



**School of Social Work**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

# Moving Forward: Who, Where, How?

**Research from Anna Scheyett, PhD**

**Presented by Maria Bowie, DrPH**

UGA School of Social Work and College of Agricultural and  
Environmental Sciences

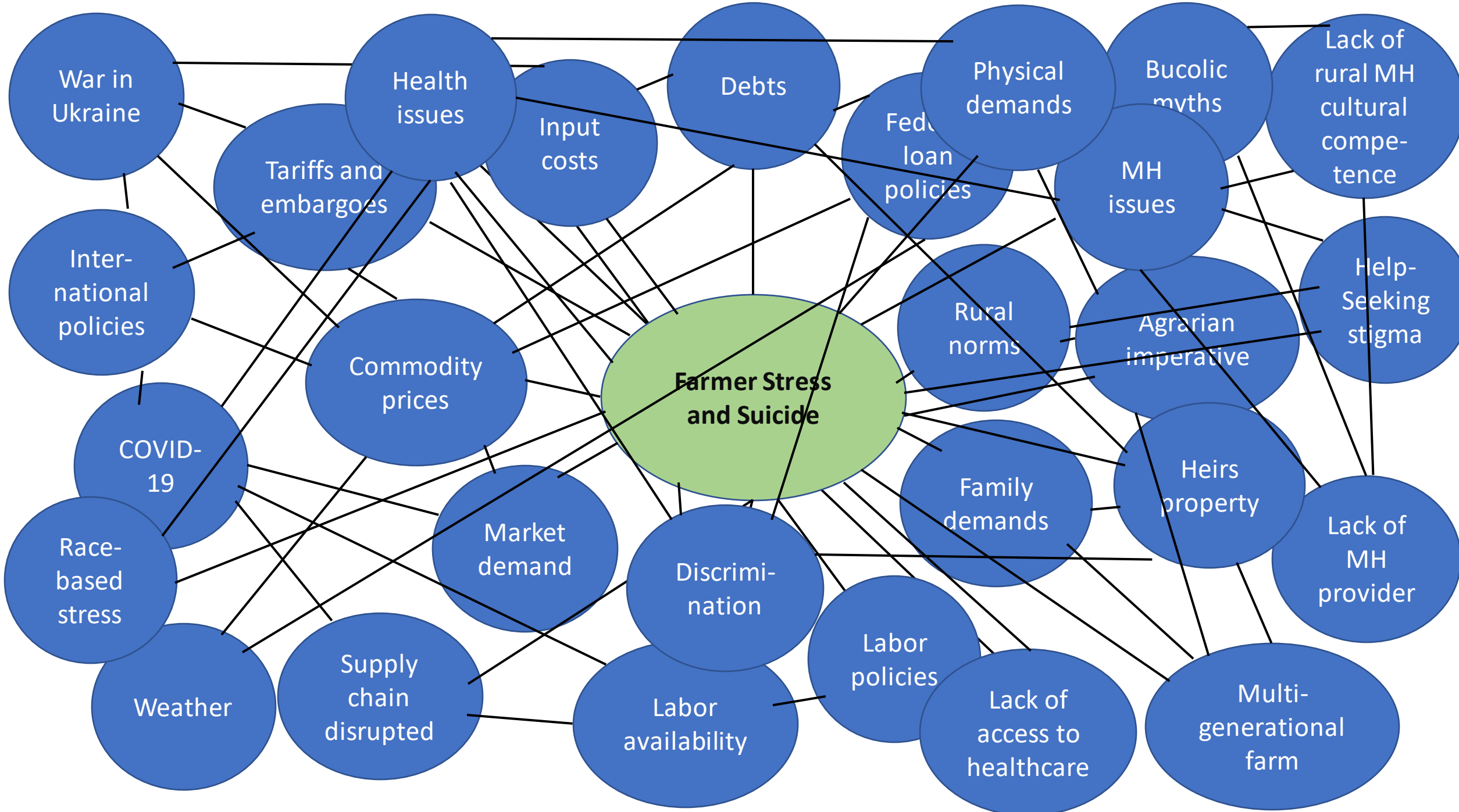
**Start by remembering: This is COMPLICATED**



**School of Social Work**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



# Update on Research Activities through *Rural Georgia Growing Stronger*

- Who: Listening to Farm Wives
- Where: Precision Agriculture Stress Support (PASS) mapping
- How: Messaging Strategies for Farmers



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# Listening to Farm Wives



**School of Social Work**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

# Why Farm Wives?

## Sunbelt Ag Expo Survey 2021

- Who will a farmer trust and talk with when experiencing extreme stress?

