



2021

## Coffee With Farmers

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COFFEE WITH FARMERS

by

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Master of Occupational Therapy, University of North Dakota, 2021

Advisor: Dr. Anne Haskins, PhD, OTR/L

An Independent Study

Submitted to the Occupational Therapy Department of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Occupational Therapy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May 2021

This independent study, submitted by Ivy Steiger, MOTS and Kelsey Sherry, MOTS in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

*Anne M. Haglin*

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Faculty Advisor

*4/27/2021*

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Date

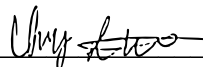
PERMISSION

Title: COFFEE WITH FARMERS

Department: Occupational Therapy

Degree: Master of Occupational Therapy

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Dr. Anne Haskins, our advisor, for her insight and dedication to this independent study. We appreciate her guidance and time she devoted to the development of this program and independent study. We want to also thank Shawnda Schroeder, PhD, MA, Research Associate Professor and Brad Gibbens, MPA, Acting Director and Assistant Professor from the Center of Rural Health at the University of North Dakota and Carla Wilhite, an occupational therapy faculty member at the University of New Mexico.

We also want to thank the farmers who took time out of their schedules to participate in the focus group. Without their insightful feedback, this study would not have been possible. We want to thank our families and express our gratitude for the experiences we have by growing up on family farms which inspired us for this project.

Finally, we extend our thanks to our family, friends, classmates, and other faculty in the occupational therapy department for their encouragement and support throughout our education and the duration of the independent study.

-Ivy Steiger & Kelsey Sherry

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The farming community is an underserved population in health care and historically there has been a lack of recognition of the psychosocial stress farmers endure. There is a lack of programming for addressing farmers' psychosocial stress and mental health, specifically within the field of occupational therapy. The overall purpose of this independent study was to explore the role occupational therapy has within the farming community and develop a program that can be implemented to address psychosocial health with this population.

**Methodology:** This independent study consisted of three primary phases: 1) Program Development, 2) Focus Group to Review the Developed Program, and 3) Program Revision. Following a literature review and conversations with experts in rural health, a community-based program was developed with an occupational therapy perspective for promotion of healthy habits and routines as well as resources for the farming population to overall improve their mental health. This community-based program was created to be implemented using retired farmer mentors who would work with active, current farm owners. To ensure useability and relevance of the program, focus group interviews were held with purposively selected farmers in a small study that was guided by participatory action research design principles and approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board. The focus group interviews were used to gather farmers' perspectives the foundations of program and the overall design of the program materials. Feedback from this focus group, once collated, was then applied to the curation of the overall product for applicability and useability within the farming population.

**Results:** Data from the focus group was recorded through informal field notes, which were than loosely coded into seven themes and assertions using the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model as a guide. The data was placed in a table and organized into four categories of person, task, context, and performance (Dunn, 2017) with key quotes identified to support the theme as well as an action plan to utilize this feedback in the program. Overall, the feedback that was received supported the preliminary development of the program with agreement from participants that information was relevant. Recommendations were given from participants on terminology to be used in the program as well as additional useful learning needs or places to reach the farming population regarding this topic. Ultimately, the literature review, conversations with experts, program development and data from the focus group was used to build the *Coffee with Farmers* program that is comprised of five modules: *Sleep, Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors, Communication with Family, Farm Transitions, and Financial Stress*.

**Conclusion:** This study resulted in a community-based mentorship program which was developed through rigorous review of the literature as well as meeting with educated individuals. By conducting the focus group, client-centered data was gathered in regards to relevancy and accuracy of the developed product. This product is to be used in conjunction with the previously developed *Coffee with Farmers* program. The intention is for this independent study to be accessible to individuals or resources which serve farmers in rural areas regionally and nationally. By targeting the prevalent topics of *Sleep, Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors, Communication with Family, Farm Transitions, and Financial Stress* further destigmatization will be achieved due to an increase in conversations regarding farmer's psychosocial health.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Deary, Willock, and McGregor (1997), farming was rated the twelfth most stressful occupation out of 130 other occupations that had high stress demands. Though it is a population that endures significant psychosocial stress, the farming community lacks health care targeting their mental health. Cole and Bondy (2020) stress the importance of meeting farmers where they are at, thus promoting participation within community-based programs targeting psychosocial factors of farming individuals. While there are numerous contributors to this problem, two factors are likely the significant gap of literature regarding mental health of people in rural areas as well as limited information the population of farmers, specifically. The dearth of research about the mental health needs of farmers is particularly evident in the field of occupational therapy, though several topics areas could be adapted to aide farmers in their greater mental well-being. Development of a community-based program for farmers in rural settings fits within the scope of occupational therapy practice and outlines for occupational therapy practitioners a specific role in addressing mental health with the specific population of farmers including their routines and habits. The purpose of this independent study was to explore occupational therapy's role within the farming community as well as develop a program which can be utilized within the community to address farmers' psychosocial needs.

### **Occupational Therapy Overview**

According to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF), occupational therapy uses everyday occupations to enhance roles, habits, and routines in several different contexts (AOTA, 2014). These areas of occupation include activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and

social participation (AOTA, 2014). Due to the intertwined nature of farmers' roles and occupations, an occupational therapist is an appropriate professional to address the topic of psychosocial health of these individuals (Brew et al., 2016). Through the holistic lens, which guides the profession, the occupational therapy practitioner hones in on the spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of a person; therefore, makes for a good fit for occupational therapy within the farming population. By utilizing the skills and education an occupational therapy practitioner has obtained, the development and curation of a community-based program is appropriate. The principles within this profession allow for the therapeutic approach include creation of a novel program (AOTA, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

To guide the development of the product, the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) and Canadian Model of Human Performance-Engagement (CMOP-E) were used. The EHP model specifies the connections between person, context, task, and performance and the CMOP-E focuses on the person, occupation, and environment as well as the relationship between these aspects as well as the spirituality aspect (Dunn, 2017; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). To guide the study, a loose participatory action research design was utilized in conjunction with these models (Lune & Berg, 2017). This evidence gathering approach was chosen and completed through a focus group to understand farmers' perceptions of farmers' experiences and gather their feedback and perspective on the semi-developed product.

### **Assumption**

We anticipate that this study and program will aide in bridging the gap between occupational therapy and the psychosocial health of the farming population through research and product development. By completion of this independent study, occupational therapists will

better determine their role in conjunction with the farming population. The overall goal is to aide farmers in psychosocial health care, which can be accomplished through use of the developed product when implemented through a trained individual.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study involved building of a program through an extensive literature review which shaped the overall curation of the product. The preliminary development of the product was reviewed by a group of farmers through a focus group to confirm the content utility with this population. The feedback from this focus group was then utilized in accordance for further program development. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were created for the participants for the focus group that is detailed in chapter III. These criteria were created to keep the stress levels that the individual experience consistent. It was also created to increase transferability for the Red River Valley region and to ensure that they are farm owners opposed to farm workers.

### **Importance of Study**

Farmers are an underserved population especially in terms of psychosocial health (Cole & Bondy, 2020). There is also limited research of occupational therapy practitioner's role within this population. This study will enhance the small amount of literature provided on the role of occupational therapy and this population. The role of occupational therapy will be a consultant role in the development of this program in developing positive habits and routines in the farmers life. Through this research and program development, a community-based program was created that can be used in rural, farming communities to address psychosocial factors. The developed community-based program will be shared with regional and national centers to utilize at their discretion.

## Key Terms and Concepts

- **Canadian Model of Occupational Performance – Engagement (C-MOPE): Is an occupational therapy practice model that** focuses on the person, occupation, and environment as well as the relationship between these aspects (Turpin & Iwama, 2011).
- **Center for Rural Health** – is at the University of North Dakota (UND) and is a “federal-state partnership that helps rural communities build their healthcare services through collaborations and initiatives with a wide range of partners across the state” (Center for Rural Health, 2020a, para 3).
- **Ecology of Human Performance (EHP): Is an occupational therapy practice model that** specifies the connections between person, context, task, and performance (Dunn, 2017).
- **Farm:** any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year (USDA, 2019b, para 1).
- **Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)** provides “comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental illness in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Region 8” that includes the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah (Center for Rural Health, 2020b).
- **Occupation:** meaningful activity that someone engages in as part of their daily life (AOTA, 2014).
- **Participatory action research** involves “the active engagement of individuals traditionally known as subjects as participants and contributors in the research enterprise” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 127).

Chapter I Introduction consisted of an overview of this independent study. Chapter II consists of a literature review of current research regarding a topics of this project with an emphasis unique stressors that farmers endure and community resources regarding farming. Chapter III addresses the project methodology, which includes the process we used to conduct the independent study and program development overall. Chapter IV Results/Product are the product itself and as well as data collected from the study. Chapter V Summary includes discussion of the results and project implications for future research. The independent study will conclude with a list of references and an appendix.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.” — Thomas Jefferson*

*“Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you’re a thousand miles from the corn field.” — President Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Chapter II Literature Review is comprised of a literature review of the psychosocial health of farmers. Among this literature review includes identifying the farming population, the prevalence of this topic, as well as theories to guide this study. This chapter also reviews literature regarding various stressors as well as supports farmers experience in detail. Among this information, the roles health professions can assume within farmers psychosocial health is discussed as well as the benefits of community-based programs among this population.

The farming community is an underserved population in health care, specifically in the realm of mental health. The psychosocial stress that farmers experience due to their occupation has not been well recognized by the researchers. Subsequently, there is a significant gap in the literature on this topic for this population. North Dakota is a rural state, where farming is a predominant occupation. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defined a farm as “any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year” (2019b, para 1). According to the USDA (2019a, 2019b), there are over 2 million farm operations in the United States and 26,100 farm operations in North Dakota. Farming is a unique occupation with a subculture that involves multiple aspects that set it apart from other occupations (Cole & Bondy, 2020). With this occupation comes many stressors that farmers endure; “[f]arming in the United States was rated



the twelfth most stressful occupation out of 130 total high stress occupations” (Deary et al., 1997, p. 131). Stressors that have been identified within previous research that farmers have encountered include, but are not limited to, income, financial threat, time availability, and weather (Anderson, Johnson, Wheat, Wofford, Wiggins & Downey, 2011; Deary et al., 1997; Ellis & Albrecht, 2017; Logstein, 2016; Roy, Tremblay, Roberston & Houle, 2017; Stain, Kelly, Lewin, Higginbotham, Beard & Houlihan, 2008). Stress occurs in an individual's life when the demands exceed ones coping abilities, in turn this will affect an individual's ability to function in his or her everyday life according to the American Occupational Therapy Association (2007). The role of an occupational therapy practitioner working with farmers is limited in the literature; however, exploration of stress management strategies and coping strategies can be adapted to work with the population of farmers. Promoting the development of community-based programs within rural communities will increase an occupational therapy practitioner’s role in mental health in rural farming communities by addressing positive and healthy coping strategies into one's habits and routines.

## **Theory**

The theoretical foundation used to guide this independent study were the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) and the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement (CMOP-E) framework. The EHP model specifies the connections between person, context, task, and performance (Dunn, 2017). One of the primary purposes of this model is to emphasize the role of the context as well as the main concepts and the impact they have on an individual’s performance (Dunn, 2017). The CMOP-E focuses on the person, occupation, and environment as well as the relationship between these aspects (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). This framework has a strong emphasis on spirituality, which is at the core of the person (Turpin &

Iwama, 2011). The person is embedded within the aspect of the environment and the occupation is the bridge that connects the person and environment (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Within this framework, there are basic assumptions that will help guide this study and the development of the product. The CMOP-E highlights that humans are occupational beings as well as engagement in occupation has therapeutic potential (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). The occupations that a person chooses to engage in influence his or her overall well-being and health and can bring meaning into one's life (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Lastly, it is vital to acknowledge that occupations are idiosyncratic and vary person to person (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). These models of practice together aim to address the person, occupation or task, context and environment, and spirituality and how these aspects relate to one another (Dunn, 2017; Polatajko et al., 2013). The EHP and CMOP-E were both used as cornerstones from which we reviewed and interpreted evidence during this review of literature.

The EHP framework includes five therapeutic approaches to intervention that support performance needs and interests of the person (Dunn, 2017). The approaches coincide with the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF), establish/restore, alter, adapt/modify, prevent, and create (AOTA, 2014; Dunn, 2017). The establish/restore intervention approach aims to improve the individual's skills and the focus is on the person factors (Dunn, 2017). The optimal match for a person's current abilities and the available contexts for the individual to perform in, is the alter intervention approach (Dunn, 2017). The adapt/modify intervention approach entails changing aspects of the context to support a person's performance (Dunn, 2017). By addressing the development of performance problems before they occur would be utilizing the prevention approach (Dunn, 2017). Lastly, the create intervention approach focuses on optimal performance for all individuals by creating circumstances to support performance (Dunn,

2017). When the relationship between the context and the person is considered, the best intervention approach will occur (Dunn, 2017).

### **Agricultural Farm Owners**

The owners of agricultural farm operations, have a unique set of roles, values, and beliefs which can better be understood by using EHP and the CMOP-E to view the literature and experiences of the owners. To express his or her values, farmers typically project these into their farming goals, including both economic and noneconomic (Parminter & Perkins, 1997). Within the study conducted by Parminter and Perkins (1997), values and goals were identified and ranked of importance by farmers. The top-ranking value regarded the business aspect of farming that included proper, ongoing education, being adaptable to changes, and developing and following a plan (Parminter & Perkins, 1997). Farmers also valued the production of their business and capital value of their farms, such as receiving the highest commodity price and paying off debts (Parminter & Perkins, 1997). Personal aspects within these goals included community, family, and personal growth which reflected the farmers values (Parminter & Perkins, 1997). This included their role of being a father or mother by providing for their children and keeping their children involved within the farm production (Parminter & Perkins, 1997). The farmer valued their sense of belonging as a community member as well as being accepted and respected by peers (Parminter & Perkins, 1997).

### **Family Farms & Who are the Folks?**

To qualify as a family farm, the majority of the business must be owned by the operator and those who have family relation to the operator (USDA, 2019d). Within the United States, family farms account for almost 98 percent of farms (USDA, 2019c; USDA, 2019d). Overall, 97 percent of the land area in the United States is rural, but only contains 19 percent of the country's

population (Thompson, 2016). Within the rural communities, there are 2.05 million farms currently in operation (USDA, 2018b). The occupation of farming is more than just a source of employment for individuals; it is a lifestyle (Vayro, Brownlow, Ireland & March, 2019). The culture of farming is shared throughout generations, which shapes individuals' identity and is often ingrained from a young age (Brew, Inder, Allen, Thomas, & Kelly, 2016; Varyo et al., 2019). Farming is tied into nearly every aspect of an individual's life and his or her family's life (Brew et al., 2016).

Most primary farm operators are male; however, two thirds of secondary farm operators are female, who are typically the spouse of the primary farm operator (USDA, 2018a). Primary farm operators are responsible for the farm and its day-to-day operations (USDA, 2018a). These individuals tend to be male, older, and identify farming as their primary occupation (USDA, 2018). Many farm operations indicate that they are a family business or individually operated (USDA, 2018a). The age of farm operators, both primary and secondary, is continuing to rise with the average age of 58.3 and 53.4 years respectively (USDA, 2018a). Minority owned farm operators have increased from 2007 to 2012, however, more than half the farms had sales less than \$10,000 (USDA, 2018a). The minority groups that are noted by the USDA (2018a) include Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and black individuals. The number of new farmers has continually decreased from 2007 to 2012, with majority of farmers indicating that they have been primary or secondary operators of the farm for at least 10 years (USDA, 2018a).

### **Critical Issues in Psychosocial Well-being**

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, there are 2.1 million principal farm operators in the United States of which 288,264 were women (USDA, 2018a). Farmers, specifically males, are a subgroup that are vulnerable to experiencing a high level of stress

related to their occupation; there is evidence of resistance to seek professional help, such as mental health services, which makes these individuals more susceptible to self-medicating and suicide (Roy, Tremblay, Oliffe, Jbilou & Robertson, 2013). Farmers score high on rural specific variables that include drought stress and concerns about infrastructure and services (Brew et al., 2016). Male farmers are found to have high rates of suicide and low rates of usage of mental health or social services compared to the general population (Brew et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2013). In rural communities, where farmers predominately live, help-seeking efforts may be stigmatized (Roy et al., 2013; USDA, 2018b).

### **Stressors**

Farmers typically view their occupation as a way of life; this lifestyle poses a variety of unique occupational stressors for farmers, which are unpredictable (Anderson et al., 2011; Varyo et al., 2019). These stressors can include but are not limited to: concern for time availability, uncertainty in the job, government involvement, physical isolation, family conflicts, successors of farm, weather, lack of resources, multiple tasks workload, farm hazards, climate cooperation, business aspects, finances, and economy (Anderson et al., 2011; Deary et al., 1997; Ellis & Albrecht, 2017; Hawes, Wiggins, Reed, & Hardin-Fanning, 2019; Lizer & Petrea, 2008; Logstein, 2016; Roy et al., 2017; Stain et al., 2008). These stressors occur due to the nature of the occupation as well as the context involved and are expected to be universal throughout all farms (Vayro et al., 2019). These stressors that farmers experience have been found to negatively influence their sleeping habits (Lizer & Petrea, 2008; Hawes et al., 2019). Poor sleeping habits and sleep deprivation put farmers at a higher risk of injury and may impair their judgment; however, it is difficult for farmers to maintain a regular sleep schedule or routine due to the demands and deadlines involved in farming (Hawes et al., 2019).

### **Emotional Stress/Farm Stress**

Due to the various stressors, farmers are at risk of experiencing poor mental health (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019). Farmers experience elevated rates of psychological distress, which doubles their risk of suicide in comparison to non-farmers (Vayro et al., 2019). With limited community resources as well as lack of time availability, farmers are less likely to seek mental health services (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019). Male farmers have reported reasons that they will not seek help that includes, but is not limited to, pride, independence, being too busy, lack of confidence in available help, and the stigma associated with seeking mental health services (Roy et al., 2013).

### **Time**

Farmers reported working long hours, on average 10-hour to 12-hour days (Lizer & Petra, 2007). However, the length of their workday varies among the time of year and current progress or step towards the farming season. During seasons such as planting and harvest, farmers work longer hours to meet set requirements (Lizer & Petra, 2007). For instance, during these seasons, the crops need to be planted or harvested within a small-time frame to meet requirements for caring for the crops as well as market deadlines. Not only do farmers need to meet these deadlines, they also experience several demands that are competing for their time and resources (Varyo et al., 2019). This includes completing their workload which may include fixing a fence, spreading fertilizer, or fixing a piece of broken equipment. All these tasks can influence the time farmers have available. These different tasks must be prioritized in addition with demands such as planting and harvesting crop. With limited time availability, seeking services may pose a barrier for farmers, as they may have to travel a considerable distance for services, which is difficult due to the time-consuming nature of the job (Varyo et al., 2019).

