

# Becoming an Informed Champion and Collaborator with Behavioral Health to Improve Quality of AgrAbility Services

► By Robert “Bob” Fetsch, Ph.D. and Chad Reznicek, LPC



Colorado State University  
Extension



**WRASAP**

Western Regional Agricultural  
Stress Assistance Program

**Colorado**  
**AgrAbility**



# Learning Objectives



1. Participants will increase their understanding of national and local trends regarding behavior health needs in rural communities along with referral resources.
2. Participants will hear about systemic methods of expanding rural behavior health options for farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, and their families.
3. Participants will identify specific behavior health tools and resources that SRAP Teams can use to refer farmers and ranchers with behavior health issues to culturally competent local behavior health providers in local rural communities.



# Our AgrAbility Vision

“The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America.”

Source: Retrieved from [www.agrability.org/about/program/#mission](http://www.agrability.org/about/program/#mission)



## What we have learned from the Quality of Life (QOL) program evaluation research studies

- ▶ when we first address ranch and farm individuals' and families' physical needs with on-site assessments with all their major stakeholders and provide prompt follow-through not only do we assist them in increasing their physical quality of life:
  - We also assist them in increasing their psychological well-being 28%
  - their existential/experiential well-being 21%
  - and their support levels by 20% (Fetsch & Collins, 2018)
- ▶ If AgrAbility Teams in Colorado and 13 other states can do this by addressing agricultural producers' physical needs, how much more can we do by a specific focus on behavioral health?



# **Purpose of the WRASAP-funded Behavioral Health Specialist**

- ▶ The purpose is to expand the Colorado AgrAbility Project Team to provide behavioral health preventive education and referrals to local behavioral health providers. The position was developed from a three-year grant through the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program



**CAP BHS Three Year Mission:** to expand and improve behavioral health support for farmers, ranchers, and their families throughout the Western Region.





## Framework for Evaluation: 4 A's--Accessibility, Awareness, Affordability, Acceptability






# The Dirty Word in Agricultural Behavioral Health

Stigma:

- ▶ a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something
- ▶ a mark of shame or discredit
- ▶ archaic : a scar left by a hot iron

[Stigma Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)





# Awareness—seeking every opportunity to share information, promote resources, and increase behavioral health literacy

➤ A 2020 study published in the Journal Of Rural Mental Health investigated barriers to help seeking among 140 rural adults and found:

➤ Knowledge of mental illness emerged as the only significant predictor of and was positively associated with willingness to seek psychological help.

Thorne, K. L., & Ebener, D. (2020). Psychosocial predictors of rural psychological help seeking. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*, 44(4), 232–242.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/rmh0000159>



