



Mental Health Counselling: Frequently Asked Questions

Some people call it counselling, others call it therapy. Here are some frequently asked questions about how to approach mental health services with confidence, and get the most value from available supports.

What is therapy, and how can it help me?

Therapy is a process where you work with a trained professional to explore your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It can help you manage stress, improve relationships, cope with challenges, and address mental health issues by providing support, coping strategies, and new perspectives.

Will it help me with challenges related to farming, like financial pressure, burnout, or managing difficult weather conditions?

Therapy can help you become more resilient to setbacks by teaching you how to manage anxiety, especially when facing uncertainty like difficult weather or financial pressures. It helps you focus on what you can control, and trains you to be more patient with yourself. Over time, therapy can reduce anxiety about the unknown and guide you to approach these uncontrollable challenges with a calmer, more balanced mindset.

What are the different types of therapy, and which one is right for me?

There are several types of therapy, and the right one for you depends on your specific needs, preferences, and the challenges you're facing. Most involve having detailed discussions about your experiences with a mental health professional.

Are there specific types of therapy that are more effective for farmers or people in rural areas with unique stressors?

The most widely respected types of therapy based on **research and evidence-based practice** that would be beneficial for issues unique to farmers are:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Structured, goal-oriented therapy that focuses on changing negative thought patterns and behaviors. The fundamental idea is that “you are what you think” – your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected. Learning to notice, interrupt and edit negative or unhelpful thoughts, you can improve your feelings and automatic assumptions, and suffer less in your head.

Example: A farmer feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work ahead of them might learn to habitually identify thoughts like "I can't handle this" and replace them with more realistic, helpful thoughts like "I can take this one step at a time."

Humanistic Therapy (Person-Centered Therapy)

This approach focuses on helping you understand and achieve your full potential. It emphasizes innate talents, self-exploration, self-awareness, and personal growth.

Example: If you're at a crossroads in life—whether it's thinking about retirement or facing life changes—humanistic therapy can help you explore your feelings, priorities, and what's most important to you.

Mindfulness-Based Therapy (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, MBSR)

This therapy integrates mindfulness and meditation practices to help you stay present and manage stress and anxiety through grounding, to calm your mind and allow better coping with difficult situations.

Example: A farmer dealing with the stress of unpredictable weather or financial uncertainty might benefit from mindfulness techniques to stay calm and reduce anxiety in difficult situations.

Solution-Focused Therapy

Short-term and goal-oriented therapy focusing on finding practical solutions to current problems rather than delving deeply into past experiences. The therapist helps you identify your strengths and resources to create actionable plans to resolve challenges.

Example: If you're facing a particular issue at work or in your family life, like a communication breakdown, this therapy would focus on finding quick, practical solutions to improve the situation.

Is therapy really confidential?

Yes, **therapy is confidential**. What you discuss with your therapist is generally protected by privacy laws, meaning they cannot share your information without your consent, except in certain situations:

- Where there is a risk of harm to yourself or others
- In cases of abuse or neglect
- If a court orders the release of information related to an ongoing investigation

What if I don't feel comfortable talking about my emotions or personal struggles?

It's completely normal to feel uncomfortable talking about your emotions or personal struggles, especially if this is your first time in therapy. Many people feel this way at first, and it's okay to take things slow. It's also very normal to feel unsure about where to begin. Your therapist will help guide the conversation and create a safe space for you to explore whatever is on your mind, no matter how small it may seem. Starting with simple concerns can lead to deeper insights over time.

How long does therapy take to work?

Therapy can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months to show noticeable improvements, depending on the issue. It's okay if you don't feel better after only 1 session, although that's all some people really need. To track your progress, it's helpful **to establish baseline measures of your mental health** or stress levels at the start, so you can compare and see how therapy is making an impact over time.

As a farmer, my days are long and unpredictable. How can I fit therapy into my busy routine?

Counsellors are available on evenings, weekends, and over the phone and/or virtually. Some people have one session per week, others two sessions per month, one per month, and some just as needed. Find what works for you and **invest as much time in yourself as you can afford**. It's worth it to prioritize yourself sometimes!

Can therapy help me manage stress from farming and financial pressures?

Yes, therapy can help you manage stress from farming and financial pressures. A therapist can teach you coping strategies, stress management techniques, and help you build resilience – while also helping you take inventory of your available resources and supports such as financial counselling. They can also support you in addressing the emotional challenges of balancing work, personal life, and factors we have less control over like government regulations and weather.

Is therapy really just for people with severe mental health problems?

Most people have heard therapy is for people with serious mental health conditions. You do not need to have any formal diagnosis to seek and benefit from therapy. It can help with everyday challenges like stress, relationship issues, work concerns, and personal growth – even if you're not experiencing a mental health crisis or illness.

Can therapy help me communicate better with my family or employees?

Yes, therapy can help improve communication skills by teaching you how to express yourself more clearly, listen effectively, and manage conflicts, which can strengthen relationships with both family and employees.

What if I'm skeptical about therapy or don't believe it will help?

It's normal to feel skeptical about therapy, but giving it a try with an open mind can be beneficial. Many people find therapy helps them gain new perspectives, develop coping skills, and improve their mental health – even if they initially doubted it.

Are there mental health services specifically for farmers or rural communities?

Yes! There are mental health services specifically for farmers and the agriculture community. Explore these for more information:

[AgriCare: Wellness Solutions for NL Farmers](#)

Call **1-866-FARMS-01** (1-866-327-6701)

**open 24/7*

OR

Visit agricare.lifeworks.com

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Username – Nlfarms

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[The DoMore Ag Foundation](#)

The national voice and champion for mental health in Canadian agriculture.

Visit domore.ag/

[The Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing \(CCAW\)](#)

The Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing performs research in farmer mental health and wellbeing. They develop evidence-based farmer-informed programming and education to address wellbeing-related challenges amongst Canadian farmers.

Visit ccaw.ca/

How do I know if therapy is actually helping me?

You'll know therapy is helping if you start noticing positive changes, like feeling less stressed, improving your relationships, or developing better coping skills. It may al

so feel easier to talk about your emotions, and you might feel more confident in handling life's challenges.

It's important to remember that progress can be gradual, and therapy doesn't always lead to instant results. However, over time, you should notice some positive changes in how you feel, how you respond to challenges, and how you relate to others.

Don't see your question? Email our NLFA Mental Health & Farm Safety Coordinator, Kylie Stokes at kylie@nlfa.ca with your inquiry.

