



# UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND SUBSTANCE USE IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL POPULATIONS

CHAD REZNICEK, LPC, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST COLORADO AGRABILITY PROJECT

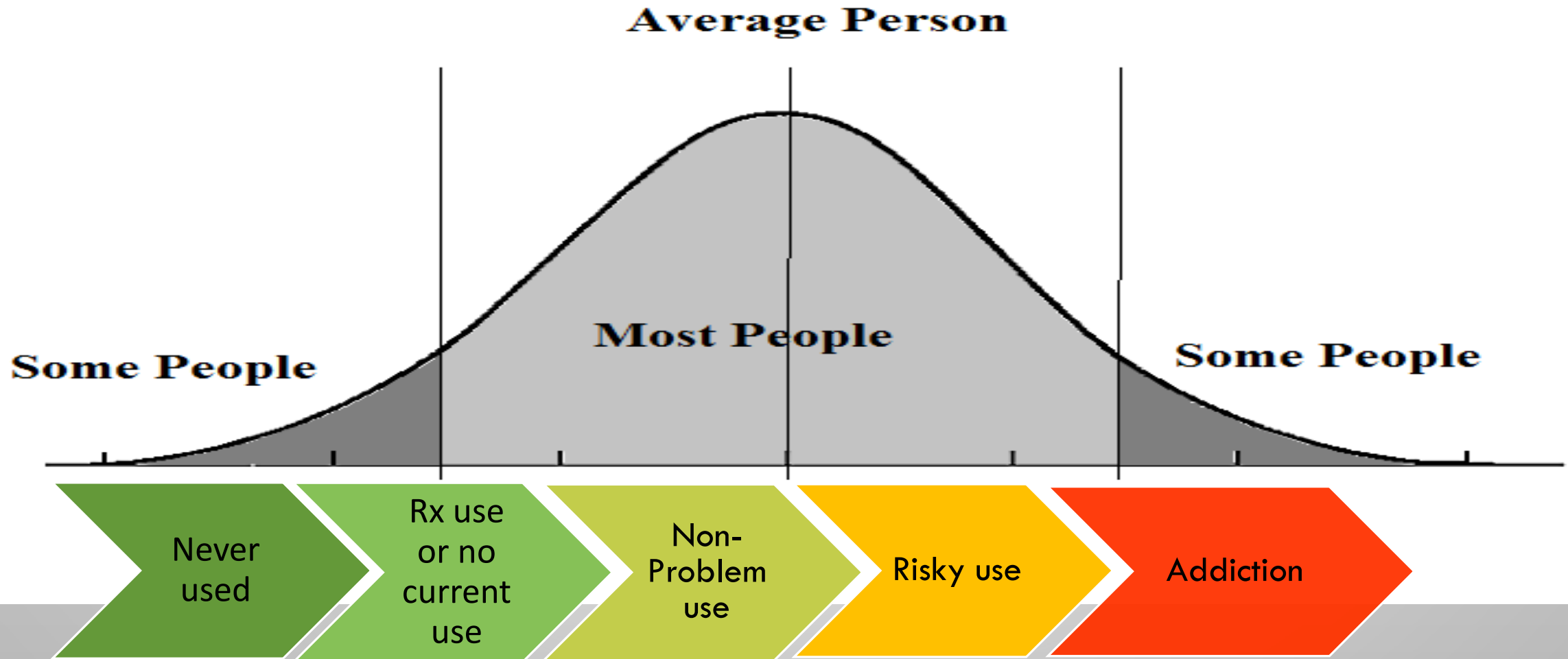
# CHAD REZNICEK, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST



**PURPOSE OF THE WRASAP-FUNDED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST:** To expand and improve behavioral health support for farmers, ranchers, workers, and their families throughout the western region.

