

Health & Wellness

Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health

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LEXINGTON — One in five adults in the United States has a mental health condition. These conditions — whether depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder or others — can affect anyone regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity or income level. Yet, despite how common they are, many people don't seek the help they need.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to breaking that silence. Since its establishment in 1949, the month aims to educate, raise awareness, and reduce the stigma associated with mental health. This month is an opportunity to reach out to those who may be struggling and remind them they are not alone. There are many resources to help people seeking treatment, including here

at the University of Kentucky. UK offers a range of mental health resources, including telehealth, therapists, and other professionals. "Although this may be a time when we most need support, the stigma of reaching out can sometimes feel too big. Stigma doesn't just silence people, it convinces them that their pain isn't valid enough to deserve help," said Rhonda Henry, LCSW, a mental health therapist for UK Human Resources Health and Wellness. "It is easy to think of seeking support as selfish, embarrassing, or futile. In reality, being met with compassion and support is often the first step to make meaningful life changes."

It's important for family, friends and even coworkers to understand how dealing with a mental illness can impact daily life. The better they are educated, the more they can be helpful and supportive. "Here at UK, HR Health and Wellness is committed to the well-being of our employees and their families and their mental health needs," said Melissa Frederick, vice president and chief human resources officer. "We encourage our supervisors to recognize and respond to the mental health needs of their employees and share our resources to best serve them."

Spring View Hospital Awarded 'A' Hospital Safety Grade from Leapfrog Group

New Grade for Spring 2025 is a national recognition for patient safety

LEBANON — Spring View Hospital received an "A" Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group. This national distinction celebrates Spring View Hospital's achievements in protecting hospital patients from preventable harm and errors. "Earning an 'A' from The Leapfrog Group is a significant achievement that places Spring View Hospital among the top hospitals in the country for patient

safety," said Bruce Tassin, interim CEO of Spring View Hospital. "This grade reflects the daily efforts of our entire team to deliver care that prioritizes patient safety at every level. I'm grateful to our staff, physicians, board members, and volunteers for their continued focus on doing what's best for our patients and community." The Leapfrog Group is an independent national watchdog organization

with a 10-year history of assigning letter grades to general hospitals throughout the United States, based on a hospital's ability to prevent medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent, and free to the public. Hospital Safety Grade results are based on more than 30 national performance measures and are updated each fall and spring. "I applaud the hospital leadership and workforce for their strong commitment to safety and transparency," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "An 'A' Safety Grade is a sign that hospitals are continuously evaluating their performance, so that they can best protect patients. Your hospital team should be extremely proud of their dedication and achievement."

To see Spring View Hospital's full grade details and to access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org and follow The Leapfrog Group on Twitter, Facebook, and via its newsletter.

Spring View Hospital publishes 2024 Community Benefit Report

LEBANON — Spring View Hospital has published its community benefit report for the 2024 calendar year. This annual report outlines the various ways the hospital is working to support the health and economic vitality of Marion and surrounding counties as part of its mission of making communities healthier®. "As a leading healthcare provider in Marion, Taylor, and Washington Counties, Spring View Hospital is committed to providing high-quality care, investing in our region's overall well-being and making a positive impact on those we serve," said Bruce Tassin, interim chief executive officer (CEO) of Spring View Hospital. "This year's report underscores our ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality care possible — both inside and outside our hospital walls."

Spring View Hospital's 2024 community benefit report highlights its continued efforts to meet the growing healthcare needs of its community through welcoming new providers, expanding service lines and continually investing in its facilities and healthcare technology. For example, in 2024, Spring View Hospital added several independent providers in a variety of service lines and made more than \$1.4 million in capital improvements, including imaging upgrades, surgical services upgrades, and the expansion and relocation of the Spring View Clinic in Washington County. Additionally, Spring View Hospital contributed more than \$10.4million in health services to those in need, demonstrating its continuous commitment to ensuring everyone has access to care, regardless of their ability to pay. Spring View Hospital is also devoted to creating environments where providers want to practice and employees want to work. In 2024, the hospital distributed more than \$27 million in salaries, wages, and benefits for its approximately 350 employees while contributing more than \$113,000 in professional development and tuition assistance so all its employees can have the opportunity to learn, grow, and improve the care they provide their patients.

Last year, the organization paid over \$5 million in local and state taxes while continuing to support local activities and organizations committed to serving the region, including the Lebanon—Marion County Chamber of Commerce, Lebanon—Marion County Rotary, Campbellsville—Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Classic Arts, Marion County Public Schools, and the Springfield—Washington County Chamber. "We feel fortunate to call Lebanon our home, and we are incredibly grateful for the continued support of all those who entrust us with their care. We are also thankful for the hard work and dedication of our providers, employees and volunteers who make it all possible," said Tassin. "As we look ahead to the future, we remain committed to honoring our legacy while further enhancing the many ways we serve our neighbors and communities." Spring View Hospitals' 2024 community benefit report is available at SpringViewHospital.com/community-benefit-report.

