

# Balanced Living

June 2023



## Self-Care: Taking Time for Yourself

Between all of life's obligations including school, studying, extracurricular activities and work, it can be hard to find any moments for self-care. Making time for self-care can help you manage stress, support your immune system and increase energy levels. Here are some tips to help you prioritize self-care and while doing so, nurture your overall wellbeing.

### Define Your Self-Care

Everyone will have their own version of what self-care means to them, so find what works for you. There are some things that might feel relaxing, such as scrolling through the internet, but consider if that is truly an effective part of your self-care routine.

### Include Self-Care in Your Schedule

Allot some time for self-care by writing it in your calendar or adding it to your to-do list. Even if you only have 15 minutes in your day to devote to yourself, you can still use that time wisely. It's enough time to meditate, do some stretches, go for a walk, read a book, etc.

### Mix Up Activities

Try some activities that are more relaxing, such as taking a bath or enjoying a cup of coffee, as well as some that require more discipline, such as working out or cooking yourself a hearty meal.

### Learn to Prioritize Tasks

Determine what truly needs to get done each day and what can wait so that you can carve out some time for yourself. If you have a tough time relaxing at home because you start doing other things, such as cleaning, it might help to plan self-care activities that happen away from your house. Consider trying out a yoga class or going for a walk in a park.

### Check In With Yourself

Some weeks you might be craving more self-care than others due to a stressful exam week, working extra hours or engaging in more social events than usual. Everyone needs to recharge their batteries after things like this, so make sure to pay attention to what your body and mind need.

### Don't Be Afraid of Saying "No"

Part of caring for yourself is knowing when to say "no." You don't have to feel obligated to attend all events you are invited to. In fact, a big part of self-care is not overcommitting yourself and knowing when your schedule is at capacity.

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# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## What is PTSD?

You may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if you've been through a traumatic event and are having trouble dealing with it. Such events may include a car crash, rape, domestic violence, military combat, or violent crime. While it is normal to have some anxiety after such an event, it often goes away in time. But with PTSD, the anxiety is more intense and keeps coming back. And the trauma is relived through nightmares, intrusive memories, and flashbacks. These can be vivid memories that seem real. The symptoms of PTSD can cause problems with relationships and make it hard to cope with daily life. But it can be treated. With help, you can feel better.

## What causes PTSD?

PTSD may be triggered by something that:

- Happened to you
- Happened to someone close to you
- You saw

Examples include:

- Serious accidents, such as car or train wrecks
- Natural disasters, such as floods or earthquakes
- Manmade tragedies, such as bombings, a plane crash, a shooting
- Violent personal attacks, such as a mugging, rape, torture, being held captive, or kidnapping
- Military combat
- Abuse in childhood or adulthood

## Who is at risk for PTSD?

There are many risk factors for having PTSD. Recognizing and addressing them can help prevent PTSD, when possible. These risk factors include:

- Lack of family or social support resources
- Repeated exposure to traumatic circumstances
- Personal history of trauma or of an acute stress or anxiety disorder
- Family history of mental health disorders
- Personality traits of vulnerability and a lack of resilience
- History of childhood trauma
- Personality disorder or traits including borderline personality disorder, paranoia, dependency, or antisocial tendencies

## What are the symptoms of PTSD?

Symptoms of PTSD last more than a month. They may include:

- Unwanted or intense memories of a trauma
- Nightmares
- Vivid memories or flashbacks that make you feel like you're reliving the event
- Feeling worried, fearful, anxious, or suspicious
- Strong reactions when you're reminded of the trauma (or sometimes for no obvious reason at all)
- Intrusive thoughts about combat, death, or killing
- Feeling disconnected or isolated, as if you're not yourself
- Loss of interest in things you once enjoyed
- Feeling agitated, tense, on edge, or easily startled
- Bursts of anger or irritation
- Problems focusing
- Trouble falling or staying asleep

The symptoms of PTSD may look like other mental health conditions. Always see your healthcare provider for a diagnosis

## How is PTSD diagnosed?

Not every person who goes through trauma gets PTSD, or has symptoms at all. PTSD is diagnosed if your symptoms last more than 1 month. Symptoms often begin within 3 months of the trauma. But they can also start months or years later. How long this illness lasts varies. Some people recover within 6 months. Others have symptoms that last much longer.

## How is PTSD treated?

Treatment will depend on your symptoms, age, and general health. It will also depend on how severe the condition is. You may think that asking for help is a sign of weakness. In fact, taking action to make your life better takes a lot of courage. Talking about a trauma can be hard. But it can make a big difference. The main treatment for PTSD is counseling. You'll work with a trained therapist to learn new ways to cope with your experiences. Medicine may also be prescribed to help with anxiety, depression, or sleep. Most people with PTSD have a combination of counseling and medicine for treatment.

