

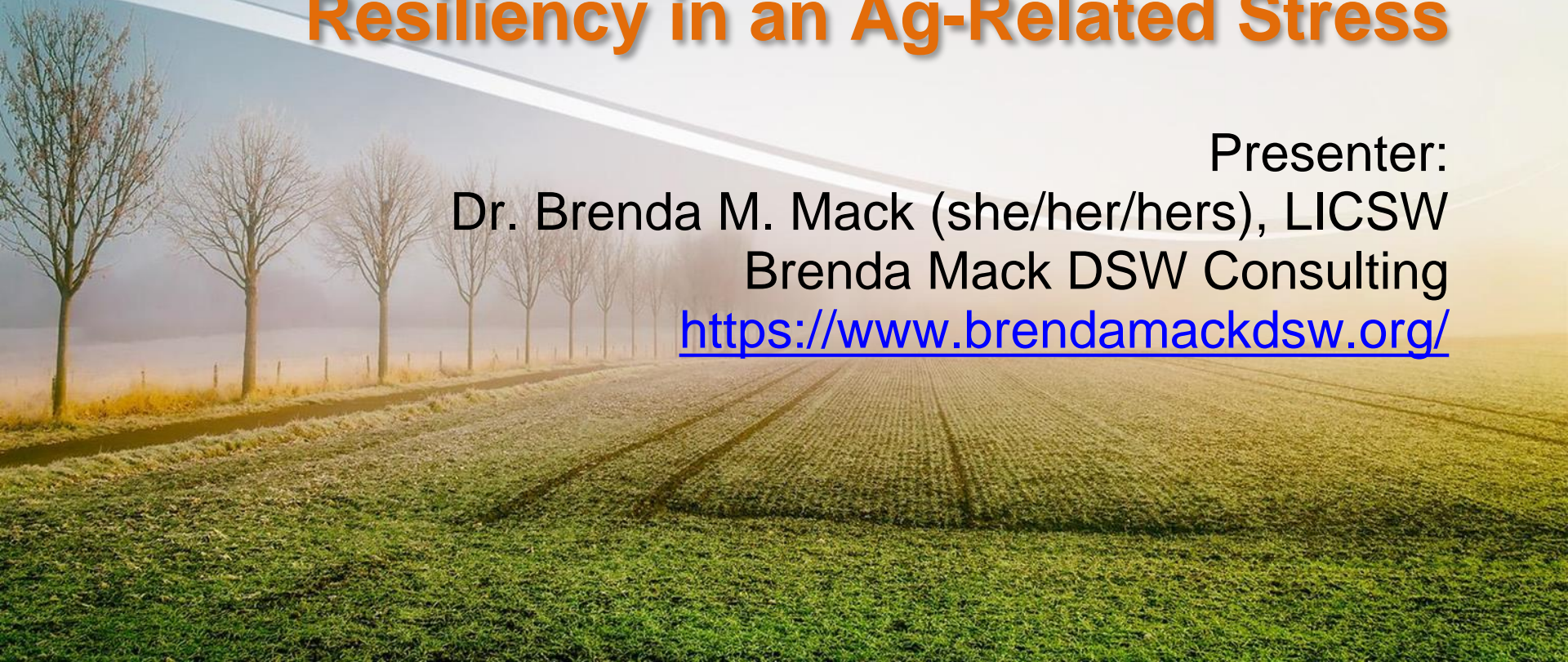
Bloom Where You Are Planted: Cultivating Wellness, Well-Being, and Resiliency in an Ag-Related Stress

Presenter:

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Dr. Brenda M. Mack, LICSW

- Grew-up in a farm family in EGF, MN
- Married to a 4th-gen crop farmer
- Doctorate in Social Work, (DSW-UST), LICSW, researcher, writer, presenter
- 21 years providing therapy & crisis response services in a farm community
- 6 year Associate Professor & Department Chair in Social Work at Bemidji State University



Before We Begin Together

- Presentation based on Brenda's lived and professional experience
- Each of you are experts in your own lives and tailor content that is relevant to you
- Some topics may trigger unexpected thoughts/feelings. Take care of yourself in the moment, step away from the presentation if you need a break, or debrief with someone after
- The information is not intended to be treatment



Agenda

- Framing the Issue
- 3-Legged Stool of Well-being
- Other Strategies and Solutions to Build Resiliency



Getting Present

- Deep breathing and stress reduction activity



Participant Sharing

With another participant and vice versa share a word or a short phrase to describe how you feel after that exercise



