

# Suicidal Behaviors and Risk Factors

Suicide is a major public health problem and a leading cause of death in the United States.

## Warning Signs

If you or someone you know exhibits any of these, seek help immediately by calling the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **988**

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Exhibiting/displaying extreme mood swings

## Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text): 988

Línea de Prevención del Suicidio y Crisis: 988

Veterans: press 1

Deaf and Hard of Hearing: dial 711 then 988

Source: Mental Health First Aid™ USA, 2015

## Making the Connection

**Mental Health:** National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) and Mental Health America (MHA) -Services and Programs for people and families living with mental illness.

**St. Croix Valley NAMI (serving Pierce & St. Croix Counties)** 608-301-5440 | [www.nami-stcroixvalley.com](http://www.nami-stcroixvalley.com)

**Barron County NAMI (serves Polk County)** 715-418-6090 | [www.namibarroncounty.com](http://www.namibarroncounty.com)

**Individuals** you can turn to for support (i.e. doctor, clergy, friend, counselor, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**Wisconsin Farm Center:** 800-942-2474 (M-F 7:45 am-4:30 pm) Information and support for farm families in the areas of financial planning, conflict mediation, arbitration, farm transfers and counseling.

**United Way 211:** Dial 211 for connection to local services like food and utility assistance, housing, mental health services, and much more.

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Supporting Farmers  
During Challenging Times  
Resources for Pierce, Polk,  
and St. Croix Counties

# Making the Connection





## Farm Stress

Farming can be difficult for families, and many are experiencing financial and emotional stress as a result. There are several signs that may indicate an individual may be in need of help. These signs include:

- Changes in daily routines
- Increases in upper respiratory illnesses (colds, flu) or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough)
- Declines in appearance of farmstead
- Declines in care of livestock
- Increases in farm accidents due to fatigue or loss of ability to concentrate
- Occurrences of signs of stress in children

### Signs of Prolonged Stress

When families are under stress for long periods of time, they may experience a number of signs and symptoms of chronic, prolonged stress.

#### Physical

- Headaches
- Backaches
- Ulcers
- Eating irregularities
- Sleep disturbances
- Frequent sickness
- Exhaustion

#### Emotional

- Sadness
- Depression
- Bitterness
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Loss of spirit
- Loss of humor

#### Behavioral

- Irritability
- Backbiting
- Acting out
- Withdrawal
- Passive-aggressiveness
- Alcoholism
- Violence

#### Cognitive

- Memory loss
- Lack of concentration
- Inability to make decisions

## Depression

Depression can affect a person's emotions, thinking, behavior and physical well-being. It is a common treatable illness.

A change in a person's normal behavior, or start of a new pattern noticed for two weeks or more, may indicate depression. Is this affecting a person's ability to work, carry out usual daily activities and personal relationships? Look for **two or more of these symptoms lasting for two or more weeks:**

- An unusually sad mood
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities that used to be enjoyable
- Lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Becoming agitated
- Sleeping difficulties
- Changes in eating habits

## Anxiety

People with anxiety disorder can worry excessively. Symptoms can be physical, psychological or behavioral:

- **Physical:** Increased heart rate, shortness of breath, headaches, tingling or numbness, diarrhea, muscle aches and restlessness.
- **Psychological:** Unrealistic and/or excessive fear and worry, confusion, irritability and nervousness.
- **Behavioral:** Avoiding situations, obsessive or compulsive behavior and distress in social situations.

An anxiety disorder differs from normal anxiety in the following ways: It is more intense, longer lasting, and interferes with the person's work, activities, or relationships.

## Stress and Mental Health

Farming is one of the most stressful occupations in the United States. Some of the common stressors include:

- Financial pressures and debt load
- Dependence on unpredictable weather and volatile markets
- Extreme outdoor work conditions
- Lack of personal time or little time to talk through difficult problems due to excessive workloads
- Intergenerational differences
- Health, pain, fatigue or mobility issues connected to years of physical labor
- Strained family relationships

### What is mental health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It does not mean mental disease. It helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood through adulthood.

Mental health problems are more common than heart disease, lung disease and cancer, combined. One in five individuals has mental health complications, including farmers.

Source: National Ag Safety Database's Mental Health and the Impact on Wellness for Farm Families