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.

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Making Gratitude a Habit

How often do you feel thankful for the good things in your life? Studies suggest that making a habit of noticing what's going well in your life could have health benefits.

Taking the time to feel gratitude may improve your emotional wellbeing by helping you cope with stress. In fact, early research suggests that a daily practice of gratitude could also affect the body. For example, one study found that gratitude was linked to fewer signs of heart disease.

The first step in any gratitude practice is to reflect on the good things that have happened in your life, whether big or little things. It can be as simple as scoring a good parking space that day or enjoying a hot cup of coffee. Perhaps you feel grateful for a close friend's support.

Next, allow yourself a moment to enjoy the fact that you had the positive experience, no matter what negatives may exist in your life. Let positive feelings of gratitude bubble up.

"We encourage people to try practicing gratitude daily," advises Dr. Judith T. Moskowitz, a psychologist at Northwestern University. "You can try first thing in the morning or right before you fall asleep, whatever is best for you."

When you make gratitude a regular habit, it can help you learn to recognize good things in your life, despite the bad things that might be happening. When you're under stress, you might not notice all the moments of positive emotion that you experience.

"Put some effort into experiencing gratitude on a daily basis and see how it goes," Moskowitz advises. "It might just surprise you that, despite how bad things are, there are things you feel grateful for alongside it."

Feeling grateful may help improve both your mind and your body. Create positive emotions by being thankful every day:

- **Take a moment.** Think about the positive things that happened during the day.
- **Journal.** Make a habit of writing down things you're grateful for. Try listing several things.
- **Savor your experiences.** Try to notice positive moments as they are happening.
- **Relive the good times.** Relive positive moments later by thinking about them or sharing them with others.
- **Write to someone.** Write a letter to someone you feel thankful toward. You don't even have to send it.
- **Make a visit.** Tell someone you're grateful for them in person.

Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Over 40,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States, resulting in the 10th leading cause of death. Suicide is complicated and tragic, but is often preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can save lives.

While the subject can be difficult to approach, it is important that employers do so, considering that the vast majority of individuals who are suicidal often display cues and warning signs.

According to the American Association of Suicidology, warning signs of acute suicide risk include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill oneself; and or,
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means; and/or,
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.

Additional warning signs:

- Increased **substance** (alcohol or drug) **use**
- No reason for living; no sense of **purpose** in life
- **Anxiety**, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all of the time
- Feeling **trapped** – like there's no way out
- **Hopelessness**
- **Withdrawal** from friends, family and society
- Rage, uncontrolled **anger**, seeking revenge
- Acting **reckless** or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Dramatic **mood changes**
- Giving away prized possessions or seeking long-term care for pets

Tips for Employers

- **Provide convenient and confidential access to resources.** Make sure your employees know how to access your EAP and how it might be able to help with a variety of situations. Make sure a mechanism for referral is in place.
- **Be observant.** There are many warning signs that a person may be thinking about ending his or her life. Providing access to educational information can empower you and your employees to react and respond when they see a coworker in trouble.

Your EAP is an excellent source for help

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free and confidential assessment and counseling services. If you are struggling with issues that feel beyond your resources or you have had suicidal thoughts, reach out to your BHS Care Coordinator. They can listen to the issues you are struggling with and assist you in scheduling an appointment with a counselor who can help you begin to address these issues.

Your BHS Care Coordinator is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800- 245-1150.

The Art of Active Listening at Work

Listening could be one of the most undervalued skills in the workplace today. Perhaps people assume that they are already good listeners. Many people believe listening is similar to hearing. Active listening is defined as fully concentrating, engaging in, and absorbing what someone is saying to you. Learning to become a better listener is one of the most important skills that a leader can work on.

Often, people want to be good listeners but do not understand the true meaning of listening. Below are five useful tips and tricks to practice if you are looking to improve your listening skills:

1. **Imagine you had to share a play by play of the conversation with someone else later.** This will help you keep focused and pay attention to details in the conversation.
2. **Put the electronics away.** This keeps you engaged in the conversation and helps avoid distractions.
3. **Quickly summarize what was discussed** at the end of the conversation and discuss any actions that need to be taken going forward. This reassures the other person that you were actually listening, while giving them an opportunity to point out any important details you may have missed.
4. **When you listen, just listen.** Try to let the person you are speaking with complete what they are saying prior to jumping in with your own ideas. Be present and truly listen to what is being said.
5. **Ask questions.** Often when we are in a conversation, once we are confused we tend to check out. While it is important not to interrupt excessively, it is acceptable to interject with a question so that you are able to keep up with the discussion.

As a leader in an organization, listening to your team can create an atmosphere of growth and trust. Active listening shows colleagues you are interested in their ideas which leads to increased engagement.

Active listening promotes productive meetings and interactions in the workplace. It is also a key component of agile learning in the modern workplace. Agile learning is the ability to actively listen, make sense of random bits of information, and make solid decisions.

HEALTHY RECIPE: Lemon Pepper Chicken

1/2 c. all-purpose flour,1 tbsp. lemon pepper seasoning, 1 tsp. kosher salt, 2 lemons, divided, 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, halved, 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, 1/2 c. chicken broth, 2 tbsp. butter, 2 cloves garlic, minced, freshly chopped parsley for garnish

Preheat oven to 400°. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, lemon pepper, salt, and zest of 1 lemon. Toss chicken breasts in the flour mixture until fully coated. Slice remaining lemon into thin rounds.

In a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add chicken in a single layer and cook until golden on bottom, about 5 minutes, then flip chicken breasts. To skillet, add broth, butter, garlic, and lemon slices and bake until chicken is cooked through and sauce has reduced slightly, 15 minutes. Spoon sauce on top of chicken and garnish with parsley.