

# THE LITTLE BOOK OF MINDING YOUR HEAD

**10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**



**YELLOWWELLIES.ORG**



# CONTENTS

Foreword	4
What do we mean by mental health?	6
What is mental ill health?	10
A (Meno) Pause for thought	17
Triggers and signs of mental ill health	28
What is stress and why does it matter?	36
Tips for coping with stress	38
Fill Your Boot	40
What is depression?	44
Starting a conversation	48
Sources of help	54

# **FOREWORD**

**FROM STEPHANIE BERKELEY,  
MANAGER, FARM SAFETY FOUNDATION**

## **THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP THIS LITTLE BOOK OF MINDING YOUR HEAD.**

For whatever reason you have been drawn to this book – for yourself, or for someone you live or work with – I hope you will find some guidance and support within its pages.

Our farming industry has experienced turbulent times over the past few years - extreme weather conditions, poor harvests, supply chain shortages and a global pandemic to contend with but, through it all, farming endured as it always does.

The UK's farmers are a remarkable breed; adaptable, resilient, and incredibly hardworking. Their efforts put food on our plates, produced to some of the highest standards in the world, and their careful stewardship knits together the environmental and social fabric of our beautiful landscape. But this commitment is coming at a price...

A shocking 95% of farmers under the age of 40 rate poor mental health as the biggest hidden problem faced today according to our latest research. And, in an industry

that continues to have the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK, making sure we are all looking after our physical and mental wellbeing has become even more important.

This book has been written to offer support and guidance for those who may be struggling with the pressures of farming or recognise that struggle in someone else. Where possible, we have kept it simple and in Plain English but sometimes, the issue is more complex and requires complex language.

### **A note on language**

Many different terms are used to describe people's experiences of mental ill health such as 'mental health problems', 'mental health issues' and 'poor mental health'. We recognise that different people will feel certain phrases helpful, whilst others will feel they have negative connotations. In an attempt to represent the broad spectrum of people experiencing mental health problems, we have used different terms interchangeably throughout this book. This is in line with guidance from the mental health charity Mind. We keep our use of language under review and welcome feedback for improvement.

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MENTAL HEALTH?

**There is a lot of chat about “mental health” in the press and media, especially after the past few years, but what do we really know about it and how does it apply to us?**

Take this example – you hurt your ankle in a five-a-side football match and you’re on the bench for a few games... your friends will ask you about it and if you’re getting better and you’ll probably be happy enough to talk about it.

Now, what about a period of time when you’ve felt particularly low? You’re worried about your finances, your family and the farm and you feel like you’re drowning... would you share your feelings or would you hide them because you’re worried about what others might say or think about you?

The fact is that we all have ‘mental health’ just like we have ‘physical health’ and it can vary from day to day. Issues can appear as a result of experiences in both our personal and working lives – or they can just happen. It’s

not surprising that, according to the charity Mind, a third of adults and young people say their mental health has gotten much worse since March 2020.

### **So why aren't we talking about it more?**

Well, stigma and discrimination are two reasons - it takes courage to talk about something so personal. There is always the risk of oversharing or making others feel uncomfortable. This is particularly the case when talking about mental health.

This stigma also means that many people have a limited understanding of mental health. They don't understand it so they don't want to know anything about it.

## **Mental health issues do not discriminate.**

They can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, geography, income, social status, sexual orientation or other aspect of cultural identity. We need to encourage a culture in farming that promotes positive mental health, prevents people from experiencing mental ill health and helps them better manage mental health problems.

One of the ways to do this is to take notice – of yourself and those you live and work with. Reach out to someone you think may be struggling. It's often the everyday things that make a difference – like asking someone how they are or sending a text. They might want to talk about it, they might not. But just letting them know you're happy to talk is important.



# WHAT IS MENTAL ILL HEALTH?

**One of the biggest challenges we face is the need to make conversations about mental health more common. A good starting point for this is to learn more about mental ill health.**

There are different types of mental illnesses, some of which are common, such as depression and anxiety disorders, and some that are not so common such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

According to [time-to-change.org.uk](http://time-to-change.org.uk), there are a number of different types of mental health problems, and they each have a different impact on those who experience them, as well as on families and friends. Learning a few things about mental health problems might help you to feel more confident about talking and listening.

**Anxiety & panic attacks** - Anxiety is a normal emotion that we all experience but it can become a mental health problem when someone finds they are feeling this way all, or most of the time.

Panic attacks happen when your body experiences a rush of intense psychological (mental) and physical symptoms. You may feel an overwhelming sense of fear, apprehension, and anxiety. You may also have physical symptoms such as: nausea, sweating, trembling, a sensation that your heart is beating irregularly (palpitations) and even temporary paralysis. With counselling and support you can live and cope with these issues.

**Bipolar disorder** - Bipolar disorder (which used to be called manic depression) is a particular type of depression where the person has extreme mood swings, experiencing periods of low (depressed) and high (manic) moods.

A proper diagnosis of Bipolar disorder can take a long time because the person will need to have episodes of both depression and mania. Bipolar disorder is less common than ordinary depression and does require medical treatment.

**Depression** - Depression is a diagnosis given to someone who is experiencing a low mood and finds it hard or impossible to have fun or enjoy their lives. As this affects 280 million people in the world we will explore this in more detail in a separate section.

**Eating disorders** - An eating disorder is a diagnosis given to someone who has unhealthy thoughts, feelings and behaviours about food and their body shape. The term covers a wide range of problems including starving (anorexia), bingeing and purging (bulimia) and binge eating. The reasons and causes behind eating disorders are varied and complex and medical help should always be sought.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder** - This term is often used to refer to someone who likes things tidy and organised but we need to stop misusing the term as this is a serious and distressing medical condition.

OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) is a mental health diagnosis given to someone who experiences obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours. It can be distressing and significantly interfere with everyday life, but treatment can help keep it under control.

