

# Healthy Farmer

April 2011

A publication by AgriWellness, Inc.

## Mental Health or Behavioral Health?!

Why does AgriWellness use the term “Agricultural Behavioral Health?”  
Why not use Mental Health?  
Isn't that what we are really about—helping farm people with their mental health?

We prefer “behavioral health” for several reasons.

- We are in charge of our behavior. In fact, our behavior is one of the few factors affecting farming that we can control. We can't control the weather—as this spring illustrates so clearly, or the markets, or government policy, for the most part. But we can control our actions, our choices, whether we take risks, get enough sleep, talk, exercise, pray, and so many more activities. We aren't afraid to talk about our behavior, but most of us are afraid to talk about our “mental health.”
- The term “mental health” seems mystical. Mental health treatments make us think about taking medications or having a therapist who interprets our thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, “behavioral health” is understandable and makes us responsible for our actions instead of expecting a paid professional to make us feel better.
- Behavioral healthcare is much more wholistic and comprehensive. Usually it includes substance abuse treatments, along with psychiatric and psychological services. At AgriWellness we feel that agricultural behavioral healthcare includes these and any interventions that are aimed at improving our behavior, such as pastoral counseling, conferring with consultants such as exercise coaches, dieticians, Extension specialists and so forth. Any services aimed at helping us behave healthier are behavioral interventions.
- The U.S. government adopted the term “behavioral Health” gradually over the past few years and it is now the preferred term for most federal agencies. In June 2005 the federal Health Resources and Service Administration sponsored the National Rural Mental Health Summit at Moran, WY, where it was recommended that the term “behavioral health” was more inclusive, less stigmatizing and more empowering. The federal SAMHSA made the switch shortly after that, so when this group reconvened again in 2010, this time at Glendale, AZ, the meeting was called the National Rural Behavioral Health Symposium.

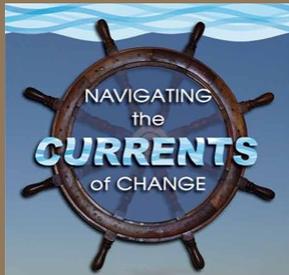
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You will find useful definitions of the terms, behavior, behavioral healthcare and agricultural behavioral health in our Glossary of Agricultural and Behavioral Health Terms on the AgriWellness website: [www.agriwellness.org](http://www.agriwellness.org). Look under Resources.

Do you agree that “behavioral” is better?

*“Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God.”*

Thomas Jefferson



### Navigating the Currents of Change

**June 22-25, 2011**

Grand River Conference Center and Grand Harbor Resort  
Dubuque, Iowa

Join the National Association for Rural Mental Health and AgriWellness, Inc. for this jointly sponsored conference. The meetings will feature outstanding plenary speakers including Dr. Susan Keys, Dr. Ron Manderscheid and Ms. Alison Lighthall. Many excellent workshops will be offered also, including: *The Inculturation of Grieving with Lakota People; Hearing the Stories: Mental Health Stresses in Rural/Farm Families with a Chronic Disability; Integrated Models of Care for Older Adults Living in a Rural State; Deepening and Broadening Diversity Training via Utilization of Technology and Shared Resources; Improving Access to Behavioral Healthcare in Rural America...and many more!* For full registration information please visit:

[www.narmh.org](http://www.narmh.org)

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