	Total		Farmer		Non-Farmer		<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Wife/Husband	159	72.3	68	73.1	91	71.7	<i>ns</i>
Friend	92	41.8	30	32.3	62	48.8	.014
Other Farmers	86	39.1	29	31.2	57	44.9	.040
Child	16	7.3	12	12.9	3	3.1	.006
Doctor	55	25.0	22	23.7	33	26.0	<i>ns</i>
Pastor/Faith Leader	80	36.4	28	30.1	52	40.9	<i>ns</i>
Banker/Financial Advisor	20	9.1	5	5.4	15	11.8	<i>ns</i>
Local Shop/Restaurant Worker	6	2.7	2	2.2	3	2.4	<i>ns</i>
Extension Agent	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.8	<i>ns</i>
Other	4	1.8	2	2.2	2	1.6	<i>ns</i>



# Farm Wives Focus Groups (Aug. 15-17, 2022 Stephanie Hollifield, Andrea Scarrow, Anna Scheyett)

- Since “spouse” most frequently identified as the person a farmer would trust and talk with about stress
- 29 women recruited from 6 counties in S GA with support from regional FB and Extension agents

	Mean (STD)	N	%
<b>Age</b>	50.1 (14.4)		
<b>Education</b>			
HS		3	10%
College 2 or less		13	45%
College		7	24%
Trade degree/certificate		1	3%
Graduate degree		5	17%
<b>Caring for children at home</b>		11	38%
<b>Working outside the home</b>		18	62%
<b>Years married to farmer</b>	26.7 (14.8)		
<b>Years lived on a farm</b>	36.3 (19.3)		



# Farm Wives Focus Group Themes

- Asked about stress in their farmer, their children, themselves
- Asked what would help?
- What we heard:
  - Farmers: high stress, reluctance to admit
  - Stress in other family members (children)
  - Stress in self
  - Time is a precious commodity
  - Coping mechanisms exist—faith, family, friends
  - More connections among farm women would be a support
  - Any education/supports for farmers must be *brief* and/or *woven into existing events*





# Next Steps

- Return to spouses in April/May 2023 to discuss focus group results and gather ideas to build a “farm family stress management toolkit”
- Considering Extension-sponsored social events for women
- Feedback supports our continuation of Farm Stress Production Meetings **(DEFINE THIS...)**
- Informed development of farm stress management flyer (more in a bit)



# Precision Agriculture Stress Support Mapping



**School of Social Work**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

# Precision Agriculture Stress Support (PASS) Mapping

Project Lead: Wes Porter, Crop & Soil Sciences

Co-leaders: Anna Scheyett, ALEC, Extension, SSW

Barry Croom, ALEC

Leo Bastos, IPA, Crop & Soil Science

Simer Virk, Crop & Soil Sciences, Extension Precision Ag

Graduate Research Assistants: Hugo Nunes Martins Nogueira

Brianna Yoo

Funded by UGA Institute for Integrated Precision Agriculture



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# The UGA Precision Ag Stress Support (PASS) Initiative

- The primary benefit is the ability to identify high-stress areas, save lives, and improve overall well-being in agricultural communities within Georgia.
- The main goal is to:
  - Develop and test a predictive GIS model to identify high-stress farming conditions at the county level
    - The model will label Georgia counties with a ranking scale for response intervention
  - Test and improve the on-the-ground response protocol for identified high-stress communities
  - Develop an automated workflow to import public data into the mapping process rather than manual entry, to ensure continuous, **real-time (??)** data updates and map generation.



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# What data will be mapped?

- Derived from rural Georgia experts, the process prioritized these variables as very important to stress levels of rural communities:

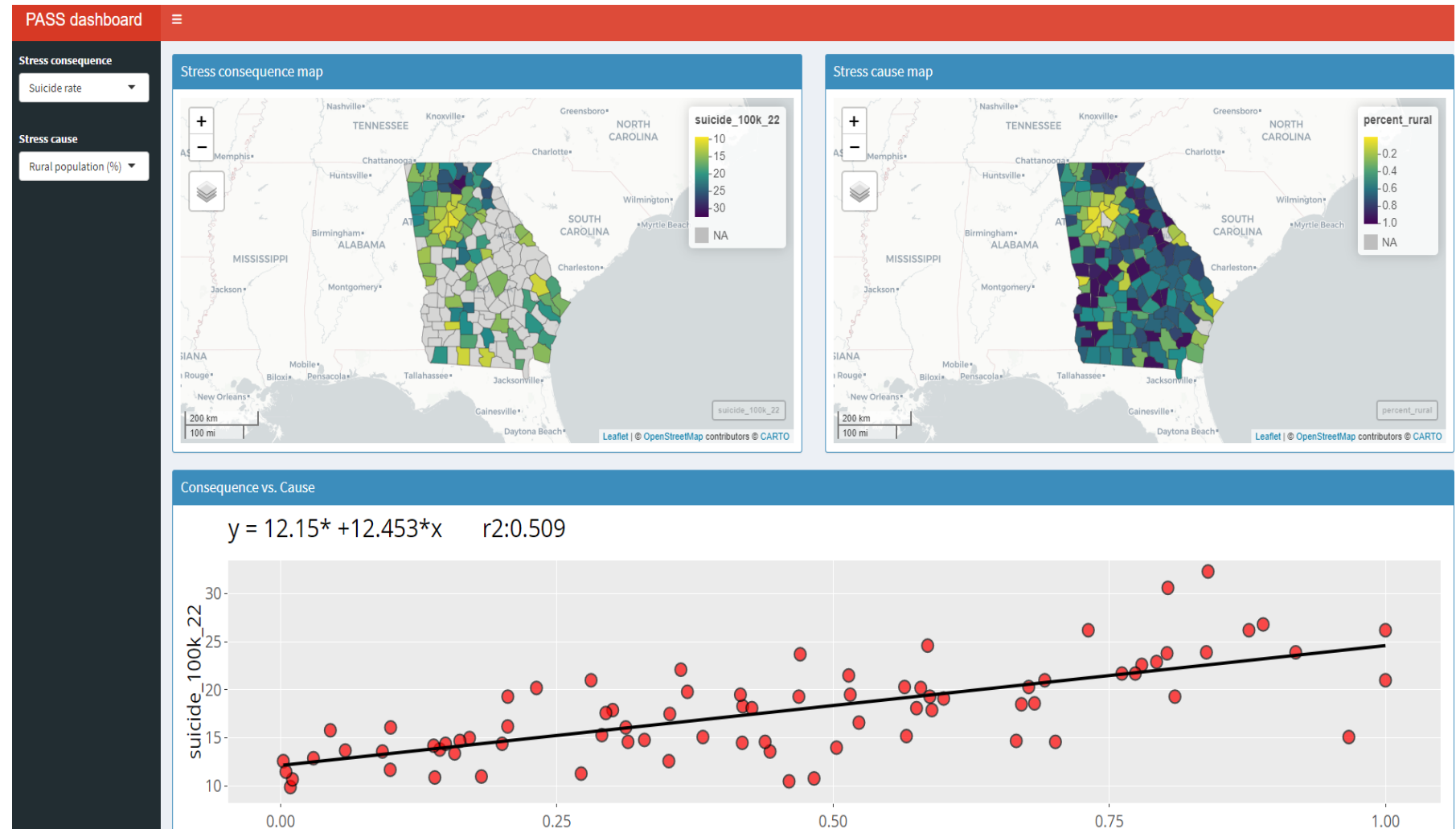
- Weather
- Commodity prices
- Farm operating costs
- Crop/livestock disease
- Lack of available labor
- Lack of access to healthcare
- Lack of health insurance
- Opioid and other substance misuse
- Work-related accidents
- Sudden changes to the local economy
- Debts and loans
- Poverty & high unemployment

UGA Weather Center  
Multiple Sources  
Multiple Sources  
Multiple Sources  
BLS  
CDC's SVI  
CDC's SVI  
GA DPH OASIS  
GA DPH OASIS  
Google alerts  
Federal Reserve  
CDC's Social Vulnerability Index



# Beta test

- So far, bivariate analysis to demonstrate proof of concept
- Ultimately, will overlay more static health and social data with more real time variables (e.g. weather)



# BUT...identifying high stress counties doesn't matter unless you *do* something

- Idea for possible resources in flagged counties
  - Materials (posters, flyers, social media content, newsletter content)
  - Advanced stress-management-related training for Extension faculty, staff, and community stakeholders
  - Information on local behavioral health resources
  - Protocol for who to contact locally to inform of high risk
  - Consultation with qualified counselors, *perhaps anonymously*