## **Climate**

The weather is a large, unpredictable factor in the occupation of farming. Once crops are planted, farmers are dependent on the weather for their crops to flourish. If the climate is uncooperative, such as a drought or excessive rain, it is found to have correlation to elevated stress levels in farmers (Deary et al., 1997; Ellis & Albrecht, 2017; Stain et al., 2008). For example, if a farmer is experiencing excessive rain during a harvest, this may impact his or her ability to get equipment into the field to successfully harvest the crop. With this barrier, there is a greater potential for breaking equipment, thus creating a financial burden, and increasing time spent getting equipment unstuck due to saturation. The farmer may also need to make the decision to collect insurance on that piece of the land as he or she may be unable to harvest the crop. The weather and climate will influence multiple decisions that the farmer will make and ultimately will influence how well the crop will grow and the ability of that farmer to plant or harvest the crop.

## **Finances**

In addition to weather conditions, financial stressors account for other factors farmers encounter (Anderson et al., 2011; Logstein, 2016; Varyo et al., 2019). Farmers have reported experiencing moderate to high stress levels regarding the business and financial aspects of their farm (Deary et al., 1997; Varyo et al., 2019). Farmers' success is strongly influenced by the prices in the market, economy, and interest rates. Finances are unpredictable due to the inconsistency of the stock markets prices at which crops are sold at and that, in turn, may produce additional stressors such as, how one will pay for seed and chemicals for the next year as well as to continue to provide for one's family (Deary et al., 1997). The legislative and political changes are included in the financial stress and are out of the farmers' control (Varyo et

al., 2019). The distress that may be caused from financial stressors may increase the likelihood of declining mental health as well as increasing the demands of farmers' resources such as time and finances, areas with which farmers may already struggle (Varyo et al., 2019). If there is not an additional household member working at a full-time job that includes benefits, it is likely the farmer will have to pay for his or her own independent health insurance. In addition, if the farmer has hired farm workers, he or she will likely be paying for their health insurance as well. Farmers are often self-insured, have large deductibles, and will often only seek care if it is affecting their ability to complete job tasks related to the farm (Lizer & Petrea, 2008). The cost of health insurance is a substantial amount, which may increase a farmer's stress due to the variability of having a steady and reliable income (Logstein, 2016). Farmers face a significant amount of debt in their occupation itself and seeking help incurs additional costs for that farmer (Varyo et al., 2019).

### **Projected Stress**

Farmers increased stress rates were found to impair their ability to perform occupations to his or her full capacity. This also contributed to farmers mental health and isolation from others in their rural communities, along with work dissatisfaction (Connolly, Anderson, Colgan, Montgomery, Clarke, & Kinsella, 2018; Logstein, 2016). When farmers experience a significant amount of stress and do not have the opportunity to recover, the excessive stress can cause problems both physically and psychologically (Atkins & Harris, 2008). Stressful events or excessive stress influences the well-being of all members in farming families in addition to the farm owner (Stanley-Clarke, 2019). According to previous research, farmers had higher symptoms of depression than people in other occupations (Torske, Hilt, Glasscock, Lundquist, & Krokstad, 2016). In addition to the demands that are required of a farmer, there are several



different stressors that farmers experience. Among farming communities, there is often a cultural expectation that expressions of thoughts and emotion should be either only positive or solution focused (Varyo et al., 2019).

### **Supports for Farmers**

Farmers have several positive supports in relation to their psychosocial health that include his or her family and friends, accessibility to healthcare personnel, and community (Brew et al., 2016). Other than individuals within his or her social context, farmers have pride and find value in their career. This leads to a mentality of fulfillment by “feeding the world” and a resilience to occupational stressors by the farmer's own positive and independent driven outlook (Brew et al., 2016; Cole & Bondy, 2020; Roy et al., 2017).

#### **Family/Friends**

Farmers tend to prefer receiving support from family, friends, and other farmers (Brew et al., 2016). Family and friends are vital in the psychosocial health of farmers in providing a solid support system (Anderson et al., 2011). In a study by Anderson et al. (2011), positive family interaction was a way in which farmers counteracted the stress they experience. Keeping a positive attitude, strong family ties, and taking necessary breaks or vacations from work have been found as positive supports which facilitate coping with their stressors (Roy et al., 2017). Humor has also been found to be utilized by young farmers among family and friends, which supports their psychosocial health (Brumby, Kennedy, & Chandrasekara, 2013).

#### **Accessibility to healthcare**

Many farmers are unaware of mental health services that are available in their community or they do not have access to these services. When farmers can access services, they will often face delays or unreimbursed costs (Cole & Bondy, 2020). In a study by Tabereaux and Wheat

(2002), farmers were found to prefer different methods of mental health service delivery than the traditional approach. According to a study completed by Cole and Bondy (2020), it was beneficial to discuss mental health and stress with farmers indirectly, opposed to directly in either a community or clinical setting. Cole and Bondy (2020) emphasized the importance of meeting farmers where they are at. This can include but is not limited to house calls, churches, or information sharing in the community as well as addressing stigma at places such as credit unions or agricultural societies (Cole & Bondy, 2020). Tabereaux and Wheat (2002) stressed the importance of meeting the need to reach these “fiercely independent and isolated individuals” (p.39).

A lack of experience and knowledge of farming has been found to negatively impact a health care practitioners' ability to deliver client-centered interventions for farmers (Hildebrand, Brinkley, Timmons, & Mendez, 2019). As farmers are found to be more self-reliant with their psychosocial health than the public, health care professionals working with farmers should recognize the positive aspects of their independent approach (Cole & Bondy, 2020). Farmers tend to rely on their family, friends, and community rather than mental health care providers; having open conversations with farmers at medical appointments will provide the opportunity for these individuals to share their worries or other challenges regarding their mental health (Cole & Bondy 2020). It is important to acknowledge that women farmers are more likely to seek social support and/or healthcare service than males (Gunn, Kettler, Skaczkowski, & Turnbull, 2012).

### **Community**

Farmers have been found to rely on their communities, both geographical and farming, as a support rather than healthcare providers (Cole & Bondy, 2020). Agricultural business, or agribusiness professionals are often included in the community of farmers. Agribusiness

professionals typically have long-standing relationship with farmers with consistent contact and have an acute understanding of the environment and economic climate involved in this career (Rudolphi & Barnes, 2020; Stanley-Clarke, 2019). Several individuals who work in agribusiness have indicated that they could be involved in a more direct role in promoting mental health among farmers, however, are aware that some farmers may deem it inappropriate (Rudolphi & Barnes, 2020). Another professional within the farming community that is deemed a front-line worker in relation to farmers, are county extension agents (Tabereaux & Wheat, 2002). These individuals provide a different outreach approach in which they can network with both farmers as well as health care professionals (Tabereaux & Wheat, 2002). In a study completed by Brew et al. (2016), farmers preferred written advice or a farmer's self-help group as a potential source to help rather than visits from health or social workers.

Although there are known drawbacks of living in small communities, there are many positives as well. Due to the close-knit nature of those living in rural communities, “residents are more likely to rally around each other and provide community support in times of need” (Brufloft, 2018, para 13). With this strong external support from community members, this can facilitate successful treatment for individuals as well as their families (Brufloft, 2018). In addition, farmers find community resources such as churches as a positive support for coping with farm related stress; many, specifically mid-age and older farmers, relied on their religion as a strategy to cope with various stressors (Gunn et al., 2012).

### **Center for Rural Health**

The Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota (UND) is a “federal-state partnership that helps rural communities build their healthcare services through collaborations and initiatives with a wide range of partners across the state” (Center for Rural Health, 2020a,

para 3). The aim of the Center for Rural Health is to gather expertise from different disciplines including knowledge and tools and distribute them to rural areas and tribal communities within North Dakota as well as the nation (Center for Rural Health, 2020a).

The Center for Rural Health works in collaboration with several health professions to address individual's needs in rural areas, which includes farmers (Center for Rural Health, 2020a). Encouraging conversation about mental health among rural communities and farmers has continued to gain momentum within literature and in the media. The Center for Rural Health has created projects such as Mountain Health Technology Transfer Center as well as utilizing the Mental Health First Aid Training program in hopes to destigmatize aspects of mental health and psychosocial services among rural communities (Center for Rural Health, 2020a; Center for Rural Health, 2020b; Kolmetz, 2019).

### **Overview of Health Professions**

The Center for Rural Health works with individuals from a variety of health and non-health disciplines at the University of North Dakota to address the needs regarding health in rural and tribal communities (Center for Rural Health, 2020a). This collaboration can include the profession of occupational therapy. Occupational therapy was defined in the OTPF as “the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation in roles, habits, and routines in home, school, workplace, community and other setting” (AOTA, 2014, p. S1). Occupational therapy can address the needs of people in a variety of occupations that include activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation (AOTA, 2014). Throughout the literature, a strong correlation was identified between a farmer's career and other occupations being deeply intertwined (Brew

et al., 2016). Through the skills and knowledge that an occupational therapy practitioner possesses, these practitioners are well-equipped to work with farmers in the farmers' local communities. Specifically, occupational therapy practitioners can address potential barriers for farmers as well as promote positive mental health and wellbeing by promoting engagement in farmers' meaningful occupation of farming.

### **Mental Health First Aid Training**

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) was created by Betty Kitchener in 2001 in Australia then adapted and renamed by the United States into Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) USA. This program is organized by the National Council for Behavioral Health in partnership with the Missouri Departmental of Mental Health (Kolmetz, 2019). The MHFA course is an adaptation of physical first aid training that encompasses an approximately 8-hour course that teaches the participants how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorder (Kolmetz, 2019; Mantzios, 2020). In the course, there is a 5-step action plan that is taught called ALGEE: (1) Approach the individual, assess, and assist with any crisis, (2) Listen and communication non-judgmentally, (3) Give support and information, (4) Encourage the individual to get appropriate professional help, (5) Encourage other supports (Kolmetz, 2019; Mantzios, 2020). The broad purpose and goal of the MHFA course is symptom recognition and initial support not diagnosis or treatment (Kolmetz, 2019). There is an emphasis on the use of appropriate terminology with a focus on health literacy in the MHFA program (Kolmetz, 2019). It is emphasized to use person-first language, avoid slang terms, and to focus on the individual rather than his or her disorder or condition (Kolmetz, 2019). In addition, the participants are encouraged to use terminology that will empower individuals by providing support and guidance to give the person who is in crisis options and control in their situation

(Kolmetz, 2019). Through this course, it seeks to change perceptions about mental health illness by education and summarizing about mental disorders and recovery (Kolmetz, 2019). In a study completed by Mantzios (2020), the individuals who participated in the MHFA were able to recognize mental health distress in peers, understand and emphasize with their peers' experience, and provide timely, appropriate, and sensitive self-care material or recommendations to professional services.

### **Background Information**

Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) is a project in conjunction with the Center for Rural Health that is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Center for Rural Health, 2020b). MHTTC provides “comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental illness in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Region 8” (Center for Rural Health, 2020b, para 1). The information that is provided from this project is to be easily accessible to the states included in Region 8; North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah (Center for Rural Health, 2020b). A goal of MHTTC is to “ensure the availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training and technical assistance to the mental health field, including Center for Mental Health Service grant recipients in HHS region 8” as well as foster alliances among culturally diverse practitioners, researchers, policy makers, family members, and consumer of mental health services (Center for Rural Health, 2020b, para 3). Centers such as the MHTTC are valuable sources of information for communities and able to disseminate resources readily.

## **Community Based Programs**

Within rural settings, there are many “misconceptions, myths, and cultural stigma associated with mental illness” (Bruflo dt, 2018, para. 12), which pose as significant barriers for individuals to seek psychosocial medical treatment. The various stigmas associated with mental health in these areas are due to a variety of factors. Individuals may possess a lack of knowledge and understanding of mental health and associated illnesses; this causes uncertainties, which often are based on fear of the unknown (Bruflo dt, 2018). This can be due to limited meaningful contact with individuals who have stigmatizing conditions, “leading to discomfort, distrust, and fear” (Fiske et al., 2016, p. 73). Due to the secrecy culture within rural communities, this can also cause general hesitancy of individuals to seek proper care (Bruflo dt, 2018). Another fear is the lack of confidentiality some individuals may experience because of the close-tied social networks throughout the community (Bruflo dt, 2018).

*Conversations in Your Community* is an initiative by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote a national dialogue to bring awareness to mental health (USDHHS, 2019). One program that has shed light on this issue is the MHFA training, by providing an opportunity for mental health literacy to occur within the adult population. To combat stigma, this program has an impact on improving public attitudes by increasing proper literacy among individuals; this leads to non-stigmatizing language choices (Fiske et al., 2016). Using client-centered language is vital to reduce stigma within mental health diagnoses. This is accomplished by highlighting the person prior to his or diagnosis (Villines, 2016).

Another program that has been utilized within communities is peer services. Peer services are provided by individuals who have lived experience within a certain field and foster a judgement free environment to help others. These peers can “help others to identify problems

and suggest effective coping strategies” (Fiske et al., 2016, p. 75). These programs can also aid in counterbalancing the isolation those with mental health issues may be experiencing, due to discrimination or rejection by community members (Fiske et al., 2016).

## **Summary**

A large majority of the United States population includes farmers located in rural communities (USDA 2019a; USDA 2019b). Within this occupation, farmers experience unique stressors that affect their psychosocial health. Although there are numerous resources that reported on the stressors that farmers experience, there is a lack of literature that outlines supports that enable performance. To address this gap in available services, the CMOP-E and EHP models will be utilized to guide the development of this study as well as the product development. Together, these models address the person, occupation or task, context and environment, and spirituality; once these are identified, the models aid in highlighting the conjunction and relationship of all the various aspects (Dunn, 2017; Polatajko et al., 2013).

There is a need to address farmers’ mental health surrounding the unpredictable stressors that they may experience. The emotional stress of farmers has been found to be elevated in comparison to non-farmers, because of stressors (Vayro et al., 2019). These stressors include time availability, climate, finances, and projected stress (Anderson et al., 2011; Deary et al., 1997; Ellis & Albrecht, 2017; Logstein, 2016; Roy et al., 2017; Stain et al., 2008). The supports that are outlined in literature to help farmers combat stressors they encounter includes the positive contribution of a farmer's family and friends, accessibility to healthcare, and community to their psychosocial health (Anderson et al., 2011; Brew et al., 2016; Bruflo, 2018; Cole & Bondy, 2020).



The Center for Rural Health is a resource in North Dakota that exists to make positive contributions within rural populations, including farmers. Within the developing programs, health professionals, such as occupational therapy practitioners, are collaborating with this department to promote state wide initiatives (Center for Rural Health, 2020a; Center for Rural Health, 2020b). The MHFA is being utilized to increase mental health literacy as well as fulfill the purpose to recognize symptoms of various mental health diagnoses (Kolmetz, 2019). Used in conjunction with community-based programs, these can be used to remove the barriers farmers face in seeking psychosocial medical treatment, including travel to receive services (Bruflo, 2018). By developing and providing a community program led by peer supports, will remove the accessibility barriers for farmers. It will aid in helping farmers identify positive coping strategies and stress management techniques as well as continue to reduce the stigma around mental health (Fiske et al., 2016; Villines, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to develop a program for the farming population based from the literature review findings. In conjunction with information gathered, prevalent areas of needs were expanded on through the lens and principles of the occupational therapy profession. Thus, further leading to exploration on the role that occupational therapy can have in developing community-based programs for rural farmers. Psychosocial factors of farmers will be addressed through the development of a community-based program by targeting habits, routines, and roles. This program will be developed to have a mentor-type relationship between individuals in the community with experience in farming to serve as mentors and active farm owners by using a number of different modules topic of different stressors that farmers experience.

Chapter II Literature Review consisted of defining the farming population as well as unique stressors and supports through an extensive review of literature. It also includes a

synthesis of literature regarding the theory utilized to guide this study as well as the benefits of a community-based and peer targeted programs. Chapter III Methodology consists of preliminary product development, a timeline of the independent study, and thorough explanation of the steps taken to complete the product.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Chapter III Methodology is an overview of the process used throughout this study. It consists of a review including the preliminary development of the overall project as well as the study that was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota. It includes a timeline of the study and product development which is in Figure 1. In this chapter, there is a description of the detailed steps taken in the development process to lead us to the final product; this includes the educated individuals involved, a thorough literature review, as well as sources of data that were accessed and used. This chapter includes a review of the methodology including the population involved, data collection methods, instruments used, and tools used for the data process.

Figure 1  
*The Process of Study and Product Development*

<b>Preliminary Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Literature review was completed.</li><li>•Meetings conducted with educated individuals: Shawnda Schroeder PhD, MA, Research Associate Professor at the University of North Dakota, Brad Gibbens, MPA, Acting Director of the Center for Rural Health and Assistant Professor at the University of North Dakota, and Carla Wilhite, OTD, OTR/L, occupational therapy faculty member at the University of New Mexico.</li></ul>
<b>Identification of Module Topics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Creation of preliminary modules: <i>Sleep and Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors</i>.</li></ul>
<b>IRB approval</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Focus group completed to gather feedback on already developed modules.</li></ul>
<b>Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Changes to preliminary modules: <i>Sleep and Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors</i>. Changes were based on findings from focus group feedback.</li><li>•Creation of final modules: <i>Financial Stressors, Communication with Family, and Farm Transitions</i></li></ul>

## **Development of Product**

### **Preliminary Project Development**

The product developed was built upon the current and most prevalent needs of people in farming communities. These needs were identified by the literature, our knowledge of the farming population due to upbringing on family farms, and meetings with professionals in the field of rural health. We discussed our personal experience with farming to identify and limit biases. The information gathered from the reviewed evidence was interpreted through the lens of the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance-Engagement (CMOP-E) and Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) models. The EHP model specifies the connections between person, context, task, and performance (Dunn, 2017) and the CMOP-E focuses on the person, occupation, and environment as well as the relationship between these aspects (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). These theories were used to determine the foundation of the developed product. These theories honed in on the connections between farmers, their contexts, and overall performance in occupations which assisted in identification of topics and creation of the overall product.

