

Bury Seeds, Not Stress: Starting the Conversation

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
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Introductions

- Name and affiliation
- How are you connected to agriculture or farming?





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Today's Goals and Objectives



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Raise Your Hand if You...



- Are part of a life-long, multigenerational farm business or farm family?
- Love being involved in agriculture?
- Know of a last generation farmer who is currently under great stress from economic or health issues?
- Know this person has the proper social and economic safety nets to support him or her?
- Can recognize and deal with a stress-related emergency affecting this person or another farmer?



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The Facts About Farming and Stress



- Farming is a high-risk profession for farmers and their family members.
 - Fatality rate is 214 deaths per 100,000 workers (CDC, 2016)
 - Transportation accidents are leading cause of death
 - 100+ farm workers suffer a lost-work injury each day
 - Farmers have high rates of death due to heart disease, hypertension, ulcers and nervous disorders
- Many challenging characteristics of rural communities
 - Farmers and family members often isolated from social networks
 - Mental health resources are often inadequate in rural communities
 - 75% of farmers say it would be easy to access opioids
- Farming is a way of life, not just a profession.
 - Little separation from work and family...where does one begin and the other end?

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M SU FactSheet:

Opioids in Rural Farming Communities

OPIOIDS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES

The opioid crisis is having an impact on rural communities.

Overdose deaths have increased in rural areas, and the opioid crisis is having an impact on rural communities. Some examples of opioids that can be prescribed by a doctor include:

- Hydrocodone
- Oxycodone
- Codeine
- Tramadol
- Fentanyl
- Heroin
- Buprenorphine
- Naloxone

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How did we get here...and where are we headed?

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Median Farm Income

• How much income does your family need to live on? Are you paying yourself?

• 58% of farms have off-farm income

• On average, 21% of household income comes from the farm

Median farm income and median total income of farm households by commodity specialization, 2016

Commodity Specialization	Median household income from farming (Dollars)	Median total household income (Dollars)
Rice, tobacco, cotton, peanuts	~85,000	~105,000
Dairy	~45,000	~85,000
Cash grains*	~25,000	~85,000
Hogs	~15,000	~85,000
High value crops**	~15,000	~85,000
Other field crops	~15,000	~85,000
Poultry	~15,000	~85,000
Beef cattle	~15,000	~85,000
General livestock	~15,000	~85,000

*Includes corn, sorghum, soybean, wheat, and other cash grains. **Includes fruit, nuts, vegetables, greenhouse, and nursery.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Resource Management Survey. Data as of November 29, 2017.

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What Lies Ahead for US Agriculture?

- Market uncertainty and price volatility
- Financial distress related to cash flows and net worth
- Stressful conditions resulting in mental and physical health issues.

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M SU Fact Sheets:

- Turning Personal Skills Into Income
- Understanding Credit and Debt
- Creating a Spending Plan

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What is Stress?

- Our body's reaction to a perceived threat or burdensome stimulus or event.
- Unrelieved stress can lead to adverse physical and/or mental health problems.

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The Signs of Stress on...



Our Body	Our Thoughts and Feelings	Our Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • Ulcers • Backaches • Eating problems • Sleeping problems • Frequent sickness • Exhaustion • Muscle tension • Chest pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Depression • Bitterness • Anger • Anxiety • Loss of spirit • Loss of sense of humor • Loss of self worth • Memory loss • Lack of focus • Difficulty with simple decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Backbiting • Outbursts • Passive-aggressive behavior • Anger or violence • Increased drinking • Taking drugs • Social isolation • Restlessness

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How Stress Affects Our Bodies



<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-stress-affects-your-body-sharon-horesh-bergquist> (Bergquist, n.d.)

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Cortisol= The Stress Hormone

- Beneficial in motivating us to act
- Harmful when elevated for extended periods



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Chronic Stress: Signs and Symptoms

- Changes in routine
- Decline of livestock care
- Poor decision making
- Chronic illness
- Increase in farm accidents
- Farmstead appearance declines
- Children show signs of stress
- Others

Three small images: a white pill bottle with pills spilling out, a cow in a stall, and a person walking in a field.

