



My Coping Strategies Plan

A helpful step in managing stresses in farming and ranching is to consider the "tools" or "strategies" that are available for dealing with particular stresses. This handout provides a list of useful coping "tools" that can be part of your toolbox for managing individual, family or farming/ranching stresses.

Strategies for the Coping Toolbox

Physical	Mental	Emotional / Spiritual
 Get a medical checkup Eat a healthful breakfast Drink four to eight glasses of water daily Eat more fruits, vegetables and healthful snacks Exercise at least 20 minutes daily (walk, swim, ride a bike, etc.) Get at least seven to eight hours of restful sleep Receive a neck or back massage Take a relaxing bath or shower Hug a loved one or friend Practice restful, deep or slow breathing Abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other drugs Do gentle stretching during a break or to warm up or cool down 	 Take 10 minutes and reflect on your blessings Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook Listen to relaxing music Spend 30 minutes doing something with your hands (draw, carve, etc.) Read a book you enjoy Watch TV or videos that make you laugh Do a hobby Attend a class or seminar to learn something new or of interest to you Visit with a counselor or spiritual leader Reach out to someone for support or help Spend 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities Take regular five- to 10-minute breaks in your day to relax and recharge 	 Tell a loved one what you appreciate about him/her Play with a child or grandchild Volunteer to help with a cause important to you Go out for a meal with a friend or loved one Reflect on and forgive yourself for mistakes Share concerns with a counselor or other professional Explore your spiritual life and activities Pray or meditate Do random acts of kindness Express "thank you" to someone daily (send a note, etc.) Write down three things you are grateful for daily Go for a walk or drive in nature





Strategies for the Coping Toolbox (continued)

Personal / Relational	Work / Professional	Financial / Practical
 Clean or organize your personal space(s) Reflect on and write down your goals Spend time with a pet Take 15 minutes each day to have uninterrupted conversation with a spouse or family member Spend time playing games with family members Learn more about your family history Begin or renew a friendship Get involved or stay connected with a group of friends Plan a getaway with a family member Go on a vacation Eat or make your favorite meal Do an activity you personally enjoy (fishing, see a movie, etc.) 	 Focus on factors you can control in your work Take time for lunch and a "work break" daily Plan your next day at the end of the work day and set priorities ahead of time Be flexible with time and tasks as things come up Set boundaries and do not overcommit yourself Say "no" more often Do not let the farm operation intrude on all other aspects of life Talk to other farmers about their strategies Take a seminar and learn new ways to handle issues Seek feedback on your farm operation and ways to grow or improve Schedule time away from work to relax and then take the time Minimize and resolve conflicts with others 	 Assess your family finances and needs Create a family budget and live within your means Learn new strategies to stretch your family finances Schedule time to organize your records monthly Take a seminar to learn more about financial management Spend 15 minutes a day reviewing your tasks and setting priorities Select three healthy habits you will try to practice daily Ask for positive feedback from others and build on it Ask for constructive feedback from others and learn from it Investigate new ways for doing things in your work Read something new every day Let go of what you cannot control

Steps to a More Sustainable Lifestyle – At Home and On the Farm

Just as farms need to be operated in a sustainable way that preserves resources for the long term, an individual's life needs to be managed in a sustainable way for long-term well-being. Feeling overly tired, overwhelmed by stresses or under constant pressure is not a recipe for a sustainable lifestyle.

Plan your "12 Steps to a More Sustainable Lifestyle" by *selecting and prioritizing two strategies for each category* from the "Coping Toolbox" list (or others that make sense to you). Seek to review and incorporate these strategies daily and weekly for a four-week period and see if your life feels healthier and less stressful. Also, share and discuss these strategies with someone you trust and visit twice a week to assess and encourage progress in your efforts.

Physical	
Mental	
Emotional / Spiritual	
Personal / Relational	
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Financial / Practical	

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Visit the K-State Families website for more information about families and stress: www.ksre.ksu.edu/families Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service MF3418

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