

*Tara Solomon-Smith - Family and Community Wellness Agent*

*March 2025*

You are not alone if you have ever had more than ‘just the blues’ sometime in your life. According to Mental Health America, one-in-five American Adults have one or more mental health conditions, with 50% meeting the criteria of a condition sometime in their life. Mental health is essential to everyone’s overall health and well-being. So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally –it’s important to pay attention to both.



Let’s focus on how a healthy lifestyle will help prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems! Eating healthy foods, managing stress, exercising, and getting enough sleep can go a long way in making you both physically and mentally healthy. To find the right balance to benefit both the mind and body, let’s tackle the sensational ‘S’ items from this list: Sleep and managing Stress.

## **Quality Slumber**

Sleep plays a role in all aspects of our life and overall health. Getting a good night's sleep is important to take on daily responsibilities. Adults should have 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Here are just a few tips for a good night’s sleep:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—including weekends.
- Get outside! Getting natural sunlight during the day helps to maintain your body’s sleep-wake cycle.
- Limit caffeine to the morning. The effects of caffeine can take 8 hours to wear off.
- If you can’t fall asleep for more than 20 minutes after going to bed, get up and do something calming until you feel sleepy.
- Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, like noises or bright lights. The light from screens can confuse your body’s internal clock.

## **Reduce the Impact of Stress**

Stress can make even day-to-day life difficult. Research shows that stress is closely linked to high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity. It also shows that people who feel depressed or chronically stressed may have a greater risk of physical illnesses.

- Be realistic: You may be taking on more responsibility than you can or should handle for yourself or your family.
- No one is perfect: Shed the “superman/superwoman” urge for yourself and others.
- One thing at a time: For people under tension or stress, day-to-day workload can sometimes seem unbearable. Multi-tasking actually often leads to more stress.
- Exercise: Regular exercise is a popular way to relieve stress.
- Explore a hobby: Take a break from your worries by doing something you enjoy. Whether it’s gardening, painting, doing puzzles or playing games, schedule time to indulge your interests.

No matter where you happen to be on our own personal journey to health and wellness, looking at your overall health every day – both physically and mentally – can go a long way in ensuring that you focus on your fitness and future!

Southwind Extension District can help, have you heard about our OWL (Older Wiser Livelier) Hour? Full details <https://bit.ly/4iHKR27>. For more information contact Tara Solomon-Smith, [tsolomon@ksu.edu](mailto:tsolomon@ksu.edu), 620-244-3826.