

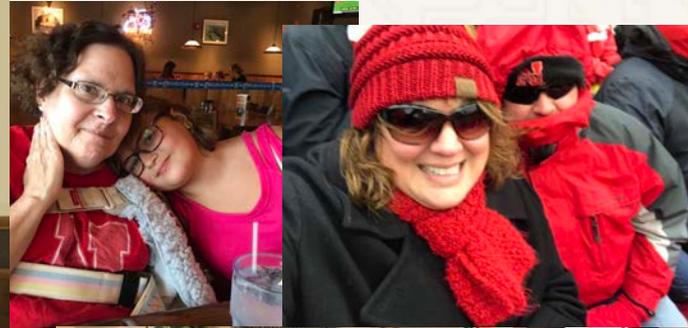
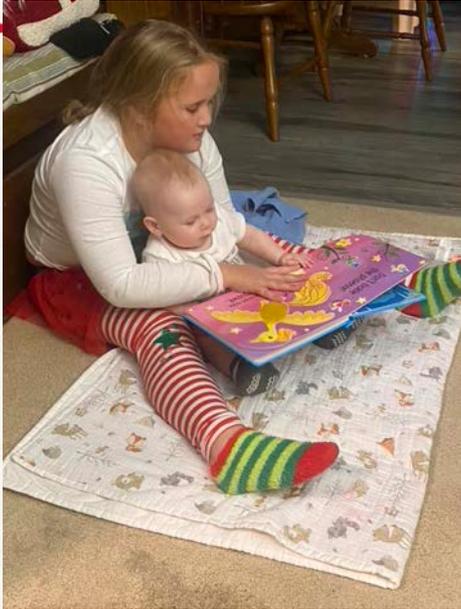
You CAN Stress-Less: Tips and Strategies for Success

Brandy VanDeWalle
Nebraska Extension Educator



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Gratitude!



You're in Ag if...

- Several articles of clothing bare trademarks of seed or animal health companies.
- By the time you get your drivers license, you've been driving for several years.
- Tallest structure in your county is a grain leg or silo
- You regularly use baling wire, binder twine, duct tape or zip ties to fix things
- You've been in at least 1 argument with your spouse while working with livestock
- Growing up you ate "breakfast, dinner and supper". Lunch was something you had at school.

Credit: Damian Mason

Agriculture: Current Issues

- Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations.
- Agriculture sustains one of the highest mortality rates from stress-related illnesses.
- The impact of stress on mental health of farmers is an international concern.

Source: Michigan State University



Suicide crisis

- The U.S. farmer suicide crisis echoes a much larger farmer suicide crisis happening globally.
- More than 700 000 people die due to suicide every year.
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19 year-olds.
- 77% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.

Source: World Health Organization, 17 June 2021



Startling Statistics

- Suicide is the **10th** leading cause of death in Nebraska.
- Suicide is the **4th** leading cause of death in 35-54 year old Nebraskans.
- Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death in 15-34 year old Nebraskans.

Source: NE Extension Wellness in Tough Times Team, 2018

**WHAT DO YOU CALL A COW WHO JUST
HAD A BABY?**



Southern Love and Blessings

DECALFINATED

Program Elements

- What is Stress?
 - Recognizing Stress
 - Symptoms of Stress
- Coping with Stress
- Reducing Stress
 - For Farm Families
- Helping Others
- Resources