In the early stages of determining of program development, we sought out other professionals in rural health and the farming population to determine prevalent needs. The professionals with whom informal meetings were held included: Shawnda Schroeder, PhD, MA, Research Associate Professor at the University of North Dakota, and Brad Gibbens, MPA, Acting Director of the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota and Assistant Professor at the University of North Dakota. These individuals are both experts in the area rural health and work within the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota. An additional meeting was also conducted with Carla Wilhite, OTD, OTR/L, an occupational

therapy faculty member at the University of New Mexico, who has experience working with the farming population.

From these meetings, numerous highlights and information were gathered and obtained. This included a discussion of the needs for this population, current programs, or resources available, stigma associated around mental health in rural communities, and the prevalent stressors that this population face. These open discussions provided an opportunity to discuss the stigma surrounding mental health within this population as well as how health care professionals can address the stressors, or problem areas, that farmers experience. Another main point addressed was discussion regarding the value and benefits of this population having a mentor-type relationship. Due to the stigma regarding mental health, a barrier is posed in regards to farmers seeking psychosocial help from a health care professional. In the meetings with Dr. Shawnda Schroeder and Brad Gibbens, the idea of a mentoring program for farmers by farmers. Such activities had been informally implemented in rural Minnesota communities where retired farmers have open discussions surrounding mental health with current farmers in an informal manner within the community context. Similarly, farming communities have long depended on cafes and coffee chats to share information (Mold & Roberts, 2020). With the information we gained from the conversations and literature reviews on the needs of farmers, in collaboration with Dr. Shawnda Schroeder, we developed a plan to implement occupational therapy principles into a semi-structured mentorship program we named *Coffee with Farmers*; a program intended to aid the retired farmers in delivery of stigmatized psychosocial topics.

### **Literature Review**

Evidence was gathered through conducting a literature review. The literature was found searching on data bases of PubMed, CINAHL, PsychInfo, Academic Search Premier, and

Google Scholar as well as occupational therapy textbooks and agricultural extension offices.

When searching these data bases, key terms that were used in regards to the population included *agricultural workers, farmworker, farmer, farm, agriculture, rancher, seasonal labor, migrant worker, shift work, shift-work, and high-pressure job*. In regards to identifying prevalent problems as well as ways to address these issues key terms searched included *mental health, coping, sleep, representative, peer, intervention, program, programme, group, mentorship, and support*. The literature search resulted over 35 resources ranging from statistical or opinion pieces to rigorous research studies.

After completing a literature review and having conversations with experts in the areas of rural health, health care professionals who work with farmers, we determined the most prevalent areas that needed to be developed further. A large majority of the United States population includes farmers located in rural communities (USDA 2019a; USDA 2019b). These individuals experience unique stressors, which affect their psychosocial health. Although there are numerous resources that report on the stressors that farmers experience, there is a lack of literature that outlines supports and has tangible programming that reaches farmers (i.e., can be readily and effectively implemented). To address this gap in the literature, we developed modules based on the available research within the literature as well as consultation with educated individuals within this area. This led to the curation of module topics including: *Sleep, Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors, Communication with Family, Farm Transitions, and Financial Stress*. This project, overall, was completed in three phases of development that have been described in subsequent sections of this chapter.

## **Learning Principles**

To ensure client-centered development with a focus on adult learners, we utilized the concept of andragogy when creating this program. Andragogy is the art and science of adult learning with an emphasis on the learner opposed to the teacher (Bastable, Myers & Arnaud, 2020). In conjunction with this principle, a community-based program with a mentor-type relationship was utilized to aide in a trusting relationship as well as remove barriers, such as access to psychosocial treatment, for the farming population (Bruflo dt, 2018). With an ease in access, the aim is for participation of the target population due to an increase in convenience and, with this, the overall stigma of mental health within rural communities will also decrease (Bruflo dt, 2018).

Another theoretical foundation that was used was the Transtheoretical Model. This model was reviewed in the introduction of the overview of the program to indicate its use to guide the overall process of the program (Braungart, 2020). This model focuses on decision-making of individuals, which is self-directed and requires intentional changes (Braungart, 2020). It contains six different stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (Braungart, 2020). An individual can sequentially, as well as non-sequentially, move throughout these stages depending on decisions or changes he or she wishes to make (Braungart, 2020). Due to the desired relationship between the mentor and farmer, this allows for the farmer to ultimately decide to apply the given information and resources (Braungart, 2020).

Bloom's Taxonomy was an additional learning principle used to guide this product development. This concept was used as it pertains to the knowledge to be learned, obtainability of behaviors by the learner, and sequencing of knowledge and experiences from simple to complex (Bastable & Rabbia, 2020). By incorporating Bloom's taxonomy, there are cognitive

and affective goals that were created to vary the complexity of understanding the module topics (Bastable & Rabbia, 2020). The purpose of the affective goal is to increase commitment to feelings expressed as emotions, interests, values, beliefs, and appreciation (Bastable & Rabbia, 2020). Furthermore, affective goals emphasize the overall emotional relation of the topic to the farmer. The purpose of the cognitive domain includes acquiring information, development of the learned capacity, as well as an individual's thinking process (Bastable & Rabbia, 2020). This cognitive aspect would target the farmer's knowledge as well as understanding of the given topic. The cognitive and affective goals helped shape the overall curation of each module as the objective was for the farmer to meet these after receiving the given materials.

### **The Program: Coffee with Farmers**

*Coffee with Farmers* is a program created to promote psychosocial health and decrease stigma around mental health of farmers in rural communities. This program is developed to have a mentor-type relationship between individuals in the community with experience in farming to serve as mentors and active farm owners. Prior to participating in the *Coffee with Farmers* program, it is highly encouraged that mentor individuals complete community programs to broaden their knowledge on psychosocial health if desired. An example of a program would include the Mental Health First Aid training, which involves an eight-hour course which teaches the participants how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorder (Kolmetz, 2019; Mantzios, 2020). There are five module topics created that mentors could address with active farmers regarding their mental health. These modules include *Sleep*, *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors*, *Communication with Family*, *Farm Transitions*, and *Financial Stress*. This product was developed to target mental health issues that are unique to the farming population and foster a positive relationship to decrease stigma in rural communities.



Each module has a cognitive and an affective goal. The program is designed so that at the completion of each module, the farmer will most likely have met those goals. These modules are expected to be used over time to aide current farmers in establishing healthy habits/routines or coping strategies regarding these unique stressors. Each module has literature and resources included and the mentor can use the literature to learn more about these issues as well as provide farmers with up-to-date information. In addition, there will be a brochure included with each module, which the mentor can have on-hand when out in the community. These can be used to provide the mentor with a quick reminder or also as a handout to farmers as a compact guide of information and resources. Community involvement is highly regarded in rural farming communities. Having mentors who understand the stressors that farmers endure will further provide a mentor-type relationship and ensure more trust than they may have with healthcare professionals.

### **Phase I of Development**

The first phase of development was creation of the mentors' guide that explained the program, its purpose, and contains the modules. This mentor guide includes the goals for each module. The modules of *Sleep* and *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors* were the modules that were initially developed, which included six sections. To begin each individual module, affective and cognitive goals were made as a guide for applicability of the topic. We then introduce the topic as well as importance, or prevalence, of this for the farming population. In order to support the mentor in bringing up often stigmatized topics, we created a 'Bringing up the Topic' section with an example conversation. After it is introduced and the mentor is able to bring up the module topic, we then developed 'Get your Gears Going', which addresses the application of the transtheoretical model. Within this section, applicable examples were given so

that the mentor can determine which stage a farmer may be in as well as how to support them in a given stage. Once this is determined, the mentor would move into the ‘Well I suppose..’ section that includes applicable information surrounding the module topic. Lastly, resources are provided with a brief description of each link so the mentor has a quick, accessible reference if needed as well as for the farmer to independently explore if so desired.

## **Phase II of Development**

After the development of the mentor guide and the two modules of *Sleep and Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors* were contrived, a focus group was conducted. To complete this, a research proposal was submitted to and approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (IRB). Refer to Appendix A to view the IRB proposal and approval. The IRB approval allowed us to facilitate a single focus group of current and semi-retired farmers in the community via Zoom. Due to COVID-19, the focus group was completed virtually synchronously over live feed where participants were able to interact in real time from the comfort of their own home (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The framework that was used to guide this study was a loose version of participatory action research with a qualitative focus group to connect personal experiences of farmers (Taylor, Braveman & Hammel, 2004). Participatory action research involves “the active engagement of individuals traditionally known as subjects as participants and contributors in the research enterprise” (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 127). By utilizing this framework, we were able to gather feedback as well as perspectives from rural farmers on the development of the *Coffee with Farmers* program. For purpose of the focus group, the topics of *Sleep and Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors* were presented for the participants to review. The goal of this focus group was to gain farmers’ perspectives on the relevancy and useability of the developed

program. To gather desired feedback, semi-structured interview questions were created to guide the discussion which can be found in Appendix B. These individuals gave us constructive feedback on the topics, content, resources, and practical changes that would further enable the individuals utilizing this product. Appendix D includes the preliminary modules which were reviewed in the focus group before the feedback was applied.

### **Phase III of Development**

Phase III of Development included gathering the feedback from the participatory action research model utilized with the focus group being conducted. We completed the data analysis with guidance and recommendations from project advisor. From the fieldnotes, we used a loose coding mechanism based off the model to guide the overall study, Ecology of Human Performance. Within this process, we were able to determine person, environment, task, and performance aspects within the feedback of the modules presented (Dunn, 2017). We also identified direct quotes from the farmers to show the need and applicability of this material. Lastly, we summarized and gathered overall suggested changes, which we implemented into our final module product. This included making recommended changes to the *Sleep* and *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors* modules. With the gathered feedback from the individuals participating in the focus group, we were able to develop three additional modules of *Communication with Family*, *Farm Transitions*, and *Financial Stress*.

### **Sources of Data**

Participants in this study were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling used our knowledge about the group to select subjects that represented the desired population (Lune & Berg, 2017). The inclusion criteria for the *retired* farmer participants included having farmed in the Red River Valley Region of North Dakota, farming was considered their primary

occupation; however, they now identify as retired or semi-retired. The participant must have had at least 20 years of experience with farming, farmed at least 3,000 acres of land, and grew at least three different crops.

The inclusion criteria for the *current* farmer participants included: farming in the Red River Valley Region of North Dakota, farming being their main occupation (vocation), had to have at least five years of experience, farm at least 3,000 acres, and grow at least three different crops.

Both the retired and current farmer participants were excluded from this study if they had or have other sources of employment, farmed or currently farm less than 3,000 acres and grew or grow less than 3 crops to keep consistency among the stress levels that individuals experience. Exclusion criteria also included participants outside the Red River Valley region and if they have less than 50% ownership of a farm.

We used our connections within our farming families and communities to recruit individuals whom fit the inclusion criteria to participate in the focus group via phone or computer. Four participants were recruited for the focus group which was held February 3, 2021 via Zoom. All the participants were male.

The participants in the focus group included four farmers from the Red River Valley region of North Dakota, all of which were purposively selected. The focus group included two father-son farmers. The two fathers served as the retired farmer and met all inclusion criteria of this study. The two sons met the inclusion criteria of the current farmer. Participant's years of farming ranged from 5-30 years (Refer to Table I).

Table I  
*Focus group data.*

Years of farm experience as operator	Number of participants
5-10 years	1
10-20 years	1
20-30 years	2

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

One semi-structured focus group interview was conducted to collect data regarding the preliminary developed product. The questions that were created for the focus group were used to provide opportunities for the participants to discuss their shared experiences in farming and collaborate as well as reflect on each other's contributions, which increased the trustworthiness of the results (Lune & Berg, 2017). The questions can be found in Table 2. This was beneficial for this study as the purpose was to utilize a group discussion to discuss mental health among farmers and their experiences related to the program. This also provided an opportunity for conversation and decreasing the stigma related to the topic of mental health.

Table 2  
*Focus Group Questions*

Questions of Active Farmer	Questions of Retired Farmer
As you look at these 5 topics, what do you think about the fit of these topics with farmers?	As you look at these 5 topics, what do you think about the fit of these topics with farmers?
As a farmer, what would be the best way to receive this information?	What is the best way to learn this information so that you would feel confident in your ability to use this information in your community?
Within this packet, what term would be the best to refer to the person in the role of a farmer?	In order to carry out this program in your community, what other things would you need?
What do you think would be the best way to share this with people who need it?	<p>Within this guide, what term or word would be the best way to refer to the person in the role of the retired farmer?</p> <p>What do you think would be the best way to share this with people who need it?</p>

One week prior to the focus group a packet was sent to each participant's home to allow the participant to review the materials thoroughly before the meeting. The packet included an informed consent form, module materials, brochures, and the focus group questions. The focus group was held via Zoom computer technology due to COVID-19 and the need to adhere to current CDC guidelines and requirements of the University of North Dakota IRB. We gathered informal fieldnotes throughout the focus group to record participant feedback and this data was stored on a password protected computer. The informed consent forms were gathered and stored in a locked cabinet in the research advisor's office. Only the principal researchers and faculty advisor will have access to this data to the period of three years at which time it will be destroyed.

Triangulation methods were utilized to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness in gathered data (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). This included three main sources of literature, our personal knowledge, and participants of the focus group. A literature review was conducted prior to the focus group to identify prevalent topics and evidence-based research targeting the farming population. According to Curtin and Fossey (2007), to achieve triangulation two or more researchers have to be involved in the data analysis within a qualitative research study. Thus, we were both involved in all data analysis tasks, which were reviewed by the faculty advisor to ensure accuracy. Due to personal family members being participants within the study, both students were present for the focus group activities to ensure triangulation. The focus group questions were semi-structured to allow us to build probing questions based on participant responses throughout the interview. This led to us ensuring participant understanding and promote overall credibility (Lune & Berg, 2017). Member checking was also utilized to ensure that input from the participants was understood accurately (Lune & Berg, 2017). This increased

the credibility of the results. Once the results of the focus group were gathered, it was analyzed into codes based off the components of the EHP model. The EHP model analyzes the connection between the person, task, context, and performance (Dunn, 2017). This model emphasizes the role of the context as well as the main concepts and the impact they have on an individual's performance (Dunn, 2017). The outcomes of the data that were gathered and analyzed were used to make changes to the semi-developed product and guide the rest of the program development.

### **Tools for Data Analysis**

We analyzed and interpreted the data from the focus groups. Handwritten notes were taken during the focus group. We reviewed and compared handwritten notes. The data was loosely coded through guidance of the EHP model and further developed into themes and assertions. Member checking was completed to ensure accuracy of the data and decrease bias. (Lune & Berg, 2017). The results of the findings will be presented in Chapter IV Results and Product.

### **Summary**

Chapter III Methodology consisted of a review of the overall product's preliminary development and the detailed steps that lead to the creation of the final product. The overall methodology discussed was the population, data collection methods, and tools and instruments utilized to process the gathered data.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS & PRODUCT**

Chapter IV Results & Product consists of the results based on the focus group results regarding our product and practical changes made to the final product. This chapter also consists of the data from the focus group, which was loosely coded into themes and assertions with the guidance of the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model. The data was compiled into a table that included person, context, task and performance aspects (Dunn, 2017). Key quotes were used to support the themes and actions steps taken to use this feedback on development of the product.

Once data was analyzed, coded, and main assumptions gathered, applicable changes were made to the already developed product. These changes, based on the EHP model, were also incorporated into the development of three additional modules. The preliminary modules developed prior to the focus group, revision of these modules, as well as the three additional constructed modules are located in Appendix D.

#### **Phase III of development**

With the data gathered and feedback coded, final assumptions were made. These practical changes were made to the already developed modules and helped guide the development of the additional modules of *Communication with Family*, *Farm Transitions*, and *Financial Stress*. Below in the table is the data that was gathered from the focus group, the alignment of the data with the EHP model and the way in which the data was used to build the final modules.

Table 3  
*Loose coding of data through EHP, key quotes, and action plan*

EHP	Key Quotes	Action Plan
<b>Person</b>		
Retired Farmer vs. Mentor	<p>“I think the term mentor would be better instead of retired farmer. You don’t want to pigeonhole that population, when experienced farmers could take on that role even if they’re not retired.”</p>	<p>Terminology was changed from retired farmer to mentor on module.</p>
Mentor knowledge	<p>“By using a farmer with experience, they will understand the times of the year that stressors are more common like planting and harvest.”</p>	<p>It is valuable to have an individual with experience in farming to be the one to implement the program.</p>
<b>Context</b>		
Stressors vary depending on time of year.	<p>“We have more time during non-harvest time to develop</p>	<p>The developed flexibility of the product will allow the</p>

some of those healthier mentors as well as the habits, such as sleep. It can be farmers to adjust or make tough to do that during changes at their own pace. harvest though.”

Most efficient way to share information

“There are NDSU extension offices in almost every county in farm country throughout North Dakota and Minnesota.”

In the future, there are many options and avenues to distribute the product materials.

“It may also be helpful to distribute this information at trade shows, like the North Dakota grain growers association or Ag Expos.”

Cultural Context

“I think it’s a good thing you guys are addressing this because there is the stigma that farmers don’t need help.”

Due to the stigma surrounding mental health in rural communities, this is a prevalent topic to address the needs of this population.

<p>“It will be important to find people who are willing to talk about mental health for this program.”</p>	<p>There may also be some lack of participation with this product/program due to this stigma.</p>
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Task

<p>Module topics including: Sleep, Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors, Financial Stress, Communication with Family, and Farm Transitions.</p>	<p>“All the topics you guys picked were main struggles that all farmers have.”</p> <p>“I think within your topics all the main difficulties around mental health are covered.”</p>	<p>No changes were made to this portion of the product.</p>
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Performance

<p>The presentation of materials</p>	<p>“It is good to have this in a casual conversation about this topic and is best to learn about it is little by little.”</p> <p>“It would be beneficial to have a short video explaining the program.”</p>	<p>In the development of the additional modules, kept same format throughout.</p>
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### **Category I: Person Aspect of EHP**

The main discussion points involving person factors included switching the term of retired farmer to mentor (Dunn, 2017). One of the farmers stated, *“I think the term mentor would be better instead of retired farmer. You don’t want to pigeonhole that population, when experienced farmers could take on that role even if they’re not retired.”* Another participant stated that he believed the relationship between a mentor and active farmer would be beneficial by stating, *“By using a farmer with experience they will understand the times of the year that stressors are more common like planting and harvest.”* We thus decided to change all terminology within our product to include mentor, rather than retired farmer. With the responses we also were able to distinguish that the program would be beneficial and valuable to active farmers due to the mentors' experiences as well as knowledge.