## Types of counseling

Counseling is done in a safe environment, either one-on-one or in a group. Group therapy is often done with other people who have been through similar events. PTSD is often treated with 1 or more of the following forms of counseling. Talk with your healthcare provider about your options so you can decide on a counseling format that works for you.

- **Cognitive processing therapy (CPT).** This type of therapy helps you cope with negative thoughts linked to the trauma. You'll work with a therapist to better understand how you think and feel about what happened. And you'll learn skills to help you cope with the trauma. CPT won't make you forget about what happened. But it can make the memories easier to live with.
- **Prolonged exposure therapy.** This helps you deal with thoughts and situations related to the trauma in new ways. You'll learn breathing and relaxation methods to calm yourself when you come into contact with triggers. With your therapist's help, you may go into situations that remind you of the trauma. You'll learn to reduce your reactions over time. This can help with avoidance. You'll also talk about the trauma to help you gain control over how you think and feel about it.
- **Other therapies.** Other therapies for PTSD include coping skills training, acceptance and commitment training, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), family counseling, and PTSD psychoeducation

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## Key points about PTSD

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition in which a person has experienced a traumatic event that causes long-term stress.
- PTSD may be triggered by a traumatic event that happened to the person or someone close to them. Or it may be something that the person saw.
- PTSD can occur in children and adults.
- The person may have flashbacks, stay away from stressful situations, or withdraw emotionally.
- Diagnosis is made by a healthcare provider when the symptoms last longer than 1 month.
- Treatment involves medicine and therapy to decrease the emotional effects of the disorder and increase coping skills.

## Next steps

Tips to help you get the most from a visit to your healthcare provider:

- Know the reason for your visit and what you want to happen.
- Before your visit, write down questions you want answered.
- Bring someone with you to help you ask questions and remember what your healthcare provider tells you.
- At the visit, write down the name of a new diagnosis, and any new medicines, treatments, or tests. Also write down any new instructions your healthcare provider gives you.
- Know why a new medicine or treatment is prescribed, and how it will help you. Also know what the side effects are.
- Ask if your condition can be treated in other ways.
- Know why a test or procedure is recommended and what the results could mean.
- Know what to expect if you do not take the medicine or have the test or procedure.
- If you have a follow-up appointment, write down the date, time, and purpose for that visit.
- Know how you can contact your healthcare provider if you have questions.



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# How to Empower Your Team

When employees don't feel empowered, they tend to isolate themselves and work alone, rather than as a team. They also might be less motivated and not as creative or inspired to achieve. In turn, this lack of empowerment leaves employees and teams unable to perform to their highest ability and productivity. Empowering your team brings success to employees, groups, and companies.

Read the advice below to see how supervisors can build empowered teams:

- **Allow the Team to Plan** for a whole project, rather than small pieces of a project at a time. This way, employees will have to plan their work schedule accordingly and assign goals for themselves. This will generate team-wide responsibility to get the project done.
- **Allow the Team to Schedule Projects**. Daily meetings on scheduling can take up precious time rather than fill individuals with a productive spirit. Allow employees to schedule for their tasks, giving them enough work to fill up a week or more. Letting team members schedule projects on their own will help create better planning skills.
- **Allow the Team to Make Decisions**. When an employee is involved with decision-making, he or she will feel like an essential part of the team. Bring the team together for brainstorming or impromptu meetings so individuals can share in the decision-making process. Encouraging decision-making will make sure the team moves forward quickly toward its goals.
- **Allow the Team to Assign Work to Its Individuals**. Individuals of a team have insight into their strengths and skills, so allow the team to divide up a large project on their own. Also, this will allow individuals to develop new strengths and skillsets, as a team member may complete a task he or she has not done before. As a result, you will have better trained and more well-rounded employees.
- **Look at Results Rather Than the Process**. When a team does the work to plan, schedule, make decisions, and assign duties, the supervisor will be able to see if the team was effective or not. By looking at the end result, rather than the process, you'll be able to empower your employees with the ability to govern themselves yet still provide feedback on whether their results were acceptable. This will inspire the team to find new ways to work on other projects and adjust their process if necessary.

