



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

June 2019

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.



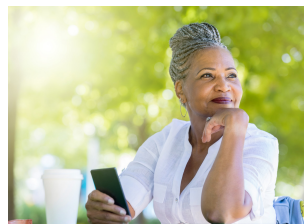
PTSD Awareness Month:  
Insights Into PTSD

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Banana Berry Smoothie

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## PTSD Awareness Month: Insights Into PTSD

According to the National Center for PTSD, 7-8 percent of the population will have post traumatic stress disorder at some time in their lives.

PTSD can occur after you have experienced a trauma—a shocking and/or dangerous event that you either witness or that happens to you. It's often associated with veterans and first responders, but can include things like sexual assault, domestic abuse, car accidents, the sudden death of a loved one, and much more.

PTSD symptoms can occur in anyone and is not a sign of weakness. It is a normal reaction to trauma, and can rewrite the script in your brain.

The amygdala, which controls your fight or flight response, becomes more reactive, inciting feelings of fear in situations that might take you back to your trauma.

If you have PTSD, you might experience:

- ▶ Reliving the trauma (flashbacks, bad dreams, frightening thoughts)
- ▶ Avoiding places, events or objects that remind you of the experience
- ▶ Avoiding thoughts or feelings related to the event

- ▶ Being easily startled
- ▶ Feeling tense or on edge
- ▶ Having difficulty sleeping
- ▶ Having angry outburst
- ▶ Trouble remembering key components of the traumatic event
- ▶ Negative thoughts about oneself or the world
- ▶ Feeling guilt or blame related to the incident
- ▶ Loss of interest in enjoyable activities
- ▶ Use of alcohol or substances to deal with your symptoms

There are resilience factors that may reduce the risk of developing PTSD, including:

- ▶ Seeking out support from friends and family
- ▶ Finding a support group after a traumatic event
- ▶ Learning to feel good about one's own actions in the face of danger

PTSD can be serious, and should be evaluated and treated by a professional. If you are struggling with symptoms of PTSD, your EAP can help. Call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 for additional support.



## Understanding Procrastination

We've all done it. We've let the laundry pile up, delayed doing something until the last minute, just waiting until we aren't so tired, are more inspired, and we try to justify it—but always it makes us feel bad. We have to do it regardless, so why don't we just get it over with?

Procrastination is not laziness. It is not a lack of self-control. It is not rational.

“Procrastination is an emotion regulation problem, not a time management problem,” claims Dr. Tim Pychyl, professor of psychology and member of the Procrastination Research Group at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Procrastination can be associated with short-term relief over long-term results. It's trying to ameliorate current symptoms of negative emotions, anxiety, low self esteem or insecurity, feeling overwhelmed by the task and choosing to avoid rather than engage in the work.

It's a cycle, and it is not rational, because choosing not to do the task cements our belief that we are lazy, unmotivated, lacking self-control and unable to accomplish the things we need to benefit our own lives. And the cycle continues, becoming a habit of

procrastinating, and then, ruminating about our shortcomings with regard to productivity.

### **What can we do about it?**

A good place to start is to forgive yourself when you are in the midst of procrastinating. Rather than ruminating on how you should be doing whatever task you're avoiding, rather than blaming yourself, and calling yourself lazy, you should be compassionate and empathetic toward yourself.

In a 2010 study, researchers found that students who were able to forgive themselves for procrastinating in the moment ended up procrastinating less when their next task came along.

Self-compassion supports motivation and personal growth. It can serve to decrease psychological distress, which is one of the main causes of procrastination, but also actively boosts motivation, enhances feelings of self-worth, and fosters positive emotions like optimism, wisdom, curiosity and personal initiative.

If you can think of the end result—a clean kitchen, an organized desk, a finished task—and keep that vision in mind, the task becomes less of a monster and more of a manageable experience.



## Where Does Your Strength Come From?

If you think about the hardest times that you've been through, there might be some pain associated with those experiences, but there is also knowledge.

Often the tough times shape us more than anything else. And statistics show that the best way to promote change in a person is to struggle in some way.

Ask yourself what good things have come from the difficult things you went through. Ask yourself what good traits you carry with you because of those experiences.

You may have had an absent parent, which inspires you to be a present parent more than anything else.

You may have lost someone you loved, which makes you cling more tightly to the ones left in your life, and ensure they know how much you care.

You may have been made fun of growing up, so you are determined to never make anyone else feel the way you felt in the past.

You may have been treated badly by a spouse or partner, so you decided to never let anyone treat you poorly again.

Often, our strengths arise from adversity, and are the best things about us. They're what make us who we are, and make us empathetic

individuals, who want to prevent that pain in other people's lives just as much as our own.

Many times, substance abuse staff employees come from a place of recovery and understanding toward the people they are helping, and there is no greater inspiration than seeing someone overcome the same adversity you've been through.

Often, your greatest strengths are also your greatest weaknesses, so be mindful of the inverse within yourself, but most of all, appreciate your strengths, and appreciate the pain and suffering that may have contributed to making you into the person you are today.

You often see that your best traits came from the ashes of a bad experience, and that is a good reason to be proud of yourself.

### **HEALTH RECIPE: BANANA BERRY SMOOTHIE**

1/2 banana; 1 cup frozen berries, any type; 1/2 cup almond milk

Place all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth. Serve in a tall glass. Add honey or protein powder to taste, if desired.

Source: <https://homemadelovely.com/3-ingredient-banana-berry-smoothie/>