

# Down on the Farm: Supporting Farmers in Stressful Times

## *Facilitator's Guide*

Stress factors are high in agriculture. Farmers and ranchers face financial problems, price and marketing uncertainties, farm transfer issues, production challenges, family tension, and more.

This workshop is designed for people who interact with producers.

- Maybe they want to help but aren't sure what to say or do.
- Maybe they find themselves having to deliver difficult news to farmers.

**This workshop teaches information and skills that help people recognize and respond when they suspect a farmer or farm family member might need help.**

*You do **not** need to be certified to use these materials and do not have to sign any agreement or pay any fees for them. We encourage you to freely adapt them for your presenters, audience, and region.*

*Please acknowledge the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, AgCentric Northern Center of Agricultural Excellence, and NCR-SARE.*



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# BACKGROUND

In 2018, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) led an effort to create and offer a *Down on the Farm: Supporting Farmers in Stressful Times (DOTF)* workshop at six locations across the state. Ted Matthews, Minnesota State Rural Mental Health Specialist, Michelle Page, Minnesota Farm Service Agency, and Randy Willis, Minnesota Sheriffs’ Association, collaborated with the MDA’s Meg Moynihan to develop and deliver the workshop as a team. More than 500 county, state and federal agency staff, clergy, veterinarians, lenders, Extension educators, social service workers, rural mental health professionals, and others attended.

Requests for the workshop kept coming, but the original group wasn’t in a position to keep offering it. Instead, we decided to create materials that others could freely adapt and use. The North Central SARE program provided funding for the MDA and AgCentric Northern Center of Agricultural Excellence at Central Lakes College in Staples, Minnesota to develop this slide set and facilitator’s guide.

While we originally intended and developed *Down on the Farm* for in-person delivery, we have added suggestions to help you modify it as an online workshop.

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. **Recognize** factors that contribute to stress in farming
2. **Identify** signs of mental/emotional distress
3. **Learn** to use active listening skills
4. **Recognize** how/why to take care of your own emotional and mental health in stressful situations
5. **Identify and increase awareness** of local/regional resources
6. **Learn** what you can say and do when you find yourself talking with a farmer in distress

NOTE: this workshop does not include a section specific to suicide, but that is another topic you should strongly consider. We encourage you explore programs offered by [NAMI](#), [SAVE](#), and [LivingWorks, Inc.](#)

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

**This course is appropriate for anyone who interacts with farmers on a regular basis.** We found that having a variety of experiences and perspectives benefitted everyone present.

Consider including:

- Agency staff (county, state, and federal)  
– both office staff and field staff
- Clergy
- Crop consultants and input applicators
- Extension educators and staff
- Farm management advisors
- Farm organizations
- High school ag instructors
- Lenders
- Local ag businesses (milk haulers, feed mill and elevator operators)
- Nurses and other medical professionals
- Social and human services workers
- Veterinarians

\*While this workshop is not designed “for” farmers, you will likely have farmers in the audience.

In our experience, different professions found value in different parts of the workshop. For example, clergy, mental health counselors, and social workers staff came already knowing a lot of the listening and interaction skills but were hungry for information about farm culture and the stress factors that farmers and ranchers juggle. By contrast, agriculture professionals were more interested in learning about human dynamics and active listening skills.

## TIME FRAME

We recommend a 2.5–3 hour time frame for this workshop. Your team can modify the length, as well as the content and duration of sections. If you offer the workshop online, we encourage you to split it into two or three smaller chunks and deliver it at the same time on consecutive days.

*Sample workshop agenda (3 hours)*

Section	Duration
Welcome & Introductions	15 minutes
Safety*	20 minutes
Farm Financial Stress	15 minutes
Other Stressors, Signs & Symptoms	30 minutes
Break	
Active Listening Skills	60 minutes
Resources & Resource Mapping Activity	30 minutes

\*This section should be facilitated by law enforcement – see below

## FACILITATORS

**We strongly recommend** you use a local or regional team of at least three people to facilitate this workshop. Work together to modify content and decide who will present what.

- One person should have strong background in production agriculture – for example, a farm business management instructor, Extension educator, or department of agriculture staff – someone who really “knows” farmers and ranchers.
- One person should have a strong background in mental health, including stress. This could be a counselor, psychotherapist, clergyperson, or other mental health specialist.
- One person should be from local enforcement (sheriff or deputy, local police chief or deputy, sheriffs’ association, etc.). These are most often the go-to people in rural areas when stress reaches the level of crisis. They can/should expand on the physical safety slide (#10) and include:
  - Security in office settings (your environment; farmer/rancher comes to see you).
  - On-farm visits (more variables out of your control).
  - De-escalation. Much of what they say will reinforce other parts of *DOTF*.
  - Q&A

**NOTE: You can easily move the safety portion of the workshop to accommodate your safety presenter’s schedule.**

## BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

### Materials to Prepare

*Down on the Farm* PowerPoint slide set

**You can adapt the content so it's appropriate** for your area, audience, time frame, and facilitators. You might incorporate photos that show more and different races or ethnicities, for example. Or you might use farm financial information that is specific to a certain agricultural sector.

