

# MEN AT RISK IN AGRICULTURE

## Challenging times

Throughout the Peace, farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural businesses are being faced with challenging times. Sometimes the day-to-day pressures can make it difficult to cope.

In Canada, mental health problems account for more time off work than heart disease, accidents or cancer. Yet the extent of this health problem can remain hidden, jeopardizing health and safety.

**People working in the agricultural sector face unique challenges that can put them at high risk for stress and other disorders.**

## Effects on health and safety

Increased illnesses, more physical accidents, difficulty concentrating, slower reactions, irritability, and poor judgment are just a few.

## How is stress a factor?

If stress gets out of control or lasts too long, it can have a negative effect on a person's ability to cope. This may lead to depression.

**Says one farmer: "It can be tough trying to find a balance. Farming is more than a job—it's a way of life. It's part of who you are. When things aren't going well, it's not like you can just leave your work at the office."**

## Barriers to seeking and getting help

Men in particular try to mask or bottle up their problems. They fear that they will be perceived as weak or that they can't handle the job. Pride and feelings of shame hold them back.

People may hesitate to help because they are worried they will say something wrong or they feel it's none of their business.

## You're already familiar with the stressors:

Weather, poor crops and crop prices;  
Huge debt loads;  
Pressure to keep up with the latest technology;  
Balancing farm responsibilities with work off the farm;  
Worries of failure, or of what others might think.

## Help can make a difference.

When people do not seek help, they are at risk of depression, or, in the worst case, suicide. Yet most people with depression can be successfully treated. Depression is an illness, NOT a weakness.

## Alarming statistics

**Over a 10-year period, the agricultural sector had the third highest number of suicides in this area.**

Men accounted for 88 percent of all suicides. In Alberta, suicide is a leading cause of injury death, some years the highest—ahead of motor vehicle fatalities.

## We can help you . . .

With the help of our local rural volunteers, our presentation will:

Help people recognize warning signs and symptoms of depression and suicide;

Identify simple ways to help someone;

Help people have a better understanding of stress and depression;

Reduce the stigma of the illness in your community.

## Want to know more? Call for a presentation

There is no charge. The presentation takes a minimum of 30 to 40 minutes.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK A PRESENTATION, CALL:**

**Barbara Campbell 780-539-0210**  
**Men at Risk Coordinator**

**MEN AT RISK** is a project delivered by community and regional partners:

- Grande Prairie & Area Safe Communities
- PACE
- Peace Country Health
- Suicide Prevention Resource Centre & Corporate, Community and Individual Donors

## If you need help now:

**Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642**  
**Alberta Ag-Info Centre 1-866-882-7677**

## Mental Health Clinics

Call for an appointment or to ask about walk-in hours in some clinics.

**Grande Prairie:** 538-5160 covers Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Fox Creek, & Valleyview (or toll-free through the RITE Line 310-0000) **Grande Cache:** 827-4998 **Fairview:** 835-6149 **Peace River & Area:** 624-6151