**Personality disorders** - A personality disorder is a type of mental disorder in which you have a rigid and unhealthy pattern of thinking, functioning and behaving. A person with a personality disorder has trouble perceiving and relating to situations and people. This can cause significant problems and limitations in relationships, social activities, work and school. In some cases, the person may not realise that they have a personality disorder because their way of thinking and behaving seems natural to them. They may blame others for the challenges they face. Diagnosis must be left to a psychiatrist.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** - PTSD is a diagnosis given to people who develop a certain set of symptoms following a traumatic event in their lives.

Symptoms include:

- Reliving the event through flashbacks, intrusive thoughts or nightmares.
- Constantly feeling on edge and alert, experiencing high anxiety or panic attacks.
- Avoiding feelings or memories of the event through keeping busy or avoiding talking about the event.
- Not being able to remember the event, through dissociation or feeling physically or emotionally numb.

PTSD can begin immediately after the traumatic event has happened, or it might begin weeks, months or years later.

**Psychosis** - Again, this is one of those terms that can be misused in everyday life which is very unfair as this is a seriously distressing condition. The person experiencing psychosis perceives the world in a different way to those around them, including hallucinations, delusions or both.

By definition, psychosis involves the person losing touch with commonly accepted reality, though the extent of this may vary.

**Schizophrenia** - Contrary to popular belief, schizophrenia has nothing to do with ‘split personality’. It is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally. Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behaviour that impair daily functioning and can be disabling. People with schizophrenia require lifelong treatment although early treatment can help get symptoms under control before serious complications develop and may help improve the long-term outlook.

**Self-harm** - Self-harm is the act of deliberately harming your own body, such as cutting or burning yourself. It is typically not meant as a suicide attempt but a harmful way to cope with emotional pain, anger and frustration. Self-harming may bring a momentary sense of calm and a release of tension but is usually followed by guilt and shame and the return of painful emotions.



# A (MENO) PAUSE FOR THOUGHT...

**Menopause is not a sign of old age and it's not an illness but, for far too long, there has been a shroud of embarrassment, shame and fear around the topic of menopause as that of mental ill health!**

Menopause refers to the time when you stop having periods and can no longer get pregnant naturally. It happens because the ovaries stop producing eggs and, as a result, levels of the hormones they produce (oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone) fall.

Every woman's experience of the menopause will be different but changing hormones can affect physical, emotional and mental health.

Approaching middle age often brings increased stress, anxiety and fear. This can partially be attributed to physical changes and decreasing levels of estrogen and progesterone which can cause temporary mood changes, including symptoms of depression as well as hot flashes, sweating and other symptoms.

The average age of menopause for women in the UK is 51, but there's a lot of variation, so menopause may happen sooner or later than this.

For most women, the menopause doesn't happen overnight. This is because, unless there has been a surgical menopause where the womb has been removed (Hysterectomy), the ovaries don't suddenly stop working. What happens is that they gradually slow down over a period of time as part of the natural menopause. This transition period is called the perimenopause, and can last for a few months or years – the average is around four years.

Research by Harvard Medical School suggests that the vast majority of women who develop significant mood issues during perimenopause have had them in the past. It's relatively rare for someone with no history of depression or anxiety to suddenly develop a severe case of it at menopause.

For some women, menopause may be a time of isolation or frustration. Family and friends may not always understand what you're going through or give you the support you need.

In addition, midlife - when menopause occurs - is a time when women sometimes face multiple sources of stress, including caring for children, dealing with aging parents, and navigating life changes, all of which may contribute to the incidence of depression and anxiety at this age.



## **So, what can you do to protect your mental health as you go through menopause?**

- Be aware that mood changes may accompany other menopausal symptoms.
- Monitor your mood and take note of patterns in other factors such as sleep and stress levels. Seek professional help if symptoms become severe and interfere with daily life.
- Make lifestyle changes such as increasing exercise, getting adequate sleep, and controlling stress to reduce potential symptoms.
- Know that it's temporary. Typically, the mood changes that accompany the hormonal changes during the menopausal transition won't last.
- Reach out to others.

With the support of personalities like Davina McCall speaking openly about menopause, hopefully times are changing and we will start to see that menopause stigma is unjustified, and there's no reason to accept it as a given. We know the problems can't be erased overnight, but we can begin to change our own outlook right away.

To learn more about menopause please visit:  
**[themenopausecharity.org](https://themenopausecharity.org) or [nhs.uk/conditions/menopause](https://nhs.uk/conditions/menopause)**



# SUICIDAL FEELINGS

**Suicide is a tragic reaction to stressful life situations and, all the more tragic because it can be prevented.**

Whether you're considering suicide or know someone who may have suicidal thoughts, suicidal ideation or suicidal feelings, learn about the warning signs and how to reach out for immediate help and professional treatment.

**You may save a life - your own or someone else's.**

It may seem like there's no way to solve your problems and that suicide is the only way to end the pain. But you can take steps to stay safe - and start enjoying your life again.

These warning signs or suicidal thoughts include:

- talking about suicide - for example, making statements such as “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I were dead” or “I wish I hadn’t been born”
- withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- acting recklessly.
- sleeping too much or too little.
- having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- having more problems with work or studies.
- becoming anxious, irritable, or confrontational.



However, some signs that an attempted suicide is likely or imminent include:

- getting the means to take your own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for doing this
- saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seeing them again
- talking or writing about death, dying or suicide.

Warning signs aren't always obvious, and they may vary from person to person. Some people make their intentions clear, while others keep suicidal thoughts and feelings secret.

At this point, according to Mental Health First Aid England, there are certain steps that you should take to support the person who feels suicidal...

1. Ensure your own personal safety
2. Ensure the person is not left alone if the risk is high - Help them stay safe
3. Seek immediate help

If you, or someone you are with, feel overwhelmed by thoughts of not wanting to live or having urges to attempt suicide, get help NOW. Call a suicide hotline:

<b>Samaritans</b>	<b>116 123</b>
<b>NHS Emergency</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>HOPELINE247</b>	<b>0800 068 4141</b>

4. Discourage further drug/alcohol use
5. If you can, get rid of any items from their home that the person could use to make suicidal actions. Keep them away from places that could pose a danger to them, too.