# Messaging Strategies for Farmers



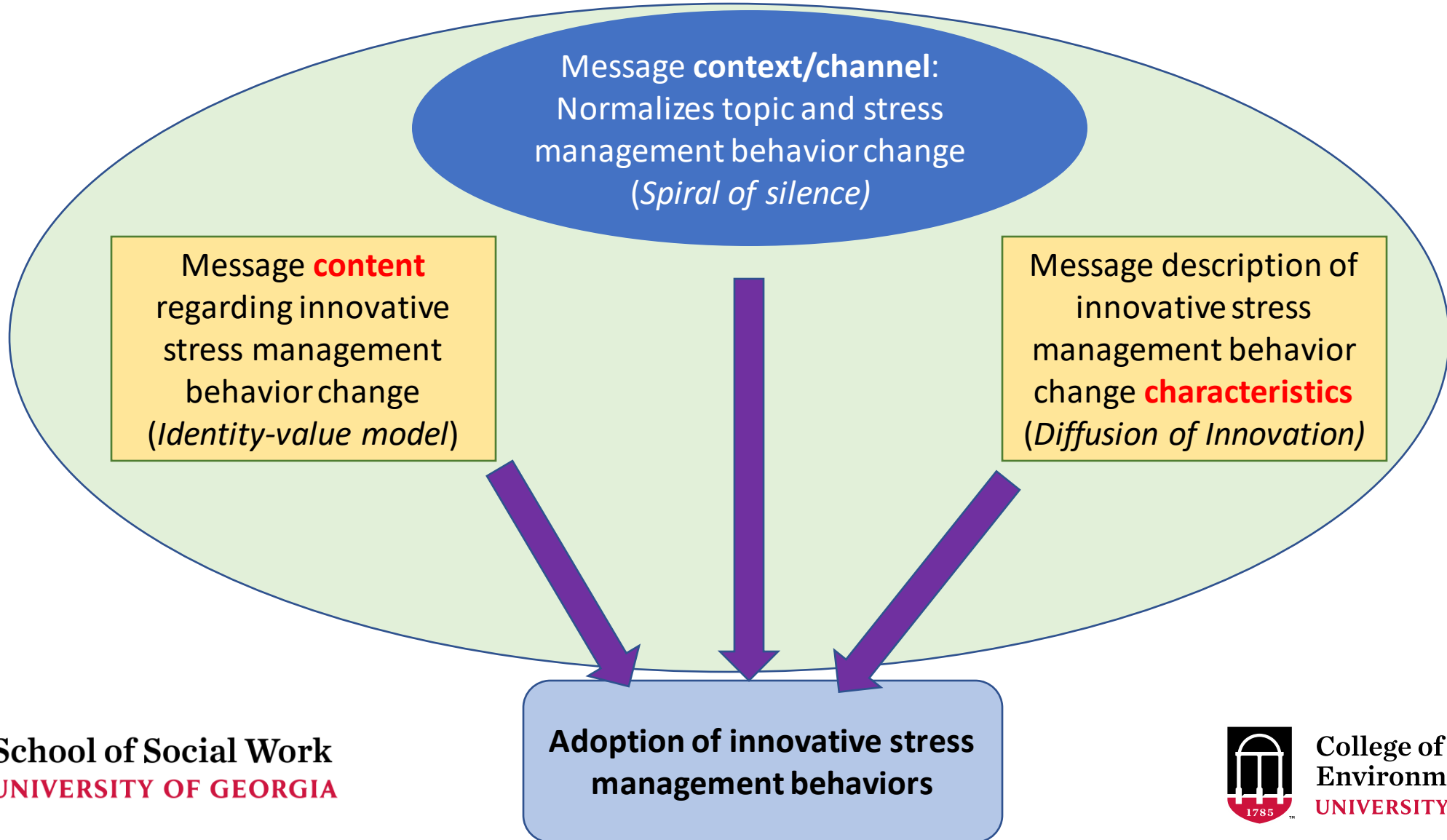
**School of Social Work**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



# Messaging Strategies for Farmers



# What does this mean for messages?

- Decrease stigma
  - Use recognized leaders
  - Use “we all” normalizing language
- Messages must match values in identity of Farmer
  - Surveyed at Sunbelt Ag Expo: *family, farming is for generations, and faith*
- Changes in behavior must have certain characteristics
  - Have a clear advantage
  - Be simple
  - Be try-able
  - Result in an observable change



# Message Testing

- Crafted messages and selected images based on principles of model
- Tested at Southern Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference
- Asked growers to select message (or combination) and image that most resonated with idea of stress management



# Results (not yet through design process)

- Proposed Slogan  
“Take care of your **family**, your **farm**, and **yourself**”
- Message
  - We all know that stress is a part of farming, but high stress can make it really hard to stay focused on what matters. Don't let stress wear you down—stay **SAFER** with these simple steps
- Images
  - Multi-generational images of farmer and land



# Stay SAFER

**Sleep:** Get a good's night sleep each night

**Aware:** Be aware when you are getting stressed, a take a break and stretch, even for just 5 minutes

**Focus:** Focus on things to be grateful for—family, friends, faith

**Eat well:** Eat healthy food, drink lots of water

**Reach out:** Talk with someone, a friend, a pastor, a counselor



# Images



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# Next Steps Summary

- Farm Family Stress Management Toolkit
- Finalize PASS and test
- Finalize farmer flyer and test



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# SIGN UP!

## Thriving on the Farm: A blog with tips and supports for managing stress on the farm

Sign up at <http://eepurl.com/ibhqJT>



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



# THANK YOU!

# QUESTIONS FOR ALL PRESENTERS

Maria Bowie

Grant Management Specialist

UGA Extension

[mbowie@uga.edu](mailto:mbowie@uga.edu)

706-542-8782

Anna Scheyett

Professor

CAES/School of Social Work

[amscheye@uga.edu](mailto:amscheye@uga.edu)

706-542-3824



School of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA