

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information,
contact: Tara Solomon-Smith
Adult Development and Aging Agent, Wildcat Extension District
tsolomon@ksu.edu, 620-724-8233

Back to Basics with Mental Health Awareness Month

After the last two years of pandemic living, many people are realizing that stress, isolation, and uncertainty takes a toll on our well-being. With mental health entering more of our daily conversations, it's critical that everyone has a solid foundation of knowledge about mental health. Mental Health America (MHA) is getting back to basics with this year's Mental Health Awareness Month.

Every May, MHA provides ideas and resources for individuals, businesses, or social organizations. You may have read about how one large company is even going 'off the grid' and encouraging people to spend time outdoors as part of Mental Health Awareness! Learn more about the basics of mental health and how you can get involved at www.mhanational.org/may.

While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. You might wonder how you really know if what you are experiencing qualifies and if there are any warning signs of a mental health condition. Take time to ask yourself about your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to see if this is part of a pattern.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- Have things that used to feel easy started feeling difficult?
- Does the idea of doing daily tasks like making your bed now feel really, really hard?
- Have you lost interest in activities and hobbies you used to enjoy?
- Do you feel irritated, possibly to the point of lashing out at people you care about?

Every day shouldn't feel difficult or out of your control. If it does, one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms is to get a checkup from the neck up with a simple, free, and anonymous mental health screening at www.mhascreening.org. Simply acknowledging to yourself that you're struggling is a really big step! Your screening results can be used to start a conversation with your primary care provider or a trusted friend or family member, and you can begin to plan a course of action for addressing your mental health.

Get involved with K-State Research and Extension's many educational and practical events to increase your mental wellness such as learning self-care with **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**, getting outside with others at **Age Well's Intergenerational Move '22** event, or taking part in **Stay Strong Stay Healthy**. All details can be found at www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu.

For more information you may contact me at tsolomon@ksu.edu, 620-378-2167, and remember, mental wellness IS as important as physical wellness!

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