6. Encourage the person to talk - Ask them: “Are you thinking about killing yourself?” As hard as it is to ask this, experts say doing so will not make anyone think about suicide more. In fact, it signals that you’ve noticed and that you care and are ready to talk with them about it.
7. Consider helping them to create a support plan and stay in touch. Check in with them often after you talk. Let them know you’re there for them when they need you.

**REMEMBER – confidentiality does not apply when someone is at risk of suicide.**

You must never agree to keep a plan for suicide or risk of suicide a secret.

If they ask or warn you not to tell anyone about their suicidal thoughts, you must not agree and explain why e.g. I care too much to keep a secret like this.

Keep in mind that it is better for that person to be angry at you for sharing their suicidal thoughts without their permission so they can get help, than to lose them to suicide.



# TRIGGERS AND SIGNS OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH

**Farming is the industry with the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK and stress is often a key factor in many of the incidents, injuries and illnesses taking place on our farms.**

Stress is something that many farmers face at some point and is an important contributor to mental ill health. It can come from many sources such as weather, financial issues, international trade agreements, politics, rural crime and rural isolation.

We all have mental health just as we have physical health, but it can be more difficult to spot the signs of mental ill health. Mental Health First Aid England have outlined some of the common triggers which might impact on someone's mental health and the signs that suggest they may need support.

## Triggers

People often undergo significant life changes without developing a mental health issue. But for some people, changes in their work or personal life, including happy events, can prove stressful and may trigger mental ill health. There are lots of reasons why someone may find it hard to cope. As well as the stressors we've looked at, there can be other factors which include:

### **Personal life changes**

- Life-changing injury
- Health scares or physical illness
- Bereavement
- Breakdown of a relationship
- Having children

## **Changes at work**

- Starting a new job or tenancy
- Increased workload
- Poor relationships with workmates or supervisor
- Redundancy, or fear of redundancy
- Uncertainty with weather or market conditions



Add to this the stresses faced by everyone in daily life such as:

**Physical Stress** - Late nights, binge drinking, drug misuse, poor diet, lack of exercise and illness.

**Emotional Stress** - Relationship problems, peer pressure, leaving home, high expressed emotion within the family home.

**Environmental Stress** - Poor housing, unemployment, new environments to adjust to such as moving house.

## Signs

Many people believe that poor mental health is rare and “happens to someone else.” It isn’t and it doesn’t.

Although everyone’s signs are individual to them, it is good to be aware of subtle or significant physical,

behavioural or personality changes in yourself, those you work, or live with, and remain alert to someone who may need your help...

Some of the signs to look out for include:

### **Physical**

- Frequent headaches or stomach upsets
- Suffering from frequent minor illnesses
- Difficulty sleeping or constant tiredness
- Being run down
- Lack of care over appearance
- Sudden weight loss or gain

### **Emotional and behavioural**

- Irritability, aggression or tearfulness
- Being withdrawn, not participating in conversations or social activities
- Increased aggression, arguments or conflict with others

- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes or sedatives
- Indecision, inability to concentrate
- Erratic or socially unacceptable behaviour
- Being louder or more exuberant than usual
- Loss of confidence
- Difficulty remembering things
- Loss of sense of humour

### **At work**

- Increased mistakes, missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
- Taking on too much work and volunteering for every new job
- Someone who is normally on time arriving late
- Working too many hours: first in, last out
- Increased sickness absence
- Negative changes to ways of communicating or socialising with colleagues

## **Maybe you can't quite put your finger on it, but you know something is not quite right, what can you do?**

If you notice one or more of these behaviours, do not make any assumptions about what mental health concerns they may have. You can check in with them, let them know you have noticed and let them know that you are there for them if they want to talk.

The earlier a problem is tackled the less impact it will have. If you, or someone you work with is having problems, encourage them to talk to someone, whether it's their partner, farm manager, vet, NFU Mutual agent or local GP.



# WHAT IS STRESS AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

**Did you know that the law requires all employers to prevent work-related stress and support good mental health at work? This includes farming.**

Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health in farming, and it can mean severe physical and psychological conditions for farm workers. It can also lead to poor productivity, high staff turnover and increases in incidents in an industry with the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Working Minds campaign aims to support those working in the industry to prevent stress and support good mental health at work.

**Many workers feel stress when they can't cope with the pressures of farming.**

For example, they can get stressed if they feel they don't have the skills or time to meet tight deadlines. Many farmers find themselves in this situation. Planning, training and support can sometimes reduce pressure and bring stress levels down.

We all know that stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether someone can cope.

The HSE Working Minds campaign offers a range of tools and support to help farmers and farm workers understand the best ways to prevent work related stress and encourage good mental health.

**To learn more visit Working Minds - Work Right to keep Britain safe**

# TOP TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS

**TALK ABOUT IT:** Talk to friends, family and workmates. You can also join farming forums and Facebook groups to chat to other farmers. They may have useful advice or experience and be able to provide support.

**TAKE A BREAK:** It's difficult to relax while on a farm as there is always plenty to do. Try to schedule regular breaks where you actually leave the farm for a period of time (anything from a few hours to a weekend away). A short time away can help you come back with a fresh perspective.



**LOOK AFTER YOURSELF:** Stress can take a physical toll so it's important that you eat a healthy diet, do some physical exercise and ensure you have a good night's sleep. Making time to take care of yourself will help you stay strong in the face of stress.

**RELAX:** There are a variety of ways in which you can relax – you might like to read a book, go for a walk or watch your favourite TV show. Try to find time to relax each day, even if it's just for 15 minutes.