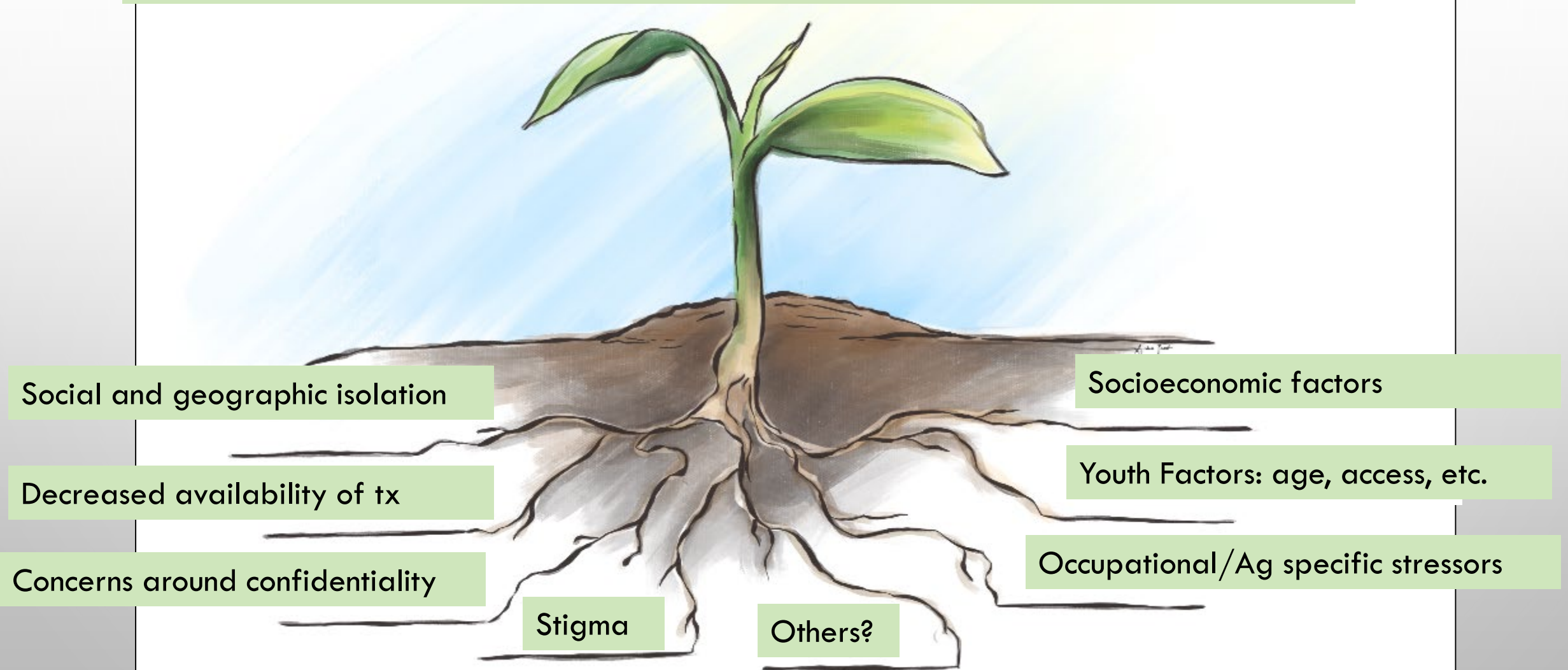


# TERMS AND CONTINUUM OF SUBSTANCE USE





# Substance Abuse Risk Factors in Rural/Ag Populations



# SUBSTANCE USE AMONG RURAL YOUTH

- Rural youth have higher alcohol use and methamphetamine use than urban youth and the more rural the area, the higher the use.
- Rural young adults living in rural-large areas have higher rates of substance abuse than their urban peers
- Those living in the most rural areas have nearly twice the rate of methamphetamine use as urban young adults.
- Rural youth are more likely than urban youth to have engaged in the high-risk behavior of driving under the influence of alcohol or other illicit drugs.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN RURAL AMERICA - LAMBERT - 2008 - THE JOURNAL OF RURAL HEALTH - WILEY ONLINE LIBRARY

# OVERCOMING STIGMA BY NORMALIZING THE CONVERSATION

- A 2020 study published in the journal of rural mental health investigated barriers to help seeking among 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](https://doi.org/10.1037/RMH0000159)

# OCCUPATIONAL/AG SPECIFIC STRESSORS



Nothing vast enters the life of mortals without a curse—Sophocles



# THE AGRARIAN IMPERATIVE THEORY EXPLAINS MUCH ABOUT SUCCESSFUL FARMERS, AND THEIR MAJOR STRUGGLES

Like many animal species, humans have a basic need to acquire sufficient territory and the necessary resources (e.G., Capital, equipment, buildings, livestock) to produce the food and shelter required by their families and communities. Also called “the agrarian personality,” this genetically programmed instinct drives Farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to tolerate unusual pain and adversity, to trust their own judgment, and to take uncommon risks.