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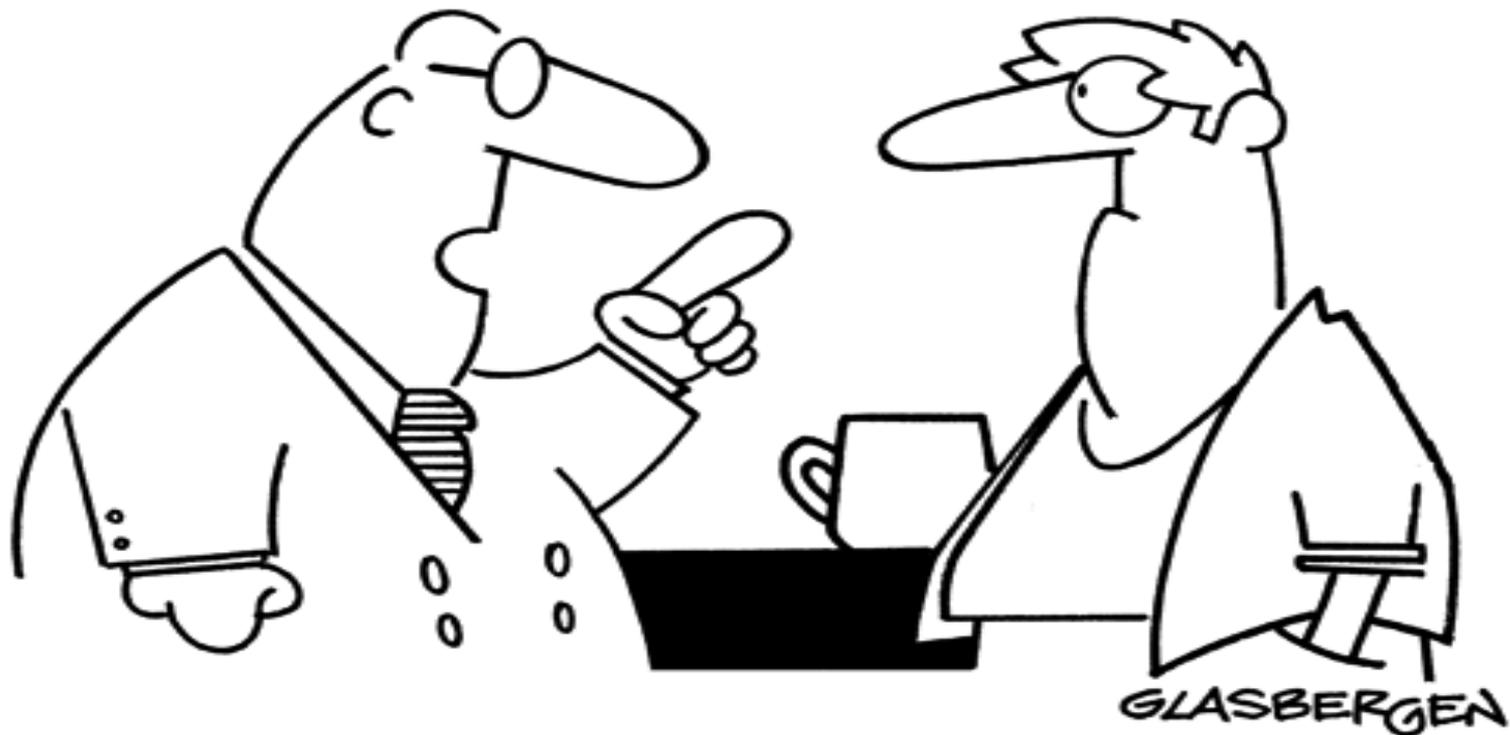


“What do you mean, you need to find a balance between work and family? We consider you part of our family.”

All about perspective...



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www.glasbergen.com



**“Aside from ulcers, heart attacks, bypass surgery,
drug and alcohol problems, and broken families,
a little hard work never hurt anyone!”**

Feeling Good... Is Good for Business

“Sometimes the best thing is to do is take a nap, or sleep on a major decision. I am amazed how many men avoid seeing their doctors, and therefore do not ensure their physical and mental health is helping, not hurting their ability to make sound decisions for their business and families.

-Elaine Froese
Family Farm
Succession Planner

Agriculture and the Rural Life Can be Rewarding, While Stressful at Times

- What is stress?
- Can stress be good and bad?
 - Eustress - good
 - Distress – bad



The National Center for Farmer Health provides these 3 points about stress -

Stress is the human response to any change that is perceived as a challenge or threat. An example might be the way one responds to an equipment breakdown. We will will respond differently in that situation.



The National Center for Farmer Health provides these 3 points about stress -

Changes that cause worry, frustration and upheaval, and seem beyond our control can cause stress. The perfect example is the weather and natural disasters. There is not a lot we can do about the situation; however we we respond will vary.



The National Center for Farmer Health provides these 3 points about stress -

Attitudes, perceptions, and meanings that people assign to events determine a large part of their stress levels. Some people are naturally more positive and will respond differently than those with a glass-half full mentality.



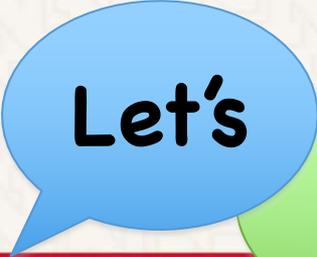
Is all stress *BAD*?



