

Turning Worry into Action: Three Practices You Can Use to Stay Grounded on Your Farm and Connected to Your Community



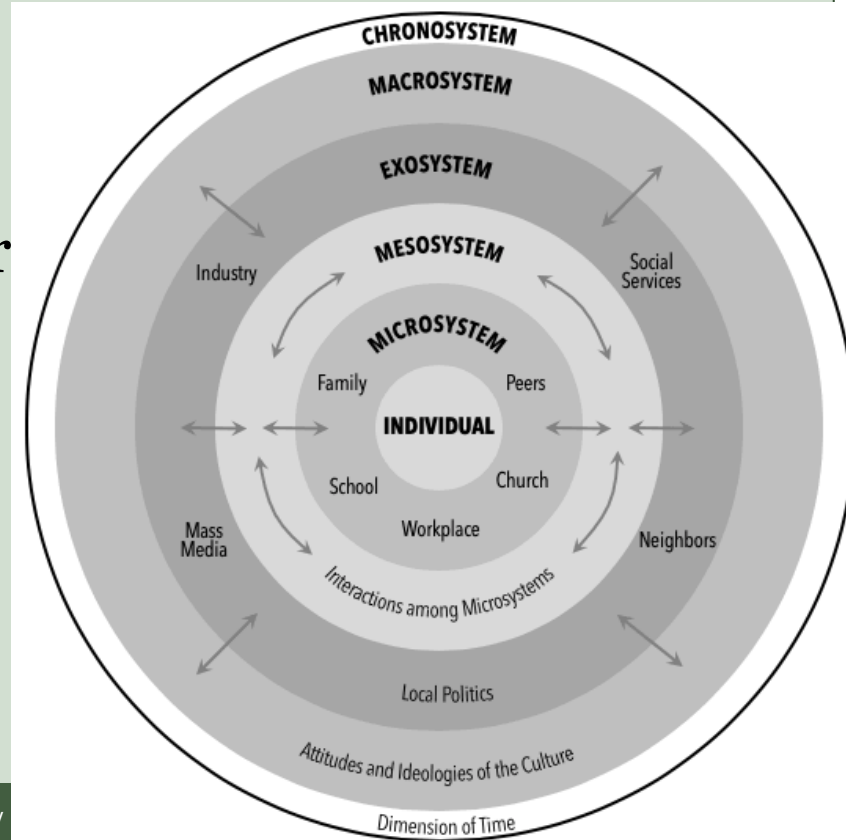
FIONA DOHERTY, MSW
FEBRUARY 18, 2022

**THE OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND
FARM ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**



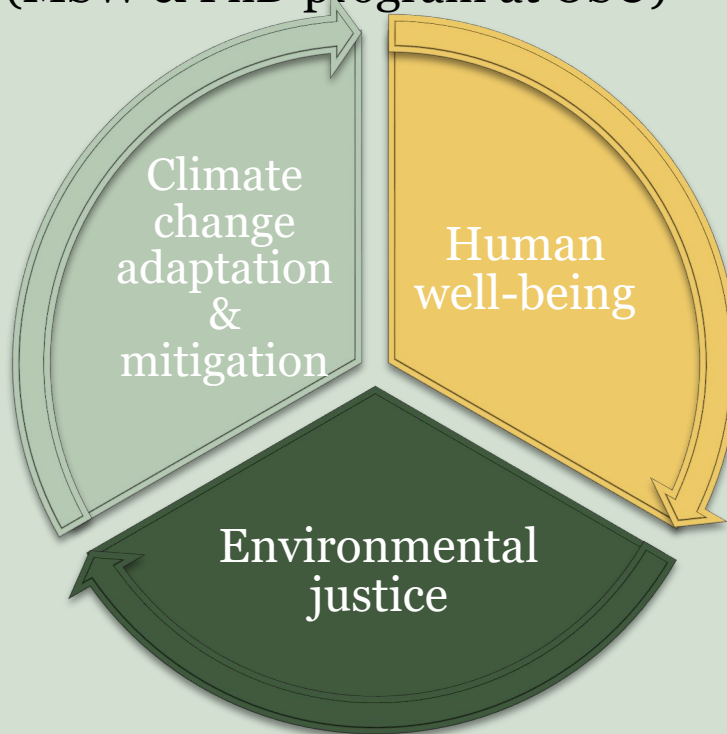
Workshop Roadmap

- Grounding in the importance of this topic
- Stress management practices & activities
 - Individual level
 - Family/community level
 - Macro/systems level
- Reflection: Putting it all together



