

THERAPIST NETWORK MEMBER INTERVIEW

WENDY BOS

WHY DID YOU WANT TO JOIN THE THERAPIST NETWORK AT AGKNOW?

I grew up in a rural community of 3,500. One of the main industries was agriculture (along with mining and forestry). The town did not have anyone working in the mental health field. While small towns today may attract some psychologists and counsellors, video counselling is allowing individuals to access services more easily when they need help.

WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO FARMING?

As a child, I had school friends who lived on farms, so I spent a fair bit of time playing on and exploring the properties. I was privy to hearing about the stressors and joys of farming. In addition, my husband was raised on a farm and my in-laws were still farming for many years after we got married. Visits and conversations with them exposed me to farm life and farm culture.

WHY DOES HAVING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH ON THE FARM MATTER?

Influences motivation to complete responsibilities, allows one to manage stress, anxiety, and depression; helps in regulating emotions and building healthy connections with partner/children/friends/community; affects decision-making and problem resolution capacity; allows one to identify red flags indicating mental health is deteriorating.

FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING FARMERS TODAY?

Weather; global, national, and local markets; disease; depopulation; seed/feed/livestock/crop/land prices; family dynamics; finances; legacy concerns; legislation; stress management; community responsibilities; isolation/mental health issues.

HOW CAN GOING TO THERAPY HELP A FARMER WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH?

Having a safe, non-judgmental space to discuss issues and concerns; validation and normalization of thoughts/feelings; stress management; skills building (healthy coping strategies); processing adverse events/trauma; managing life transitions

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED STYLE OF THERAPY? DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIALIZATIONS?

I work with individuals who are experiencing anxiety; those unable to manage their emotions; and persons trying to cope with life stressors or life transitions. I provide therapy to individuals who have experienced



Wendy Bos is a Registered Psychologist based in Edmonton, Alberta. She is available for in-person and virtual sessions through her practice: Sanctuary Psychology and Wellness.

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recent adversity/trauma or past trauma that is still affecting them. I am trained in EMDR (eye movement, desensitization and reprocessing), a therapy specifically for processing adversity/trauma. I also provide couple counselling, which can include partners learning skills to communicate and resolve conflict effectively.

WHAT CAN A FARMER EXPECT IN THEIR SESSION WITH YOU?

The first session gives us a chance to get to know each other and build the foundations of a strong therapeutic relationship. I will review consent and limits to confidentiality. I will be interested in learning about what is bringing them to therapy and any relevant history that may be contributing to presenting issues or concerns. I may provide psycho-education to help the farmer understand why they are experiencing uncomfortable, worrisome or intense thoughts, feelings and body sensations. We will collaboratively identify meaningful goals for therapy and discuss the various interventions or techniques that may help to resolve their issues. The following sessions will focus on relationship building; holding space to listen to concerns; skill-building to increase capacity, cope and live a healthy, meaningful life; and possibly processing any adversity, overwhelming, or traumatic situations.

WHAT WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOU?

Kind, thoughtful, warm, easy to talk to, loyal, gentle, good sense of humour, curious, intelligent.



Interview by Dr. Rebecca Purc-Stephenson
*Applied Social Psychologist and Professor in
the Department of Social Sciences*