\*Rosmann, MR (2010). The Agrarian Imperative. [Journal of Agromedicine](#), 15, 71-75.

# PSYCHO-BIOLOGY OF STRESS/TRAUMA— HOW SURVIVING CAN STOP US FROM THRIVING.

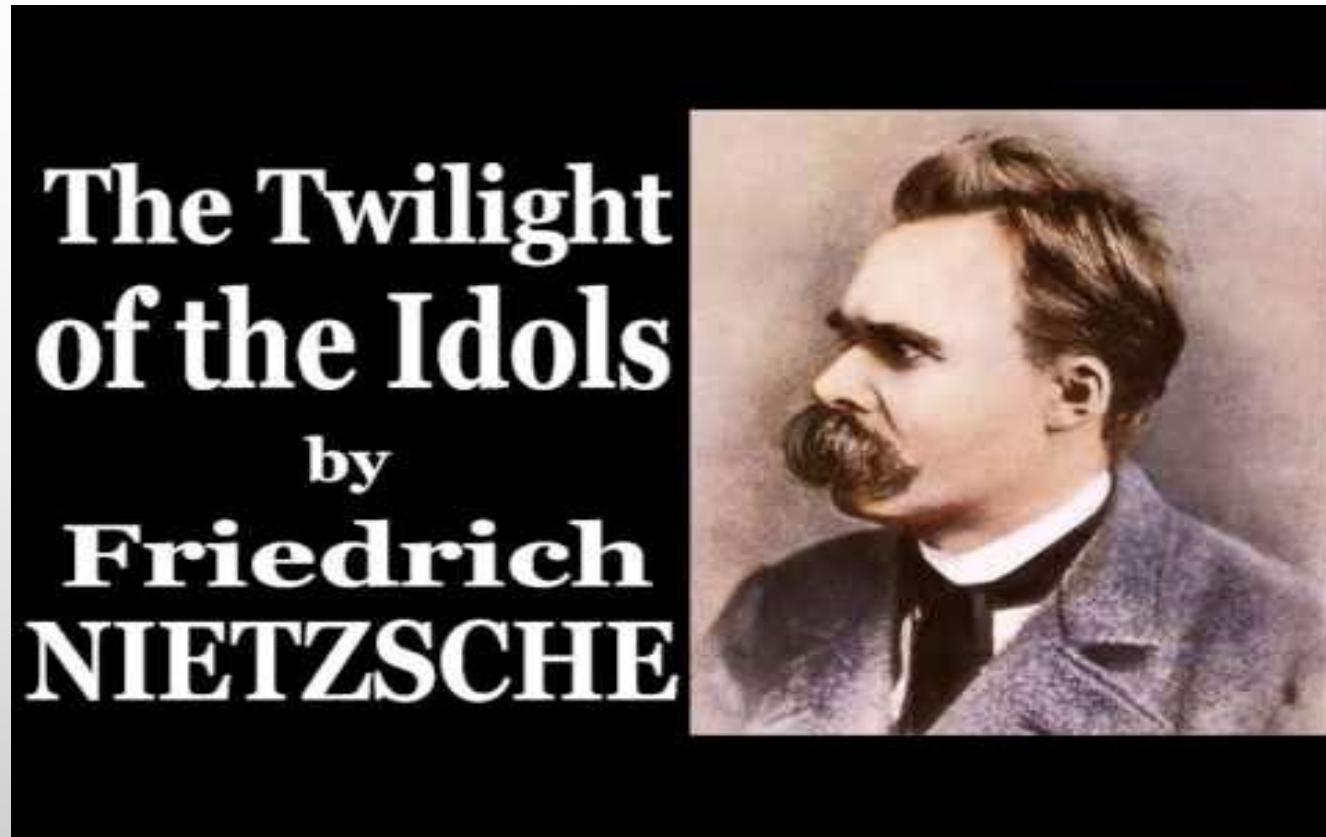


# ACUTE VS. CHRONIC STRESS

- Our ancestors had to be relatively good at dealing with acute stressors during their reproductive years, and as a result, they passed those abilities down to us.
- However, *chronic* stress, or stress over the long term, *doesn't usually kill us when we're young enough to breed*. The medical conditions that it engenders generally kill us in later life *after we are no longer capable of reproduction*; relevant coping capacities, therefore, had less chance of entering our modern genome.