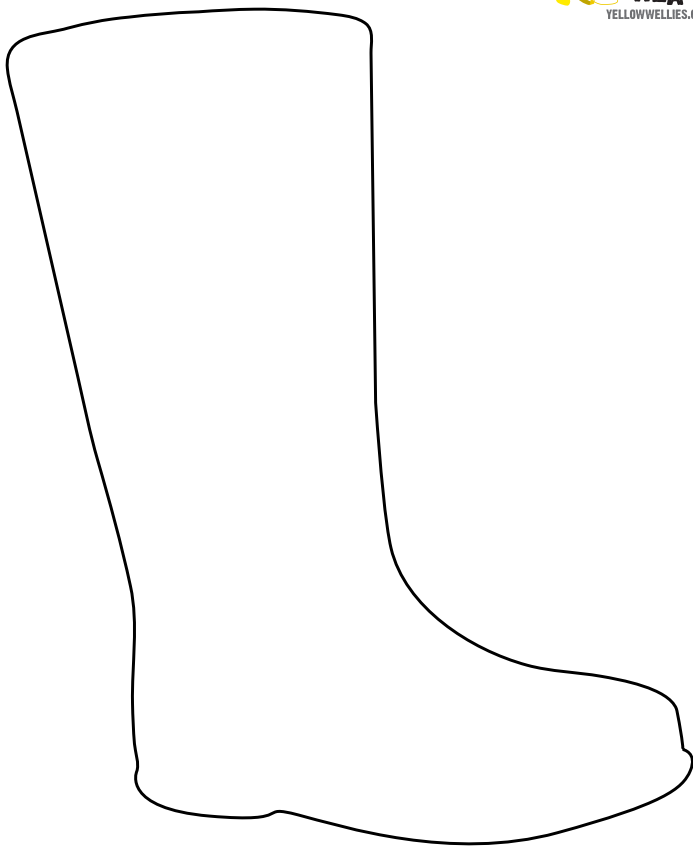


# FILL YOUR BOOT...

**If you, or someone you work or live with, is feeling overwhelmed by the stresses of everyday life, this can be a handy tool to use to explore the things that are concerning, worrying or causing you to feel down or apprehensive.**

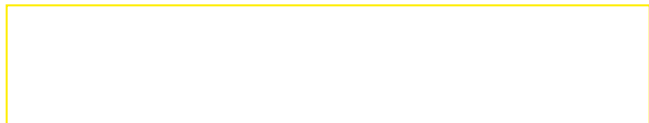
Using the space inside, literally fill the boot with all the worrying thoughts you have inside your head. No matter how big or small, try to include everything from your work, home life and the world at large that is causing you stress right now.

When you feel that you've noted everything, leave it for a while and take a break. After a short time, come back, take a look at the list again – add more if you want to - and start to separate what you've written into things you can personally control and things that you have no control or influence over...



## **NOW ASK YOURSELF...**

1. What can I control?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin yellow border, intended for the user to write their answer to the first question.

2. What is out of my control so I need to accept?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin yellow border, intended for the user to write their answer to the second question.

3. What needs my attention right now?

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4. Who can help me? Who can I talk to?

5. How do I deal with things in a negative way?  
(keeping it to myself, self-medicating with drugs or alcohol,  
not getting enough sleep)

6. How do I deal with things in a positive way?  
(asking for help, making time for positive experiences,  
getting enough rest)

# WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

**Everyone can feel sad or down when bad things happen, however sadness is not the same as depression.**

People who are feeling a little ‘down’ may have a short-term depressed mood but they can manage to cope and soon recover without needing treatment. The type of depression that does require treatment and there is no quick fix for is ‘clinical depression’. Please Note - You should never try to diagnose someone with depression. This is a medical condition and can only be diagnosed by a medical professional.

## What does it look like?

It doesn't look the same in everyone however, someone who is ‘clinically depressed’ will experience at least two of these three symptoms most of the day, every day for more than two weeks:

1. Continuous low mood or sadness that does not go away
  2. Not getting any enjoyment out of life
  3. Lack of energy and prolonged tiredness
- Other symptoms include:
4. Loss of confidence / low self esteem
  5. Feeling guilt-ridden
  6. Suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself
  7. Difficulty in concentrating and making decisions
  8. Moving or speaking more slowly than usual and unable to settle
  9. Having difficulty sleeping / sleeping too much
  10. Loss of appetite / overeating leading to weight loss / gain

Not everyone who experiences depression has all these symptoms so the following is a good guide to severity of depression...

**Mild Depression**

4 of the 10 symptoms experienced over the past two weeks and has some impact on your daily life

**Moderate Depression**

6 of the 10 symptoms experienced over the past two weeks and has significant impact on your daily life

**Severe Depression**

8 of the 10 symptoms experienced over the past two weeks and make it almost impossible to get through daily life.

## **What does it sound like?**

Someone experiencing depression will tend to have a negative view of themselves, the world and the future.

Things you may hear them say:

- I'm useless
- It's all my fault
- I'm worthless
- No-one loves me
- Things are never going to get any better
- I've let everyone down
- Life sucks

Being aware of what to look and listen out for can allow you to address the issue at an early stage and guide yourself, or the person you are concerned about, to the right support.

# START A CONVERSATION...

## **You've seen the signs so what happens now?**

It's often the everyday things that make a difference – like asking someone how they are or sending a text. If you think someone is having a tough time, don't be afraid to reach out. They might want to talk about it, they might not.

But just letting them know you're happy to talk is important.

We don't often talk about our mental health so it might seem a little daunting to start a conversation about it but it's important to remember you don't have to be an expert.

Mental Health First Aid England has put together some ideas for how you can start the conversation.

## **Choose where to have the chat**

- Send a text, make a call or make them a hot drink. It's a great way to ask someone a quick 'how are you?' and start a conversation.
- Meeting in a location away from the farm in a neutral space such as a café or pub might feel less intimidating.
- Give yourself plenty of time so you don't appear to be in a hurry – Ten minutes may be enough but, if you need longer, then allow yourself the time.
- Give them your full attention – keep the focus on them and switch your phone off or on 'silent'.

