



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

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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.



### Inner Strength: The Path to Self-Esteem

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### Suicide Grief: Healing After a Loved One's Suicide

[Click to Read Article](#) ▶



### What Can the Present Moment Tell You?

[Click to Read Article](#) ▶



### Healthy Recipe: Granola Bars

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## Inner Strength: The Path to Self-Esteem

Do you want to feel better about yourself? You can learn how to build self-esteem and raise your confidence by building inner strength. Try these tips:

- ▶ **Outline your goals and accomplish them.** Each time you get to check something off your to-do list, you're going to feel great about yourself and your accomplishments.
- ▶ **Practice being assertive.** Try to express your thoughts, opinions and needs. It feels great to prove that you can advocate for yourself when the situation calls for it.
- ▶ **Check out new activities.** Join a gym, go for a hike, pick up sewing. You'll feel proud for stretching your wings. Does trying something new on your own seem too intimidating? Maybe see if a friend will go along.
- ▶ **Tell your inner critic to be quiet.** If you have a mean thought about yourself, see if you can change it to something positive instead. You're probably harder on yourself

than you are to anyone else, so think of yourself as someone that you care about, too.

- ▶ **Don't compare yourself to others.** Social media especially makes us view others' lives as more perfect than our own, but understand that this does not reflect reality, and that everyone is struggling in some ways.
- ▶ **Find ways to feel like you're contributing.** It feels great to help. Assist a family member with chores, volunteer somewhere or smile at a stranger. Contributing positively in the world is a sure-fire way to build your self-worth.

As you work on building your self-esteem, you will notice that you feel better more often, that you are enjoying life more than you did before and that you are doing more of the things you have always wanted to do. This is shaping you toward becoming the person you want to be—a person with self-esteem and belief in yourself.



## Suicide Grief: Healing After A Loved One's Suicide

Understanding the complicated legacy of suicide and how to cope with palpable grief can help you find peace and healing, while still honoring the memory of your loved one.

As you face life after a loved one's suicide, remember that you don't have to go through it alone.

### Adopt Healthy Coping Strategies

The aftermath of a loved one's suicide can be physically and emotionally exhausting. As you work through your grief, be careful to protect your own well-being.

- ▶ **Keep in touch.** Reach out to loved ones, friends and spiritual leaders for comfort, understanding and healing. Surround yourself with people who are willing to listen when you need to talk, as well as those who'll simply offer a shoulder to lean on when you'd rather be silent.
- ▶ **Grieve in your own way.** Do what's right for you, not necessarily someone else. There is no single "right" way to grieve. If you find it too painful to visit your loved

one's gravesite or share the details of your loved one's death, wait until you're ready.

- ▶ **Be prepared for painful reminders.** At holidays, anniversaries and other special occasions, there can be painful reminders of your loved one's suicide. Don't chide yourself for being sad or mournful. Instead, consider changing or suspending family traditions that are too painful to continue.
- ▶ **Don't rush yourself.** Losing someone to suicide is a tremendous difficulty, and healing must occur at its own pace. Don't be hurried by anyone else's expectations that it's been "long enough."
- ▶ **Expect setbacks.** Some days will be better than others, even years after the suicide—and that's okay. Healing doesn't often happen in a straight line.
- ▶ **Know when to seek help.** If you experience intense or unrelenting anguish or guilt related to a loved one's death, your EAP can help. Call your Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.



## What Can the Present Moment Tell You?

With constant interruption in our lives every day, it's hard to stay focused on the present moment. We spend most of our time engaged with our phones, our televisions, the radio, or another form of distraction. You have to wonder, is this really good for us?

It's hard to stay in the present moment, but the benefits are great. Our lives are constantly unfolding before us, but instead of noticing it, our minds are focused on the past or the future, or distracted by something else.

Mindfulness allows us to see what is present with us, and not what our fears and anxieties are showing us. It provides clarity of thought.

Some benefits of mindfulness include:

- ▶ Decreased stress
- ▶ Lower blood pressure
- ▶ Increased awareness
- ▶ Improved sleep
- ▶ Increased self-esteem
- ▶ Bolstered immune system
- ▶ Improved concentration

### **Mindfulness: How Do I Do It?**

Mindfulness can be understood as heightened awareness in the present moment. How does your body feel right now? Are you tired, sore from a workout, holding tension in your jaw? What do your emotions tell you? Are you excited, anxious, lonely?

Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and mentally scan your body for tension. Breathe slowly, simply watching each breath come in and go out of the body. When your mind starts to wander, bring the focus back to your breathing.

### **HEALTHY RECIPE: GRANOLA BARS**

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a saucepan with 1/3 cup each honey and brown sugar, and a pinch of salt. Mix in 2 cups rolled oats, 1 cup each chopped nuts and dried fruit, and 2 tablespoons wheat germ. Press into a parchment-lined 8-inch-square pan and bake 30 minutes at 300°F. Cool, then cut into bars.