



Beyond the Balance Sheet: Recognizing Farm Stress, Heeding Warning Signs, and Sharing Mental Health Resources

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Overview

- Agrarian Imperative
 - Warning Signs
 - Stress
 - Strategies to Support
 - Resources
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The Agrarian Imperative

“To farmers, ‘the land is everything.’ Ownership of a family farm is the triumphant result of the struggles of multiple generations. Losing the family farm is the ultimate loss – bringing shame to the generation that has let down their forbearers and dashing the hopes for successors.”

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES OF THE AGING AGRICULTURAL POPULATION. By: Michael R. Rosmann, Ph.D. .
A Conference on the Aging Farm Community: Using Current Health and Safety Status to Map Future Action.
Indianapolis, IN Wednesday, March 7, 2007.

The Agrarian Imperative

"...impels farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship, and to take uncommon risks."

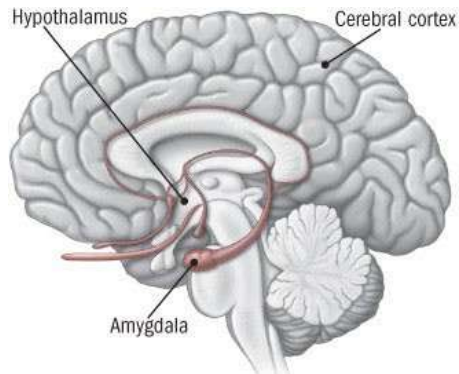
Rosmann MR. The agrarian imperative. *J Agromedicine*. 2010;15(2):71-75. doi:10.1080/10599241003630585

Warning Signs



- Isolation
- Mood Changes
- Abrupt Sales
- Disrepair
- Injury and Illness
- Altered Sleep Patterns
- Increased Substance Use
- Lack of Motivation
- Unpaid Bills
- Hopelessness
- Family Exhibiting Stress

Stress Response



1. Stressful incident
2. Information sent to amygdala – processes and interprets
3. Danger signal sent to hypothalamus (command center – communicates to rest of body through nervous system)
 - Surge in adrenaline
 - Heart beats faster
 - Pulse rate and blood pressure ↑
 - Rapid breathing
 - Senses sharpen
 - Release of glucose & fats to supply energy
4. Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn

Chronic Stress

- Prolonged and constant feeling of stress
- Stressors are experienced with frequency and intensity that the autonomic nervous system does not have an adequate opportunity to activate the relaxation response
- Body remains in constant state of psychological arousal



Working with the chronically stressed

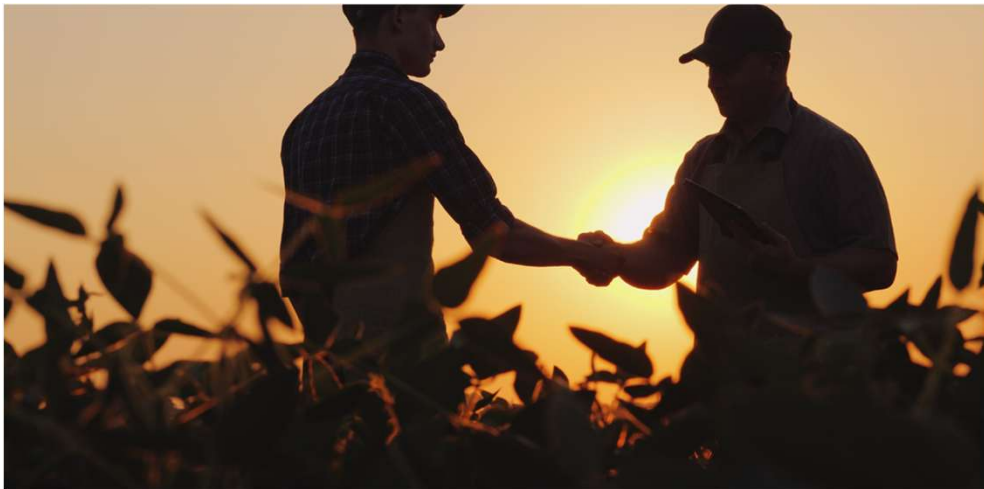
- Active Listening
- Make a plan
- Be clear and concise
- Write it down
- Check in
- Provide resources



What do I say?

- I've been noticing you've been _____, what's been going on?
- I heard you were _____. How are you doing?
- I'm hearing you say _____. I'm worried about you. Let's get some help.

What about you?



Shifting Gears for Survival

First-Order Change – work harder, stay up later, get up earlier, push yourself more

Second-Order Change – shift into a lower gear



Protective Factors



Resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text: [988](tel:988)
- Chat: 988lifeline.org

NDSU Farm Stress - <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/ag-topics/farm-safety-health/managing-stress>

Farm State of Mind – American Farm Bureau Resource Directory

<https://www.fb.org/initiative/farm-state-of-mind>

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