

# CULTIVATING RESILIENCY *for Women in Agriculture*



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**EXTENSION**



## Honoring Grief When Making Devastating Agriculture Decisions During COVID-19

Shauna Reitmeier, MSW, LGSW  
Megan Roberts, EdD





## Honoring Grief When Making Devastating Agriculture Decisions During COVID-19

This program is a collaboration and is brought to you by:  
American Agri-Women,  
University of Minnesota Women in Ag Network,  
District 11 Agri-Women,  
and the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center



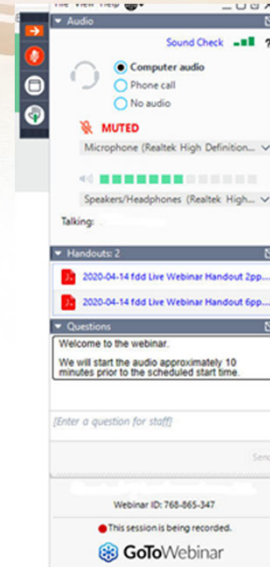
## Webinar Logistics

- You are in “listen only” mode (muted) during the webinar.
- A recording of this presentation will be made available on the American Agri-Women (AAW) website & Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center website (UMASH).
- If you are having technical difficulties during the webinar you may ask a question and our moderator will do her best to assist you.



# Webinar Logistics

- Please use the “Question” area on your control panel to post a question at any time during the presentation. Most questions will be responded to at the end of the presentation.
- A survey will launch after the webinar. We would appreciate your feedback.



## How to View Saved Recordings

<https://americanagriwomen.org/webinars/>

### Past Webinars

#### February 7, 2020 12:00 PM CST – Planting Courage and Authenticity in a Farming Life

##### [View Webinar](#)

Are you tired of the same old same old in your farming life, family and relationships? Do you feel that you have more to give or more to who you are that can help you and your farm thrive? In this session, you will be exposed to the research of Brene' Brown on shame and vulnerability. Shauna Reitmeier will share with you key elements and factors rooted in Brene's work that you can use to break through personal barriers, help you gain focus and a 2020 vision.

Shauna Reitmeier, MSW, LGSW will lead this session of Coffee Chat. Shauna has over 20 years of experience in the behavioral healthcare and cognitive disabilities fields. She currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Northwestern Mental Health Center, which serves a comprehensive array of behavioral healthcare services to adults, children and families across six (6) rural and frontier counties of Northwest Minnesota. Shauna grew up on a farm and is well-connected with rural communities.

## How to View Saved Recordings

<http://umash.umn.edu/cultivating-resiliency-webinars/>

- Go to past sessions, click on the one that you want
- A window will open, click on view recording

### PAST SESSIONS:

+ December 14, 2018: Impact of Farming and Ranching Stress for Women 101
+ January 11, 2019: Self-Care Tips to Help Reduce Stress
+ January 25, 2019: You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup - How Do You Fill It Up to Support Yourself and Others?
+ February 8, 2019: Building and Maintaining Relationships in Stressful Times
+ March 8, 2019: Increasing Your Joy and Happiness While Living a Farm Life
+ April 12, 2019: Putting It All Together
+ May 10, 2019: Suicide and the Agriculture Way of Life: What You Need to Know

### December 14, 2018: Impact of Farming and Ranching Stress for Women 101

December 14, 2018

Presented by: Shauna Reitmeier and Brenda Mack

In this session, Shauna and Brenda will define and discuss farming and ranching stress that may be affecting women in agriculture. The presenters will address possible outcomes of excessive worrying and hopelessness. Dealing with stress in healthy and healing ways will be highlighted.

[VIEW RECORDING](#)

*Note: You must register to view the recording*

### HANDOUTS:

- Session 1 Handout
- Personal Self Care Model
- Self-Talk Worksheet
- Stress Symptoms

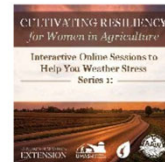
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### Planting Courage and Authenticity in a Farming Life

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About our presenter: Shauna Reitmeier, MSW, LGSW will lead this session of Coffee Chat. Shauna has over 20 years of experience in the behavioral healthcare and cognitive disabilities fields. She currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Northwestern Mental Health Center, which serves a comprehensive array of behavioral healthcare services to adults, children and families across six (6) rural and frontier counties of Northwest Minnesota. Shauna grew up on a farm and is well-connected with rural communities.