### **Category II: Context Aspect of EHP**

A topic that was discussed included the various seasonal contexts that farmers experience (Dunn, 2017). One common theme included that stressors are dependent on the season and the responsibilities they require. One participant stated, *“We have more time during non-harvest time to develop some of those healthier habits, such as sleep. It can be tough to do that during harvest though.”* Other participants also echoed this statement and agreed with the varying demand schedule. With our knowledge of the farming population and responsibilities, we were able to prepare for this possibility; thus, the choosing of the transtheoretical model (Braungart, 2020). With this model, the mentors will have the flexibility to meet the farmers at whatever stage they are at (Braungart, 2020).

Within our product, the plan included having the mentors primarily distribute all resources to farmers. During the focus group discussion participants also made suggestions of

additional distribution ideas. One participant stated, “*There are NDSU extension offices in almost every county in farm country throughout North Dakota and Minnesota.*” After this another participant also chimed in, “*It may also be helpful to distribute this information at trade shows, like the North Dakota Grain Growers’ Association or Ag Expos.*” These were taken into consideration for further promotion in the future.

Lastly, within this category the cultural context within EHP was addressed within the focus group (Dunn, 2017). Based on the literature reviewed as well as our personal experiences, psychosocial healthcare is stigmatized within rural settings. Participants also commented on the same premise stating, “*I think it’s a good thing you guys are addressing this because there is the stigma that farmers don’t need help.*” Another concern of the participant included finding individuals to be a part of the program. One participant stated, “*It will be important to find people who are willing to talk about mental health for this program.*” It is our hope that by developing a community-based program, the stigma would be reduced. By utilizing the mentor, role the premise we included would be a pre-established trust and relationship between this individual and the farmer. Thus, the overall stigma of reaching out for psychosocial help would be decreased or eliminated completely.

### **Category III: Task Aspect of EHP**

Throughout the focus group, the topics of *Sleep and Coping with Emotional and Farm Stress* were primarily covered as these were developed as preliminary modules. The participants did also mention the topics of *Communication with Family, Farm Transitions, and Financial Stress* and their applicability within the farming population. The feedback received included one participant stating, “*All the topics you guys picked were main struggles that all farmers have.*” Another participant agreed by saying, “*I think within your topics all the main difficulties around*

*mental health are covered.*” Given this feedback, we made no revisions to our already developed modules. This feedback also helped confirm our decision to also complete the development of the three remaining modules.

#### **Category IV: Performance Aspect of EHP.**

Another major area of discussion was the overall presentation and delivery of the materials. During the development, the principles of andragogy as well as community-based programs were utilized for better applicability to the farming population. For example, andragogical principles were evident in the design of the product with the different cognitive and affective goals as well as catering to various learning styles met to increase participation (Bastable et al., 2020). To ensure these guided us in the correct direction, questions were posed during the focus group. One participant stated, *“It is good to have this in a casual conversation about this topic and is best to learn about it is little by little.”* This further confirmed the development in which the learning principles helped guide.

Through the discussion during the focus group, some of the participants also gave suggestions for future delivery of this program. A main theme emerged of the overall delivery of these would be more helpful to some through a video. One participant stated, *“It would be beneficial to have a short video explaining the program.”* This would also cater to additional learning styles of individuals. For the feasibility of completing this project within the given deadlines, we will touch on this in Chapter V within the future recommendations to guide expansion of this project.

#### **Application of feedback**

The mentor guide was presented, reviewed, and discussed during the focus group. The initial mentor guide is in Appendix D. This mentor guide includes a brief overview and purpose

of the program, *Coffee with Farmers*. Following the general introduction of the purpose of the program, the Transtheoretical Model (Braungart, 2020) was reviewed as this was used to guide the development of the product. In the mentor guide, the five module topics were introduced along with the cognitive and affective goals for each module. This guide contained a general outline of how each module is designed that includes six specific sections: *Goal, Introduction, Bringing up the Topic, Get your Gears Goin', Well I suppose...*, and *Resources*. Main assumptions gathered from the focus group relating to the mentor guide included changing the terminology of retired farmer to mentor. Other main takeaways from the focus group included confirmation of an effective layout, thus promoting ease of reading as well as implementation. The participants in the focus group also commented on the resources section, stating that these provided the farmer with quick and easy references if needed.

The results of the focus groups were used to modify the existing two modules and to create the final three modules. The modules are *Sleep, Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors, Communication with Family, Farm Transitions, and Financial Stress*. The module *Sleep* reviewed the role that sleep plays and the influence it has on daily routines and psychosocial health with applicable recommendations to improve on this area. *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors* module reviewed and identified negative coping strategies and provided resources to establish positive coping strategies. The module, *Farm Transitions* reviewed the number of different transitions of which farmers can be part, whether it is transitioning the farm ownership to a younger generation or selling the farm. In this module resources were identified to assist the farmer through this transition and strategies to cope with transitions. *Communication with Family* module reviewed the different types of communication and provided resources and strategies to promote positive communication with family. Lastly,



the *Financial Stressors* module reviewed the impact that finances have on a farmer's life and resources to aide farmers in managing this stressor. With each of these developed modules is a condensed version in form of a brochure. These modules were made in hopes to aid the retired farmer in discussing stigmatized topics. Based on the focus group feedback, these topics are applicable to the desired population. Due to this stigma surrounding these topics, it was also gathered through the focus group that the modules will promote discussion within psychosocial health, thus reducing the overall stigma. Each module is located in Appendix E.

### **Summary**

Chapter IV Results & Product consisted of the results from the focus group that was loosely coded into themes and assertions and compiled into a table via the EHP model (Dunn, 2017). These themes were supported with key quotes and assertions were made through action steps which were taken to use the feedback into the development of the product. Future recommendations for this program are noted and will be included in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Farmers are not adequately served regarding their psychosocial health (Cole & Bondy, 2020; Roy et al., 2013). Community-based programs are highly regarded within rural communities due to the trusting relationship already established as well as further built between two individuals (Cole & Bondy, 2020). The profession of occupational therapy can serve as a consultative role through development of the product and program by addressing habits and routines. By incorporating occupational therapy principles targeting the psychosocial factors within the farming population in a community-based program, this further addresses the gap in literature within this area.

To begin the process of this project, a literature review was conducted to find the most prevalent needs within the farming population. Once these were identified, additional resources and literature were found in strategies or ways to aide farmers within problem or stressor areas. Modules were then created by utilizing this information as well as learning principles for client-centered development. These modules were built in conjunction with the *Coffee with Farmers* program; a program that was based on a concept and activity recommended by professionals within the Center for Rural Health from the University of North Dakota.

After preliminary module development of the topics *Sleep* and *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors*, a focus group was held with current and semi-retired farmers. The goal of this focus group was to gauge the applicability of the overall module content as well as practical recommendations for improvements. Once the feedback was gathered, this was then analyzed through loose coding guided by the EHP model (Dunn, 2017). This included loose themes within the categories of the person, context, task, and performance based off key quotes throughout the

focus group as well as practical changes made to the overall modules based off discussion points (Dunn, 2017). Additional modules of *Communication with Family*, *Farm Transitions*, and *Financial Stress* were then developed along with brochures as condensed guides of each module topic.

Main findings from the data analysis included changing the term ‘retired farmer’ to a ‘mentor’ to further expand this population and those allowed to be within this role. Another was that the farmers were fond of the community-based program due to the mentor having farming experience. It was also gathered through the focus group that the chosen module topics were applicable as well as appropriate for the population. Lastly, additional suggestions were given on distribution of the product which have been described in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### **Implications for Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapy practitioners address the holistic aspects of all clients and this includes the farming population. Occupational therapy looks to address enhancing roles, habits, and routines in numerous settings included home and work by addressing different areas of occupation that include ADL, IADLs, rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure and social participation (AOTA, 2014). There is a strong correlation between a farmer's career and the other occupations with which farming is deeply intertwined (Brew et al., 2016). Therefore, this correlation suggests the unique benefit that occupational therapy can utilize within this population. By utilizing the EHP as well as CMOP-E, this assisted in guidance of the study as well as the developed product. Through the lens of the EHP model, a therapeutic approach of create was utilized in curation of the product (Dunn, 2017). This model also guided the data analysis through loose coding based off the principles of the EHP model. By completion of

this study, a role of consultant of the product was further defined within the occupational therapy profession.

### **Limitations**

One limitation was that our study occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the completion of our focus group and required to hold the interviews and discussions over video technology rather than in-person. Another limitation was that all participants were from the same region of the Red River Valley of North Dakota. Different areas of the state as well as country, may affect the stressors that farmers experience in that area. Also, all members of the focus group were family members of the principal researchers, thus leading to possible biases in responses.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that future research be conducted to gather data regarding crisis contacts or resources for that specific area. This would make all materials more applicable as well as accessible for farmers in that area. Another recommendation is that an app or website with the materials be curated. A recommendation that arose from the focus group, which we were not able to create, was creating a brief education video on the program for the mentors to have another learning opportunity before implementing it in the community. A final recommendation is that future evaluation of effectiveness of the program is completed to determine the feasibility and useability of the product.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to develop a program for the farming community to address psychosocial needs through an occupational therapy lens. An extensive literature review was conducted to define the farming population, gather prevalent stressors, as well as

effective ways to deliver psychosocial services. Informal meetings were held with expert individuals for further ideas that we could implement which would align with occupational therapy principles as well as fall under the researched topic. This led to the development of the product that is the *Coffee with Farmers* program. This program was developed with an occupational therapy lens by utilizing the CMOP-E and EHP theories to guide the study as well as addressing the population through a holistic perspective. This led to the development of modules to aide mentors within the *Coffee with Farmers* program to deliver stigmatized topics to current farmers.

The preliminary development included curation of a mentor guide and two modules, *Sleep* and *Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors*, which also included condensed brochures of each topic. To gauge applicability and relevancy of the preliminary product, a focus group was held and recommendations by participants, which included two current farmers and two semi-retired farmers. The feedback received included that the module topics were appropriate to the population. The program that was developed was deemed appropriate and applicable to this population through information gathered during the focus group. This also included changes to the preliminary modules which were applied to the product as well as creation of three additional modules and brochures of *Communication with Family*, *Farm Transitions*, and *Financial Stress*.

The role of occupational therapy in addressing psychosocial health within the farming population is not well recognized, however, through curation of this program it is evident the value that occupational therapy has to play within this population. It is desired that the role of different health care professionals begins to take a more active role with farmers regarding their

mental health especially occupational therapy due to the holistic nature. Due to that holistic nature of the profession, it is applicable to serving rural communities and farm families.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**IRB Approval**

**Office of Research  
Compliance & Ethics**

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January 22, 2021

<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Kelsey Sherry and Ivy Steiger
<b>Project Title:</b>	Coffee with Farmers
<b>IRB Project Number:</b>	IRB-202101-097
<b>Project Review Level:</b>	Expedited 7
<b>Date of IRB Approval:</b>	01/11/2021
<b>Expiration Date of This Approval:</b>	01/10/2022
<b>Consent Form Approval Date:</b>	01/11/2021

The application form and all included documentation for the above-referenced project have been reviewed and approved via the procedures of the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.


Attached is your original consent form that has been stamped with the UND IRB approval and expiration dates. Please maintain this original on file. **You must use this original, stamped consent form to make copies for participant enrollment. No other consent form should be used.** It must be signed by each participant prior to initiation of any research procedures. In addition, each participant must be given a copy of the consent form.

Prior to implementation, submit any changes to or departures from the protocol or consent form to the IRB for approval. No changes to approved research may take place without prior IRB approval.

You have approval for this project through the above-listed expiration date. When this research is completed, please submit a termination form to the IRB. If the research will last longer than one year, an annual review and progress report must be submitted to the IRB prior to the submission deadline to ensure adequate time for IRB review.

The forms to assist you in filing your project termination, annual review and progress report, adverse event/unanticipated problem, protocol change, etc. may be accessed on the IRB website:  
<http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/>

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP  
RC&E Manager

Enclosure

Cc: Anne Haskins, OTR/L

**APPENDIX B**  
**Focus Group Questions**



## Discussion Group Questions (conversational way)

### To begin, we want to get to know more about you:

- How did you get started into farming? What is your favorite thing about farming?

### Now we will focus our attention onto the program.

- As you look at this packet, we gave you, what comes to mind for you about what works and what doesn't work?
  - What were your thoughts? What was good? What was bad?

### Perspective of Farmer

1. As you look at these 5 topics (1.Sleep, 2.Coping with emotional and farm stressors, 3.Financial stressors, 4.Communicating with family, 5.Farm transitions) what do you think about the fit of these topics for farmers?
  - a. What works and what doesn't work? What did we miss? What is something you wish you knew more about?
2. As a farmer, what would be the best way to receive this information? (If you want to really learn something, what is the best way for you to learn?)
  - a. Little by little or all at once?
3. Within this packet, what term or word would be the best way to refer to the person in the role of the farmer?
4. What do you think would be the best way to share this with people who need it? (e.g. elevator, chemical licensure training sessions, cafes, etc.)

### Perspective of Retired Farmer

1. As you look at these 5 topics (1.Sleep, 2.Coping with emotional and farm stressors, 3.Financial stressors, 4.Communicating with family, 5.Farm transitions) what do you think about the fit of these topics for farmers?
  - a. What did we miss? What do you wish you would have known when you were still farming?
2. What is the best way to learn this information so that you would feel confident in your ability to use this information in your community? (What information & going to have to see it first)? (Do you want to learn the same way you just told us?)
  - a. Detailed description (a paper hand out with a clear outline and lots of information) or a short and sweet brochure (condensed, less detailed)?
3. In order to carry out this program in your community, what other things would you need (additional resources, information, etc.; what we would provide is xyz, beyond that what else would be helpful.)
4. Within this guide, what term or word would be the best way to refer to the person in the role of the retired farmer? (e.g. mentor, guide, etc.)
5. What do you think would be the best way to share this with people who need it? (e.g. elevator, chemical licensure training sessions, cafes, etc.)

### Overview/Additional Questions

1. What changes would you make to this program? - this is at the start(the modules, design, etc.)
2. What would be the most effective way to provide the farmers with resources?
  - a. Brochures, paper handout, index card, etc.

**APPENDIX C**  
**Participant Consent Form**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Project Title:** Coffee with Farmers

**Principal Investigator:** Ivy P. Steiger & Kelsey J. Sherry

**Phone/Email Address:** 701-520-8440 [ivy.steiger@und.edu](mailto:ivy.steiger@und.edu) & 218-791-1152  
[kelsey.sherry@und.edu](mailto:kelsey.sherry@und.edu)

**Department:** Occupational Therapy

**Research Advisor:** Anne Haskins, PhD, OTR/L

**Research Advisor  
Phone/Email Address:** [anne.haskins@und.edu](mailto:anne.haskins@und.edu) 701-777-0229

Hello. We are graduate student in the Occupational Therapy program s at the University of North Dakota. We are in the process of designing a program in which retired farmers help and mentor current farmers in areas of work and life that can be challenging for farmers. As part of the process, we are doing a research study in which we ask retired farmers and farmers of review part of the program we have developed so far and give us feedback. The research steps would be that we first obtain your consent to take part, then give you a packet that includes two of the parts of the program. Once you review the packet, we would like to sit down with you and three other farmers and interview you about what you found to be strengths and weaknesses in the program. We also want to ask you about your ideas about the topics we chose to address overall. We would record your answers by jotting down notes and then use your feedback to improve the two parts you reviewed and also build the next two parts of the program. The details of this research are presented below.

**What should I know about this research?**

- Someone will explain this research to you.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary. Whether you take part is up to you.
- If you don't take part, it won't be held against you.
- You can take part now and later drop out, and it won't be held against you
- If you don't understand, ask questions.
- Ask all the questions you want before you decide.

**How long will I be in this research?**

We expect that your taking part in this research will last approximately two hours. A possible follow up phone call within a month to verify feedback.

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Expires: 01/10/2022  
University of North Dakota IRB

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**Why is this research being done?**

The purpose of this research is to gather information and feedback for creating a community program to address mental health needs among farmers. The information that is gathered from this focus group will be used to improve the program to be more applicable to current farmers.

**What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?**

If you decide to take part in this research study, you will be involved in one discussion group lasting approximately one to two hours. The discussion group will take place virtually via Zoom technology following the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control. After the discussion group you can expect a follow up call to ensure the data we have collected is accurate. You are free to skip any questions or not share without any consequence. The discussion group will include written notes by researchers.

**Could being in this research hurt me?**

People who take part in this study do not face any serious risks though some questions may evoke an emotional response. The emotional discomfort should not be more than what people experience in average daily life. You can leave the study at any time with no penalty.

**Will being in this research benefit me?**

It is not expected that you will personally benefit from this research. However, the information gathered and the discussion had will be used to develop a program for farmer to discuss mental health and decrease stigma through conversation.

**How many people will participate in this research?**

Approximately four people will take part in this research study. The study is being done by students who are at the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program.

**Will it cost me money to take part in this research?**

You will not have any financial costs for being in this research study.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

**Who is funding this research?**

The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

**What happens to information collected for this research?**

Your private information may be shared with individuals and organizations that conduct or watch over this research, including:

- Anne Haskins, PhD, OTR/L who is a professor in occupational therapy at UND

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Expires: 01/10/2022

University of North Dakota IRB

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

• The Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviewed this research  
We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential. We protect your information from disclosure to others to the extent required by law. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Data or specimens collected in this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if identifiers are removed. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else.

**What if I agree to be in the research and then change my mind?**

There are no consequences of withdrawal of participation in the study. Any information that you have shared will not be included in the research data.

**Who can answer my questions about this research?**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think this research has hurt you or made you sick, talk to the research team at the phone number listed above on the first page.

