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DECEMBER 2021

HEALTH

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CONGRATULATIONS

RUTH RAMSEY

Kansas City Medical Society

2021 Friend of Medicine

Award Recipient

Page 12

DON'T LET

STRESS

MANAGE YOU
IN 2022

MAKE CHANGES NOW FOR BETTER HEALTH.

DID YOU KNOW...

You can download digital copies of *Our Health Matters* magazine at kcourhealthmatters.com/digital-editions/



HELP SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

When you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. Masks work best when everyone wears one. A mask is NOT a substitute for social distancing. Masks should still be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially when indoors around people who don't live in your household.

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Don't Let Stress Handle You in 2022

By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

Mental health professionals sound the alarm as they see increased numbers of patients who admit to struggling with their mental health. More troubling is many people don't know when, how or where to access mental health treatment.



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By Megan Ross, LCPC, CIMPH
Director of Counseling

GateWay of Hope

As teletherapy grows in popularity, it is hoped the stigma of seeking treatment will be eliminated.

Blessed. Thankful. Determined.

I can recall over the years hearing folks at church respond, "I'm too blessed to be stressed!" after being asked how they were doing. We'd laugh at this quick and expected response. Over the 16 years I have been publishing this magazine, it has become evident that many of us may not be taking our health—or stress—as seriously as we should.

Stress can be a serious problem, especially when it starts to affect one's health. I think stress sometimes gets cast aside as if it's just a fleeting thing, when for some people, it may be chronic or severe. They may have internal conflicting emotions that are screaming for help. They may just need someone to listen.

We chose the topic of stress for this last edition of the year to remind ourselves and you that some stress is normal (we point those out) and some stress is cause for reaching out to a mental health professional. In this edition, you'll learn many aspects of stress.

2020 and 2021 delivered a whopper of stress and uncertainty. It's okay not to be okay. I just couldn't let this year end without letting you know that we are in this together.

BIG NEWS! We received a wonderful surprise when we were recently recognized with the 2021 FRIEND OF MEDICINE AWARD from the Kansas City Medical Society. It filled us with so many positive emotions (GOOD STRESS) and uplifted *Our Health Matters*™ team spirit. We have worked hard for more than 16 years to provide timely, accurate health news and information to keep you informed and increase your health literacy. Be sure to read the full story that starts on Page 12.

THANK YOU, KANSAS CITY MEDICAL SOCIETY, and THANK YOU, READERS, ADVERTISERS and SPONSORS. Without your recognition and support, OHM would not be the strong resource for Kansas City that we strive to be.



As 2022 approaches, we pray for the day when we all will be safe from a pandemic and go forward to live stronger, healthier lives.

Have safe and healthy holidays.

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

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is published bi-monthly (6 issues)
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P.O. Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131
816.361.6400
kcourhealthmatters.com

PUBLISHER
Ruth Ramsey
ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING
Donna Wood
dwood@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jeanene Dunn
jdunn@kcourhealthmatters.com

HEALTH WRITER
Tenille Lawson, PharmD, BCPS
tlawson@kcourhealthmatters.com

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info@kcourhealthmatters.com

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CONTRIBUTORS
Jim Braibish
Ruth Bigus, MA
Laura Gilman
Alex Jackson, LMT, NCTMB
Megan Ross, LCPC, CIMPH
Shaleesa Rocket, LCSW



WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine. Email us at info@kcourhealthmatters.com or write to us at

Our Health Matters
PO Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131



THE TRUSTED CHOICE



When my dad suffered a stroke, it was my turn to help him with important decisions, like making the right choice in rehabilitation. I asked the medical professionals that treated him who they trusted for the best care and outcomes. They said Encompass Health, the nation's largest system of rehabilitation hospitals.

There, they created a rehabilitation program specifically designed for his needs using advanced technology and innovative treatments. And he was cared for by a highly trained, experienced staff that showed professionalism and compassion throughout his recovery. Now I know why they are the trusted choice of medical professionals.

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Rehabilitation Hospital

encompasshealth.com/midamericarehab



DON'T LET STRESS MANAGE YOU IN 2022

MAKE CHANGES NOW FOR BETTER HEALTH.

If we don't get a handle on stress, we are headed for the next big public health crisis. This is the warning from the American Psychological Association (APA) in response to data from the Stress in America: A National Mental Health survey, released last October.

If we don't make changes now, a large segment of the population is headed for poor mental and physical health outcomes. The APA has not been alone in raising concerns about the rising levels of stress people are experiencing. For months, mental health professionals, primary care providers and social services agencies have been sounding the alarm as they report seeing larger numbers of patients and clients who admit to struggling with their mental health.

OUR BODIES CAN HANDLE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF STRESS

It is important to know that stress is normal. When we experience challenges or stressors, our bodies and minds react in response. For example, you may be nervous about a job change or the birth of a child or grandchild, or your child could be anxious about a test at school. All stress isn't bad.

