

- 1) Mental Wellness
- 2) Work/Life Balance
- 3) Nutrition
- 4) Work

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

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

### National Suicide Prevention Week

National Suicide Prevention Week is a time for encouraging peers, organizations, workplaces and communities to make mental health a priority. September 5-11 is National Suicide Prevention Week and World Suicide Prevention Day is on September 10, 2016.



“Connect, communicate, care” is the theme of the 2016 World Suicide Prevention Day. It’s important to know certain risk factors and signs so you can seek help for yourself or aid someone you know who needs help.

#### Risk Factors

Risk factors vary with age, gender or ethnic group. They may occur in combination or change over time. Some important risk factors include:

- ▶ Prior suicide attempt
- ▶ Depression and other mental disorders, substance-abuse disorders (often in combination with other mental disorders)
- ▶ Family history of suicide
- ▶ Family violence including physical or sexual abuse
- ▶ Incarceration
- ▶ Exposure to suicidal behavior of others, such as family members or peers

#### Signs to Look For

The following are some of the signs you might notice in yourself or a friend that may be reason for concern.

- ▶ Not wanting to participate in family or social activities
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, depressed mood, poor self-esteem or guilt
- ▶ Changes in sleeping and eating patterns—too much or too little

- ▶ Feelings of anger, rage or need for revenge
- ▶ Feeling exhausted most of the time
- ▶ Trouble with concentration, problems academically or socially in school
- ▶ Feelings of irritability
- ▶ Regular and frequent crying
- ▶ Not taking care of oneself
- ▶ Reckless, impulsive behaviors
- ▶ Frequent physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches

Seeking help is a sign of strength. If you are concerned, go with your instincts, get help!

#### What Can I Do for Myself or Someone Else?

If you are concerned, immediate action is very important. Suicide can be prevented and most people who feel suicidal demonstrate warning signs. Recognizing some of these warning signs is the first step in helping yourself or someone you care about.

If you need help for yourself or someone you care about, call your EAP. We have the expertise to assess and refer you to the appropriate level of care.



If you or someone you know is struggling with these symptoms, call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.

## Rest & Digest

As important as it is to be engaged and productive when you're working on a project at work or home, it is equally valuable to be able to unplug and relax. This downtime can bring you renewed energy and often a new perspective.



**U**nplugging and having some downtime is much more than giving yourself breathing space by temporarily disengaging from your work and your worries, it's also about being able to prepare just the right environment for your body and mind to relax. In fact, when you allow yourself time for relaxation, you activate your body's parasympathetic nervous system, which is also known as the "rest and digest" mode of your nervous system—in contrast to the "flight or fight" mode of the sympathetic nervous system.

### Relaxation Response

The rest and digest mode allows your body to repair itself and your mind to relax. The parasympathetic nervous system causes a cascade of events that brings your body and mind to a place of renewal and healing.

### For the Mind

The head clears and thoughts become less erratic. An overall sense of well-being is experienced.

### Relax and Recharge

Even a little bit of downtime for renewal can help you better handle life's stressors. Carve out some time from your day—every day—to take care of yourself. Even 10 to 15 minutes can have a big impact on how balanced you feel. Also, remember that exercise is an effective method for stress relief, as the aftereffects trigger the body's rest and digest response.

### Setting the Stage

To unplug from your everyday busyness, it helps to unplug from your electronics. You'll also want to find a place where you can be away from all of your other usual distractions. You may want to have something that signals that you're beginning your relaxation time, such as lighting a candle, ringing a bell, a simple bow, or even saying, "Now, I begin."

### Breathing Into It

Slowing down your breathing is a great way to prompt the parasympathetic nervous system. Rhythmically breathe in and out, slowly and regularly. Count the length of your inhales and exhales to help you make your breaths longer as you start to relax more. As little as 5 minutes can be enough to get your relaxation response going. Making time for relaxation is a reward in itself. Yet, it also comes with the extra benefits of contributing to a healthier and more balanced you.

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Occupational Health. (2013). Unplug—Tips for skillfully disengaging. Retrieved June 1, 2015, from <http://www.foh.hhs.gov/>*

**EAP**  
EMPLOYEE  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

If you are feeling anxious or stressed, call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 to discuss your available benefits.



## ADDED SUGAR

Don't get sabotaged by sweeteners

If you're like many people, you may be eating and drinking more sugar than you realize because it's added to so many foods and beverages. Added sugar adds calories without adding nutrients. Although the relationship between added sugars and obesity, diabetes and heart disease isn't clear, your intake should be monitored for optimal health.

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate that your body uses for energy. "Added sugar" refers to sugars and syrups added to foods during processing. Desserts, sodas, and energy and sports drinks are the top sources of added sugar for most Americans, but many other foods contain added sugar.

