to start.

You should monitor yourself and your loved ones, especially those dealing with heart disease or stroke.

“Doctors are going to say, ‘Are you still smoking? How are you doing with your diet? Are you checking your blood pressure? How’s your mood been? Are you enjoying the same things that used to give you enjoyment?’” Dr. Jacobs said. “Whether someone is clinically depressed or just anxious, they need follow-up care.”

www.heart.org | Nov 10, 2015



If you find yourself struggling with depression, call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 to learn about your available options.



Improve Communication

by Tailoring to Their Personality

We all have different personal communication styles. The better you recognize and understand them, the more effective you will communicate. Below are four basic styles to look for:

Direct. These people focus on results. They want other people to get to the point, and quickly. They grow impatient with too much chitchat or beating around the bush. Chances are they are very organized and their areas uncluttered. You will communicate most effectively by going straight to the basic message without delay.

Relationship-oriented. Some people are driven to connect with others on a personal level. They are always ready to talk about their family, friends, and activities, and ask you about yours. They know a lot of people and usually know what is going on around them. Take some time to get friendly with this personality type. Learn about their family and personal history.

Analyzer. Relying on facts and data to make their decisions, they will listen if you can provide detailed, logic-driven information supporting your point. A good strategy: Give them statistics and other data to look over on their own so they can convince themselves that your idea is workable.

Enthusiastic. Turned on by new ideas and interesting challenges, these people can get very involved in what they are talking about, using physical gestures and dramatic figures of speech. Talk about the big picture to get their energy up and avoid giving excessive details.

BOOSTING YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

Like most people, you probably feel down about yourself from time-to-time; but for some people, it's deeper than that.



Many people suffer from severe low self-esteem, especially those who experience depression, anxiety, or have an illness or disability. Low self-esteem can keep you from enjoying the life you deserve. By using the ideas and activities in this article, hopefully you can boost your self-esteem and feel better about yourself.

Before we begin, it is important to remember that low self-esteem can be a symptom of depression, anxiety or other mental health condition. If you think there could be an underlying issue, call your BHS Care Coordination to discuss available options.

Everyday Things You Can Do to Boost Your Self-Esteem

Pay attention to your own needs and wants. Listen to what your body, mind, and heart tell you. For instance, if your body is telling you that you have been sitting down too long, stand up and stretch. If your heart is longing to spend more time with a special friend, give them a call. If your mind is telling you to clean up your basement, spend time outdoors, or listen to your favorite music, make time for these activities.

Take good care of yourself. Many of us spend more time taking care of others' needs than taking care of their own needs. If you work at taking good care of yourself, you will find that you feel better about yourself. For example:

- ▶ Eat healthy foods and avoid junk foods. Focus on vegetables, fruits, whole grains and proteins.
- ▶ Get daily exercise. Consult with your doctor before changing your exercise habits.
- ▶ Make time for things you enjoy, like crafting, playing an instrument or fishing.

- ▶ Get something done that you have been putting off, like cleaning out that room of the house.
- ▶ Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself. Check out local consignment shops if budget is an issue.
- ▶ Give yourself rewards. You are a great person and deserve to be rewarded.
- ▶ Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself.

Do for others. While it's important to take care of yourself, offering to help others can also boost your self-esteem. Maybe a friend or family member needs help with moving, cooking dinner or yard work. Offer to help them out and enjoy a sense of accomplishment. Something as simple as a smile or casual conversation with the check-out cashier goes a long way.

Stop Talking Bad About Yourself. Have you ever said to yourself "I'm a jerk" or "I'm so stupid?" Well stop! Even when you say these things lightheartedly, you eventually begin believing them. Focus on the positive things you do. Instead of saying "I'm so stupid" when you make a mistake, remind yourself that everyone makes mistakes and reminisce a positive accomplishment.

As you walk through this journey, it's important to ensure you have support, whether that be a friend, family member or a therapist. Improving your self-esteem can take time. If none of these steps or activities seem to help, it may be time to seek professional help. Call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 to see what options are available to you.

STRIKE A BETTER BALANCE

Juggling the demands of career and personal life can be an ongoing challenge. Use these ideas to help you find the work-life balance that's best for you:



Track your time. Track everything you do for one week, including work-related and personal activities. Decide what's necessary and what satisfies you the most. Cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle — or share your concerns and possible solutions with your employer or others.

Learn to say no. Whether it's a co-worker asking you to spearhead an extra project or your child's teacher asking you to manage the class play, remember that it's OK to respectfully say no. When you quit doing the things you do only out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll make more room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you and bring you joy.

Leave work at work. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. When you're with your family, for instance, turn off your cell phone and put away your laptop computer.

Manage your time. Organize household tasks efficiently, such as running errands in batches or doing a load of laundry every day, rather than saving

it all for your day off. Put family events on a weekly family calendar and keep a daily to-do list. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go. Limit time-consuming misunderstandings by communicating clearly and listening carefully. Take notes if necessary.

Bolster your support system. At work, join forces with co-workers who can cover for you — and vice versa — when family conflicts arise. At home, enlist trusted friends and loved ones to pitch in with child care or household responsibilities when you need to work overtime or travel.

Know when to seek professional help. Everyone needs help from time to time. If your life feels too chaotic to manage and you're spinning your wheels worrying about it, talk with a professional — take advantage of your EAP benefit and call your BHS Care Coordinator today at 800-245-1150.

Zesty Shrimp & Black Bean Salad

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced chipotle chile in adobo (see Tips), or more to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound peeled and deveined cooked shrimp, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 1 cup quartered cherry tomatoes
- 1 large poblano pepper or bell pepper, chopped



- 1/4 cup chopped scallions
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Nutritional Information Per Serving:

- 273 calories, 12g fat, 21g protein, 1915g carbs
- Active Time:** 20 minutes
- Total Time:** 20 minutes
- Servings:** 4 servings, 1 1/2 cups ea.

Instructions:

Whisk vinegar, oil, chipotle, cumin and salt in a large bowl. Add shrimp, beans, tomatoes, poblano (or bell pepper), scallions and cilantro; toss to coat. Serve room temperature or cold.

Tips: Chipotle chiles in adobo sauce are smoked jalapeños packed in a flavorful sauce. Look for the small cans with Mexican foods at large supermarkets.