Good stress promotes resilience and helps us balance our emotions. Positive stress can include planning a new adventure like hang gliding or rock climbing for the first time; starting a new job, or going on a first date.

The effects of good stress can be increased self-esteem, motivation and inspiration.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EXPERIENCE STRESS?

"All parts of the body work in balance with each other," explains Alex Jackson, LMT, NCTMB, Holistic Health Practitioner. Jackson understands the connection between stress and chronic diseases. In his practice, clients complete an assessment so that he understands their physical and mental status, which helps him determine if stress is a contributor to their health condition. "Most of the time we find all systems of the body are affected by stress," says Jackson.

Situations that may cause stress and have a negative impact include:

- Extreme anger
- Fear of being bullied
- Working too hard
- Losing a job
- Marriage or relationship problems
- Divorce or recent breakup
- Death of a family member or friend
- Difficulty in school
- Overwhelming schedule (caring for a loved one, vacations and holidays)
- Relocating to a new home or job



STRESS IMPACTS THE BODY

- Musculoskeletal system (muscles and bones)
- Respiratory system (airways, lungs and blood vessels)
- Digestive system (mouth, throat, esophagus, stomach, intestines rectum, anus, salivary glands, liver, gallbladder and pancreas)
- Reproductive system (in women, ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix and vagina; in men, prostate, the testes and penis)
- Immune system (more susceptible to viruses and infections)

Some health conditions resulting from long-term or chronic stress include:

- Stomach issues (pain, digestive problems, eating disorders)
- Reproductive challenges (can contribute to infertility issues)
- Neck and back pain
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Chronic health diseases (diabetes, high blood pressure, breathing issues, kidney disease)

STRESS CAN LEAD TO UNHEALTHY HABITS

Long-term exposure to stress takes its toll. In her work as a Therapist at Reconciliation Services (RS), Shaleesa Rocket, LCSW, sees clients who have experienced long-

term stress—sometimes all their lives. “Some of my clients have been exposed to trauma and stress and have faced struggles and loss,” Rocket explains. “As a result, some have adopted unhealthy habits or engage in risky behaviors. My goal is to give them the tools to heal, cope and grow—and lean into healthier ways to deal with life’s challenges.” Unhealthy habits can include:

- Poor nutrition
- Abusing alcohol and other drugs
- Tobacco use
- Sedentary lifestyle (little to no exercise)

UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE

Communities of color are more likely to live with the physical and mental health effects of stress and are the least likely to have access to mental health services. “The lack of access creates barriers and contributes to the stigma of seeking help,” Rocket says. “There is still a lot of work to do to remove the stigma and shame. Families are experiencing stresses and trauma that have passed from generation to generation.”

CAN STRESS BE PREVENTED?

Stress cannot be prevented, but it can be managed. These tips can help you battle stress and guard your mental health.

- **GET MOVING.** Exercise is great for mental and physical health. If you can't get outside, do some indoor stretches and bends.
- **CONSIDER THERAPY AND COUNSELING** to learn new perspectives and techniques to help you manage day-to-day stressors in your life.
- **GET ORGANIZED.** Planning your day can help ease a lot of stress.
- **MANAGE WORRIES.** Take action in those areas in which you have some control.
- **CONNECT WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE** who are calming and supportive.
- **LEARN TO SAY "NO."** When you have too much—or even enough—on your plate already, taking on additional responsibilities will only add to your discomfort.
- **EAT HEALTHIER.** Learn what foods contribute to poor health. Ask your doctor to refer you to a nutritionist.
- **REDUCE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** and if you use tobacco, quit.
- **RELAX, RELAX, RELAX.** You might try meditation, yoga, Tai Chi or breathing exercises to promote relaxation.

IF YOU NEED HELP

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, providers have begun asking questions about mental health during

screenings and visits. Talk to your healthcare provider and be open about your mental health. If you are considering a less traditional approach, talk to your provider to determine what works best for your situation and health.

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

If you or someone you know is struggling to cope or threatening self-harm, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK.

Reconciliation Services provides evidence-based, clinical support, group therapy and intensive case management for clients struggling with depression and the effects of trauma. To learn about how they support individuals and families, visit rs3101.org.

Shaleesa Rocket, LCSW is a Therapist at Reconciliation Services; Alex Jackson, LMT, NCTMB, is a Holistic Health Practitioner and owner of Centered Spirit, in Kansas City, Missouri.

Our Health Matters does not endorse any medical treatment or approach. Always consult your doctor regarding any physical and mental healthcare needs.

Source: American Psychological Association, Cleveland Clinic, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention



PROTECT YOUR HEART FROM

STRESS

Your heart is at the center of your circulatory system, which is a network of blood vessels that delivers blood to every part of your body. Blood carries oxygen and other important nutrients that all body organs need to stay healthy and to work properly.