## **Talking tips**

- Keep the conversation positive and explore the issues, thank them for sharing with you and look interested.
- Keep your body language open and non-confrontational.
- Be empathetic, try not to judge and just listen - this is a serious issue so do not say things like “pull yourself together” or “cheer up” – this could make them feel foolish and clam up and will mean they are less likely to share with anyone else.

Useful questions to ask – Open questions invite the person to share more so they can't answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no'

- “How are you feeling at the moment?”
- “How long have you felt like this?”
- “Tell me how work is adding to this?”
- “What can we do to help?”



## **How to listen**

- Don't wade in with your thoughts and opinions. Let them talk and LISTEN.
- Focus on their words, tone of voice and body language – all of these will give clues as to how they are really feeling.
- Don't judge. Respect the person's feelings, experiences and values although they may be different from yours.
- See it from their side. Put yourself in the other person's shoes and show them that you hear and understand what they are saying and feeling.
- Be genuine – show that you accept the person and their values by what you say and do.

## **What happens next?**

- Keep the conversation going – follow up and ask them how they are doing. Reassure them that your door is always open and mean it. It's particularly important to stay in touch with any workers who are off sick.
- Reassure them that help is available so no matter how they want that support – face-to-face, by phone or online – there are farming charities and rural support groups across the UK that can help. The next section highlights many of those organisations and how to contact them.
- Remember, you are not an expert and you will have limited knowledge so it can also be appropriate to encourage the person to visit their GP or seek expert help.

# SOURCES OF HELP

**Creating awareness and understanding of the issue of poor mental health is important but it is also important to know who to turn to if you - or someone you know - is struggling with their mental health.**

In the UK, we are lucky to have a wide range of charities and farm & rural support groups working in this area and this section contains the details of some national and regional charities and support groups that you can call on in times of need.

*Special thanks to Melinda Raker MBE and the Royal Countryside Fund for their work in helping us bring this section together.*

## **What if they're not okay?**

If you, or someone you are with, feels overwhelmed by thoughts of not wanting to live or having urges to attempt suicide, seek help NOW

**Call a suicide hotline:**

**Samaritans 116 123**  
(available 24/7)

**NHS Emergency 999**  
(available 24/7)

**HOPELINE247 0800 068 4141**  
(available 24/7)

# **National**

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Rural Support**

**0800 138 1678** Available Mon - Fri 9am – 9pm

**[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)**

**[info@ruralsupport.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralsupport.org.uk)**

Rural Support provides impartial guidance for farmers and farm family members in Northern Ireland to support their farm business and personal wellbeing. A support line provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and farming families and the charity also provides programmes, mentoring, and advice on a wide range of issues including financial issues, mental health concerns and succession planning.

## **SCOTLAND**

### **RSABI**

**0808 1234 555** Available 24/7

**www.rsabi.org.uk | helpline@rsabi.org.uk**

RSABI provides emotional, practical and financial support to individuals and their families across the agricultural sector in Scotland including farming and crofting. The RSABI helpline is available 24/7 with webchat also available via the website - also 24/7.

## **WALES**

### **The DPJ Foundation**

**0800 587 4262** Available 24/7

**www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk**

**admin@thedpjfoundation.co.uk**

The DPJ Foundation provides support to those who work in the agricultural sector with a 24hr call line for support and access to fully funded counselling across Wales.

## **Tir Dewi**

**0800 121 4722** Available 24/7

**www.tirdewi.co.uk**

**mail@tirdewi.co.uk**

Tir Dewi's volunteers work with farmers and their families to help make sense of problems, provide practical support and solutions and partner with other organisations where it would be helpful. A Freephone Helpline is available and volunteers can visit farms to spend time getting to understand the issues and provide the support needed.

## **ISLE OF MAN**

### **ISLE Listen**

**01624 679118** Available Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

**www.islelisten.im**

Isle Listen supports children and young people up to the age of 25 through education and one-to-one therapeutic support. They also provide a suite of wellbeing solutions to businesses and community

groups to support a variety of issues including mental health training, an employee counselling service and workplace wellbeing audits

Isle Listen is not a crisis service and only offer planned interventions. In emergencies contact Manx Care's 24 hour Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team on 01624 642860 or 999

## **ENGLAND & WALES**

### **Addington Fund**

**01926 620135** Available Mon - Fri 9am – 5pm

**[www.addingtonfund.org.uk](http://www.addingtonfund.org.uk)**

**[enquiries@addingtonfund.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@addingtonfund.org.uk)**

Addington Fund can provide a home for farming families living in England & Wales who have to leave the industry, through no fault of their own and, by doing so, will lose their home. They may also award emergency grants towards certain business costs in times of emergency and where hardship prevails.

## **FCN The Farming Community Network**

**03000 111 999** Available daily 7am -11pm

**[www.fcn.org.uk](http://www.fcn.org.uk) | [www.farmwell.org.uk](http://www.farmwell.org.uk)**

**[help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk)**

FCN provides practical and pastoral support to farmers and their families through difficult times. Established in 1995, their national helpline provides free, confidential support to anyone who seeks help and their website contains some valuable resources to improve farming resilience.

## **RABI - Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution**

**0800 188 4444** Available 24/7

**[www.rabi.org.uk](http://www.rabi.org.uk) | [help@rabi.org.uk](mailto:help@rabi.org.uk)**

RABI offer practical, financial, and emotional support to farming people. Among the many professional services offered, RABI provide counselling support, mental health training and an online mental wellbeing service.

## **UK-WIDE**

### **Farm Safety Foundation (Yellow Wellies)**

**[www.yellowwellies.org](http://www.yellowwellies.org)**

**[farm\\_safety\\_foundation@nfumutual.co.uk](mailto:farm_safety_foundation@nfumutual.co.uk)**

Celebrating its 10 year anniversary in 2024, The Farm Safety Foundation (Yellow Wellies) is an independent registered charity (1159000) set up with funding from leading rural insurer NFU Mutual to raise awareness of farm safety and mental health among young farmers aged 16-40 across the UK.

