Strengthening the Behavioral Health of the Agricultural Community

By Michael R. Rosmann, Ph.D.

Rural Behavioral Health Symposium Workshop
September 21, 2010
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Building hope and health in the rural agricultural community

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AgriWellness – Building Hope and Health in the Rural Agricultural Community

Who We Are
AgriWellness was founded in 2001 to provide administrative support, technical assistance and provider training in the Sowing the Seeds of Hope region (i.e., Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin). We build culturally competent, accessible, affordable behavioral health services for the agriculture community.

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Sowing the Seeds of Hope Regional Network

Vision – SSoH is a sustainable, regional strategic partnership that provides culturally competent, accessible and affordable behavioral health services to the agricultural community

A 7-state collaborative of state and local grass roots community and faith-based organizations and governmental agencies

Target population – 1.06M farm and ranch residents and 1.28M agriculture-dependent residents

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Sowing the Seeds of Hope
Network Partners

Our Mission: We promote accessible behavioral health services for underserved and at-risk populations affected by rural crisis in agricultural communities.

ISU Outreach/Iowa Concern Hotline
Kansas Rural Family Helpline
Minnesota Crisis Connection
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska
Mental Health America in North Dakota
Catholic Family Services of Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Wisconsin Farm Center

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Research has accumulated which indicates that the agricultural population has a higher incidence of depression, related to stress, than the non-agricultural population.
In their sentinel report of longitudinal research of farm families in eight north central Iowa counties from 1988 through 1994, Elder and Conger (2000) noted “The decline of families with ties to agriculture threatens the survival of an accustomed quality of life in rural communities that dot the open countryside, for young and old, children, parents and grandparents.”

Why Do People Farm?

Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God.

- Thomas Jefferson

Agriculture is a noble and essential occupation, a profoundly spiritual way of life.

- Michael R. Rosmann

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The Agrarian Imperative

Like many animal species, humans have a basic need to acquire sufficient territory to produce the food and shelter required by their families and communities. Also called “the agrarian personality,” this genetically programmed instinct drives farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship and to take uncommon risks.*


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To farmers, “the land is everything.” Ownership of a family farm is the triumphant result of the struggles of many generations. Losing the family farm is the ultimate loss – bringing shame to the generation that has let down their forebearers and dashing the hopes for successors.
By its very nature, agriculture is enmeshed in cycles of life and death. It is more than coincidence that farmers are more apt to take their lives during the planting and harvest seasons than at other times.


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## Comparison of Suicide by Farmers vs. Non-Farmers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Non-Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate is twice the national average.</td>
<td>Rate is slightly below average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to occur in spring and fall.</td>
<td>More likely to occur in summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to occur on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.</td>
<td>More likely to occur on Friday and Saturday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to occur between 6:00 and 11:59 a.m.</td>
<td>More likely to occur in late p.m., early a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm are main method.</td>
<td>Greater variety of methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few attempts precede suicide.</td>
<td>Many attempts precede suicide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Hotline/Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Illinois Farm Resource Center</td>
<td>877-633-3372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Iowa Concern Hotline*</td>
<td>800-447-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Kansas Rural Family Helpline*</td>
<td>866-327-6578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Minnesota Crisis Connection*</td>
<td>866-379-6363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Nebraska Rural Response Hotline*</td>
<td>800-464-0258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>NY Farm Net</td>
<td>800-547-3276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>North Dakota 2-1-1, website: <a href="http://www.myfirstlink.org">http://www.myfirstlink.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>South Dakota Rural Helpline*</td>
<td>800-664-1349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Univ. of Tennessee MANAGE</td>
<td>800-345-0561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Farm First</td>
<td>877-493-6216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Wisconsin Farm Center*</td>
<td>800-942-2474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Affiliates with the Sowing the Seeds of Hope Program.

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The SSoH Hotlines/Helplines Provide:

• Culturally appropriate telephone counseling to callers who are employed in agricultural occupations

• Three of the SSoH farm crisis services (Minnesota Crisis Connection, North Dakota 2-1-1, South Dakota Rural Helpline) are certified by the American Association of Suicidology to provide suicide prevention 24/7

• At least two of the SSoH farm crisis services (Iowa Concern Hotline, North Dakota 2-1-1 are accredited by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems
The SSoH Hotlines/Helplines Provide (Cont):

• All the SSoH hotlines/helplines offer information and referral for professional behavioral health services, other supports as needed (e.g., legal advice, mediation, financial expertise, etc.), community education, and most are able to offer support groups, educational retreats and home visits by outreach workers.

