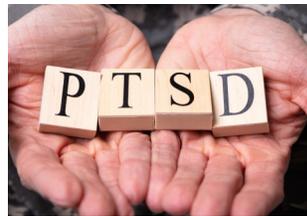




BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. Spotlight

June 2020

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.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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Men's Health Week:
June 15—June 21
Men and Depression

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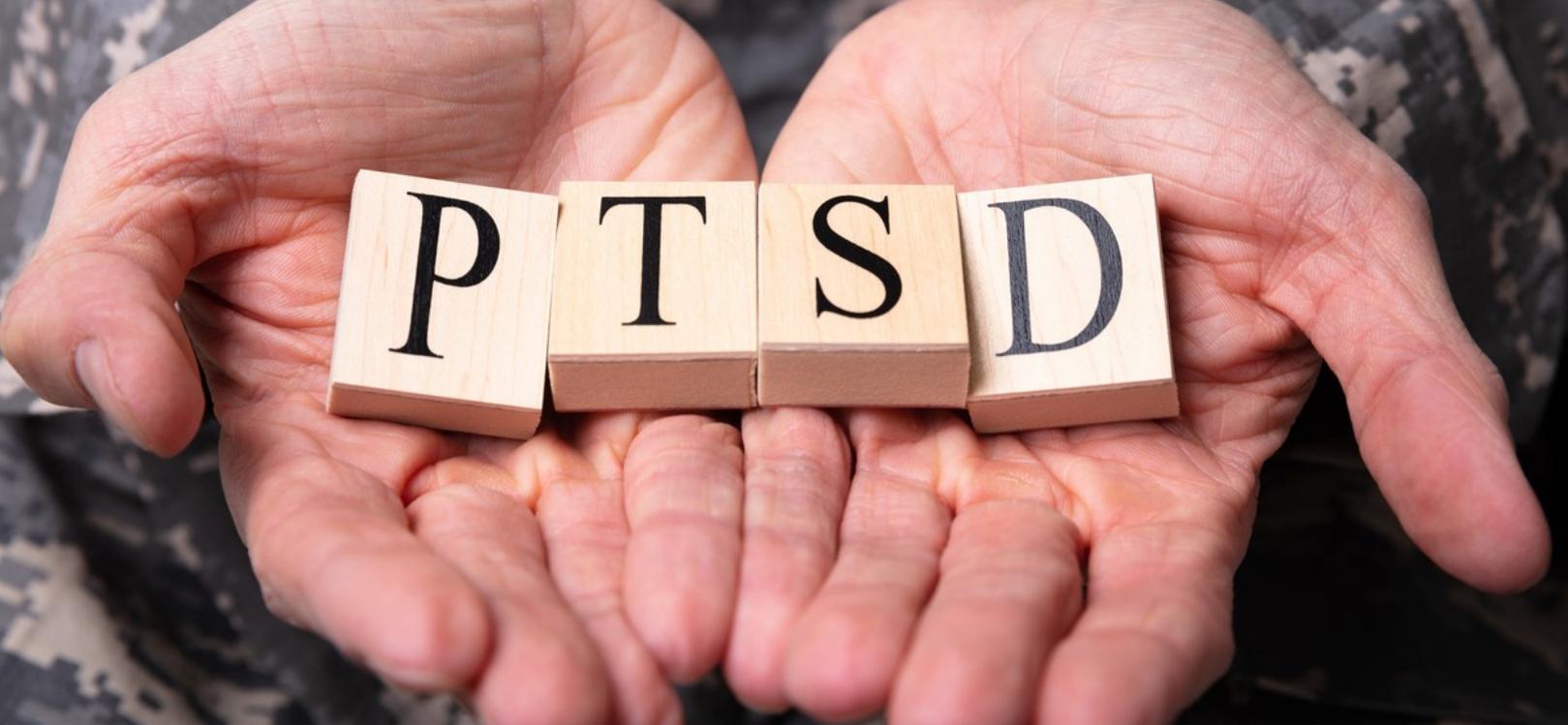
We Know What To Do.
Why Don't We Do It?

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Recipe: Summer Pan Roasted
Corn and Tomato Salad

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better.

Getting effective treatment after PTSD symptoms develop can be critical to reduce symptoms and improve functioning. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships. They can also interfere with your ability to go about your daily tasks.

Symptoms

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms may start within one month of a traumatic event, but sometimes may not appear until years after the event. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships. They can also interfere with your ability to go about your daily tasks. Symptoms may include:

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event
- Negative thoughts about yourself, other people or the world
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Being easily startled or frightened

Having PTSD may also increase your risk of other mental health problems, such as:

- Depression and anxiety
- Issues with drugs or alcohol use
- Eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts and actions

When to see a professional:

If you have disturbing thoughts and feelings about a traumatic event for more than a month, if they're severe or if you feel you are having trouble getting your life back under control, it may be time to speak with a mental health professional.