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- When we are excited about something (like a wedding, birth of a baby, holidays), we feel anticipation. This helps us get mentally and physically ready for the event. This type of stress is called **eustress**. (Selye, 2013).
- However, when we suffer from too much stress, and particularly if it is over a long period of time, this is called **distress**. Prolonged distress can result in severe physical problems, emotional problems or both. (Selye, 2013).

In the chat box:



Let's



Talk!

When stressed in a GOOD way, how do you look, behave and communicate with others?

When stressed in a BAD way, how do you look, behave and communicate with others?

Stress Management

- Elements of stress:
 - Presence of an external stressor
 - Difficult person/situation
 - Individual internalization of stress
 - How do YOU internalize
 - Response to the stressor
 - How will you respond



Let's walk through this stressor!

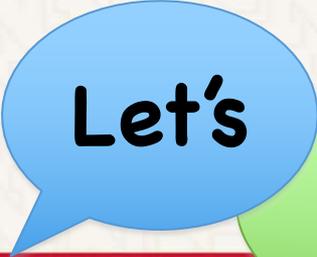


- External stressor...
- Individual Internationalization...
- Response to stressor...



Meet “Bear” & “Grizzly”
Featured stars at FCMS Petting Zoo
Grizzly & the weather, unpredictable
The show must go on!

Stress Management



Let's



Talk!

- Elements of stress:

- Presence of an external stressor _____
- Individual internalization of stress _____
- Response to the stressor _____

Farm/Ranch Specific Worries

- Rising expenses & low prices
- Concerns about farm/ranch finances
- Machinery breakdown
- Prolonged bad weather or natural disaster
- Weather related crop loss
- Delay in planting/harvest
- Time pressures & long work hours
- Farm viability



Walker and Walker, 1987 and 2003 USDA Small Farm Digest. Missouri Department of Mental Health

Worries shared with most families

- Death in family
- Divorce or separation
- Major illness or disability
- Aging parents who need care
- Worries about owing money
- Few vacations
- Changing economic conditions



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Walker and Walker, 1987 and 2003 USDA Small Farm Digest. Missouri Department of Mental Health

Tip from a Nebraska Farmer/Rancher

“You have to talk about this or it will eat you alive.”



How does stress affect you?

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive	Self-Worth
Headaches / ulcers / backaches	Anxiety	Anger or acting out	Lack of concentration	Feeling like a failure
Poor posture	Sadness or depression	Passive-aggressive behavior	Memory loss	Can't do anything right – hard on self
Overeating or not eating	Loss of spirit	Irritability	Difficulty with simple decisions	Not being able to fix things
Sleeping problems	Loss of sense of humor	Increased drinking or drug use	Constant worrying	Perception of physical image is negative
Frequent or recurring illness	Bitterness	Isolation	Uncontrollable, racing thoughts	Feeling powerless to control life
Exhaustion	Crying	Violence	Poor judgment	Lack of assertiveness
No longer doing physical activities once enjoyed	Non-tolerant of others	Clumsiness or breaking things	Perceiving things negatively	Taking on more than is reasonable to handle

Signs and Symptoms of Chronic, Prolonged Stress

- **Change in routine**
- **Care of livestock declines**
- **Increase in illness**
- **Increase in farm accidents**
- **Appearance of farmstead declines**
- **Children show signs of stress**



Photo: Copyright istock.com/roman023

What if stress lingers?

- Chronic stress creates high levels of cortisol which can:
 - Increase blood cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure which can cause heart disease
- Long-term stress can affect how the blood clots. This makes the blood stickier and increases the risk of stroke.



