

FARMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Women's Institute Convener Kit, 2021

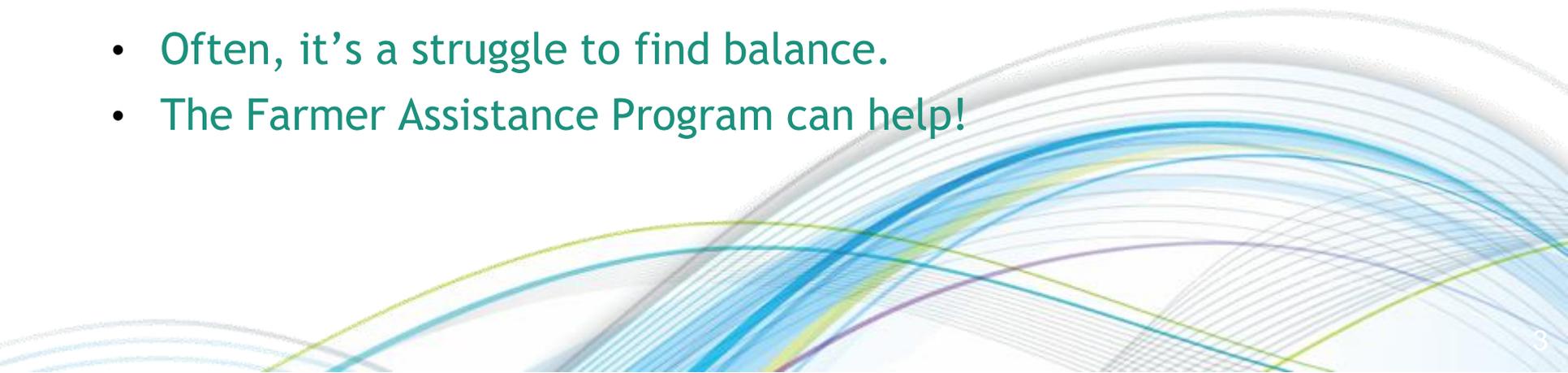


Please note that this document contains information on mental health, including suicide. If you are in need of immediate mental health assistance, please contact the Island Help Line at **1-800-218-2885**.

If you are a farm worker or their family member, you can also call the Farmer Assistance Program at **1-800-736-8006**.

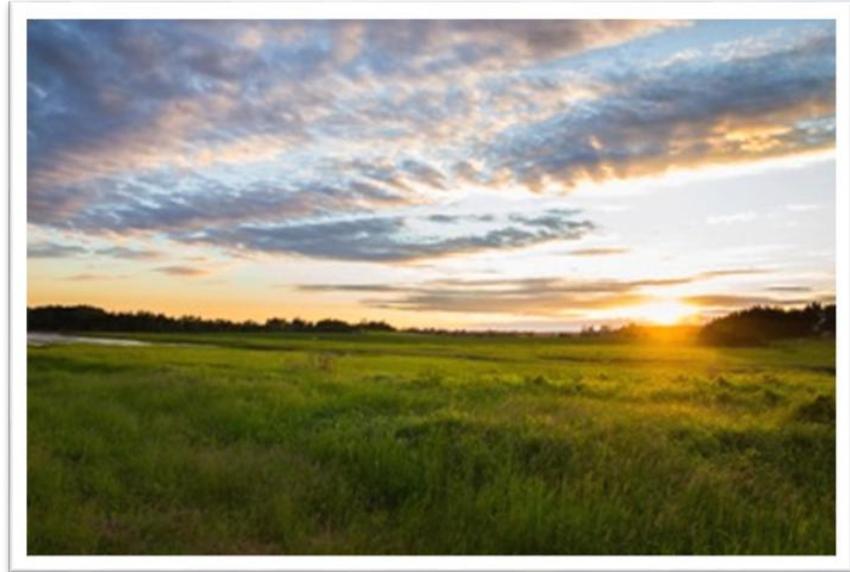


Women in Farming

- Some women are reluctant to identify as “farmers.” Whether it’s bookkeeping, caregiving, running errands, preparing meals, working in the field, operating equipment, or contributing to the farm via off-farm work, women’s farm contributions are endless.
 - Often, it’s a struggle to find balance.
 - The Farmer Assistance Program can help!
- 

What is Mental Health?

Mental health means being able to enjoy life and cope with life's challenges and changes. Without mental health, there is no health.





Farming & Mental Health

- Farmers are the caretakers of the land, animals, and crops that feed us.
- Farmers face many uncontrollable challenges, such as unpredictable weather, variable market prices, machinery breakdowns and animal welfare.

Farmers & Mental Health

- Struggles with mental health are common in the farming community.
- Many farmers, producers, and family members report very high levels of stress, and signs and symptoms of burnout, depression, and anxiety.





You Are Not Alone!

45%
of producers
met the
criteria for
high stress.

35%
of producers
met the
criteria for
depression.

58%
of producers
met the
criteria for
anxiety.

