



# 5 Steps to Alleviate Stress

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With all of the factors that cannot be controlled in farming or ranching, this 5-step method may help farmers become better prepared for tough times. By identifying needs, resources and sources for support, farmers can focus on what can be controlled. Establishing support and using effective coping strategies are important in improving one's overall health.

**1**

## **Assess Needs and Impacts**

- Any stressor can impact the individual, family, or family operation.
- What is a NEED resulting from stress in your life?
- What is size of the IMPACT (manageable or not manageable)?

**2**

## **Identify and Access Resources**

- What resources are needed to help manage the stressor(s)?
- Are they available to you?
- Resources can be intangible (knowledge, creativity, optimism) or material (money, land, equipment).

**3**

## **Pursue Good-Quality Decisions**

- Asses options and determine how to respond.
- How should you use your resources?
- How can you be more open to change?
- Consider cost vs. benefits and clarify values and goals.

**4**

## **Connect with Sources of Support**

- What type of support is most helpful for you to pursue quality decisions?
- Do you need to talk to someone at a bank regarding financial decisions, or would a more appropriate source be a counselor or pastor to discuss personal concerns?

**5**

## **Use Effective Coping Strategies**

- Are the coping strategies you use harmful (alcohol use, tobacco, unhealthy eating), or are they helpful (exercise, mindfulness, watching a movie, family conversations)? Try to match a coping strategy with an identified need. It also does not hurt to learn new strategies to help alleviate stress.

**Reference:** Brotherson, S., & Berg, L. (2017). *Managing stress and pursuing wellness in times of tight margins*. Fargo, ND: North Dakota State University Extension Service

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