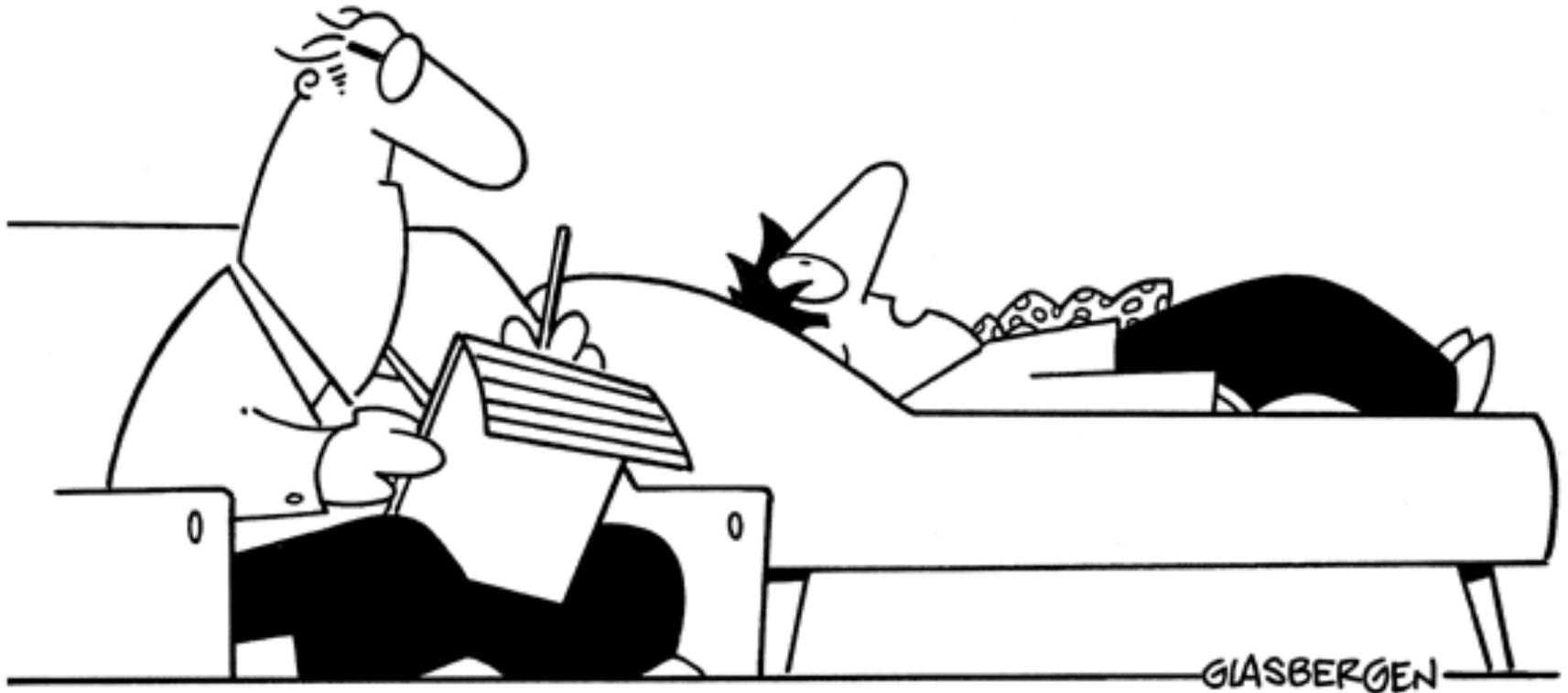
Source: Nebraska Medicine

How to Handle Stress



Stress-Less Tips

- Deep breathing
- Self-talk
- Meditating
- Exercise, Foods, Sleep
- Connect with people in your social network
- Speaking with a mental health professional



“When I get angry, I turn into a huge green monster and smash everything that gets in my way. It’s the first stress-management program that’s really worked for me!”

Coping with Stress

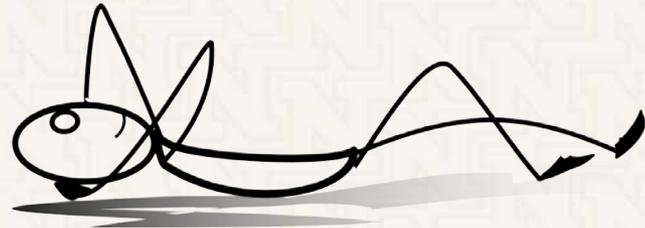
- Effective or Not Effective?

<https://youtu.be/mQaXTBP-Jdk>



Stress Reducing Activities/Actions

- Eating a well-balanced diet.
- Exercising ½ hour a day every day/every other day.
- Getting enough sleep to meet the demands of your body.
- Accepting that stress is a part of life –don't dwell on it.
- Clearly define home and work responsibilities.
- Managing time efficiently.
- Setting realistic goals.
- Learning to relax.
- Separate work and family time.



