



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

Spotlight

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When You Are Not Going Home For the Holidays

With the COVID-19 pandemic still part of our lives, you may be realizing that you will not be able to go home for the holidays this year. When you decide not to return home you can be faced with many emotions. It can be tough to feel as though you'll be missing out on the childhood and family traditions that often accompany the holidays.

It's important to acknowledge the feelings you are experiencing not only as you confirm your plans with your loved ones, but also as you start accepting the reality that you will be celebrating in a different way and location. There is no right or wrong way to react to any situation, including not being able to go home for the holiday season. You may feel sad, angry or irritable, or maybe it seems bittersweet. No matter what you are experiencing, take care to acknowledge your feelings and refrain from judging them.

Acknowledging your feelings is essential, but communicating these feelings is also critical. The holidays can be stressful, and tensions may run high, so it's important to be up front and communicate what you are feeling to those closest to you in order to avoid unnecessary conflict and misdirected emotions. Being able to acknowledge and communicate your own unique responses to changes in situations, especially with those closest to you, can help with the transition and assist in redefining holiday traditions.

If this is your first time or your tenth time that you will not be heading home for the holidays, the tips and suggestions below may be helpful as you begin your own brand new holiday customs:

Create your own holiday. Plan an "alternate" holiday for your household. Recreate in your home what you would be doing with your family. Sometimes, it can be just as exciting knowing you will still be able to participate in the festivities, although in different locations.

Use technology to communicate. Even if you can't physically be with your loved ones, technology can come in handy. Try using Skype, Zoom or other videoconferencing applications. Just seeing your family and hearing familiar voices and sounds can make you feel as though you were there.

Reach out on social media. Make a Facebook post and converse with others who are celebrating the holiday away from home. It will make you feel good to interact on your own terms, so message others throughout the day and send greetings.

If you are concerned about your mental health during the holiday season, don't hesitate to seek advice. BHS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150.



Creative Ways to Motivate Employees

How do you motivate your staff when you can't afford to give them a raise? Use a different kind of currency. Contrary to popular belief, money is not the best motivator because it sends the message that nothing is worth doing unless you get paid extra. This can develop a sense of entitlement that quickly becomes a bottomless pit and does nothing to increase job satisfaction.

A study by psychologist Adam Grant of the University of Michigan suggests that a better performance booster is when workers have personal contact with the beneficiaries of their work. For example, cafeteria line workers are significantly happier than those who work back in the kitchen, because line workers are able to see the happy customers. An employee's morale is positively influenced by knowing his or her work is meaningful.

Employees want to be recognized as individuals, shown appreciation and given opportunities to grow. This requires supervisors to manage one-to-one rather than treating every employee alike. Here are some low-cost ideas for motivating your staff that can have a big return on investment.

- Encourage comments from external and internal customers. Post praise
- Remind staff how their work matters to customers and encourage some level of customer interaction for everyone
- Call an employee into your office just to say thank you without discussing any other issue

- Write a thank you card or email
- Create an employee newsletter to share updates and recognition
- Post a bulletin board for employees to share news, hobbies and recognition
- Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and special achievements
- Save the best parking spot for an employee of the month. Let your staff decide how the spot is earned
- Join in and help an employee who is under pressure. Ask what can be done and help complete the task side-by-side
- Create a change of pace by giving employees a chance to work on exciting projects or learn new skills
- Delegate worthy projects, not just menial tasks, to increase feelings of trust and pride
- Ask an employee who is proficient in a certain area to train others or make a presentation at a staff meeting
- Book a speaker to speak on a subject of interest to your employees like personal finance, stress management or improving relationships
- Help build skills with a training library filled with books, tapes and other resources that employees can check out
- Allow employees to attend seminars and ask them to make a presentation to others sharing what they have learned



Practicing Gratitude: Ways to Improve Positivity

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 well-being by helping you cope with stress. Research suggests that a daily practice of gratitude could affect the body too. 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. These can be big or little things. It can be as simple as scoring a good parking space that day or enjoying a hot mug of coffee. Perhaps you feel grateful for a close friend's compassionate support.

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

Put some effort into experiencing gratitude on a daily basis. Here are some tips to create positive emotions by being thankful every day:

- **Take a moment.** Think about the positive things that happened during the day
- **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
- **Call a friend or relative.** Tell someone you're grateful for them

Wild Rice and Cider Cranberry Pilaf

Ingredients: 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided · 1 small cinnamon stick · 2 large cloves garlic, 1 smashed and 1 chopped · 2-1/2 cups water · 2 cups wild rice blend · 1/2 cup fresh apple cider · Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper · 1/2 cup dried cranberries · 2 onions chopped · 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar · 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley · 4 scallions, chopped

Directions: Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add cinnamon and smashed garlic. Cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add rice and toss to coat. Add cider and 2-1/2 cups water. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to boil, reduce heat to low, cover and cook until rice is tender, 15 to 17 minutes, adding cranberries during last 10 minute of cooking. Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are tender, 18 to 20 minutes. Add chopped garlic and cook, stirring until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in vinegar and parsley. Add scallions and onion mixture to rice and toss to combine.