\*Required field

First Name\*

Last Name\*

Email Address\*

State/Province

Choose One...





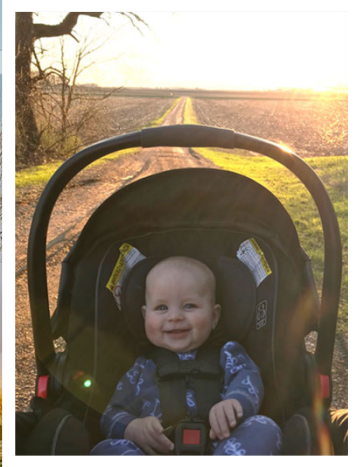
## About Shauna Reitmeier

- Raised on the family farm in Crookston, MN.
- Helped every summer in the fields until I moved.
- Social Worker, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Advocate
- Passionate about Rural and Frontier farmers and increasing access to services





## About Megan Roberts



## Before We Begin

- We use our experience and background as guides. Each of you are experts in your own lives
- Today's topic in particular may bring up thoughts or feelings that you may not have been prepared to address, resources will be provided for you to seek assistance if needed.
- The information is not intended to be treatment.



What is grief?  
Ag and other grief during Covid-19  
What comes next in 2020?



Acknowledgement of national  
collective grief and recent events.



# What is Grief?

- **grief** noun
  - \ 'grēf \
  - Definition of grief
- 1**
    - a: deep and poignant distress caused by or as if by bereavement //his grief over his son's **death**
    - b: a cause of such **suffering** //life's joys and griefs
  - 2**
    - a: trouble, annoyance //enough grief for one day
    - b: annoying or playful criticism //getting grief from his friends
    - c: an unfortunate outcome: **DISASTER** used chiefly in the phrase come to grief



<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grief>

# Where does Grief come from?

Many sources of grief

- Farm Bankruptcy
- Disaster
- Animal (pet, cattle, hogs)
- Farm Transition
- Death
- Illness
- Divorce





## Poll Question:

On a Scale of 1-4 with 1 being no grief and 4 being constant grief where do you fall?

1. No Grief
2. Some Grief
3. Moderate Grief
4. Constant Grief



## Grief Reactions

Reaction to loss, it is more than sadness and it can affect your...

- Actions (sleeping, eating, withdrawn)
- Emotions (sad, angry, lonely, guilt)
- Thoughts (disbelief, confused, hallucinate)
- Body (hollow, tightness, noise, weak)
- Spirituality (close, lost, question, meaning)

**NO RIGHT** or **WRONG** way to grieve

Source: University of Wisconsin, Integrative Medicine

## What Grief can look like?



## Ag and Other Grief during Covid-19





## Agricultural losses

- Euthanasia of animals
- Disposing of unused production (dumping milk, leaving crops in field)
- Increased farm financial stress
- Disrupted market chains
- Increased rural isolation



## Agriculture already in difficult spot





## Other losses

- Loss of loved one (whether Covid-19 related or not) without funeral
- Loss of job
- Lack of typical celebrations, including graduation and weddings
- Loss of school, daycare, and other social outlets for children





## Question:

What is the source or sources of your grief ?

(i.e. euthanized livestock, bankruptcy,  
death, world events)



## Grief in children



## Grief in context of family

- Parents grieving need to give children what they need or find someone who can until the parent is able.
- Keep routines
- Listen: let children talk, talk, talk and talk
- Include children in the planning if they want
- Give choices to attend funeral, and what to expect



## Age is Important: Preschool

- Younger children may not even know the concept of death.
- Concrete terms and words (died vs. passed away)
- Fairy Tales: wake up from sleep
- Anxiety: cling to person caring for them
- See someone familiar and then sad
- Faith: God will take care of...





