



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

September 2022

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.



Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

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Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month - a time to raise awareness of this stigmatized and often taboo, topic. The month is used to shift public perception, spread hope and share vital information to people affected by suicide. Suicidal thoughts or behaviors are more common than suicide deaths and are signs of extreme distress. Suicidal thoughts and behaviors are not harmless bids for attention and should not be ignored.

Risk factors vary with age, gender or ethnic group and may change over time. Some factors that increase an individual's risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors are listed below. However, it's important to note that many people who have these risk factors are not suicidal.

- Depression, anxiety and other mental disorders
- Substance use disorder
- Chronic pain
- Prior suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence
- Firearms in the home
- Exposure to suicidal behavior of others

Warning signs are some of the things you might notice in yourself or a friend that may be reason for concern:

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill oneself
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online, buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Feeling empty or hopeless
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs

- Acting anxious or agitated
- Behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing from family and friends or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Saying goodbye to loved ones; putting affairs in order

What if someone seems suicidal on social media? Many social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr and Google+ have ways to report suicidal content and get help for the content creator. Each social media site has a different procedure, so search the site's help page for assistance.

What can I do for myself or someone else? Seeking help for yourself or a friend is a sign of strength. If you are concerned, go with your instincts and seek professional help immediately. The following resources can help you get started:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: call or text 9-8-8
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Hotline: call 1-800-950-6264
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Hotline: text HOME to 741-741
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): call 1-800-662-4357

How do I access my EAP Benefits? Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free and confidential benefit that is available to you today. Call 800-245-1150 to speak to your BHS Care Coordinator about options and resources, including an appointment with a mental health professional.



Sandwich Generation: Caregivers in the Middle

Many middle-aged adults find themselves torn between the demands of raising children and caring for aging parents. The squeeze is on the sandwich generation because many couples choose to start families later in life. Even parents whose children are grown can get sandwiched if they have to care for grandchildren on a full or part-time basis. When adult children move back home, caregivers could find themselves responsible for aging parents, adult children and grandchildren. You can follow the steps below when it feels like you are overloaded and have no time to yourself.

Communicate openly. If you feel sandwiched, the worst thing you can do is suffer in silence. First talk with your aging parents to find out if they have made plans or decisions about what should happen next. Talk to your siblings and adult children about how they envision helping out. Maybe they'd welcome a bigger role in helping you care for your parent, or perhaps what they really need is a guarantee of a half hour of your time each evening before bed.

Don't assume it's best for your parent to move in with you. This may seem like a tempting option because everyone would be under one roof, but ask yourself these questions first:

- Is your home accessible for someone with limited mobility?
- Would your parent be able to tolerate your family's normal daily routines?
- How do your partner and kids feel about the idea?
- What contributions can your parent make to the household, such as rent, childcare or gardening.?

Create a strategy. Use a calendar to track everyone's appointments, and combine tasks when you can. For instance, schedule your father's doctor appointment around your daughter's soccer practice.

Discuss finances. The financial strain can be especially tight if you're caught between parents and children. Discuss the cost of different care arrangements with all parties, from your parent to your siblings and partner. If your mother or father can't manage alone anymore, it's time to talk about the financial situation, including their sources of income and savings.

Remain flexible. For many families, one decision rarely settles the matter forever. Your teenagers may go off to college; your mother may move in with you but someday, she might need more care than you can provide or maybe she'll decide she needs a quieter place to call home. Respect everyone's needs and adjust to changing conditions.

Don't neglect yourself or your family to care for your parent. This is the toughest advice to accept. Plan outings with your partner, with your kids, and by yourself. Let your employer know what's happening but try not to let your performance suffer. Take advantage of outside help, such as respite care, caregiver support groups or help from other loved ones.

Remember caring for yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. You can't help someone else properly if you're run down. If you care for an elderly person and children, it's vital to get regular, relaxing and healthful breaks. Don't feel guilty about taking care of yourself, it benefits the people you care for, too!

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free and confidential assessment and counseling services. If you are interested in hearing more about the benefits, call BHS at 800-245-1150. Your dedicated Care Coordinator is available to help you get started today!



Practicing Gratitude at Work

Practicing gratitude can increase happiness, reduce stress levels, improve relationships, boost patience and compassion and help maintain healthy eating and exercise habits. This single practice can improve many important elements of your well-being at home and in the workplace.

What is gratitude? Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative. When you experience gratitude, you feel grateful for something or someone in your life and respond with feelings of kindness, warmth and other forms of generosity.

What are the benefits of practicing gratitude? Researchers have tested the effects of gratitude on people and found positive results such as greater self-esteem, strengthened ability to handle stressful situations, greater decision-making abilities, lower blood pressure and improved eating and sleep habits. These can all make your home and work life more enjoyable.

How Do I Apply the Power of Gratitude? To fully embrace the power of gratitude, it helps to make a habit of considering what (and who) you are grateful for. Here are ways to build gratitude:

1. **Be Grateful.** Look for opportunities to be grateful in your daily life. Make a list of three things that went right at the end of every day. This can include things like finishing an important email or having a meaningful conversation with a coworker.
2. **Take a moment to savor those good things.** As you get into the habit of noticing the good things in your life, however small they might be, take a moment to savor and appreciate them.
3. **Build a brief gratitude session into your day.** Take advantage of your work commute by using one or two minutes to reflect on what you are grateful for. Those might be the gifts of nature, family, friendship or your religious faith.
4. **Express your thanks to others.** Take the time to thank the people who have been an important part of your life. Thank the people at work who collaborate with you to accomplish something. Write a letter to someone who has made an important difference in your life, letting them know how grateful you are and how their influence has changed you for the better.

HEALTHY RECIPE: Easy Broccoli Salad

Ingredients 1-1/2 cups fresh broccoli florets • 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese • 4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled • 1/4 cup finely chopped onion • 2 tbsp. mayo • 2 tbsp. white vinegar • 1 tbsp. sugar

Instructions • In a bowl, combine broccoli, cheese, bacon and onion. • In another bowl, whisk mayo, vinegar and sugar. • Pour over broccoli mixture and toss to coat. • Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. • Makes 2 Servings

