



Farm Stress Counseling Efforts in ND – A Snapshot

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Farming ranks in the
top ten most stressful occupations
in the United States.



Rural Stress and Individual / Family Wellness



Which Matters More? Tractor Maintenance vs. Farmer Maintenance



"THEY MAINTAIN THEIR TRACTORS, THEY
MAINTAIN THEIR PUMPS AND EVERYTHING
BUT THEY DON'T MAINTAIN THEMSELVES."

Harry, male farmer on farmer's mental health
in Judd, et al, 2006

#ElevateTheConvo

Photo Credit Derek Gavey

Key Messages on Rural Stress

- Your health is your most important asset as a farmer, rancher or agricultural worker.
- Farmer and farmworker health and safety is the most important priority in managing any farm or ranch operation.
Good stress management is good farm management!

What is the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center?



Funded by a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant, North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center is composed of lead agencies representing 12 states. We want to make sure that you, your family, and the people you work with have access to the resources needed, when they are needed. We believe in working together to cultivate rural supports, mental health resources, and community to help farmers, ranchers, and other agriculture workers as they navigate increasing stress.

Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Funding – USDA-NIFA

- Purpose: “To establish a network that connects individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations **to stress assistance programs.**”
- Possibilities
 - “Grants awarded under subsection (a) may be used to **initiate, expand, or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance** as necessary through the following:”

NDSU Extension + Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center

Multi-Year Project

- NDSU Extension
- Together Counseling (counseling options)
- FirstLink (suicide prevention & mental health training)
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Online suicide prevention training
 - Educational workshops



Partnering Together Counseling – Telehealth & More

➤ Spring 2021 to present:

- Counseling at NO or LIMITED cost
- Counseling sessions for those in agriculture or related fields
- 65-70 percent of sessions are telehealth
- Ag-informed professionals

➤ Example – Together Counseling and Becky Kopp-Dunham

- Link - <https://www.togethercounselinggroup.com/farm-to-farm>



“Bootstraps” Wallet Handout & Table Tent – Marketing Efforts

- Wearing out your bootstraps?
- You don't have to go it alone.
- Where to get help

