

# Disclaimer

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At the time of this presentation, Elinore F. McCance-Katz served as SAMHSA Assistant Secretary. The opinions expressed herein are the views of Monica Kramer McConkey and Kristi Phillips and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.

# Improving Behavioral Health Service Access for Farming and Rural Communities Series

The American Psychological Association (APA) and Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers (MHTTC) serving the Great Lakes and Mountain Plains Regions are pleased to present the first part of a three part series on addressing the behavioral health needs of farmers and rural communities.



# Improving Mental Health Care by Understanding the Culture of Farming and Rural Communities

- This session will highlight challenges and identify opportunities to address the mental health needs surrounding American farming and rural communities. It will examine the implementation of psychological science and research and provide practical application.



# Focus Areas of the Session:

- Address stressors, risk factors, social supports, and treatment resources in rural/frontier farming communities;
- Provide an introduction to the unique economic aspects of current agricultural climate; and
- Offer tools to guide practitioners on addressing the unique aspects of providing mental health services to farmer/ranchers and their families.

# Presenters



Kristi Phillips, PsyD, L.P.

Dr. Phillips is the Chair of the American Psychological Association, Committee on Rural health and a licensed psychologist and health service provider in Minnesota. She is on the National Register of Health Psychologists.

## Monica Kramer McConkey, M.A., LPC

Monica has 25 years of experience in the behavioral health field. Growing up on a farm in northwestern Minnesota, she currently works as one of two rural mental health specialists in Minnesota providing support to farmers and their families through a contract with the MN Ag Centers of Excellence and Farm Business Management.



# Boots on the Ground: Lessons Learned

**Monica Kramer McConkey, MA, LPC**  
Rural Mental Health Specialist  
Eyes on the Horizon Consulting, LLC

**Kristi K. Phillips, Psy.D, L.P.**  
Chair, APA Committee on Rural Health  
Meeker Memorial Hospital and Clinics and  
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# The Agrarian Imperative

“To farmers, ‘the land is everything.’ Ownership of a family farm is the triumphant result of the struggles of multiple generations. Losing the family farm is the ultimate loss – bringing shame to the generation that has let down their forbearers and dashing the hopes for successors.”

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES OF THE AGING AGRICULTURAL POPULATION. By: Michael R. Rosmann, Ph.D . A Conference on the Aging Farm Community: Using Current Health and Safety Status to Map Future Action. Indianapolis, IN Wednesday, March 7, 2007.

# The Agrarian Imperative

“...impels farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship, and to take uncommon risks.”

# Farmers and the Mental Health Crisis:



- Stressors
  - Farmer debt to income ratio
  - Trade wars and impact on tariffs
  - Volatile commodities market
  - Unpredictable weather and natural disasters
  - Labor shortages
- Rural Resilience
  - Heavy Workloads
  - Social Isolation

# Additional Ranching and Farming Stressors



- Illness/Injury
- Irregular/uncertain income
- Transition/Succession

# COVID-19 Specific Stressors

- Job Loss/Health Insurance
- Social Isolation
- Family stress (daycare/school)



# Warning Signs



- Mood Changes
- Abrupt Sales
- Disrepair
- Injury and Illness
- Altered Sleep Patterns
- Increased Substance Use
- Lack of Motivation
- Unpaid Bills
- Hopelessness

