



Managing Rural Stress Model

Instructions: Having a process that you can use in managing the pressures that impact your family, your farming operation and your life in general is helpful. The Managing Rural Stress Model is designed to provide you with a process for thinking about the different stressors you may experience and strategies for managing them more effectively.

Identify Your Stressor

Any “stressor” (source of stress) in a person’s life brings with it an impact on the life of the person, the family or the farming operation. This impact can be compared with the idea of throwing a pebble or rock in a pond and a splash and waves are the result. So, first name and identify a key stressor causing a “ripple effect” in your life.

Key Stressor: _____

(Example: long hours and fatigue, etc.)

Step 1 – Assess Needs and Impacts

- Identify the key needs resulting from the identified stressor in your life, family or farming operation. For example, due to long hours or interruptions to your sleep schedule, a need may be “more and restful sleep.”
- Assess the size of the impact occurring in your life or operation due to a stressor (small, medium, large).
- Rate the impact on a continuum from “easy to manage” to “difficult to manage.” (scale of 1 = easy to 7 = difficult)

Step 1 – Assess Needs and Impacts						
Key Needs	Size of the Impact			How manageable is it?		
a. _____	Small	Medium	Large	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
b. _____	Small	Medium	Large	1	2	3 4 5 6 7

Step 2 – Identify and Access Resources

- Identify the resources that will be of most help to you in managing a specific need or stress.
- Assess availability of key resources and what you might do to access them. Also, what other resource options might exist for a need?
- Briefly describe a strategy to access and use key resources identified.

Step 2 – Identify and Access Resources		
Useful Resources to Help	Available to you? Yes / No	How will I access and use it?
a. _____	Resource Types: Personal –	
b. _____	Material –	
c. _____	Other –	

Step 3 – Pursue Good-quality Decisions

- You face critical decisions about using resources to resolve concerns or reduce stresses, such as: Should we invest in new equipment or crop and livestock production strategies? Am I willing to visit with a professional about health concerns?
- Write down information that you need to feel informed and enable you to make a good decision. Be open to new ideas and information.
- Assess the options that are available to you. What are the pros and cons, or benefits and costs, associated with each particular option? Explore how you feel about each option.
- List others you trust to discuss a decision with you (family members, professionals, etc.).
- Clarify any values you hold or goals that are relevant to guiding you in making a decision.

Step 3 – Pursue Good-quality Decisions		
What Information is Needed	2-3 Possible Options 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____	With whom will I discuss it? What values or goals are important here?

Step 4 – Connect With Sources of Support

- Identify sources of support that can help you access resources, explore options or implement coping strategies.
- Make sure the support source fits the need you are seeking to address. For example, a pastor, counselor or close friend would fit the need to discuss stress concerns.
- Write down a specific plan to make contact with the support source. Also, list one to two ways a support source can be of help to you.

Step 4 – Connect With Sources of Support		
Possible Support Sources • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____	Plan to Make Contact	How can this source of support help me?

Step 5 – Use Effective Coping Strategies

- Assess current strategies being used to manage stresses. Also, brainstorm and list other possible options.
- Explore whether what you are using as a coping strategy in relation to a specific need is working. Be open with yourself and/or others.
- Assess whether a change in coping strategy is needed. What might need to change?

Step 5 – Use Effective Coping Strategies		
Current Coping Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____	What are you doing? Is it working?	Do you need to make a change? What kind?
Possible Coping Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____		

Developed by North Dakota State University Extension and used with permission of the authors and NDSU. Publications from Kansas State University are available at: www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu. Date shown is that of publication or last revision. Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. Credit Sean Brotherson and Lindy Berg, *Handout 2: Managing Rural Stress Model*, Kansas State University, June 2018.

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

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

MF3417

June 2018

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.