

Farmers tell us how to help improve their mental health help-seeking

C. Vayro, C. Brownlow, M. Ireland, S. March.

INTRODUCTION

- Queensland farmers suicide rate twice that of the metropolitan population (Arnautovska et al., 2014)
- Farmers are reluctant to seek help for their mental health (Brew, Inder, Allen, Thomas, & Kelly, 2016)
- Mental health help-seeking defined as seeking help from health professionals for issues relating to mental health or distress (Rickwood & Thomas, 2012).
- Adverse outcomes could be prevented if mental health help-seeking occurs, but considering farmers' are reluctant, intervention is likely needed.
- It is currently unclear what strategies would create the optimal engagement with farmers.
- This research explores intervention strategies for mental health help-seeking in farmers (with added insight from farmers' partners)

METHOD

- QLD farmers (n=10) + farmers' partners (n=10)
- Qualitative
- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)



FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

Education

- Start education on mental health early in life, providing knowledge in increments and building upon it, long-term.
- Myth-busting is needed for topics including the prevalence of stress and mental illness, stress/symptom recognition, the help available (helpful techniques and professional help), and the help-seeking process (including the benefits)
- "We should be taught strategies on how to recognise mental health issues and how to deal with them. Rather than saying 'ok, I need to rush off and go and see someone now', already having the strategies and recognising the signs." [Kathy, F, Farmer's partner]

Medium

- Preference for face-to-face mediums such as community events, integration with farming workshops and men's' events. Beneficial if the presenter is famous, or an expert (with cultural knowledge).
- Radio and rural newspapers may be better than other media forms. Social media and internet-mediated options may have less engagement due to poor connectivity. Also, television campaigns would need careful targeting
- "They do listen to the radio a lot ... a better idea than TV because a lot of them don't really get time to watch telly. Maybe doing those workshops ... and advertising the fact that 'so-and-so is going to be at that social event — come and say g'day'." [Kate, F, Farmer's partner]

Multi-faceted Programs

- Take services to the farmers in an ongoing and appropriate way that is community driven and culturally appropriate (e.g. sensitive, face to face, collaboration with farming support services)
- Actively target the community, including farmers' friends and family, for themselves, as well as advocacy on farmers' behalf. Encourage collaboration between all practitioners working with farmers
- "On the television or in the media or on Facebook or something, saying 'if you've got financial worries, come and talk to a financial advisor', or something. Maybe that financial advisor could also be educated to recommend them to a doctor or something if he thought it was necessary." [Michael, M, Farmer]

Conclusion

- Consideration on how information is presented, the mediums used and who is targeted is needed when designing interventions for farmers.
- This knowledge can be used to guide and implement strategies for increasing mental health help-seeking in farmers.
- Tailoring interventions specifically to farmers may increase engagement, and ideally, increase mental health help-seeking behaviours when they are necessary.