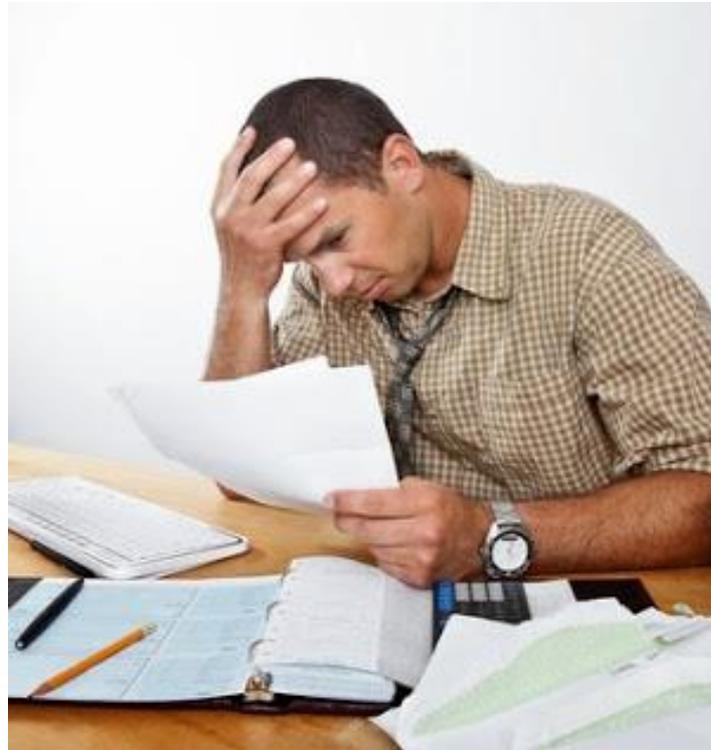
# Biopsychosocial Protective Factors

- Biophysical
- Psychological
- Social
- Spiritual



# Addressing Barriers

- Expense
- Insurance



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# Addressing Barriers

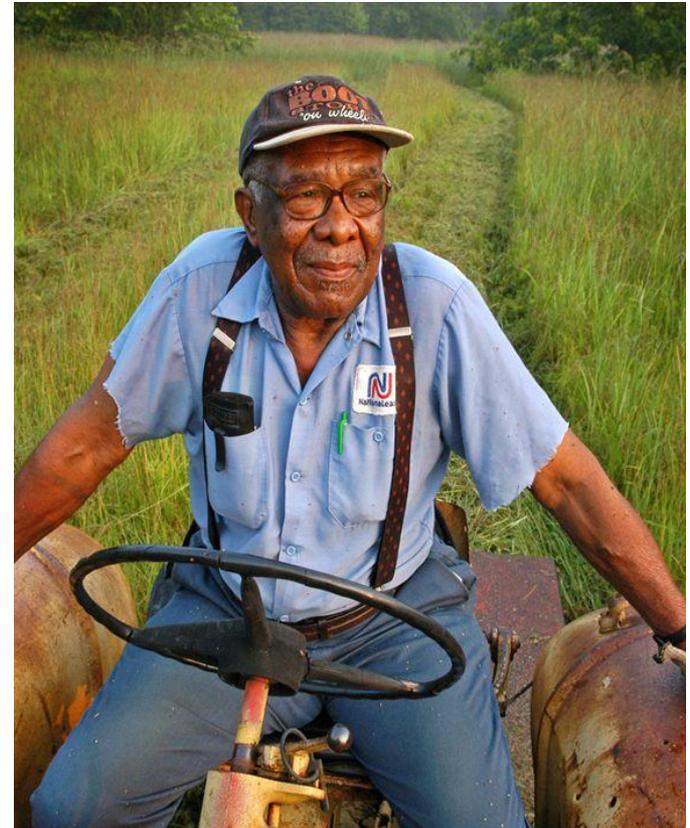
- Time
- Seasonal Workload Demands



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# Addressing Barriers

- Perceived/Real Stigma in Rural Areas



# Techniques & Strategies to Start the Conversation

- Acknowledge
- Remind
- Share
- Initiate
- Encourage

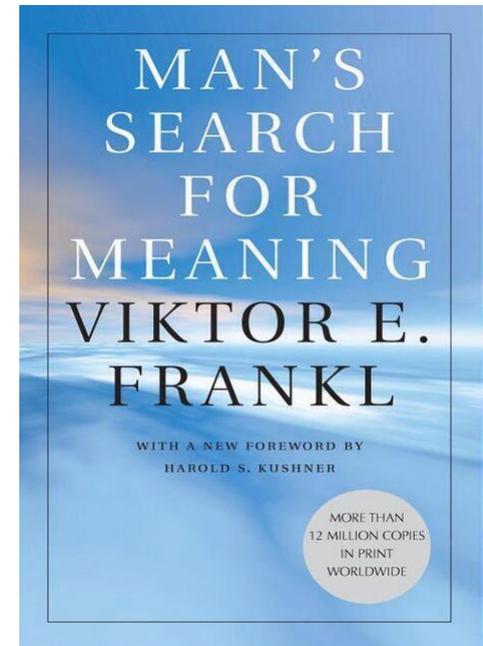


# Know Your Region's Agriculture

- Become familiar with primary commodities
- Learn about Ag Resources
  - Farmer-Lender Mediation
  - Farm Advocates
  - Farm Business Management
  - Finance Assistance
  - Transition/Succession support programs

# Treatment/Resources and Getting Farmers to Talk

- Telehealth
- Risk Assessment
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



Retrieved from Amazon.com

# Resources

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): Call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or Use the [online Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- Mountain Plains MHTTC farm stress resources [MHTTC farm stress resources](#)

AFBF's Research on Farmer Mental Health:

A strong majority of farmers and farmworkers say financial issues, farm or business problems and fear of losing the farm impact farmers' mental health, according to a [national research poll](#) sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Additional Resources for Managing Stress, Anxiety or Depression:

For More Information - Contact us at [farmstateofmind@fb.org](mailto:farmstateofmind@fb.org).

- [Managing & Breaking the Cycle of Chronic Farm Stress](#): A peer-reviewed paper by John Shutske, Ph.D., Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
  - [Managing Farm Stress](#): Mental health and stress management resources from Michigan State University Extension
  - [Podcasts, videos and information on farm and ranch stress](#) from North Dakota State University
  - [TransFARMation](#): A radio and podcast series focused on coping with stress, from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Red River Farm Network
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- Journal of Rural Mental Health: [www.apa.org/pubs/journals/rmh/](http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/rmh/)
  - National Association for Rural Mental Health: [www.narmh.org](http://www.narmh.org)
  - Farm Aid's Farmer Resource Network: [www.farmaid.org/ideas](http://www.farmaid.org/ideas)
  - Farm Aid Fact Sheets: [www.farmaid.org/blog/fact-sheet/](http://www.farmaid.org/blog/fact-sheet/)

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A large, vibrant green field occupies the foreground and middle ground, showing distinct rows of crops. To the right, a two-lane asphalt road with yellow center lines runs diagonally. Beyond the road is a large, brown, tilled field. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing shadows cast by the crops and the road.

**Thank you for joining!**