When you are stressed, you are more likely to do things that are bad for your heart, such as smoke, drink heavily or eat foods high in salt, sugar and fat. Constant stress can strain your heart in several ways:

- Stress raises blood pressure.
- Stress increases inflammation in your body.
- Stress can increase cholesterol and triglycerides in your blood.
- Extreme stress can make your heart beat out of rhythm.

Harmful Kinds of Stress for Your Heart

You can protect yourself from some stress. But other stressors are beyond your control.

- **CHRONIC STRESS.** Constant work-related stress or relationship woes can put constant pressure on your heart.
- **ACUTE STRESS.** In rare cases, extremely bad news can bring on heart attack symptoms. This is called broken heart syndrome. This is not the same thing as a heart attack, but it requires medical attention.
- **HELPLESSNESS.** Long-term (chronic) stress is even more harmful when you feel unable to do anything about it.

- **LONELINESS.** Stress can be more harmful if you do not have a support system to help you cope.
- **ANGER.** People who blow up in anger have a higher risk of heart attack and stroke.

Do YOUR part to manage stress

Learn how to manage stress in healthy ways in order to improve your mood and help you avoid unhealthy behaviors. Try different ways to relax, such as:

- Spending time outdoors in nature
- Getting regular exercise (ask your doctor for advice)
- Sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing for 10 minutes each day
- Spending time with friends
- Escaping with a movie or a good book
- Making time every day for activities that you enjoy

If you are having trouble managing stress on your own, consider a stress management class at a local hospital, community center, or adult education program. Always consult with your healthcare provider, who may recommend therapy to help you get stress under control.

NOTE: This information is provided for educational purposes. Always consult with your medical provider before participating in new activities.

SOURCE: medlineplus.gov/stress

— OUR PROMISE TO KEEP —



In 1894, friends of Mattie Florence Rhodes founded The Mattie Rhodes Memorial Society to honor her wishes to help the less fortunate. The pledge: ***“I promise to do all I can to help the needy and suffering by working for them, learning about them, giving for them, and trying to interest others in them.”***

The Promise continues as Mattie Rhodes Center (MRC) collectively serves more than 15,000 individuals each year through culturally

competent, bi-lingual services which include: mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment, domestic violence counseling, youth violence prevention and intervention, job placement and support for young adults with developmental disabilities. Mattie Rhodes’ mission is clear—build a stronger vibrant community where all individuals and families are healthy, safe and have the resources to thrive.

— WHO THEY SERVE —

Mattie Rhodes specializes in serving Latino / immigrant families. There are no qualifications or requirements to receive services and no one is turned away due to a lack of insurance, documentation, or inability to pay.

Mattie Rhodes Center welcomes donations for participant families or programming and is in need of mental health professionals to meet the growing needs of families they serve. For more information call 816-241-3780.

“Don’t wait until there is no meaning to life to get help. Mattie Rhodes Center was there for me ...and they are there for you too.”

—Mattie Rhodes client



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KANSAS CITY
MEDICAL SOCIETY
2021
Friend of Medicine Award
RUTH RAMSEY

KANSAS CITY
MEDICAL SOCIETY

Friend of Medicine

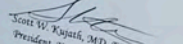
Dear Ruth Ramsey,

Each year, the Kansas City Medical Society recognizes a group of outstanding physicians in our community with the KCMS Annual Awards. The Board of Directors of the Kansas City Medical Society is pleased to congratulate you on being chosen to receive the Medical Society's 2021 *Friend of Medicine Award*. This award recognizes a non-physician for outstanding service to medicine.

Recipients of the KCMS Awards are nominated by their peers and colleagues. Nominations are carefully considered by the Nominating Committee of the Board, and then approved by the Board.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire membership, thank you for serving the people of Greater Kansas City. All of our award recipients exemplify a truly special level of caring and commitment. Again, congratulations on your achievement!

Sincerely,


Scott W. Kujath, MD, FRCPC, FACS
President, Kansas City Medical Society

KANSAS CITY

MEDICAL SOCIETY

RECOGNIZES RUTH RAMSEY MAKING HEALTH MATTER TO EVERYONE

By **Jim Braibish** Managing Editor, Kansas City Medical Society

Ruth Ramsey, publisher of *Our Health Matters*, received the 2021 Friend of Medicine Award from the Kansas City Medical Society, the association of physicians across greater Kansas City. The Friend of Medicine Award recognizes a non-physician for outstanding service to medicine.

“Since 2005, *Our Health Matters* has provided valuable preventive health information to a wide audience representing the diversity of Kansas City,” said Scott Kujath, MD, FSVS, FACS, Medical Society president. “*Our Health Matters* works to improve health literacy and empower people to take charge of their health. More people are taking better care of themselves as a result of the information they gain from *Our Health Matters*.”