### For in-person delivery

- Handouts. We suggest:
  - [Signs and Symptoms of Stress](#) (Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center, UMASH)
  - [How to Talk with Farmers Under Stress](#) (Michigan State University Extension)
  - [Responding to Distressed People](#) (North Dakota State University Extension)
  - Something else from your state or region
- Printed practice scenarios for active listening exercises (see suggestions below)
- Name tags
- Pens/pencils
- Post-It notes
- Sharpie markers
- Pre-printed signs you can post on walls during the *Resource Mapping* activity:
  - Clergy/Pastoral Care
  - Counseling/Mental Health
  - Employment/Careers
  - Farm Transition
  - Farmer Networking
  - Financial/Business
  - Health Care
  - Human Services/Basic Needs
  - Legal
  - Law Enforcement
  - Other

### For online sessions

Select online tools you can use to promote audience interaction and practice using them before your workshop. Here are some to consider:

- Chat box
- Breakout rooms
- Whiteboard
- Polling feature – if your webinar platform has one
- [PollEverywhere](#) (www.polleverywhere.com)
- [Padlet](#) (www.padlet.com)
- [Mentimeter](#) (www.mentimeter.com)

## ADAPTING THE FARM ECONOMICS SECTION FOR YOUR AREA

- You can get current farm financial data from a farm business management instructor or Extension economist in your state.
- The Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota's [FINBIN](#) (https://finbin.umn.edu) and the [American Farm Bureau Federation](#) (www.fb.org) are good sources of economic data.

- Identify any specific farm stress issues in your areas – natural disasters, elevator or processing plant closures, etc.

## RESOURCE MAPPING ACTIVITY

Have a plan for how you will share the information participants contribute during the *Resource Mapping* activity. We used [Excel spreadsheets](#) that users could sort by category, but other layouts would work well too.

## OPTIONAL ACTIVE LISTENING PRACTICE SCENARIOS (Section 5)

In mock conversations, sometimes it's hard for people to make up a response on the fly. Use any of these if you think they will be helpful:

1. We just got back from the doctor, Mom's forgetfulness is getting worse and the doctors said we should start looking for a memory care facility. I don't know how we're going to afford this. And I don't know what's going to happen to Dad.
2. The vet was just here. Only 10 percent of our cows are bred. I don't know what I'm going to do.
3. I got another letter from the county feedlot lady, about manure on the road. I have been up and down the freaking road and I don't see where there is any spill. It's that #\*%&&# neighbor complaining again.
4. OMG!! The school just called. They did one of those locker searches this morning and found pot in Brian's locker. Evidently the sheriff is on his way out to see me. My wife/husband is going to hit the roof. I don't know who I'm more afraid of – the sheriff or my wife/husband.
5. We are behind on everything. The balances are piling up. The late charges are piling up on top of the balances. We are getting nasty letters from people we've done business with for years and years.
6. I haven't slept more than a few hours for weeks. I just can't seem to get everything done.
7. I just want to quit and start over. Where do I even begin?
8. My family says that I got the farm from dad and I can't sell it or let it go out of the family. I don't know what to do.

## EVALUATION

Evaluate the session and keep your evaluation survey **short** – fewer than 10 questions. You can ask participants for feedback at the end of the workshop or 1-2 days later using an online tool (ours was Survey Monkey). We found the following questions helpful:

1. **What kind of work do you do?** (check all that apply – base survey options on what audiences you targeted)
2. **How well did the workshop meet these learning objectives?** (list each objective and use a 4-category scale like *Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree/Somewhat agree/Strongly agree* OR structure this as a before/after question)
3. **What was the most important thing you learned at the workshop?** (short answer)
4. **If anything about the workshop disappointed you, what was it?** (short answer)

5. **Would you recommend this workshop to colleagues or coworkers?** (use 4 category scale  
*Definitely/Probably not/Probably/Definitely*)
6. **If there are related topics you want to learn about, what are they?** (short answer)

## **OTHER TIPS**

1. Start and end on time (but allow people to ask questions or talk after the program adjourns).
2. Use a sign in sheet with pens ready when participants arrive.
3. Provide nametags.
4. Allow time for introduction of participants. See slide deck for suggestions on how to do this.
5. After introduction, provide housekeeping information (e.g. restrooms, snacks, breaks, etc.).
6. Introduce presenters, providing brief bios.
7. Distribute handouts or set them out, along with other materials, on a “Resources” table.






## **THANK YOU**

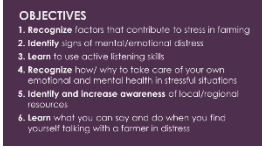
We appreciate your interest in this workshop and would love to hear about your experience adapting and delivering it. Please contact Meg Moynihan at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture: [meg.moynihan@state.mn.us](mailto:meg.moynihan@state.mn.us) or 651-201-6616.




