

Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness in Times of Tight Margins

Brief Lesson 2

Understanding Suicide and Depression

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please email Charlotte Shoup Olsen, colsen@ksu.edu.

Who is at risk for depression?

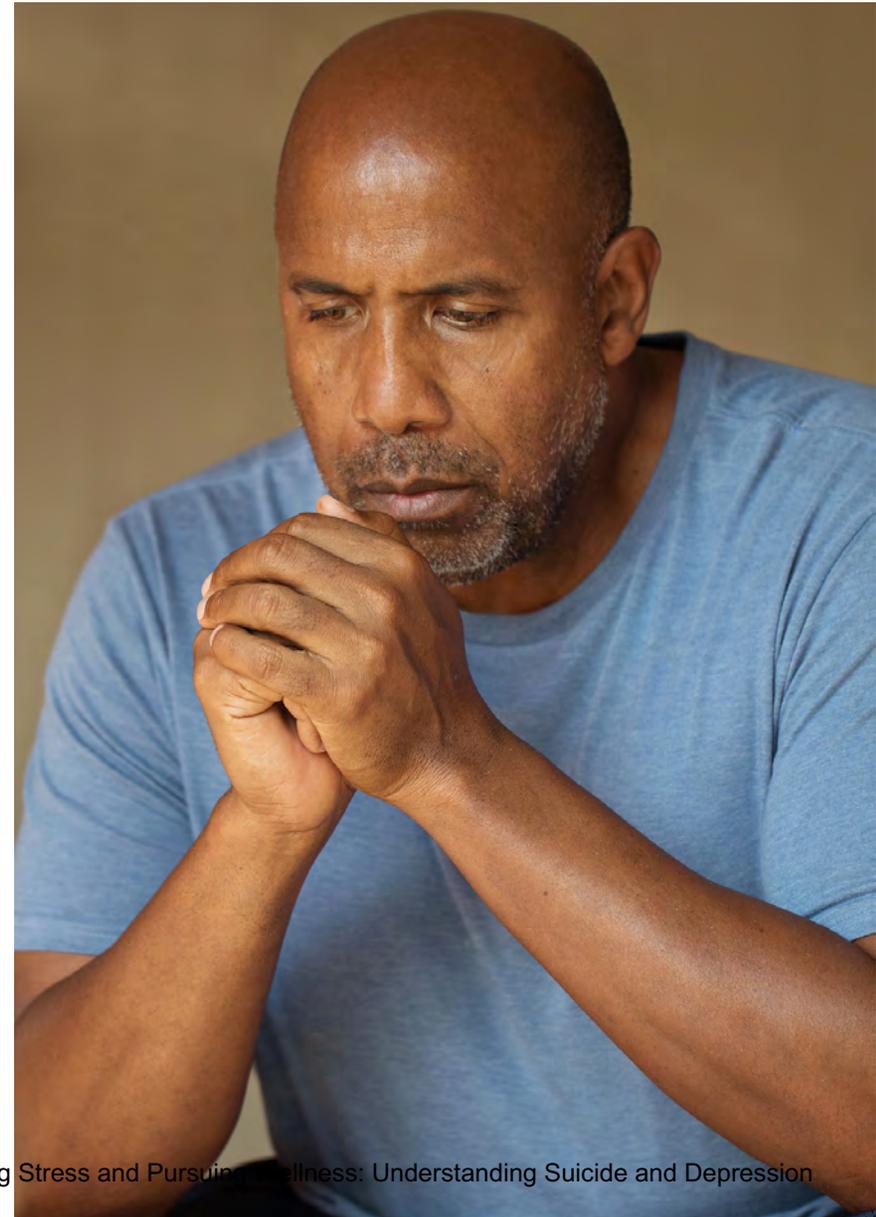
Rural community members who:

- Are socially withdrawn or isolated from others
- Are economically troubled or overwhelmed
- Have limited connection with relatives, friends or supports
- Have experienced recent losses
(job, farm, friends, family members, moves, etc.)
- Have been ill or have a progressive or chronic illness
- Have personal experience or a family history of anxiety or depression
- Have undergone significant challenges with family stress, economic stress or other concerns

Risk Factors for Depression

Personal history of:

- Chronic medical illnesses
- Chronic pain
- Loss of physical functioning
- Prior depressive episodes
- Reliving bad past experiences
- Recent significant loss
- Multiple recent stressors

