



## SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH & REDUCING STRESS

**408**

mental health and stress reduction educational events delivered.

**7,714**

adults and youth participated in MSU Extension's mental health and stress reduction programming.

### PRIORITY

#### A R E A S

- Supporting social-emotional health.
- Building awareness of stress and mental health issues.
- Empowering people to intervene in mental health crises.
- Teaching positive communication skills.
- Understanding the benefits of mindfulness and mindfulness practices.

To support mental health and stress reduction programming, contact Cheryl Eschbach at [cheryl@msu.edu](mailto:cheryl@msu.edu). To bring social-emotional health programming to your community, contact Holly Tiret at [tiret@msu.edu](mailto:tiret@msu.edu) or Jade Richards (Mental Health First Aid) at [jader@msu.edu](mailto:jader@msu.edu).

### IMPACTS

As a result of MSU Extension's social-emotional health programming, children and adults across Michigan learned how to manage anger, reduce stress, practice mindfulness and strengthen their families' and communities' understanding of and response to mental health crises. Of the participants surveyed:



**94%**

reported they were highly confident that they could recognize and identify their own anger triggers.



**97%**

reported they could better recognize signs of a mental health crisis.



**90%**

reported they felt highly confident that they understood how anger and stress affect the brain.

**“ I think everyone should practice mindfulness. I really like it. It helps with my real-life frustrations. ”**

• *Stress Less With Mindfulness participant*



## REDUCING STRESS & ANGER, ENCOURAGING MINDFULNESS

How someone handles anger and stress can affect the person’s emotional and physical health. It can also carry over into their relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. MSU Extension offers evidence-based programs that help children and adults develop the positive communication skills they need to control anger, reduce stress and maintain healthy relationships.

The RELAX: Alternatives to Anger program is designed to help young people, parents and caregivers foster healthy relationships so they can live, learn and grow in safe, affirming and fair environments free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. The program is available in English and Spanish. In 2019, MSU Extension held three Relajarse Alternativos series, serving 46 participants.

To ensure participants in rural areas or with transportation issues can also access programming, MSU Extension offers RELAX: Alternatives to Anger in a self-paced online learning format. Throughout the course, regular feedback is given by an MSU Extension health expert. In 2019, 38 people, mostly from the Upper Peninsula, participated in the online module.

MSU Extension also offers one-time social-emotional presentations, as well as stress reduction programs like Stress Less With Mindfulness. This five- or six-class series for teens, adults and seniors introduces mindfulness concepts and practices to reduce stress and related symptoms. In 2019, MSU Extension delivered Stress Less With Mindfulness programming to almost 1,700 people.



## TEACHING INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES FOR MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

When someone’s in distress, a quick and compassionate response is just as important for the person’s mental health as it is for their physical health. MSU Extension’s trained facilitators deliver the National Council for Behavioral Health’s Mental Health First Aid program to help participants learn to help people who may be experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

Participants are taught how to use a five-step action plan to help people experiencing mental health issues and connect them to the care and resources they need to recover. After taking Mental Health First Aid training, 97% of participants say they can better recognize signs of a mental health crisis. Further demonstrating MSU Extension’s commitment to the program, about 70% of Extension’s own staff — from educators to executive assistants to administrators — are trained in Mental Health First Aid.

In 2019, MSU Extension offered three Mental Health First Aid modules:

- Mental Health First Aid for Adults.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid, which prepares trainees to help children ages 12 to 18 who may be developing or experiencing mental health challenges.
- Higher Education Mental Health First Aid, which teaches people in a college setting to help students who are experiencing mental health challenges.

Almost 300 people participated in one or more Mental Health First Aid modules in one of 45 training sessions sponsored by MSU Extension in 2019.

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