



# 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"> <li>• Get a medical checkup</li> <li>• Eat a healthful breakfast</li> <li>• Drink four to eight glasses of water daily</li> <li>• Eat more fruits, vegetables and healthful snacks</li> <li>• Exercise at least 20 minutes daily (walk, swim, ride a bike, etc.)</li> <li>• Get at least seven to eight hours of restful sleep</li> <li>• Receive a neck or back massage</li> <li>• Take a relaxing bath or shower</li> <li>• Hug a loved one or friend</li> <li>• Practice restful, deep or slow breathing</li> <li>• Abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other drugs</li> <li>• Do gentle stretching during a break or to warm up or cool down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take 10 minutes and reflect on your blessings</li> <li>• Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook</li> <li>• Listen to relaxing music</li> <li>• Spend 30 minutes doing something with your hands (draw, carve, etc.)</li> <li>• Read a book you enjoy</li> <li>• Watch TV or videos that make you laugh</li> <li>• Do a hobby</li> <li>• Attend a class or seminar to learn something new or of interest to you</li> <li>• Visit with a counselor or spiritual leader</li> <li>• Reach out to someone for support or help</li> <li>• Spend 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities</li> <li>• Take regular five- to 10-minute breaks in your day to relax and recharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell a loved one what you appreciate about him/her</li> <li>• Play with a child or grandchild</li> <li>• Volunteer to help with a cause important to you</li> <li>• Go out for a meal with a friend or loved one</li> <li>• Reflect on and forgive yourself for mistakes</li> <li>• Share concerns with a counselor or other professional</li> <li>• Explore your spiritual life and activities</li> <li>• Pray or meditate</li> <li>• Do random acts of kindness</li> <li>• Express “thank you” to someone daily (send a note, etc.)</li> <li>• Write down three things you are grateful for daily</li> <li>• Go for a walk or drive in nature</li> </ul>

## Strategies for the Coping Toolbox (continued)

Personal / Relational	Work / Professional	Financial / Practical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean or organize your personal space(s)</li> <li>• Reflect on and write down your goals</li> <li>• Spend time with a pet</li> <li>• Take 15 minutes each day to have uninterrupted conversation with a spouse or family member</li> <li>• Spend time playing games with family members</li> <li>• Learn more about your family history</li> <li>• Begin or renew a friendship</li> <li>• Get involved or stay connected with a group of friends</li> <li>• Plan a getaway with a family member</li> <li>• Go on a vacation</li> <li>• Eat or make your favorite meal</li> <li>• Do an activity you personally enjoy (fishing, see a movie, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on factors you can control in your work</li> <li>• Take time for lunch and a “work break” daily</li> <li>• Plan your next day at the end of the work day and set priorities ahead of time</li> <li>• Be flexible with time and tasks as things come up</li> <li>• Set boundaries and do not overcommit yourself</li> <li>• Say “no” more often</li> <li>• Do not let the farm operation intrude on all other aspects of life</li> <li>• Talk to other farmers about their strategies</li> <li>• Take a seminar and learn new ways to handle issues</li> <li>• Seek feedback on your farm operation and ways to grow or improve</li> <li>• Schedule time away from work to relax and then take the time</li> <li>• Minimize and resolve conflicts with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess your family finances and needs</li> <li>• Create a family budget and live within your means</li> <li>• Learn new strategies to stretch your family finances</li> <li>• Schedule time to organize your records monthly</li> <li>• Take a seminar to learn more about financial management</li> <li>• Spend 15 minutes a day reviewing your tasks and setting priorities</li> <li>• Select three healthy habits you will try to practice daily</li> <li>• Ask for positive feedback from others and build on it</li> <li>• Ask for constructive feedback from others and learn from it</li> <li>• Investigate new ways for doing things in your work</li> <li>• Read something new every day</li> <li>• Let go of what you cannot control</li> </ul>

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## 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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Mental	<hr/> <hr/>
Emotional / Spiritual	<hr/> <hr/>
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Work / Professional	<hr/> <hr/>
Financial / Practical	<hr/> <hr/>

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**Visit the K-State Families website for more information about families and stress: [www.ksre.ksu.edu/families](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/families)**

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