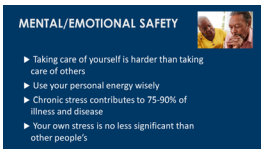

# SLIDE-BY-SLIDE GUIDE

## Section 1 – Welcome & Introductions


Slide	Description
	<p>Welcome participants to the workshop. Thank relevant people/organizations that helped to support the workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give overview of the workshop and location of refreshments, bathrooms, and resource table (if used)</li> </ul> <p><b>In this workshop, we will explore ways to support farmers and their families in stressful times.</b></p>
	<p>This workshop grew out of one originally created by a small team in Minnesota in 2018.</p> <p>Today’s curriculum was also shaped by instructors in the Minnesota State Farm Business Management program and funded by a grant from North Central Region SARE. <b>Please do not remove funder acknowledgement.</b></p> <p><b>This is an interactive workshop, and we look forward to your participation.</b></p>
	<p>Add your organization to this nondiscrimination clause if applicable.</p>
	<p>Presenters introduce themselves.</p> <p>This slide is blank so you can customize with presenters and any sponsors.</p>
	<p>Ask participants introduce themselves. <b>ONLINE:</b> use chat box and spend a little time going through peoples’ answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>If group is 25 or fewer</b>, ask each participant share first name and their connection to farming.</li> <li><b>If the group is greater than 25</b>, ask participants turn to three people around them and introduce themselves.</li> </ul> <p><b>TIP: Call attention to the diversity present – it’s likely you will have variety of ages, backgrounds, professions.</b></p> <p>People from many professions interact with farmers – but in different ways. Some will have a lot of practical farming experience/background, others won’t. Some will have counseling or mental health background, others won’t.</p>



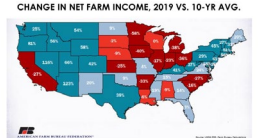
Slide	Description
	<p>Review workshop objectives with the participants.</p> <p>Seems like a lot for 3 hours, but it will happen!</p>

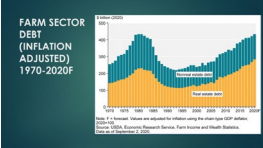
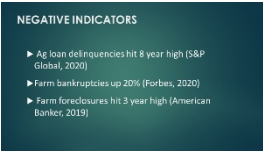
## Section 2 – Safety

Slide	Description
	<p>You can use this section at the beginning or at the end of the workshop – whenever your law enforcement speaker is going to be available.</p>
	<p><b>You probably came to this workshop intending to learn when and how to help others. But YOU experience stress also.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What stress management strategies do you use to keep going to work every day?</b></li> <li>• <b>What kind of support is available for you?</b></li> </ul> <p>In Minnesota, we were surprised by the number of attendees who said they appreciated getting this permission to consider themselves.</p> <p>There are many attributions for the link between stress and illness/disease – including Mayo Clinic and National Institutes of Health.</p>
	<p><b>NOTE: This slide can be edited or replaced, depending on who is leading this section</b></p> <p>If possible, ask someone from local law enforcement to present this section. Ask them to talk about situational awareness and safety plans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Security in office settings (where you control environment)</li> <li>2. On-farm visits (more variables are out of your control)</li> <li>3. Basic de-escalation</li> <li>4. How local law enforcement responds (what you can expect if you call them)</li> <li>5. Resources within the local and county law enforcement</li> </ol> <p><b>**Allow time for Q and A.</b></p>

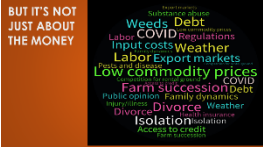
### Section 3 – Farm Financial Stress

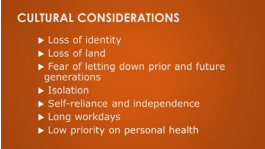


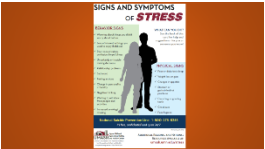
Slide	Description
	<p>So always keeping in mind the importance of <b>YOUR OWN</b> mental and physical safety, let's now shift our focus. Today we're talking about how to recognize and respond when we see farmers in Stress. Distress. Crisis. Trouble.</p> <p>Let's start with what's been in the news lately. <b>ASK</b> participants to share what kind of negative things they are hearing, seeing, reading about agriculture. Headlines may include things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Farmers Wash Up 'in a Fragile Place' After Historic Midwest Floods</i></li><li>• <i>Weather causes problems for farmer</i></li><li>• <i>Wet fields slow planting/harvest</i></li><li>• <i>Hail comes at just the wrong time</i></li><li>• <i>Is climate change affecting how we farm?</i></li><li>• <i>Farm income drops again</i></li><li>• <i>Low and falling commodity prices</i></li><li>• <i>Dairy farms closing in record numbers</i></li><li>• <i>Agriculture inputs continue to rise</i></li></ul> <p><b>The Centers for Disease control identifies farming as one of the occupations with the highest rates of suicide. Today's workshop does not explicitly include information about suicide or suicide prevention. But this topic is top of mind and of concern to many.</b></p> <p>Be ready to share resources like National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Your State Department of Health, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), etc.</p> <p>(After our experience offering <i>Down on the Farm</i> in Minnesota, we followed it with suicide awareness and prevention training for the agricultural community.)</p>