Post-traumatic stress disorder treatment can help you regain a sense of control over your life. The primary treatment is psychotherapy but can also include medication. Combining these treatments can help improve your symptoms by:

- Teaching you skills to address your symptoms
- Helping you think better about yourself, others and the world
- Learning ways to cope if any symptoms arise again
- Treating other problems often related to traumatic experiences, such as depression, anxiety or misuse of alcohol or drugs

You don't have to try and handle the burden of PTSD on your own. BHS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150.



Men's Health Week: Men and Depression

Men and women both experience depression but their symptoms can be very different. Because men who are depressed may appear to be angry or aggressive instead of sad, their families, friends and even doctors may not always recognize the anger or aggression as symptoms of depression. In addition, men are less likely than women to recognize, talk about and seek treatment for depression. Yet depression affects a large number of men.

Everyone feels sad or irritable sometimes, or has trouble sleeping occasionally, but these feelings and troubles usually pass after a couple of days. When a man has depression, he has trouble with daily life and loses interest in anything for weeks at a time. Men may be more likely to feel very tired and irritable, and lose interest in their work, family, or hobbies. They may be more likely to have difficulty sleeping than women who have depression, and although women with depression are more likely to attempt suicide, men are more likely to die by suicide.

Depression can occur along with other serious illnesses, such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and Parkinson's disease. Many men do not recognize, acknowledge, or seek help for their depression. They may be reluctant to talk about how they are feeling, but depression is a real and treatable illness. It can affect any man at any age. With the right treatment, most men with depression can get better and gain back their interest in work, family, and hobbies.

Signs and symptoms of depression in men

Some symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad or empty
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious, or angry
- Loss of interest in work, family, or once pleasurable activities, including sex
- Feeling very tired
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or not wanting to eat at all
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems
- Inability to meet the responsibilities of work, caring for family, or other important activities

How is depression treated?

Men often avoid addressing their feelings, and in many cases, friends and family members are the first to recognize that their loved one is depressed. It is important that friends and family support their loved one and encourage him to visit a doctor or mental health professional to manage symptoms. It is important that the man seeking help be open and honest about any efforts at "self-medication" with alcohol, non-prescribed drugs, gambling or high-risk activities.

If you or a loved one is in need of a free, confidential assessment, please contact BHS at 800-245-1150.



We Know What To Do. Why Don't We Do It?

You know you could improve your health with a few steps every day. But you have not started. Or maybe you have tried a few times but lost steam. Don't worry, it's not just you. Our brains rely on habits, from how we grocery shop to how we respond to criticism.

Reliance and repetition make things easier for the brain, giving it less work to do. It can take some mental gymnastics to build new, healthy habits. Research shows that lasting change is possible. By being aware of the thought patterns that get in the way of achieving your goals, you can work with your brain to build new ones.

Use these tactics to challenge less-than-helpful thought patterns to build new habits. You might be focused on the 'should' instead of the 'want.' "I should exercise more for my heart health." "I should watch less TV and be social instead." Studies show that knowing why we *should* make a change usually won't keep us going with new habits long term. Usually, our brains respond to the here and now. Research shows we need positive reinforcement to set habits.

Try this: Be on your own team.

You are trying to figure out what helps you make healthy choices. Without judgment. Notice when your brain says, "You're not good at this," or "You're probably going to fail." Talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend. Try "I'm working to make a change; I'm learning and I'm being good to myself." It might seem counterintuitive, but accepting yourself, flaws, and all, can make you more ready for healthy change.

Imagine how good you will feel when you have reached a goal. It is the part where you get excited and motivated. Dreaming about the future can mean you are not getting realistic about the obstacles. There is a difference between imagining yourself stronger from a gym routine and imagining yourself getting out the door earlier in the morning for a workout. To get to the reward, you must be mentally ready for the things in your way. Focus on the positives or the sense of accomplishment you get every time you make a healthy choice. They're a key ingredient to long-term change.

Summer Pan Roasted Corn and Tomato Salad

Ingredients: 1/4 pound bacon, 1 red onion, 2-3 cups corn kernels, 2 cups chopped tomatoes, 1 chopped avocado, 1 chopped pepper, 1 lime (for juice), Optional: serve alone or over rice or quinoa

Instructions: Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until fat begins to render; add chopped onion and cook until just softened, then add corn, stir/shake until corn begins to brown. Let cool and drain fat. Put the bacon/corn mixture in a bowl; add lime juice, chopped tomatoes and chopped avocado. Add the rest of the ingredients to your taste: chopped pepper, salt & pepper, cilantro. May be served warm or chilled.

