



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 style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

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Visit the K-State Families website for more information about families and stress: www.ksre.ksu.edu/families

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