



BE BOLD. Shape the Future.
College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences
Cooperative Extension Service
Guadalupe County Extension Office

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Article Two in a series on Mental Health and Well-being

The holiday season is coming, and with it come many feelings and emotions – warm thoughts of time with family and friends, gift giving and receiving, holiday activities and celebrations, from faith-based events to family gatherings, to shopping. For many, the holiday season can also be a stressful time, and for many, it can also conjure memories of loss, sadness, and loneliness, and can trigger or worsen depression. This month, we will look at stress and stress management. Please watch for the November article on Depression.

Stress, when not addressed, can lead to more serious, longer-term problems. When we are not addressing our needs for mental health and wellness, the results are actions and feelings that impact our interactions with others, our ability to function in our jobs and life. Over time, stress can affect our physical health as well as our mental health. Whether the coming holidays are bringing angst and stress, or there are other reasons for your feelings, understanding and addressing our stressors is important to our overall well-being.

What is **STRESS**?



Stress can come in various forms and have different impacts. Three major classifications of stress include:

- **Acute** – highly intense stress for a short period of time,
- **Chronic** – constantly present and difficult to avoid pressures and circumstances, and
- **Traumatic** – usually from one or more unexpected and shocking experiences that bring immediate or long-term consequences often outside your control.

Psychologically, stress is the perception that your circumstances have exceeded your capacity to cope (creating a threat to your being). Physiologically, (regarding the internal physical functioning of the body), stress is a state of internal imbalance where there is an over-activation of the fight or flight response.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

NM Crisis Access Line

1-855-NMCRISIS (663-7474)

If you or a loved one is experiencing any kind of emotional crisis, mental health, or substance use concern, you can find help 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line or Peer-to-Peer Warmline.

nmcrisisline.com

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8238)

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call is routed to the nearest crisis center in our national network of more than 150 crisis centers. The lifeline's national network of local crisis centers provides crisis counseling and mental health referrals day and night.

Peer2Peer Regional Warmline

1-833-425-1490

If it's not a crisis, call a warmline or visit the WarmLines website. warmlines.org.

Guadalupe County Health Council

575-472-4567 or

sharenm.org@guadalupe-county-health-council.guadalupe-county-health-council.org

• Here To Help NM:

nmhlp.org/Get-Involved/
Here-To-Help-NM

• AgWell:

nmhlp.org/home/special-projects/or-agwell.org/

• CHES Health Connections App:

ches.healthverecore.com/connections-app/

• 988 suicide & Crisis

Lifeline Chat & Text:
988lifeline.org/chat/

• NAMI-New Mexico:

naminewmexico.org/resources/

• Bilingual Minds New Mexico:

bilingualminds.gov/new-mexico-psycho-social-care-for-mental-health/

• List of Therapists in New Mexico who accept Medicaid:

www.nm.gov/new-mexico-of-the-therapist-you-need/

SOURCES FOR THIS ARTICLE

• NMSU College of ACEES
webhome.crk.colostate.edu/~nmcrisisline/extension/withhealthwells.nmcs.edu/index.html
• NM Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network
farmranchstress.com/new-mexico/ (877)333-nm-itsa
• www.nm.gov/new-mexico-of-the-therapist-you-need/
• Other NMSU publications and NMSU resources
www.nmcs.edu/extension/health-resources.html

Susann Mikkelsen is a certified PEARLS (Program Encouraging Active, Rewarding Lives) Coach, trained in other mental health and wellness programming, and a certified QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Program trainer. If you are interested in PEARLS or other mental health and wellness programming, or your group, organization or business would like to offer a QPR training, please contact the NMSU Guadalupe County Extension Office at 575-452-3652 or susann@nmsu.edu.

SIGNS of **STRESS**

Some signs that stress is impacting you or someone in your life:

❖ PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Fatigue
- Digestive symptoms (upset stomach, heartburn, & related)
- Heart problems
- Insomnia
- Frequent headaches
- Random body aches
- Triggering of chronic and other health problems

❖ EMOTIONAL SIGNS

- Sadness
 - Anger
 - Anxiety
 - Loss of sense of humor
- ### ❖ BEHAVIORAL SIGNS
- Irritability
 - Short or quick temper
 - Unusually quiet or isolating oneself
 - Unusual effort to portray happiness or jubilation
 - Increased use of alcohol & drugs

❖ COGNITIVE SIGNS

- Lack of concentration
- Memory thoughts
- Difficulty with decisions
- Change to Self-Worth
- Feeling like a failure
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling alone or lonely
- Self-deprecating statements or thoughts

Addressing the issue & dealing with **STRESS**

The first important step to lowering stress and regaining wellness is recognizing that there is an issue. But it is important to take that a step further – to actually identifying the core issue or issues causing the stress, and working to address them and how they impact our life.

Factors of stress exist for all of us. Each of us handles those various factors differently, depending on our temperament, life experiences, and other circumstances. We should not minimize a stress factor for us or for someone else. Some stress factors can be minimized or eliminated. Other stressors may be ongoing, in which case we need to find ways to manage and minimize the stress it causes us.

Tips & ideas to identify & minimize stressors

- ❖ Speak with someone you trust – a friend or family member, a member of clergy, or a counselor – who can help you sort through your stressors and how to approach them differently.
- ❖ Keep a journal and get your feelings out; sometimes hearing or reading our thoughts and feelings helps us process them more objectively.
- ❖ Build in quiet time for yourself, even if just a few minutes, every day.
- ❖ Make a concerted effort to plan and make decisions that will avoid stressors or make them less stressful.
- ❖ Build in time for activities that bring you joy and peace, and take your mind off of your worries; examples might include:
 - Exercise such as walking or going for a bike ride.
 - Go for a drive (safely).
 - Spend time with people you love and care about.
 - Have a game night or movie night with friends.
 - Give time to others in need.
 - Spend time with beloved pets or volunteer to help at the animal shelter.

Addressing and resolving stress is about formulating a plan that works for us, implementing that plan, and adapting over time, as we learn what works for us and find new ways of managing and minimizing stress.

Ignoring stress will often lead to more serious problems. At a minimum, it will spread to those around us, those we love. None of us wants to cause stress to our loved ones. Long-term, ignoring or minimizing our stress will inevitably lead to other, more serious issues, both mental health and physical health related.

We should never feel embarrassed or ashamed about taking care of our mental well-being. Just as we sometimes need to involve outside experts – medical professionals – in our physical health and well-being, we also sometimes need to bring in outside resources to manage our own mental health and well-being. **It is not shameful to ask for help; rather, it is brave, courageous and smart.**

Stay **SMARTT** Guadalupe County

❖ Strive to **Maintain A Resilient and Tranquil Trek**

This monthly ad is meant to inform the citizens of Guadalupe County of pertinent activities and useful information. This ad is made possible through the support of Singleton Ranches; content is developed by NMSU Guadalupe County Cooperative Extension Service. Anyone interested in providing input is welcome to contact the Extension Office at 575-472-3652 or email guadalupe@nmsu.edu.



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