11 rhythmic activities to calm your brain during hard moments

Your brain is amazing. It controls everything you think, feel and do. It tells you when you are hungry, tired, frustrated, sad or happy. It helps you do math. It helps you read books. It can also help you regulate your emotions and stay composed in tough situations. When you understand how your brain works, you can have more control of how you think, feel and act. During Mental Health Awareness Month, we're highlighting an essential truth: your brain functions best when it's regulated. Your brain has three levels it moves through to work well. Calm: This means feeling relaxed and safe. Connected: This means you feel like people get you and support you. Concentrate: This means you can focus, problem solve and figure things out.

Have you ever tried to figure things out when you're upset, and you feel like you are in it alone? It doesn't work very well. That's why it's so important to get centered first and connect with others. Only then can you truly engage the smart, thinking part of your brain. So, how do we do this? Since getting calm is the key to everything, let's focus on that. There are so many things in life that can make you feel upset, stressed or frustrated. But there are things we know can soothe our brain. Activities with rhythm naturally do this, and here are some examples of activities with rhythm:

- Listening to music
- Playing music, drumming or singing
- Dancing
- Participating in a sport
- Running or walking
- Swinging or rocking
- Using a fidget spinner or other fidget toy
- Deep breathing or blowing bubbles
- Drawing, coloring or painting
- Playing with clay
- Playing a card game

You should identify the things on this list you enjoy or would like to try. Don't wait until you are feeling stressed out to do them. Also, weave as many as you can into your daily and weekly routine. That will get your brain more used to being relaxed and help you get through tough situations.

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Tips to improve your child's speech development, when to seek help

LEXINGTON Communication begins at birth when you make eye contact and talk to your baby during care routines like feeding and dressing. Your baby's smiles and coos spur you to keep this primitive conversation going. As babies begin to gesture, crawl and sit up, they initiate conversations. During this stage, expect your child to pair gestures with babbling or "pretend talk." Around 12 months, children typically begin to say their first words, imitate adult speech and answer simple questions nonverbally. By 24 months, children should have about 50 words in their vocabulary, including their favorite word "mine," and be speaking in two-word phrases. A child's speech and language will explode over the next three years as they use their growing vocabulary to tell stories, answer and ask questions, speak in complete sentences and engage with the world around them. Strong speech and language skills lay the foundation for reading, writing and furthering academic success. The tips below can help you ensure your child's communication skills thrive.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD FREQUENTLY Engage in regular conversations with your child about their day and feelings. Ask open-ended questions to keep the conversation going. Narrate your daily activities and routines, describing what you are doing and why. Labeling objects and actions exposes your child to new vocabulary and sentence structures in a natural context. Explaining the why for your actions develops critical thinking skills and helps them make inferences.

LISTEN AND RESPOND Acknowledge your child's attempts to communicate. Be patient, maintain eye contact, nod and use encouraging words to demonstrate that you're listening and valuing their turn. Control the urge to finish their sentences for them. Acknowledging their efforts builds confidence and signals to them the importance of communication. Expand on what your child says by adding more information or rephrasing their words in a more complex manner. This helps them learn new ways to express themselves and enhances their understanding of language.

READ TOGETHER DAILY Demonstrate the importance of reading to life participation. Incorporating book reading into your daily routine signals to your child that reading can be a fun hobby. Reading environmental materials like recipes, signs, and food labels shows them the utility of reading for completing tasks and interacting with their community. Choose books with interactive elements such as flaps, textures, or sounds and repetitive phrases. Encourage your child to participate by asking them to touch or guess what comes next. Books with repetitive phrases allow your child to complete the sentences while reading. These immersive exchanges keep them engaged and practicing language.

ENCOURAGE PLAY Start by imitating daily routines like preparing dinner or caring for a baby. Using familiar routines provides structure and natural roles to play. As your child's imagination and experiences grow, create new scenarios in which you and your child pretend to have different roles, like being a chef, a zookeeper or a bus driver. Help your child move from using toys that resemble the real object to substituting unrelated to objects like a block for a comb. These object substitutions

promote abstract thinking, which helps to develop inferencing and learning abstract concepts later in school. Work on building blocks, LEGO sets or model kits together. Discuss the steps and ask questions about what your child is doing. This interaction promotes descriptive language, sequential thinking, and problem solving. **KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP** Not all children meet speech and language milestones. The CDC reports that nearly 8% of children aged 3-17 experienced a communication disorder last year. These disorders are more common in children aged 3-6, boys, and non-Hispanic black children. Early detection and intervention are effective. Recognizing signs early is crucial for getting professional help from a speech-language pathologist.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR **Limited Vocabulary** If your child's vocabulary is noticeably smaller than same-age peers, especially by age two or three, this could indicate a need for assessment. **Difficulty Pronouncing Words** Problems with articulation, such as frequent mispronunciations or difficulty producing

certain sounds, can signal a need for assistance. A child's speech should be intelligible to others by age three. **Struggles with Sentence Structure** Children who have trouble constructing sentences, using proper grammar, or who speak in disjointed phrases may benefit from speech-language therapy. By age four, children should be able to form sentences with appropriate syntax and structure. **Challenges with Social Interaction** Issues in social communication, such as difficulty participating in conversations, understanding social cues, or expressing a range of thoughts and emotions clearly, are important signs. If your child struggles to engage with others or is frequently excluded from peer activities, seeking help is advisable. While each child develops at their own pace, recognizing these signs and seeking professional guidance can support a child's communication development and overall well-being. Early intervention by a speech-language pathologist can make a significant difference in helping your child overcome speech and language challenges.



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