



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

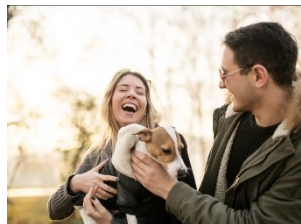
*February 2018*

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.



**Battling SAD  
(Seasonal Affective  
Disorder)**

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**Eating Disorder  
Awareness Month**

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**Getting Out of the  
Groundhog Day Rut**

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**Healthy Recipe:  
Frozen Greek Yogurt  
Banana Poppers**

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## Battling SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)

The winter months can be challenging for those who struggle with a unique form of depression known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a form of depression that tends to affect people during the Fall and Winter months. It is marked by a lack of energy and increased moodiness, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Often dismissed as the “Winter Blues”, those who experience SAD seem to have decreased energy, lowered interest in activities they normally enjoy, changes in appetite and weight, difficulty concentrating, feeling agitated, feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty.

Doctors believe that three factors may cause SAD:

### **Your Biological Clock**

The changing of the seasons causes us to experience less sunlight, which could throw off our body’s internal clock.

### **Decreases in our Brain Chemistry**

Decreased sunlight has been shown to decrease the level of serotonin our body

releases. This brain chemical is tied to our mood and feelings of contentment.

### **Changes in Melatonin**

Decreased sunlight also can affect the balance of melatonin in our body. This chemical messenger affects our sleep patterns and mood.

### **What can you do?**

Some things that you can do to minimize the effects of SAD include exposing yourself to more sunlight during the day, getting exercise, staying hydrated, avoiding alcohol, sticking to a healthy sleep schedule and practicing relaxation techniques.

If Seasonal Affective Disorder is causing disruptions in your personal or work life, try speaking with a trained professional who can help you develop strategies for coping with SAD during the winter months. Your EAP provides access to free and confidential assistance for issues such as this. Call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 for more information.



## Eating Disorder Awareness Month

Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating disorder are serious, life threatening conditions that affect the lives of millions of Americans and their families each year. Eating disorders are not limited by age, gender or socio-economic status. February is National Eating Disorder Awareness Month. Below are some resources that you might find helpful if you feel that you or a family member may be struggling with an eating disorder.

### **National Eating Disorder Association**

[www.nedawareness.org](http://www.nedawareness.org)

∴ This organization is dedicated to raising awareness of and providing resources for those interested in learning more about eating disorders. Their website includes helpful video testimonies, screening tools, resources for family members, support group information and more. It is an excellent resource.

### **Eating Disorders: Every Body is Beautiful**

[www.eatingdisorders.com](http://www.eatingdisorders.com)

∴ This website provides hundreds of helpful,

supportive articles and videos about eating disorders.

Eating disorders are a very serious topic. If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, they should contact their healthcare professional as soon as possible. Coordinated medical and psychological care is essential for them to get the care they need.

### **Eating Disorder Hope**

[www.eatingdisorderhope.com](http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com)

∴ Eating Disorder Hope is another excellent resource. It has a positive focus on embracing life and promotes recovery from a variety of eating disorders. Their focus on one's unique value to this world is uplifting and reminds individuals of their intrinsic worth.

For information on a mental health specialist in your area, contact your Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.



## Getting Out of the Groundhog Day Rut

Each year on February 2nd, the town of Punxsutawney, PA steps into the national spotlight. This is the home of the famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, who is said to predict whether or not we will have 6 more weeks of winter. In the movie based in this town, Bill Murray plays a weatherman who is stuck having to relive Groundhog Day over and over again. While at first it is an annoying rut, he learns from his mistakes and begins the next day anew with the opportunity to change his behaviors.

Do you ever feel like you are in a rut and need to change your behaviors? During certain times of the year, our routines can feel like they rob us of energy and creativity. Here are a few pointers to help get out of your rut.

- ▶ **Make Some Small Changes** - Clean out your inbox, reorganize your desk, take a different route to work. You would be amazed how these small changes can help to reset your perspective and allow you to get back to your task with a fresh outlook.
- ▶ **Get Some Exercise** - Exercise can change your outlook on life. Exercise releases

endorphins and serotonin into our bodies that give us energy and positively affect our mood.

- ▶ **Use Your Benefits** - Maybe it is time for you to use a vacation day to do something you enjoy. You will find that when you return to work you will be more focused on the tasks that you lost interest in.
- ▶ **Energize Your Mind** - Reading a good book or watching a program that you enjoy is like food for your soul. Whether it is cooking, woodworking, art or sports, taking time to recharge is important and your rut may be your body's way of telling you it is time for a recharge.

### HEALTHY RECIPE:

#### FROZEN GREEK YOGURT BANANA POPPERS

Bananas, Greek yogurt (any flavor)

Scoop your favorite flavor of Greek yogurt into a bowl. Slice bananas into 1/2-inch slices. Roll banana slices in yogurt using a fork. Place coated banana slices on parchment paper or wax paper, and freeze for at least 1 hour before eating.