# Some Great Resources on Behavioral Health and Farm Stress

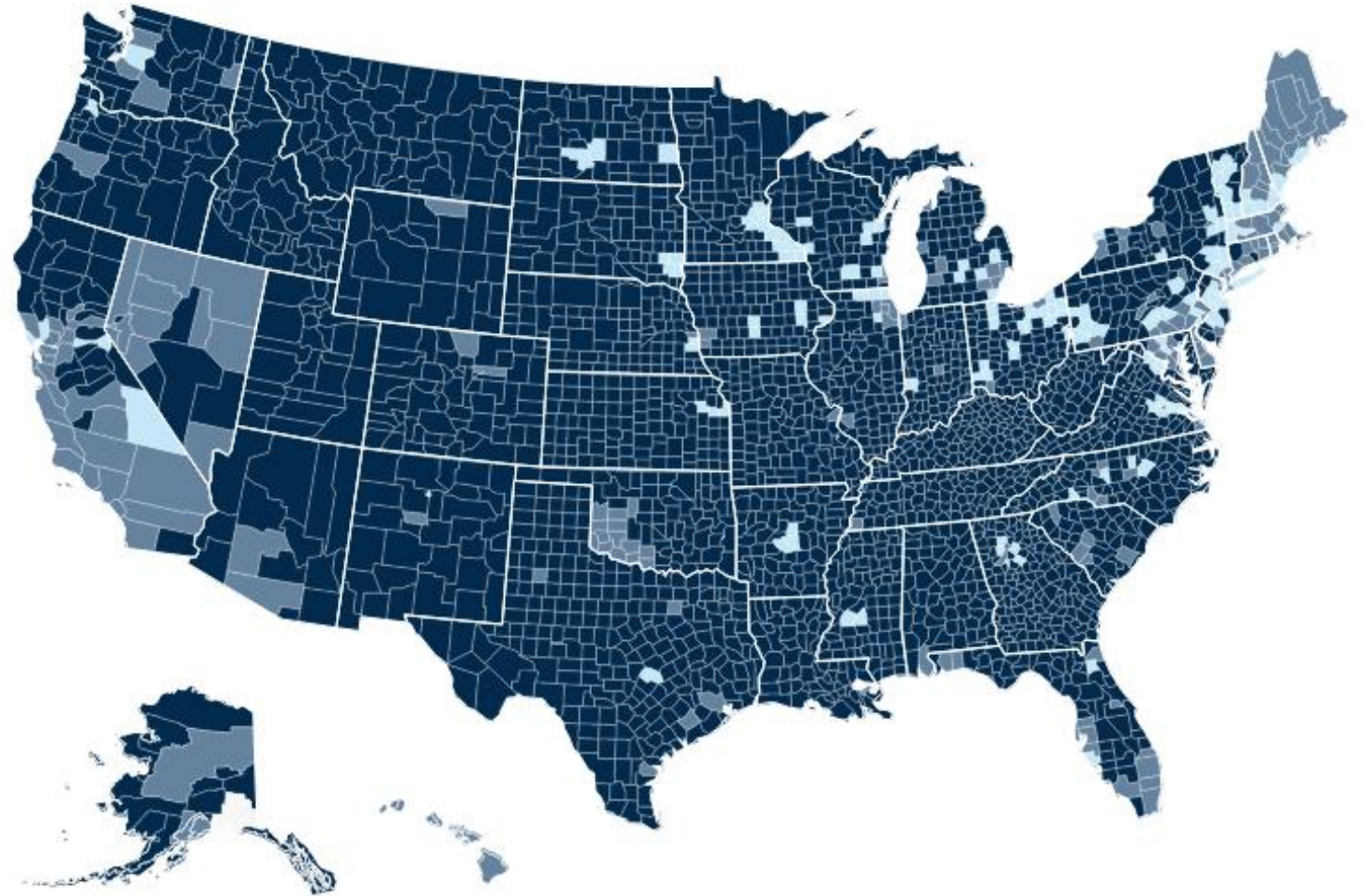
- ▶ [Rural Resilience: Farm Stress Training](#)
  - ▶ Released in 2020 by Michigan State University Extension and University of Illinois Extension
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Psycho-Biology of Stress/Trauma— How surviving can stop us from thriving.



# Accessibility: A National Issue in Our Rural Communities

- Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas by County






## Accessibility—reducing barriers in efficient access to care

- ▶ Know who, what, where, and how for your community.
- ▶ Most Regional Behavioral Health Centers offer a range of in-person and telehealth services. Broadband Access is steadily improving but remains an issue.
- ▶ Navigating insurance options can be tricky and offering support, linkage, and follow up can make all the difference. “Let’s call this number” vs. “Here is a number for you to call”
- ▶ Ability to provide services “in-home” or on the farm are almost non-existent.


