



# NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 2025

## A SEASON TO CARE: NOVEMBER FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH, KINDNESS, AND CONNECTION

November invites us to slow down, reflect, and care – for ourselves, for one another, and for our communities. This month highlights the importance of mental health, kindness, and connection at every stage of life. From early childhood development to adult well-being, small moments of understanding can create lasting change. Whether it's learning how the brain works, starting a conversation about stress, or showing a simple act of kindness, each action helps strengthen the fabric of our communities. Together, let's make this season of care one that fosters awareness, connection, and hope across Western Kansas and beyond.



### BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS: EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH & THE BRAINWISE SERIES

Early childhood is a powerful window of growth – a time when children's brains are developing faster than at any other stage of life. Research shows that 90% of brain development happens before age five, shaping how children learn, manage emotions, and build relationships for years to come. Project Frontier believes that when adults understand how a child's brain develops, they can better support emotional growth and resilience. That's why we created the BrainWise Series – a free online learning resource that explores how the brain works and how caring adults can help children manage emotions, build confidence, and strengthen connection.

The series combines simple brain science with practical, easy-to-use strategies that can be applied at home, in the classroom, or in any setting where children learn and grow. It's an excellent tool for parents, caregivers, educators, or anyone who works with kids and wants to nurture emotional wellness in a meaningful way. Complete the BrainWise Series by December 31 and you'll receive a free copy of My Brain is a Home – plus be entered for a chance to win the full book collection!



#### Help Us Share the Message

Emotional well-being begins with understanding.

We invite you to share the BrainWise Series with parents, caregivers, educators, and anyone working with children. Together, we can help every child grow with curiosity, confidence, and compassion.



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## MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

While mental health affects everyone, the conversation around men's emotional well-being is often overlooked. Research shows that men are far less likely to seek support for mental health challenges – yet they are nearly four times more likely to die by suicide than women (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention).

November is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to break down the stigma and remind the men in our lives that it's okay to talk, ask for help, and take care of their mental well-being. Strength isn't about staying silent – it's about showing up, speaking honestly, and supporting one another. Everyday stress, financial pressure, work demands, and family responsibilities can build quietly over time. Open conversations and small acts of care can make a huge difference.

### WAYS TO SUPPORT MEN'S HEALTH

- Check in with a friend, coworker, or family member – even a quick “How are you, really?” can matter.
- Encourage time for hobbies, movement, or rest – self-care isn't selfish.
- Share local mental health resources and let others know help is available.

### LOCAL RESOURCES

- High Plains Mental Health Crisis Hotline – 24/7 Crisis Line: (800) 432-0333
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or text 988 anytime



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## NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS DAY — NOVEMBER 5

Observed on the first Wednesday of November, National Stress Awareness Day is a gentle reminder to pause, check in with ourselves, and take stock of how stress may be affecting our lives. According to the American Psychological Association, over 75% of adults report experiencing moderate to high levels of stress, and many say it impacts both their physical and emotional health. Whether it's balancing work and family demands, managing finances, or keeping up with daily responsibilities, stress can quietly build – often before we realize it.

While we can't eliminate stress entirely, we can learn healthy ways to manage it and strengthen our ability to bounce back.

Simple Strategies for a Calmer Day:

- **Practice the 4-7-8 Breath:** Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7, and exhale for 8.
- **Take a nature break:** Even 10 minutes outside can reduce stress hormones.
- **Start small with gratitude:** Write down three things that went right today.
- **Set boundaries:** It's okay to rest, say no, or take a moment to reset.

When we model calm and prioritize self-care, we remind others – and ourselves – that emotional wellness matters every day, not just once a year.

## WORLD KINDNESS DAY — NOVEMBER 13



Kindness is more than a simple gesture – it's a powerful force for connection and healing. When we show kindness, our brains release oxytocin, the "feel-good" hormone that reduces stress and strengthens relationships. Celebrated each year on November 13, World Kindness Day reminds us that even the smallest acts can make a big difference. A kind word, a genuine smile, or helping hand can brighten someone's day – and our own.

### Get Involved:

Start a Kindness Challenge in your classroom, workplace, or neighborhood by completing one kind act each day for a week. Or create a Kindness Tree, adding a leaf for every kind act done. By month's end, you'll see how small gestures can grow into something beautiful. Kindness costs nothing – but its impact can last a lifetime.



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## INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY — NOVEMBER 23

Each year, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, communities around the world come together for International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day – a day of remembrance, connection, and healing for those who have lost someone to suicide.

Grief after suicide can feel isolating, but no one has to walk that path alone. Sharing stories, finding community, and learning how to support others are powerful steps toward healing – both individually and collectively.

To help strengthen that support, Project Frontier, in partnership with High Plains Mental Health Center, offers QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training. This evidence-based program teaches everyday people how to recognize warning signs, start a caring conversation, and connect someone to help. If you're interested in bringing this FREE training to your community, contact Jenny Mitchell at [jmitchell@nkesc.org](mailto:jmitchell@nkesc.org) to discuss this option further.

**You are not alone. For immediate help, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – available 24/7.**



As we move into the season of gratitude and giving, may we continue to lead with compassion – for ourselves, our families, and our communities. Remember: small actions add up to meaningful change. Whether it's taking time to listen, offering a kind word, or sharing a resource, you never know whose life you might touch.

Let's keep creating communities where everyone feels seen, supported, and valued.