



# NEWSLETTER

THE CENTER FOR COUNSELING & CONSULTATION



**STRONG ROOTS,  
STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES**

p. 02

## **STANDING TOGETHER: BREAKING THE SILENCE AROUND FARM STRESS**

Farmers and ranchers face unique pressures that can take a toll on mental health, yet stigma often keeps these challenges hidden. Learn how our community can work together to recognize the signs of farm stress, offer support, and cultivate hope for those who help sustain us all.



p. 04

## **TO OUR LEGISLATORS: THANK YOU, FROM THE CENTER**

During a budget season filled with uncertainty, Kansas leaders demonstrated their commitment to protecting mental health services. Read our message of gratitude to legislators whose support helps ensure continued progress and access to care across our state.



# STANDING TOGETHER: BREAKING THE SILENCE AROUND FARM STRESS

*Building awareness and connection where it matters most.*

## **Cultivating Hope in the Fields: Farm & Ranch Suicide Awareness**

Farming and ranching are more than professions – they are ways of life built on resilience, hard work, and deep commitment to providing for others. Yet behind this strength, many agricultural producers experience intense pressure that can impact mental

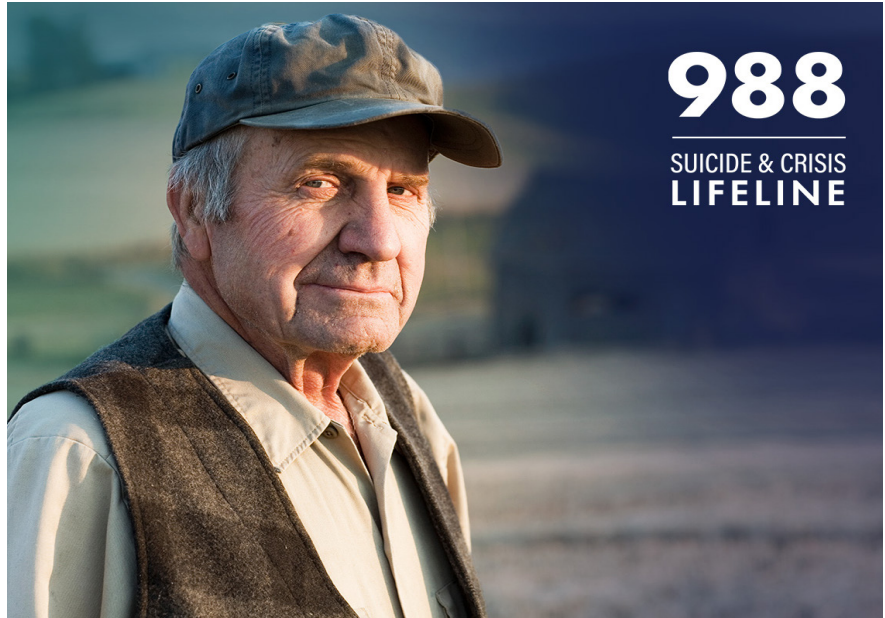
**“YOU ARE NOT ALONE. YOU MATTER. WE NEED YOU HERE.”**

health in serious ways.

Farm stress refers to the unique mental, emotional, and physical strain experienced by agricultural producers. Factors such as volatile markets, unpredictable weather, high debt, long hours, and isolation create a level of stress few other professions encounter. Research shows that suicide rates among farmers are significantly higher than the national average, making awareness and support critically important.

### **Why Farm Stress Happens**

Producers often carry significant responsibility, not only for their business, but for family legacies



and future generations. Some common contributors include:

*Financial pressure* from fluctuating commodity prices and high debt loads

*Environmental uncertainty* due to weather, drought, and natural disaster

*Operational demands* requiring long hours and physically demanding labor

*Isolation* from working long days in rural settings

*Cultural stigma* that can make seeking help feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar

*Succession concerns*, including uncertainty about who will continue the farm or the fear of losing land that has been in the family for generations

Many farmers and ranchers also feel unable to step away from daily responsibilities, often postponing medical or mental health care. Combined with access to lethal means such as firearms or chemicals, this can increase the risk of suicide completion.

### **Recognizing Signs of Stress or Crisis**

Farm stress can show up in many ways. Some common warning signs include:

#### **Physical**

- Chronic fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Headaches or muscle tension

#### **Behavioral**

- Increased alcohol or tobacco use

# “FARMERS AND RANCHERS CARRY IMMENSE RESPONSIBILITY — SUPPORTING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH HELPS SUSTAIN THE FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND FOOD SYSTEMS WE ALL DEPEND ON.”

- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Irritability or anger

## **Emotional or Mental**

- Anxiety or depression
- Hopelessness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

## **Signs that someone may be experiencing suicidal thoughts include:**

- Talking about wanting to die or feeling like a burden

## **Helpful approaches include:**

- Speak directly and openly
- Listen without judgment
- Show care and concern
- Offer hope and remind them support is available
- Encourage professional help
- Remove access to harmful items when possible
- Practice active listening by giving full attention and reflecting what you hear

Often, simply knowing

such as Farm Bureau offer programs like Rural Minds Matter, which connect producers with specialized resources and information

## **What Our Community Can Do**

Reducing stigma and increasing access to support requires community effort. Helpful steps include:

- Talking openly about mental health
- Sharing resources in places farmers already gather such as co-ops, coffee shops, elevators, and farm service agencies
- Offering flexible support options like telehealth or virtual visits

- Providing education at agricultural meetings and events
- Checking in regularly with neighbors, friends, and family members

Farmers and ranchers dedicate their lives to sustaining our communities. Supporting their mental health helps



- Expressing feelings of being trapped or without purpose
- Increased substance use
- Extreme mood changes
- Social withdrawal or isolation

## **How to Help Someone Who May Be Struggling**

Talking about mental health or suicide can feel uncomfortable, but open conversations can save lives.

someone cares can make a meaningful difference.

## **Resources Are Available**

Support is available both locally and nationally. Call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, for immediate support. Connect with local mental health providers, including The Center for Counseling & Consultation. Agricultural organizations

ensure the sustainability of agriculture itself.

***If you or someone you know is struggling, help is available. You are not alone. You matter. We need you here.***

*Article Information Provided by: Leonard Kaiser, LCPC, The Center for Counseling*

# TO OUR LEGISLATORS: THANK YOU, FROM THE CENTER

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN KANSAS

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to **Representatives Sherri Brantley, Brett Fairchild, and Senator Tory Marie Blew** for their support of mental health services during this year's legislative session. In a budget season where proposed funding changes created uncertainty for behavioral health providers across the state, your willingness to listen, ask questions, and support continued investment in mental health services made a meaningful difference for Kansans.

Over the past several years, Kansas has made significant progress in strengthening its behavioral health system through the implementation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model. This approach has expanded access to care, increased service availability, strengthened crisis response systems, and improved coordination between providers, hospitals, schools, and community partners. As a result of these efforts, Kansas has moved from ranking 51st in the nation in mental health support to 18th, reflecting the impact of sustained legislative commitment and thoughtful policy decisions.

Continued investment in men-



tal health services helps ensure that individuals and families can access care when they need it most – whether through crisis services, therapy, substance use treatment, school-based support, or community programs that reduce stigma and encourage early intervention. Stable funding also allows providers to recruit and retain qualified professionals, expand access in rural communities, and build programs that strengthen the overall health of Kansas communities.

Your support during this legislative session helps preserve this progress and demonstrates a shared commitment to the wellbeing of Kansans. Mental health care is not only a healthcare priority – it is an investment in stronger families, healthier communities, and a

more resilient Kansas.

Thank you for your leadership and for recognizing the importance of protecting and strengthening mental health services across our state. Your partnership helps ensure that hope, help, and healing remain accessible to those who need it most.

*With sincere appreciation,  
The Center for Counseling team*

# HONORING SERVICE: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF VETERAN SUPPORT

## SUPPORT FOR VETERANS BY VETERANS

At The Center, we are deeply committed to serving those who have served our country. Veterans and their families often face unique challenges – from navigating transitions to civilian life, to managing stress, trauma, depression, substance use, or feelings of isolation. We believe every veteran deserves access to compassionate, high-quality care that honors their experiences and supports their future.

One of the ways we are strengthening this commitment is through the work of our Veteran Specialist, Jeff McQuade. Jeff brings not only professional expertise, but a deep understanding of the veteran community and the importance of connection, trust, and practical support. His work helps ensure that veterans who come to The Center feel

understood, respected, and supported in ways that truly meet their needs.

As we continue expanding our services, we want to ensure we are growing in the right direction. That means listening directly to veterans, their families,

Your input will help guide future programming, partnerships, and resources designed specifically for veterans.

**Share your perspective by completing the survey:**

<https://wkf.ms/4maMM2a>

Together, we can build stronger pathways to care, connection, and opportunity for those who have given so much. Your voice helps shape the future of veteran mental health support in our community.



and those who support them. We are currently inviting veterans and community members to complete a short survey that will help us better understand gaps in services, barriers to care, and opportunities to strengthen support across our region.



# JOIN OUR TEAM



## WE ARE HIRING

Join a team that's making a difference every day. At the Center for Counseling & Consultation, we're cultivating help, hope, and healing in our community—together. Apply today and be part of something meaningful.