Over the past decade, the charity has trained over 25,000 young farmers at land-based colleges and universities across the UK and through the young farmers clubs network. Their annual campaigns – Farm Safety Week and Mind Your Head - are challenging and changing attitudes to, and behaviours around, risk-taking and poor mental health and resources like their online Build Your Own Health & Safety Policy, Farm Emergency Checklist and this Little Book of Minding Your Head offer support to farmers of all ages.

## **Perennial**

**0800 093 8543** Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

**www.perennial.org.uk | info@perennial.org.uk**

Perennial is the UK's only charity dedicated to helping everyone who works in horticulture, and their families, when times get tough. Perennial provides free and confidential advice, information and support to people working in, or retired from horticulture and their families.

## **The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust**

**0300 1233088** Available 24/7

**www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com**

**enquiries@thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com**

Jamie's helpline offer support for a wide range of issues including health, retirement, redundancy, housing and employment but they are first and foremost a confidential listening service. Gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies and their families can benefit from a wide variety of financial grants in times of hardship, ill health and retirement as well as educational grants for young people.

## **REGIONAL**

Where possible, we have highlighted the availability of volunteers / staff to answer calls however, outside these times, several of the national charities are available 24/7.

**In case of an emergency, and when a life is at risk, call 999 or Samaritans on 116 123**

## **CHESHIRE & WIRRAL**

### **Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy**

**07967 559594** Available 24/7

**[www.agchap.com](http://www.agchap.com) | [talk@agchap.com](mailto:talk@agchap.com)**

Cheshire Ag Chap offer pastoral support to the farming community using supporting agencies when required. Team members visit individual farms, livestock markets, agricultural shows and church services.

# **CORNWALL**

## **FarmCornwall**

**01736 367589**

**mail@farmcornwall.co.uk**

Established in 2001 by landowners and farmers to support small farmers FarmCornwall offers independent technical advice, particularly finance, debt and family mediation. They also advise farmers entering Countryside Stewardship schemes and complete claims for financial support.

## **Farming Health Hub**

**01736 367589 / 07775 667825**

**www.farminghealth.co.uk**

**jon@farminghealth.co.uk**

The Farming Health Hub provides confidential advice around Physical Health, Mental Health and Business Health to farmers and their families in their day-to-day lives.

## **CUMBRIA**

### **The Farmer Network**

**01768 868615** Available Mon – Fri 9am - 5pm

**[www.thefarmernetwork.co.uk](http://www.thefarmernetwork.co.uk)**

**[info@thefarmernetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@thefarmernetwork.co.uk)**

The Farmer Network is an independent, “not for profit” organisation providing help and support to farmers, their families and businesses across Cumbria and The Yorkshire Dales.

## **DERBYSHIRE**

### **Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy**

**07710 088972**

**[www.derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk)**

**[alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk](mailto:alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk)**

The Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy provides confidential practical and pastoral support to farmers, young farmers, and farming families in Derbyshire.

## **The Farming Life Centre**

**01692 810903** not a helpline

**[www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)**

**[info@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)**

A farming charity supporting people living and working in the Peak District. Based at the Agricultural Business Centre in Bakewell, the team are well placed to support farmers going about their business at the Livestock Markets each week. The charity works to offer farm business support and promote good physical and mental health.

## **DEVON**

### **Dartmoor Hill Farm Project**

**01822 890913** Mon-Fri 9am-5pm with some out of hours support

**[www.dartmoorhillfarmproject.co.uk](http://www.dartmoorhillfarmproject.co.uk)**

**[hfp@dartmoor.gov.uk](mailto:hfp@dartmoor.gov.uk)**

Covering the National Park area and providing a range of services to hill farmers helping to support agricultural businesses in a variety of different ways. This includes training, advice and general support and guidance on many issues.

## **Exmoor Hill Farming Network CIC**

**01643 841455**

**www.ehfn.org.uk | katherine@ehfn.org.uk**

A farmer-led organisation, established in 2014, to improve the viability and sustainability of Exmoor farming businesses through knowledge transfer, peer-group support, training, and co-operation to safeguard upland farming, rural employment and landscape management.

## **DORSET**

### **Sherborne Deanery Rural Chaplaincy**

**07966 754110** Available 7am-11pm not a helpline

**rural.chaplaincy@btinternet.com**

Although not a helpline, Richard offers a listening ear and support for farming and rural communities across Dorset and beyond and can help signpost to other organisations. The team can often be found at Salisbury Livestock Market, supporting farming and rural businesses.

## **DURHAM**

### **Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services - UTASS**

**01833 641010** Available Mon-Fri 9am-4pm closed Wed

**07917 304685 (Emergency)**

**[www.utass.org](http://www.utass.org) | [inittogether@utass.org](mailto:inittogether@utass.org)**

UTASS has worked with farmers across the Durham Dales for more than 25 years and provides guidance, practical support and help with complex paperwork. They deliver a raft of community-based services including offering training and support to farm businesses to help them access opportunities, financial support and focus on the future. The team want to de-jargonise essential information, signpost to other organisations and prevent problems from getting to crisis stage.

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

### **Gloucestershire Farming Friends**

**0845 300 6886**

**[www.gloucestershirefarmingfriends.wordpress.com](http://www.gloucestershirefarmingfriends.wordpress.com)**

**[help@gloucestershirefarmingfriends.co.uk](mailto:help@gloucestershirefarmingfriends.co.uk)**

A voluntary group in Gloucestershire providing free, confidential, emotional and practical support to farmers and the rural community via the helpline, Facebook page and email.

## **HEREFORDSHIRE**

### **Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy**

**07958 591646 or 07531 676832**

**[www.borderchaplain.org](http://www.borderchaplain.org)**

Operating through the Hereford Diocese and the Shropshire and Marches Methodist Circuit, Borderlands Rural Chaplains work in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Eastern Powys. The Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy is a confidential, listening ear offering pastoral support to farmers, farming families and agricultural communities.