Stress Defined

“Stress is a fact of nature in which forces from the inside or outside world affect the individual, either one's emotional or physical well-being, or both. The individual responds to stress in ways that affect the individual, as well as their environment. Due to the overabundance of stress in our modern lives, we usually think of stress as a negative experience, but from a biological point of view, stress can be a ***neutral, negative, or positive*** experience” <https://www.medicinenet.com/stress/article.htm>



Ag-Related Stress

- Ag-related stress may be experienced by farmers, ranchers, their families, and others who work in the agricultural industry and is a direct result of the uniqueness and nuances of this type of personal and professional life.
- Contributing factors include financial pressures, lack of control over outside influences (weather, commodity prices, dealing with disgruntled producers), extreme outdoor working conditions, excessive workload, exhaustion, stigma in seeking help. (Schroeder, 2021)



Physical Symptoms of Ag-Stress

- Muscle or headaches
- Stomach and digestive issues
- Shortness of breath
- Low-energy or fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Sleep disruptions
- Increase in illness (Schroeder, 2021)



Emotional and Behavioral Symptoms of Ag-Related Stress

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling sad, angry, depressed, cynical
- Loss of spirit or humor
- Acting out
- Withdrawing from the world
- Irritable or Impatient
- Unhealthy substance use (Schroeder, 2021)

Understanding Your Stress

- Scaling Question
- Stress Quiz

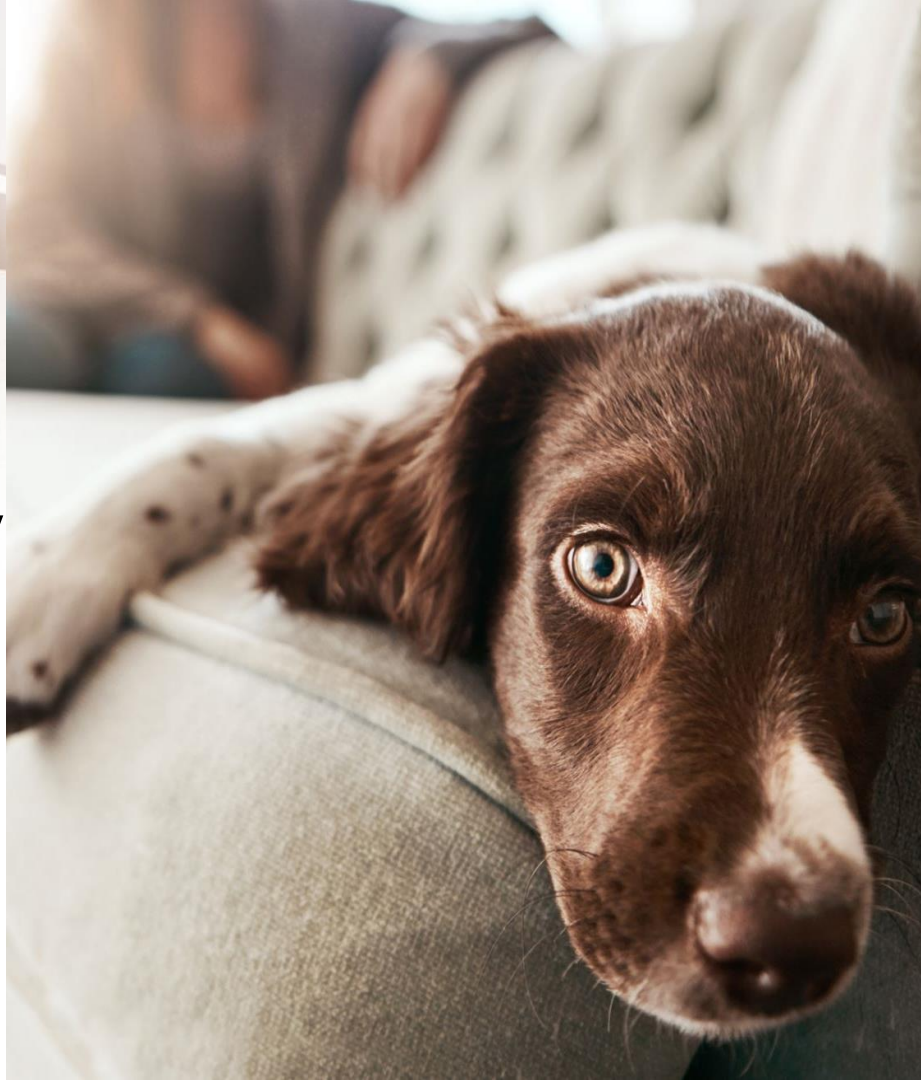
3-Legged Stool of Well-Being: To Reduce Stress

