



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

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Talking About Race at Work

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## Talking About Race at Work

It's at work that most people are likely to find themselves with diverse groups of people and where a productive conversation about race might be most helpful. It can feel like a topic too dangerous to touch but silence can be potentially hurtful, too. When people stay silent about incidents of racial violence and injustice, their colleagues of other racial backgrounds may read their silence as indifference.

Having productive conversations about race requires a willingness to get uncomfortable and simultaneously take special care to be respectful. Managers have a special role in initiating these kinds of conversations for a team, but anyone can reach out to a coworker at work to talk. If you're ready to stretch yourself, connect at a deeper level with your coworkers and help create a mutually supportive work environment, here are some suggestions for taking those first steps:

- **Ask for help** - your HR may be able to facilitate a discussion with your team.
- **Reach out after an incident of racial violence** to share your feelings then offer support others.
- **Invite, but don't force conversation.**
- **Practice active listening** when a coworker is sharing their thoughts and feelings on race.

- **Be willing to look at the world from different perspectives** and acknowledge that there can be truth in different viewpoints.
- **Don't be afraid to make mistakes** when talking about race. Keep asking questions to figure out how you tripped up or caused offense.
- **Don't put the burden on coworkers** who are of other racial backgrounds to lead the conversations about race.
- **Make an effort** to learn about the context of race.

Coworkers and managers who have had direct and hurtful experiences with racial bias are likely to be very aware of how deeply issues of race impact relationships in our society; they may be tired of talking about race or reluctant to have these conversations in a time of emotional pain but probably don't need help knowing where to start. These suggestions are primarily for those who are unfamiliar with these types of experiences.

**Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free and confidential assessment and counseling services. BHS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150.**



## Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Getting through the stressful situations can be a bit easier when you have supportive people in your life. Those relationships, whether they are friends, family, a spouse or a significant other, can be a lifeline. Recognizing their value may leave some to wonder how to maintain those relationships. Below are a few tips that can aid in maintaining healthy relationships.

### Benefits of Maintaining Healthy Relationships

First, identify the benefits of maintaining good relationships. Healthy, long-term relationships can help create the foundation for a solid emotional base. Often, people can be hard on themselves and forget to give themselves the grace they give others. Partners and loved ones can, a lot of times, have a more positive image of you than you have of yourself. This is known as the Michelangelo phenomenon, in which loved ones believe in your ability to be your ideal self, thus providing positive messages and encouragement to get you to that ideal self. Your loved ones can push you to be the best that you can be, because they see and believe you can achieve your goals.

Committed, healthy relationships allow you to bounce back from stress and trauma, be more enthusiastic about life, and be comfortable trying new things. Those with whom you have healthy, committed relationships can continue to push you to achieve your goals and ambitions, even when you stumble.

### Tips on Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Whether you are looking at family members or friends, the following tips can help lead to committed, long-term, healthy relationships with those in your life:

- Be realistic about expectations in the relationship.
- Improve trust by showing that you can be a reliable friend, family member and so forth.
- Find time to be present (without distraction) with those you want to maintain healthy relationships with.
- Find ways to be interdependent of one another. Relationships in which the individuals solely rely on one another can become overwhelming and unhealthy. It is important to have shared interests but also engage in enjoyed activities outside of that relationships.
- Be aware of how your partner or loved one feels loved or supported. People can give and feel love and support differently, and it can be helpful to know how that important person in your life likes to receive support.
- While it can feel amazing when you have relationships that seem effortless, it often requires time and effort to foster helpful and supportive relationships.

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## Ten Tips for Dealing with Stress

**1. Put your body in motion.** Physical activity is one of the most important ways to keep stress away by clearing your head and lifting your spirits. Physical activity also increases endorphin levels—the natural *feel-good* chemicals in the body that leave you with a naturally happy feeling.

**2. Fuel up first.** Eating regular meals and taking time to enjoy them will make you feel better. Make sure to fuel up with fruits, vegetables, proteins and grains.

**3. LOL (Laugh out loud)!** Lots of laughing can make you feel good—and, that good feeling can stay with you even after the laughter stops. Head off stress with regular doses of laughter by watching a funny movie, visiting joke websites, or even making up your own riddles.

**4. Have fun with friends.** Being with people you like is always a good way to ditch your stress. Get a group together to go to the movies, shoot some hoops, listen to music, play a board game or just hang out and talk.

**5. Spill to someone you trust.** Talking out your problems and seeing them from a different view might help you figure out ways to deal with them.

**6. Take time to chill.** Pick a comfy spot to sit and read, daydream or listen to music. Work on a relaxing project like putting together a puzzle or making jewelry.

**7. Catch some zzz's.** When you're overtired, you may have a hard time completing tasks that usually seems easy, you don't do your best or you may have an argument with someone over something trivial. Fatigue is a best friend to stress.

**8. Keep a journal.** It's a good idea to write things down in a journal to get it off your chest—like how you feel, what's going on in your life and things you'd like to accomplish.

**9. Lend a hand.** Get involved in an activity that helps others, which is as easy as saying hello, holding a door or volunteering to keep a neighbor's pet.

**10. Learn ways to better deal with anger.** The next time something really has you stressed out, try the following:

- Try to calm yourself down before doing or saying anything
- Tell the other person what the problem is
- Try to think of some solutions
- Try to put it into action together

### DRINK RECIPE: Fizzy Peach Shake

Ingredients: 3 medium peaches (pitted), 1/3 cup ginger ale (chilled), 2 tablespoons honey, 1 quart vanilla ice cream, whipped cream (optional)

1. Place peaches, ginger ale and honey in a blender; cover and process until smooth.
2. Add ice cream; cover and process until combined.
3. Pour into serving glasses. Serve immediately.

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/fizzy-peach-shake/>