• All the SSoH hotlines/helplines have state coalitions of supporters who may assist with promotion and funding.

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SSoH Accomplishments
September 1, 2005 – October 31, 2007*

• 43,852 hotline/helpline calls
• 7,238 vouchers redeemed for professional behavioral healthcare sessions
• 1,369 providers trained
• 7,515 community education participants
• 760 educational retreat participants
• 2,468 outreach/home visits
• 16,956 information clearinghouse contacts
• 301 support group participants

Characteristics of Callers to the SSoH Hotlines/Helplines

• Reasons for calling the hotlines:
  – Marital/family concerns – 24.6%
  – Problems coping with daily activities – 27.7%
  – Feeling Depressed – 27.7%
  – Alcohol/drug abuse – 4.9%
  – Gambling – .6%
  – Stress over finances – 14.3%

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Characteristics of Callers to the SSoH Hotlines/Helplines (Cont.)

- 79% lived on farms and were farmers
- 11% lived on farms and were connected with agriculture but were not farmers
- 10% were farmers and lived in town
- 1.6% of callers (i.e., 685 out of 43,852 callers) reported suicidal ideation; 77 persons reported a suicide plan and 56 persons had attempted suicide
- 54.5% of the callers were female

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Characteristics of Callers to the SSoH Hotlines/Helplines (Cont.)

• 88.7% of 43,852 callers were adults, ages 18 – 64
• 10.2% were adults older than 64 years
• 1.1% were children and adolescents under 18 years
• 86% were White/Non-Hispanic people
Characteristics of Callers to the SSoH Hotlines/Helplines (Cont.)

- 2.7% were Black/African-Americans
- 1.9% were American Indians
- 1.1% were Hispanic
- 8.3% were two or more races or not reported

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SSoH Sustainability Approach

• An ongoing collaborative process directed at generating a diversity of revenue streams and in-kind contributions to sustain AgriWellness, Inc. and the SSoH regional network’s infrastructure and services to the agricultural population

• Addresses sustainability planning at both the regional network level and the state partner coalition level, with commitment to mutual contributions to sustainability
SSoH Sustainability Approach (cont.)

• In general, each state partner maintains its infrastructure, while the state partners and AgriWellness work together to sustain the professional agricultural behavioral health services

• AgriWellness coordinates sustainability efforts, provider training in agricultural behavioral health, research, evaluation, national social marketing and advocacy

Produced by J. Pat Hart, Ph.D., SSoH Evaluator
Sustainability Approach: Tools

- Communication and collaboration asset assessment
  - What each state partner and coalition can contribute in knowledge, experience, talent and connections
  - Answers the question: Why invest in this organization?

- Revenue and in-kind development formula asset assessment
  - Builds on existing and historical connections with federal, state, private and local funding sources
  - Answers the question: What strengths do we have in pursuing our priorities?

Produced by J. Pat Hart, Ph.D., SSoH Evaluator.
Sustainability Approach: Developmental Milestones

Revenue Formula Development Workshop
Feb 2007
• Crystallize formula concept & federal initiative (FRSAN) idea

State Coalition Sustainability Workshops
Apr – Dec 2007
• Conduct revenue formula & communication/collaboration assessments

RHND Strategic & Grant Planning Workshops/Site Visits
Feb 2008 – Sep 2010
• Establish & implement regional & state sustainability priorities

Sustainability Projects
AgriWellness, Inc./Regional - Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)

State Partner/Coalition - Collaborative Rural Mental Health Services (MN, ND, AgriWellness)

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# Revenue Development Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>(✓) Nature of experience, knowledge, talent, tools or relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Federal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal/Entrepreneurial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training/TA Fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curriculum/Materials Sales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual Giving/Endowment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Produced by J. Pat Hart, Ph.D., SSoH Evaluator
**Communication and Collaboration Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Function</th>
<th><code>Nature of experience, knowledge, talent, tools or relationships</code></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Information Exchange – emails, list serve, conference calls etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Organizational Foundation – stated vision, mission, clear leadership roles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Defined Financial Needs – projected budget, potential funding sources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Community Connectedness – community education, social marketing, outreach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Joint Endeavors – joint sponsorships, funding requests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Advocacy – contacting, educating, writing funding proposals, seeking legislation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Results Monitoring – know demographics and needs, track efforts and changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Definition of Sustainability*

Achieving an organizational state where programs and services are continually provided because they have perceived value and receive adequate financial support.