Back in the early 2000s, Ruth Ramsey became more keenly aware of the sharp health disparities facing African Americans and other minorities through the experiences of family members and her business clients. The evidence was strong that hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cancer and other diseases are much more prevalent among Blacks. If only people had more understanding about how to take care of themselves and get preventive screenings, she thought, that could make a huge difference and keep more people healthy.

Thus was born the idea of starting a health magazine—one that is visually appealing, easy to read and packed with valuable health advice. *Our Health Matters* magazine was launched in 2005.

Sixteen years later, *Our Health Matters* continues to be distributed five times a year throughout greater Kansas City, mostly through more than 100 free pickup stands at area CVS pharmacies, hospitals, grocery stores, community centers and other sites. Mailed subscriptions range from 3,000 to 10,000 through sponsorships, with thousands more people accessing *Our Health Matters* online.

For her contributions to health in greater Kansas City, Ramsey has been chosen to receive the 2021 KCMS Friend of Medicine Award.

“We focus on improving health literacy and encourage our audience to adopt a healthier lifestyle. In every edition, we provide critical information to our readers while highlighting local healthcare providers.”

Topics covered in recent editions of *Our Health Matters* include current trends in cancer treatment and the importance of early diagnosis, how a patient-centered care team improves health outcomes, the science behind COVID-19 vaccines, better sleep health and much more. Content is shaped to reach a diverse audience reflecting the Kansas City community racially, ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically.

Ruth reflected on the impact of *Our Health Matters*: “We have helped people increase their level of health literacy

Friend of Medicine Lifetime Award recipient Ruth Ramsey accepts her award from Scott Kujath, MD, KCMS president. Masks removed for presentation photo only.



Pick up a copy of *Our Health Matters* at local CVS stores, KC Parks community centers and some Price Chopper and HyVee stores. Digital copies can be downloaded at kcourhealthmatters.com.

so they can understand what influences their health. We have equipped people with information ... knowledge is power! We are concerned with the whole community. Everyone should know they matter. That's why, regardless of race, ethnicity or neighborhood, everyone should get early screenings and see their doctors regularly."

Articles typically are contributed by local experts; some are staff written or compiled from federal government resources. Graphic design is provided by Ramsey & Associates Design, the firm she founded in 1990.

is the Health Forward Foundation, whose sponsored ads feature the extraordinary services offered by their grantees."

A reader survey showed that the publication has a strong, loyal following. Nearly one-third of respondents indicated they have read every issue over the past 12 months, and more than two-thirds pass along their copy to family, friends and others.

Our Health Matters has been recognized with numerous awards including the 2017 Black Girls Rock Award from the Alpha Kappa Alpha Xi Tau Omega Chapter, the 2011 Delta Sigma Theta Women of Courage Award, the 2007 Black Health Care Coalition Media Award, the 2007 Missouri Public Health Association Media Award and the 2006 Kansas



GROUP PHOTO CAPTION: KCMS President Scott Kujath, MD, with honorees John Hagan III, MD; Ruth Ramsey; Maninder Pabla, MD; Amy Patel, MD; Michael Weaver, MD; Andrew Schlachter, MD; Todd Beardman, MD; and Denny Fugate, PharmD. Masks removed for presentation photo only.

Partnerships have been a key ingredient of the success of *Our Health Matters*. These, along with advertising, provide the main sources of revenue. Ramsey explained, "Throughout the years we have developed relationships with a number of organizations including Blue Cross Blue Shield KC, Truman Medical Centers, the University of Kansas Medical Center, local FQHC's Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center and Swope Health. One special partnership

City Chronic Disease Association Health Media Award. Ramsey served as a member of the Kansas City Minority Health Commission for six years.

Daphne Bascom, MD, chair of the KCMS & Foundation Wellness and Prevention Committee, praised Ramsey's work: "Ruth has been a key leader in providing resources to our community about health, wellness and care. As the publisher of *Our Health Matters*, Ruth has focused on developing

partnerships with key stakeholders across the KC metro to bring timely, relevant and digestible information to all members of our community.”

The award was presented at the Medical Society's 2021 annual meeting, held October 26. More than 100 area physicians and guests attended the event, the Society's first in-person gathering since the start of the pandemic. Masking protocols were followed.

Others honored are:

- Todd Beardman, MD, and Denny Fugate, PharmD, of North Kansas City Hospital, Community Service Award
- Andrew Schlachter, MD, of Saint Luke's Hospital, Rising Star Award
- Amy Patel, MD, of Liberty Hospital, Patient and Community Advocate Award
- John Hagan, III, MD, FACS, FAAO, of Discover Vision Centers, Innovation Award
- Maninder Pabla, MD, of ConnectCare Hospitalists, Exemplary Leadership Award

Also at this annual meeting, the Medical Society pledged to carry out an ongoing partnership with the Greater Kansas City Medical Society, the organization of African American physicians in the region.

Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Michael Weaver, MD, accepts his award from Scott Kujath, MD, KCMS president. Masks removed for presentation photo only.



Michael Weaver, MD, FACEP, CDM Recognized with Lifetime Achievement Award

The Kansas City Medical Society also honored Michael Weaver, MD, FACEP, CDM, with the Lifetime Achievement Award. An emergency physician, Dr. Weaver recently retired from Saint Luke's Health System after serving there for 41 years. He is the first African American to receive the award.

Dr. Weaver has been a pioneer locally and nationally in the development of emergency care services for victims of sexual assault as well as other forms of abuse. He was medical director of forensic care services for Saint Luke's Health System and was founding co-chair of the Forensic Section of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Throughout his career, Dr. Weaver has championed the advancement of African Americans in medicine. He was the first Black student to complete the University of Missouri-Kansas City six-year medical school curriculum in 1977. For the past 15 years, he has led the Critical Mass Gathering event for Black students at Kansas City's three area medical schools. More recently, he founded and continues to lead Mission Vision Project KC, a nonprofit that aims to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the Kansas City health care workforce.

The Kansas City Medical Society advances the practice of medicine and works to improve the health of people throughout greater Kansas City. The Medical Society represents over 2,500 physicians holding the degrees of Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) and Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.) in Jackson County, Clay County and Platte County in Missouri, and Johnson County and Wyandotte County in Kansas. It advocates for physicians and medicine, promotes public

health, provides educational programs for physicians, and more. The affiliated Kansas City Medical Society Foundation coordinates the delivery of over \$8 million in donated charitable care annually to uninsured individuals. Founded in 1881, the Medical Society is affiliated with the Missouri State Medical Association, the Kansas Medical Society and the American Medical Association. To learn more, visit www.kcmedicine.org and Facebook KCMedSociety.



Lending a Helping Hand

At Jewish Family Services (JFS), sustaining quality of life throughout the aging journey is everything. A 2014 AARP study found that of Americans 50 and older, 87% wanted to age in their own homes. Knowing that you want to age in your home is one thing; actualizing it is another. Aging in your home takes flexibility to adapt as needs change and evolve. This is true for singles who age, couples who age and for those who are aging and have caregiver responsibilities.

Seniors living in their homes often have a long list of fix-it projects, and many don't want to burden their children with these tasks.

Seniors living in their homes often have a long list of fix-it projects, and many don't want to burden their children with these tasks. Jewish Family Services' Express Program can step in to help with cleaning gutters, hanging blinds, checking carbon dioxide levels, installing smoke detectors, as well as fixing leaky toilets

and faucets. Seniors can also schedule a walk-through with JFS's occupational therapist, who will make simple recommendations so aging residents can navigate safely in their home. Transportation is also provided for a variety of needs.

JFS' care managers do an excellent job of assisting

caregivers and older adults with all types of resources such as reviewing Medicare benefits or more complex tasks, such as understanding the senior housing landscape. Their experts are ready to help. Jewish Family Services wants you to know you are not alone.

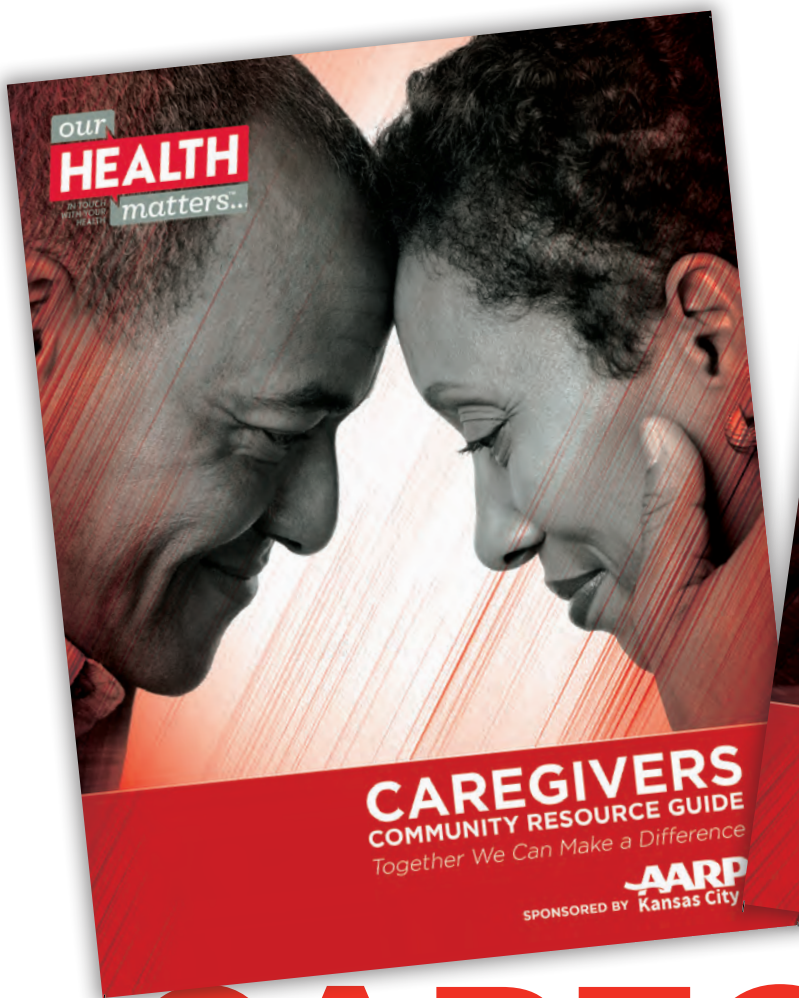
Jewish Family Services supports and strengthens lives throughout Greater Kansas City. JFS provides essential human services for people facing challenges in everyday life or times of crisis—regardless of faith, age, culture or lifestyle.