[Ancient fears: acute and chronic stress responses | psychology today](#)

# TOXIC GRIT AND THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC STRESS



“what doesn’t kill me, makes me stronger” ...if you have the internal and external resources to manage the threat



# STRESS AND ADDICTION

- Stress is a well-known risk factor in the development of addiction and in addiction relapse vulnerability.
- Stress has long been known to increase vulnerability to addiction. The last decade has led to a dramatic increase in understanding the underlying mechanisms for this association.

CHRONIC STRESS, DRUG USE, AND VULNERABILITY TO ADDICTION - PMC (NIH.GOV)

- One explanation for the strong linkage between stress and addiction is the self-medication theory, which suggests that the person may use drugs to cope with tension associated with life stressors or to relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression resulting from a traumatic event.
- STRESS AND ADDICTION | PSYCHOLOGY TODAY



# THE FUNCTIONAL VALUE OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE INNATE DRIVE FOR PREDICTABILITY

- The human mind is naturally impelled to take delight in uniformity—Giambattista Vico
- It turns out your brain craves certainty in a similar way, and using similar circuits, for how we crave food, sex and other primary rewards. Information is rewarding.
- Your brain doesn't like uncertainty - it's like a type of pain, something to be avoided. Certainty on the other hand feels rewarding, and we tend to steer toward it, even when it might be better for us to remain uncertain.

A HUNGER FOR CERTAINTY | PSYCHOLOGY TODAY





- *As the owner of a predicting brain, you have more control over your actions and experiences than you might think and more responsibility than you might want.*

YOUR BRAIN PREDICTS (ALMOST) EVERYTHING YOU DO  
– MINDFUL

- “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” – Viktor E. Frankl





# NEUROPLASTICITY

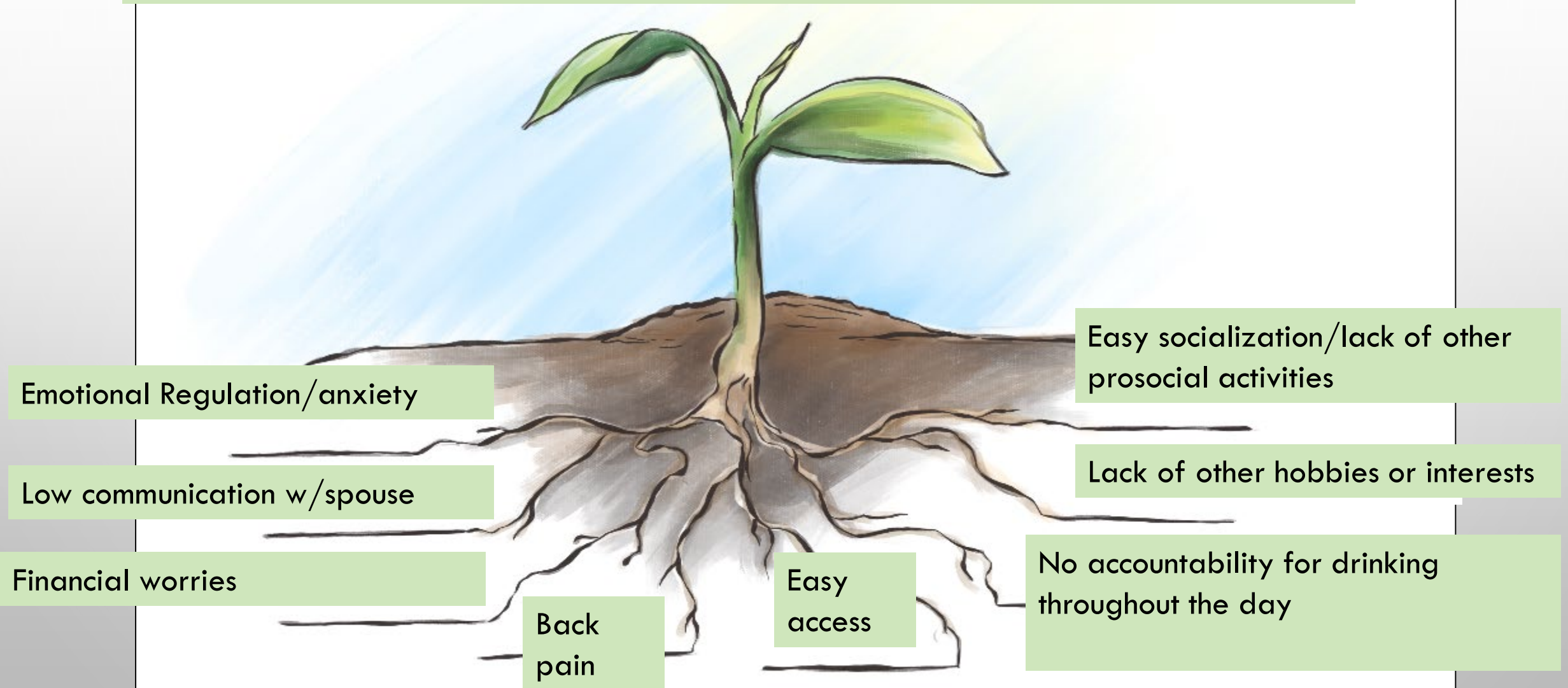
- ...”REFERS TO THE PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE BRAIN THAT HAPPEN AS THE RESULT OF OUR INTERACTIONS WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT. FROM THE TIME THE BRAIN BEGINS TO DEVELOP IN UTERO **UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE**, THE CONNECTIONS AMONG THE CELLS IN OUR BRAINS REORGANIZE IN RESPONSE TO OUR CHANGING NEEDS. THIS DYNAMIC PROCESS ALLOWS US TO LEARN FROM AND ADAPT TO DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES”