**APPLY  
NOW!**

**SUBSTANCE USE  
COUNSELOR**

**ADULT OR CHILD  
THERAPIST**

**CSS ADULT CASE  
MANAGER (MALE  
ONLY)**

**CBS CHILD CASE  
MANAGER**

**CBS PARENT  
SUPPORT/CASE  
MANAGER**

**For More Information:**

[www.thecentergb.org/jobs](http://www.thecentergb.org/jobs)

# APRIL SCHEDULE

## Mental Health & Related Calendar Recognitions:

### APRIL

- Stress Awareness Month
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Autism Acceptance Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month
- Counseling Awareness Month
- World Health Day - 7th
- National Youth Violence Prevention Week - 20-24th

## FIND THE CENTER OUT AND ABOUT THIS MONTH

<b>Apr. 1</b>	Mental Health First Aid Training - Barton Community College
<b>Apr. 8</b>	Real World Presentations
<b>Apr. 10</b>	Child Abuse Prevention Event
<b>Apr. 11</b>	Sexual Assault Awareness & Child Abuse Prevention Event
<b>Apr. 13</b>	Child Abuse Prevention Event
<b>Apr. 18</b>	Laundry Love - Great Bend
<b>Apr. 21</b>	Family Engagement Nights
<b>Apr. 22</b>	Child Abuse Prevention Event
<b>Apr. 27</b>	Child Abuse Prevention Event
<b>Apr. 29</b>	Laundry Love - Larned
<b>Apr. 30</b>	Barton County Community Baby Shower



## DO YOU WANT THE CENTER TO BE AT YOUR EVENT?

Scan the QR code above to request The Center be present at your event. We can't wait to hear from you!

# COMMUNITY IN ACTION: THREE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT, CELEBRATE, AND SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

We are excited to invite our community to be part of three meaningful and engaging events in 2026 that bring people together around connection, hope, and wellbeing. Whether you're looking for family fun, inspiration, or ways to honor those who have served, there is something for everyone.

## Wild About Wellness - June 18

A family-friendly evening at the Brit Spagh Zoo designed to promote healthy minds through interactive learning, activities, and special experiences you won't find on a typical zoo visit. Perfect for families looking to have fun while exploring mental health in a welcoming way.

## HopeFest - September 19



Our signature community celebration of recovery, healing, and suicide prevention in downtown Great Bend. This powerful event blends inspiration, entertainment, remembrance activities, and connection as we come together to reduce stigma and remind one another that no one has to walk alone.

## Honoring Service, Supporting Futures - November 11

A special Veterans Day gathering connecting veterans and their families with resources, community support, and meaningful opportunities for connection. This event recognizes the service and sacrifice of those who have served while helping build strong pathways forward.

These events are open to the entire community – whether mental health has personally impacted your life or you simply want to support a healthier, stronger Central Kansas.

**RSVP to attend and help us plan meaningful experiences for all.**

**Businesses are invited to become sponsors and demonstrate their commitment to community wellbeing while gaining visibility at these impactful events.**

Together, we are Cultivating Help, Hope, and Healing across our communities.

Visit our events page to RSVP or explore sponsorship opportunities.



VISIT OUR  
EVENTS PAGE  
NOW



# CELEBRATING OUR TEAM

At The Center, we believe the heart of our mission lives in the everyday actions of our team. The REACT Award – Recognizing Effort by Acknowledging Contributions to our Team – celebrates employees who go above and beyond to support clients, coworkers, and our community.

Nominations come directly from the people who experience that impact firsthand—both fellow team members

and the clients we serve.

In this issue, we are proud to recognize Holly Bowyer, Neveah Ramirez, and Alysia Ricker for the meaningful ways they show up for others—whether that’s supporting colleagues, helping clients navigate challenges with kindness, or creating a positive environment for those around them. Their dedication reflects the compassion and teamwork that make our

mission possible every day.

## **Know a Center team member who made a difference for you?**

We invite our clients and community members to share their appreciation by submitting a REACT Award nomination. Your story helps us celebrate the people who are helping cultivate help, hope, and healing across our communities.

The Center  
- FOR COUNSELING & CONSULTATION -

## REACT Award Recipients

Recognizing Effort by Acknowledging Contributions to our Team

*Holly Bowyer*

*Neveah Ramirez*

*Alysia Ricker*

**NOMINATE A CENTER TEAM MEMBER HERE**

Thank you for sharing your support, leadership, passion, and skills with us!



HELP US IMPROVE.  
TAKE OUR SHORT COMMUNITY SURVEY BY  
CLICKING THE BOX BELOW.

**CLICK  
HERE**

THE CENTER FOR  
COUNSELING AND  
CONSULTATION  
5815 Broadway  
Great Bend, KS 67530

---

CONTACT

[saraa@thecentergb.org](mailto:saraa@thecentergb.org)  
[www.thecentergb.org](http://www.thecentergb.org)  
620-792-2544

**988** | SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE