

FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Living with fear and anxiety has been upending. Being forced to distance ourselves from those we care about created disconnection. Coping with extraordinary losses is distressing. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis has affected people's mental health around the world. People are suffering—some worse than others, depending on gender, personality, age, health, socioeconomic status, and race. Ongoing research demonstrates that people are experiencing mental health issues at higher rates than before the pandemic. Issues include stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

To help KEHA deal with the many different types of loss individuals and families may have experienced over the past few years, the Family and Individual Development Program of Work (POW) is reaching in (versus reaching out) and addressing self-care. Specially, lessons and activities will focus on:

- 2022-2023: Self-Care and Mental Health: Living Alongside the Pandemic
- 2023-2024: Self-Care and Self-Indulgence (aka: Pamper Yourself!)
- 2024-2025: Self-Care and Strengthening Family and the Community

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FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT 2022-2025
Focus 1: Self-Care and Mental Health: Living Alongside the Pandemic
2022-2023

This focus area is about replenishing and doing things for individual benefit—including recognizing loss, both big and small.

Goals & Lesson Resources

Resources will be provided to explore the following topics:

1. Analyze various types of loss and grief
2. Examine ways to take care of yourself mentally and physically
3. Create mental health survival kits

Activities

The facilitator guide will provide a homemaker “survival kit” activity. In addition, consider these additional activities:

1. Educate yourself –attend KEHA lessons, learn about grief, talk about your feelings
2. Seek help –Talk to trusted family members/friends, reach out to a religious leader, attend a support group, call a health-care provider, schedule mental health counseling
3. Keep a journal—document things for which you are grateful, write from the heart, reflect on your loss and how it affects you, let your feelings flow
4. Surround yourself with positive, healthy people—spend time with people who have positive energy and who can support and encourage you
5. Be active—engage in meaningful activity, discover your purpose, join a club, attend an event, volunteer, spread joy

For more information, resources or assistance with website access, contact your county Family & Consumer Science Agent.

Focus 2: Self-Care and Self Pampering 2023-2024

Rational

To feel great this year, KEHA supports the following goals:

Taking time to engage in self-care alleviates some of life's daily pressures and provides the necessary reset that allows you to get back a healthy point where you can maximize daily productivity. When you take time to spend time on yourself, you ultimately benefit everyone. But if negative experiences, behaviors, and feelings persist and/or prevent the ability of carrying out daily responsibilities, it is important that you call a health care provider and seek professional services.

In addition to supporting on-going self-care, KEHA is also exploring the temporary benefits of self-pampering. Self-pampering in this sense refers to healthy adornment practices that make us feel good in the moment. The practice of self-care and self-pampering can complement each other. When used in moderation, pampering yourself can be a form of self-care that we should not feel guilty about.

Goals & Lesson Resources

Resources will be provided to explore the following topics:

1. Identify the difference between your self-care needs and self-pampering wants in terms of health and grooming.
2. Analyze what style is best for your body shape.
3. Identify ways to pamper yourself at home without breaking the bank.
4. Choose to love yourself and be happy with the blessing you have.
5. What is self-care and why is it important for you.

Activities

The facilitator guide will provide several suggestions for self-pampering activities.

For more information, resources or assistance with website access, contact your county Family & Consumer Science Agent.

Focus 3: Self-Care and Strengthening Family and the Community 2024-2025

Rational

Meaningful relationships and positive social connections help you build support systems and contribute to physical and mental health as well as overall life quality and well-being (National Institute of Health, 2021). Strategies for improving personal social health include (1) making connections with family, friends, neighbors, romantic partners, etc.; (2) taking care of yourself while caring for others; (3) getting physically active with others in the community; (4) creating strong bonds with kids; (5) Building strong, healthy, supportive relationships; and (6) Influencing your family's health habits. When committed to personal and family well-being, you are better able to support, maintain, and/or improve the life quality of your family and community. Strong families are the building blocks of society. According to research, the qualities of strong families include (MO Extension; MSU Extension; NE Extension; UK Extension):

1. **Adaptability and Flexibility.** Strong families can manage unanticipated events and stressors.
2. **Affection and Appreciation** – Strong families care about each other, they say nice things to one another, they help each other, do positive things for one another and keep promises.
3. **Commitment to Community.** Strong families are committed to and connected to their communities (clubs, organizations, volunteering, etc.)
4. **Commitment to Family.** Strong families share responsibilities, are loyal to each other, make decisions together, support each other, eat together, and trust each other.
5. **Encouragement.** Strong families encourage individual development inside and outside of the family system.
6. **Spiritual Health** – Strong families have a sense of peace, believe in a greater power, and share/respect spiritual values.
7. **Positive Communication** -Strong families eat together (and put away phones and electronics), they actively listen and hear each other, they talk to each other with respect, attention and honesty, they share open and honest feelings with each other, and avoid putdowns and negative sarcasm. Positive communication also includes the ability to manage and resolve conflicts.
8. **Strong coping skills** - Families with healthy well-being tend to be resilient. Crisis brings them closer together and they are supportive of one another. They look for something good from a bad situation and tend to accept the things they cannot change.
9. **Time together** -Strong families spend quality and quantity time together. They share common interests and respect each other's likes. Strong families being together, laugh a lot, and are not afraid to embrace spontaneous activities.

Goals & Lesson Resources

Resources will be provided to explore the following topics:

1. Practice positive communication with a focus on listening and respect
2. Plan outings that are relaxing, fun and affordable
3. Shape your family's health habits.
4. Participate in a community service project and help others.

Activities

The facilitator guide will provide several suggestions for activities for self-care and to strengthen family and community.

For more information, resources or assistance with website access, contact your county Family & Consumer Science Agent.