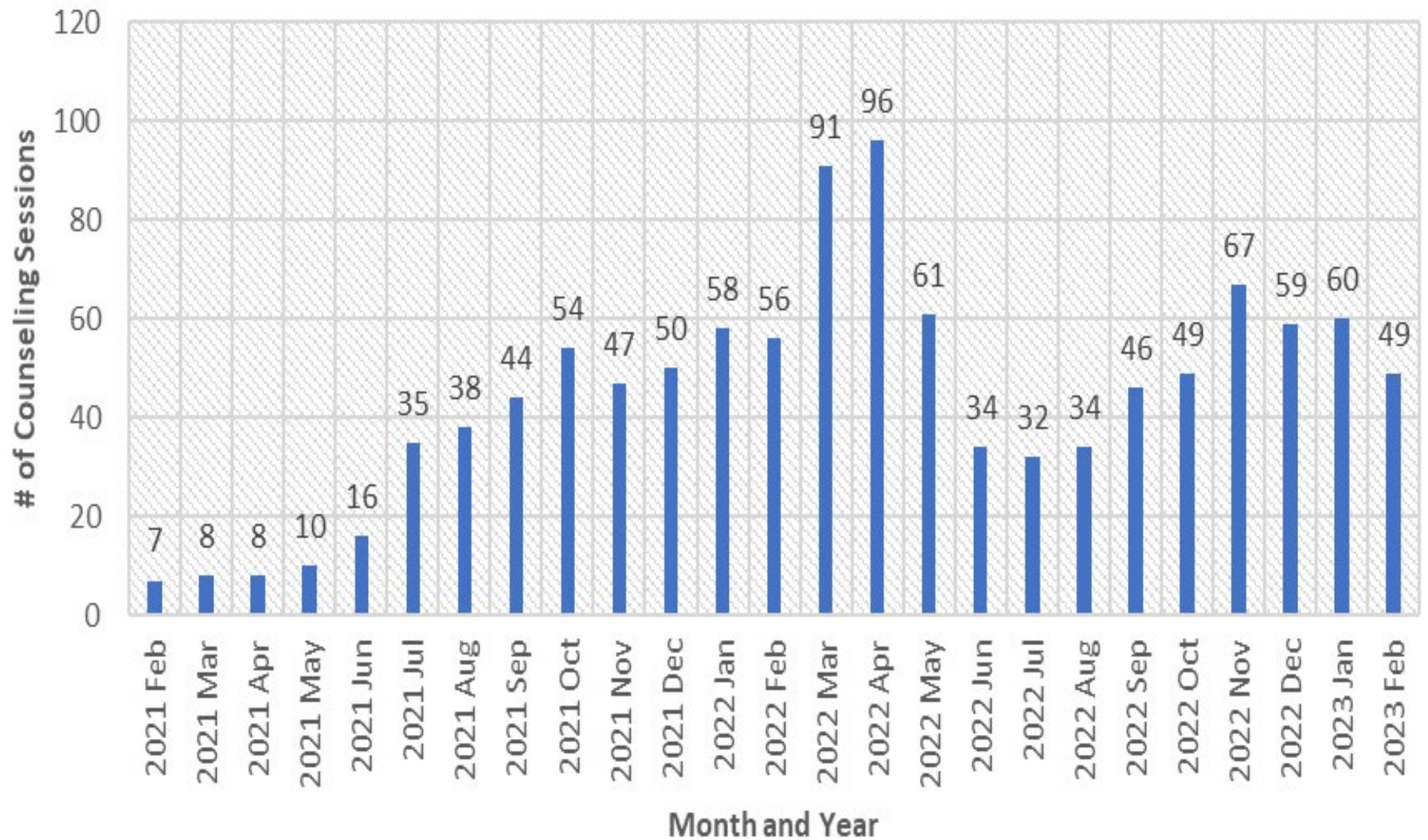
- NDSU Extension, FirstLink, Together Counseling, Other



Effective Sharing – Find or Be a “Champion” for A Resource



North Dakota FRSAN - Monthly Counseling Sessions



Other Key Information – Farm Stress Counseling in ND

- Four Key Providers - # of sessions per client
 - 1) 8.9 sessions
 - 2) 10.1 sessions
 - 3) 16 sessions – **Note: Some high volume clients in need**
 - 4) 14 sessions

- Four Key Providers – Cost per client
 - 1) \$826.78 per client
 - 2) \$1,284.61 per client
 - 3) \$936.13 per client
 - 4) \$610.58 per client

Other Key Information – Farm Stress Counseling in ND

- Planned # of sessions in Grant – **125 sessions per year**
- Total # of sessions in 2 Years
 - Feb to August 2021 – 122 sessions (6 months)
 - Sept 2021 to Feb 2022 – 309 sessions (6 months)
 - March 2022 to August 2022 – 348 sessions (6 months)
 - Sept 2022 to Feb 2023 – 330 sessions (6 months)
- Total # of Sessions – **1,109 sessions over 2 years**
- Total # of Clients – 85 clients to date

Potential Research Projects

Farm to Farm Services Follow-Up Survey

- This research project is intended to gather information from clients who have participated in Together Counseling Farm to Farm Services (counseling supports, etc.) under the auspices of the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant. Topics to be explored include demographic characteristics of clients served, satisfaction with services received, impact of services on different stress and coping factors, changes associated with services received, and variables including financial stress, health, and farming situation or stressors.

Best Practices in Agricultural Counseling – Interviews/Focus Groups

- To study the experiences of service providers that are providing counseling services to distressed agricultural populations in the North Central region and beyond.
- To gain insight into barriers to service, lessons learned and best practices among service providers that are providing counseling services to distressed agricultural populations.

NDSU Extension Response to Farmers Under Stress



Support Sources – What can we do?

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