



Improving the mental health of farmers: what types of remote intervention and support are acceptable and feasible to best support improved outcomes?

Stage 1: Focus groups / interviews with farmers

Participant Information Sheet

Introduction

A research team led by the University of Stirling and the Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is conducting a study to find out how to effectively reach individuals from the farming community who would benefit from support for their mental health.

Results from the study will be used to design methods of recruitment to the next stage which will look at three types of support:

1. An online-based psychological therapy that teaches practical strategies that can be used in everyday life. This support can be provided with or without telephone support.
2. A social and emotional support service that includes a telephone helpline which is staffed by mental health first aid trained staff and volunteers.
3. A combination of both interventions.

What are we planning to do?

We want to invite individuals from the farming community in Scotland to share their views and suggestions about the language and methods to use to attract and engage with farmers who may be experiencing a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation is voluntary. We will explain the study and go through this information sheet with you. If you do decide to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time, without having to give any explanation.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, you will first be asked whether you would like to be involved in a focus group or an interview (face to face or by telephone). Your chosen method of participation will then be organised by the researcher. Face to face interviews and focus groups may be restricted as a result of Government Covid-19 guidelines. The focus group would involve a discussion with others from the farming community who have an interest in this subject.

During the focus group or interview, you will be asked to answer some questions about how best to attract and engage with individuals from the farming community who may be experiencing a common mental health problem, and what might encourage them to seek help. An audio recording will be made of the focus group / telephone interview which will be transcribed. Your answers will be treated anonymously.

Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit

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Are there any potential risks in taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in taking part of this study. However, in case you become aware of your own mental health symptoms as a result of taking part, information will be provided about how to access support and details of crisis helplines. Your participation will be confidential (except to other members of the focus group) and any data we hold will not include your name or contact details. We will aim to remove any other obviously identifiable information from any data held (such as locations, names of farms etc.).

Are there any benefits in taking part?

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part, but information gathered from your participation will help us to understand how best to engage with individuals from the farming community who would benefit from receiving support for their mental health.

There will be no payment for taking part in this research study.

What will we do with the results?

The information gathered from this study will be used in the recruitment of individuals from the farming community to take part in the next stage of this study which is to find out what type of intervention they would prefer in supporting their mental health.

Findings from all phases of the study will be shared with the wider networks of farming communities, livestock vets, and other agricultural support services. We may also publish our findings in a journal to share these with others. We will include the results in our report to the project funders.

Data security and confidentiality

All information collected in this study will be used for research purposes only. Personal and confidential information will be stored anonymously using unique code numbers with all references to actual names removed. Only members of the research team will have access to the collected data, which will be stored securely at the University of Stirling and SRUC. The data will be kept for a period of 10 years as requested by University of Stirling Ethics requirements. The research team will have no access to your personal medical records.

Who is funding and organising this research study?

This research study is funded by the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government and is led by Professor Margaret Maxwell from the University of Stirling.

For more information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

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Thank you for considering taking part in this study and taking time to read this information sheet.