



TALK LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

This is background information ONLY. Be sure to customize your talk to your operation and facilities.

- ✓ Print copies of this sheet for yourself and each of the participants.
- ✓ Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet at a location that is appropriate to the topic. Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible.
- ✓ Be open to questions.
- ✓ Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- ✓ Fill in your operation name, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- ✓ File your sheet in your worker training records to document the training experience.

BACKGROUND

Farming can be a very stressful occupation. Stress that goes unrecognized and is not managed well can cause you to make risky choices and can result in a farm incident. Unrelieved stress can take an emotional as well as a physical toll, in the form of anxiety or depression, or high blood pressure and heart disease. If unattended, stress can seriously damage physical health; psychological well-being; and relationships with friends, family, and coworkers.

Key Points

Our farm is dedicated to making sure your health and safety are our priority. Please feel free to discuss any issues with a supervisor that you feel are affecting your health and safety. If you feel that you can't talk to someone on the farm, reach out to your doctor or someone you are comfortable with.

COMMON STRESSORS

Stressors are the things that may cause stress. Things like weather, pests, disease, off-farm work, major life changes, relationships, fears and uncertainty are all things that can be stressors.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF STRESS

Acute stress is also known as the fight-or-flight response. Acute stress is your body's immediate reaction to a perceived threat, challenge or scare. Chronic stress is more subtle than acute stress, but the effects may be longer and more problematic.

Some symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- Stomach distress
- Unexplained headaches
- Muscle tension
- Chronic fatigue
- Insomnia or disrupted sleep

Farm Stress Management

- Change in appetite
- Relationship problems, hard on self, family or others
- Depression/withdrawal
- Substance abuse

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Identify the source of stress. Effective stress management starts with identifying your stressors and thinking about ways to manage them. Some stressors will be events that happen and others seem to come from within.

Manage the stressor or your reaction. There are four ways to deal with stressful situations. You can avoid the stressor, alter the stressor, adapt to the stressor or accept the stressor.

AVOID THE STRESSOR

Not all stress can be avoided, but you can eliminate a number of stressors by following a few tips:

- Learn how to say no. Know your limits and stick to them.
- Avoid people and situations that cause you stress, if possible.
- Pare down your to-do list if possible.

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CAUTION

Unresolved stress can lead to breakdowns in relationships, physical illness and safety issues. It's important to address stress and deal with it in a healthy manner.

CONTACTS

Contact your family doctor to discuss how to seek professional help regarding stress if you are feeling overwhelmed.

ALTER THE STRESSOR

If you can't avoid stress, try to change the situation:

- Talk about what is bothering you. Talk about the situation in a calm way.
- Be more assertive. Deal with problems head-on and don't expect issues to resolve themselves.
- Manage your time better. If you feel stretched thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused.
- Plan ahead and learn how to say no.

ADAPT TO THE STRESSOR

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself.

- View stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Change your attitude about a stressor. Think about it as glass-half-full instead of glass-half-empty.
- Keep it in perspective. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Is it really worth stressing over?

ADAPT THE STRESSOR

Some stressors are unavoidable. Acceptance may be difficult, but it's easier and more healthy than stressing about a situation you can't change.

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Bad weather and other people's behaviors are things you can't control. Rather than stressing about them, focus on what you can do, like your own reaction.
- Communicate your feelings. Frustration, anger, sadness are all ok feelings to have. Talk about it with a trusted friend or a professional. Talking about it can

help you feel relieved – opening up isn't a sign of weakness.

- Learn to forgive. People make mistakes, let go of anger and resentment.

KEEP YOUR MIND AND BODY HEALTHY

Regular exercise and eating well are two things that can help manage stress. Physical activity is a great stress reliever. Do something you enjoy so that it doesn't seem like a chore. Eat a balanced diet including plenty of fruits and vegetables and limit the amount of sugary and fatty foods.

FIND AN ESCAPE

Relaxing through a hobby or a healthy activity that you enjoy can help relieve stress. Do simple things like go for a walk, read an enjoyable book, play a sport, spend time with a pet, meditate or listen to music.

What are some other things that you can do to relieve stress?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS

Operation Name _____

Location _____

Meeting Leader _____

Date _____

TOOLBOX TALK PARTICIPANTS

Print name _____

Signature _____

Print name _____

Signature _____

Print name _____

Signature _____

Print name _____

Signature _____



CanadaFarmSafe
SécuriFermeCanada

This Producer Tool was developed by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). Conducting regular Toolbox Talks, or safety meetings, with farm workers is one component of establishing a comprehensive farm safety plan as outlined in the Canada FarmSafe Plan, CASA's business-risk management tool for health and safety on the farm. To download the core Canada FarmSafe Plan, visit casa-acsa.ca/CanadaFarmSafePlan, or contact CASA to learn more at 1-877-452-2272.

This Toolbox Talk was funded by exclusive corporate sponsor Dupont Pioneer. CASA is funded in part by *Growing Forward 2*, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, with support from the agricultural and corporate sectors.