## **Herefordshire Rural Hub**

**01432 268428** Available 5am – 10pm messaging service

**[www.herefordshireruralhub.co.uk](http://www.herefordshireruralhub.co.uk)**

**[hub@herefordshireruralhub.co.uk](mailto:hub@herefordshireruralhub.co.uk)**

A business support organisation promoting economic, environmental and social improvements in land-based and rural businesses. The Hub provides an information and support network to farming and other rural businesses, in and around Herefordshire, through newsletters, website, email, and events. Email or call (and leave a message).

## **We Are Farming Minds**

**Tel: 0808 8020070 or Text: 07786 203130** Available 24/7

**[wearefarmingminds@gmail.com](mailto:wearefarmingminds@gmail.com)**

**[www.wearefarmingminds.co.uk](http://www.wearefarmingminds.co.uk)**

Set up by farmers to support the farming community in Herefordshire, the charity provides a 24hour support line, access to fully funded counselling, social events as well as Mental Health Awareness Workshops for anyone in the Herefordshire farming community who wants to make a difference, from family members and vets to field reps.

## **LANCASHIRE**

### **Lancashire Field Nurse**

**07815 099748**

**info@fieldnurse.org.uk**

Providing a health and wellbeing drop-in clinic at Clitheroe, Gisburn and Brock Auction Markets for farmers and rural workers of any age group. Can also be contacted through their Facebook page @fieldnursecare

## **LINCOLNSHIRE**

### **Lincolnshire Rural Support Network**

**0800 138 1710** Available daily 8am-8pm all year

**www.lrsn.co.uk | info@lrsn.co.uk**

A volunteer led organisation that provides pastoral, emotional and practical support to farming and rural people during periods of anxiety, stress and problems relating to their families and businesses. One-to-one visits, helpline, drop in advice points, health screening.

## **NORFOLK**

### **YANA**

**0300 323 0400** Available 24/7 messaging service available  
**[www.yanahelp.org](http://www.yanahelp.org) | [helpline@yanahelp.org](mailto:helpline@yanahelp.org)**

YANA is an East Anglian charity working in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. YANA can help anyone worried about a member of their family, a colleague or a friend and offer an informative website; confidential helpline with access to specialist counsellors and doctors and funding for counselling.

## **SHROPSHIRE**

### **Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy**

**07958 591646 or 07531 676832**  
**[www.borderchaplain.org](http://www.borderchaplain.org)**

Operating through the Hereford Diocese and the Shropshire and Marches Methodist Circuit, Borderlands Rural Chaplains work in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Eastern Powys. The Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy is a confidential, listening ear offering pastoral support to farmers, farming families and agricultural communities.

## **Shropshire Rural Support**

**0300 123 2825** Available 24/7 9pm-9am divert to Samaritans

**[www.shropshireruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.shropshireruralsupport.org.uk)**  
**[ruth@shropshireruralsupport.org.uk](mailto:ruth@shropshireruralsupport.org.uk)**

Shropshire Rural Support provides confidential support during periods of anxiety and stress, and with problems relating to their families and their businesses. The service is delivered by people with farming backgrounds who understand the ups and downs of farming, family farming businesses and living in the countryside.

## **SOMERSET**

### **Exmoor Hill Farming Network CIC**

**01643 841455**

**[www.ehfn.org.uk](http://www.ehfn.org.uk) | [katherine@ehfn.org.uk](mailto:katherine@ehfn.org.uk)**

A farmer-led organisation, established in 2014, to improve the viability and sustainability of Exmoor farming businesses through knowledge transfer, peer-group support, training, and co-operation to safeguard upland farming, rural employment and landscape management.

## **STAFFORDSHIRE**

### **The Farming Life Centre**

**01692 810903** not a helpline

**[www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)**

**[info@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)**

Supporting people living and working in the Peak District. Based at the Agricultural Business Centre in Bakewell, the team support farmers going about their business at the Livestock Markets each week. The charity works to offer farm business support and promote good physical and mental health.

## **SUFFOLK**

### **Lightwave**

**07413 683368** Available 24/7

**[www.light-wave.org](http://www.light-wave.org)**

**[graham.miles.lightwave@gmail.com](mailto:graham.miles.lightwave@gmail.com)**

Reaching out and supporting farming and countryside communities in Suffolk and beyond.

## **YANA**

**0300 323 0400** Available 24/7 messaging service  
available

**[www.yanahelp.org](http://www.yanahelp.org)**  
**[helpline@yanahelp.org](mailto:helpline@yanahelp.org)**

YANA is a key East Anglian charity working across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. YANA can help anyone worried about a member of their family, a colleague or a friend and offer an informative website; confidential helpline run by Samaritans-trained volunteers with access to specialist counsellors and doctors and funding for counselling.

## **WARWICKSHIRE**

### **Warwickshire Rural Hub**

**07780 159291** Available Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm

**[www.ruralhub.org.uk](http://www.ruralhub.org.uk) | [info@ruralhub.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralhub.org.uk)**

Established in October 2003 the Warwickshire Rural Hub now has a membership of over 1200 rural businesses. Membership is free of charge. Members receive a monthly e-news and invitations to topical events organised with partner organisations.

# **YORKSHIRE**

## **The Farmer Network**

**01768 868615**

**[www.thefarmernetwork.co.uk](http://www.thefarmernetwork.co.uk)**

**[info@thefarmernetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@thefarmernetwork.co.uk)**

An independent, not-for-profit organisation providing help and support to farmers, their families and businesses across Cumbria and The Yorkshire Dales.

## **Yorkshire Agricultural Society**

**01423 541000** Available Mon – Fri 9am - 5pm

**[www.yas.co.uk/yrsn](http://www.yas.co.uk/yrsn)**

**[kated@yas.co.uk](mailto:kated@yas.co.uk)**

The Support Network brings together farming help organisations across Yorkshire focusing on farmer health and wellbeing, social isolation and women in farming.

## **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

### **C.A.L.L. Community Advice & Listening Line**

**0800 132 737** Available 24/7  
**www.callhelpline.org.uk**

C.A.L.L offers emotional support and information/ literature on mental health and related matters to the people of Wales. Anyone concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend can call the mental health helpline or text **81066** from their mobile phone.