CELESTE CAMPBELL (N.D.).





# Daily Alcohol Use



LandLogic™ illustrations by Andrea Rochat, MFA [www.RochatCreative.com](http://www.RochatCreative.com)

# Increase days without alcohol use

Coping strategies for anxiety

Eat lunch with spouse every day

Meet with accountant  
about record keeping

Schedule  
Dr. appt

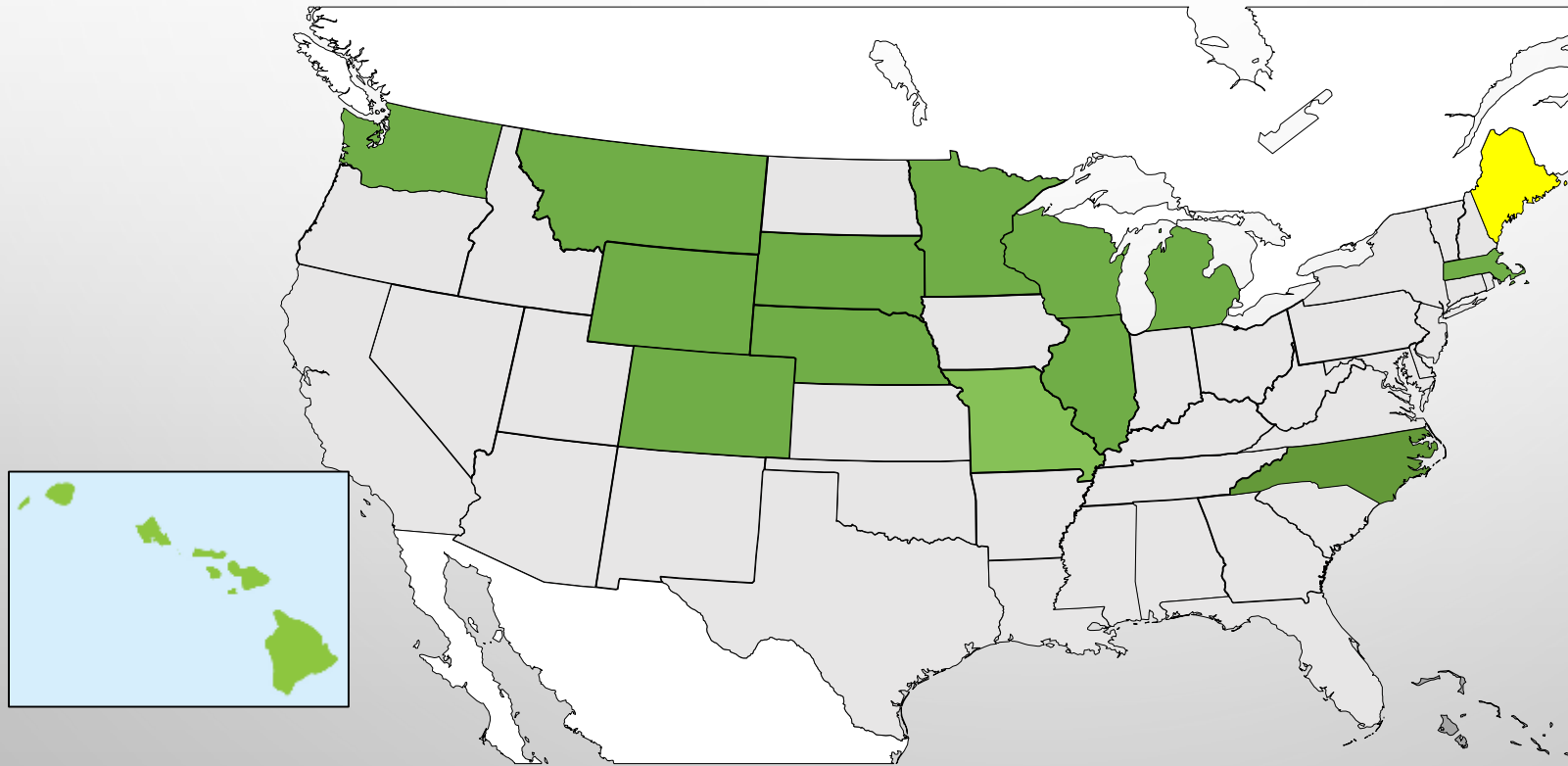
Limit  
EtOH on  
hand