Cultivate a Productive Mindset

- **Use self-talk**
 - **Choose three words to help maintain a positive mindset (calm, capable, controlled)**
- **Use your breath**
 - **Deep breathing time to pause, accept and begin problem solving**
- **Use Acceptance**
 - **Focus on solutions**

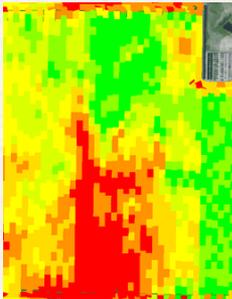


Michigan State University, 2018

https://www.canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress/

Reducing Farm/Ranch Stress...

- Aim for the most profitable yield (may not always be the highest yield)
 - Controlling costs:
 - Are you following the correct nutrient rates?
 - Cutting seeding rates?
 - Buy inputs jointly with neighbor for bigger discount
- High-profit farms have lower per-acre machinery, depreciation and repair costs



(Source: Robert Tigner, NE Extension, 2017)

Reducing Farm/Ranch Stress...

- Reduce family living
- Renegotiate cash rental rates
- Increase revenues
 - Marketing plan and execute the plan
- Reduce capital spending
 - Does a purchase reduce costs
- Increase non-farm income
 - Do you have a hobby that can earn income

(Source: Robert Tigner, NE Extension, 2017)

Reducing Farm/Ranch Stress...

- Education
 - Attend extension programs, and other seminars
- Communication
 - With your lender, tax adviser, friends, family, etc.



Write It Down!

- What are you doing that you want to continue?
- If farming/ranching is your passion and you want to continue, what does it look like?
- What would a really great day on the farm/ranch look like?
- Does your family know what you desire on the farm/ranch and in your personal life? If not, discuss it!

Wellness Wheel



Assisting Others in Distress

- Recognize signs of distress
- Express your concern and ask them about their situation
- Understand the warning signs
- Ask them about their plans if you see warning signs
- Take immediate action

Any suicidal talk or behavior must be treated as serious.

**DO NOT
IGNORE
SIGNS OF
DISTRESS
OR SUICIDE**

Assisting Others in Distress

We might be Strong - but please don't be too strong to reach out for help.

There are resources available to help, please reach out.

- Nebraska Family Helpline:
1-888-866-8660
- Nebraska Rural Response Hotline:
1-800-464-0258
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:
1-800-985-5990



Resources on Stress Management for Farmers and Ranch Families

- Rural Response Hotline 800-464-0258
- Legal Aid of Nebraska 800-464-0258
 - <https://www.legalaidofnebraska.org/>
- Farm Mediation 402-471-4876
 - <http://www.negotiations.nebraska.gov/>
- UNMC Nebraska System of Care Regions
 - <https://www.unmc.edu/bhecn/education/nebraska-system-of-care/soc-map.html>
- Confidential Online Mental Health Screening
 - <https://www.bryanhealth.com/services/online-screenings/>

And sometimes we just need someone to listen to us!

- Listening is important; don't judge.

<https://youtu.be/-4EDhdAHRog>



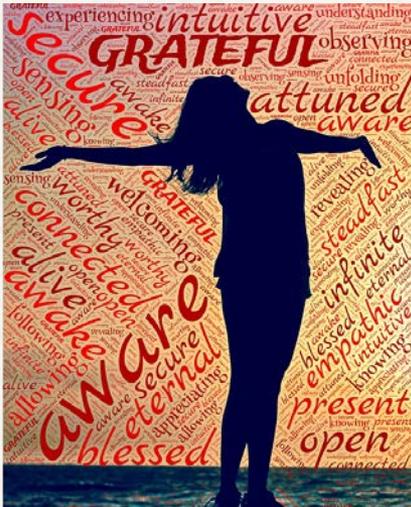
Feeling Good Involves the Mind, Body & Spirit (Elaine Froese)

“Your health is your wealth.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Be smart. Take good care of yourself. Keep your body and mind sound and your ‘well’ full so you have something to give to your family and your business.”

– Elaine Froese



***YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
WE CARE ABOUT YOU!***

N

EXTENSION

Wellness in Tough Times

<https://ruralwellness.unl.edu/>

Brandy VanDeWalle, Nebraska Extension Educator

402-759-3712

brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu

Contact me



FACEBOOK

FillmoreCountyExtension



TWITTER

bvandewalle2



BLOG

vandewalleviews.wordpress.com