

HOW TO HELP



Suicide is complicated and tragic, but it can be preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.

- ▶ **Pay attention.** Take notice of signs the farmer or family member needs professional help you can't provide, such as financial, legal or personal counseling.
- ▶ **Ask, listen carefully.** Provide opportunities for the individual to talk about what they are going through. Try not to compare their challenges to someone else's, or minimize their situation.
- ▶ **Acknowledge.** Learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.
- ▶ **Help them connect.** Encourage them to establish connections with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or local mental health professional.
- ▶ **Provide important numbers.** Save important numbers in their phone such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) and the Crisis Text Line (741741).
- ▶ **Stay connected.** Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. Studies have shown the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

FIND SUPPORT



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- ▶ Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**
- ▶ Access **Online Chat** at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Both resources are free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area. For more information, visit the website that provides 24/7 support for people in distress.

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Crisis Text Line

- ▶ Text **HOME** to **741741**
- The Crisis Text Line provides support 24 hours a day.



Avera Health Farm and Rural Stress Hotline

- ▶ Call **1-800-691-4336**

Avera's hotline will connect you with a skilled, compassionate mental health professional who can help you navigate whatever you're experiencing – such as symptoms or signs of anxiety or depression.




Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

- ▶ Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

SAMHSA offers a number of valuable resources including treatment locators, SAMHSA's National Helpline, a Disaster Distress Helpline and other important information.

For additional information and resources visit FarmStateOfMind.org and follow [#FarmStateOfMind](https://twitter.com/FarmStateOfMind) on social media.

 Information in this brochure is shared from our national partners in the American Farm Bureau Federation.

STRONGER TOGETHER

#FarmStateOfMind

If you are struggling with anxiety, depression or another mental health challenge, you are not alone.



As any farmer or rancher can tell you, farm life can be demanding and stressful. It's reaching a critical stage with coronavirus impacts on top of trade wars, natural disasters, depressed commodity prices, labor shortages and other factors. Given these ongoing challenges, it's no surprise more farmers and farm families are experiencing stress and mental health issues.

If you are struggling with anxiety, depression or another mental health challenge, you are not alone. A healthy farm or ranch is nothing without a healthy you.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS



When loved ones, neighbors or others you care about are experiencing mental health challenges, they may not even realize it. Here's how you can identify someone who may be at risk.

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

- ▷ **Change in routines or social activities:** Farmers or members of the farm family may change who attends a market, stop attending regular meetings or religious activities, drop out of other groups, or fail to stop at the local coffee shop or feed mill.
- ▷ **Decreased interest:** Farmers or farm families may be less willing to commit to future activities, sign up for gatherings, or show interest in community events.
- ▷ **Decline in appearance of farmstead:** The farm family no longer takes pride in the way farm buildings and grounds appear.
- ▷ **Decline in the care of domestic animals:** Livestock or pets may not be cared for in the usual way.

- ▷ **Increase in illness or other chronic conditions:** Farmers or farm family members may experience more upper respiratory illnesses (cold, flu) or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough, migraine, ulcers).
- ▷ **Increase in emotional pain:** Farmers or farm family members may exhibit signs of depression along with out-of-character negativity, loss of humor, lack of confidence, irritability, bitterness, passive-aggressive behavior, anger, and violence.
- ▷ **Increase in farm accidents:** The risk of farm accidents increases with fatigue or loss of ability to concentrate. Children may be at risk if there isn't alternative child care.
- ▷ **Signs of stress in children:** Farm children may act out, show a decline in academic performance, or be increasingly absent from school. They may also show signs of physical abuse or neglect, or become depressed.

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION OR SUICIDAL INTENT

If farm family members are exhibiting signs of depression or suicidal intent, it is important they get help as soon as possible. Many of these signs are also symptoms of fatigue and stress, however, when someone exhibits multiple signs, there may be a more serious issue. If there are significant changes in the way someone typically functions, they may need immediate help or intervention.

- ▷ **Appearance:** Sad face, slow movements, unkempt appearance, lack of facial expression
- ▷ **Anxiety and/or depression:** Severe/intense feelings, appearance of anxiety or depression (both may be present)
- ▷ **Unhappy feelings:** Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness
- ▷ **Withdrawal or isolation:** Reclusiveness, discouragement, listlessness, rejection of friends and support
- ▷ **Negative thoughts:** "I'm a failure," or "I am no good."
- ▷ **Helpless and hopeless:** Sense of complete powerlessness, sense that no one cares
- ▷ **Reduced activity:** Absence of planning, increased sleeping, feeling that "doing anything is just too much."

- ▷ **People problems:** Lack of interest in being social ("I don't want anyone to see me.")
- ▷ **Previous suicide attempts:** Previous attempts are important signs, regardless the severity
- ▷ **Physical problems:** Sleeping problems, decreased appetite, various physical ailments from aches and pains to severe muscle tension or chronic pain
- ▷ **Suicidal plan:** Frequent or constant thoughts/mentions of a specific suicide plan
- ▷ **Guilt and low self-esteem:** "It's all my fault," or "I should be punished."
- ▷ **Cries for help:** Making a will, giving away possessions, making statements such as "I'm calling it quits" or "Maybe my family would be better off without me."

START THE CONVERSATION



Although it may feel like it's out of your comfort zone, you can start a conversation in any number of ways:

Share a habit you've seen change.

"I've noticed you don't drop by the cafe to chat anymore. Is everything ok?"

Remind them of something they've said and express interest.

"You mentioned feeling overwhelmed the other day. You're a good friend, let's sit down and figure out how I can help you."

Don't wait for them to ask for help.

"I've noticed you seem down lately. Can we talk?"

What matters most is showing genuine care and empathy, and listening.