Introduction: About Me

- **Fiona Doherty** (she/her)
- Background in farming, previous work with Cornell Cooperative Extension, pivot to social work (MSW & PhD program at OSU)



COLUMBUS-ATHENS
SCHWEITZER FELLOWS
PROGRAM

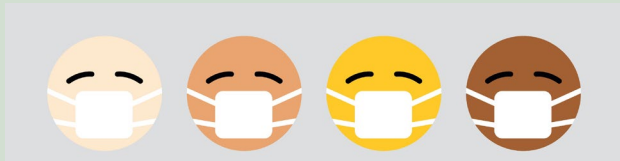


Some Nuts & Bolts



We're all in this together

- If you cannot hear me or have other needs, please say so.
- Practice a beginner's mindset



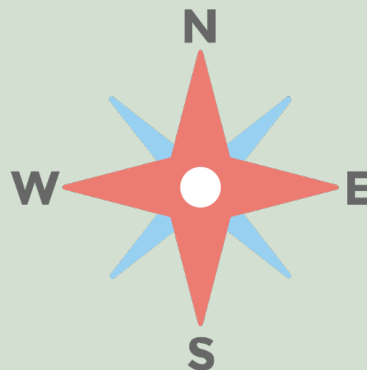
Guidelines for engagement

- Confidentiality
- Be fully present as possible
- Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth
- If the going gets rough, turn to wonder
- Any others?

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Think, Pair, Share



❖ **WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE STRESSORS THAT FARMERS FACE?**

❖ **WHAT ABOUT BARRIERS TO SEEKING CARE?**



Statewide Needs Assessment: Overview



- **Online survey:** Measures of farm stress, anxiety/depression symptoms, food security
- **Sample (n=62):** Beginning farmers (<10 years), in Greater Ohio Region, able to read Basic English
- Distributed through OEFFA's email contact list in October 2020
- 20 qualitative interviews also conducted (analysis in progress)
- Funded by NC-SARE, in partnership with OEFFA



Statewide Needs Assessment: Results

Top 5 stressors

1. Having too much to do & too little time (89%)
2. Covid-19 (84%)
3. Not enough person power (79%)
4. Climate change (79%)
5. Social justice (73%)

Top 5 coping resources

- Alt. or body-based therapy (36%)
- Web-based resources (30%)
- Faith-based services (30%)
- In-person therapy (26%)
- Telecounseling (21%)

*Stressors varied by sub-group, depending on race/ethnicity and gender identity

Statewide Needs Assessment: Results



- **58%** of respondents had symptoms of anxiety/depression
 - This is higher than Ohio's general population (37.9%) in same timeframe
- **34%** had not accessed any mental health support in the past 12 months
 - 66.7% of male respondents
 - 12.9% of female respondents
 - 16.7% of gender nonconforming respondents

What can we glean from the results?

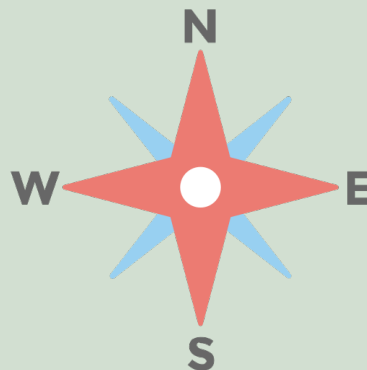


- **ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS ARE HIGH AMONG FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE**
- **STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES VARY BASED ON SOCIAL IDENTITY**
- **WHILE SOME ARE SEEKING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, 1/3 OF THE SAMPLE ARE NOT**
- **BARRIERS: HEALTH INSURANCE, GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION, AND STIGMA**

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Individual level practices



THINK, PAIR, SHARE:

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN
YOU ARE STRESSED?



What is mindfulness?



*“MINDFULNESS IS THE
AWARENESS THAT EMERGES
THROUGH PAYING ATTENTION ON
PURPOSE, IN THE PRESENT
MOMENT, AND NON-
JUDGMENTALLY TO THINGS AS
THEY ARE.”*

*-EXCERPT FROM THE MINDFUL WAY THROUGH
DEPRESSION*



Reflections

- How was that experience for you?
- What did you notice?
- Were you able to practice non-judgment?
- Did you feel your mind wandering or a quieting of mental chatter?