For more information about JFS services, call 816-333-1172/MO or 913-327-8250/KS.



By Laura Gilman

Director
Older Adult Services
Jewish Family Services
www.jfskc.org



CAREGIVERS MATTER

Caregiving is a journey you should not face alone. If you have ever been a caregiver or are new to the role, it's not easy. Caregivers have many needs and are sometimes at a loss for where to turn for food assistance, medicine, transportation, in-home care, emergency assistance, health care, mental health services, support groups and more!

Our Health Matters™ Caregivers Community Resource Guide, sponsored by AARP Kansas City, connects

Visit KCOURHEALTHMATTERS.COM to download a digital copy of the Caregivers Community Resource Guide

caregivers of a loved one or a person in their care to beneficial services and programs.

Pick up a print copy at local CVS pharmacy stores on the FREE magazine displays at the entrance, or call us to request copies at 816-361-6400.





Healthy Ways to Help Children Manage Stress

Prolonged stress can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression—disorders that are becoming more common in youth.

Stress in young people doesn't always look like stress in adults. But like adults, children and teens can find healthy ways to cope. Together, young people and their parents can learn to spot the signs of excess stress and, with the right tools, manage it.

Sources of stress in young children

For young children, tension at home is a common source of stress. Children may be troubled by family discord or divorce. Big life changes, such as a new step-parent or new home, can also be hard on a child. Many teens worry about fitting in, their first romantic relationship and peer pressure around substance use.

Recognize the signs of stress

- **IRRITABILITY AND ANGER:** Stressed-out kids and teens might be more short-tempered or argumentative than normal.
- **CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR:** A once-active teen now doesn't want to leave the house. Sudden changes can be a sign that stress levels are high.
- **TROUBLE SLEEPING:** A child or teen might complain of feeling tired all the time, sleep more than usual or have trouble falling asleep at night.

- **EATING CHANGES:** Eating too much or too little can both be reactions to stress.
- **GETTING SICK MORE OFTEN:** Stress often shows up as physical symptoms. Children who feel stress often report headaches or stomachaches and might make frequent trips to the school nurse's office.

Stress management for kids and teens

- **SLEEP WELL.** Experts recommend nine to 12 hours of sleep a night for 6- to 12-year olds. Teens need eight to 10 hours a night. Sleep needs to be a priority to keep stress in check. Limit screen use at night and avoid keeping digital devices in the bedroom.
- **TALK IT OUT.** Talking about stressful situations with a trusted adult can help kids and teens put things in perspective and find solutions.
- **MAKE TIME FOR FUN — AND QUIET.** While some children enjoy bouncing from one activity to the next, others need more down time. Find a healthy balance between favorite activities and free time.
- **GET OUTSIDE.** Spending time in nature is an effective way to relieve stress and improve overall well-being.

If you recognize that a child needs counseling, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional. Consult with the child's doctor for referrals.

SOURCE: The American Psychological Association (APA)



DO YOU QUALIFY FOR EXPANDED HEALTH COVERAGE THROUGH MEDICAID?

Income limits have been raised. That means **MORE** Missourians are now eligible for coverage!

