



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

May 2017

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.



May is Mental Health Month: Fighting the Stigma

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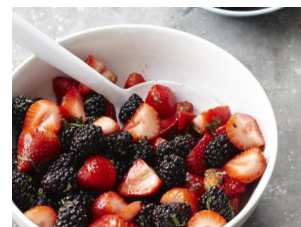
Work/Life Balance: Integration or Separation?

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Prepping Your Finances for a Summer Vacation

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Healthy Recipe: Strawberry Fruit Salad

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## May is Mental Health Month: Fighting the Stigma

The National Institute of Mental Health says that mental health conditions affect 1 in 10 Americans, with less than 25% of those seeking help. Statistics also indicate 6.9% of American adults live with major depression.

Mental Health Month exists to defy stigma and create a culture of people who are aware of their options and more willing to seek help for conditions affecting their lives.

Common conditions include depression, bipolar disorder, panic attacks, anxiety disorders, ADHD, eating disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), all of which are effectively treatable by a qualified medical provider.

Symptoms of mental health conditions vary and some can be difficult to recognize. If you or a loved one experience any of the following symptoms, you may benefit from speaking with a professional who can offer guidance.

### **Common symptoms:**

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes with highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Trouble understanding and relating to others
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major changes in eating habits
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking

Finding an appropriate provider is important. For a mental health checkup, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 for an assessment.



## Work/Life Balance: Integration or Separation?

There are some people who meticulously keep their meat separate from their veggies, and then there are those who like it all mixed together because "it all winds up in the same place."

The same could be said for how people approach work/life balance. Some prefer to keep work at work and home at home. Others flow freely between the two, such as leaving work early for a child's field trip and catching up on work in the evening. Knowing which works best for you, separation or integration, will help you achieve your ideal balance, and ultimately lower your overall stress level.

### Separation

For many people, a clear delineation between their personal lives and their roles as employees is essential. Taking work home may create unnecessary stress. In this case, creating a mental buffer zone between work and family is necessary. One working mom used a specific landmark on her drive home as the "switch-over point." When she passed the landmark during her commute, she started/stopped thinking about work.

For those who need to bring work home, putting work aside until the children have gone to bed and setting a clear boundary around your family time may be necessary.

### Integration

While some people need a clear separation between the two worlds, others thrive on the constant excitement of "wearing multiple hats" simultaneously. Some people choose to draw the worlds of work and home closer through technology, workplace flexibility and other means. The goal for many is to accomplish more and lead richer lives on both fronts. The challenge for those in this category is giving both work and family the time they need. If you ever find yourself neglecting one end of the spectrum, take a step back and refocus your priorities.

### Balance

Whether you prefer the separation or integration approach, it is essential to ensure you have a healthy balance between your work and personal life. If you struggle with work/life balance, your EAP may be able to help.



## Prepping Your Finances for a Summer Vacation

It's that time of year when many people begin planning for Summer vacations. Early planning, especially with regard to finances, can prevent unnecessary stressors that often come with vacations.

Following these tips can help ensure you're prepared for your upcoming adventures:

### 1. **Create a budget and keep it.**

When you're on vacation, worrying about money will certainly create stress. Eliminate that worry by strategically planning your activities, meals, lodging and travel expenses. Don't make last minute decisions that compromise your finances, unless you've left room in your budget for some spontaneity.

### 2. **Open a vacation savings account.**

Examine your finances and consider how much money could be saved prior to your trip. Some employers offer the option of depositing a portion of your paycheck directly into a savings account to ease the process.

### 3. **Set vacation goals.**

Checking every item off the vacation activity list may not be possible. As a family or group, make a list of the most popular activities and decide what fits the within vacation budget. Some items may need to wait until next time.

#### **HEALTHY RECIPE: STRAWBERRY FRUIT SALAD**

2 tablespoons honey; 2 tablespoons lemon juice; 6 cups hulled fresh strawberries, halved (or quartered if large); 2 cups fresh blackberries; 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh mint

Whisk honey and lemon juice in a large bowl. Add strawberries and blackberries; gently toss to coat. Let stand for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour. Stir in mint just before serving.