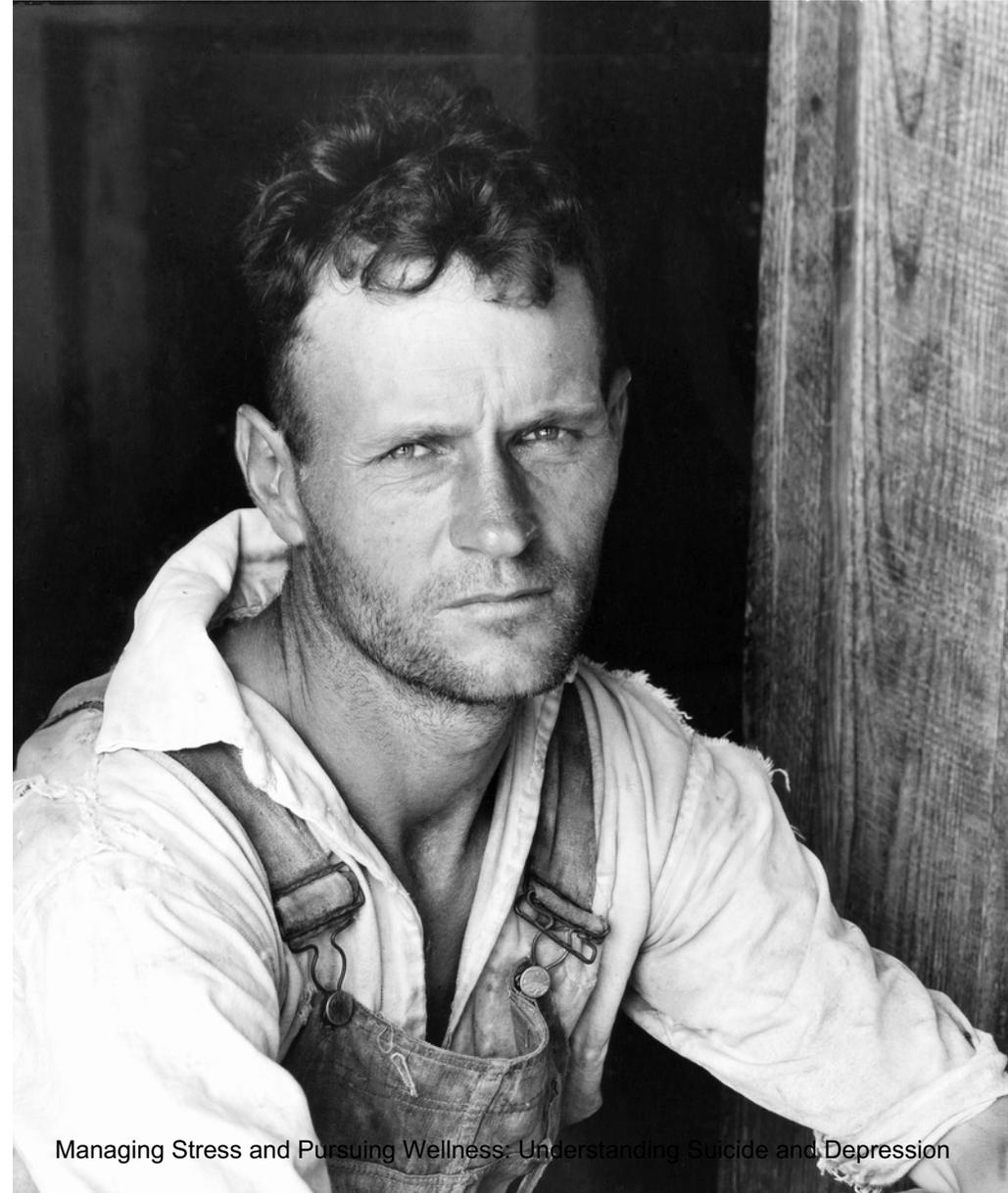


Risk Factors for Depression

Social isolation

Family history of:

- Recurrent depression
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol abuse or dependence



Suicide and Farm Stress

Research consistently has shown a strong link between suicide and depression. The risk increases for rural men in agriculture.



Suicide and Farm Stress

Rural men 50 and older are more likely to commit suicide than American men in other groups.

