

Be Proactive During Mental Health Awareness Month

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month! According to the Mental Health America (MHA) report entitled “The State of Mental Health in America 2023,” Kansas is ranked last out of all fifty states and the District of Columbia on how well the state handles mental health needs. This is one of the shocking statistics that sheds light on the state of mental health in our state and why the K-State Research and Extension Stress and Resiliency Team is encouraging others to be proactive in honoring Mental Health Awareness Month.



What could being proactive this month look like? To start, you can check out the resources available from MHA. On their website, they offer two specific worksheet resources with steps you can take to make changes to improve your mental health by:

- **Shaping your environment.** Your home environment can affect your mental health. Take time to think about what you like and dislike about your space. What can you do to improve it? Some suggestions from MHA include starting small, getting rid of unneeded items, personalizing your space, and making your bedroom sleep-friendly.
- **Opening your mind to the outdoors.** According to MHA, “spending time in nature is linked to many positive mental health outcomes, including improved focus, lower stress, and better mood.”

These resources (as well as others) can be found online at www.mhanational.org/may. They also offer a free mental health test which can be taken online at www.mhascreening.org.

This article was adapted from an article originally written by the K-State Research and Extension Stress and Resiliency Team. For more information, please contact me at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or 620-365-2242. If you or someone you know is in crisis or seeking emotional support, call or text 988 to connect with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also chat with them online at 988lifeline.org. You can also text HOME to 741741 to reach a volunteer Crisis Counselor with the Crisis Text Line.