This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may talk to them at 701.777.4279 or [UND.irm@UND.edu](mailto:UND.irm@UND.edu) if:

- You have questions, concerns, or complaints that are not being answered by the research team.
- You are not getting answers from the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone else about the research.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You may also visit the UND IRB website for more information about being a research subject: <http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.html>

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved: 01/11/2021  
Expires: 01/10/2022  
University of North Dakota IRB

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved: 01/11/2021  
Expires: 01/10/2022  
University of North Dakota IRB

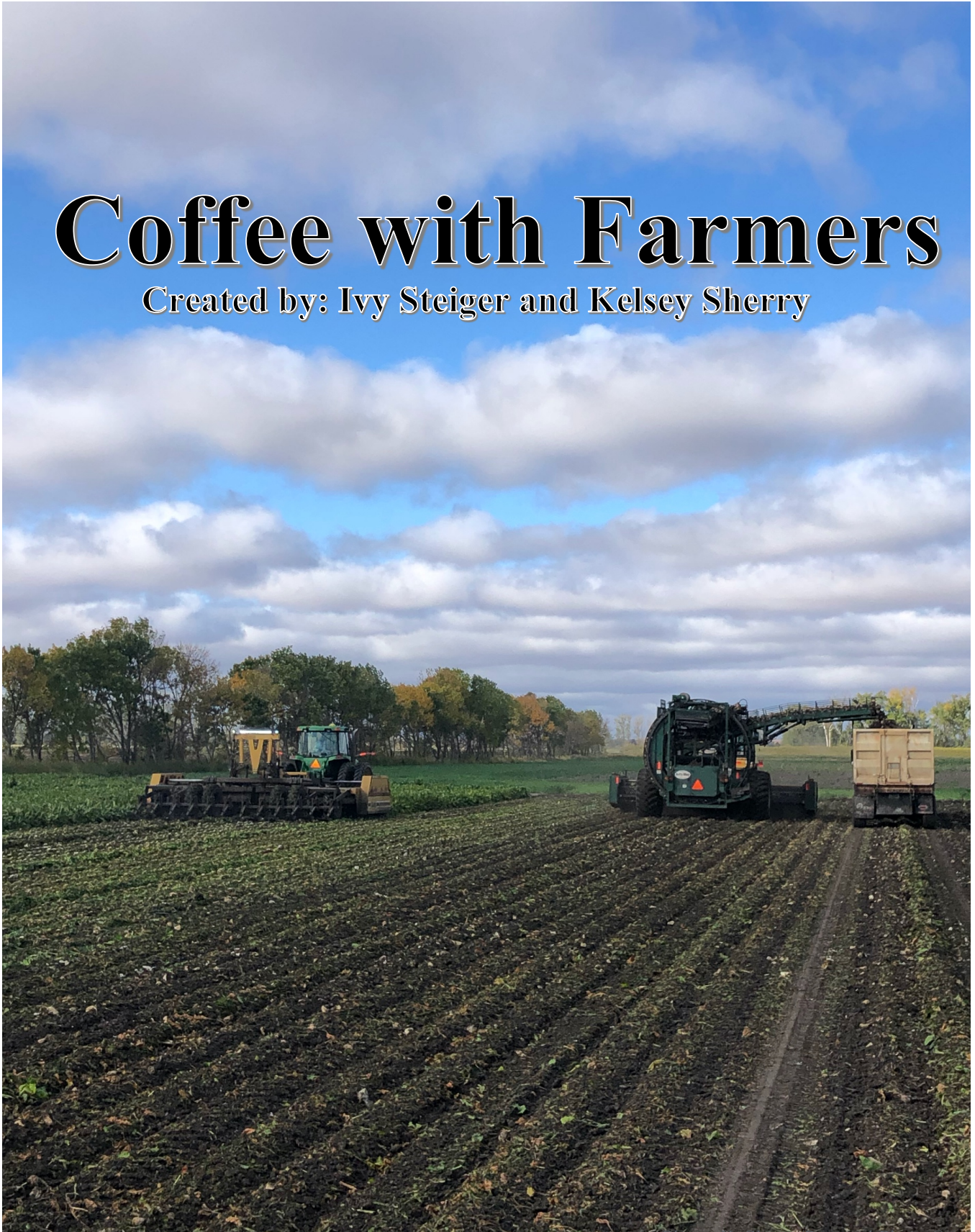
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D**  
**Preliminary Modules, Mentor Guide, and Brochures**



# Coffee with Farmers

Created by: Ivy Steiger and Kelsey Sherry



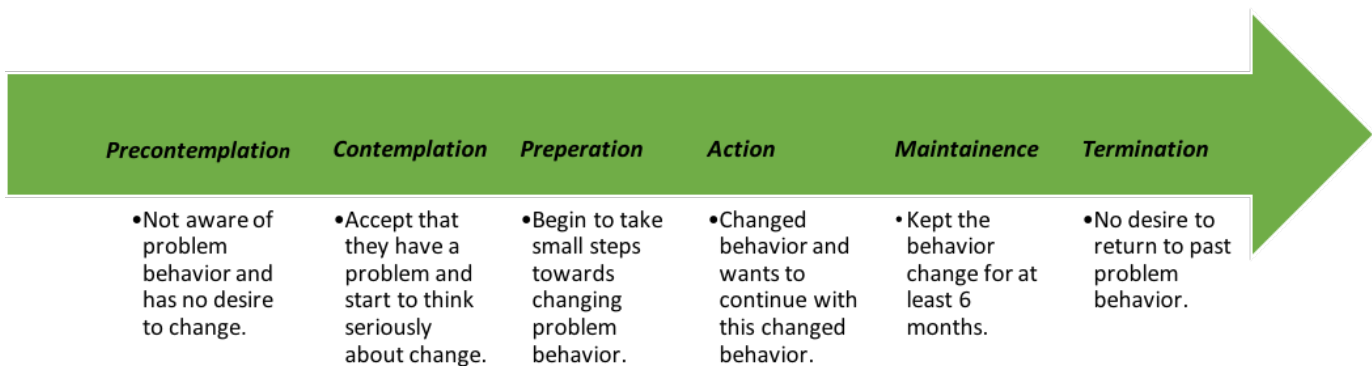
## Overview

*Coffee with Farmers* is a program that was made to increase wellbeing and decrease shame around mental health among farmers in rural towns. This program has a mentor-type relationship between retired and current farmers. Community involvement is appreciated in rural communities. By having a mentor-type relationship between retired and current farmers, greater trust will be built. This program is made of 5 parts. Each part has a topic the retired farmer may choose to talk to the current farmer about. All the topics relate to mental health and wellness. The parts are sleep, farm or emotional stress, financial stress, farm transitions, and communication with families.

There are cognitive and emotional goals in the table below. These are the end goals after each part of the program is finished. The different parts of this program are used over time. These help current farmers make healthy habits or routines by teaching positive ways to deal with stressors. Each topic has research and useful things that retired farmers can use in addition to their prior knowledge. There is a brochure within

each topic that a retired farmer can have on hand when in the community. The brochure will be a snapshot of the information that is given in this packet.

The five parts of the product match the goals that were created. The transtheoretical model was used while creating this program (Baumgart, 2020). This model demands conscious changes of the individual (Baumgart, 2020). There are six stages to this model.



Each part of the program is broken down into six different sections:

1. **Goals:** The expected end result of each part of the program.
2. **Introduction:** Facts about the topic to present to the farmers.
3. **Bringing up the topic:** An example is provided on how one may bring up the topic to the current farmer.
4. **Get you gears goin':** Application of used model and an example of application to conversation.
5. **Well I suppose...:** Resources are noted to help the farmer get into the action phase of the model.
6. **Resources:** References for the farmers to look more into resources that are available.

**Table 1: Module Goals**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Cognitive Goal</b>	<b>Emotional Goal</b>
<b>Sleep</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to locate resources regarding healthy sleeping habits.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to recognize implementation of two healthy sleeping habits.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> After reviewing resources, the farmer will be able to process through three healthy sleeping habits to fit his or her needs.</p>
<b>Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify at least two coping strategies they can use when experiencing emotional or farm stressors.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmers will be able to locate one resource for coping strategies and identify resources for when he/she is in crisis regarding emotional stressors.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will display consistent interest with using positive coping strategies when experiencing emotional or farm stressors through report.</p>
<b>Communication with Family</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify two different strategies to communicate with family members.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to explain effective communication strategies with family.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will be able to process through two scenarios that resulted in difficulty in communicating with family through their own means (journaling, talking, etc.).</p> <p><b>Goal 4:</b> The farmer will be assertive in discovering his or her communication needs with family members.</p>
<b>Farm Transitions</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify one potential resource to aide in the transitions he or she may be experiencing in relation to the farm.</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> The farmer will be able to identify two coping strategies they can use when</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will be able to show value of considering emotions through discussion of various transitions within their farming career.</p>

	going through transitional phases in relation to the farm.	
<b>Financial Stress</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to locate one resource (financial advisor, business plan, etc.) which may aide in reducing financial stressors.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to develop a list of coping strategies to reduce financial stressors for themselves.</p>	<b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will express the influence regarding psychosocial effects of financial stress on their wellbeing.

## Sleep

### Goals:

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to locate resources regarding healthy sleeping habits.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to recognize implementation of two healthy sleeping habits.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: After reviewing resources, the farmer will be able to process through three healthy sleeping habits to fit his or her needs.
  - Goal 4: The farmer will be open to the experience of sharing the effects of healthy sleeping habits on their nightly routine.

### Introduction:

What is rest and sleep?


- Rest and sleep can support healthy and active engagement in other parts of life (AOTA, 2014). It includes resting, a bedtime routine, and sleeping (AOTA, 2014).

### How poor sleep effects farmers:

- Poor sleeping habits and lack of sleep put farmers at a higher risk of injury and may weaken his or her judgment. It is hard for farmers to keep a regular sleep schedule due to the demands involved in farming (Hawes et al., 2019).
- Influences on sleep: common medical conditions & psychiatric disorders, healthy habits and behaviors, stress and occupational balance, sleep environment, sleep disorders (Solet, 2013)
- Statistics show that many farm accidents happen between 2pm and 4pm, when a poor night's sleep shows up as the 'afternoon slump' (Farm Strong, 2018).

### Other factors:

- In addition to poor sleep habits caused from the demands of farming, financial stress specific to agricultural seasons is identified as a contributor to decreased sleep hours (LaBash et al., 2008).

 <p><i>Retired Farmer (RF):</i> You have been busy this harvest I see, have you been able to find time to rest when you are not working?</p>	<p><i>Current Farmer (CF):</i> Here and there. We have been working 24 hours round clock in 12-hour shifts, I haven't been able to get much sleep because I'm worried about getting the beets off in time before rain/deadlines.</p> <p><i>RF:</i> It is trying times during harvest, its important though to get sleep to decrease your risk of injury. When harvest is over, do you have a plan to establish a healthy sleeping routine?</p>
---	--

*...if willing to discuss sleep, share resources of establishing healthy sleeping routines, if not bring up another time until farmer is willing to discuss and share...*

### Get your gears goin’:

Precontemplation	Contemplation	Preparation	Action	Maintenance	Termination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Bring up topic of sleep if farmer shares that they have not been getting enough. "Have you been getting much sleep lately?" may be appropriate, followed by talking about the benefits of sleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The farmer may tell you they are having problems sleeping and say they need to make a change to get better sleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The farmer seeks help and shares that they need to make better sleeping habits and notice the effects poor sleep has on them. They start to look at healthy sleeping habits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The farmer will ask for tips and methods to improve sleep. This is where suggestions can be made for healthy sleeping habits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•You will be a resource/motivator for healthy sleep. It is a mutual understanding that it is not always possible to get the 8 to 10 hours of sleep during times such as harvest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The farmer continues to have healthy sleeping habits and better sleep.</li> </ul>

### Well, I suppose...

According to Wall (2017), sleep deprivation has many effects including physical, mental, and motor coordination. There are many ways to improve this area, which are supported.

- Effects (Wall, 2017):
  - What are some things you experience when you don't get enough sleep?
    - Irritability
    - Sluggishness
    - Reduced vigilance
    - Motor discoordination
    - Impaired cognition
- Possible Changes to Improve Sleep (Cordeiro, 2014; Solet, 2014; Tomorrow Team, 2019; Wall, 2017):
  - What are some possible solutions to help you sleep better?

- Turning off technology (phone, computer, TV) 1-hour prior to bed
    - The light they emit triggers your sleep/wake switch and keeps you alert.
  - Decreased alcohol usage
    - Limit how much alcohol you drink and none 2 to 3 hours before bed.
  - Limit caffeine intake
    - Don't drink caffeine after 3pm as it takes up to 7 hours to metabolize.
  - Avoid nicotine products
    - These lead to individuals experiencing withdrawal symptoms during the nighttime and affect sleeping patterns.
  - Blackout curtain
    - These help to increase melatonin production by having a darkened room environment.
    - May help if the farmer is sleeping during the daytime.
  - Fan/White Noise
    - Can drown out background noises that may disrupt sleep patterns.
    - Would be helpful during harvest when farmer may be sleeping during hours when family/roommates may be up.
- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?
- 
-



## Resources:

Article reviewing the dangers of sleep deprivation for farmers; the importance of setting a sleep routine, but aware that this is not always an option:

<https://www.agriculture.com/family/health-safety/the-dangers-of-sleep-deprivation>

Overall gives tips and explanations of why sleep is important for farmers:

<https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeing-topics/sleep-well/>

Ten 1-minute podcasts outlining various tips on how to improve your sleep as a farmer:

<https://farmstrong.co.nz/the-10-commandments-of-sleep-avoiding-worries/>

Fatigue Safety Checklist:

<http://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/March-2018-FSC-Fatigue-2020.pdf>

Sleep Deprivation – causes, consequences, and assessment tool to indicate daytime sleepiness:

[https://nasdonline.org/static\\_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf](https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf)

## **Coping with Emotional & Farm Stressors**

### Goals:

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify at least two coping strategies they can use when experiencing emotional or farm stressors.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to locate one resource for when he/she experiences crisis regarding emotional stressors.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will display consistent interest with using positive coping strategies when experiencing emotional or farm stressors through report.

## Introduction:

### What is stress and coping?

- Stress happens when the demands in one's life is more than their ability to cope. This will influence how a person will go about their day. (AOTA, 2007).
- A person manages stress and demands in their life through coping. Coping consists of action to overcome the challenges of stress (Pogere, Lopez-Sangil, Garcia-Senoran, & Gonzalex, 2019; Solet, 2014).

### Farming & Stress

- “Farming in the United States was rated the twelfth most stressful occupation out of 130 total high stress occupations” (Deary, Willock & McGregor, 1997, p. 131).
- Farmers are at risk of poor mental health due to the number of stressors they experience (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019).
- Farmers are at risk of suicide compared to non-farmers because of the high levels of stress they experience (Vayro et al., 2019).
- Farmers are less likely to seek help regarding mental health due to lack of community resources and time availability (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019)



BRINGING UP THE  
CONVERSATION

*Retired Farmer (RF):* How have you been dealing/feeling lately? I know the crop needs some rain and that your kids have been busy in school?

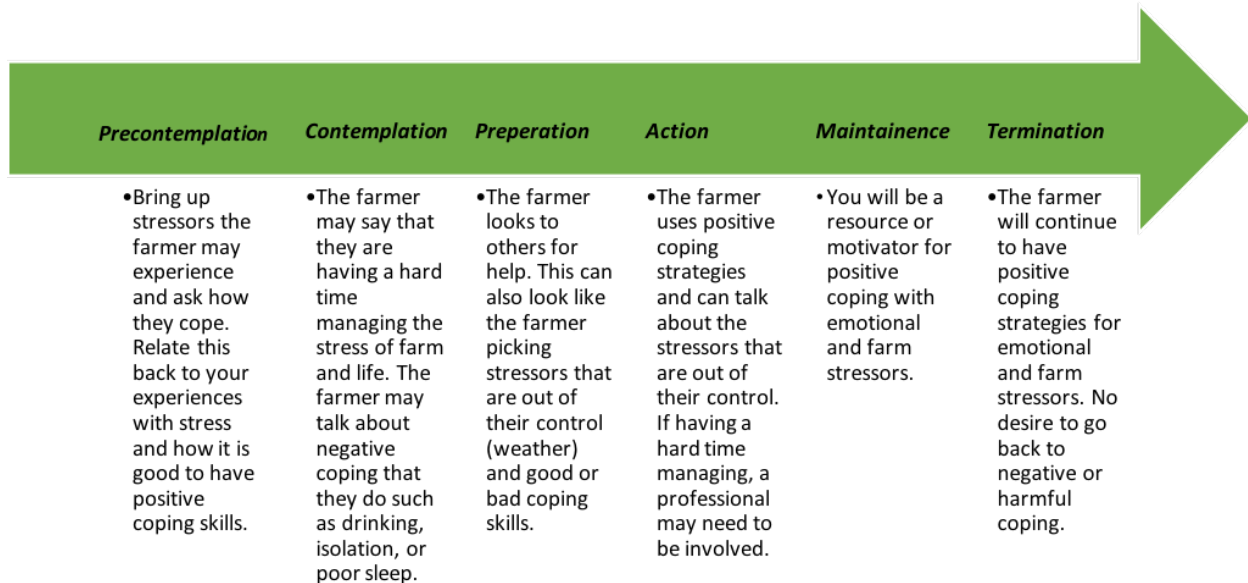
*Current Farmer (CF):* Just another one of those years you know. Hoping for rain here soon so those crops get some much-needed moisture. The kids are good; I haven't been able to see them much because I have been busy spraying. My wife has been keeping up with the kids though.

*RF:* It's hard when the weather isn't giving us what we need for a successful crop, but it is out of our control. It's important to remember that there are some things that we can't control. What have you been doing when you are in the field? Have you been able to make it to "child name" game?

*CF:* You know, I usually go up to the bar for a few after spraying to unwind. I haven't made it to a game yet this year, but maybe I'll try to make it to one next week. It would be nice to see them play instead of just hearing about it after.

.... if willing to continue to discuss, talk about letting go of stressors that are not in one's control and discuss different coping strategies and make list of positive coping strategies (make a list, deep breathing, leisure activity, etc).

## Get your gears goin’:



## Well, I suppose...

The key to helping individuals is to evaluate their self-esteem and abilities to combat the stressors they face (McCarthy & Mejia, 2008). North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension office created a 4 step approach to helping an individual manage stress.

- 4 steps to managing stress (NDSU Extension, 2019):
  - 1. Assess needs and impact
    - What are the key needs and the size of the impact?
  - 2. Identify and access resources
    - What resources are helpful? Are they easy to access? How will I access these key resources?
  - 3. Pursue good-quality decisions
    - What is the decision you are facing? Write down information you feel you need to be informed and the options that are available. Who can you discuss this with and be open to possibility of change.
  - 4. Connect with sources of support

- Who are sources of support and how do they fit the need you are looking to address? Ask how they might approach this issue.
  - Healthy ways to cope with stress (CDC, 2019)
    - Take care of yourself
      - Eat healthy, well balanced meals
      - Exercise on a regular basis
      - Get plenty of sleep
      - Give yourself a break
    - Talk to others about how you are feeling. This can be a friend, a counselor, family member, pastor, etc.
    - Avoid drugs and alcohol
    - Recognize when you need more help. If your problems persist or you have thoughts about suicide, talk to a professional
  - Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?
- 
- 

## Resources

Four steps to manage stress:

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/4-steps-to-managing-stress-in-farming-and-ranching>

Effective and positive coping strategies:

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/key-coping-tools-in-times-of-farm-ranch-stress>

Farm Stress Zone – survey of physical, social, emotional & mental stressors:

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/where-are-you-in-the-farm-ranch-stress-zone>

**Additional Modules****Communication with Family**

Goals:

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify two different strategies to communicate with family members.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to explain effective communication strategies with family.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will be able to process through two scenarios that resulted in difficulty in communicating with family through their own means of report.
  - Goal 4: The farmer will be assertive in discovering his or her communication needs with family members.