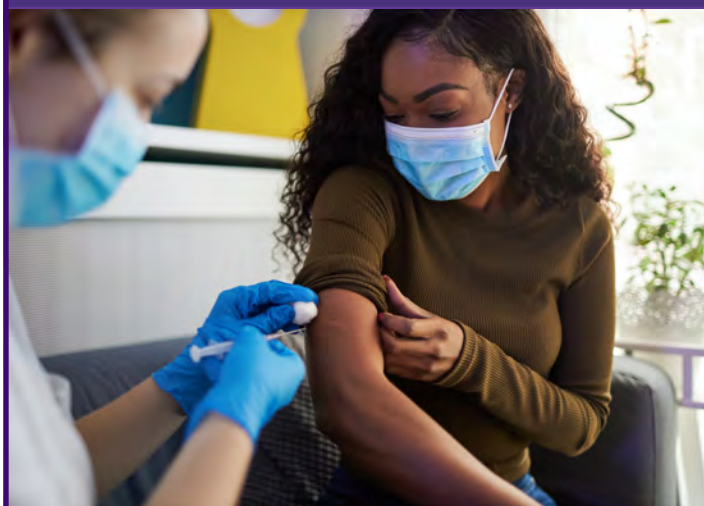
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"I'll protect you, you protect me."



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or call the COVID-19 hotline
at 877-435-8411.

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe

- Get vaccinated.
- Wear a face mask.
- Stay 6 feet apart.
- Wash your hands.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Office of Minority Health



MoStopsCOVID.com
cdc.gov/coronavirus



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER: Services provided on a non-discriminatory basis. Individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability can dial 711 or 1-800-735-2966.

HIGH DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



According to a recent study conducted by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing regarding current access to and attitudes towards mental health services, American mental health services are insufficient. Despite high demand, the root of the problem is lack of access to care or the inability to find it.

Common Barriers Remain

Nearly six in 10 (56%) Americans seek or want to seek mental health services either for themselves or for a loved one. These individuals are trending younger and are more likely to be of lower income and have a military background. The large majority of Americans (76%) also believe mental health is just as important as physical health.

Despite this strong demand and growing societal awareness of the importance of mental health in the U.S., the study found the overwhelming majority of Americans (74%) do not believe such services are accessible for everyone and about half (47%) believe options are limited.

These beliefs are driven by several perceived barriers in people's ability to seek mental health treatment, including:

- High cost and insufficient insurance coverage – 25% reported having to choose between getting mental health treatment and paying for daily necessities.
- Limited options and long wait times for face-to-face services – 38% have had to wait longer than one week for treatments.

- Lack of awareness – 29% do not seek treatment for themselves or loved ones because they do not know where to go to receive services.

- Social stigma – 49%

Gen Z vs. 40% Millennials vs. 30% Gen X vs. 20% Boomers worry about others judging them for seeking mental health services.

29% (OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD SEEK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT) DO NOT SEEK TREATMENT FOR THEMSELVES OR LOVED ONES BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO TO RECEIVE SERVICES.

The Path Forward

More must be done to improve access to care for everyone. Young adults especially need more information on how and where to access care. In addition, more needs to be done to train and retain providers to ensure that people get the help they need.

To locate mental health services in the Kansas City area call (816) 254-3652 and visit www.thecmhs.com; for Kansas call the Community Mental Health Centers-KDADS and visit www.kdads.ks.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OR SUICIDE PREVENTION, CONTACT:

Comprehensive Mental Health: <https://thecmhs.com>

Community Mental Health Center: <https://dmh.mo.gov>

Community Mental Health Centers-KDADS: <https://kdads.ks.gov>

Photo: Kenny Johnson



INCREDIBLE REMARKABLE FOCUS, SUCCESS

The peace of mind created by having access to a community of people you can trust is priceless. One local organization, BlaQOut, exists to serve as a reliable source of health, wellness and empowerment to the area's Black LGBTQ+ residents. BlaQOut's mission is to engage this unique community in the fight to end HIV/AIDS and to support and improve the lives of Black queer folks whose needs are often marginalized.

Services provided range from providing telehealth services, access to affordable medications, including PrEP to prevent HIV infection, to offering support tailored to meet each client's individual needs. BlaQOut's vision is on community building, in which Kansas City's Black queer residents—and all members of our vibrant city—find themselves living in an environment that is healthy and safe.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL 816-866-0355**

BLAQ OUT
A Grassroots Movement to End HIV/AIDS

“We know for sure that one key differentiator as to whether a person can endure great upheaval or not is if they have reliable support. Adequate support systems help people create a way through even the worst of times. By empowering people with the right tools we can help them to build a foundation upon which they can engineer truly fantastic lives.”

D. Rashaan Gilmore,
Founder + CEO, BlaQOut

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Teletherapy Makes Access to Counseling Convenient

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 brought about challenges that disrupted many families' lives personally and professionally. We became more conscious about the spread of a contagious virus and quickly adapted to fight it. And we learned how important it is to protect our physical and mental health.