### **CALM - The Campaign Against Living Miserably**

**0800 58 58 58** Available daily 5pm – midnight  
**www.thecalmzone.net**

CALM offers confidential, anonymous and free support information and signposting to anyone anywhere in the UK through their helpline.

## **Citizens Advice Bureau**

**Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848**

**Adviceline (Wales): 0800 702 2020**

**Available Mon – Fri 9am - 5pm**

**[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

A network of 316 independent charities throughout the United Kingdom that give free, confidential information and advice to assist people with money, legal, consumer and other problems.

## **Cruse**

**0808 808 1677**

**Available: Monday and Friday: 9.30am-5pm**

**Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 9.30am-8pm**

**Saturday and Sunday: 10am-2pm**

**[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)**

Bereavement Counselling - available throughout UK and online resources. The Helpline is run by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by grief. They will give you space to talk about your feelings and how you've been coping. Volunteers are non-judgemental and will not share what you've told them with anyone else, unless you are in danger.

## **Gay Farmer**

**07837 931894** Available 24/7

**[www.gayfarmer.co.uk](http://www.gayfarmer.co.uk)**

**[keithineson@gmail.com](mailto:keithineson@gmail.com)**

Nationwide, confidential support for gay farmers and their families.

## **Grassroots Suicide Prevention**

**[www.prevent-suicide.org.uk](http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk)**

Developers of the Staying Alive App - free to download from the App Store or Google Play, Grassroots also offers the online Suicide Prevention Hub which can help people understand more about suicide, help to prevent it in your community and find help if you need it.

## **Growing Well**

**07903 013648**

**[www.growingwell.co.uk](http://www.growingwell.co.uk)**

**[info@growingwell.co.uk](mailto:info@growingwell.co.uk)**

A farm-based mental health charity in Cumbria, providing a safe supportive working environment to nurture mental health recovery. If you're feeling depressed, anxious or finding everyday life difficult, Growing Well may be able to help with free effective support. You can call them or fill in a self-referral form on the website and you could be volunteering in the Growing Well field or kitchen within two weeks. Health professionals can refer a patient.

## **Heads Together / SHOUT**

**Text SHOUT to 85258** Available 24/7

**[www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)**

Shout is volunteer-run and is the UK's first 24/7 crisis text service. The service is free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. Trained volunteers will listen, and work to help you take the next steps towards feeling better.

## **MIND**

**0300 123 3393**

Available Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, except Bank Holidays

**www.mind.org.uk | info@mind.org.uk**

MIND provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They offer information on mental health problems, where to get help near you and treatment options. The Infoline provides an information and signposting service.

## **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

**0808 2000 247**

## **HOPELINE247**

**0800 068 4141** Available 24/7

**www.papyrus-uk.org**

If you are concerned that a young person you know is feeling suicidal, advisers can support you to start a conversation with them about suicide and explore options of how best to support them.

## **Samaritans**

**116 123** Available 24/7

**www.samaritans.org | jo@samaritans.org**

Every 10 seconds, Samaritans responds to a call for help. The charity is available around the clock, every single day of the year, for anyone who is struggling to cope. You can call for free from any phone, email them, or visit their website to find details of your nearest branch.

## **SANE**

**0300 304 7000** Available daily 4pm-10pm

**www.sane.org.uk**

SANEline provides emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness

## **Scottish Mental Health**

**0344 800 0550** Available Mon-Fri 9am-6pm except Bank Holidays

**www.samh.org.uk | info@samh.org.uk**

Mental health support lines across Scotland – please note this is not a crisis service.

## **Support In Mind Scotland**

**0300 3231545** Available Tuesday to Thursday 9am-4pm

**[www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk](http://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk)**

Support in Mind Scotland seek to support and empower all those affected by mental illness, including family members, carers and supporters.

## **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide**

**0300 111 5065** Available 9am-9pm

**[www.uksobs.org](http://www.uksobs.org)**

SOBS offers peer-to-peer support to all those over the age of 18, impacted by suicide loss at the time of their loss and in the months and years that follow. SOBS provides a safe, confidential environment in which bereaved people can share their experiences and feelings, so giving and gaining support from each other.

# **YOUNG FARMERS CLUBS**

## **NFYFC - National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs**

**02476 857200**

**[www.nfyfc.org.uk](http://www.nfyfc.org.uk) | [post@nfyfc.org.uk](mailto:post@nfyfc.org.uk)**

A rural youth organisation for those who have a love for agriculture and rural life. YFCs provide members with opportunities to develop life skills, work with their local communities, take part in a varied programme and provide peer support and friendship.

## **SAYFC - Scottish Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs**

**01313 332445**

**[www.sayfc.org](http://www.sayfc.org) | [penny@sayfc.org](mailto:penny@sayfc.org)**

Scotland's largest rural youth organisation providing competitions, events, training and travel. Their award-winning "Are Ewe Okay" campaign, launched in 2016, paved the way for discussions about mental health in farming.

## **Wales Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs**

**01982 553502**

**[www.yfc.wales](http://www.yfc.wales) | [information@yfc-wales.org.uk](mailto:information@yfc-wales.org.uk)**

Wales YFC is a voluntary youth organisation operating bilingually throughout rural Wales and has over 5,000 young people aged 10 - 26 years.

## **YFCU - Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster**

**028 9037 0713**

**[www.yfcu.org](http://www.yfcu.org) | [info@yfcu.org](mailto:info@yfcu.org)**

YFCU is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation open to anyone aged 12 - 30 years, no matter of his or her ethnic background, religion or profession. There is no requirement to be a farmer or come from a farming background to join – the only requirement for membership is an interest in rural life.

**The printing of this book has been  
made possible by all the YFCs,  
individuals and organisations that  
have raised money and awareness for  
the issue of mental health in farming.**

**Together we can make a difference.**

**THANK YOU**





WHO WOULD  
FILL YOUR  
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**@YELLOWWELLIESUK**

