

News Column for Use Week of 9/2/2024
Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent
River Valley Extension District
August 30, 2024

September is Suicide Prevention Month

Nearly 50,000 Americans died by suicide in 2022; making suicide the 11th leading cause of death overall. While suicide prevention is important to address year-round, Suicide Prevention Month provides a dedicated time to come together with collective passion and strength to address this difficult topic.

Mental health is just like physical health: everybody has it and we need to take care of it. Mental health conditions affect your thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior. According to a recent study across 29 countries with Harvard Medical School and the University of Queensland, approximately one out of every two people in the world will develop a mental health condition at some point in their lifetime. A mental health condition may happen over a short period of time or come and go. Some can be chronic (long-lasting).

But whatever the condition or the duration, recovery is possible. Psychotherapy, medication, a combination, and other interventions can be beneficial in treating mental health conditions. We can all benefit from honest conversations about mental health conditions and suicide, because just one conversation can change a life. Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

More mental health resources, such as warning signs and symptoms, risk factors, treatment information, and statistics are available online at 988lifeline.org, nami.org, nimh.nih.gov, and cdc.gov/mentalhealth/.

If you need assistance finding local resources, please contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

-30-

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.