

Help is at hand

If you could use some extra support right now, or know someone who you think is struggling, it's okay, there is help available – no one should go through a tough time alone.

If you're not sure where to start, you should talk to your GP. They're trained to assess and provide support and know what other services are available in your area.

To help you prevent problems from building up, there are new face-to-face mental health and addiction services being developed across the country as part of the Access and Choice programme. Visit wellbeingsupport.health.nz to see if there is a service near you.

There are also a number of free helplines available:

Need to talk?

Call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.

The Depression Helpline

Call 0800 111 757 or text 4202 to talk through issues with a trained counsellor.

Youthline

Text 234, call 0800 37 66 33, email talk@youthline.co.nz, or go to youthline.co.nz for an online chat.

Alcohol Drug Helpline

Call 0800 787 797 or text 8681 for confidential advice, information or support about drinking or other drug use.

In case of an emergency, call 111.

For more wellbeing tips, resources, and tools, go to mentalhealth.org.nz.

Free wellbeing apps

You can download wellbeing apps for Android and Apple devices from the App Store and Google Play, including:

Groov

Aimed at those aged 19 years and older, Groov is an app that supports people to manage their mental health and wellbeing on a day-to-day basis and at times of increased stress or distress.

Headstrong

Headstrong is an app co-designed with young people by the University of Auckland research team. Aiming to strengthen the mental wellbeing of 12-18-year-olds and be a 'personal trainer for the mind', Headstrong's interactive chat function helps the user feel like they're messaging with a trusted friend.

Organisations that can support you

Farmstrong

Farmstrong is a nationwide wellbeing programme for the rural community, helping you live well to farm well. You can find a range of resources to help you manage stress and pressure on farmstrong.co.nz.

Rural Support Trust

Rural Support Trust (RST) is a nationwide network, run by local people, that helps farming families and rural communities. Call 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP) to arrange a free and confidential chat at a place that suits you, or visit rural-support.org.nz.

NZ Young Farmers

NZ Young Farmers has compiled a list of services as a starting point for seeking help. Go to youngfarmers.co.nz/get-support.

FirstMate

FirstMate provides health and wellbeing support for people working in the commercial seafood sector. Go to firstmate.org.nz.

After the Storm

ALL SORTS

Tips for coping and recovering after a natural disaster



Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Mental Health Foundation
mauri tū, mauri ora OF NEW ZEALAND

Feeling all sorts of stuff at the moment?

The storm has passed, but you may still be dealing with the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle or other severe weather events. Maybe you've had to make big changes to how you run your agriculture or horticulture business. Your livelihood might have taken a hit, and you might be grieving for what was lost. Perhaps you're working tirelessly to help your community recover and get your operations back on track.

This can be a heavy burden to carry on your shoulders. If you're feeling overwhelmed, angry, frustrated, anxious, tired, or something else entirely, we hear you. These are all very normal and human responses to a difficult situation. When times are tough, there's no magic wand to solve all our issues. But there are all sorts of small things we can do which can, over time, help us build resilience and boost our wellbeing.

Simple-as tips to help you cope & feel better

When you're cleaning up the mess after a natural disaster, it's easy to neglect your wellbeing and put everyone's needs ahead of your own. But to look after your farm, family and community, you also have to take care of you.

Here are some no-nonsense tips and tools you can add into your routine, no matter how busy you are.



1. Accept how you're feeling right now

After a traumatic event like a natural disaster, your brain might try to keep you safe by scanning the environment for more threats. This can make you feel anxious, overwhelmed, or on edge. There's nothing abnormal or shameful about it. Try not to fight your emotions. Accept them as a normal part of the recovery process.

2. Take it one day at a time

When times are tough, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by what was lost and the uncertainty ahead. Taking things day by day, or even hour by hour, is all good right now.

3. Have a yarn with your mates and whānau

Share your thoughts with whānau, mates, neighbours, and other farmers who are going through something similar. There's a reason why people often say: "A problem shared is a problem halved".



Signs you might need extra support:

- Feeling hopeless, worthless, useless.
- Being unusually tired, experiencing low energy levels.
- Changes in behaviour – eating or sleeping way more or less than usual.
- Resorting to drugs, alcohol, gambling.
- Isolating from your loved ones.
- Withdrawing from social events and activities you used to enjoy.
- Physical symptoms without an apparent cause (headaches, stomach aches).

4. Focus on what you can control

Make a list of everything that's weighing on your mind, then split it into two columns – the stuff you can control and influence, and the stuff you can't. Concentrating on the first will help you feel like you're back in the driver's seat again. If you can't do much about a problem, you can still change how you look at it – even if it's by adding a dash of humour or thinking about some new opportunities that could come out of it.

“Problem-focused coping, such as figuring out a plan for future farming in a rapidly changing environment may be helpful. But if you're overwhelmed by anxiety about that challenge, or you can't control the problem, then it can be useful to try changing how you emotionally respond to it.”

– Dr Sarb Johal, Clinical Psychologist

5. Build a routine

When some things in your life feel uncertain, try to make other things as predictable as possible. Find a routine that works for you – going to bed at the same time every night, planning meals, spending time with your kids after dinner, etc.

6. Fill your tank with things you enjoy

A lot of joy can be found in small everyday things, like a hot cuppa, going fishing, breaking a sweat at the gym, or jamming with your mates. Rest is also important. Running a farming or growing business is hard work, so find what works for you, then stick to it as best as you can.

7. Try to stay hopeful

Our brains are very good at making us think that what we're feeling right now is how we will feel in the future, but these challenges will pass.

Remember: if you're not feeling great right now, you won't feel like this forever. But it's important to reach out for help if you feel like you can't cope.