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M SU FactSheet: Youth Farm Stress

YOUTH FARM STRESS

Farmers experience stress by a range of factors: low commodity prices, difficult weather events, animal and crop losses, farm expansion and other pressures. The stress a family may experience varies from their family's farm conditions.

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

EMOTIONAL:

- Irritability and depression
- Loss of interest in family and farm
- Loss of energy
- Depression
- Sleeplessness
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of interest in farm
- Loss of interest in family
- Loss of interest in community
- Loss of interest in life

PHYSICAL:

- Headaches
- Stomach problems
- Loss of interest in family
- Loss of interest in farm
- Loss of interest in community
- Loss of interest in life

WAYS TO HELP COMMUNITY RESOURCES

It can be very helpful to have a community resource to help with stress. Community resources can help with stress in many ways. Community resources can help with stress in many ways. Community resources can help with stress in many ways.

WAYS ADULTS CAN SUPPORT YOUTH IN STRESSING SITUATIONS

Adults can support youth in stressing situations in many ways. Adults can support youth in stressing situations in many ways. Adults can support youth in stressing situations in many ways.

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How Full is Your Plate?

Record on your plate:

- Obligations
- Tasks
- Problems
- Other stresses

Circle all the things that you have no control over!

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Personal Responses to Stress

Accept
Make changes
Seek assistance

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M SU Fact Sheets:

- Stress
- How to Cultivate a Productive Mindset

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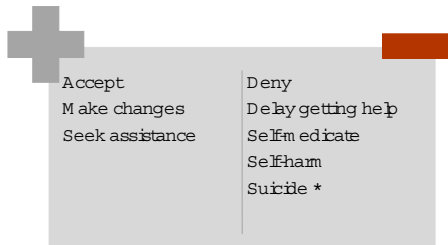
Positive Methods to Handle Stress



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Personal Responses to Stress



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Chronic Stress and Suicide Warning Signs

- ☐ Taking overthinking about suicide or death
- ☐ Feeling hopeless, trapped, or like a burden
- ☐ Giving away prized possessions
- ☐ Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- ☐ Making a plan and acquiring means
- ☐ Reckless behavior
- ☐ Saying goodbye
- ☐ Withdrawal or isolation from others
- ☐ Loss of interest
- ☐ Extreme mood swings



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Direct and Indirect Suicide Warning Signs*

Components of the QPR Institute Question, Persuade, Refer QPR for Families and Ranchers)

Direct

To friend: I'm going to kill myself.

To banker: If you find out, you'll be seeing my obit next week.

To his wife: Why don't I just shoot myself and let the bank have this place?

To spouse: no warning signs

To pastor: no warning signs

Indirect

To son: Don't be surprised if I die in a tractor rollover.

To friend: If I should pass away, I want you to have my old Winchester 12 gauge.

To financial advisor: What happens to my debt if I die?

To doctor: Is this enough medicine to kill someone?

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*Each situation is different. There may or may not be warning signs.

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Asking About Suicide

Asking DOES NOT increase the risk of suicide. It may provide relief to those in despair.

Ask: Are you having thoughts of suicide?

If "yes":

- DO NOT leave the person alone.
- Call or call a family member or health provider.
- Transport directly to health care provider.
- Use active listening and empathy.

If "no":

- Provide helpful resources as needed.
- Follow up or check in with them in the future.

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NDSU FactSheet: Responding to Distressed People

You want to help. As a friend, professional, family or community member, you may encounter people in distress. This fact sheet will help you know when to look for warning signs and how to respond.

Sometimes you need help. Sometimes you are help.

Responding to Distressed People

NDSU

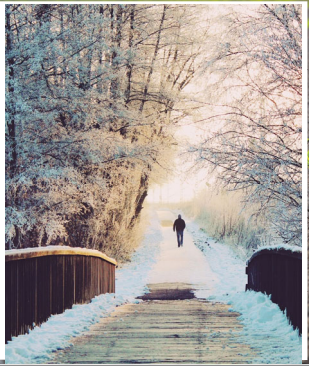
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Bridging the Gap: How Can You Help?