**Farm Transitions**

Goals:

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify one potential resource to aide in the transitions he or she may be experiencing in relation to the farm.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to apply two coping strategies they can use when going through transitional phases in relation to the farm.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will be able to show value of considering emotions through discussion of various transitions within their farming career.

**Financial Stress**

Goals:

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to locate one resource (financial advisor, business plan, etc.) which may aide in reducing financial stressors.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to identify one possible coping strategy they can use when experiencing financial stressors.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will express the influence regarding psychosocial effects of financial stress on their wellbeing.

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# Resources

Environment & Well-being Tips:  
<https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeingtopics/sleep-well/>

Ten 1-minute podcasts outlining various tips to improve sleep as a farmer:

<https://farmstrong.co.nz/the-10-commandments-of-sleep-avoidingworries/>

Fatigue Safety Checklist:  
<http://umash.umn.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/03/March2018-FSC-Fatigue-2020.pdf>

Daytime Sleepiness Tool:  
[https://nasdonline.org/static\\_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf](https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf)

Researchers are providing resources but not endorsing any of the organization, nor are the organizations endorsing this project.

## hotlines

National Suicide Prevention:  
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line:  
text 'GO' to 741741

Avera Health: Farm Stress:  
1-800-691-4336

Minnesota Farm & Rural  
Helpline:  
833-600-2670

Prairie St. Johns 24/7:  
701-746-7200



EAT  
FARM  
SLEEP  
REPEAT

Made by Ivy Steiger & Kelsey Sherry  
Contact Information: [ivy.steiger@und.edu](mailto:ivy.steiger@und.edu) &  
[kelsey.sherry@und.edu](mailto:kelsey.sherry@und.edu)

Occupational Therapy Graduate Students in University of North  
Dakota/Occupational Therapy Department. Created for a student project.

This program was created for retired farmers to use in their local communities with current farmers to address mental health needs. To find goals and additional information on this topic, see program packet.

Photo used with permission, courtesy of Erin Kovarik

# Effects of sleep deprivation

- Irritability
- Sluggishness
- Mistakes
- Increased Stress

# Research Facts

Poor sleeping habits and lack of sleep put farmers at a higher risk of injury and may weaken his or her judgement. It is hard for farmers to keep a regular sleep schedule due to the nature of farming (Hawes et al., 2019).

Farm accidents happen between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., when a bad night's sleep shows up as the 'afternoon slump' (Farm Strong, 2018).

## HOW CAN YOU SEE THIS FITTING INTO YOUR LIFESTYLE?

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

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# What YOU can do

1. Turn off technology 1-hour prior to bed
  - o The light they emit triggers your sleep/wake switch and keeps you alert.
2. Decrease alcohol/nicotine intake
  - o Will help avoid withdrawal symptoms while sleeping
3. Limit caffeine
  - o Try to avoid after 3 p.m. as it takes up to 7 hours to metabolize.
4. Blackout Curtain
  - o Help to increase melatonin production by having darkened room environment
5. Fan or White Noise
  - o Drowns out background noise that may disrupt sleep patterns.

# COPING WITH EMOTIONAL AND FARM STRESSORS

## RESOURCES

4 steps to manage stress

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/4-steps-to-managing-stress-in-farming-and-ranching>

Useful and positive coping strategies

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/key-coping-tools-in-times-of-farm-ranch-stress>

What is your farmer stress zone?

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/where-are-you-in-the-farm-ranch-stress-zone>

## HOTLINES

National Suicide Hotline  
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line  
text "GO" to 741741

Avera Health Farm Stress  
1-800-691-4336

Minnesota Farm and  
Rural Helpline  
833-600-2670

Prairie St.Johns 24/7  
701-746-7200

Coffee with Farmers

Created by Kelsey Sherry  
Contact Information: [kelsey.sherry@und.edu](mailto:kelsey.sherry@und.edu)

Photo: K. Sherry/Personal Photos ©

This program was created for retired farmers to use in their local community with younger farmers to address mental health needs. To find goals and additional information on this topic, see program packet.

# FACTS

Farming in the United States was ranked the 12th most stressful job out of 130 total high stress jobs (Deary, Willock & McGregor, 1997).

Farmers are at a risk of poor mental health due to number of stressors they experience (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019).

Farmers are more at risk of suicide than non-farmers because of the high levels of stress they experience (Vayro et al., 2019).

Farmers are less likely to seek help regarding mental health due to lack of community resources and their schedule (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019).

## List examples of feeling stressed

Physical (ex. low energy)

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Social (ex.withdrawl from family)

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Mental (ex. difficulty concentrating)

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Emotional (ex. feeling hopeless)

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## Select 3 healthy habits you will practice daily

Physical

1) Exercise 20 minutes a day (2) Get a medical checkup with your provider

Mental

(1) Take 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities (2) Take regular 5 to 10 minute breaks in your day to relax

Emotional/Spiritual

(1) Write down 3 things you are grateful for daily (2) Share concerns with a counselor or professional

Personal/Relationship

(1) Take 15 minutes each day for uninterrupted conversation with a family member (2) Get involved or stay connected with a friend

Work/Professional

(1) Discuss needs of farm operations but do not let them occupy all aspects of life (2) Seek helpful feedback on your farm operation for ways to grow or improve

Finanical/Practical

(1) Create a family budget and seek to live within your means

Photo: K. Sherry/Personal Photos ©



**APPENDIX E**  
**Revised Modules, Mentor Guide, and Brochures**

# Coffee with Farmers

This program was developed by Kelsey Sherry and Ivy Steiger, occupational therapy students at the University of North Dakota. They were advised by Dr. Anne Haskins, a faculty member within the occupational therapy department at the University of North Dakota.

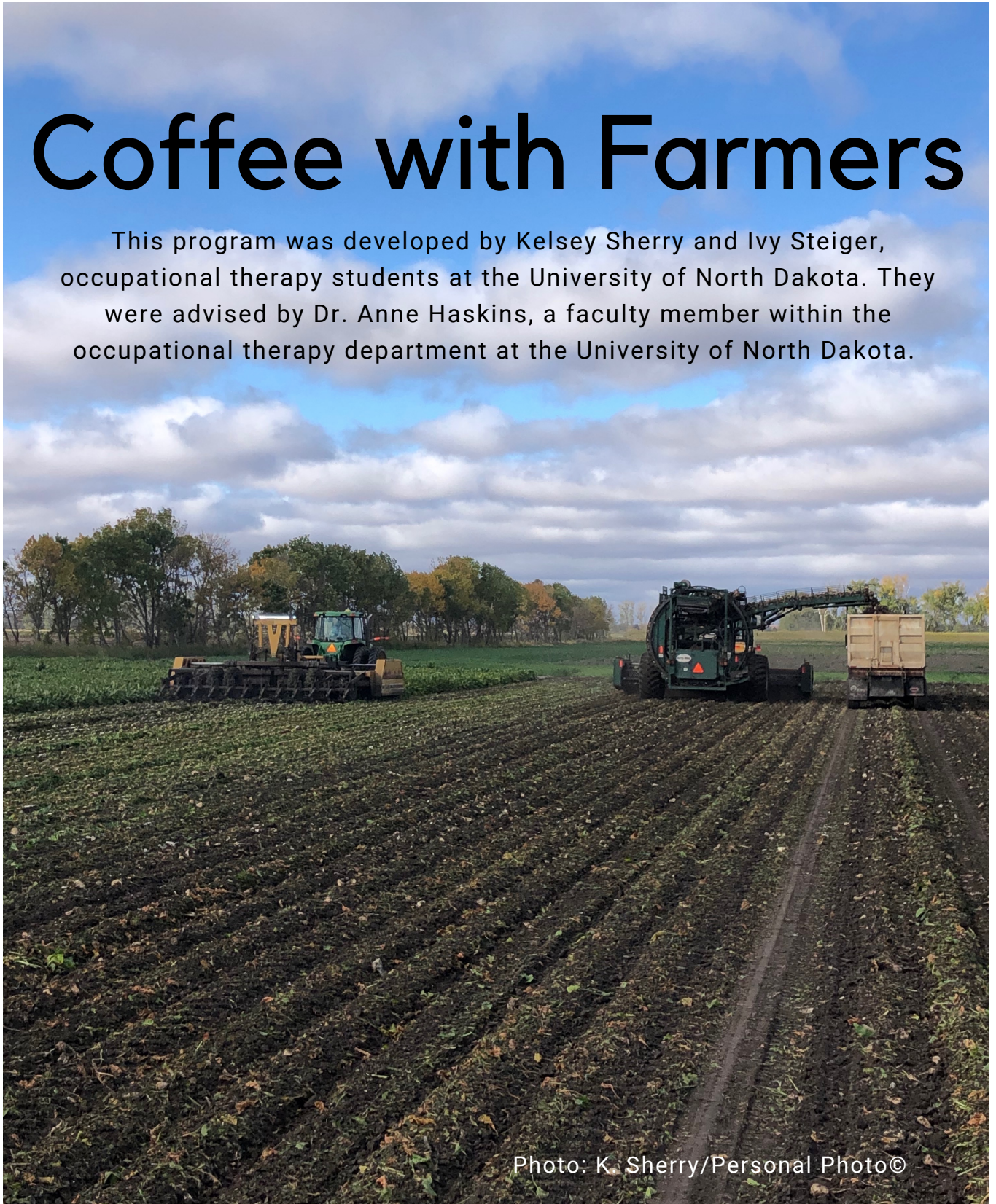


Photo: K. Sherry/Personal Photo©

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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*Coffee with Farmers* is a previously developed program that was made to increase wellbeing and decrease shame around mental health among farmers in rural areas. The program is built around the idea of a retired farmer, who has received training on this program, mentoring an active farmer. This manual is for the use of the mentor figure to aide in additional information under all topics.

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## **WHO MADE THIS:**

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Two graduate occupational therapy (OT) students from the University of North Dakota (UND) developed this product. They did this with advisement of a faculty member from the UND Occupational Therapy program. They made this guide with the thought of the pre-existing program of *Coffee with Farmers*.

The students used principles from the profession within this manual. This includes identifying stressors through research, addressing

routines and habits, and overall aiming to deliver client-centered, mental health services to farmers. Occupational therapy can look at all aspects of a person including his or hers physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. This was made in hopes that it could be taken and applied by all individuals, due to thorough explanation throughout. If questions arise, the OT students can be reached through the UND Occupational Therapy Department.

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### **WHAT TO EXPECT AS A MENTOR:**

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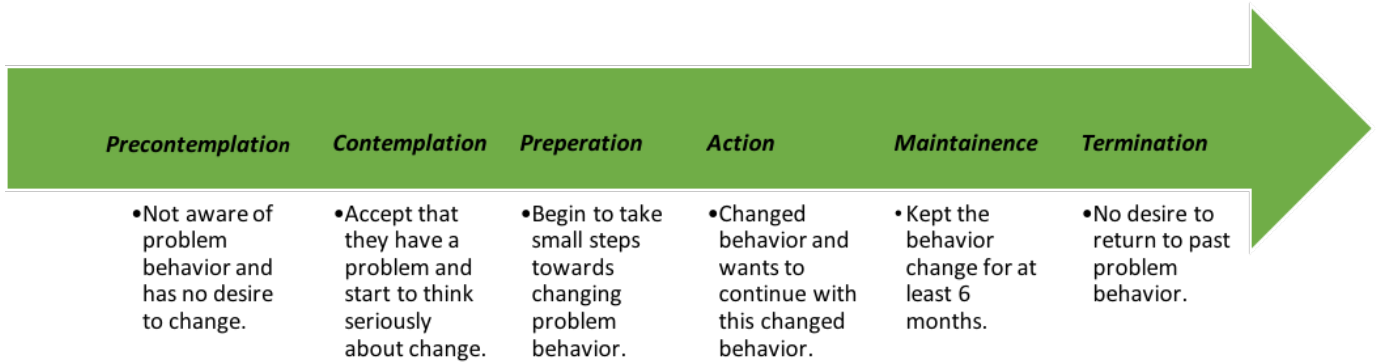
Prior to using this manual, the mentor figure will have had Mental Health First Aid Training prior to beginning the Coffee with Farmers program through their specific administration. Community involvement is appreciated in rural communities. By having a mentor-type relationship between these two individuals, greater trust will be built. This program is made of 5 parts. Each part has a topic the mentors may choose to talk to the active farmer about. All the topics relate to mental health and wellness. The parts are *sleep, coping with emotional and*

*farm stressors, communication with family, farm transitions, and financial stress.*

There are cognitive and emotional goals (see table 1). These are the end goals after each part of the program is finished. The different parts of this program are used over time. These help active farmers make healthy habits or routines by teaching positive ways to deal with stressors. Each topic has research and useful things that the mentors can use in addition to their prior knowledge. There is a brochure within each topic that a mentor can have on hand when in the community that will be located at the end of this packet. The brochure will be a snapshot of the information that is given in this packet.

The five parts of the product match the goals that were created. The transtheoretical model was used while creating this program<sup>1</sup>. This model requires self-action of an individual in order to make lifestyle changes<sup>1</sup>. There are six stages to this model.

Figure 1: Transtheoretical Model. <sup>1</sup>



(Baumgart, 2020).

Each part of the program is broken down into six different sections:

1. **Goals:** The expected end result of each part of the program.
2. **Introduction:** Facts about the topic to present to the farmers.
3. **Bringing up the topic:** An example is provided on how one may bring up the topic to the current farmer.
4. **Get you gears goin’:** Application of used model and an example of application to conversation.
5. **Well I suppose...:** Resources are noted to help the farmer get into the action phase of the model.
6. **Resources:** References for the farmers to look more into resources that are available.

Table 1: Module Goals

Topic	Cognitive Goal	Emotional Goal
Sleep	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to locate resources regarding healthy sleeping habits.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to recognize implementation of two healthy sleeping habits.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> After reviewing resources, the farmer will be able to process through three healthy sleeping habits to fit his or her needs.</p>

<p><b>Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify at least two coping strategies he/she can use when experiencing emotional or farm stressors.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmers will be able to locate one resource for coping strategies and identify resources for when he/she is in crisis regarding emotional stressors.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will display consistent interest with using positive coping strategies when experiencing emotional or farm stressors through report.</p>
<p><b>Communication with Family</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify two different strategies to communicate with family members.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to explain effective communication strategies with family.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will be able to process through two scenarios that resulted in difficulty in communicating with family through their own means (journaling, talking, etc.).</p> <p><b>Goal 4:</b> The farmer will be assertive in discovering his or her communication needs with family members.</p>
<p><b>Farm Transitions</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to identify one potential resource to aide in the transitions he or she may be experiencing in relation to the farm.</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> The farmer will be able to identify two coping strategies he/she can use when going through transitional phases in relation to the farm.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will be able to show value of considering emotions through discussion of various transitions within their farming career.</p>

<b>Financial Stress</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> The farmer will be able to locate one resource (financial advisor, business plan, etc.) which may aide in reducing financial stressors.</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> The farmer will be able to develop a list of coping strategies to reduce financial stressors for themselves.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> The farmer will express the influence regarding psychosocial effects of financial stress on their wellbeing.</p>
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# SLEEP

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*\*A matching brochure can be found at the end of the packet\**

## **GOALS:**

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- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to locate resources regarding healthy sleeping habits.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to recognize implementation of two healthy sleeping habits.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: After reviewing resources, the farmer will be able to process through three healthy sleeping habits to fit his or her needs.
  - Goal 4: The farmer will be open to the experience of sharing the effects of healthy sleeping habits on their nightly routine.

---

## **INTRODUCTION:**

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What is rest and sleep?

- Rest and sleep support healthy and active engagement in other parts of life<sup>2</sup>. It includes resting, a bedtime routine, and sleeping<sup>2</sup>.

How poor sleep effects farmers:

- Poor sleeping habits and lack of sleep put farmers at risk of injury and may weaken his or her judgment. It is hard for farmers to keep a regular sleep schedule with farming demands<sup>3</sup>.

- What influences sleep?: common medical conditions & psychiatric disorders, habits and behaviors, stress and occupational balance, sleep environment, and sleep disorders <sup>4</sup>.
- Statistics show that many farm accidents happen between 2pm and 4pm, when a poor night's sleep shows up as the 'afternoon slump' <sup>5</sup>.


Other factors:

- Decreased sleep hours in farmers is a partially caused by poor sleep habits and financial stress specific to farming seasons <sup>6</sup>.

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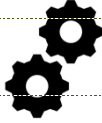
**BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION:**

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 <p><i>Mentor:</i> You have been busy this harvest I see, have you been able to find time to rest when you are not working?</p>	<p><i>Farmer:</i> Here and there. We have been working 24 hours round clock in 12-hour shifts, I haven't been able to get much sleep because I'm worried about getting the beets off in time before rain/deadlines.</p> <p><i>Mentor:</i> It is trying times during harvest, its important though to get sleep to decrease your risk of injury. When harvest is over, do you have a plan to establish a healthy sleeping routine?</p>
--	---



*...if willing to discuss sleep, share resources of establishing healthy sleeping routines, if not bring up another time until farmer is willing to discuss and share...*



## **GET YOUR GEARS GOIN':**

Figure 2: Transtheoretical Model and Sleep<sup>1</sup>



## **WELL, I SUPPOSE...**

Sleep deprivation has many effects including physical, mental, and motor coordination<sup>7</sup>. There are many ways to improve this on sleep that has evidence.

