

BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. E-NEWS

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National Suicide Prevention Week is September 5-11

The Warning Signs of Suicide. Recognizing the warning signs of suicide could result in a life being saved. Suicide is a devastating act that almost always seems to take friends and family members by surprise, but people often give clues that they're thinking of taking his or her own life.

Warning Signs. Giving away cherished possessions and being preoccupied with death are red flags that a person is suicidal. Furthermore, the old saying "people who talk about suicide don't do it" is simply not true. Conversely, such talk is often a cry for help before it's too late. Another clue is depression. Any of these changes could be an indicator:

- feelings of hopelessness or helplessness
- changes in eating, sleeping patterns, or behavior
- withdrawal from his/her normal social activities
- unusually poor performance at work or school
- unusually poor concentration

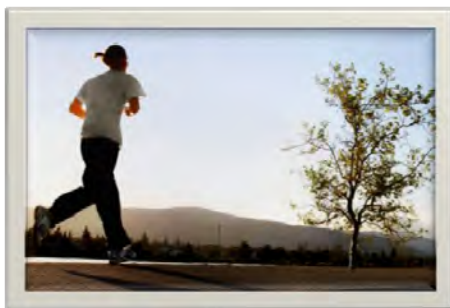
(See *PREVENTION* on page 2)



Managing Stress With Exercise

While there are several ways to manage runaway stress, none are as enjoyable and effective as regular exercise. "Numerous studies have shown exercise provides excellent stress-relieving benefits," says Cedric Bryant, chief exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise. "And let's face it, we all could do with less stress in our lives."

How It Works. Exercise causes the brain to release endorphins, opium-like substances that ease pain and produce a sense of comfort and euphoria. It also encourages the nerve cells in the brain to secrete other neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine, which improve mood. Deficiencies of these substances, particularly serotonin, have been linked to symptoms of depression, anxiety, impulsiveness, aggression and increased appetite. According to a study published in *Archives of Internal Medicine*, when depressed people exercise, they increase their levels of these natural antidepressants. According to the National Institutes of Health, exercise also improves people's ability to relax and sleep, promotes self-esteem and enhances energy, concentration and memory.



Exercise also provides an outlet for negative emotions, such as frustration, anger and irritability, thereby promoting a more positive mood and outlook. Regular moderate exercise interrupts the cyclic thinking process associated with depression. A person who is worried about a particular problem may dwell at length on it, thus bringing on more anxiety. Depression deepens this effect and creates a descending cycle. Exercise can break this pattern.

(see *EXERCISE* on page 4)

(PREVENTION from page 1)

Risk Factors. Anyone who is depressed or has recently been depressed has a higher risk for suicide. The following are also risk factors:

- alcohol and drug use
- a history of physical or sexual abuse
- death of a friend or family member
- end of a relationship
- a previous suicide attempt

What to Do. If you suspect someone is considering suicide, take it seriously — don't assume it will blow over. Share your concerns with someone who's in a position to take charge. Getting a person past a suicide crisis involves being very direct. Ask these questions:

1. Do you feel there's no other way?
2. Do you have a plan to commit suicide?
3. If yes, how and when would you do it?

If the answers indicate the individual is serious about suicide, don't try to talk him/her out of it. Instead, try to make a deal with the person not to do anything without talking to you (or another trusted person) first. Then get help immediately by talking to a responsible family member, school counselor, teacher, or suicide prevention hotline. If possible, have a trusted friend or relative stay with him until the crisis has passed, and follow up with professional help. As a friend or family member: show



understanding, compassion and caring, even though you may be angry with him for putting you through this.

If You're Considering Suicide...

Reach out: Talk to a family member or friend — they'll be able to get you the help you need and deserve. Call Behavioral Health Systems at 800-245-1150 and talk with a Care Coordinator — day or night — for immediate assistance. And if you think you're going to harm yourself, call 911 immediately. It's hard to see it when you're feeling down, but getting help can enable you to understand that your life is valuable to yourself and others. Ψ

For more suicide prevention information visit:

www.suicidology.org

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

www.save.org



“Courage does not always roar. Sometimes it is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow’.”