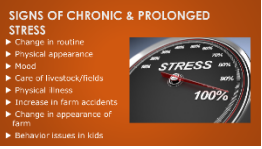
Slide	Description
	<p><b>NOTE: Depending on what's going on in the world and your region or state, you may or may not want to use this slide. If there is a current disaster situation that involves agriculture in your area, make a slide for it. Use stock photos if necessary.</b></p> <p><b>Sometimes challenges are thrust upon us abruptly, like COVID-19 was. What are some of the effects COVID has had/had on farmers and their lives?</b></p> <p>Listen for answers like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price instability</li> <li>• Some processors went off-line, causing backups for meat, poultry. Destruction of animals and crops. (psychological and financial toll)</li> <li>• Changes in consumer behavior (fewer restaurants, more groceries, more toilet paper, more milk, more “comfort foods”, wheat and yeast shortages as everybody started baking)</li> <li>• Consumer attitudes – “Why are they just plowing under those crops and killing those pigs when people are going HUNGRY? Those selfish farmers.”</li> <li>• Empty grocery shelves</li> <li>• Distance learning/co-teaching with your kid’s teacher</li> <li>• Loss of critical off farm income (and maybe health insurance) if a farm spouse got laid off</li> <li>• Worry about elderly or ill parents, relatives</li> </ul>
	<p><b>We’re going to explore some typical stressors in more depth, starting with topic of farm finances, because so many farmers and ranchers report that this is a tipping point for them.</b></p>
	<p><b>NOTE: If you have more recent and/or state level farm finance data from Farm Business Management, your department of agriculture, or Extension, insert a different slide here. There is often a several year lag in publishing economic numbers, especially at national level.</b></p> <p><b>ASK</b> attendees for their observations on this slide.</p> <p><i>Net farm income</i> is the money left for family living including health insurance, debt service, retirement funding, and business upgrades.</p>

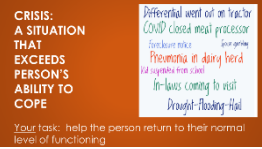
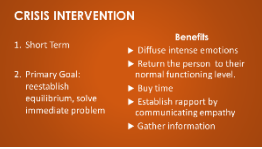
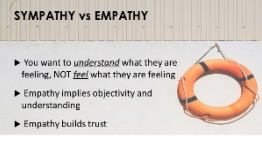
Slide	Description
	<p><b>NOTE: If you have more recent and/or state level farm finance data from Farm Business Management, your department of agriculture, or Extension, insert a different slide here. There is often a several year lag in publishing economic numbers, especially at national level.</b></p> <p>This slide shows that farm debt levels are similar to those of the 1980's – a time when family farms underwent severe financial crisis, and many lost their farms.</p> <p>While the credit sector is in a more secure place than it was in the 1980's and in many places land has not lost value, the fact that debt levels are that high on the farm is alarming and cause for much concern, especially looking forward.</p>
	<p><b>And the thing is, it hasn't JUST gotten bad – when revenues and net farm income are low for years on end, that eats into savings, working capital, and other resources. For many farmers, there's no cushion left.</b></p>

## Section 4 – Other Stressors, Signs, & Symptoms

Slide	Description
	<p>But the conversation doesn't stop with finances.</p> <p><b>How many of you could easily identify one or more farmers or farm families you know that is currently under stress? Please raise your hand.</b></p> <p><b>Most of us are aware that farming can be stressful and that at least some of the farmers we know have more challenges than others. Take a look at the tangle of chronic stressors on this slide. Who can tell us more about some of these?</b> (take 3 or 4 contributions from attendees.) <b>ONLINE:</b> use an app like Padlet or PollEverywhere.</p> <p><b>So, the stress isn't all financial. There are some other considerations, too.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often, farmers live where they work.</li> <li>• In farming co-workers may be a spouse or other family members.</li> <li>• While farmers get to be their own boss, they feel responsible for a lot and can control very little. (How many of the stressors on this slide does a farmer have much control over?)</li> <li>• In general, rural residents have higher rates of depression, substance abuse and suicide. However, farmers face additional challenges. Farming is a business largely influenced by factors that are beyond any farmer's control, including weather, disease, pests, prices, and interest rates -- things that can come and go without warning.</li> </ul>


