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Tools to Thrive

Stress can take a toll on the body's physical and mental wellbeing with potentially disastrous results. Our friends in the agricultural community may be feeling it especially high right now. Just as farms and businesses 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.

Farmers and agricultural professionals have careers full of uncertainty. Changing weather patterns, fluctuating schedules, low commodity prices, and now a global pandemic, mental health for so many is being tested like never before. To help anyone involved in agriculture manage the challenges, several agencies and organizations have come together with [Kansas Ag Health Resources](#) to help provide a path toward good mental health.

If you are like me and need some simple ideas to get you started, "*My Coping Strategies Plan*" provided by North Dakota State University Extension Service and K-State Research and Extension is a great thing to have in your wellness toolbox. The great thing about the plan, is it gives us choices that can fit our own situation and personal style. The handout breaks the strategies into six categories. *Physical, Mental, Emotional/Spiritual, Personal/Relational, Work/Professional, and Financial/Professional*. Under each category there is a list strategies for you to choose from. Check it out here: <https://bit.ly/timetocope!>

You can personalize your plan by selecting and prioritizing a few strategies for each category from the "Coping Toolbox" list. Try it out with someone you trust to assess and encourage progress in your efforts.

Be sure to start small and build up! If nothing else, make time for things you enjoy. Even if it's just 15 minutes a day, set aside time to do something you find fun or relaxing—it will release chemical messengers in your body that are good for your physical and mental health. You and your family are worth it!

Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information, Tara Solomon-Smith, Adult Development and Aging Agent, tsolomon@ksu.edu or 620-724-8233.

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