

Raising Hope for Kentucky Farmers

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Funding

- Funding provided by the Kentucky Legislature
- General Fund appropriations in fiscal years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 & 2022-2023
- To support the Kentucky Rural Mental Health and Suicide Prevention pilot program

Our Mission and Goals

Promote the physical/mental health and safety of Kentucky's (KY's) farmers and farm families through translational research, prevention/intervention, and community education/outreach informed by key stakeholders with the common goal to enhance quality of life for our farmers and farm families.

Develop community-based programming, education, communication and support systems informed by local voices to support the mental and physical health, safety of our farmers and farm families by focusing on the reduction of stress, depression, and suicide rates among farmers and farm families.

Objectives for Today

- Understand the unique stressors related to farming as an occupation
- Describe at least 2 strategies utilized to reduce stigma and increase health seeking behavior in farming communities.
- Recognize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to address mental health issues in agricultural populations.

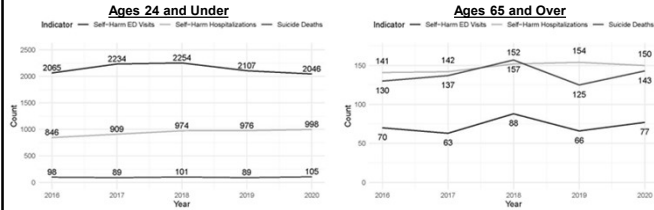
Kentucky Suicide Data

- 82% of all KY suicides in 2022 were male
(Murphy et al, 2023)
- 78% of KY youth suicide in 2022 were males
(Murphy et al, 2023)
- Predominately male and white*
- Suicide deaths via firearms*
- Higher suicide rates for farmers than general public (Peterson et al, 2020)

*Produced by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center as Iowa site agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Data source: Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Kentucky Office of vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Data extracted on May 17, 2023. Data are preliminary and subject to change.

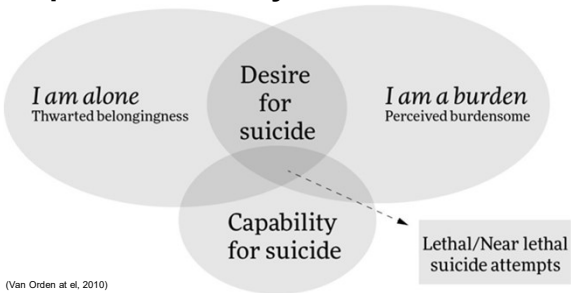
Kentucky Suicide Data

Suicide & Self-Harm in KY Residents



*Published by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center as a service to the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Data source: Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Data extracted on May 17, 2022. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Background Information: Interpersonal Theory of Suicide



Why farmers?

Culture of farmers

- Highly independent
- Self-reliant
- Strong work ethic
- Rural masculine identity

Why farmers?

Occupational-based suicide drivers

- Health = Ability to work/livelihood
- Unpredictable income
- Rising operational costs
- Government regulations
- Long work hours (< 70% work > 10 hours/day)
- Majority live on their farms (work/life balance)
- Geographically and socially isolated
- Labor challenges
- Public perception

(Garnham & Bryant, 2014; Gregoire, A., 2002)



Barriers and Challenges to Health-Seeking

- Location/proximity to health-care
- Stigma
- Limited professional training on suicide
- Limited number of providers
- Culture
- Workforce shortage

(Brems et al., 2009)

Focus Groups of Farmers

Goal: to learn about stress from the farmer perspective

- Conducted 3 focus group interviews in KY/TN
- 26 farmers and family members participated
- Represented a variety of commodities
- 7 of the participants directly knew a farmer who had attempted or completed suicide
- Interviews audiotaped and analyzed for major themes

(Garrett-Wright, Malin & Jones, 2023)

Focus Groups Findings:

Three major themes

Multiple components of stress on the farm

- Uncontrollable events/issues
- Lack of appreciation from society
- Misconceptions about farming
- Anticipated stress

Love of Land/Generational Connections

Suggested Strategies to Lower Occupational Stress

- Create social groups for farmers
- Educate the public about the role of farming
- Capture and share the stories of farming
- Incorporate information about farming in the curricula of public schools

(Garrett-Wright, Malin & Jones, 2023)

Findings from the Literature Review

Cultural Humility

Introduced in medicine and public health about 30 years ago by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia

Attributes of cultural humility include: (Foronda et al, 2016)

- Openness- "possessing an attitude that is willing to explore new ideas" p.211
- Self-awareness- "being aware of one's strengths, limitations, values, beliefs, behavior, and appearance to others" p. 211
- Egoless- "humbleness or throwing away ego" p.212
- Supportive interaction- "intersections of existence among individuals that result in positive human exchanges" p.212
- Self-reflection and critique

Outcomes of using cultural humility in healthcare: (Hock, 2013)

