TOOLKIT
RESPONDING TO FARMERS IN DISTRESS
The EARS Model.
When dealing with farmer distress, be all **E.A.R.S**

**ENGAGE**: ask a question like: ‘how are you?’

**ACKNOWLEDGE**: listen, don't judge, be compassionate, empathise.

**REASSURE**: ‘you will get through this’, Encourage Action.

**SIGNPOST**: to appropriate services/supports (e.g. GP, etc.)

Agricultural Professionals and Service Providers’ Good Practice Guide
ENGAGE: What Do I Say?
If you’re concerned about someone... talk to them!
You don’t seem yourself lately, how are you doing?
I’ve noticed you’ve been a bit quiet this week, are you OK?
Work’s been full on this month, how are you managing?

ACKNOWLEDGE
The Dos and Don’ts of listening
It is vital to ask a person how they are and REALLY listen to them

DON’T: • Give advice
• Try to fix
• Make judgements

DO: • Listen
• Reflect back what is said
• Clarify & summarise
• Empathise
• Be Compassionate
• Signpost
Seek help if needed!

REASSURE
What if they’re not ok?
That’s ok, don’t panic!
You don’t need to have all the answers
Support them, help them identify their own strengths and to take their next steps.
• Have you felt like this before?
• What helped then?
• What supports do you have?
• What’s the first thing you need?
• How can I help you to do that?
**Remember:**

1. Your role is to support & signpost, not diagnose or fix.
2. Respect confidentiality but explain it has limits.
   - You may need to disclose, when concerned for the safety of others.
3. Recognise caring for others may impact your own mental health.
   - Engage in self-care and seek support for yourself when needed.

**Signpost:**

**24/7 & Crisis Services**

If a person is very distressed, contact an immediate service AND agree a follow-up action.

**Nearest A&E Dept Emergency Services:**

Freephone: **112 or 999**

**GP Services - Regional Out of Hours:**

www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp-out-of-hours

**24/7 GP services:**

www.gp24.ie
01 518 0808
www.samaritans.ie
Freephone: 116 123
www.pieta.ie
Freephone: 1800 247 247
or Text HELP to 51444
www.text50808.ie
Text HELLO to 50808

**Signpost:**

**Contact Local GP:**

**Healthy Body:**

www.arthritisireland.ie
0818 252 846
www.AskAboutAlcohol.ie
1800 459 459
www.cancer.ie
1800 200 700
www.diabetes.ie
01 842 8118
www.irishheart.ie
01 668 5001
www.irishsport.ie/lsp
or
www.getirelandwalking.ie

**Healthy Mind:**

www.iacp.ie
01 230 3536
Counsellors, Nationwide
www.MentalHealthIreland.ie/get-support
www.YourMentalHealth
SUPPORT:

Incident Check-ins

- Take a moment for ‘The Pause’ after an incident to acknowledge what just happened.
- After an incident try debrief with an appropriate person within 72 hours.
- Don’t isolate yourself. Talk to a friend, family member, co-worker, a support group, etc.
- Form a daily routine with regular exercise.
- Writing about issues may help you process thoughts & emotions.
- If you’re still not feeling better: Seek Professional Support.

SUPPORT:

The Self-Care Seven

- Good Routine. Ensure you: get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise, shower etc.
- Practice daily relaxation methods to reduce physical symptoms of tension.
- Avoid using drugs & alcohol to tackle distress or stress.
- Reduce caffeine intake to 300mg or less per day.
- Identify & challenge pessimistic thoughts & words. Be positive!
- Use evidence-based anxiety websites or self-help books.
- Find Fun: try to do things you love every day/week.
THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Your role is to support and signpost.
- You are not there to diagnose or fix.
- Give time and space.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Be non-judgemental and compassionate.
- Be prepared with helpful information on signposting and supports available.
- Advising someone in distress to see their GP is a good starting point.
WHAT DO I SAY?

Whilst what you say is, of course, important, giving someone the time and safe space to say how they feel, and to be really listened to, is essential. Keep these things in mind when chatting with someone about their mental health and...

**Be compassionate and non-judgmental.**

- There are no perfect things to say.
- Try to be friendly and open in what you are saying, instead of feeling you have to say the right thing.

**Be honest, direct and clear in what you are saying. For example:**

- ‘How are you doing?’
- ‘You don’t seem yourself lately, how’s it going?’
Respect confidentiality but explain the limits to confidentiality.
You may have to disclose if you have concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

Questions to ask / questions to avoid:
Use open questions, or at least follow a closed question with an open question. For example: ‘I noticed you’ve been quiet this week, are you OK?’

Avoid accusatory or assumption-based questions like: ‘What’s wrong with you?’

You may experience pushback.
Let them know that you are concerned and that you are there if they would like to talk at a different time. Avoid a confrontation. You could say: ‘Please call me if you ever want to chat about this again’ or ‘is there someone else you’d rather talk to?’
If they do agree to talk and engage with you. LISTEN!

- Take what they say seriously and don’t interrupt or rush the conversation.

- Don’t judge their experiences or reactions, but acknowledge that things seem tough for them.

- If they need time to think, sit patiently with the silence.

- Encourage them to explain. For example: ‘how are you feeling about that?’ or ‘how long have you felt that way?’

- Show that you have listened by repeating back what you have heard (in your own words) and ask if you have understood them properly.

- Know that you don’t have to have any or all of the answers.

- The most important thing is to show compassion.
NEXT STEPS

Thank the person and acknowledge their openness and honesty.
Reassure - focus on strengths.

Encourage action - agree a plan.

- Advising someone to see their GP is a good starting point.
- If the farmer is very distressed, advise them to contact the Samaritans (Tel: 116 123) or Pieta House (Tel: 1800 247 247) and agree a follow-up course of action.
- If you feel someone is at immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services (Tel: 112 or 999).
- Respect confidentiality, but explain the limits to confidentiality. You may have to disclose if you have concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

Set a date for check-in and ask ‘how are you?’
- not ‘did you do x, y and z?’

If you’re unsure or concerned - seek advice or support.
Self-care.

- Be mindful of the potential toll that caring for others can have on your own mental health. Don’t hesitate to seek support for yourself.
- Be aware of how these circumstances can really impact on our own wellbeing and reflect and identify some self-care supporting actions.
- Based on your own experience and intuition, know how to end the engagement as safely as possible, even if you will come back later.

If you need someone to talk to, the Men’s Development Network has professional counsellors that are available to participants of the On Feirm Ground 2 programme.

📞 Derek 086 859 0983
📞 John 086 458 6319

Scan QR for quick access to the Engage Website