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BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. MAY NEWSLETTER



May is Mental Health Month

Mental health issues are common. About 1 in 5 adults has a mental health concern in any given year. Some mental concerns can be temporary or longer lasting. Your EAP is here to help!

Counseling isn't for me...or is it? Many people have preconceived ideas about counseling, but hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life have successfully received assistance from a counselor at some point in their lives. Life is full of challenges, even with support from family and friends, and it can sometimes be helpful to talk with an independent counselor who can help you work out what's right for you, in an empathic and confidential setting. Here are some of the common myths surrounding counseling:

Myth: Counseling is only for serious problems.

Reality: While counseling can help people facing serious issues, most people who access counseling through their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) do so for assistance with everyday issues such as stress, anxiety or work-life balance. You don't have to wait until things spiral out of control before seeking support; counseling can help nip things in the bud before things become too serious.

Myth: How can a stranger possibly help?

Reality: Discussing your concerns with an impartial professional is one of the reasons counseling is so effective. Counselors have the training and skills to provide you with unbiased insights and support, which may help you speak more openly about your situation without fear of being judged or criticized. Counseling can often give you a fresh perspective, which can be motivating.

Myth: Counseling just goes on and on.

Reality: The counseling offered through your EAP is based on a short-term, focused model. This enables you to discuss the problems you're facing, set a goal to give you direction, and develop strategies and skills to improve your current situation.

Myth: Everyone at work will know I'm seeing a counselor.

Reality: Your BHS EAP is strictly confidential. The only person who will know you are seeing a counselor is you. Counselors are bound by a code of ethics and work within their confidentiality guidelines, which your EAP strictly adheres to.

Myth: I've tried counseling before, and it doesn't work.

Reality: On rare occasions, the fit between a person and a counselor might not be right. If you feel this is the case, contact your BHS Care Coordinator to discuss what other options may be available.

EAP
EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

If you would like more information on counseling resources, call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.

As the weather warms and we begin spending more time outside, it's important to be reminded of the importance of taking care of our skin.

Sun damage to the body is caused by invisible ultraviolet (UV) radiation. People recognize sunburn as a type of skin damage caused by the sun. Tanning is also a sign of the skin reacting to potentially damaging UV radiation by producing additional pigmentation that provides it with some — but often not enough — protection against sunburn.

No matter your skin color, everyone is a potential victim of sunburn and the other detrimental effects of excessive exposure to UV radiation. Although people need to take precautions to protect their skin, people who need to be especially careful in the sun are those who have:

- ▶ Pale skin
- ▶ Blonde, red or light brown hair
- ▶ Been treated for skin cancer
- ▶ A family member who has had skin cancer

If you're on any medicine, ask your health care professional about extra sun care precautions, because some medications may increase sensitivity to the sun. Cosmetics that contain alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) also may increase sun sensitivity and susceptibility to sunburn.



The following are a few ways to effectively protect your skin from the sun this summer:

REDUCE TIME IN THE SUN.

This is especially recommended from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Even on an overcast day, up to 80% of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds, according to the FDA.

DRESS WITH CARE.

Wear clothes that protect your body. Cover as much of your body as possible if you plan to be outside on a sunny day. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeves and long pants. Sun-protective clothing is now available in stores. Consider using an umbrella for shade.

TAKE SUNSCREEN SERIOUSLY.

Check product labels to make sure you get a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or more. SPF represents the degree to which a sunscreen can protect the skin from sunburn. The higher the

number is, the better the protection.

APPLYING SUNSCREEN.

Apply the recommended amount evenly to all uncovered skin, especially your lips, nose, ears, neck, hands and feet.

Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going out in the sun.

If you don't have much hair, apply sunscreen to the top of your head or wear a hat.

Reapply at least every 2 hours. Read the label to see how often.

Apply sunscreen to children older than 6 months every time they go out.

Don't forget to protect your eyes with sunglasses offering both UVA and UVB protection.