- Effects<sup>7</sup>:
  - What are some things you experience when you don't get enough sleep?
    - Irritability
    - Sluggishness
    - Reduced vigilance
    - Motor discoordination

- Impaired cognition
- Possible Changes to Improve Sleep<sup>4 7 8 9 10</sup>
  - What are some possible solutions to help you sleep better?
    - Turning off technology (phone, computer, TV) 1-hour prior to bed
      - The light triggers your sleep/wake switch and keeps you alert.
    - Decreased alcohol usage
      - Limit how much alcohol you drink. Do not drink any alcohol 2 to 3 hours before bed.
    - Limit caffeine intake
      - Don't drink caffeine after 3 pm as it takes up to 7 hours to be processed by digestive system.
    - Avoid nicotine products
      - Can lead to withdrawal and change sleep patterns.
    - Blackout curtain
      - These help to increase melatonin production by having a darkened room environment.
      - May help if the farmer is sleeping during the daytime.
    - Fan/White Noise
      - Can drown out background noises that may disrupt sleep patterns.
      - Would be helpful during harvest when farmer may be sleeping during hours when family/roommates may be up.

- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?

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**RESOURCES:**

IF YOU ARE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HELPFUL RESOURCES, BELOW IS A TABLE THAT HAS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WEBSITES WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IN THAT WEBSITE.

**Table 2: Resources for Sleep.**

Description	Website
Article that reviews dangers of sleep deprivation for farmers.	<a href="https://www.agriculture.com/family/health-safety/the-dangers-of-sleep-deprivation">https://www.agriculture.com/family/health-safety/the-dangers-of-sleep-deprivation</a>
Overall gives tips and explanations of why sleep is important for farmers:	<a href="https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeing-topics/sleep-well/">https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeing-topics/sleep-well/</a>
Ten 1-minute podcasts outlining various tips on how to improve your sleep as a farmer:	<a href="https://farmstrong.co.nz/the-10-commandments-of-sleep-avoiding-worries/">https://farmstrong.co.nz/the-10-commandments-of-sleep-avoiding-worries/</a>

Fatigue Safety Checklist	<a href="http://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/March-2018-FSC-Fatigue-2020.pdf">http://umash.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/March-2018-FSC-Fatigue-2020.pdf</a>
Sleep Deprivation: causes, consequences, and assessment tool to indicate daytime sleepiness.	<a href="https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf">https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf</a>

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# COPING WITH EMOTIONAL & FARM STRESSORS

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*\*A matching brochure can be found at the end of the packet\**

## **GOALS:**

---

- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify at least two coping strategies he or she can use when experiencing emotional or farm stressors.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to locate one resource for when he/she experiences crisis regarding emotional stressors.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will display consistent interest with using positive coping strategies when experiencing emotional or farm stressors through report.

---

## **INTRODUCTION:**

---

### What is stress and coping?

- Stress happens when the demands in life is more than the person can cope with. This will influence how a person will go about their day<sup>11</sup>.
- A person manages stress and demands in their life through coping. Coping consists of actions to overcome the challenges of stress<sup>12</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>.

## Farming & Stress

- “Farming in the United States was rated the twelfth most stressful occupation out of 130 total high stress occupations”<sup>14</sup>.
- Farmers are at risk of poor mental health due to the number of stressors that he or she experiences<sup>15 16</sup>.
- Farmers are at risk of suicide compared to non-farmers because of the high levels of stress that he or she experiences<sup>16</sup>.
- Farmers are less likely to ask for help regarding mental health because of a lack of community resources and time availability<sup>15 16</sup>.

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### **BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION:**

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BRINGING UP THE  
CONVERSATION

*Mentor:* How have you been dealing/feeling lately? I know the crop needs some rain and that your kids have been busy in school.

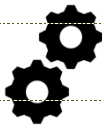
*Farmer:* Just another one of those years, you know. Hoping for rain here soon so those crops

*Mentor:* It's hard when the weather isn't giving us what we need for a successful crop, but it is out of our control. It's important to remember that there are some things that we can't control. What have you been doing when you are in the field? Have you been able to make it to "child name" game?

*Farmer:* You know, I usually go up to the bar for a few after spraying to unwind. I haven't made it to a game yet this year, but maybe I'll

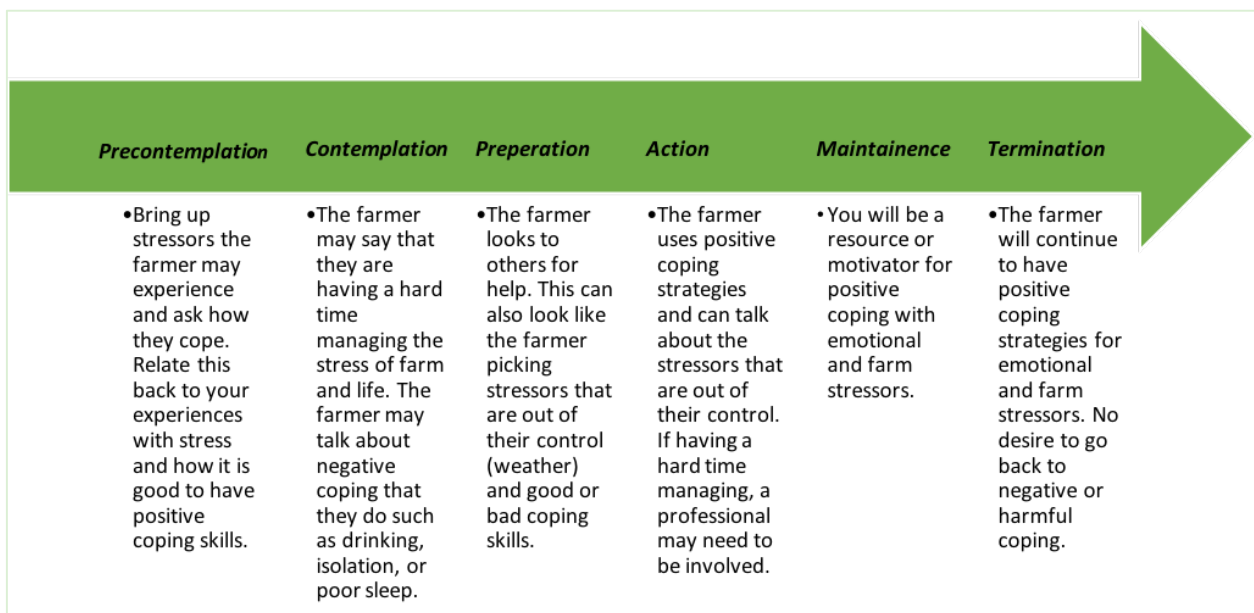
<p>get some much-needed moisture. The kids are good; I haven't been able to see them much because I have been busy spraying. My wife has been keeping up with the kids though.</p>	<p>try to make it to one next week. It would be nice to see them play instead of just hearing about it after.</p>
--	---

... if willing to continue to discuss, talk about letting go of stressors that are not in one's control and discuss different coping strategies and make list of positive coping strategies (make a list, deep breathing, leisure activity).



### GET YOUR GEARS GOIN':

Figure 3: Transtheoretical Model and Coping with Stressors<sup>1</sup>



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## WELL, I SUPPOSE...

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The key to helping individuals is to evaluate their self-esteem and abilities to combat the stressors that he or she will face <sup>17</sup>. North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension office created a 4 step approach to helping an individual manage stress which was adapted for this program with their permission.

- 4 steps to managing stress <sup>18</sup>
  - 1. Assess needs and impact
    - What are the key needs and the size of the impact?
  - 2. Identify and access resources
    - What resources are helpful? Is it easy to access? How will I access these key resources?
  - 3. Make good-quality decisions
    - What is the decision you are facing? Write down information you feel you need to be informed and the options that are available. Who can you discuss this with and be open to possibility of change.
  - 4. Connect with sources of support
    - Who are sources of support and how does he/she fit the need you are looking to address? Ask how he/she might approach this issue.
  
- Healthy ways to cope with stress <sup>19</sup>
  - Take care of yourself
    - Eat healthy, well balanced meals
    - Exercise on a regular basis
    - Get plenty of sleep
    - Give yourself a break



- Talk to others about how you are feeling. This can be a friend, a counselor, family member, pastor, etc.
  - Avoid drugs and alcohol
  - Recognize when you need more help. If your problems persist or you have thoughts about suicide, talk to a professional
- 
- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?

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## RESOURCES:

IF YOU ARE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HELPFUL RESOURCES, BELOW IS A TABLE THAT HAS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WEBSITES WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IN THAT WEBSITE.

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Table 3: Resources for Coping with Emotional and Farm Stressors.

Description	Website
Four steps to manage stress for farmers	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/4-steps-to-managing-stress-in-farming-and-ranching">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/4-steps-to-managing-stress-in-farming-and-ranching</a>
Effective and positive coping strategies for farmers	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/key-coping-tools-in-times-of-farm-ranch-stress">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/key-coping-tools-in-times-of-farm-ranch-stress</a>
Farm Stress Zone – Survey of physical, social, emotional, and mental stressors	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/where-are-you-in-the-farm-ranch-stress-zone">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/where-are-you-in-the-farm-ranch-stress-zone</a>

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# COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY

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*\*A matching brochure can be found at the end of the packet\**

- **GOALS:**

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- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify two different strategies to communicate with family members.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to explain effective communication strategies with family.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will be able to process through two scenarios that resulted in difficulty in communicating with family through their own means of report.
  - Goal 4: The farmer will be assertive in discovering his or her communication needs with family members.

---

## **INTRODUCTION:**

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What does communication look like in farming families?

- Open communication is important in healthy family relationships<sup>20</sup>. Due to the demands of farming, high amounts of stress affect all members of the family<sup>21</sup>.
- Family and friends are key in a solid support system for the mental health of farmers. Positive family interactions balance the stress farmers and their families experience<sup>22 23</sup>.

- Openness, respect, and sensitivity is important in family communication<sup>24</sup>.


### Different styles of communication<sup>25</sup>

1. Clear and Direct Communication – This is the healthiest type of communication. The message is direct and stated clearly.
2. Clear and Indirect Communication- This message is clear but is not directed to family member it was intended for.
3. Masked and Direct Communication- The message is unclear but said to the appropriate family member.
4. Masked and Indirect Communication – The message is unclear and is not directed to the intended person. This is the unhealthiest.

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## **BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION:**

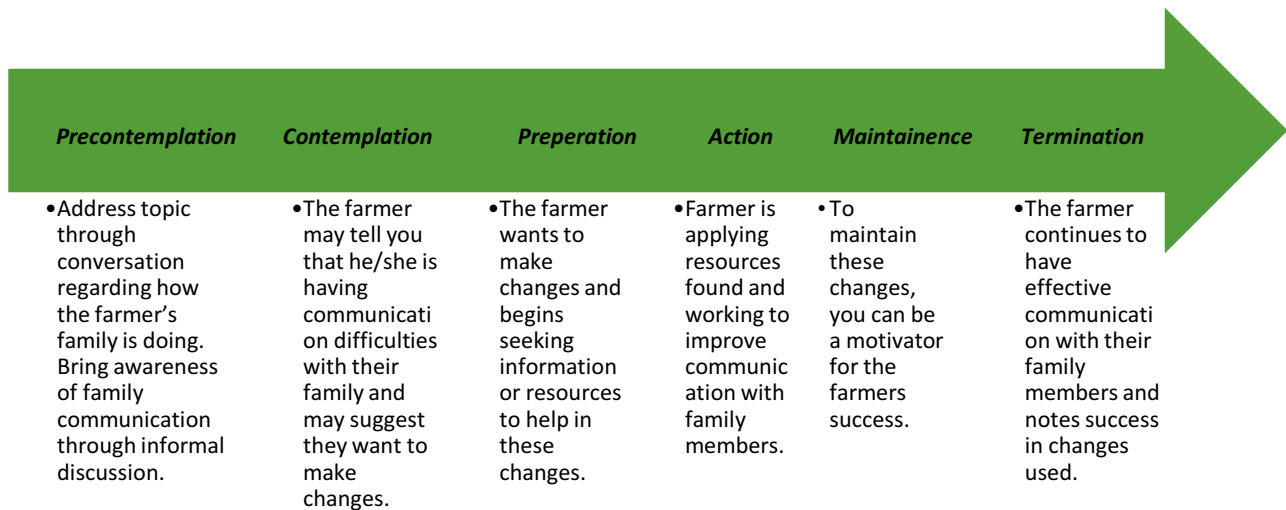
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 <p><b>BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION</b></p>	<p><i>Mentor:</i> Well, I have many years of dealing with communicating with the wife and could always provide you with some pointers.</p> <p><i>Farmer:</i> Yeah, I may need those.</p> <p><i>....this gives you a segway into providing the farmer with communication strategies to improve his/her communication with family members.</i></p>
<p><i>Mentor:</i> How is the family doing?</p> <p><i>Farmer:</i> Oh yeah know pretty good, been having some arguments with the wife lately though.</p>	



## GET YOUR GEARS GOIN':

Figure 4: Transtheoretical Model and Communication<sup>1</sup>



## WELL, I SUPPOSE...

According to Swift et al. (2019)<sup>20</sup>, families that use open communication have healthier relationships. This will also increase their ability to cope positively with a situation at hand.

Tips for keeping open communication in your family<sup>26</sup>:

- Talk often (formally or informally)
- Be clear and direct on your thoughts and feelings
- Be an active listener
- Pay attention to body language
- Be positive

## Stress management for farm couples<sup>27</sup>:

- Plan ahead
  - Communication your realistic expectation clearly. (Use “I” statements)
  - Be flexible with your roles and attitudes
  - Negotiate
  - Check in every day
  - Take time to appreciate each other
  - Schedule a night once a week to play together (not farm or children related)
  - Laugh at yourselves
  - Celebrate! (anniversaries or getting field planted before it rains)
  - Take time to relax and dream together.
- 
- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?
- 
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## RESOURCES:

IF YOU ARE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HELPFUL RESOURCES, BELOW IS A TABLE THAT HAS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WEBSITES WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IN THAT WEBSITE.

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Table 4: Resources for Communication with Family.

Description	Website
Communication skills for farmers and his or her family	<a href="https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/fact-sheets/comunications-skills-you-family/">https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/fact-sheets/comunications-skills-you-family/</a>
Four tips for communicating on the family farm	<a href="https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/4-tips-for-communicating-on-the-family-farm/372346.html">https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/4-tips-for-communicating-on-the-family-farm/372346.html</a>
Communication guide for farmers	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/farm-stress-fact-sheet-when-generations-farm-ranch-together">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/farm-stress-fact-sheet-when-generations-farm-ranch-together</a>

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# FARM TRANSITIONS

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*\*A matching brochure can be found at the end of the packet\**

- **GOALS:**

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- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to identify one potential resource to aide in the transitions he or she may be experiencing in relation to the farm.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to apply two coping strategies he/she can use when going through transitional phases in relation to the farm.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will be able to show value of considering emotions through discussion of various transitions within their farming career.

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

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### What is a life transition?

- A life transition is as a change in a person's life that leads to a change in their role. A transition is ongoing<sup>28</sup>. It includes changes in one's relationships, roles, and routines<sup>29</sup>.

### How to navigate farm transitions:

- People will try to make sense of transitions by asking; why, the purpose, or more in-depth questions about life<sup>28</sup>.
- Making time to do more non-work activities may help older workers continue to work in later life<sup>30</sup>.



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## **BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION:**

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BRINGING UP THE  
CONVERSATION

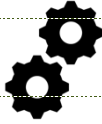
*Mentor:* I heard your son is starting to take over the farm.

*Farmer:* Yeah, I think he is ready for the responsibility. There are a lot of steps so I'm starting to slowly let him start taking over different responsibilities.

*Mentor:* It can be overwhelming task but there are people and resources that you can use to make the transition easier

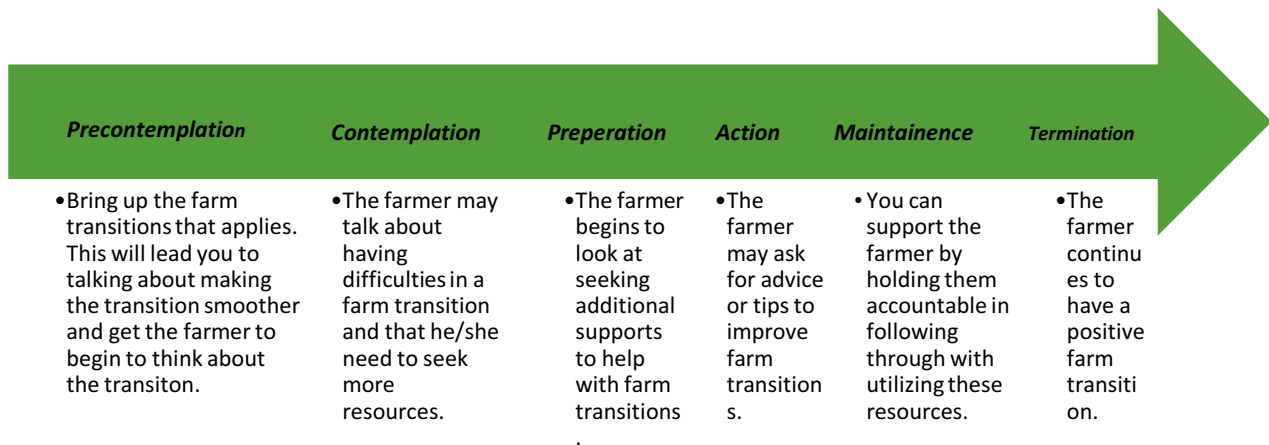
*Farmer:* What are some of the resources? I am still going to help on the farm but I'm going to have to find something else to do with my time.

*...provide resources for farm transitions. These will likely differ on the type of transition he/she are having. Discuss coping strategies for dealing with farm transition and talk about identity outside of farming.*



## GET YOUR GEARS GOIN':

Figure 5: Transtheoretical Model and Farm Transitions<sup>1</sup>



## WELL, I SUPPOSE...

There are multiple steps and tools a farmer can use during a transition<sup>31 32</sup>.

1. Develop a plan with intent
  - Be proactive
  - Be clear with wants and needs
2. Redefining roles
  - Hand over responsibilities and decision making a little at a time.
  - Communicate through the process.
  - Make role expectations
3. Communicate

- This is the key to success in a farm transition.
- Identify individual's strengths and weaknesses.
- Being clear and transparent is critical.

4. Be aware of financials

- Finances should be discussed
- Different documents can be helpful for role responsibilities

5. Matching attitudes

- Use additional resources if needed (financial planner, farm analyst, etc.).
- Be open to other mediators if needed (counselor, pastor, other family, etc.)

- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?

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## RESOURCES:

IF YOU ARE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HELPFUL RESOURCES, BELOW IS A TABLE THAT HAS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WEBSITES WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IN THAT WEBSITE.