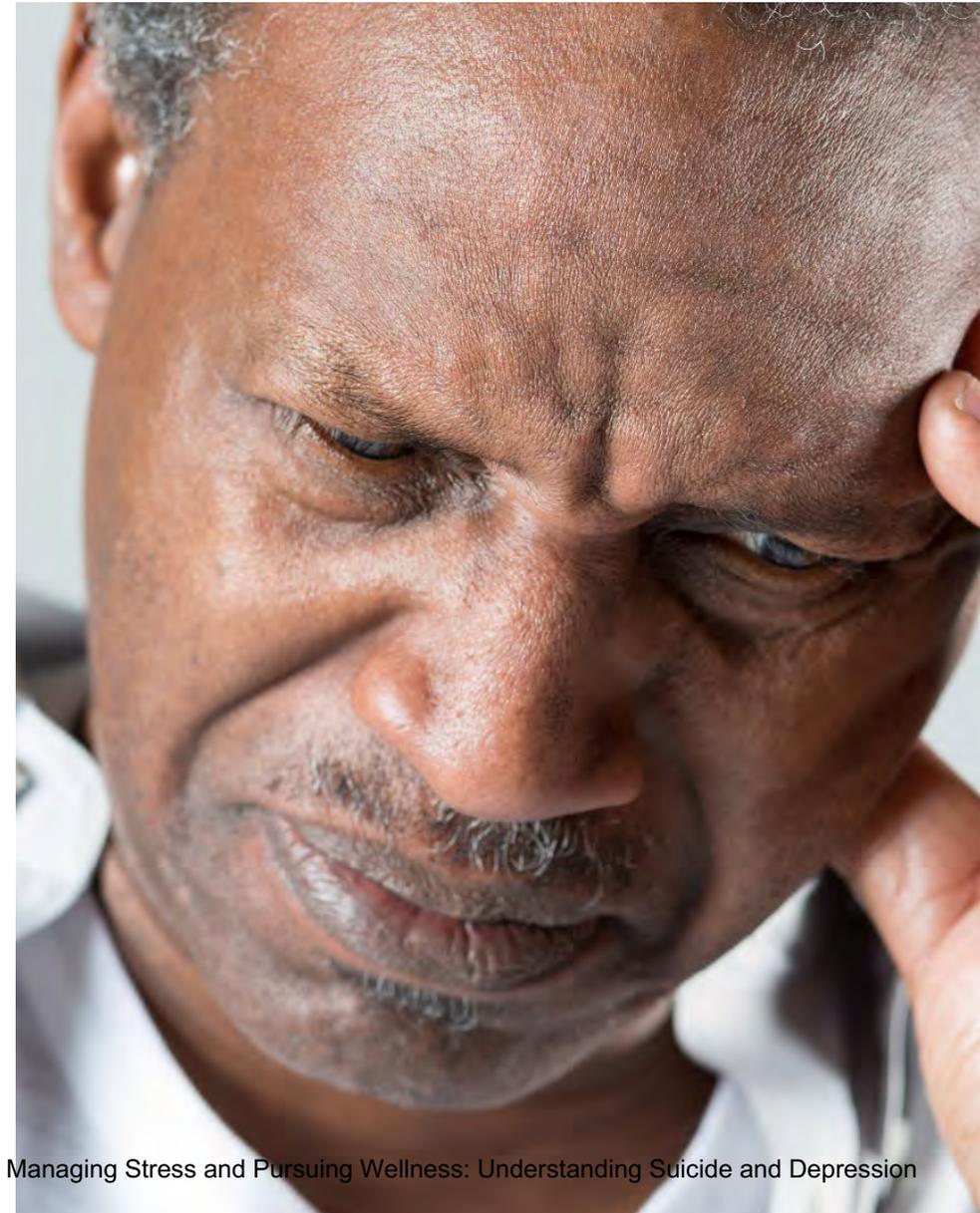
Suicidal behavior in rural men can be a reaction to a perceived loss of social status.

Suicide may be linked to loss of impulse control.

Suicide and Farm Stress

Watch for These Signs

- Severe feelings of anxiety, depression, hopelessness
- Withdrawal from people or activities they ordinarily enjoy
- Negative thoughts, including frequent talk about disappearing or death
- Strong feelings of guilt or low self-esteem
- Decline in hygiene or appearance
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Stockpiling medication
- Easy access to firearms



At risk for suicide?

Call for help:

- **FirstLink** has a 24-hour suicide lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which is connected to a national network of crisis services. Call specialists help those who are having thoughts of suicide or have a concern about someone.

Seek help:

Go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation

Go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Where to get help?

- Visit your doctor.
- Seek counseling with a mental health professional.
- Call 2-1-1 for confidential listening and support, in addition to information and referral. Call specialists are trained in crisis intervention, including suicide intervention.



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

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Lesson Introduction – Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness in Times of Tight Margins

Brief Lesson 2 – Understanding Suicide and Depression

Briefly identify the lesson topic. If planned, take a few moments to share your perspective on the importance of understanding depression and suicide, and finding resources to address this concern during times of stress.

Who is at risk for depression?