5 Simple Productivity Tips for Organizing Your Work Life

Productivity is all about efficiency – doing more, faster and with less. With increasing demands from today’s anytime, anywhere workplace, it is has never been more important. To get the most out of your day, try focusing on these 5 tips:

- ▶ **Start the day with structured 'me time':** Go through email and social media updates that have piled up overnight and triage the backlog. Knock out quick responses and referrals, so other people can start working on tasks. Schedule the bigger tasks. And delete the stuff that is informational or not important.
- ▶ **Schedule regular breaks during the day:** Running from back-to-back meetings is not productive. Block off time in your calendar and take breaks. Making these breaks routine increases predictability, creating a regular schedule to keep your mind organized.
- ▶ **Switch off popup notifications on mobile devices and computers:** Don’t let applications interrupt your concentration with annoying popup messages. Shut them off. Now. And limit checking your email to set times during the day. You won’t regret it.
- ▶ **Converse, don’t email:** Pick up the phone or walk down the hall and talk directly to colleagues. You can give precise direction and clear up misunderstandings quickly. The amount of time wasted perpetuating endless email threads is mindboggling.
- ▶ **Use checklists for repetitive tasks to reduce errors:** Particularly when you are overworked or are operating under time constraints, checklists keep you on track.

3 Tips for Better Work-Life Balance

If you're finding it more challenging than ever to juggle the demands of your job and the rest of your life, you're not alone. Below are three ways to bring a little more balance to your daily routine:

1. Build downtime into your schedule.

When you plan your week, make it a point to schedule time with your family and friends, and activities that help you recharge. Try scheduling a date night with your significant other or a softball game with friends. Relaxation goes a long way.

2. Rethink your errands.

Consider whether you can outsource any of your time-consuming household chores or errands. Could you order your groceries online and have them delivered? Hire a kid down the street to mow your lawn? Have your dry cleaning picked up and dropped off at your home or office?

3. Get moving.

It's hard to make time for exercise when you have a jam-packed schedule, but it may ultimately help you get more done by boosting your energy level and ability to concentrate.

Everyday Ideas to Move More

Help your family move more each day and have fun with it. Think about what your family can do to be active together. Here are some ideas:

Make time.

- ▶ Identify free times. Keep track of your daily activities for 1 week. Pick two 30-minute time slots you could use for family activity time.
- ▶ Add physical activity to your daily routine. For example, walk or ride your bike to work or a friend's house, walk the dog with your children, exercise while you watch TV or park farther away from your destination.

Bring others into it.

- ▶ Ask friends and family to support your efforts and invite them to be active with you.
- ▶ Set up a party or other social event with activities that get people moving, like dancing or having a jump rope contest.
- ▶ Play with your kids or ask them to join you for a fitness game.

Develop new friendships with physically active people. Join a group, such as the YMCA or a hiking club.

Energize yourself.

- ▶ Plan to be active at times during the day or week when you feel you have a lot of energy.
- ▶ Convince yourself that if you give it a chance, physical activity will increase your energy level—then try it.

Stay motivated.

- ▶ Plan ahead. Make physical activity a regular part of your family's schedule. Write it on a family activity calendar.
- ▶ Join an exercise group or class. Sign your children up for community sports teams or lessons.
- ▶ Exercise with friends who are at the same skill level as you are. Create opportunities for your children to be active with friends.

Build new skills.

- ▶ Take a class to develop new skills, and enroll your children in classes too, such as swimming, dancing, or tennis.

Use available resources.

- ▶ Select activities that don't need costly sports gear, such as walking, jogging, jumping rope or doing push-ups.
- ▶ Identify cheap, local resources in your area, such as programs through your community center, park, recreation group or worksite.

Make the most of all conditions.

- ▶ Develop a set of activities for you and your family that are always available regardless of weather, such as indoor cycling, swimming, stair climbing, rope dancing and active games that you can play indoors.

Baked Blueberry French Toast

Ingredients:

- ▶ 12-inch French or sourdough baguette
- ▶ 4 egg whites
- ▶ 1 cup fat-free soy milk
- ▶ 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- ▶ 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ▶ 4 tablespoons brown sugar, divided
- ▶ 3/4 cup blueberries
- ▶ 1 tablespoon canola oil
- ▶ 1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted (optional)



Calories: 171 **Fiber:** 0.5g, **Protein:** 6 g **Serving Size:** 2 slices
Sodium: 249 mg **Total Fat:** 3 g

Instructions:

1. Spray a 9-inch square baking dish with cooking spray. Cut 10 1-inch-thick slices from baguette. Arrange in baking dish.
2. In a large bowl, whisk egg whites until frothy. Then whisk in milk, nutmeg, vanilla and 2 tablespoons brown sugar. Pour evenly over bread, turning slices to coat evenly. Cover pan. Chill at least 8 hours or overnight, until liquid is absorbed by bread.
3. Heat oven to 400°F. Drop blueberries evenly over bread. In a small bowl, stir together 2 tablespoons brown sugar, oil, and pecans. Spoon evenly over bread. Bake, uncovered, about 20 minutes, until liquid from blueberries is bubbling. Enjoy!