## Age is Important: Elementary

- More understanding what death means
- Ask a lot of questions (how, why, when)
- Magical thinking
- Concrete questions, who will do \_\_\_ with me?
- Fear; Anger; Sadness
- Change



## Age is Important: Teenage

- Fuller Comprehension, know own feelings and independent thoughts
- Include in planning when comfortable
- Privately grieve
- May have outbursts, regress, grades change.
- Be with friends more or isolate



## Overall

- Be honest
- Be concrete
- Show stability and security
- Recruit trusted family/friends to help if unable
- Help children describe feelings or observe actions for awareness
- Let kids still be kids

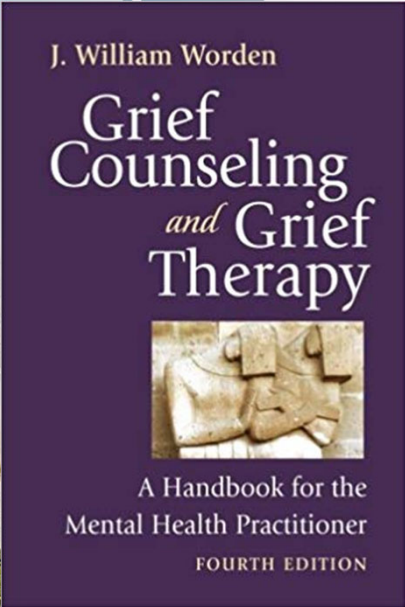






## What comes next in 2020?



We don't know what will come next this year.



	<h3>Worden's Tasks of Mourning</h3>	
	<b>Task #1</b>  To Accept the Reality of the Loss	
	To Work Through the Pain of Grief	<b>Task #2</b> 
	<b>Task #3</b>  To Adjust to an Environment in Which the Deceased is Missing	
To Find an Enduring Connection with the Deceased While Embarking on a New Life	<b>Task #4</b> 	

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/blog-1/page/46/>



## Task #1: Accept the reality of the Loss

- Basic ways
  - Funeral, begin to think and speak about the person in past tense
  - Accept the death
- Complex ways
  - May speak of someone in past tense and accept death but downplay the significance of that relationship
  - Deny the impact
- Common struggle
  - Acceptance in the mechanism of the death (i.e. suicide, overdose) if family or friends are unable to acknowledge/accept the reality of how someone died.

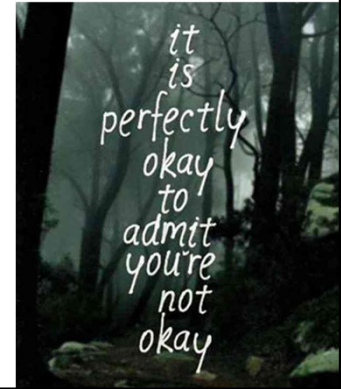






## Task #2: To work through the pain of Grief

- Sounds extremely broad
- Adaptive, learn how to deal with each emotion as they come up. Each person responds in their own way
- Can't get around grief
- Be patient with yourself, good self care
- Give yourself permission to grieve



Your grief and pain cannot be compared to some else's grief and pain.

## Self Care: 3-Legged Stool

- Relational

- Healthy Relationships & Connection to Others

- Cognitive

- Changing negative self-defeating talk to empowering self-talk

- Physical

- Eating/drinking right, sleep and exercise

*(Listen to the Self-Care Tips to Help Reduce Stress Webinar #2)*




## Coping Strategies

- Support Groups
- Rituals
- Nature
- Journaling/Writing
- Massage/Healing Touch
- Forgiving



