



March 19, 2019

[Coping with stress in agricultural disasters](#)

CURTIS, Neb. – We are supportive of all rural families, and particularly for our Aggie students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Many are facing natural disasters and some personal tragedies in the aftermath of the disasters which began on March 13 and are continuing.

Brandy Van DeWalle, NU extension educator in Fillmore and Clay Counties, shared some tips which may help our NCTA students and their families to cope with the high levels of stress they are facing at this time.



1. Look for something positive to focus on in the difficult situation and focus on it.
2. Keep things in perspective. “These things too, shall pass.”
3. Pull together rather than apart. Don’t see the problem as an individual’s problem but as a challenge for the whole family.
4. Focus on what is most important and minimize fragmentation. Without focusing on the essentials, the details, details, details can get you edgy, even hysterical.
5. Go with the flow to some degree. Sometimes you are relatively powerless in the face of crisis. At this point it can be useful to simply tell yourself to “let it go.”
6. Know how to laugh and know how to cry, for both are essential for emotional balance in life.
7. Create a life full of meaning and purpose. All people face severe crises in life. You will not be able to avoid these challenges. Rather, your aim can be to live a useful life of service to your community. This brings richness and dignity to your life, in spite of the troubles you endure.
8. Realize that suffering can be a catalyst for positive growth. Crisis, by definition, is a difficult time in your life. However, it also can be a turning point, planting the seeds for a satisfying and successful future. This is hard to internalize but useful to remember.
9. Identify spiritually with the grand procession of life: Through good times and bad, we, as individuals, come and go, but life from whence we all spring is eternal. There is something satisfying and soothing about that thought.
10. Get help outside the nuclear family when needed. Seek help from extended family members, supportive friends, neighbors, colleagues, members of your religious community, professionals in the community, or others. In a manner of speaking, it takes a whole village to resolve a crisis.

The **Nebraska Counseling, Outreach and Mental Health Therapy (COMHT) Program**, 800-464-0258, offers no-cost vouchers for confidential mental health services for persons affected by the rural crisis. Also, the **Nebraska Farm Hotline/Rural Response Hotline** – 1-800-464-0258.

See more information in the NebGuide, [Creating a Strong Family: Effective Management of Stress and Crisis](#) (G1886) at <https://go.unl.edu/phd7>

The report by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was a worldwide research project on strong families. It involved more than 24,000 family members in 35 countries.