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## **Mental Health Awareness Month Highlights the Importance of Supporting Youth**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to recognize the importance of mental well-being and the role families and communities play in supporting young people.

Recent national reports have shown that youth mental health challenges have increased significantly in recent years. The U.S. Surgeon General has identified youth mental health as a major public health concern, with increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness among young people.

Young people today face many pressures, including academic expectations, social relationships, and the growing influence of social media. These challenges can sometimes contribute to emotional stress if youth do not have strong support systems in place.

One of the most important ways adults can support youth is by creating an environment that encourages open conversations about emotions. Checking in regularly, listening without judgment, and showing empathy can help young people feel supported and understood.

Encouraging healthy routines such as physical activity, good sleep habits, and meaningful social connections can also support mental well-being. Communities, schools, and families all play an important role in helping young people build resilience and feel connected.

For more information, visit [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) or contact Michelle Broxterman, Family and Child Development Extension Agent, at [mbroxterman@ksu.edu](mailto:mbroxterman@ksu.edu) or (620)724-8233.

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