*Written by Life Advantages - Author Dr. Delvina Miremadi ©2023*

## Webinar Now Available:

### PTSD: Let's Get the Facts

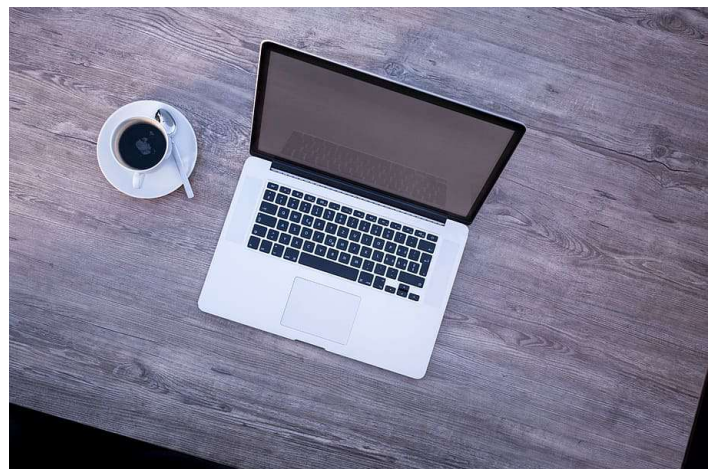
You've heard about it. What is it, what are its causes, and how is it treated? This webinar will explore and discuss post-traumatic stress disorder. We will discuss the definition, common myths vs. facts, symptoms, relationships, self-care, and treatment.

**Log-in** any time this month to watch the webinar!

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1<sup>st</sup> time login? Contact us at [AM@alliancewp.com](mailto:AM@alliancewp.com) for your Registration Code.







# The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

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## Men's Health Month

Men often neglect regular check-ups and screenings, risking their health. June is Men's Health Month, making it a great time to review the top health concerns that men may face and how to screen for them.

1. **Heart Disease.** Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men in the United States. Risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, and obesity. Screening for heart disease involves checking blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.
2. **Cancer.** Cancer is a significant health concern for men. The most common types of cancer in men are prostate, lung, and colorectal. Screening for prostate cancer involves a blood test called the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test and a digital rectal exam. Screening for lung and colorectal cancer involves imaging tests like CT scans and colonoscopies.
3. **Chronic lower respiratory disease (CLRD).** CLRD is a group of conditions that affect the lungs, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other chronic conditions. Typical symptoms include shortness of breath, wheezing, increased mucus, chronic cough, racing heartbeat, and fatigue.
4. **Stroke.** According to CDC, four out of five strokes are preventable, and men are more likely to have a stroke than women. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke. However, nicotine use, heart disease, and certain medications can also increase your risk of a stroke.
5. **Diabetes.** Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects millions of men worldwide. Risk factors for diabetes include obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a family history of the disease. Screening for diabetes involves a blood test that measures blood sugar levels.

In conclusion, regular health screenings are essential for maintaining good health and preventing serious illnesses. Men should try to get screened for the top five health concerns facing them today. By caring for their health and getting screened regularly, men can live healthier, happier lives.

Source: [Top 10 Causes of Strokes - Risk Factors and How You Can Lower Your Risks \(webmd.com\)](https://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/heart-disease-top-10-causes-strokes-risk-factors-and-how-you-can-lower-your-risks)



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## Anti-Aging Benefits of Resistance Training

According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), participation in regular physical activity (both aerobic and strength exercises) elicits several favorable responses that contribute to healthy aging.

According to Webster, aging is the organic process of growing older and showing the effects of increasing age. Part of the normal physical aging process, which starts in our 30s, is that bone density diminishes, we lose muscle strength, and our muscles and connective tissues become less flexible and pliable. All of this increases our risk of injury.

### Physical benefits of resistance training include:

- Prevention or control of chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, back pain, depression, and obesity
- Increased bone density and strength and reduced risk of osteoporosis
- Weight management and increased muscle-to-fat ratio
- Maintaining flexibility and pliability of muscles
- Improved muscle strength and tone
- Improved mobility and balance
- Decreased risk of injury
- Pain management
- Improved posture
- Greater stamina

Aging is also associated with a gradual decline in cognitive function. As such, it is common for aging individuals to find that mental tasks take longer to complete and that their memory and attention may be diminished. Resistance training can help to mitigate some of these normal side effects of aging.

### Additional benefits of resistance training include:

- Reduce or prevent cognitive decline with age
- Enhanced performance of everyday tasks
- Increased self-esteem

Overall, the benefits associated with regular exercise and physical activity contribute to a healthier, independent lifestyle, greatly improving this population's functional capacity and quality of life.