Prioritize non-alcohol social activities

Dust off guitar and play 30 mins

Only drink on weekend evenings

# STATES WITH AG VOUCHER AND/OR NO COST BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS





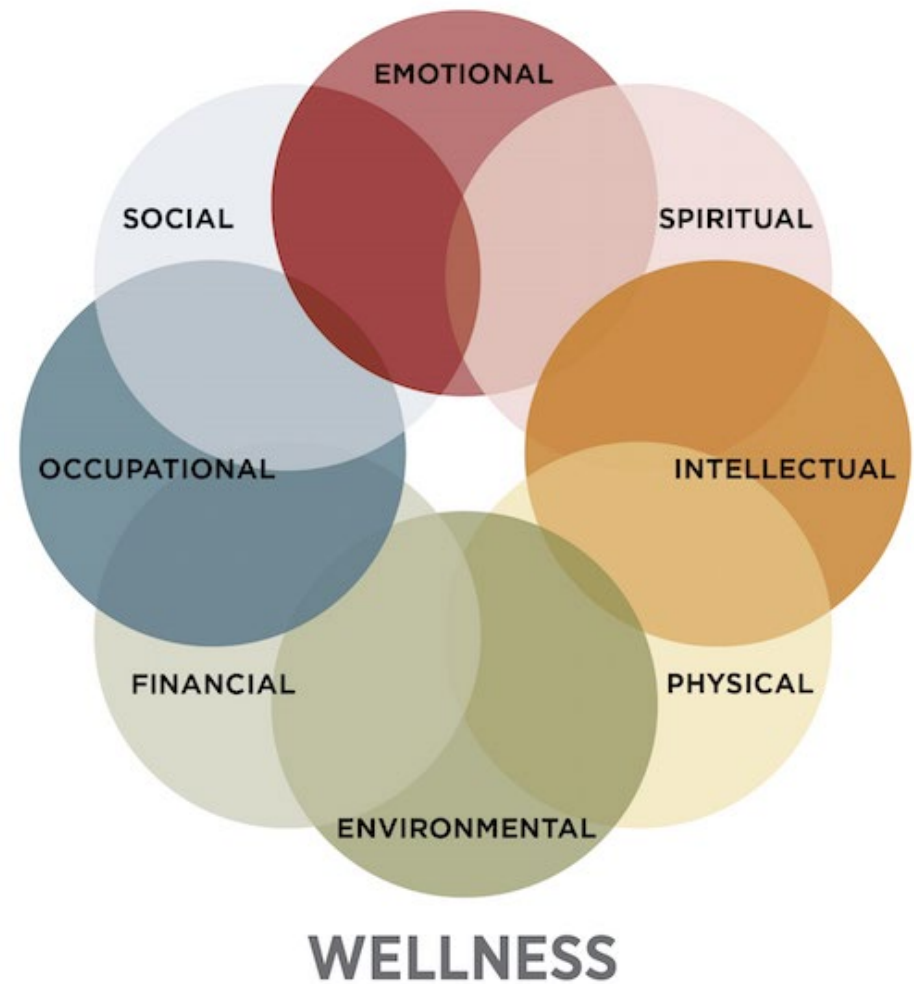


LANDLOGIC  
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# **SAMHSA'S 8 DOMAINS OF WELLNESS: A WHOLE-PERSON, STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH**