# Some Resources to Identify Services in Your Area

- **211**—24/7 on-line, chat, text, and phone connections to local resources. [Call 211 for Essential Community Services | United Way 211](#)
- **Farm Aid**—Ag Specific Resource for links at info at state and community level services. On-line search and hot line. **1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)** Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. eastern time, and 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. western time. [Resources for Farmers – Farm Aid](#)
- **Rural Health Information Hub**—On-line catalog of state level resources. [Rural Health Resources by State - Rural Health Information Hub](#)
- **Western Agricultural Stress Assistance Program**-- On-line catalog of state level resources for Western States. [Clearinghouse - Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program \(farmstress.us\)](#)



# Affordability—Ughh, We Have a Long Way to Go

- ▶ Some states have implemented Voucher Programs or free behavioral health services for farmers: Maryland, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, and Washington
- ▶ Currently no known central data base to determine this. As such would love to gather info and create one.
- ▶ If you know of any free BH services in your state, please feel free to passionately and loudly let us know at this time!



# Acceptability—Promoting Agriculturally Informed and Responsive Care.

- Or..., How Not to Scare Away Farmers in Their First Session
- Most behavioral health providers in rural communities have to be “generalists” but even that is no guarantee of Agricultural Competence or the ability to connect clinical practice with agricultural lived experience






LANDLOGIC  
THE LAND TEACHES

# The Aerial Photo




Mom+Camera, 2021




# Aerial Photo/Representation as a Tool of Assessment, Engagement and Clinical Enlistment

- ▶ With context... conveys cultural humility, honoring and interest in the individual's operation, stresses, and resources
- ▶ Provides a common frame of reference for provider and clients
- ▶ Allows provider a unique perspective into the client's ecological system



# Bridge between client experience and therapeutic concepts and interventions

- ▶ Environmental context for learning CBT and ACT concepts
  - ▶ Value clarification and evaluation
  - ▶ Rich source of analogies for a wide range of therapeutic applications
  - ▶ Potential for designing individualized, relevant, and practical homework and interventions
- 

## Accessibility, Awareness, and Affordability



# Colorado Agricultural Addiction and Mental Health Program

- Offers a voucher system for 6 free sessions for Colorado Farmers with providers trained in Agricultural Competency.
- Offers training in Agricultural Competency, based heavily on the notion of the Agrarian Imperative by Dr. Rosmann.
- Partnering with CAP to offer 4 spring weekend workshops on parenting strategies for teen substance abuse prevention/intervention in rural communities.

# Southeast Health Group as blue-chip model for accessibility, acceptability, and awareness through community collaboration



**DO YOU LOOK AFTER  
YOUR NEIGHBORS  
AS CLOSE AS YOUR  
CROP OR HERD?**

 **LA JUNTA  
LIVESTOCK  
COMMISSION INC** 

 **SOUTHEAST AREA  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

**4RIVERS  
EQUIPMENT**

 **SOUTHEAST  
HEALTH GROUP**

If you or someone you know are in crisis,  
please call: 800-511-5446 (Local)  
844-493-8255 text TALK to 38255 (Statewide)





# Minnesota Model of Ag-Specific Behavioral Health Checks All the Boxes

- ▶ Monica McConkey [Farm Family Mental Health Specialist | Eyes on the Horizon | MN](#)
  - ▶ Ted Matthews [Ted Matthews | United States | Farm Counseling](#)
- 



**There is one resource in every  
community that addresses the 4 A's**







# Training Programs to Increase Skill in Community Intervention

- ▶ **Mental Health First Aid**--Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues. [Mental Health First Aid](#)
- ▶ **QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer**--The QPR mission is to reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives by providing innovative, practical and proven suicide prevention training. The signs of crisis are all around us. We believe that quality education empowers all people, regardless of their background, to make a positive difference in the life of someone they know. [QPR Institute | Practical and Proven Suicide Prevention Training QPR Institute \(en-US\)](#)
- ▶ **“COMET: Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory**-- recognizes our rural values of neighbor helping neighbor, and communities being their own best resource – especially when concerned about another’s emotional and mental well-being. [COMET@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:COMET@cuanschutz.edu)



- ▶ COMET provides five specific guiding questions to help you start a conversation with someone who might be dealing with a mental health issue.
- ▶ 90-120 minute training available to rural community members
- ▶ Recently featured in an article by Civil Eats detailing [Wisconsin Women in Conservation](#) as they prepare to begin offering COMET trainings to increase the capacity for peer support among the 38,000 women producers in that state.