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## Great Outdoors Month

**Great Outdoors Month was officially recognized on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and is now celebrated each June.**

The history behind Great Outdoors Month began in 1998 under President Clinton when 'Great Outdoors Week' was established to help increase jobs and to get people to enjoy nature.

This celebration of the Great Outdoors has helped bring many health and social, and economic benefits since then. In 2016, the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act was enacted to analyze the outdoor recreation economy of the United States.

A report released in 2018 showed that outdoor recreation contributed more than \$412 billion to the US economy in 2016, comprising about 2.2% of the total US GDP. The outdoor recreation industry provided over 4.5 million jobs that year, which continues to rise.

Great Outdoors Month is now celebrated and recognized by most of the United States and continues to be a way to bring people together to appreciate all that nature has to offer.

**Do you want to know how to celebrate and participate in the Great Outdoors Month this June? Here are a few ideas:**

- Plan a trip to a National Park
- Hike or bike a new trail
- Go fishing
- Kayak or tube down a river
- Picnic in a park
- Go camping
- Go rock climbing
- Help clean up a park or trail

Whether you choose to go for a hike, visit a national park, or just take time to appreciate your local trail, Great Outdoors Month is the perfect reminder of the benefits of vitamin D and fresh air.

Sources: <https://www.mindful.org/tips-bringing-mindfulness-next-vacation/>

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We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.  
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## Green Goddess Ricotta Pasta

### Ingredients

- 8 ounces whole-wheat or gluten-free pasta shells
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons chopped shallot
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon anchovy paste
- 2 cups packed baby spinach
- 1 cup chopped mixed fresh tender herbs (such as basil, chives, parsley, *and/or* tarragon), plus more for garnish
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided

### Directions

1. Bring a large pot of water to boil; add pasta and cook according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup of cooking water; drain the pasta and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallot and garlic; cook, stirring often, until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add anchovy paste; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add spinach; cook, stirring constantly, until bright green and wilted, about 1 minute.
3. Transfer the spinach mixture to a blender. Add herbs, ricotta, lemon zest, lemon juice, and salt; blend on medium-high speed until smooth and bright green, about 1 minute. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the reserved pasta water to thin the sauce if necessary.
4. Transfer the sauce to a large skillet over medium heat. Add the pasta and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Parmesan; toss to coat until warmed through, about 1 minute, adding pasta water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached.
5. Divide the pasta among 4 bowls: sprinkle with the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Parmesan. Garnish with additional herbs, if desired.

### Nutrition

**High Protein, Gluten-Free Option, Egg Free, Soy Free**

**4 Servings**

**Per Serving:**

Calories: **393** | Protein: **18g** | Carbohydrates: **49g** | Dietary Fiber: **6g** | Fat: **6g** | Saturated Fat: **5g** | Sodium: **547mg** | Calcium **295mg** | Potassium: **407mg** | Magnesium: **113mg**

Source: [Green Goddess Ricotta Pasta Recipe \(eatingwell.com\)](https://eatingwell.com/recipes/green-goddess-ricotta-pasta-recipe/)



## Guidance on Social Media Use for Teens

The American Psychological Association has issued recommended guidelines for parents and educators concerning use of social media by teens entitled “American Psychological Association Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence,” it offers ten recommendations. Example: Adolescents’ social media use should be preceded by training in social media literacy to ensure that users have developed psychologically informed competencies and skills that will maximize the chances for balanced, safe, and meaningful social media use. The APA recommends education and training to help prevent toxic effects of social media use. They equate the idea of educating teens in the use of social media with educating teens before they can drive a car. Learn more at

[www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use.pdf](http://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use.pdf)

## Danger of Complacency in the Workplace

Complacency can sneak up on you. With complacency, you risk neglecting safety procedures and protocols, or you may overlook other dangers associated with a hazardous task. Complacency causes many unintentional workplace accidents and injuries. Think of familiarity and routine as the “birth parents” of complacency. To be on guard, understand that the more frequently an individual engages in an unsafe practice or disregards safety measures resulting from complacency, the higher the likelihood an accident will occur. Eventually, this risk rises to near certainty. This dynamic is also known as the “Law of Large Numbers.” Learn more by going to [www.osha.com/blog/complacency-safety](http://www.osha.com/blog/complacency-safety).

## Men’s Health Awareness Month: Stay Proactive with Your Healthcare

Many studies have shown men to be less proactive than women regarding preventive healthcare. If you’re a man, avoid falling prey to societal or cultural influences that can shorten your life. Reject 1) “powering through illness”—feeling pressure to display toughness and self-reliance; 2) “dismissing the small stuff”—ignoring minor symptoms of health problems; 3) “fear”—delaying preventive healthcare to avoid bad news, embarrassment, invasive procedures, or discussion of “sensitive” topics; 4) “lack of health curiosity”—not being savvy about men’s health issues, getting the right information, and understanding your susceptibility to illnesses, which often are curable in the early stages.