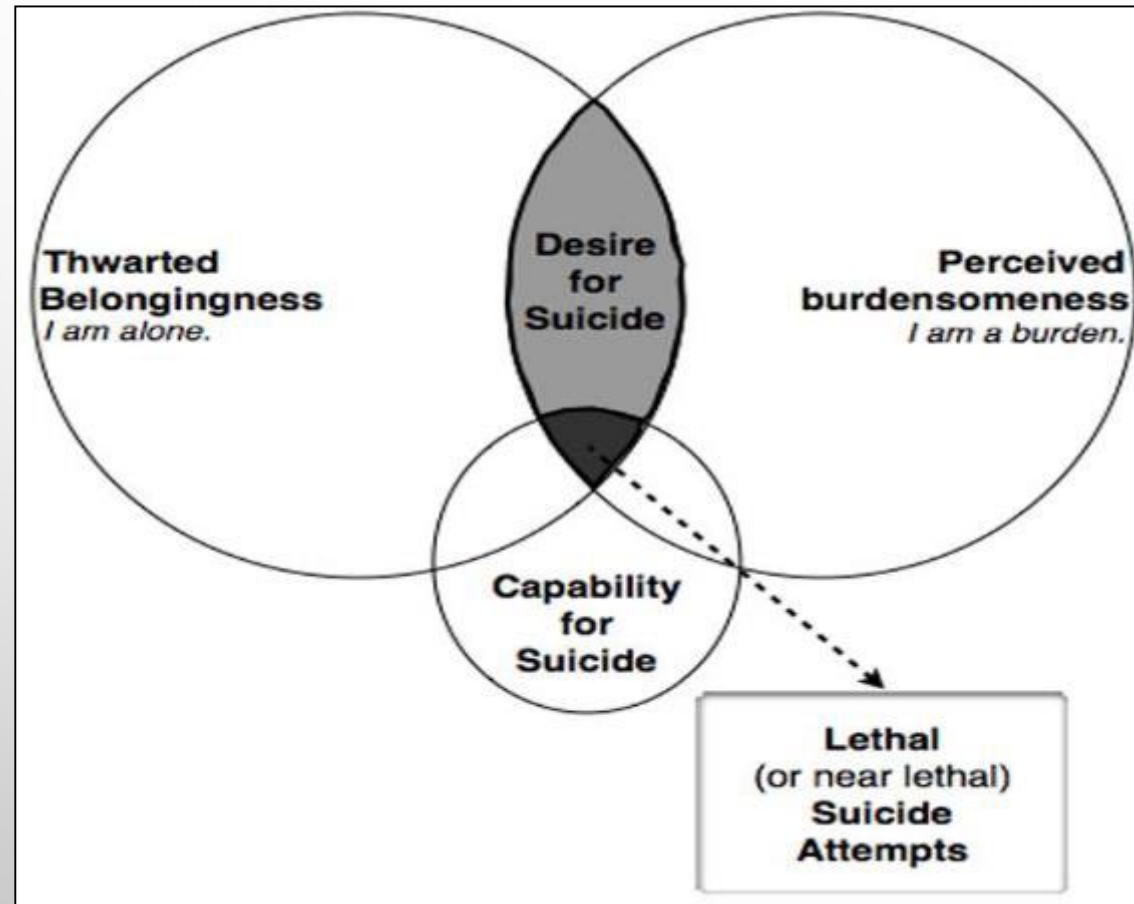
[MFP \(samhsa.gov\)](https://www.samhsa.gov)



