

# The Importance of National Stress Awareness Month Activities

In 2022, Missouri [was ranked 49th](#) in the nation for adult mental health. This suggests that many adults in Missouri struggle with mental health issues and are not getting the care they need.

April has many monthly-long observances and campaigns to raise awareness about various issues. In the United States, it is the time of the year when National Stress Awareness Month is observed to highlight the causes of stress and how they impact people's lives.

Try these Stress Awareness Month activities to learn how to handle stress more effectively.

## **Meditation**

Although World Meditation Day is observed annually on May 21, you should dedicate a few minutes per day to the millennia-old practice of meditation. Fitting a short meditation into your day can help calm your mind, reduce anxiety, and improve your focus.

## **Regular Exercise**

Regular physical activity, whether it's a brisk walk, a yoga session, or a workout at the gym, not only helps you keep fit but can also significantly reduce stress levels and improve your mood.

## **Nature Walks**

If you're a nature lover, consider spending more time in nature. A walk in the park or a hike in the woods can be

incredibly soothing for the mind. Plus, it's good exercise for the body.

## **Journaling**

If you live with anxiety or depression, writing down your thoughts and feelings in a journal can help you manage them better. By [journaling about your feelings](#) and experiences, you can reduce the impact of stressful events. This will help you avoid chronic stress and anxiety.

## **Hobbies**

When it comes to de-stressing, nothing beats doing the things you love or enjoy. Whether painting, cooking, gardening, or playing a musical instrument, hobbies can be a great stress reliever.

## **Digital Detox**

In 2022, the average American spent [8 hours and 14 minutes](#) per day with digital media. This can be mentally draining and exhausting, resulting in high-stress levels.

Digital information overload can add to your stress. Take breaks from [social media](#) and other digital platforms.

## **Healthy Eating**

Did you know that what you eat can affect how you feel? Foods rich in vitamins and minerals can boost your mood and energy levels. Maintain a varied diet to ensure your body gets all the essential nutrients it needs to keep healthy while improving your mood.

## **Quality Sleep**

If you haven't been getting quality sleep, prioritizing it can help with your stress management. Good sleep restores your mind and body, resulting in positive moods.

## Socialize

How often do you connect with other people? Social support is vital for dealing with stress. Talking to family and friends can help you in coping with stress. Consider attending [community events](#) to meet new people you can engage with.

## Try These Stress Awareness Month Activities to Boost Your Well-Being

By incorporating these National Stress Awareness Month activities into your routine, you can manage various types of anxiety, reduce stress levels, and promote overall well-being. If stress becomes overwhelming, consider getting help from a qualified therapist or counselor.

Don't hesitate to [get in touch](#) with us at Compass Health Network for professional help with stress management. As a network of patient-focused healthcare providers in Missouri, we know the different types of stress and how to manage them.

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# National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is recognized as National Child Abuse Prevention Month (NCAPM), or "CAP Month," a time when the importance of communities working together to support and strengthen families is highlighted to prevent child maltreatment. This observance underscores the critical role communities play in fostering a safe and nurturing environment for children and families. During NCAPM, efforts are made to increase awareness about the importance of child and family wellbeing and to implement effective strategies that support families and prevent child abuse and neglect

(<https://www.childwelfare.gov>). The significance of this month resides in drawing attention to the ongoing need for education and resources to combat child abuse, which has been shown to have enduring negative impacts on children's development and wellbeing.

Awareness of the signs of child abuse and maltreatment are crucial for early intervention and prevention. Recognized indicators of child physical abuse can include unexplained or frequently appearing injuries, behavioral changes or changes in school performance, passiveness or withdrawal from friends or family, fear of going home or fear of parents. Some indicators of child sexual abuse can include symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, injuries to the genitals, difficulty and/or pain when sitting and walking, sexually suggestive, inappropriate or promiscuous behavior or verbalization, expressing age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual relations, or the sexualization of other children. Common indicators of child maltreatment can include obvious malnourishment, listlessness or fatigue, stealing or begging for food, lack of personal care—poor personal hygiene, torn/dirty clothes, untreated need for glasses, dental or other medical care, frequent absence from or tardiness to school, and children left unattended or without supervision (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cps/signs.php>).

Recognition of these signs can lead to timely support and protection for the at-risk child. Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), through the utilization of a multidisciplinary teams (MDT) approach, play a pivotal role in this effort by bringing together professionals involved in child protective and victim advocacy services, law enforcement and prosecution, and physical and mental health to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive approach to each case (<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov>). CACs also provide essential direct services such as forensic interviews, victim advocacy, therapy, Sexual Assault Forensic Exams (SAFEs), courtroom preparation, case management, and

other services, with the ultimate goal of supporting children and families in their journey toward healing and restoration, allowing them the opportunity to thrive after abuse (<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org>).

The Children's Advocacy Center of East Central Missouri (CACECM), A Division of Compass Health Network, celebrates and promotes National Child Abuse Prevention Month through the sales of our annual Prevention t-shirts, by planting Pinwheel Gardens at the courthouses in our primary counties—Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Francois, and we cap the month off with our Annual Be A Voice Gala, which will take place at the Historic John B. Busch Brewery in Washington, Missouri on Saturday, May 4, 2024.

You can join us for the Gala by going to <https://compasshealthnetwork.org/upcoming-events/>. Here, you can buy tickets for the event, you can look at sponsorship opportunities if you are not able to join us in person, or you can sign up to donate raffle items or items for the CAC. Any amount of support helps our children and families in need