



May 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension

Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

Welcome—we're glad you're here. Extension programs offer practical, research-based tools to help you learn new skills, support your family, and get involved in your community. There's a place for everyone, and we're excited to have you join us.

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4-H Youth Development

INTRODUCING OUR NEW 4-H ASSISTANT

Hi everyone!

My name is Lotus Hernandez, and I'm the newest addition of the K-State Extension team! I will be assisting with the 4-H program alongside Casey Ling, our 4-H agent, as well as helping the front desk and around the office as a whole, so I'm sure you'll see my face at some point.

I grew up for a large portion of my life in KCK before moving to Leavenworth, KS for school and recently moved to Baldwin City, KS where my family is part of the 4-H program in Lawrence. I graduated high school in 2021 and took a year to work full time in order to pay for cosmetology school, which I graduated from in 2023. I am a licensed cosmetologist in Missouri and worked as a hairstylist for 2 years in KCMO where I helped manage the salon, build clientele, and got a feel for the community. I have experience in social media management and marketing, office organization, animal handling, and customer service.

When I'm not at work, I spend time with my big family and my 2 miniature poodles, Goose and Gator. Being creative is a big part of who I am so I spend quite a bit of time crocheting, sewing, painting, and thrifting, as well as watching movies.

I'm looking forward to assisting the 4-H program, helping with the fair, and getting to know all of the volunteers! I believe that pouring into the next generation is very important and I think the 4-H program does a great job at helping guide young individuals into leadership and influencing them to continue improving the world around them.



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MAY IS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Here are four common categories with examples:

- **Anxiety Disorders:** Intense fear and worry, like Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Social Anxiety, Panic Disorder, or specific phobias (heights, spiders).
- **Schizophrenia & Psychotic Disorders:** Disturbances in thought and perception, featuring hallucinations (seeing/hearing things) or delusions (false beliefs).
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Develops after a traumatic event, causing flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety.
- **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** Difficulty with focus, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, impacting daily functioning.

Below are The Five Key Components, Known As The 5 C's, That Are Essential For Maintaining Good Mental Health?

The 5 C's of mental health provide a way that is well structured and helpful to have well-being and resilience as part of our everyday routine. For clarity, key terms such as '5 C's' (a framework encompassing Connection, Compassion, Coping, Community, and Care) are defined here to help you understand how each component contributes to mental well-being.

The 5 C's of mental health care:

- **Connection** refers to the relationships we build with others, including family, friends, and colleagues. Human beings are inherently social creatures, and strong, positive connections are fundamental to our mental health.
- **Compassion** involves being kind and understanding towards ourselves and others. Self-compassion, in particular, is crucial for mental health. It means recognizing our own suffering, treating ourselves with kindness, and avoiding self-criticism.
- **Coping** refers to the strategies and skills we use to manage stress and navigate life's challenges. Effective coping mechanisms are essential for maintaining mental health and resilience.
- **Community** involves being part of a larger social network that provides support, purpose, and a sense of belonging.
- **Care** encompasses taking proactive steps to maintain and improve mental health. This includes self-care practices, seeking professional help when needed, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Discover the foundational principles of mental health known as the 5 C's.

Understand how these can transform your daily life. If you need help locally contact <https://www.wyandotbhn.org/> 988 Lifeline & Mobile Crisis Response or the 24-hour Crisis Line 913-788-4200.



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HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH

Did you know that nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure – and many don't know they have it? When left unmanaged, it can lead to serious health issues, including heart disease. The good news is there are steps you can take to prevent or manage it, such as talking with your doctor, monitoring your blood pressure, and making healthy lifestyle changes.

In recognition of High Blood Pressure Education Month this May, we'll explore what high blood pressure is, how to take action to prevent or manage it, and where to find more information.

High blood pressure occurs when the force of blood flow against artery walls is consistently too high. Age, family history, race and ethnicity, stress, and unhealthy lifestyle choices can increase your risk of developing it. That's why the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) encourages everyone to take action to prevent or control high blood pressure.

7 Ways to Keep Your Blood Pressure Healthy

You can start by adopting heart-healthy habits, including:

- Being more physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Following a heart-healthy diet such as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan
- Quitting smoking
- Managing stress
- Getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep
- Follow your doctor's advice

You can stay aware of your blood pressure by having it checked at each visit with your healthcare provider. A healthy blood pressure is typically less than 120/80 mm Hg. If your numbers are high, work with your provider to learn about ways you can lower it. Your healthcare provider may suggest regularly self-measuring your blood pressure – usually at home.

Learning more about high blood pressure is an important first step toward reducing your risk and improving your health. K-State Extension's Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Program (HAPp) is a free, 4-month self-measured blood pressure program designed to support you in managing your health. To learn more, visit [Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Program | K-State | Kansas State University](#) or contact your local extension office. Additional high blood pressure resources are linked below.

