



A helpful step in managing stresses in farming and ranching is to consider the “tools” or “strategies” that are available for dealing with particular stresses. This handout provides a list of useful coping “tools” that can be part of your toolbox for managing individual, family or farming/ranching stresses. Also, you can use this resource to create your own “action plan” for a healthy lifestyle—at home and on the farm.

## Strategies for the Coping Toolbox

Physical	Mental	Emotional / Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a medical checkup</li> <li>• Eat a healthful breakfast</li> <li>• Drink four to eight glasses of water daily</li> <li>• Eat more fruits, vegetables and healthful snacks</li> <li>• Exercise at least 20 minutes daily (walk, swim, ride a bike, etc.)</li> <li>• Get at least seven to eight hours of restful sleep</li> <li>• Receive a neck or back massage</li> <li>• Take a relaxing bath or shower</li> <li>• Hug a loved one or friend</li> <li>• Practice restful, deep or slow breathing</li> <li>• Abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other drugs</li> <li>• Do gentle stretching during a break or to warm up or cool down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take 10 minutes and reflect on your blessings</li> <li>• Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook</li> <li>• Listen to relaxing music</li> <li>• Spend 30 minutes doing something with your hands (draw, carve, etc.)</li> <li>• Read a book you enjoy</li> <li>• Watch TV or videos that make you laugh</li> <li>• Do a hobby</li> <li>• Attend a class or seminar to learn something new or of interest to you</li> <li>• Visit with a counselor or spiritual leader</li> <li>• Reach out to someone for support or help</li> <li>• Spend 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities</li> <li>• Take regular five- to 10-minute breaks in your day to relax and recharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell a loved one what you appreciate about that person</li> <li>• Play with a child or grandchild</li> <li>• Volunteer to help with a cause important to you</li> <li>• Go out for a meal with a friend or loved one</li> <li>• Reflect on and forgive yourself for mistakes</li> <li>• Share concerns with a counselor or other professional</li> <li>• Explore your spiritual life and activities</li> <li>• Pray or meditate</li> <li>• Do random acts of kindness</li> <li>• Express “thank you” to someone daily (send a note, etc.)</li> <li>• Write down three things you are grateful for daily</li> <li>• Go for a walk or drive in nature</li> </ul>

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## Steps to a More Sustainable Lifestyle – At Home and On the Farm

Just as farms need to be operated in a sustainable way that preserves resources for the long term, an individual's life needs to be managed in a sustainable way for long-term well-being. Feeling overly tired, overwhelmed by stresses or under constant pressure is not a recipe for a sustainable lifestyle.

Plan your "12 Steps to a More Sustainable Lifestyle" by **selecting and prioritizing two strategies for each category** from the "Coping Toolbox" list (or others that make sense to you). Seek to review and incorporate these strategies daily and weekly for a four-week period and see if your life feels healthier and less stressful. Also, share and discuss these strategies with someone you trust and visit twice a week to assess and encourage progress in your efforts.

Physical	<hr/> <hr/>
Mental	<hr/> <hr/>
Emotional / Spiritual	<hr/> <hr/>
Personal / Relational	<hr/> <hr/>
Work / Professional	<hr/> <hr/>
Financial / Practical	<hr/> <hr/>

## My Healthy Lifestyle Partners

List two people you will share your plan with and discuss your healthy lifestyle efforts twice a week.

- Partner 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Partner 2 \_\_\_\_\_

## Selected Resources List – Managing Farm and Ranch Stress

This is a short list of selected resources that may be useful for finding further information and support in the process of working in agriculture and related fields, managing stress and accessing resources.

### Farm and Financial Management Resources

- **Cooperative Extension Service and state Extension Service programs** — Contact your county or state office of the Cooperative Extension Service for information and programs on farm and financial management. Link: <https://nifa.usda.gov/extension>
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency** — Link: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

### Farming/Ranching and Stress Resources

- **eXtension – production agriculture and stress resources** — <http://articles.extension.org/pages/70313/production-agriculture-and-stress>
- **Visit the NDSU Farm Stress website for further information.** NDSU Extension provides a website with information on managing farm/ranch stress at: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress>
- **Access resources at the Farm Crisis Center online**, sponsored by Farm Aid and National Farmers Union: <https://farmcrisis.nfu.org/>
- **Live Your Life Well Campaign, Mental Health America** — [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/live-your-life-well](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/live-your-life-well)
- **Farms.com – Val Farmer, “Mind Over Matter” video series** (10 short videos) — [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL89017F264C488BC5](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL89017F264C488BC5)
- **Calm in the Storm mobile stress app** — <http://calminthestormapp.com/>

### Mental and Emotional Health Resources

- **Call a state helpline** — Most states have a toll-free, 24-hour helpline for health and human services information and referral. In North Dakota, call 2-1-1.
- **Refer to a local health-care provider or mental health professional** — If you or someone you know needs help, contact and connect with a local professional such as a clergy member, medical professional, law enforcement, school counselor or social worker. Link: <https://healthfinder.gov/>
- **SAMHSA, Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator** — Online confidential system for locating support or treatment resources in your area. Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or link: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- **Psychology Help Center, American Psychological Association** — Online resource center providing information on daily physical and emotional well-being. Link: [www.apa.org/helpcenter/](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/)
- **Real Men, Real Depression short video series** — National Institute of Mental Health. Link: [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/men-and-mental-health/men-and-depression/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/men-and-mental-health/men-and-depression/index.shtml)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**

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