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CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE SÉCURITÉ AGRICOLE

## LIVING WITH STRESS

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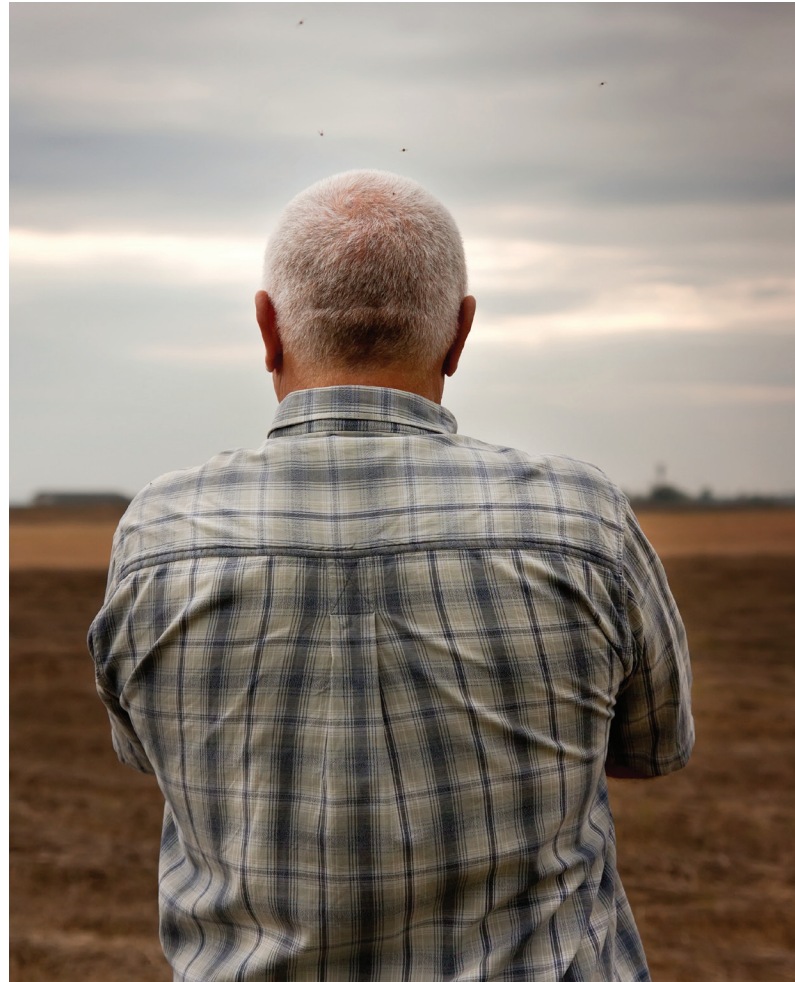
### STRESS IS A NORMAL PART OF LIFE

There are times when stress gives us motivation to accomplish our daily tasks. It provides the adrenaline we need to get jobs done. However, there are times when stress becomes overwhelming and it has a negative impact on our lives. Stress can become so debilitating that it becomes difficult to function. At times like this stress can lead to other mental and physical health issues. And when that happens we jeopardize our personal safety and the safety of others.

It is important to understand the components of stress. Stress is a normal reaction to situations that are perceived to be challenging. However, it is important to understand that it is our reaction to events and not the events themselves that cause stress. How we react is quite dependent on our resilience and tolerance to stress.

*Simply speaking when there is too much stress or long-term stress, it can put us into crisis.*

As we age our tolerance to stress is impacted. As our resilience decreases, our tolerance to stress may also decrease, making us more vulnerable to things that never seemed to bother us when we were younger.



So as much as we cannot control the events of our lives we can learn to better manage our stress levels.

Recognizing the symptoms of stress is not always easy. Stress has a tendency to manifest itself in our physical and mental wellbeing. Perhaps it is an increase in headaches, chest pains, a stiff neck, or sore back. Or we may find that we are more prone to anger, more emotional, experience low self-esteem, or even depression. And as that happens our behaviors change. Our expectations for ourselves and others increase, there may be an increased use of alcohol, we may have a tendency to isolate ourselves, or we may lose sleep.



The good news is there are some simple tools that can assist in dealing with stress. Following you will find the 6 Rs of stress management. (Based on work done by the Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services)

1. **RECOGNIZE** Be aware of when stress becomes overwhelming and having a negative impact on you.
2. **REDUCE** Do an inventory of your stress and come to an understanding of which stressful items you can control and deal with them. Also learn to accept the things that you cannot control.
3. **RESPOND** Make sure you treat your body responsibly through healthy nutrition, physical and mental activity, enough sleep, and take the time to recharge.
4. **RELAX** Take the time to kick back and enjoy life. Utilize mindfulness techniques such as breathing exercises, yoga, or meditation. And remember to laugh. As they say, laughter is the best medicine.
5. **REACH OUT** Identify your support system. Verbalizing your thoughts and feelings can be helpful. You will find it normalizes and validates the feelings you are experiencing.
6. **RESOURCES** Remember that there are resources available – from books to read, to organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, as well as professionals who are trained to help you.



It is not the experiences of today that create the most stress. Rather it is a reflection of the past or dread for tomorrow that tends to create an overwhelming sense of stress. Meeting challenges one at a time is a good approach to stress management. By focusing on today you may be surprised at the renewed energy you have for the day and for an enhanced life for tomorrow.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER:

1. You're worth it
2. Your family, friends, and community will benefit
3. Your farm will benefit
4. Your life will benefit