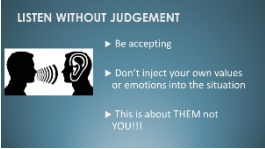
Slide	Description
 <p><b>CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Loss of identity</li> <li>▶ Loss of land</li> <li>▶ Fear of letting down prior and future generations</li> <li>▶ Isolation</li> <li>▶ Self-reliance and independence</li> <li>▶ Long workdays</li> <li>▶ Low priority on personal health</li> </ul>	<p><b>There are some important cultural factors to consider when it comes to farmers and ranchers.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identity</b> – A farmer’s role is at the root of their identity; it’s who they <b>are</b>, not just what they <b>do</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Loss of land</b> – Farmers and ranchers can feel tremendous fear and guilt at the thought of losing land – especially land that has been in their family for generations.</li> <li>• <b>Isolation</b> – Farmers and ranchers are often isolated, geographically and socially, since they often work alone. There are fewer, larger farms which means fewer friends and neighbors.</li> <li>• <b>Self-reliant</b> – They are self-reliant, independent and can be <b>unlikely to ask for help</b>. Many come from a tradition of not sharing their challenges, choosing instead to tough them out on their own.</li> <li>• <b>Long workdays</b> – Many work long, hard, days with a lot of physical labor.</li> <li>• Low priority personal health – May de-prioritize their own health and well-being to get the job done or sometimes because of cost. Stress as a concept may be seen by farmers as something for “city people”.</li> </ul> <p><b>Can you think of any others?</b></p>
 <p><b>WHAT DOES STRESS LOOK LIKE?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Mental</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Behavioral</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>	<p><b>Now let’s talk about the physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and social SIGNS of stress.</b></p>
 <p><b>WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS?</b></p>	<p>Discussion (large OR small group). Allow 5-7 minutes for this activity. <b>ONLINE:</b> consider using a tool like <a href="http://www.mentimeter.com">www.mentimeter.com</a> or chat box.</p> <p><b>What clues do you notice in yourself or others that tells you that you or others are experiencing stress?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipchart list of signs and symptoms.</li> <li>• Compare their list to the UMASH card on next slide.</li> </ul> <p>Optional supplemental activity – Use Michigan State University “How Stress Affects You”</p>
 <p><b>SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS</b></p>	<p>Compare flipchart with this list. May generate a few more suggestions.</p>

Slide	Description
 <p><b>SIGNS OF CHRONIC &amp; PROLONGED STRESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Change in routine</li> <li>▶ Physical appearance</li> <li>▶ Mood</li> <li>▶ Care of livestock/fields</li> <li>▶ Physical illness</li> <li>▶ Increase in farm accidents</li> <li>▶ Change in appearance of farm</li> <li>▶ Behavior issues in kids</li> </ul>	<p><b>When stress goes on and on with little to no relief, it becomes chronic.</b></p> <p><b>You are all here because you are concerned about the amount of stress “your” farmers are experiencing. Maybe they are your friends, neighbors, clients, customers, family members, parishioners, or whatever.</b></p> <p><b>So, as you think about them, give me some examples of what the signs and symptoms of chronic stress on this slide might look like IN A FARM SETTING.</b></p> <p><i>WORKSHOP: Large group. ONLINE: use chat box or another feedback tool.</i> Go through the bullets one by one and ask for examples. Listen for some of the examples below to be mentioned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Change in routine</b> – stop attending church, drop out of community activities, no longer attending children’s events, not going to town.</li> <li>• <b>Change in appearance</b> – loss of weight, clothes – lack of care for what wearing, looking sick.</li> <li>• <b>Change in mood</b> - an optimist becomes a pessimist – or vice versa. Extrovert becomes introvert – or vice versa.</li> <li>• <b>Care of livestock/fields</b> – livestock shows signs of weight loss, bellowing cattle, dead animals, animals show signs of neglect. Fields full of weeds, may appear to lack fertilizer, field work not timely (doesn’t get crop in or off).</li> <li>• <b>Increase in illness</b> – may show respiratory illness, ulcers, or other illness – may be worse from lack of health care (no insurance).</li> <li>• <b>Increase in farm accidents</b> – due to fatigue, insomnia, loss of ability to concentrate. No money for childcare can put young children at risk, children helping on the farm doing jobs they are not trained or prepared for.</li> <li>• <b>Appearance of farm</b> – again fatigue, depression may mean lack of motivation to maintain farm and buildings.</li> <li>• <b>Children show signs of stress</b> – teachers notice decline in academic performance, increase absenteeism, may act out or show signs of neglect or abuse.</li> <li>• <b>What else would be a sign?</b></li> </ul>

