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We will provide industry-leading, reliable, knowledgeable service, in a friendly, courteous and timely manner, to benefit our clients and the communities we serve.

St Clements Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 7am to 5pm Open Saturday 7am-12pm

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CLINICS ARE CLOSED SUNDAY and NO DELIVERY SERVICE SATURDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Orders for Delivery: Please, call BEFORE 9:30 am, for same day local delivery Monday to Friday

24 Hour Emergency Vet Service - call 519-698-2610 519-323-9002 519-699-0404 1-800-663-2941

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

April Holiday

Friday April 7 Clinics will be closed for Good Friday. Vet will be available for emergencies. There will be no delivery service.

Mental Health: Check in on your neighbour

The first annual National Symposium on Agricultural Mental Health is March 8, 2023 and it will be a virtual conference for any and all farmers to attend. Ag mental health awareness month is in May, but none the less this time of year is certainly a good reminder that there is always support. The gloomy weather, little to no sun and a slower time of year can be hard for anyone and we at Linwood Vet wanted to bring awareness to some supports targeted for our industry.

Breaking the Stigma of Mental Health In Farming

By: Lesley Kelly, Farmer and Co-founder of Do More Ag Foundation

About 40 percent of Canadian farmers say they would be uneasy seeking help for mental illness because of what others may think, according to research from the University of Guelph in 2018. While there has been much effort and progress made over the last five years within agriculture, stigma against people with mental illness within agriculture is deeply rooted and still very much an issue.

Farming can be a very rewarding career but it can also be difficult and stressful. The responsibility that comes with caring for the land, animals, and families with many factors outside of a farmer's control can be overwhelming. For decades, farmers have been typically boxed into a certain type of character: Strong, resilient and hard working, which are valuable traits and skills given the many roles and responsibilities farmers take on. However, somewhere along the way this characterization equated mental health challenges with a sign of weakness, and showing signs of weakness threatens the integrity of a farmer.

Because of the stigma around mental health within agriculture, farmers and those working in the industry avoid or delay seeking treatment due to concerns about being treated differently within their rural communities or fears of losing their livelihood. Stigma against people with mental illness can be subtle or it can be obvious—but no matter the magnitude, it can lead to harm. It can

lead to experiences and feelings of shame, blame, hopelessness and distress and can often lead people to believe that there is no other way to feel or that it's not a big deal.

People with mental illness are marginalized and discriminated against in various ways, but understanding what that looks like and how to address and eradicate it can help. Normalizing the conversation of mental health within agriculture and improving discussions of mental illness is a great place to start.

What is stigma? Stigma is a mark of disgrace that sets a person apart and often comes from lack of understanding or fear. When a person is labeled by their illness, they are seen as part of a stereotyped group. Negative attitudes create prejudice, which leads to negative actions and discrimination.

“When I think of stigma I think of someone bringing up a topic or addressing something and being met with very unwelcome silence instead of acknowledgement or discussion.”

-Veronica Vermeulen (via Twitter), Dairy farmer

Researchers identify different types of stigma:

- **Public stigma** involves the negative or discriminatory attitudes that others have about mental illness. Example: “People with mental illness are dangerous, incompetent, to blame for their disorder, unpredictable.”
- **Self-stigma** refers to the negative attitudes, including internalized shame, that people with mental illness have about their own condition. Example: “I am dangerous, incompetent, to blame.”
- **Institutional stigma** is more systemic, involving policies of government and private organizations that intentionally or unintentionally limit opportunities for people with mental illness. Examples include lower funding for mental illness research or fewer mental health services relative to other health care.

Harmful Effects of Stigma- Stigma and discrimination can contribute to worsening symptoms and reduced likelihood of getting treatment. Effects can include: Reduced hope, lower self-esteem, difficulties with social relationships, reduced likelihood of staying with treatment, social isolation, lack of understanding by family, friends, coworkers, or others, bullying, physical violence or harassment.

Addressing Stigma-Research shows that knowing or having contact with someone with mental illness is one of the best ways to reduce stigma. Individuals speaking out and sharing their stories can have a positive impact. When we know someone with mental illness, it becomes less scary and more real and relatable.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers some suggestions about what we can do as individuals to help reduce the stigma of mental illness:

- **Talk openly about mental health**, which can take place in the barn, shop, or kitchen table.
- **Educate yourself and others** – respond to misperceptions or negative comments by sharing facts and experiences.
- **Be aware of your attitudes and behaviour.** Examine your own judgmental thinking, reinforced by upbringing and society.
- **Encourage equality between physical and mental illness** – draw comparisons to how they would treat someone with cancer or diabetes.
- **Support people.** Treat everyone with dignity and respect; offer support and encouragement.

Other Resource Links:

- National Symposium on Agriculture Mental Health <https://www.nsamh.ca/concurrent-sessions/>
- Agriculture Wellness Ontario <https://agriculturewellnessontario.ca/>
- OMAFARA Mental Health Resources <https://www.ontario.ca/page/mental-health-resources-for-farmers>
 - Farmer Wellness Initiative <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>
 - The Do More Agriculture Foundation <https://www.domore.ag/>
 - Farm Credit Canada <https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/community/wellness.html>

Crisis lines available 365/24/7

- Farmer Wellness Initiative 1-866-267-6255
- ConnexOntario 1-800-565-8603