~ Anonymous

*It isn't easy to beat an addiction,
but your EAP can help.*

Weathering a Financial Storm...Together



In these times of economic downturn, it is important to realize that it can have an impact on relationships. Financial problems is one of the leading causes of separation and divorce. If you and your spouse are in the middle of a financial storm, consider the following:

- **Keep your perspective.** Money is material but immaterial things like trust, love, fun and laughter are priceless contributions to a relationship. Don't let financial problems keep you from seeing other things that are good about your partner.
- **Don't be selfish.** All decisions about money should be made with you and your partner working together. Tough times call for tough sacrifices. Now is not the time to buy yourself that gym membership, new computer or car.
- **Ask yourself: "Is this really about money?"** Your problems may not be about money at all. Sure, finances may be tight, yet you may not be getting along for other reasons. If the tension between you is about something other than finances, call BHS to talk with your Care Coordinator and schedule an appointment with a professional counselor.
- **Don't be afraid to get help.** There are professionals whose advice and skills might rescue you from financial chaos. Like everything else: what isn't helped, continues to hurt. Don't be afraid to get assistance before it's too late. Ψ



Face Up to Your Teen's Problems With Acne

Have a teen or preteen who's dealing with acne problems? They may feel embarrassed, self-conscious and full of adolescent angst with this troublesome condition. Here are some *dos* and *don'ts* to remember when helping your children cope:

- **Don't** just brush off their concerns. Resist the tendency to say that it doesn't matter or that it will just go away eventually. This is not productive as it is not being sensitive to their very real feelings and doesn't acknowledge them as a valuable person.
- **Do** share some of your own experiences. Demonstrate your empathy by recounting a time you felt unattractive or embarrassed when you were their age.
- **Do** point out that many of their friends have the same problem.
- **Do** explain that acne problems are normal due to changing hormone levels and is not permanent.
- **Do** emphasize that eating right, drinking water, keeping clean and getting plenty of rest will help.

Sometimes, despite good self-care efforts, acne persists. If you observe your teen making an effort to improve their condition and yet it remains, schedule an appointment for them with a dermatologist. Medical office visits can be costly, and treatments often require a more thorough routine. Encourage your teen to follow his prescribed regimen.

While acne may be a sensitive subject for you to discuss, it's a good opportunity to connect. It's also good practice for tougher conversations that you'll have to have in the future. Ψ

Simple Communication

"We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end," Winston Churchill declared in one of the most memorable speeches of World War II. "We shall fight on the beaches... We shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

There were 81 words in that particular passage. Churchill used only nine words with more than one syllable. And only three had more than two syllables. The lesson: simple words are best in conveying powerful messages. Ψ



(EXERCISE from page 1)

Finally, exercise helps you take time for yourself. "Whether you exercise alone or with a friend, it's important to take time for yourself during stressful periods," says Mr. Bryant. "In this way, exercise functions as a positive distraction from the problems of the day that are causing your stress."

Stress-Reduction Moves. Almost any exercise can provide stress relief, but the following guidelines can help you find those likely to be more effective for you.

- Choose an exercise you enjoy. This will depend on your physical ability as well as your preferences.
- Choose activities that are accessible and feasible for you to do regularly.
- Consider whether you want to do your exercise routine on your own or with others.
- Ask yourself if you want to play competitive sports, such as basketball or tennis, or if you'd rather do noncompetitive activities, such as walking, bicycling or taking an aerobics class.

Exercise every day if you can. The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health recommends 30 minutes of activity on most, if not all, days of the week. "You'll benefit from exercising three to five times a week, but you'll see more consistent stress reduction if you can be physically active every day," says Bryant. Consider mind/body activities: in yoga and tai chi, your mind relaxes progressively as your body increases its amount of muscular work. "If you're attracted to a spiritual component, these forms of exercise are effective for honing stress management and relaxation skills," says Mr. Bryant.

One could say that controlling stress ultimately comes down to making time to exercise. Physical activity provides an enjoyable and effective way to cope with life's troubles as it promotes lasting strength and empowerment. Ψ

Red Bean Crostini with Rosemary from www.cookthink.com

1 15-ounce can of red beans, rinsed & drained
 1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
 1 Tablespoon olive oil
 ½ Teaspoon red pepper flakes
 Dash of salt and pepper
 1 Tablespoon chopped rosemary marjoram
 4 Thick slices of good-quality bread
 1 Clove garlic, peeled and halved
 Prep time: 5 minutes
 Total time: 20 minutes
 Servings: 2-4

1. Combine the beans, red wine vinegar, olive oil, red pepper flakes, salt, pepper and rosemary in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the beans smell fragrant.
2. Meanwhile, toast the bread until crusty but still a little soft in the center. Rub the garlic clove on one side of the slices. Spoon the beans over bread slices and drizzle with more olive oil.