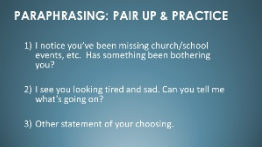
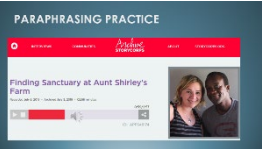
Slide	Description
	<p><b>Chronic, prolonged stress or a sudden negative event can perpetuate CRISIS. You may find yourself in a position to do help -- if you choose to do so.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis is a very personal thing.</li> <li>• They perceive the situation as a threat to their emotional, psychological, and physical needs</li> <li>• “Their” crisis might not seem like a crisis to you</li> <li>• Emotions, not reason, control the person’s actions</li> <li>• Their usual coping mechanisms don’t work</li> </ul>
	<p><b>In your jobs, you may have already encountered someone in a crisis situation.</b></p> <p>When we talk about crisis intervention, we mean an <b>immediate</b> and <b>short-term</b> response.</p> <p>The primary goal is to reestablish a person’s equilibrium and to solve an immediate problem.</p> <p>Our role is NOT to fix their problem, but to help them regain strength and composure to address it themselves. Sometimes this means connecting them with a professional. But you do not have to be a psychologist to help someone in crisis.</p>
	<p>Use <a href="#">Brené Brown on Empathy</a> video (YouTube, 3 min.)</p> <p><b>Understanding the difference between sympathy and empathy is important.</b></p> <p><b>Sympathy</b> is feeling sorry for someone else. There is a place for that from family and friends. Sometimes we need company in our pain and sorrow. In this situation, in your role as a professional in their life, it is not your place. You want to help them tap their reason, rather than their feelings. You want to toss them a life preserver.</p> <p><b>Your goal is to offer empathy. Empathy is recognizing, understanding, acknowledging, and respecting what someone is feeling, not FEELING what they are feeling.</b></p> <p>Warning: Don’t make assumptions or jump to conclusions about someone else’s feelings based on your own perceptions.</p> <p>What are all the things tears can mean, for example?</p>

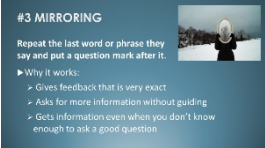

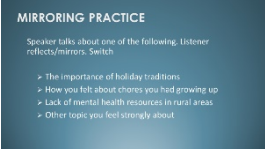


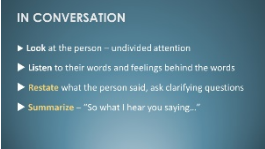
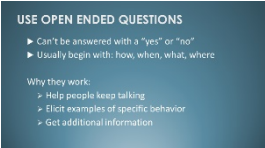
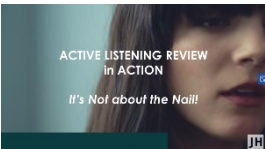
## Section 5 – Active Listening Skills


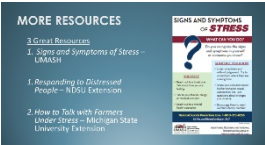
Slide	Description
 <p>SKILL BUILDING: ACTIVE LISTENING</p>	<p>Now we're going to spend some time learning and practicing <b>3 different listening SKILLS</b>. Active or empathetic listening is one of the <b>MOST IMMEDIATE</b> and <b>MOST IMPORTANT</b> things you can do to help someone in distress or crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This communication technique requires the listener – YOU – to provide feedback on what you are hearing.</li><li>• It helps the speaker feel heard and understood, and helps clarify the issues.</li><li>• It demonstrates sincerity, and that nothing is being assumed or taken for granted.</li><li>• There are several different techniques you can use, depending on your preference and the situation you find yourself in.</li></ul>
 <p>LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Be accepting</li><li>▶ Don't inject your own values or emotions into the situation</li><li>▶ This is about THEM not YOU!!!</li></ul>	<p>Effective, empathetic listening must be done <b>without judgement</b>. Sometimes this is hard, but it is important.</p> <p>Give them your full attention -- look at the person and stop anything else you are doing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Listen</b> not merely to the words, but the values and feelings behind them.</li><li>• Use your <b>body language</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make eye contact</li><li>• Lean toward the speaker</li><li>• Nod your head</li></ul></li></ul>

Slide	Description
<div data-bbox="305 199 565 346"> <p><b>#1 EMOTIONAL LABELING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Respond to the emotions you hear in their voice, rather than the content.</li> <li>▶ Don't tell a person how they are feeling, but <i>how they seem to be feeling to you</i>.</li> <li>▶ Don't worry about labeling emotions incorrectly.</li> </ul> </div>	<p><b>This skill/technique is a great place to begin. It's one of the easiest listening techniques to learn. It's particularly helpful in the beginning, when you are trying to get a handle on the situation the person is dealing with and how it's affecting them.</b></p> <p>Here's why it works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People communicate on two levels: content &amp; emotions – the feelings behind the words.</li> <li>• Their <b>emotional</b> reactions/behavior are what can make a situation into a crisis.</li> <li>• You can help them control their emotions, which can help control their behavior.</li> </ul> <p><b>Don't worry about being wrong – they will correct you. And that exchange might uncover helpful information.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> During a tough conversation, the person you're talking with slumps back in her chair and stares out the window. You might say, "You seem to feel really sad about this whole turn of events." Maybe she is sad. But she might say, "Sad? No, I'm not sad. I am just so relieved to have this issue finally decided and that this is all finally out in the open. I was just thinking about all the new possibilities."</p>
<div data-bbox="305 1018 565 1165"> <p><b>#2 PARAPHRASING</b></p> <p>Summarize in your own words what they just told you</p> <p>Why it works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Demonstrates you're listening</li> <li>✓ Creates empathy and rapport</li> <li>✓ Clarifies content, highlights issues</li> </ul> <p>They may be hearing own thoughts for first time.</p> </div>	<p><b>SAY: Another method you can use is paraphrasing.</b></p> <p>Review this slide.</p> <p>Summary starters:</p> <p>So what I hear you saying is...</p> <p>Let me see if I understand...</p>