- Recognize signs of stress
- Listen, listen, listen!
- Respond with empathy
- Connect individuals to the resources they need

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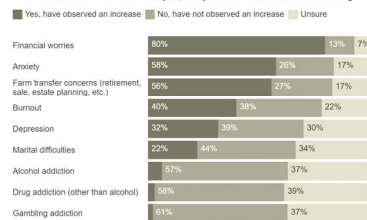


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The Ag Professional Perspective

Recent survey shows increases in anxiety, financial worries, depression among farmers

Last summer, state agriculture officials surveyed nearly 550 professionals who work closely with Minnesota farmers and asked: In the last year, have you observed an increase in the following?



Source: Minnesota Department of Agriculture if Graphic by C.J. Sinner, Star Tribune • Created with Datawrapper

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M SU FactSheet: How to Talk with Farmers Under Stress

HOW TO TALK WITH FARMERS UNDER STRESS

Farmers face challenges that can cause acute or chronic stress on a daily basis.

Individuals who experience chronic stress are more likely to experience health problems, decreased productivity, and decreased ability to cope with stress. Chronic stress can also lead to burnout, which is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

Warning signs of stress can be physical, emotional, or behavioral. Physical signs include changes in appetite, weight, and sleep. Emotional signs include changes in mood, anxiety, and depression. Behavioral signs include changes in work habits, social interactions, and decision-making.

WAYS TO HELP

There are several ways to help farmers under stress. These include providing emotional support, offering practical assistance, and connecting them to resources. It is important to listen to the farmer's needs and provide support in a way that is respectful and non-judgmental.

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a communication technique that involves fully concentrating on what the other person is saying, rather than just listening to your own thoughts. It is a key skill for helping farmers under stress.

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Show Em pathy, Not Sym pathy



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Use Your EARS in Active Listening

- 90% of communication is nonverbal.
- Use positive body language!


Explore

- Ask for elaboration.

Affirm

- Provide encouragement.
- Use empathy, not sympathy.

Reflect

- Listen versus hear.

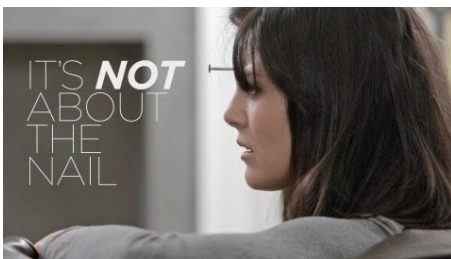
Summarize

- Repeat key points.

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What is Active Listening?


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Conversation Starters

Remember: Don't insert yourself in someone else's story. Say "you", not "I".

- You are not alone. Several families are in similar situations.
- Every situation is a little different. Help me understand better.
- Have you thought about _____?
- What if you _____?
- This new idea might _____ . What do you think?
- Let's write down some of the pros and cons.

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Communicating in Stressful Situations

- You can help others to...

- Determine what decisions need to be made.
- Think, discover and live with possible outcomes of their decisions.
- Organize information so they can remember what was discussed and decided upon.
- Review the discussion during follow-up communication.

Remember:
People under stress
are easily overloaded
and may not process
things as expected!

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Barriers to Mental Health Care

- Attitudes and perceptions
- Stigma
- Accessibility
- Availability
- Cost and insurance coverage
- Social networks and support systems



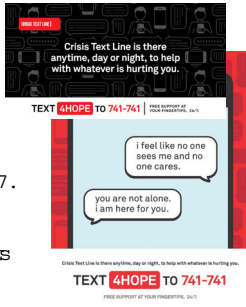
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Ohio's Crisis Text Line

- Text 4HOPE to 741741 to connect with a trained volunteer crisis counselor within five minutes.
- Free, confidential, anonymous 24/7.
- Features active rescue where trained counselors connect with emergency services to save texters from immediate self-harm.



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Suicide Prevention Resources

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
<https://afsp.org>



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National Resources

- Center for Rural Affairs: <http://www.cfa.org/news/180130/10-helpful-resources-farmers>
- Crisis Text Line: Text "CONNECT" to 741741: <https://www.crisistextline.org/textline/>
- Iowa State University: Iowa Concern 24-hour hotline: 1-800-447-1985
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Crisis Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/>
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, Press 1 (website also has a chat option) <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

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Raise your hand if you could help a friend,
family member, client or other person under
extreme stress?



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