Thanks to teletherapy, many mental health therapists didn't skip a beat in providing therapeutic support. A seamless transition was made from in-office sessions to virtual teletherapy. At GateWay of Hope, each client's HIPAA policy was already in place, which allowed us to start this new process. Our goals and approaches remained the same for clients who opted to continue services while in-house sessions were not being offered. Some clients initially said, "I'll wait to do therapy when I can see you in person," thinking it would be a couple of weeks before we returned to the office. As time passed, it became apparent that in-person therapy wasn't going to return as soon as we thought. Fortunately, those clients who couldn't wait discovered that virtual therapy sessions were effective—and in fact, they were convenient. More clients returned to therapy through virtual care than in-person.

As teletherapy has become more popular to current clients, it has also attracted new clients who wouldn't have

been able to access services due to barriers such as lack of reliable transportation, inflexible schedules and unreliable daycare.

Does insurance pay for teletherapy?

Depending on one's insurance provider and type of plan, the cost of teletherapy may be covered 100%. Check with your insurance provider to understand what is covered. Another advantage is a therapist may not have to be in the same

state as you. Teletherapy has closed the gap to ensure that clients receive consistent treatment. A reduction in cancellations means a reduction in barriers to progress.

According to the American Psychological Association, research shows that teletherapy can be just as successful as in-person therapy and has the potential to change the mental health landscape for good.

Sources: American Psychological Association, Forbes Health



By Megan Ross
LCPC, CIMPH

Director of Counseling
GateWay of Hope
www.gwhope.org

HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

If you or someone you know exhibits any of these, seek help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or DIAL 9-8-8.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

SOURCE: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else/

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION GLOSSARY

Information about mental health and suicide prevention can sometimes include language you might not be familiar with. These terms are used commonly when talking about suicide prevention.

CRISIS COUNSELING Brief counseling focused on minimizing stress, providing emotional support and improving immediate coping strategies. Like psychotherapy, crisis counseling involves assessment, planning and treatment, but the scope of service is much more specific.

SUICIDE PREVENTION PLANS Plans that use a multi-faceted approach to addressing the problem. For example, including interventions targeting biopsychosocial, social, and environmental factors.

CRISIS CENTER A facility or call center where people going through personal crises can obtain help or advice, either in person or over the phone.

CONTAGION A phenomenon whereby susceptible persons are influenced toward suicidal behavior through knowledge of another person's suicidal acts.

IMMINENT RISK A situation where a person's current risk status is believed to indicate actions that could lead to his or her suicide.

INTERVENTION A strategy or approach that is intended to prevent an outcome or to alter the course of an existing condition (such as providing lithium for bipolar disorder or strengthening social support in a community).

MEANS The instrument or object whereby a self-destructive act is carried out (i.e., firearm, poison, medication).

METHODS Actions or techniques which result in an individual inflicting self-harm (i.e., asphyxiation, overdose, jumping).

MENTAL DISORDER (MENTAL ILLNESS) A diagnosable illness characterized by

alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress that significantly interferes with an individual's cognitive, emotional or social abilities; often used interchangeably with mental illness.

MENTAL HEALTH The capacity of people to interact with one another and the environment in ways that promote subjective well-being, optimal development, and use of mental abilities.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM Diminished cognitive, social or emotional abilities, but not to the extent that the criteria for a mental disorder are met.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES Health services that are specially designed for the care and treatment of people with mental health problems, including mental illness. Includes hospital and other 24-hour services, intensive community services, ambulatory or outpatient services, medical management, case management, intensive psychosocial rehabilitation services, and other intensive outreach approaches to the care of individuals with severe disorders.

PREVENTION NETWORK Coalitions of change-oriented organizations and individuals working together to promote suicide prevention. Prevention networks might include statewide coalitions, community task forces, regional alliances, or professional groups.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS Factors that make it less likely that individuals will develop a disorder. Protective factors may encompass biological, psychological or social factors in the individual, family and environment.

RISK ASSESSMENT The process of quantifying the probability of an individual harming himself or others.

SCREENING Administration of an assessment tool to identify persons in need of more in-depth evaluation or treatment.

SCREENING TOOLS Instruments and techniques (questionnaires, check lists, self-assessment forms) used to evaluate individuals for increased risk of certain health problems.

SELF-HARM The various methods by which individuals injure themselves, such as self-cutting, self-battering, taking overdoses or exhibiting deliberate recklessness.

STIGMA An object, idea, or label associated with disgrace or reproach.

SUICIDAL ACT (ALSO REFERRED TO AS SUICIDE ATTEMPT) A potentially self-injurious behavior with a nonfatal outcome, for which there is evidence that the person intended to kill himself or herself. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injuries.

SOCIAL SUPPORT Assistance that may include companionship, emotional backing, cognitive guidance, material aid and special services.

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR A spectrum of activities related to thoughts and behaviors that include suicidal thinking, suicide attempts, and completed suicide.

SUICIDE Death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is evidence that a self-inflicted act led to the person's death.

Adapted from the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 2001

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