



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





## Strategies for the Coping Toolbox (continued)

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

## 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	
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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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