### Task #3: To adjust to a new environment

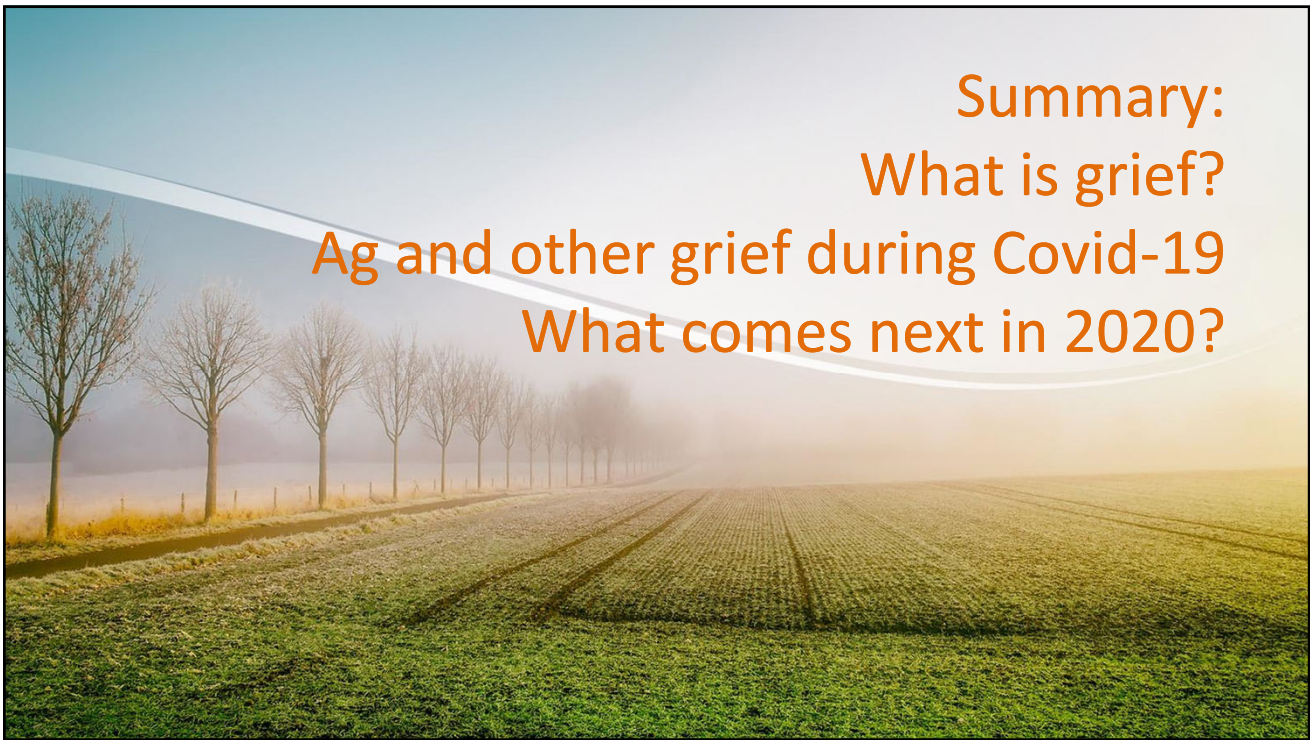
- Gradually (quick for some) over a period of time you adjust
- Resume normal routine
  - Go back to work/school
  - Social activities
- Realize the different roles that your loved one performed
- Learn new skills and tasks
  - paying bills, new job,
  - parenting
  - redefining how you see yourself
  - asking for help



### Task #4: To find an enduring connection with the deceased while moving forward with life

- Mean varying things to different people
  - Often means allowing for thoughts/memories while simultaneously engaging in pleasurable activities
  - Finding new activities, people and relationships
- Life did not stop when the loss occurred. Worden says “not accomplishing this task is to not live”.
- Evolves and changes
- Choices in how we respond
- When ready you can choose to begin to find a new way forward while incorporating the profound love you still have.
  - Learn what mattered most to us and invite that into our lives





## Mental Health Resources

**NATIONAL  
SUICIDE  
PREVENTION  
LIFELINE™**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

CRISIS TEXT LINE |  
741741

**NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE**  
1-800-799-SAFE

MINNESOTA FARM & RURAL HELPLINE  
833-600-2670  
*Free. Confidential. 24/7.*

**NEED TO TALK?**

Are you struggling with feeling alone,  
sad, stressed, or worried and feel like  
you have no one to turn to?

CALL US.



