



# A Better You For a Better Farm

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Dairy Girl Network #StrongerTogetHER Webinar  
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# Some notes on well-being, mental health, & mental illness



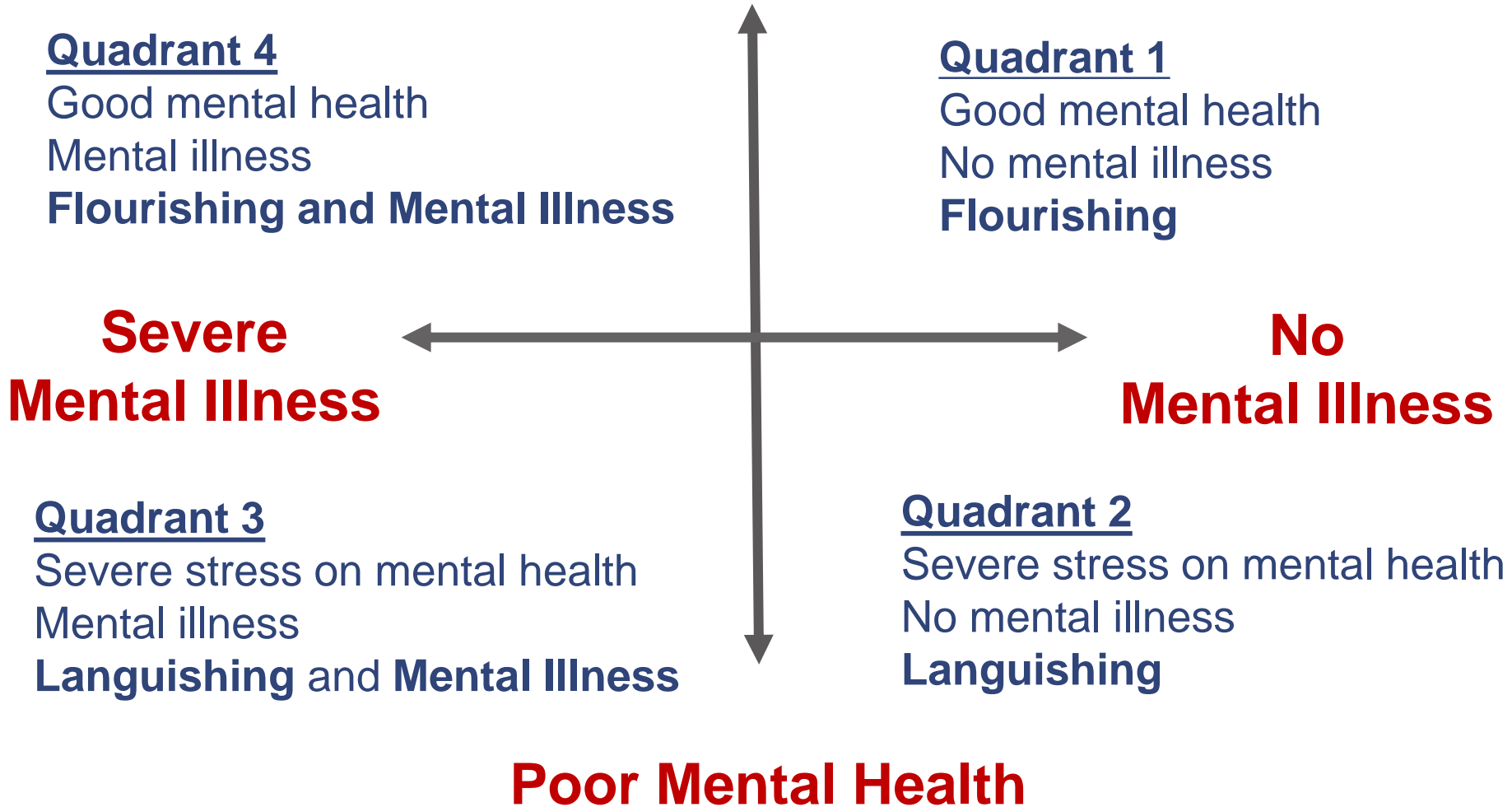
# THE OLD NARRATIVE



Mental Illness

Mental Health

# Optimal Mental Health



Keyes, C. (2014). Mental health as a complete state: How the salutogenic perspective completes the picture. In G.F. Bauer & O. Hammig (Eds.), Bridging occupational, organizational and public health: A transdisciplinary approach. New York: Springer Publishing.

# The nature of farm stress

# STRESSORS IMPACTING FARMERS

- High interest rates
- Large debt loads
- Commodity prices
- Weather/disaster
- Gov't regulations
- Long work hours
- Livestock illness
- Crop yield
- Machinery breakdown
- Illness/injury
- Relationships
- Barriers to help

# THE AGRARIAN IMPERATIVE

“To farmers, ‘the land is everything.’ Ownership of a family farm is the triumphant result of the struggles of multiple generations. Losing the family farm is the ultimate loss – bringing shame to the generation that has let down their forbearers and dashing the hopes for successors.”

Rosmann, 2003



# THE AGRARIAN IMPERATIVE

“...impels farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship, and to take uncommon risks.”

(Rosmann, 2010)

# Identifying stress

# RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF STRESS

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive	Self-worth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Ulcers</li> <li>• Backaches</li> <li>• Eating problems</li> <li>• Sleeping problems</li> <li>• Frequent sickness</li> <li>• Exhaustion</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadness</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Bitterness</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Loss of spirit</li> <li>• Loss of sense of humor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Acting out</li> <li>• Passive-aggressive behavior</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Increased drinking</li> <li>• Taking drugs</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memory loss</li> <li>• Lack of concentration</li> <li>• Difficulty with simple decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel like a failure</li> <li>• Can't do anything right</li> <li>• Not being able to fix things</li> </ul>

# SIGNS OF PROLONGED STRESS

- Previously identified signs have not improved or have multiplied
- Change in routine
- Appearance declines
- Increase in illness
- Increase in accidents
- Family members show signs of stress

# REACH OUT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

- It can be uncomfortable, but reaching out is critical
- Individuals experiencing stress typically feel isolated
- Acknowledgment of someone's suffering can offer them relief

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what you are experiencing? If not, who are you comfortable talking to?

I am someone who cares and wants to listen. What do you want me to know about how you are feeling?

It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help you to find help?

How can we best help  
ourselves, family, & neighbors?

# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Adjust your own oxygen mask
- You can't pour from an empty cup
- Practice intentional well-being



# STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WELLNESS

- Deep breathing
- Meditation/Reflection
- Positive self-talk
- Physical Activity
- Hobbies
- Connect with people in your social network
- Speaking with a mental health professional

# Deep breathing

# Meditation/Reflection

# Positive self-talk

# Physical activity

# Hobbies

# Connect with your social network

# Speak with a mental health professional



# RESOURCES

- [z.umn.edu/ruralstress](http://z.umn.edu/ruralstress)
- [mnfarmstress.com](http://mnfarmstress.com)
- [farmaid.org](http://farmaid.org)
- Extension
- Departments of Agriculture
- Your physician

# REMEMBER:

- It's okay to not be okay
- Bad days happen
- You are not alone
- It's okay to ask for help



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Make  
YOUR mental  
Health a  
Priority

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