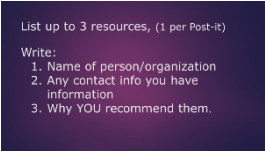

Slide	Description
 <p>PARAPHRASING: PAIR UP &amp; PRACTICE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I notice you've been missing church/school events, etc. Has something been bothering you?</li> <li>2) I see you looking tired and sad. Can you tell me what's going on?</li> <li>3) Other statement of your choosing.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Instructor choice: Do Option A (pair activity) or Option B (individual activity). Option B is on next slide.</b></p> <p><b>Option A (5-8 minute activity)</b>  Have people pair up. Ask them to expand on and respond to one of these questions by paraphrasing, then switch. They can speak from truth or just completely make up a situation in their head.</p> <p><b>This will probably feel awkward and even silly and obvious...but once you get a feel for it, it really works.</b></p> <p><b>DEBRIEF IN LARGE GROUP</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did it go?</li> <li>2. Was it harder to ask or to answer?</li> <li>3. Can anybody think of a recent situation where this paraphrasing technique would have been useful? What was it?</li> </ol> <p><i>Suggestion:</i> Practice unobtrusively on low-risk targets – conversations with kids, friends, pets, spouse.</p> <p><i>Suggestion:</i> When you ask the question, it's helpful to provide data – missing events, see you looking tired and sad, yard isn't as tidy as usual.</p>
 <p>PARAPHRASING PRACTICE</p> <p>Finding Sanctuary at Aunt Shirley's Farm</p>	<p><b>Option B (5-8 minute activity)</b>  (Works for in-person or online. Use as much of this 3-minute story as you want.)</p> <p><b>I'm going to play you a short story from the Story Corps project. Once or twice, I will stop the recording and ask you to jot down on paper (or enter at Padlet) what you might say to paraphrase what you just heard. (Click on the little speaker to open player.)</b></p> <p>Briefly review some of their paraphrased answers.  <b>Can anybody think of a recent situation where this paraphrasing technique would have been useful? What was it?</b></p>

Slide	Description
	<p><b>Mirroring is a technique that's even easier than paraphrasing.</b> Review slide</p> <p>Examples you could use:</p> <p><i>Everything is such a mess I don't know what I am going to do.</i> You don't know what you are going to do?</p> <p><i>I have lost so many calves to this virus is, I don't know if I can take it anymore.</i> You don't know if you can take it anymore?</p> <p><i>The nursing home is going to be so expensive that I'm really afraid we're going to have to sell land.</i> You're going to have to sell land?</p> <p>Ask participants to generate one or two statements the rest of the group can mirror.</p>
	<p><b>Here's a short YouTube video that shows a mirroring master in action. His name is Friday.</b></p> <p><a href="#">Copper Clappers</a> (YouTube, uploaded by alvern, 2 min, 49 sec.)</p> <p>Notice you can also use a period at the end of a sentence, instead of question mark, like Sergeant Friday does.</p>
	<p><b>OPTIONAL – Practice in Pairs</b></p> <p>Same pairs – one person is the speaker and one the listener. Take 2 minutes for the speaker to respond to the statement and the listener to reflect/mirror the response. Then switch.</p> <p><b>DEBRIEF</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did it go?</li> <li>2. What was the most difficult part?</li> <li>3. Who can share a recent situation when this technique might have been useful?</li> </ol>

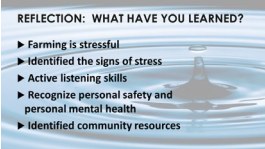

Slide	Description
	<p><b>The three skills we just covered – emotional labeling, paraphrasing, and mirroring – will get you started. As the conversation progresses, you can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Restate what the person said and ask clarifying questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you mean by .....</li> <li>• In other words what you said was .....</li> <li>• I heard you say .....</li> <li>• You said you are .....</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Summarize – Repeat the key points of the conversation from the SPEAKER’S frame of reference, not an interpretation from YOUR viewpoint.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim of a summary is to review understanding, not to give explanation, to judge, to interpret or provide solutions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Be aware of your own feelings and opinions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But leave them out of this conversation.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Asking open ended questions can also help deepen a conversation.</b></p> <p>Review the slide.</p> <p>Be careful of the question “Why.” It sometimes makes people feel defensive.</p>
	<p><b>Some of you may have already seen this video in other trainings, it is short, funny, and SO makes the point.</b></p> <p><b>CLICK ON GREEN BOX TO PLAY VIDEO</b> <a href="#">It’s Not about the Nail</a> (YouTube, 1 min. 41 sec.)</p> <p><b>Debrief</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How many of you have ever been in or witnessed a conversation like this one?</li> <li>2. What did you get out of that video?</li> <li>3. Which elements that we’ve talked about today did you see in action?</li> </ol>