Text **MN** to  
**741 741**  
Free support at your fingertips, 24/7

CRISIS TEXT LINE |



## COVID19 Resources

**CDC** Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

**m** DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

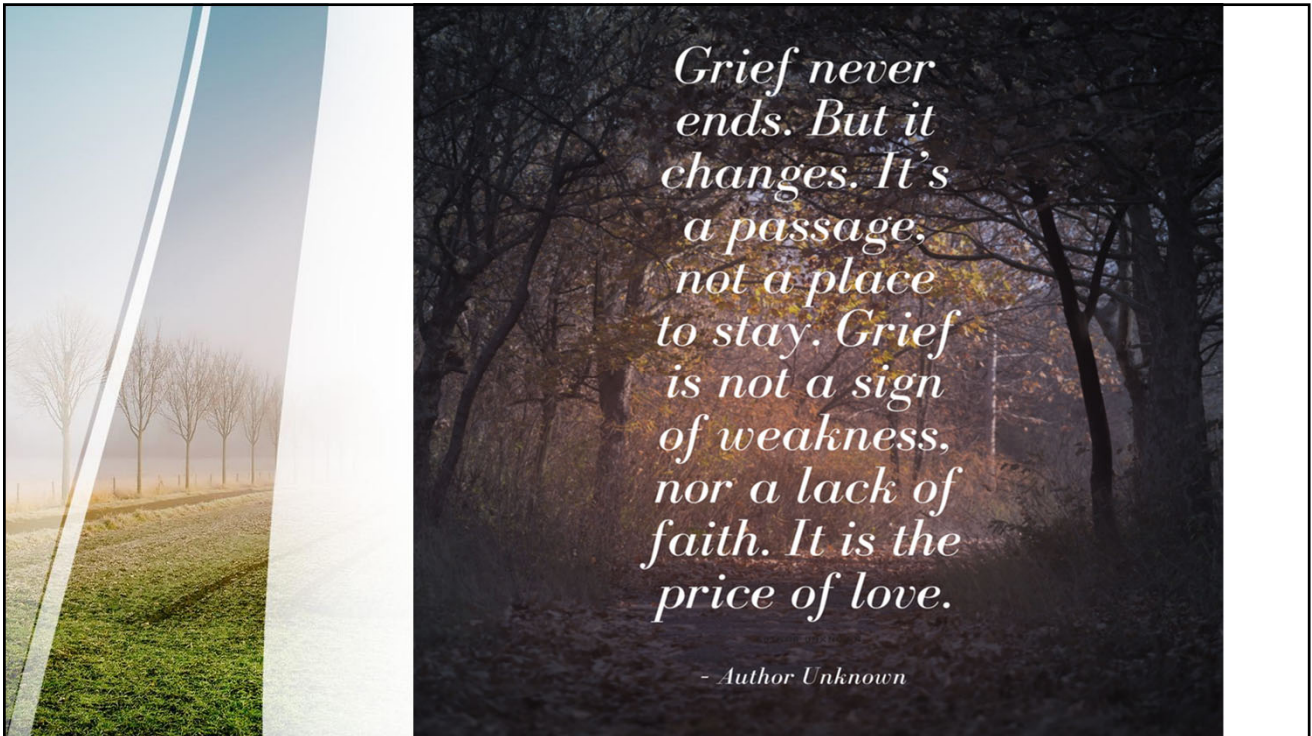
[www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture)

Your local state Dept of Ag likely has its own response website.



[umash.umn.edu/covid-19-resources](http://umash.umn.edu/covid-19-resources)







## References/Resources

- Coping with Grief after Losing the Farm: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/coping-with-grief-after-losing-the-farm>
- J. William Worden: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, Fourth Edition: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner.
- Refuge in Grief Website: <https://www.refugeingrief.com/>
- University of Wisconsin Integrative Medicine: [https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/files/webfm-uploads/documents/outreach/im/module\\_grief\\_patient.pdf](https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/files/webfm-uploads/documents/outreach/im/module_grief_patient.pdf)
- What's Your Grief Website: <https://whatsyourgrief.com/wordens-four-tasks-of-mourning/>
- Center for Complicated Grief: <https://complicatedgrief.columbia.edu/for-the-public/complicated-grief-public/overview/>





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