

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS **ABOUT THERAPY**

There are a lot of misguided notions about what really happens in therapy and how a therapist can help you. Sometimes we get these ideas from popular television shows (remember Fraser!) or movies. Unfortunately, these ideas are often incorrect and can even prevent people from getting help.

We've listed 10 of the most common myths about therapy.

MYTH 1: A THERAPIST WON'T UNDERSTAND ME

Maybe. A therapist will ask you a series of questions to help understand you and your wellness needs. If they think that you have needs beyond their scope, they'll probably refer to you someone else who represents a better fit. You can speed up this process by being open and honest. But not all therapists understand farming! At AgKnow, we've identified therapists who already have farm clients or farming background so that you find a therapist who understands what it means to be a farmer.

MYTH 2: GOING TO THERAPY IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

Not true. Life exposes us to a lot of things we didn't expect to deal with. We can either do nothing about it and suffer in silence, or we can take action. If you seek treatment, you're being resourceful and taking control of your own wellbeing. And we know there's still a stigma about using mental health in the ag community. But you know what, the average farmer struggles with the same issues we all struggle with: self-esteem, stress, anxiety, life transitions, depression, and relationships.

MYTH 3: GOING TO THERAPY WON'T SOLVE MY ISSUES OR SAVE MY BUSINESS

Not true. While going to therapy won't make it rain to feed your crops or fix your broken equipment, it can help you improve your relationship with your family or partner. It can also help you find better ways of coping with stress. It can help you get a good night's sleep so that you're less prone to risks and injuries. Just like your truck needs oil every once in a while to run smoothly, you need to work on your mental health so that your business runs smoothly. Think of therapy like that oil – things sure run better with it.



MYTH 4: MY PROBLEMS AREN'T SERIOUS ENOUGH FOR THERAPY

Not true. Some of the most common reasons for seeking therapy are self-esteem issues, work/life stress, transitions in life, relationship problems, depression, and anxiety. You don't have to have experienced a traumatic event to use therapy. Not all topics are heavy either. Sometimes we use a therapist on an as-needed basis. It's nice to have a dedicated time to discuss our issues in a confidential way to an objective, outside person.



MYTH 5: THERAPY TAKES TOO LONG

Not true. Therapy can last for as long as you need it to. Television shows can give us the impression that a character can be "fixed" in the length of an episode or that psychotherapy is this endless process. The average therapy session is about 50-60 minutes, and the first session is basically an intake and "getting-to-know-you" session. You really start getting into issues by the second meeting though. Therapy is thought to be a short-term treatment, with the average treatment course lasting about three to four months as needed.



MYTH 6: THERAPY COSTS TOO MUCH

Maybe. Through AgKnow, you and members of your family can receive two free counselling sessions. Many therapists use a sliding scale or offer plans to make their services more affordable. With most therapists offering to take the sessions virtually or by telephone, these sessions are so much more accessible, private, and save you time from driving into the city.



MYTH 7: I CAN GET THE SAME ADVICE FROM A FRIEND

Probably not. While peer support is extremely important, a therapeutic relationship will look very different than the one you have with friends and family. Sure, you'll discuss issues like you might with a friend, but YOU remain the primary focus. The therapist isn't going to tell you about his issues or what worked for his Uncle Bob so that's what you should try too. Their goal isn't to tell you what to do but rather help you develop tools to use in your everyday life. They're trained to listen and to pick up on patterns. They'll support you in making healthy changes using science-based methods. And because they're not connected to your life, you can express yourself freely and be heard without judgment.



MYTH 8: THERAPY DOESN'T WORK

Not true. According to the American Psychological Association, therapy has also been shown to help approximately three-quarters of the people who try it. What's more, they note that about 80% of people who tried some type of therapy feel better after therapy ends than people who never attended therapy.

MYTH 9: THERAPISTS ANALYZE YOU FROM BEHIND A DESK WHILE YOU LIE ON A COUCH

This is rarely the case. Trained therapists will create a space that is comfortable for the client. In fact, a typical therapeutic setting might look a lot like your living room where both people sit in comfortable chairs and talk. Many therapists will even ask what set-up is most comfortable for you and they won't take notes until after the session so they can give you their undivided attention.

MYTH 10: ALL THERAPY IS THE SAME

Not true. There are many different types of therapy, and sometimes it takes time to find the one that works best for you.

MYTH 11: GOING TO THERAPY WILL HURT MY CHANCES AT GETTING INSURANCE OR APPROVED FOR A LOAN

Not true. Large companies like Farm Credit Canada not only recognize that farming is a demanding career with its own unique stressors, but they actively advise farmers to learn ways of managing their mental health which includes using therapy. In fact, one of the therapists profiled on our AgKnow website, Laura Friesen, is advertised in FCC's recent publication!

NEXT STEPS

There will also be myths and misconceptions floating around about therapy. Unfortunately, these myths prevent people from getting the support they need to live a happy and productive life.

In reality, therapy is a common tool used by a lot of people whether they're experiencing anxiety, wanting to strengthen their marriage, or wanting to feel excited and hopeful about farming again.

Remember, making the decision to work with a therapist isn't just an investment in your mental health – it's going to benefit your health as a whole.

For helping finding a therapist with an understanding about farming, you can start here with these simple tools.