

Recognizing Signs of Extreme Stress, and Who's there to help?

Alicia Boor
K-State Extension
Cottonwood District
Ag and Natural Resources Agent

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Are you coping?

- Farming is one of the top 10 most stressful occupations in the United States.
 - Working on and around large equipment
 - Working long days and longer evenings
 - Repetitive heavy labor
 - Engaging in dangerous activities much of the time
 - Lack of control on conditions:
 - input pricing
 - commodity pricing
 - weather



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Why are Farmers So Resilient?

- Farmers have experienced multiple generations of family members
 - Personality traits:
 - Willingness to take risks
 - Very high conscientiousness about work
 - Great capacity to persevere in the face of adversity and self reliance
- The unique factors and experience that can affect farming life can contribute to the development of depression.



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What does that mean when it comes to mental health?

- Being in the habit of "working it out yourself"
- Isolation and limited access to services
- Finding it difficult to approach local health workers because you may know them socially.
- Practical issues to do with leaving the farm to seek help.
- Financial, climate related and other pressures that may seem insurmountable.



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WHAT IS STRESS?

- "A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances."
 - Apathy, lack of energy
 - Difficulty making decisions
 - Difficulty "keeping track" of things
 - Feeling on edge
 - A change in eating habits
 - Sleeping more than usual or difficulty getting to sleep
 - Being more emotional
 - Using alcohol or drugs to relieve or forget stress



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Watch for these signs:



- Severe feeling of anxiety, depression, hopelessness
- Withdrawal from people or activities they ordinarily enjoy
- Negative thoughts, including frequent talk about disappearing or death.
- Strong feelings of guilt or low self-esteem.
- Decline in hygiene or appearance
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Stockpiling medication
- Easy access to firearms



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How can YOU help?

- Be cautious in talking to a person under the influence of drugs/ alcohol.
- Avoid using labels.
- Consider the person's personality and potential resistance to help.
- Be gentle and kind.
- Avoid a confrontational approach.
- Encourage positive coping strategies.
- Be consistent and patient in your expression of concern.
- Be direct.
- Exhibit a non-judgmental attitude.



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COPING WITH STRESS

• Find what "Fits You"

- Exercise
- Reading
- Watching T.V.
- Spending time with friends
- Yoga/ Meditation



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Phone numbers to keep handy

Local:

- The Center for Counseling and Consultation
 - 620-792-2544 or 800-875-2544, <https://thecentergb.org/>
- High Plains Mental Health Services
 - 800-432-0333, <https://www.hpmhc.com>
- Pawnee Mental Health Services
 - 800-609-2002, <http://www.pawnee.org>

State:

- 211- 24 hour helpline
- Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services
 - 800-321-3276, <https://www.k-state.edu/kams/>

Nationwide:

- **Talk or Text: 988**



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THANK YOU!!



Questions?

Alicia Boor
K-State Extension
Cottonwood District
Ag and Natural Resources Agent
620-793-1910 (aboor@ksu.edu)

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