* National Survey of Farmer Mental Health, involving 1100 producers from across Canada, by Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton, University of Guelph, 2016.

Are you concerned about someone?

It's important for farmers, and those who support them - family members, friends, and trusted community members - to recognize the signs of chronic stress and the signs of suicide and to know where to go for help.

Warning Signs

- increased substance (alcohol or drug) use
- no sense of purpose in life
- anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all of the time
- feeling trapped - like there's no way out
- hopelessness
- dramatic mood changes
- withdrawal from friends, family and society
- rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- giving away prized possessions

Signs of Suicide

A person with thoughts of suicide will often show these signs:*

- threatening to hurt or end their life, or talking of wanting to hurt or to end their life; and/ or,
- looking for ways to end their life by seeking access to firearms, available pills, pesticides, or other means; and/or,
- talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.
- If you notice these warning signs, **seek professional help as soon as possible.**

Suicide is Preventable

If you think someone might be having suicidal thoughts, try to remain calm. Here's what you can do:

- Call the Island Helpline at **1-800-218-2885** day or night, any day of the year. A trained professional can help you decide what to do.
- Keep the individual safe. Do not leave a person alone who is in distress.
- Do not judge. Focus on messages of hope.

Suicide is Preventable

- Ask the question - Do you want to end your life? Research shows that asking this question directly can give the person a chance to talk and be comfortable with a difficult topic.
- Asking the question and talking about suicide will not lead to suicidal behavior. Oftentimes, suicide is not about death - it is about stopping emotional pain. Many would choose to live if they could find another way to deal with the situation. You can be available for support and to help the person make connections to help.

Suicide is Preventable

- If the person says “yes,” ask if they have a plan. If they do, ask if they have the means to carry out the plan. (For example, if someone says he plans to shoot himself, find out if the person has access to a gun. If it is safe for you to do so, remove the firearm from the farm or home).
- For each “yes” to this question series, the person is at greater risk of completing suicide.
- Encourage the person to call the Island Helpline for help to deal with suicidal thoughts. Stay with the person as he or she talks to a counselor.

Suicide is Preventable

- Help make a connection. Ask the person who they trust to talk to about this. If they cannot come up with someone, you could make suggestions such as a therapist/counselor, family member, friend, or faith leader. Help make a plan to reach out to that person.
- Let them know that the Farmer Assistance Program is available.



Farmer Assistance Program of PEI

- Offers **FREE & Confidential** support for PEI farmers, who are members of the PEI Federation of Agriculture or the National Farmers Union
- Confidential service is available 24 hours a day by calling a counselling coordinator:
(902) 626-9787 or toll-free 1-800-736-8006



<https://youtu.be/PcTqlsXXUFc>

Who can access the Farmer Assistance Program?

- **Farmers** who are members of the PEI Federation of Agriculture or National Farmers Union
- **Immediate family members of farmers** who are members of the PEI Federation of Agriculture or National Farmers Union
- **Farm workers/farm employees of farmers** who are members of the PEI Federation of Agriculture or National Farmers Union



You don't need to drive a tractor or milk cows to access the Farmer Assistance Program. It is open to farmers, their families and employees.



Can women access the program?

Absolutely! The Farmer Assistance Program is open to people of **all genders** who qualify as farmers or immediate family members/employees of farmers.

Farm women who work on and off the farm play a vital to the success of the family farm, but their roles and responsibilities can be stressful. **The Farmer Assistance Program is here to help!**

What issues can FAP counsellors help with?

- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Farm transition issues
- Family farm partnership strain
- Trauma and critical incidents
- Addictions
- Bereavement and grief counselling
- Couple and marital counselling
- Elder care concerns
- Anger management
- Health concerns: chronic and terminal illness
- Parenting issues and concerns
- Legal issues
- Learning disabilities
- Injury
- Gender issues/sexuality
- Job conflict and pressures
- Career counselling



How does the FAP work?

When you call the PEI Farmer Assistance Program (FAP), you will talk with one of the program's two professional counselors. At this time, you can share a bit about what is bothering you. From there, you will establish a date and time to meet face-to-face for a counselling session.



Where do sessions take place?

Counseling sessions will be held at a private, independent office in Summerside or Charlottetown, not connected with the PEI Federation of Agriculture, the National Farmers Union or the Department of Agriculture.

How much does it cost?

There is no cost for the service for farmers, immediate family members, and farm workers who qualify. You can access this service for up to six sessions.





Is it confidential?

This is usually the first question people ask when they call the PEI Farmer Assistance Program; and the answer is always **YES!**

It is important to know that although farmers need to be a member of the PEI Federation of Agriculture or the National Farmers Union of PEI to access the program, their information will not be shared with either organization.

What can I do to help?

Share the Farmers Assistance Program PEI information with your communities.

Confidential service is available 24 hours a day by calling a counselling coordinator:
(902) 626-9787 or 1-800-736-8006

www.farmerstalk.ca

