

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

*Sandra L. Wick  
K-State Extension  
Post Rock District  
Crop Production Agent*

*Alicia Boor  
K-State Extension  
Cottonwood District  
Agriculture Agent*



# 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



# 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.



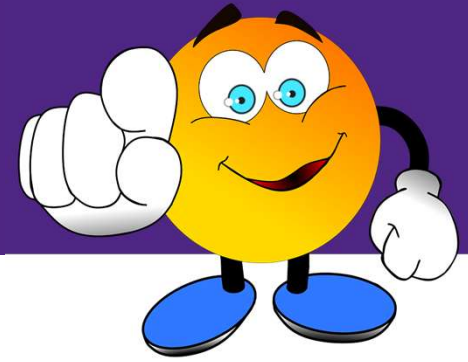
# What does that mean when it comes to mental health?

- 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.

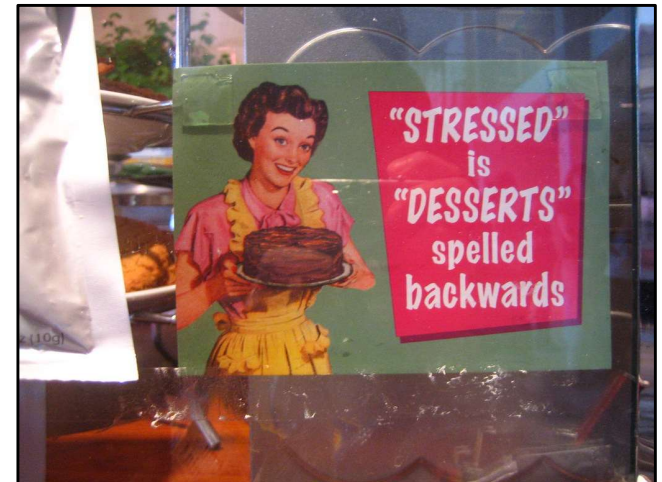




# Watch for these signs:



- 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



# 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.



# COPING WITH STRESS

- Find what “Fits You”
  - Exercise
  - Reading
  - Watching T.V.
  - Spending time with friends
  - Yoga/ Meditation



# 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**



# THANK YOU!!



Questions?

*Sandra L. Wick*  
*K-State Extension*  
*Post Rock District*  
*Crop Production Agent*  
*785-282-6823 ([swick@ksu.edu](mailto:swick@ksu.edu))*

*Alicia Boor*  
*K-State Extension*  
*Cottonwood District*  
*Agriculture Agent*  
*620-793-1910 ([aboor@ksu.edu](mailto:aboor@ksu.edu))*