- **Relational**: Healthy relationships & Connection to others or pets
- **Cognitive**: Changing negative self-defeating talk to empowering self-talk
- **Physical**: Eating/drinking right, sleep and exercise



Relational

- Hire-wired to connect
- Healthy relationships with humans/pets' fuels resiliency
- From solo responsibility to shared support
- Find supporters who listen to understand
- “Being with”





I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

— Brené Brown —

AZ QUOTES

A young girl with long dark hair is holding a white sign with black text. She is outdoors, with a blurred background of greenery and a blue umbrella. The sign reads: WHERE HAS HUMAN CONNECTION GONE?

WHERE HAS
HUMAN
CONNECTION
GONE?



Who's Your Person (s)

- Who cares about you unconditionally?
- Who do you share your joy with?
- Who can you lean into?
- Share

Self-Talk Worksheet:
To deal with Ag-Related and Personal Stress

Old Pattern:

New Pattern:

Thoughts



Feelings



Behaviors

Self-Talk Worksheet:
To deal with Ag-Related Stress

Old Pattern:

Example 1: I'm a failure at farming

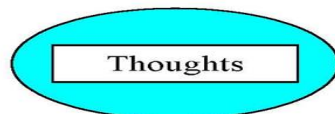
Example 2: I don't like the way I look, my thighs are huge

Example 1: Worried, Embarrassed, Angry, Sad, Frustrated

Example 2: Depressed, Sad, Unmotivated

Example 1: Verbally "snap" at others; Unable to sleep at night; Drink too much alcohol

Example 2: Isolate oneself; Stay home rather than going for a walk, to the gym or out for dinner



New Pattern:

Example 1: I did everything in my power to get the crop off the field; I never gave up

Example 2: I am proud of myself for exercising, I have athletic-looking legs

Example 1: Empathetic, Hopeful, Compassionate

Example 2: Honest, Empowered, Inspired

Example 1: Talk calmly with others; Sleep better; Drink in moderation

Example 2: Exercise; Grab coffee or dinner with a significant other or friend; Go out in public

xx Bloomberg

ntly organiz: vent



What stood out in that video?

- How can you apply Shawn Achor's message to your ag-related life?

The background of the slide features a misty landscape. On the left, there is a row of bare trees standing in a field. The ground appears to be covered in grass or low-lying vegetation. The sky is overcast and hazy, creating a soft, diffused light across the scene. A diagonal white line runs from the top left towards the center, separating the landscape image from the text area.

Physical Component

- Eat healthy
- Drink water
- Exercise
- Sleep

Sleep

Research shows that a chronic lack of sleep, or getting poor quality sleep, increases the risk of disorders including high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity. (www.ninds.nih.gov)





3 Good Things Activity

- Stress Reduction – Sleep Connection Activity
- Seligman's Study
- Let's practice



Additional Strategies

- Recreational activities (games, cards, woodworking)
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Listen to inspirational podcasts or reading inspirational books
- Laugh
- Participate in conferences, webinars, coffee chats



Additional Strategies

- Follow a budget, have emergency fund
- Faith-based or religious practices
- Listen to music
- Sing in the church or community choir
- Journal
- Practice self-gratitude and self-grace
- Express your gratitude to others



A Simple Plan

- Talk to a spouse, friend, another person in Ag about worries and what's going well
- Throughout the day, say out loud- 3 kind, compassionate, positive self-statements
- Drink water throughout the day
- 5-min of deep breathing and relaxation
- Walk (or another form of exercise) for ½ hour 3 x's per week
- Write a note of gratitude to someone 1x per mos.

What if?

- Stress symptoms get worse
- Increased sadness, worry, depression, anxiety
- Rule out a physical issue, see primary care provider
- Talk to a faith-based contact (ex. Pastor), social worker, counselor, or therapist



Self-Compassion Wrap-Up Exercise



Resources

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/about/mnfarmerstress>
- Northwest MN Foundation
<https://www.nwmf.org/resources/support-for-farmers/>
- Positive Self-Talk (Thinkup): <https://thinkup.me/>
- Stress-relief and Self-Care Apps: (Calm, Headspace, Happify)
<https://www.calm.com/> , <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app> , <https://www.happify.com/>
- Upper Midwest Agriculture Safety and Health- Cultivating Resiliency Webinar Series <http://umash.umn.edu/cultivating-resiliency-webinars/>
- Verywell Mind Website <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-coping-strategies-are-effective-3144562>

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