Slide	Description
	<p>The following is a good large or small group discussion topic. Give them a few minutes to jot down ideas before discussion starts. <b>ONLINE:</b> Use a tool like Padlet or Mentimeter, so they can see and respond to others' responses in real time.</p> <p><b>While active listening is one of most important things you can offer, what are some other ways it might be appropriate or necessary to help?</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional support – remind clients about upcoming appointments, what to bring, encourage them to bring a friend/note taker if appropriate (esp. financial, legal meetings).</li> <li>• Suggest specific kinds of help. Asking “What can I do to help?” might feel overwhelming to them.</li> <li>• Demonstrate respect and care by following up with a phone call, email, or text. (Can really give a boost to people who may be feeling worthless.)</li> <li>• Accommodate their schedule (daily or seasonal).</li> <li>• Keep their situation confidential (unless there is a moral or legal reason not to). Some people use “dirt” on their friends and neighbors to gain advantage.</li> <li>• Listen for techniques covered earlier in the workshop: e.g., de-escalation, empathy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Points to draw out:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Helping” does not mean fixing their crisis for them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have to fix their own.</li> <li>• What you <b>CAN</b> do is help them find recognize what’s happening and engage their rational thinking (usually emotional takes over).</li> <li>• Help them find other resources they might need (information, professional advice, counseling, doctor, addiction treatment, legal counsel, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>There are many excellent resources out there and three are in your packet/on the resource table.</b></p> <p><b>ONLINE:</b> provide hotlinks to the materials in chat box.</p>

## Section 6 – Resources & Resource Mapping Activity

Slide	Description
	<p>This is an especially powerful exercise if you are doing a geographically local/regional workshop. If they are from a large area or statewide, divide participants into regional groups (or regional online meeting rooms).</p> <p>There are also resources in our communities. Sometimes, depending on the situation, the person you're with may need a resource that is beyond what you're familiar with. So, we're going to pool our experience do an exercise that maps these.</p>
 <p>List up to 3 resources, (1 per Post-it)</p> <p>Write:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name of person/organization</li> <li>2. Any contact info you have information</li> <li>3. Why YOU recommend them.</li> </ol>	<p><b>IN PERSON</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually on separate post-its, list up to three resources YOU recommend – include the name of the person or organization, any additional contact information you have and WHY you recommend them. (Write only one recommendation per post it.)</li> <li>• Allow five minutes. Emphasize “resources <b>you</b> recommend” and “<b>why</b> you recommend”</li> <li>• While they do this, you put category signs on the walls around the room.</li> <li>• Each person should next take their post-it note and place it on the corresponding category. <i>NOTE: some suggested resources may fit into several categories; place in the BEST one.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>ONLINE:</b> you might us an interactive tool like Padlet (shelf option)</p> <p><i>NOTE: We strongly recommend you have a plan for compiling and sharing the resources with participants after the workshop.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask everyone to select one resources category to work with. Walk over to it. <b>ONLINE:</b> split out into breakout rooms, and review the post it notes in your category, eliminate duplication. Discuss what is missing and add any new suggestions.</li> <li>• Reassemble large group. One person from each breakout group should quickly present the resources and ask for any additional suggestions.</li> <li>• As a group, reflect on what's missing and, if appropriate, ask key participants to describe some of the key resources that are posted (FBM, Mental health crisis teams, mental health clinics, favorite pastor, whatever).</li> </ul> <p>Encourage people to take pictures (or screenshots) of the sheets before they go. <i>We also recommend that you have a plan for compiling and sharing the resources with participants quickly after the meeting.</i></p>

## Section 7 – Reflection & Close

Slide	Description
	<p><b>Instead of me reviewing what we covered today, I'd like you to do it. Let me hear something you learned, got fresh insight on, or are taking away with you.</b></p> <p><b>ONLINE:</b> use chat box</p> <p><b>What are some reasons farming is a stressful profession?</b> Listen for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather, commodity prices, input prices</li> <li>• Economics of farming are tough</li> <li>• Farmers tend NOT to seek help for stress and depression– for many reasons – pride, don't know where to go, have never asked for help before, no access to help</li> </ul> <p><b>What are some signs of stress?</b> Listen for examples of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Mental</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Behavioral</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul> <p><b>What are some keys to active listening?</b> Listen for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonjudgmental</li> <li>• Empathy vs sympathy</li> <li>• Paraphrasing</li> <li>• Mirroring</li> <li>• Emotional labeling</li> <li>• Open ended questions</li> </ul> <p><b>What are some personal safety practices you will keep in mind?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and when to take care of yourself</li> </ul> <p><b>What's one Community Resource you didn't know about before?</b> <i>NOTE: Here is another chance to explain your follow up plan for this.</i></p> <p><b>Clearly, you all pass!</b></p>
	<p><b>Add presenter info here.</b> Take questions OR end workshop and invite participants to stay after for Q&amp;A.</p> <p><b>TELL THEM now</b> about any evaluation plan. We recommend a short, simple (&lt;10Q) in person or online survey using something like Survey Monkey.</p> <p>Thank you for coming. Goodbye!</p>