Rural community members who:

- Are socially withdrawn or isolated from others
- Are economically troubled or overwhelmed
- Have limited connection with relatives, friends or supports
- Have experienced recent losses (job, farm, friends, family members, moves, etc.)
- Have been ill or have a progressive or chronic illness
- Have personal experience or a family history of anxiety or depression
- Have undergone significant challenges with family stress, economic stress or other concerns

Key Points

- Stress influences a person physically, mentally or emotionally due to existing pressures or concerns. Each person is affected differently, but for some individuals, stress may lead to depression.
- Individuals attending the session may have experienced depression or known others who have done so. Discuss some of the factors that may raise the risk of depression for rural community members, such as being socially withdrawn or isolated, being financially overwhelmed or experiencing recent losses. Sharing such possibilities and insights can enable greater awareness of this condition.

Risk Factors for Depression

Personal history of:

- Chronic medical illnesses
- Chronic pain
- Loss of physical functioning
- Prior depressive episodes
- Reliving bad past experiences
- Recent significant loss
- Multiple recent stressors



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Managing Stress and Promoting Well-Being: Understanding Suicide and Depression

Key Points

- Some individuals may experience substantial risk factors for depression. Encourage participants to be aware of such risk factors, such as multiple recent stressors or prior depressive episodes. Some factors are personal, and individuals need to consider their own circumstances and experiences, which may heighten their personal risk of depression.
- Invite participants to assess their own experiences to consider the risk for depression in their life.

Risk Factors for Depression

Social isolation

Family history of:

- Recurrent depression
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol abuse or dependence



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Key Point

- Some individuals may experience things that are substantial risk factors for depression. Encourage participants to be aware of such risk factors, such as multiple recent stressors or prior depressive episodes. Some other factors that can put a person at risk include social isolation or family history factors.
- Invite participants to assess their own experiences to consider the risk for depression in their life.

Suicide and Farm Stress

Research consistently has shown a strong link between suicide and depression. The risk increases for rural men in agriculture.



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Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness: Understanding Suicide and Depression

Key Points – Understanding Suicide and Farm Stress

- Depression also is associated with suicide. Individuals living in rural areas have higher rates of suicide than other groups.
- Among those living in rural areas, men working in agriculture also are at higher risk of suicide when they experience depression.
- The experience of significant stress or the possibility of loss in farming and ranching puts those who work in farming and ranching at increased risk for depression, and perhaps, thoughts or feelings related to suicide.

Suicide and Farm Stress

Rural men 50 and older are more likely to commit suicide than American men in other groups.

Suicidal behavior in rural men can be a reaction to a perceived loss of social status.

Suicide may be linked to loss of impulse control.

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Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness: Understanding Suicide and Depression

Key Points – Understanding Suicide and Farm Stress

- In fact, suicide rates are particularly pronounced among older men in rural areas. Suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviors in rural men can be a reaction to a perceived loss of social status, among other factors.
- This group's higher rate of suicide may be linked to loss in the ability to control impulses. Also, if an individual is "self-medicating" with the use of alcohol or other substances, this lowers impulse control and can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts or feelings.

Suicide and Farm Stress

Watch for These Signs

- Severe feelings of anxiety, depression, hopelessness
- Withdrawal from people or activities they ordinarily enjoy
- Negative thoughts, including frequent talk about disappearing or death
- Strong feelings of guilt or low self-esteem
- Decline in hygiene or appearance
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Stockpiling medication
- Easy access to firearms

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Managing Stress and Promoting Wellness: Understanding Suicide and Depression

Key Points – Understanding Suicide and Farm Stress

Identifying a person at risk of suicide can be difficult, even for a trained professional. Here are a few common events or situations that may place farmers or ranchers under stress at increased risk for suicide:

- Severe feelings of anxiety, depression, hopelessness
- Withdrawal from people or activities they ordinarily enjoy
- Negative thoughts, including frequent talk about disappearing or death
- Strong feelings of guilt or low self-esteem
- Decline in appearance or hygiene
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Stockpiling of medication
- Easy access to firearms

At risk for suicide?

Call for help:

- **FirstLink** has a 24-hour suicide lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which is connected to a national network of crisis services. Call specialists help those who are having thoughts of suicide or have a concern about someone.

Seek help:

Go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation

Go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Key Point

- If you are unsure whether a person is immediately at risk for suicide, seek help and take him/her to the nearest emergency room for an evaluation by health-care professionals.
- You also may contact: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- 1-800-273-TALK (8255) – 24-hour suicide prevention lifeline

Where to get help?

- Visit your doctor.
- Seek counseling with a mental health professional.
- Call 2-1-1 for confidential listening and support, in addition to information and referral. Call specialists are trained in crisis intervention, including suicide intervention.



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Key Point

If an individual feels a need to access mental health support or services, or if a person feels concern about an individual he/she knows who is under stress and may have difficulty coping or is suicidal, the resources listed here provide a starting point for information in North Dakota. Other states should identify helplines or other resources of use in that state.

Visit the K-State Families website for more information about families and stress:
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