• Appreciation is expressed to Georgia Health Policy Center for this slide
Return On Investment

\[ \text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Benefits}}{\text{Investment}} \]

ROI Questions

• Can you demonstrate the economic impact of your programs and services?
• Can you show they are cost effective?
The Case for the SSoH: ROI Perspective

- ERS estimated that the average farmer would earn $83,622 in 2007
- The average farmer who completes suicide is a male in his late 50’s who would have approximately 15 more productive years if he remained alive
- It can be estimated that over a 15 year period a farmer suicide results in the loss of $1,254,330

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ROI Calculation Example

ROI = \frac{10 \text{ lives saved} (\$12,543,300)}{\$1,400,000} = 8.96*

*For each dollar invested, return is $8.96
Collaborative Rural Mental Health Services

- Minnesota SSoH Coalition - Initiated Project
- Funded by the Otto Bremer Foundation of Saint Paul, Minnesota for $120,000
- Supports Work of
  - Minnesota Partner: Crisis Connection; and
  - North Dakota Partner: Mental Health America North Dakota (MHAND); and
  - AgriWellness, Inc.

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Collaborative Rural Mental Health Services (cont.)

• Minnesota Funding
  – Stabilize and promote state-wide crisis line funding
  – Fund pilot test of web-based dealing with stress educational series for agricultural population
  – Conduct state coalition membership and leadership development

• North Dakota Funding
  – Stabilize and promote state-wide crisis line funding

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Collaborative Rural Mental Health Services (cont.)

• AgriWellness, Inc. Funding
  – Administer, support and coordinate project
  – Produce and air public service announcements about SSoH hotlines and services in MN and ND
  – Produce and publish news articles in MN and ND farm news publications
  – Develop and deliver training on agricultural behavioral health to MN and ND providers
  – Promote the Otto Bremer Foundation funding as match for $7,500 grant from the Farm Foundation for agricultural behavioral health textbook and curriculum development

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Navigating the Currents of Change

A joint conference of AgriWellness and the National Association for Rural Mental Health

June 22 – 25, 2011

Dubuque, IA

Call for Papers:


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The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., The Farm Bill) authorizes a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) which contains the following provisions:

- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to make competitive grants to support cooperative programs between state Extension services and nonprofit organizations.
- Each FRSAN shall provide stress assistance programs to individuals engaged in farming, ranching and other agricultural-related occupations.
The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., The Farm Bill) authorizes a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) which contains the following provisions (cont.):

- Funds shall be awarded to initiate, expand or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary through farm telephone helplines and websites.
- Make available community education, support groups, outreach services and activities, and home visits to deliver assistance in situations in which a farm resident is homebound.
Why the SSoH/FRSAN is Needed

- Free, confidential, 24/7 assistance during times of crisis
- Much needed during disasters of all types (e.g., economic downturns, weather events, disease outbreaks)
- Needed on the Gulf Coast currently
- Culturally acceptable stress assistance
- Prevents suicide in high-risk population
Intermediate Goal 5.5 – Develop and promote adoption of effective interventions to enhance psychological well-being of workers and to minimize the adverse affects of stressful agricultural working conditions (e.g., economic forces, weather and isolation).

*Adopted, December 2008*
NORA Action Steps*

Action step 5.5.1 – Develop a surveillance system to help qualify the types and extent of psychological disorders experienced by agricultural workers. Use these findings to develop research priorities.

Action step 5.5.2 – Conduct targeted research on factors associated with psychological disorders, especially as they relate to specific regional concerns or patterns.

Action Step 5.5.3 – Develop, implement and evaluate culturally appropriate educational and outreach programs for promoting psychological well-being of agricultural producers, farm workers and their families. Involve agricultural workers in their development and delivery.

*Adopted, December 2008
Acknowledgements:

• The Sowing the Seeds of Hope program was supported by federal grants from the Office of Rural Health Policy:
  ▪ Sowing the Seeds of Hope: Regional Outreach Network 1 D04 RH 00864-01
  ▪ AgriWellness Targeted Capacity Expansion project 90IJ0486
  ▪ Sowing the Seeds of Hope: Regional Network Development 1 D06 RH 07935-01

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Acknowledgements (cont):

• Appreciation is expressed to Dr. J. Pat Hart, Ph.D., program evaluator and to Shari Stucker, M.Div., publicity and data management coordinator for AgriWellness, Inc. for helping compile project data.

• Portions of the SSoH project were supported by grants from the Otto Bremer Foundation and the Farm Foundation.
Thank you and So Long!

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