



Vignette



Men's Mental Health Webinar

Rohan, age 56, lives with his wife of 24 years, Sandra, and their Kelpie, Skye, on a small family farm near Ballarat. The farm has been in his family for generations. Rohan's three children have all moved to Melbourne. He does not get to see them as much as he would like and feels increasingly distant from them. Rohan has always seen the farm as a part of who he is and what he owes his family.

Rohan is well known in the local football community. He no longer plays but stays involved through the local club. A mate from the club has noticed that lately Rohan has not been himself. He suggests that Rohan explore help. Rohan reached out to a local men's mental health service, encouraged by his mate who points out it costs nothing to make a call.

Rohan reports months of poor sleep. He finds it challenging to fall asleep and wakes after a few hours feeling alert and tense. He describes feeling wired despite being exhausted. He notices constant tightness in his chest and shoulders and a sense of dread when he thinks about the day ahead.

The farm has been under financial pressure for some time. Rohan finds himself preoccupied with bills, rising costs, and the future of the property. He feels responsible for keeping the farm going and believes he needs to work harder, even though his body is not feeling as young as it once did. The physical demands are becoming hard to manage. Rohan experiences this as personal failure, rather than ageing.

Rohan has started to withdraw from friends and community activities. He avoids phone calls and visits. He feels he does not have the energy to be the upbeat person that people expect. He worries he brings others down when he spends time with them. He sometimes thinks to himself his friends are probably better off without him around.

Rohan is unsure whether talking will help. He says talking does not pay bills or fix any physical pain or discomfort. He believes he should be able to deal with things himself. He says he cannot be depressed because he still gets up each day and he does not cry. He frames his current experience of distress as stress rather than mental health challenges.

Rohan has tried to see his GP about sleep problems but has found it hard to get in with his farm commitments contributing to a limited window in which he can actually get to the GP, who is in high demand. He worries that referrals to a specialist will cost money that they do not have. He does not feel unwell enough for hospital care but feels stuck without other options.

Rohan's wife wants to help and has offered to take on more financial management. She is also anxious about their long-term security. Rohan feels ashamed and fears disappointing her. He keeps her at a distance from the business to avoid feeling exposed as a failure. Their arguments have become more frequent and intense. His wife has raised the possibility of a separation.

Rohan interprets this as further proof that he is a burden and cannot get things right. He feels trapped between financial pressure, responsibility to the farm, and fear of losing his relationship. He is not sure where to turn next.