



## Observe!

### What do you see?

As an agriculture service provider, you are on the front line to notice the signs and symptoms of stress. Signs of stress do not necessarily mean that someone is in crisis. Noticing the signs mentioned below may lead to conversations, which open the door to providing resources for the farmer.

**Physical and Mental** – These are signs associated with the physical and mental aspects of the individual. As a service provider, you may see some of these signs or an individual may share them in conversation with you.

- Headaches
- Backaches
- Eating Problems
- Sleeping Problems
- Shortness of Breath
- Frequent Sickness
- Aching Muscles
- Diarrhea
- High Blood Pressure
- Exhaustion
- Memory Loss
- Lack of Concentration
- Difficulty with Decisions

**Emotional and Behavioral** – You may notice these signs as a reaction to the environment. Although it stems from the physical or mental aspect of the individual, emotional and behavioral signs tend to be more expressive.

- Sadness, Depression
- Bitterness, Anger
- Anxiety
- Loss of Spirit
- Loss of Humor
- Irritability, Backbiting
- Acting Out
- Passive-Aggressive
- Increased Drinking, Smoking
- Increased Substance Use
- Violence
- Change in Eating Habits

**Social and Relational** - Stress is also observed in the relationships we have with others. It can be in our social relationships, which are typically external to the farm, or personal relationships internal to the farm or individual.

- Isolation
- Lack of Communication
- Increased Conflicts
- Strained Relationships
- Marital Issues
- Verbal or Physical Abuse

**Environmental** – These are visible signs which may be observed in the individual and/or on the farm.

- Care of Fields
- Equipment in Disrepair
- Neglect of Animals Individual Appearance
- Disorganized/Not Prepared Missed Meetings



## Engage!

### How do you respond?

#### When making your initial observation:

- “I’ve noticed...” , “Help me understand...” , “I’m wondering what has happened to cause...” ... [behavior, appearance, recent statement]. I am concerned. Do you want to share more?”
- “How do you feel about that?”

#### When responding to how the person feels (providing validation):

- “I could understand you...” , “I could imagine you...” , “No wonder you...” , “It would make sense that you...” ...might feel/think/want to/not want to \_\_\_\_\_

#### Demonstrate that you “get it” with sincerity and in a way that reflects their positive intentions, vulnerable feelings, or attempts for relief from pain: because 1: \_\_\_\_\_ because 2: \_\_\_\_\_ because 3: \_\_\_\_\_

- Example: “No wonder these latest market fluctuations have you so nervous, because you already had a tough year last year, and because you have new medical bills this year, and you are just looking for a break from that constant stress.”

#### After (and only after) validation can you:

- Offer reassurance (“I’m here for you”) and practical support (“lets complete this budget”).

## Share!



### What are the resources?

- **University of Maryland Extension - Farm Stress Management –**  
[www.go.umd.edu/farmfamily](http://www.go.umd.edu/farmfamily)
- **Referral Resources**
  - Center for Rural Affairs: <http://www.cfra.org/news/180130/10-helpful-resources-farmerss>
  - Crisis Text Line: Text “CONNECT” to 741741: <https://www.crisistextline.org/textline>
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Crisis Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now>
  - National Postpartum Depression Hotline: 1.800.PPD.MOMS (773.6667)
  - SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
  - Veterans Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255, Press 1 (website has a chat option), <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>
- **Financial Resources -** <https://go.umd.edu/fsfinancialresources>
- **Legal Resources -** <https://go.umd.edu/fslegalresources>



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