### Why is sugar added to so many foods?

Sweetness has an almost universal appeal. So adding sugar to processed foods makes them more appetizing. But sugar is also added to foods because it:

- ▶ Gives baked goods flavor, texture and color
- ▶ Boosts flavor
- ▶ Helps preserve foods, such as jams and jellies
- ▶ Fuels fermentation, which enables bread to rise
- ▶ Serves as a bulking agent in baked goods and ice cream
- ▶ Balances the acidity of foods containing vinegar and tomatoes

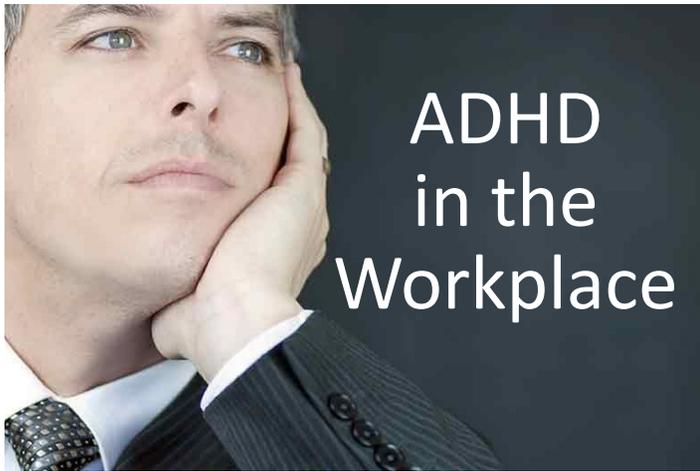
### Why is added sugar a problem?

Foods with a lot of added sugar contribute extra calories to your diet, but provide little nutritional value. In addition, added sugar is often found in foods that also contain solid fats, such as butter, margarine or shortening in baked goods.

Eating too many foods with added sugar and solid fats sets the stage for potential health problems, such as:

- ▶ **Poor nutrition.** If you fill up on sugar-laden foods, you may skimp on nutritious foods and miss out on important nutrients, vitamins and minerals. Regular soda plays an especially big role. It's easy to fill up on sweetened soft drinks and skip low-fat milk and even water — giving you lots of extra sugar and calories and no other nutritional value.
- ▶ **Increased triglycerides.** Triglycerides are a type of fat in the bloodstream and fat tissue. Eating an excessive amount of added sugar can increase triglyceride levels, which may increase your risk of heart disease.
- ▶ **Weight gain.** There's usually no single cause for being overweight or obese. But added sugar might contribute to the problem. Adding sugar to foods and beverages makes them more calorie dense. It's easy to consume extra calories when eating foods that are sugar sweetened.

*Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER).*



## ADHD in the Workplace

Although ADHD is often associated with children, rest assured it can also impact adults. Many adults don't even realize they have the disorder or falsely attribute workplace concerns to poor time management or stress. Common symptoms in adults include difficulty following directions, remembering information, concentrating, organizing tasks, or completing work within time limits.

ADHD affects workplace performance. Research indicates that adults with ADHD put in 22.1 fewer days at work per year than people without the condition—nearly a month's worth of workdays. The good news is that effective treatment is available. Adults with ADHD are treated with medication, psychotherapy or a combination. Behavior

management strategies, such as ways to minimize distractions and improve organization, can also be helpful.

### Tips for Employers

**Educate employees and managers about mental health disorders, including ADHD.** Encourage employees to seek care when they need it by educating the workforce that mental illnesses are real and can be effectively treated. Teach supervisors how to (and how not to) intervene appropriately by focusing on job performance.

**Promote the use of employee assistance and health programs.** Early intervention is key. Remind employees of the availability of resources for staying healthy and productive. Ensure that employees know how to access care confidentially and quickly by providing information on how to do so in multiple places and throughout the year. Heavily push these messages during times of stress, at the holidays, and so forth.

**Integrate mental health educational messages in health communication strategies.** Include content about ADHD in company newsletters, on the intranet, and in other regular employee communication platforms.

If you believe you struggle with ADHD, call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 for a confidential assessment.

### Chicken and Asparagus Tossed With Penne



#### Ingredients:

Goat cheese, such as Montrachet, has a soft, creamy texture and a slightly tangy flavor. If you prefer, you can use other cheeses in this recipe, such as feta or Romano.

- ▶ 1 1/2 cups uncooked whole-grain penne pasta
- ▶ 1 cup asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ▶ 6 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- ▶ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes, no salt added, including juice
- ▶ 2 teaspoons dried basil or oregano
- ▶ 1 ounce soft goat cheese, crumbled
- ▶ 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese

**Serving Size:** 1 1/2 cups

#### Nutrition:

445 calories; 7 g fat (3 g saturated);  
63 mg cholesterol; 11 g fiber;  
32 g protein; 276 mg sodium

#### Instructions:

- ▶ Fill a large pot 3/4 full with water and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until al dente (tender), 10 to 12 minutes, or according to the package directions. Drain the pasta thoroughly. Set aside.
- ▶ In a pot fitted with a steamer basket, bring 1 inch of water to a boil. Add the asparagus. Cover and steam until tender-crisp, about 2 to 3 minutes.
- ▶ Spray a large nonstick frying pan with cooking spray. Add the chicken and garlic and saute over medium-high heat. Cook until the chicken is golden brown, about 5 - 7 minutes. Add the tomatoes, including their juice, basil or oregano and simmer 1 minute more.
- ▶ In a large bowl, add the cooked pasta, steamed asparagus, chicken mixture and goat cheese. Toss gently to mix evenly.
- ▶ To serve, divide the pasta mixture between 2 plates. Sprinkle each serving with 1/2 tablespoon Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.