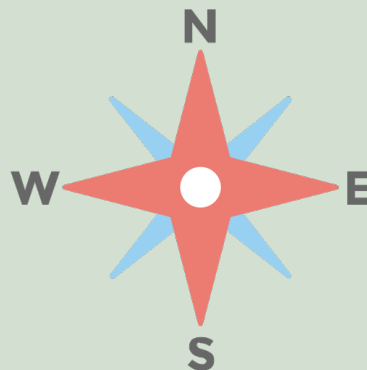


Thoughts or
experiences
to share?

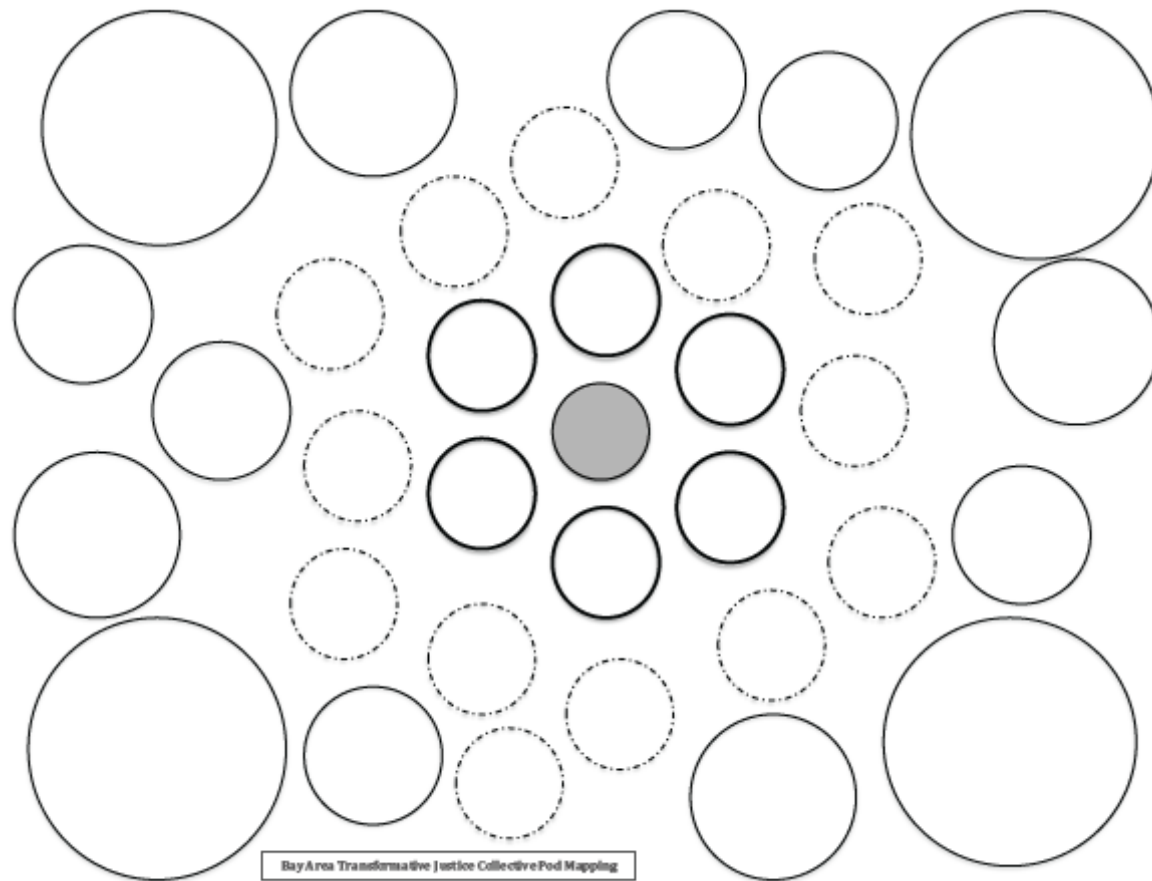
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Social Support Mapping

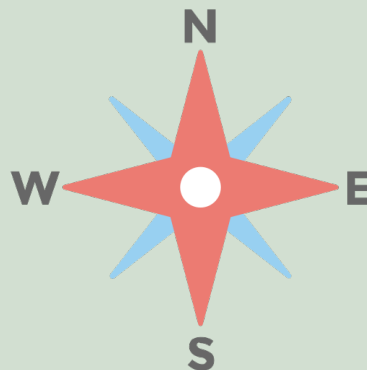


Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective Pod Mapping

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**LET'S FACE IT, MANY SOURCES
OF STRESS ARE LARGER THAN
US AND RESULT FROM
STRUCTURAL FACTORS.**

**WHERE CAN WE FOCUS OUR
VOICES TO ENACT CHANGE?**

OEFFA Policy Initiatives



- **OEFFA Soil Health Task Force Petition**
 - OEFFA, the Ohio Soil Health Initiative and allies are urging decision makers to pass legislation that creates a Soil Health Task Force as a first step towards developing farmer informed solutions that support health soil principles and practices.



OEFFA Policy Initiatives



- **Farm Bill Town Halls and Survey**
 - The Farm Bill is a major piece of legislation developed every five years that shapes our food and farm system. The work to shape what the 2023 Farm Bill looks like will be done this year.
 - Provide your input about how to use the Farm Bill as an opportunity to create a more resilient, fair, and healthy food system.

Yellow Springs, March 3, 6:30-8:00 pm.

Newark, March 10, 6:30-8:00 pm.

Online virtual discussion, March 17th 6:30-8:00 pm.

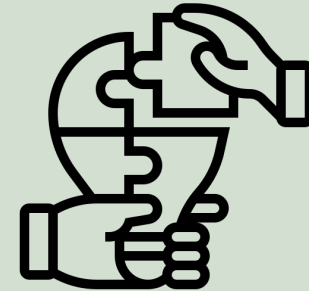
Wooster, March 24th, 2:30-4:00 pm.

OR FILL OUT AN ONLINE SURVEY

OEFFA Policy Initiatives



- Reach out to OEFFA's policy team for a one-on-one
 - Share what you care about, learn about OEFFA's work, and determine how you can plug in



Contact Info:

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Heather Dean, heather@oeffa.org, 614-725-3165



Other ways to get involved:

- Farm aid action center & tools for change, <https://www.Farmaid.Org/take-action/>
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Advocacy Toolkit, <https://sustainableagriculture.net/take-action/advocacy-toolkit/>
- National Young Farmers Coalition, <https://www.youngfarmers.org/policy-change/>

Any other advocacy initiatives we should know about?



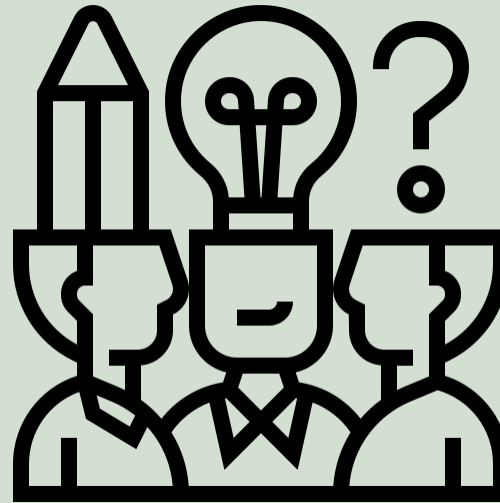
- Growing Community Resilience series
 - *Parenting and Farming in the time of COVID-Community Support*
 - *February 23, 2022*
 - *5-6pm MST*
 - <https://wfan.org/news/2022/2/14/growing-community-resilience-is-back>

Putting it all together



- What will you take away from this workshop?
- Write a SMART goal:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound



- Research shows we are more accountable when we share goals/intentions. Care to share?

Wrapping Up



- Farmer Stress Management Drop-In Sessions
 - <https://sites.google.com/view/farmer-stress-drop-in-sessions/home>
- Mental Health Resource Sheet
- Today/tomorrow:
 - Paths to Self-Care: A Community Conversation, 3-4:30pm
 - Farmer Wellness Table in Exhibit Hall

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Questions?



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SARE PROJECT NUMBER: GNC20-299

**"HOW ARE YOU REALLY DOING?": SOCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY OF BEGINNING FARMERS"**