- "Cultural humility may help counteract and regulate the sense of superiority that may occur when cultural differences arise..." (p.354)
- Cultural humility can have a positive impact of the working relationship/therapeutic alliance



Cultural Humility

"a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances... and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations" (p. 123)



Concepts that Impact Farmer Health

- Chronic stress impacts farmer health and well being in a negative way (Yazd, 2019)
- Farmers may equate health with the ability to work (Jones, Reed & Hunt, 2018)

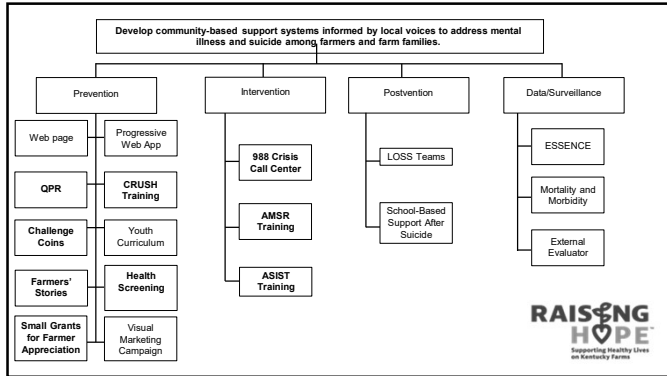


Ways to Improve Healthcare for Farmers

- Show compassion, be honest and understand common concerns faced by farmers (Parrish, 2020)
- Explore the farmer's role on the farm and use open ended follow up question to elicit information (Jones, Reed & Hunt, 2018)



A Cultural Approach to Suicide Prevention for Farmers



CRUSHing Farmer Suicide

- 1-credit hour continuing education course, **CRUSHing Farmer Suicide—Cultural Respect, Understanding, Sensitivity, and Humility.**
- Partnered with instructional designer and videographer to design the interactive CE course
- Used a software tool, Articulate Storyline 3, allowing active learning



CRUSHing Farmer Suicide

- The interactive, asynchronous, virtual training will be available for free for 3 years @ <https://www.cecentral.com/crush>
- The training offers 1-hour continuing education credit for several disciplines including medicine, nursing, and social work.
- Content includes:
 - Interviews with farmers discussing stressors
 - Scenarios featuring various healthcare professionals working with a farmer and their family
 - Review of screening tools
 - Resources



Farmer Cultural Awareness Project

- Interviewed 19 farmers in a 10-county geographic area
 - Represented a cross section of gender, race, age, and agricultural commodities.
 - Interviews conducted by Folk Studies faculty member and graduate student.
 - Interviews conducted at locations selected by the farmer.
 - Interview process extended over a 6-month period.
- Researchers requested farmers to **share their life experiences** and what they **desired the non-farming public to know** about their occupation.



Farmer Cultural Awareness Project

- Website to showcase interview clips and share farmer biographical information
- Informational cards highlighting each farmer
- Promotional bags
 - Bags contained an image of KY with
 - Samples of some favorite foods such as milk, fruit, pizza
 - Statement on the bags – "Farmers Grow Your Favorite Foods"



Outcomes

- Over 765 healthcare and lay professionals have completed the CRUSHing Farmer Suicide CE
- Over 5,000 promotional bags and sets of cards have been distributed
- 678 hits on the website containing farmer stories





Farmer Appreciation

44 applications requesting a total of \$206,472 in funds
15 projects awarded for a total of \$60,865

- Farmer Appreciation Banner
- Thank-A-Farmer February
- Farmer Appreciation Breakfast
- Farmer Appreciation Calendar
 - highlighted local farmers
- Farmer Appreciation Dinner
 - multiple across the state



Health Screenings

- Over 2000 thus far.
- Blood pressure
- Glucose
- A1c
- Cholesterol
- Hemoglobin
- Mental health screening
- Carotid artery scan
- Thyroid scan



Suicide Prevention Trainings

Question Persuade Refer (QPR)

- 40 QPR Trainer who are Farmer Connected
- 352 QPR Trainings with 5,382 participants for FY 2023

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

- 8 ASIST Trainings with 145 participants for FY 2023

Assessing & Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR)

- 21 AMSR Trainings with 304 participants for FY 2023

Suicide Prevention Trainings

Upcoming ASIST Trainings

- November 28th-29th, 2023 in Richmond, KY
- December 18th-19th, 2023 in Morehead, KY
- January 10th-11th, 2024 in Hopkinsville, KY



Main Points

- Interventions grounded in cultural humility will assist healthcare providers in giving more appropriate care to the farming community.
- Interventions that promote appreciation of farm culture can connect the larger society to the farm community and may reduce stress experienced by farmers.
- The use of interventions that align with the farming culture support the overall mission of reducing farmer suicide deaths and the improvement of mental health for this population.

And then....Partnership is Key



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