



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

November 2025

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.



How to Relax: The Mind-Body Connection

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How to Relax: The Mind-Body Connection

The old idea that the mind and body are separate is giving way to research showing how deeply connected they are. Stress and relaxation reveal this clearly—when you're tense, your body and mind both react, and when you relax, both find relief. Understanding this connection can help you use it to promote calm and overall wellbeing.

What the Mind-Body Connection Means

The mind-body connection shows how your thoughts, emotions, and physical health affect one another. When you feel anxious, your body responds with faster breathing, tense muscles, and a racing heart. Relaxation techniques like deep breathing can reverse these effects, calming both body and mind. Likewise, healthy habits such as balanced eating and regular activity support both physical health and emotional wellbeing.

How Relaxing Your Body Calms Your Mind

When tension builds, your body often reacts before your mind fully registers the stress. By physically relaxing—slowing your breathing or releasing muscle tension—you can interrupt the stress cycle. As your body settles, your mind follows, leading to clearer thinking, a more stable mood and fewer stress signals sent back to the body. The process builds on itself, creating a reinforcing calm that helps you stay grounded and focused.

How Relaxing Your Mind Supports Your Body

Calming your mind produces a cascade of positive physical effects. Your heart rate slows, your blood pressure drops, your muscles loosen and your digestion improves. A calm mind even strengthens the immune system and helps you sleep better. These physical benefits then make it easier to maintain a peaceful state of mind, completing the mind-body feedback loop. By learning to calm your thoughts, you can improve your physical health in powerful ways.

Practical Ways to Activate Relaxation

You can strengthen the mind-body connection through simple practices. Deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, mindfulness, and visualization all train your body and mind to return to a calm state more easily. Techniques like yoga, Tai Chi, aromatherapy, massage and even small comforts—such as a warm bath or soothing music—can break stress cycles and restore balance. With practice, these methods help you build lasting habits that nurture both body and mind, supporting relaxation and resilience every day.

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Balancing Caregiving, Work and Family

Caring for an older or infirm family member can be as life-changing as having a new child. Balancing caregiving with work, relationships and self-care is challenging, but with planning, communication and support, you can find a balance. Small steps can make a big difference in managing your time, energy and wellbeing.

Maintaining Your Relationship

Caregiving adds demands that require organization and flexibility. Keep a shared calendar of appointments and responsibilities, plan ahead for routine and unexpected events, and prioritize what truly matters. Ask for help from family, friends or community resources. At work, explore flexible schedules, remote options or EAP support, and communicate openly with your manager or HR. Cross-training, delegating tasks and setting limits can help you maintain balance and reduce stress.

Supporting Your Children

When your attention is divided, it's easy for your children to feel left out. Set aside dedicated time with them, both together and one-on-one, to help them feel valued and secure. Ask how they're coping with changes at home and listen without judgment. Involve them in caregiving tasks when appropriate as it can help them build empathy and foster meaningful connections with their older relative. Just as important, let them choose when they prefer not to participate and respect those boundaries.

Supporting Your Children

Children notice when family routines change. When your attention is divided, it's easy for your children to feel left out. Set aside dedicated time with them, both together and one-on-one, to help them feel valued and secure. Ask how they're coping with changes at home and listen without judgment. Involve them in caregiving tasks when appropriate as it can help them build empathy and foster meaningful connections with their older relative. Just as important, let them choose when they prefer not to participate and respect those boundaries.

Taking Care of Yourself

In the midst of caregiving, it's easy to overlook your own needs but doing so can lead to burnout. Prioritize self-care just as you would any other responsibility. Schedule time to rest, exercise, connect with friends or enjoy quiet activities that recharge you. Caring for yourself supports not only your wellbeing but also your ability to care for others. Remember, finding balance is an ongoing process and giving yourself grace along the way is one of the most important forms of care you can practice.

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Make the Holidays Your Own

The holidays are often pictured as perfect family celebrations, but not everyone fits that mold. Single people, childless couples, divorced or blended families and those juggling multiple traditions can feel left out. The good news is you can create your own traditions that work for you.

Figure Out What You Want

Holiday stress often comes from things we feel we “should” do. Take time to reflect on what you truly want—family gatherings, solitude, cultural or religious connections, or time helping others. Focus on creating holidays that feel right for you.

Going It Alone or Together

If you’re single, consider volunteering, taking a solo trip, or enjoying a relaxing day for yourself. Lean on friends and family for support or join their holiday activities. New relationships also bring pressure; instead of forcing traditions, focus on what the season means to you and find ways to enjoy it together without stress.

Blending Families

Blended families face unique challenges during the holidays. Memories of past celebrations can bring up strong emotions for both kids and adults alike. Talk openly about traditions from each side and decide what to keep, combine, or start fresh. Flexibility is key, and celebrating more than once in different ways can help everyone feel included and comfortable without being tied to exact dates or routines.

Setting Boundaries and Planning Ahead

A stress-free holiday starts with knowing what you don’t want. Make a “no” list of activities, obligations, or people that add pressure, and practice saying no if needed. Plan ahead so others have time to adjust to your new approach. Letting go of unrealistic expectations and taking control of your own traditions can help you create a holiday season that is enjoyable, meaningful, and truly your own, giving you space to focus on what matters most to you.

RECIPE: Easy Caramel Apple Dump Cake • 5 Minute Prep Time • 45 Minute Cook Time

Ingredients • 40 ounces apple pie filling • 1/3 cup caramels diced into small bits (or Kraft caramel bits) • 1 box yellow or white cake mix • 2 sticks salted butter 16 ounces, melted

Instructions • Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. • Prepare a 9x13" cake pan or baking dish with cooking spray. • To the prepared dish, add apple pie filling. Sprinkle caramel bits over the top. • Next, layer dry cake mix over the top, smoothly with a spatula. • Finally, pour the melted butter over the top of the dry cake mix. Do not stir. • Bake for 45 minutes.

