



Talk the Talk - Workshop Summary

Thank you for attending Talk the Talk. The following provides a summary of the workshop including some of the strategies you can use when helping someone in distress.

Farming communities across Australia are doing it tough. Every ten days, a farmer dies by suicide, and behind that statistic are real people feeling isolated, undervalued, and under pressure. In recent years, 88% of farmers have experienced some form of disaster, and over half have had thoughts of suicide. Many are carrying this quietly, often without the right kind of support around them.

In our work across the region, we're seeing the signs. People are stepping away from community and sporting groups. Farms and machinery are being neglected. Families are tired and tensions are rising. Kids are missing school or showing signs that something's not quite right. These are warning signs – red flags that tell us someone might be struggling.

Sometimes we see the “Bitser” mindset – starting task after task but never finishing one – or the sudden bursts of anger from someone who's been holding everything in. Others throw themselves into helping everyone else while ignoring their own needs. And many of us inherit the belief that we should just keep going, no matter what.

This is where we can step in, by starting simple, everyday conversations. Using the T.A.L.K. approach – Take the time, Ask how you can help, Listen without judgement, and Keep supporting – we create space for people to open up in their own way and in their own time.

The best conversations often happen in familiar places: in the dairy, shed, the ute, or out in the paddock. It doesn't have to be formal or heavy. A question like “How's the stress levels?” or “Haven't seen you at the footy lately” can be the opening someone needs. The goal isn't to solve everything. It's just to start the chat and let them know they're not on their own.

Take the time
Ask them how you can help
Listen without judgement
Keep supporting





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It's also important to understand the difference between situational distress – the kind that comes from specific life events – and longer-term mental health conditions like depression or anxiety. Both can lead to suicidal thoughts, and both deserve to be taken seriously. What matters is that we notice the signs, trust our instincts, and lean in with care.

If someone does open up, the best thing we can do is listen well and offer practical, steady support. That might mean helping them make a GP appointment, encouraging small changes in their routine, or simply being part of their support team. If they don't open up, we don't walk away. We keep checking in, staying connected, and – if needed – quietly looping in others like a partner, friend or neighbour.

If you're worried someone might be suicidal, don't panic. Believe what they say, ask if they have a plan, and look for even one reason they haven't acted. You don't need to have all the answers – you just need to walk alongside them and help link them to the right support.

In the heartbreaking event that the worst does happen, remember – it's not your fault. Their pain may be over, but yours may just be beginning. Grief is complex and often doesn't follow a straight line. Talk to someone. Lean on those around you. And know that it's okay to ask for help, even later.

What protects people most in tough times are the simple things: connection, purpose, health, and self-worth. These are the foundations of wellbeing, and we can all help each other hold onto them.

Finwell Support and RFCS Victoria West are here to help. Whether the farmer or small business owner you are concerned about is facing financial pressures or emotional stress, we offer free and confidential support across Western Victoria.

We work alongside farmers, small business owners to provide practical support, counselling, and a listening ear – without judgement.

If someone you care about needs support, reach out. You don't need to go it alone.

Ph: 1300 735 578
www.rfcsvictoriawest.com.au



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Wellbeing Support

Talk the Talk Workshop Additional Resources

Crisis and Support Services

Where to go in a crisis?	Where to go when you're struggling?
In a life threatening emergency, call Triple Zero - 000	Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria West 1300 735 578 www.rfcsvictoriawest.com.au
SuicideLine Victoria 1300 651 251	TIACS Counselling Service 0488 846 988 Mon - Fri 8am - 10pm
Lifeline 131 114 Lifeline Text 047 13 11 14	Rural Health Connect Online appointments with psychologists www.ruralhealthconnect.com.au
Suicide Call Back 1300 659 467	Open Road Counselling Sarah Crosthwaite 0419 181 784 www.openroadcounselling.com.au
Beyond Blue 1300 224 626	1800RESPECT 1800 737 732



Other Resources

Podcasts	Websites
 <p>More than Milk</p>	 <p>ifarmwell.com.au</p>
 <p>Are you bogged mate?</p>	 <p>farmerhealth.org.au</p>
 <p>Farm Life Psych with Steph Schmidt</p>	 <p>ruralaid.org.au</p>
 <p>The Imperfects</p>	 <p>farmsafe.org.au</p>
 <p>Five of my Life</p>	 <p>beyondblue.org</p>