Taking small, consistent steps to monitor and manage your blood pressure can make a big difference in your long-term health. If you have any questions or need support, don't hesitate to reach out to your healthcare provider, your local extension office, or explore trusted resources to learn more.

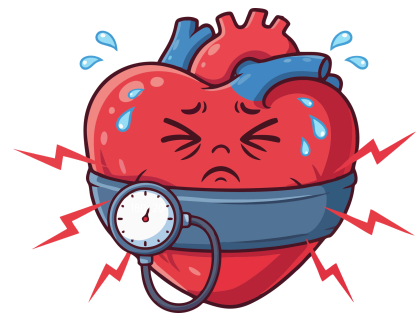
Resources:

[May is High Blood Pressure Education Month | NHLBI, NIH](#)

[K-State's free blood pressure program to fight hypertension expands statewide](#)

[High Blood Pressure | American Heart Association](#)

[High Blood Pressure | High Blood Pressure | CDC](#)



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Horticulture MAY MADNESS!

With the preparation part of the season in the rear view, it's time to get your garden game on! With so much to do between planting, mowing, weed/pest control, and watering it can feel like you're dribbling more than one ball. Here are some helpful tips to help master the month of May.

Fruits and Vegetables

We should be past the last frost day of the year (knock on wood) and it's a great time to plant seeds or seedling vegetables. If you opt for seedlings grown indoors, consider gradually "hardening off" these young plants by acclimating them to climate and leaving them out starting in the early morning and bring them back in before planting around the middle of the month. For fruit trees and shrubs, avoid spraying insecticides and fungicides while flowers are blooming as this can be harmful to our pollinator friends.

Turf and Lawns

Mowing season is officially here and the lawns are ready for a trim but be mindful of deck height depending on your species of grass. Bluegrass can be cut to 1.5 - 2.5", zoysia 1.5", and tall fescue 2 - 3". Warm season weeds will be presenting soon and can be controlled with appropriate post emergent products

Ornamentals

Now is a great time to plant those non cold hardy bulbs such as gladiolus, dahlias, caladiums, and colocasia. Certain perennials are able to be divided and replanted to avoid crowding planting beds. Iris', peonies, and alliums will be blooming and showing this month.

Pests

With the weather warming up on unfortunate happenstance will be the pests returning to feed on plants and their foliage. Keep an eye out for rose slugs, pine sawfly, cucumber beetles, and tent caterpillars along with their prominent web structures.



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Community Development

GROWING CULTURAL AWARENESS AS OUR COMMUNITY WELCOMES WORLD CUP VISITORS

As the World Cup brings visitors from around the globe to our region, our community has an important opportunity to practice cultural awareness in everyday interactions. Many of our guests will be experiencing the United States—and our neighborhoods—for the very first time. A little awareness, patience, and curiosity can make their experience memorable for all the right reasons.

Cultural awareness begins with recognizing that people communicate differently across the world. Some cultures greet with a handshake, others with a bow, a nod, or simply a warm smile. Some value direct eye contact, while others see it as too bold. Personal space, tone of voice, and even how long a conversation pause lasts can vary widely. Being mindful of these differences helps us avoid misunderstandings and approach each interaction with respect.

Language will be one of the biggest bridges—and challenges. Many visitors will speak English as a second or third language, and some may not speak it at all. Slowing down, using clear words, and offering simple directions can make a world of difference. Gestures, pointing to signs, or showing a map on a phone can help when words fall short. What matters most is patience and kindness, not perfection.

Food, schedules, and daily routines also differ across cultures. Some visitors may eat later in the evening, observe religious practices during the day, or avoid certain foods. Others may be unfamiliar with tipping customs, public transportation systems, or how lines and queues work here. When we notice someone hesitating or looking unsure, offering help in a friendly, non-intrusive way can ease their stress and show them they're welcome.

Our youth are watching how adults respond to these moments. When we model curiosity—asking where someone is visiting from, which team they're cheering for, or what they've enjoyed so far—we show young people that cultural differences are worth appreciating, not fearing. When we demonstrate patience and empathy, we reinforce the values of belonging and respect that Extension promotes in every program.

Small gestures matter. A smile at the bus stop. Holding a door. Offering directions. Being flexible when someone doesn't understand a local custom. These simple acts create a sense of safety and hospitality that visitors will remember long after the final match.

As more out-of-country guests explore our neighborhoods, cultural awareness becomes a shared responsibility. By approaching each interaction with openness and generosity, we not only welcome the world—we strengthen our own community, deepen our understanding of others, and show the best of who we are.

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Upcoming Events



- May 1-2:** Plant Sale
- May 2:** 4-H Tag In
- May 5:** Mejure Su Salud
- May 6:** ServSafe Food Handler
- May 6:** Create Better Health
- May 6:** K-State Garden Hour
- May 7:** Growing Nourishment
- May 7:** 4-H Tag In
- May 14:** Feed Your Heart: Health Fats
- May 29:** Mental Health First Aid

Connect with us!



K-State Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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