Source: [www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22081983/](http://www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22081983/)

## Grow a Powerful Contact List

One of the most potent strategies for professional growth lies in building a personal contact list. Communicate with each person on this list at least yearly—share a greeting, report news about your career, and offer helpful information as well. (A hard-copy letter will dramatically deliver the most memorable impact with this strategy.) The younger you are, the more valuable this list will eventually become and the more leverage it will give you. Over years and decades, you will accumulate a powerful leveraging resource for finding and sharing job announcements, opportunities, and resources. You will also achieve top-of-mind recall with people on this list, even with celebrities who otherwise are hard to reach. This strategy has advanced the careers of many CEOs and even former U.S. presidents.

### Overcome Layoff Fears

Does all the news about company layoffs have you worried? It's unsettling, but don't isolate yourself or live with dread of losing your job. 1) Get proactive. Seek support from your EAP or a counselor. 2) Take action to lessen your worry. It starts with focusing on what you can control, like inventorying your skills, recognizing strengths, spotting areas for improvement, and working to increase competitiveness. 3) Develop a powerful job search plan in case the worst happens. A career coach can help with this task and dramatically boost your confidence. 4) Build an emergency fund. Sound tough? Examine your checkbook online. Sort the debit column low to high. Do you see many expenses under, say, \$25? If so, these may include unnecessary or impulse purchases—money possibly for your emergency fund.

### Work-Life Balance Is Not Just a “Nice to Have”

Work-life balance is often treated as a mere afterthought, with people acknowledging its importance only when they are overwhelmed and desperate. However, Dr. J. Gerald Suarez, an esteemed educator, consultant, and executive coach at the University of Maryland, emphasizes that work-life balance should be viewed not as a luxury but as an essential element crucial for achieving success in our professional lives. His position is that work-life balance does not guarantee success, but without it, failure is almost inevitable. To enhance work-life balance, it is vital to resist the allure of relying solely on coping mechanisms to manage stress that provide only temporary relief. Doing so can become a habit of coping that only facilitates increased deterioration of your equilibrium between work and personal life. A more intelligent approach starts with introspection and decisions. You can't do everything well, so deliberate and identify the core values and experiences that hold the utmost importance in your life. Next, embrace these core beliefs and principles as the foundation of your life. Let them shape your decisions, and establish priorities for achieving work-life balance. Take a proactive approach by scheduling a balance of work-life activities on your calendar. Instead of trying to fit them in or treating them as secondary to other commitments, make them a nonnegotiable part of your available time. Using this approach will be more likely to contribute to stability in your life and help you maintain mindful choices that add to success in work and beyond.

Source: [www.rhsmith.umd.edu/research/pursuing-work-life-balance-isnt-want-its-need-success](http://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/research/pursuing-work-life-balance-isnt-want-its-need-success).

### Start Your Day Off Right

Can a morning routine influence the happiness and productivity of your coming day? Research-based evidence says yes, it can. A good morning, of course, starts out with adequate sleep the night before, a nutritious breakfast, and a regular wake-up time. However, add the following mental health and productivity boosters for added push, and notice the impact on your life after one week: 1) Spend a few moments focusing on things you are grateful for in order to improve your mood; 2) expose yourself to sunlight or bright daylight for few moments; 3) make your bed; 4) write down your goals for the day; 5) take a few minutes to meditate or practice mindfulness. (This last mental application develops a skill that allows you to quickly calm your mind and reduce stress when needed.) Source:

<https://positiveroutines.com/productive-morning-routine/>

### Moderate Drinking and Risk of Cancer

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the American Cancer Association, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer recognize that regular or heavy alcohol consumption raises one's risk for at least six types of cancer: breast, colorectal, liver, neck, esophageal, and pancreatic. Why, and what's going on? Use of alcohol exposes your body to a toxin called acetaldehyde when the liver does its job of breaking down alcohol. Like tobacco smoke, acetaldehyde is classified as a Level 1 carcinogen. It can damage DNA. So, the more exposure, the higher the risk. It's why several years ago, these organizations agreed that more than one drink per day for a woman and more than two drinks per day for a man is considered risky or heavy drinking. Genetics and other factors may contribute to the risk of cancer as well.

Source: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) [search alcohol, cancer, acetaldehyde]

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