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Table 5: Resources for Farm Transitions.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Website</b>
Different farming transitions and planning for these	<a href="https://agecon.okstate.edu/farmtransitions/files/farm-transitions-workbook.pdf">https://agecon.okstate.edu/farmtransitions/files/farm-transitions-workbook.pdf</a>
Farm Transition Planning and Estate Planning from the University of Minnesota	<a href="https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/farm-transition-and-estate-planning">https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/farm-transition-and-estate-planning</a>
5 Steps for successful farm transitions	<a href="https://www.agdaily.com/insights/farm-transition-planning/">https://www.agdaily.com/insights/farm-transition-planning/</a>

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# FINANCIAL STRESS

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*\*A matching brochure can be found at the end of the packet\**

- **GOALS:**

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- Cognitive
  - Goal 1: The farmer will be able to locate one resource (financial advisor, business plan, etc.) which may aid in reducing financial stressors.
  - Goal 2: The farmer will be able to identify one possible coping strategy he/she can use when experiencing financial stressors.
- Emotional
  - Goal 3: The farmer will express the influence regarding psychosocial effects of financial stress on their wellbeing.

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

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### What is financial stress?

- According to Dave Ramsey, financial stress occurs when one worries, fears, or has anxiety about their finances<sup>33</sup>.

### What is managing finances?

- Managing finances includes planning, setting long and short-term personal goals, and utilizing helpful resources<sup>2</sup>.
- Financial management is an important task for daily living. It can change views of identity by causing a change in everyday functional activities<sup>34</sup>.

## Financial Stressors farmers experience:

- Farmers report higher levels of stress due to the business and financial aspects of their farm. This includes the lack of control over legislative and political changes<sup>14 16</sup>.
- Decline in mental health may be due to financial stress and the high demands of farmers resources of time and finance<sup>16</sup>.

## Signs that a farmer may be experiencing financial stressors<sup>35</sup>:

- Altered sleep schedule
- Isolation
- Lacking expression, monotone voice tone
- Outbursts of anger towards others
- Blaming others (bank, spouse, etc.)
- Difficulty concentrating
- More farm accidents

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### **BRINGING UP THE CONVERSATION:**

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BRINGING UP THE  
CONVERSATION

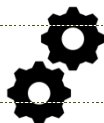
*Mentor:* How are you feeling about the commodity prices on \_\_\_\_\_ right now?

personal example if applicable (ex: I had relied heavily on my financial advisor to plan out when to sell a certain crop, etc.).

*Farmer:* I mean I could consult with others before making decisions.

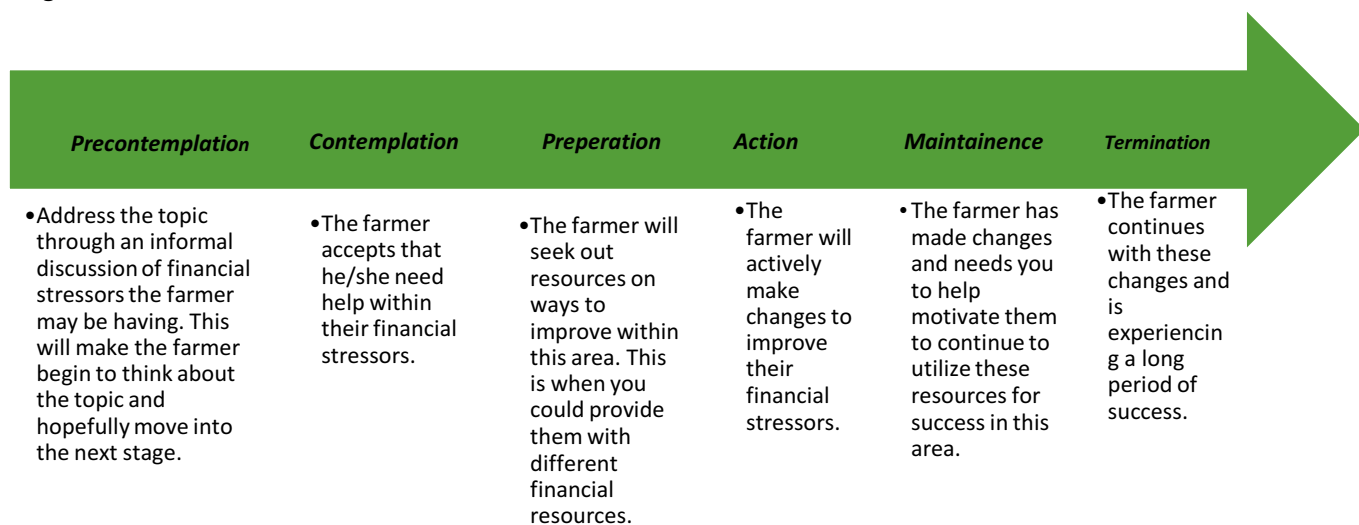
*Mentor:* Have you set up a business plan to help with year-round expenses??

<p><i>Farmer:</i> It's a tough break, but hoping they start to raise within the next week or two.</p> <p><i>Mentor:</i> Have you ever thought about getting someone else involved to help you out? Share</p>	<p><i>.....Explain effects of financial stressors and different resources to help decrease these. This may be a difficult topic</i></p>
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## GET YOUR GEARS GOIN':

Figure 6: Transtheoretical Model and Financial Stress<sup>1</sup>



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## WELL, I SUPPOSE...

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There are a variety of tips and steps a farmer can take if dealing with financial difficulties<sup>36 37</sup>.

1. Face problems and deal with them immediately
    - Talk to banker often and early, this will lead to early identification and resolution.
    - Talk to people you trust: pastor, counselor, spouse, friend.
  2. Set up a farm budget
    - Track all income and expenses
    - Examine debt structure
    - Examine different insurances: hazard, fire, life, etc.
  3. Take breaks for a clear perspective
    - Build in a gap or two in your day for a mental break
    - Take a weekend off to center yourself
    - Find and participate in hobbies
    - Set boundaries with phone and email
  4. Take care of yourself
    - Well-balanced diet
    - Adequate sleep
    - Exercise
  5. Keep a positive attitude
    - Acceptance of life's problems
- 
- Reflect on the transtheoretical stages: how is it working, is it establish a habit/routine?
- 
-



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## RESOURCES:

IF YOU ARE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HELPFUL RESOURCES, BELOW IS A TABLE THAT HAS A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WEBSITES WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IN THAT WEBSITE.

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Table 6: Resources for Financial Stress.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Website</b>
USDA Financial Resources specifically for farmers	<a href="https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic/financial-resources-farmers-and-ranchers">https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic/financial-resources-farmers-and-ranchers</a>
Small and mid-sized farms financial resources from USDA	<a href="https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/resources-small-and-mid-sized-farmers">https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/resources-small-and-mid-sized-farmers</a>
Resources for new or beginning farmers	<a href="https://foodtank.com/news/2015/05/ten-financial-resources-for-new-and-beginning-farmers/">https://foodtank.com/news/2015/05/ten-financial-resources-for-new-and-beginning-farmers/</a>
Other resources for farmers for financial management	<a href="https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/files/resources_for_farm_financial_challenges_ukaec.pdf">https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/files/resources_for_farm_financial_challenges_ukaec.pdf</a>

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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If you have questions, please contact the creators of this guide through the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Department.

Phone: 701-777-2209

# Resources

Environment & Well-being Tips:  
<https://farmstrong.co.nz/wellbeingtopics/sleep-well/>

Ten 1-minute podcasts outlining various tips to improve sleep as a farmer:

<https://farmstrong.co.nz/the-10-commandments-of-sleep-avoidingworries/>

Fatigue Safety Checklist:

<http://umash.umn.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/03/March2018-FSC-Fatigue-2020.pdf>

Daytime Sleepiness Tool:

[https://nasdonline.org/static\\_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf](https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/872/d000705.pdf)

Researchers are providing resources but not endorsing any of the organization, nor are the organizations endorsing this project.

## hotlines

National Suicide Prevention:  
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line:  
text 'GO' to 741741

Avera Health: Farm Stress:  
1-800-691-4336

Minnesota Farm & Rural  
Helpline:  
833-600-2670

Prairie St. Johns 24/7:  
701-746-7200



EAT  
FARM  
SLEEP  
REPEAT

Made by Ivy Steiger, MOTS &  
Kelsey Sherry, MOTS  
Contact Information: University of North Dakota  
Occupational Therapy Program, Grand Forks, ND  
701.777.2209

This brochure was created by two graduate occupational therapy students for their graduate project "Coffee with Farmers".

This program was created for mentors to use in their local communities with farmers to address mental health needs. To find goals and additional information on this topic, see program packet.

Photo used with permission, courtesy of Erin Kovarik

# Effects of sleep deprivation

- Irritability
- Sluggishness
- Mistakes
- Increased Stress

# Research Facts

Poor sleeping habits and lack of sleep put farmers at a higher risk of injury and may weaken their judgement. It is hard for farmers to keep a regular sleep schedule due to the nature of farming (Hawes et al., 2019).

Farm accidents happen between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., when a bad night's sleep shows up as the 'afternoon slump' (Farm Strong, 2018).

## HOW CAN YOU SEE THIS FITTING INTO YOUR LIFESTYLE?

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

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# What YOU can do

1. Turn off technology 1-hour prior to bed
  - o The light technology emits triggers your sleep/wake switch and keeps you alert.
2. Decrease alcohol/nicotine intake
  - o Will help avoid withdrawal symptoms while sleeping
3. Limit caffeine
  - o Try to avoid after 3 p.m. as it takes up to 7 hours to metabolize.
4. Blackout Curtain
  - o Help to increase melatonin production by having darkened room environment
5. Fan or White Noise
  - o Drowns out background noise that may disrupt sleep patterns.

## RESOURCES

### 4 steps to manage stress

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/4-steps-to-managing-stress-in-farming-and-ranching>

### Useful and positive coping strategies

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/key-coping-tools-in-times-of-farm-ranch-stress>

### What is your farmer stress zone?

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/where-are-you-in-the-farm-ranch-stress-zone>

Researchers are providing resources but not endorsing any of the organization, nor are the organizations endorsing this project.

This brochure was created by two graduate occupational therapy students for their graduate project "Coffee with Famers".

Created by Kelsey Sherry MOTS & Ivy Steiger MOTS

Contact Information:

University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program, Grand Forks, ND  
701.777.2209

## HOTLINES

National Suicide Hotline  
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line  
text "GO" to 741741

Avera Health Farm Stress  
1-800-691-4336

Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline  
833-600-2670

Prairie St.Johns 24/7  
701-746-7200

# COPING WITH EMOTIONAL AND FARM STRESSORS

## Coffee with Farmers

This program was created for mentors to use in their local community with active farmers to address mental health needs. To find goals and additional information on this topic, see program packet.

# FACTS

Farming in the United States was ranked the 12th most stressful job out of 130 total high stress jobs (Deary, Willock & McGregor, 1997).

Farmers are at a risk of poor mental health due to number of stressors they experience (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019).

Farmers are more at risk of suicide than non-farmers because of the high levels of stress they experience (Vayro et al., 2019).

Farmers are less likely to seek help regarding mental health due to lack of community resources and their schedule (Roy et al., 2013; Vayro et al., 2019).

## List examples of feeling stressed

Physical (ex. low energy)

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Social (ex.withdrawl from family)

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Mental (ex. difficulty concentrating)

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Emotional (ex. feeling hopeless)

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## Select 3 healthy habits you will practice daily

Physical

1) Exercise 20 minutes a day (2) Get a medical checkup with your provider

Mental

(1) Take 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities (2) Take regular 5 to 10 minute breaks in your day to relax

Emotional/Spiritual

(1) Write down 3 things you are grateful for daily (2) Share concerns with a counselor or professional

Personal/Relationship

(1) Take 15 minutes each day for uninterrupted conversation with a family member (2) Get involved or stay connected with a friend

Work/Professional

(1) Discuss needs of farm operations but do not let them occupy all aspects of life (2) Seek helpful feedback on your farm operation for ways to grow or improve

Finanical/Practical

(1) Create a family budget and seek to live within your means

Photo: K. Sherry/Personal Photos ©



# Resources

## Communication skills for you and your family:

<https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/fact-sheets/communications-skills-your-family/>

## 4 tips for communicating on the family farm:

<https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/4-tips-for-communicating-on-the-family-farm/372346.html>

## Communication guide:

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/kids-family/farm-stress-fact-sheet-when-generations-farm-ranch-together>

Researchers are providing resources but not endorsing any of the organization, nor are the organizations endorsing this project.

## HOTLINES

National Suicide Hotline  
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line  
text "GO" to 741741

Avera Health Farm Stress  
1-800-691-4336

Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline  
833-600-2670

Prairie St.Johns 24/7  
701-746-7200

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# COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY

Coffee with Farmers

This program was created for mentors to use in their local community with active farmers to address mental health needs. To find goals and additional information on this topic, see program packet.





Photo: K. Sherry/Personal Photos©

## Notes:

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This brochure was created by two graduate occupational therapy students for their graduate project "Coffee with Farmers".

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## Types of Communication

Clear & Direct – This is the healthiest type of communication. The message is direct and stated clearly.

Clear & Indirect- This message is clear but is not directed to family member it was intended for.

Masked & Direct- The message is unclear but said to the appropriate family member.

Masked & Indirect – The message is unclear and is not directed to the intended person. This is the unhealthiest

(Epstein, Bishop, Ryan, Miller & Keitner, 1993)

## TIPS FOR KEEPING OPEN COMMUNICATION IN YOUR FAMILY (PETERSON & GREEN, 2009):

- Talk often (formally or informally)
- Be clear and direct on your thoughts and feelings
- Be an active listener
- Pay attention to body language
- Be positive

## FACTS

Open communication is key in having healthy family relationships (Swift et al., 2018). Due to the demands of farming, high amounts of stress affect all members of the family (Stanley-Clarke, 2019). Family and friends are key in a solid support system for the mental health of farmers. Positive family interactions balance the stress farmers and their families experience (Anderson et al., 2011; Roy et al., 2017). Openness, respect, and sensitivity is important is family communication (Rathunde, 1997)

## RESOURCES

### **Farm Transitions Planning:**

<http://agecon.okstate.edu/farm-transitions/files/farm-transitions-workbook.pdf>

### **U of M – farm transitions and estate planning:**

<https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/farm-transition-and-estate-planning>

### **Farm Transitions Toolkit:**

<https://misadocuments.info/FarmTransitions.pdf>

### **5 steps for successful farm transition:**

<https://www.agdaily.com/insights/farm-transition-planning/>

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# Farm Transitions

COFFEE WITH FARMERS

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# Facts

## What is a life transition?

A life transition is as a change in a person's life that leads to a change or adaptation in their role. A transition is an ongoing adjustment (Maley, Pagana, Velenger, & Humbert, 2016). It includes changes in one's relationships, roles, and routines (Schwartzman, Adler, Borg & Schwartzman, 2006).

## How to navigate farm transitions:

People try to make sense of transitions when they experience it. They will ask questions such as why, the purpose, or more in-depth questions about life (Maley et al., 2016) Making more opportunity to do non-work activities may help older workers continue to work in later life (Eagers, Franklin, Broome & Yau, 2019)

## NOTES:

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# 5 steps towards a successful farm transition

According to Mettlen (2019), there are five steps towards a successful plan for farm transitions.

### 1. Get a plan in writing

-Be proactive.

### 2. Hand over the reins - a little

-Hand over responsibilities and decision making a little at a time.  
-Communicate through the process.

### 3. Communicate

-This is the key to success in a farm transition.  
-Identify individual's strengths and weaknesses.  
-Transparency is critical.

### 4. Know the operation's financial situation

-Finances should be shared.

### 5. Ensure the legacy can continue

-Use additional resources if needed (financial planner, farm analyst, etc.).

# Resources

## USDA Financial resources:

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic/financial-resources-farmers-and-ranchers>

## Small and mid-sized farms:

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/resources-small-and-mid-sized-farmers>

## Resources for new and beginning farmers:

<https://foodtank.com/news/2015/05/ten-financial-resources-for-new-and-beginning-farmers/>

## Financial resources:

[https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/files/resources\\_for\\_farm\\_financial\\_challenges\\_ukaec.pdf](https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/files/resources_for_farm_financial_challenges_ukaec.pdf)

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# FINANCIAL STRESS

## COFFEE WITH FARMERS

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# FACTS

What is financial stress:

- According to Dave Ramsey, financial stress occurs when one worries, fears, or has anxiety regarding their finances (Cruze, 2020).

Financial Stressors farmers experience:

- Farmers report higher levels of stress due to the business and financial aspects of their farms. This also includes the lack of control over legislative and political changes (Deary et al., 1997; Varyo et al., 2019).

- Decline in mental health may be due to financial stress and the high demands of farmers resources of time and finance (Varyo et al., 2019).

## Signs that a farmer may be experiencing financial stressors (Successful Farming Staff, 2019)

- Altered sleep schedule
  - Isolation
- Lacking expression, monotone voice tone
- Outbursts of anger towards others
  - Blaming others (bank, spouse, etc.)
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - More farm accidents

## Notes:

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# 7 STEPS TO REDUCE FINANCIAL STRESS

According to Schafer (2020), there are seven steps to reduce financial stress of farmers.

### 1. Face your problems

- Find someone to talk to: pastor, counselor, spouse, friend, etc.

### 2. Gather information and advice

- Communicate through conflict
- Find solid information
- Get advice from others who understand

### 3. Build in breaks

- Build in a gap or two in your day for a mental break

### 4. Unplug for a bit

- Set boundaries with phone and email

### 5. Expands life beyond agriculture

- Find/participate in hobbies

### 6. Take care of yourself

- Well-balanced diet
- Adequate sleep
- Exercise

### 7. Keep a positive attitude

- Acceptance of life's problems

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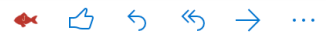
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**APPENDIX F**  
**Permissions**

Wed 11/11/2020 9:51 PM

To: Sherry, Kelsey; ndsu.permission@ndsu.edu

Cc: Steiger, Ivy



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So you're welcome to use Extension's online content as long as you give credit. However, if we didn't follow a Creative Commons license, I would have needed more details on specifically which resources you wanted to use or adapt.

I hope you'll share your project with Extension staff and Lutheran Social Services because both have developed programs, such as farmer to farmer and listening circles, which sound similar. [Scott Brothers](#), family science specialist, would be NDSU Extension's leader on topics like this. He can be reached at [scottbrothers@ndsu.edu](#) 701-81-16

How will you recruit retired farmers for your program?

Good luck with your program. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]  
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