# **SAMHSA'S 8 DOMAINS OF WELLNESS: A WHOLE-PERSON, STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH**

1. **EMOTIONAL:** COPING EFFECTIVELY WITH LIFE AND CREATING SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS
- 2. **ENVIRONMENTAL:** ENJOYING GOOD HEALTH BY OCCUPYING PLEASANT, STIMULATING ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT WELL-BEING
- 3. **FINANCIAL:** SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL SITUATIONS
- 4. **INTELLECTUAL:** RECOGNIZING CREATIVE ABILITIES AND FINDING WAYS TO EXPAND KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
- 5. **OCCUPATIONAL:** PERSONAL SATISFACTION AND ENRICHMENT FROM ONE'S WORK
- 6. **PHYSICAL:** RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, HEALTHY FOODS, AND SLEEP
- 7. **SOCIAL:** DEVELOPING A SENSE OF CONNECTION AND BELONGING; AND HAVING A [GOOD] SUPPORT SYSTEM
- 8. **SPIRITUAL:** EXPANDING ONE'S SENSE OF PURPOSE AND MEANING IN LIFE

# Substance Use and Suicide Risk



INTERPERSONAL THEORY OF SUICIDE--KIMBERLY A. VAN ORDEN, TRACY K. WITTE, KELLY C. CUKROWICZ, SCOTT BRAITHWAITE, EDWARD A. SELBY, AND THOMAS E. JOINER, JR.

# OUR TRIBE AS THE MOST POWERFUL PROTECTIVE FACTOR





# RURAL AND AG SUBSTANCE USE RESOURCES

- [ALCOHOL USE AND AGRICULTURE - AGRISAFE NETWORK](#)
- [OPIOIDS - AGRISAFE NETWORK](#)
- [SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE IN RURAL AREAS OVERVIEW - RURAL HEALTH INFORMATION HUB](#)
- [RURAL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TOOLKIT - RHIHUB](#)  
[\(RURALHEALTHINFO.ORG\)](#)
- [SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS IN THE FARMING POPULATION: SCOPING REVIEW \(WILEY.COM\)](#)
- [SUBSTANCE USE AMONG AGRICULTURAL WORKERS-](#)  
[REPORT ON A NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN MAINE-LAURA VALENCIA OROZCO-HANNAH MILLER.PDF](#)  
[\(NCFH.ORG\)](#)

# SOME GREAT RESOURCES ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND FARM STRESS

- FARMRESPONSE - AGRISAFE NETWORK
  - *FARMRESPONSE*<sup>SM</sup> IS AN ON-DEMAND 3.5-HOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSE DEVELOPED BY NATIONAL EXPERTS FROM THE AGRISTRESS RESPONSE NETWORK<sup>SM</sup>.
- RURAL RESILIENCE: FARM STRESS TRAINING
  - RELEASED IN 2020 BY MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
  - SELF-GUIDED TRAINING ON MANAGING STRESS, COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRESSED FARMERS AND SUICIDE AWARENESS
- AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION & FARM AID TRAINING
  - RELEASED IN 2019 BY APA AND FARM AID
  - ONE-HOUR WEBINAR EXPLAINING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS FOR FARMERS AND WAYS TO CONNECT WITH FARMERS
- FARM STRESS: FACTS, IMPACT OF COVID-19, AND RESOURCE AND TRAINING NEEDS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS
  - RELEASED 2020 BY MOUNTAIN PLAINS MHTTC
  - A BRIEF SUMMARIZING THE CONTENT FROM KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS REGARDING PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS FACING THE FARMING COMMUNITY AND ALSO PROVIDES A RESOURCE LIST FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

# SOME RESOURCES TO IDENTIFY SERVICES IN YOUR AREA

- **988** CAME ON-LINE 7/16/22
- **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](#)
- **AGRISTRESS HELPLINE**—AG SPECIFIC RESOURCE FOR MISSOURI, PENNSYLVANIA, TEXAS, AND WYOMING **833-897-2474** [AGRISTRESS HELPLINE - AGRISAFE NETWORK](#)
- **WESTERN AGRICULTURAL STRESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**-- ON-LINE CATALOG OF STATE LEVEL RESOURCES FOR WESTERN STATES. [CLEARINGHOUSE - WESTERN REGION AGRICULTURAL STRESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM \(FARMSTRESS.US\)](#)
- **211**—24/7 ON-LINE, CHAT, TEXT, AND PHONE CONNECTIONS TO LOCAL RESOURCES. [CALL 211 FOR ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY SERVICES | UNITED WAY 211](#)



# A FEW OTHER GREAT STARTING POINTS

- [RURAL HEALTH INFORMATION HUB](#)

- THE RHIHUB 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

- [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.

# 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**

