



# Mental Health in Canadian Agriculture.

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The  
Do More  
Agriculture  
Foundation



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# THE DO MORE AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

**The Do More Agriculture Foundation is the national voice and champion for mental health in agriculture and is changing the culture of agriculture to one where all producers are encouraged, supported, and empowered to take care of their mental wellbeing.**

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## **Awareness**

**Awareness, education and breaking the stigma. These are the first steps to making a real and lasting impact for our industry. We strive for an industry where producers understand what it means for them to be truly healthy.**



## **Community**

**Community is more than just a physical place, community is also a sense of belonging and being a part of something more. We aim to create a community where people can connect and also find resources that are relevant and accessible to them**



## **Resources**

**Mental health services and supports are hard to access in rural and remote locations. We aim to help bridge the gap of accessing those supports and services to farmers and their supports and services to farmers and their support networks.**



# CURRENT PICTURE

- **35%** meet the classification for depression
- **58%** meet the classification for anxiety
- **45%** report high stress
- **68%** more susceptible to chronic stress than the general population
- **20-30%** higher rates of suicide than any other occupation in Canada.
- **4x** times more likely to use a firearm to die by suicide than the general public.

**STIGMA.**





## **MENTAL HEALTH, ILLNESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING.**

**The difference between mental health and mental illness can be confusing. Everyone has mental health, just like everyone has health.**

**In the course of a lifetime, not all people will experience a mental illness, but everyone will struggle or have a challenge with their mental health just like we all have challenges with our physical well-being from time to time.**

# Mental Health Continuum Model

## HEALTHY

- Normal fluctuations in mood
- Takes things in stride
- Good sense of humour
- Consistent performance
- Normal sleep patterns
- Physically and socially active
- Behaving ethically and morally
- Confident in self and others
- Limited or no alcohol/gambling

- Focus on task at hand
- Break problems into manageable tasks
- Controlled, deep breathing
- Nurture a support system

## REACTING

- Nervousness, irritability
- Sadness, overwhelmed
- Displaced sarcasm
- Procrastination
- Forgetfulness
- Trouble sleeping
- Low energy
- Muscle tension, headaches
- Intrusive thoughts
- Occasional nightmares
- Decreased social activity
- Regular alcohol use/gambling

- Recognize limits; take breaks
- Get adequate rest, food, exercise
- Reduce barriers to help-seeking
- Identify and resolve problems early
- Example of personal accountability

## INJURED

- Anxiety, anger
- Pervasive sadness, tearfulness
- Hopelessness, worthlessness
- Negative attitude
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble making decisions
- Decreased performance or workaholic tendencies
- Restless, disturbed sleep
- Increased fatigue, aches and pains
- Recurrent vivid nightmares
- Recurrent intrusive thoughts/images
- Avoidance, withdrawal
- Increased alcohol use, gambling – hard to control

- Talk to someone; ask for help
- Tune into own signs of distress
- Make self care a priority
- Get help sooner, not later
- Maintain social contact; don't withdraw

## ILL

- Excessive anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Easily enraged, aggressive
- Depressed mood, numb
- Overt insubordination
- Cannot concentrate
- Inability to make decisions
- Cannot perform duties
- Cannot fall asleep/stay asleep
- Constant fatigue, illness
- Absent from social events
- Suicidal thoughts/intent
- Alcohol, gambling or other addictions

- Follow care recommendations
- Seek consultation as needed
- Respect confidentiality
- Know resources and how to access them

# Signs to look for...

## Behavioural Changes

- Withdrawal from activities they used to enjoy (church, or coffee row).
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in socialization (no longer willing to talk to someone on the phone)
- Evidence of self-harm
- Other changes (reduction of maintenance on the homestead)



# ACTIVE LISTENING

## Get curious

- "tell me about..."
- "help me understand..."
- "What do you think..."



## Use Open ended questions

this means your question cannot be answered with a "yes", or a "no"

**VALIDATE,  
VALIDATE,  
VALIDATE**

**To demonstrate or support the truth or value of what an individual shares with you.**

**It is personal – their personal experience is seen as truthful.**

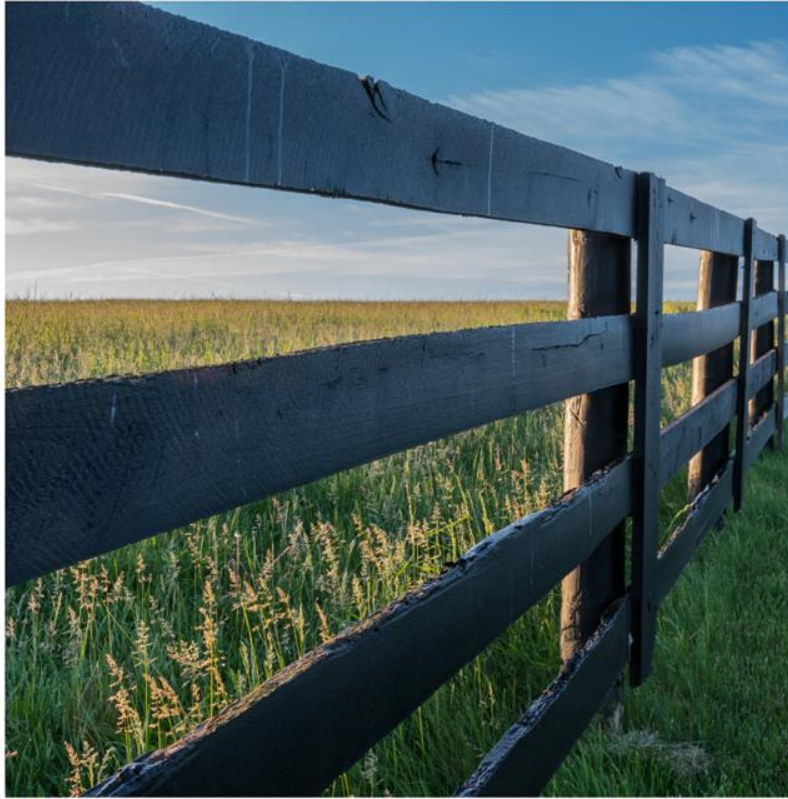


**Example:**

**"You are right, farming is tough, and even though we work hard, there is always something around the corner that needs us to attend to"**



**SUPPORTING  
WITHIN  
OUR MEANS**



# WHAT DOES A BOUNDARY APPLY TO?

- **Personal space**
- **Emotions & thoughts**
- **Stuff & possessions**
- **Time & energy**
- **Culture, religion & ethics**

# Strategies to Grow Resilience:



## Change the Narrative (limit rumination)



## Practice Self-Compassion

- Recognize everyone suffers
- What would you say to a friend who was going through this same crisis



## Build Coping Skills Daily

- Deep breathing
- Thought change activities (changing unhelpful (defeating thoughts) to helpful thoughts)
- Prayer/meditation
- Practice Forgiveness
  - Acknowledge what happened and how it affected you
  - Commitment to forgive is not letting the offender off the hook



# Resources.

- **911** – if you cannot keep yourself safe
- [www.domore.ag](http://www.domore.ag)
- **Local counselling centre**
- **Speak to your Dr.** - many rural practitioners are beginning to recognize the needs of their community...but don't stop there
- **Speaking to anyone is better than speaking to no one**