[Can Farmers Help Each Other Navigate Mental Health Crises? | Civil Eats](#)



## Developed BY and FOR rural communities:



- Based on evidence from rural people
- Developed by researchers and rural community members
- Includes a very intentional set of questions and guidelines – not random questions.

# Conversational Gravity Assist

Be "the other person"



Someone headed towards crisis.

You are here.  
Be "the other person."

*Community-based safe venues for emotional expression*

*Mental Health First Aid,  
Crisis Hotlines,  
Law Enforcement*

## BE THE OTHER PERSON

1. You don't seem to be yourself lately.
2. How are you? No, really. How are you?
3. I've noticed you haven't...(been at coffee, at the football games, at the club). **Or**  
I've noticed that you seem (stressed, sad, distracted) lately.
4. How are things at home/work/school/with your friends?
5. Can we get coffee sometime soon and talk?  
Can I call you sometime?



# Links to Resources:

Please feel free to email me for a copy of this slide deck with active links at [chad.reznicek@colostate.edu](mailto:chad.reznicek@colostate.edu)





# Crisis Line Numbers

- ▶ 211
- ▶ Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
- ▶ National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273- 8255 (1-800-273-TALK)
- ▶ Military Veterans Suicide Hotline: 800-273- 8255 (1-800-273-TALK) Press 1
- ▶ Farm Aid Hotline: 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)
- ▶ LGBTQ Suicide Hotline: 1-866-4-U-TREVOR

# Service Identification Links

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# A few others

- ▶ [Rural Health Information Hub](#)

- ▶ The RHlhub is your guide to improving health for rural residents—we provide access to current and reliable resources and tools to help you learn about rural health needs and work to address them.

- ▶ [Home | Mental Health Technology Transfer Center \(MHTTC\) Network \(mhttcnetwork.org\)](#)

- ▶ Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals.
- ▶ Nationwide network broken into regional application



# And a Few More

- ▶ [Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program \(farmstress.us\)](https://farmstress.us)
  - ▶ Funded by a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant, the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program is composed of lead agencies representing 13 states and 4 territories.
- ▶ [WRASAP Baseline Aggregate Report](#)
  - ▶ Released 2022 by Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP)
  - ▶ Results of survey aimed to better understand the types of stressors that agricultural producers are facing, what types of stress management topics and dissemination strategies they would most prefer
- ▶ [www.RuralMinds.org](http://www.RuralMinds.org)
  - ▶ The mission of Rural Minds is to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. The nonprofit pursues collaborative initiatives to help end the silence, stigma, and suffering that surround mental illness.
- ▶ [Home - AgriSafe Network](#)
  - ▶ AgriSafe was formed in 2003 by rural nurses who believed that together they could improve the health and safety of farmers and ranchers. Today, AgriSafe builds the competency of health and safety professionals to deliver exceptional occupational agricultural health care.



## CALM: Counseling on Access to Lethal Means | Suicide Prevention Resource Center ([sprc.org](http://sprc.org))

- Reducing access to lethal means, such as firearms and medication, can determine whether a person at risk for suicide lives or dies. This free online course focuses on how to reduce access to the methods people use to kill themselves. It covers how to: (1) identify people who could benefit from lethal means counseling, (2) ask about their access to lethal methods, and (3) work with them—and their families—to reduce access.
- While this course is primarily designed for mental health professionals, others who work with people at risk for suicide, like social service professionals and health care providers, may also benefit from taking it

# Questions and Comments?

- ▶ Thank you all for your time and attention today and especially for your dedication to help support this most noble of occupations and the incredible families that give so much back to the world through agriculture
- ▶ Contact: Chad Reznicek **970-744-9011**  
**chad.reznicek@colostate.edu**



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