

Season 2, Episode 2

Hannah: Welcome to the diversity imperative, a podcast dedicated to unearthing the agriculture sectors potential. I'm your co-host Hannah Kenschuh and I'm a grain farmer from Southern Alberta

Erin: and I'm Erin Gowriluk, your other co-host. And I lead a national Grower association in the nation's Capital.

Hannah: We're doing something different this episode and we can't wait to share it with you.

Erin: Yep. This week we're passing the mic onto The Do More Agriculture Foundation, a charity that focuses on mental health in agriculture across Canada,

Hannah: So do more and friends are taking over the diversity imperative mic. From The Do More Agriculture Foundation, we get to hear from executive director Megs Reynolds, as well as Himadry Singh, who is the marketing director for the foundation.

And they're joined by Stuart Chutter farmer from Sask and Amy Vanderheide farmer from Nova Scotia, and they discuss many important topics that bring together mental health and inclusion.

Erin: And these four professionals and advocates in their own right. They get into the power of language and the role that language plays in building community and overcoming mental health stigma.

Hannah: Yeah. And so much more like is imposter syndrome, even a thing and the importance of representation.

Erin: So I think we should get right into this great conversation.

Hannah: Yes, absolutely. Let's do it. We hope this conversation resonates for you as much as it did for us.

Megz: Hey everyone. Thank you for joining us. I am Megz the new executive director for the Do More Agriculture Foundation. Do More is the national voice and champion for mental health in agriculture, and is working to change the

culture to one where all producers are encouraged, supported, and empowered to take care of their mental wellbeing.

I am super excited to be joined by three very special guests. And we're going to have a conversation about the importance of mental health inclusion, and many other things. So I've introduced myself and now I'm going to let everybody else introduce themselves,

Stuart: Good morning. Hi Megz. Great to see everyone. Um, my name is Stuart Chutter. I'm a farmer from Eastern Saskatchewan. I raised about 200 purebred red Angus cows on my farm on about 1,280 acres. I'm a first-generation farm or I farm on a first-generation farm. I am not the farm, but, uh, I started farming in 2010 on a rented land and was able to buy my farm about five years ago. I describe myself as a regenerative farmer. Um, I get super jazzed about soil health and soil conservation. Those are conversations I love to have. Um, and most of my farm practices are, are guided by the five principles of soil health. Uh, one of which is recognizing and incorporating the value of diversity in farming systems. I'm also a gay farmer and I do make a specific effort to, uh, um, to be visible as a gay farmer in, in my rural community, uh, and to, to, to help create community for, um, for the LGBTQ plus rural community

Megz: Thank you for joining us Stuart, Amy.

Amy: Hey everyone. It's nice to see everyone today. Um, my name's Amy Vanderheide, uh, I am a director with The Do More Ag Foundation, uh, but I'm also a farmer in Nova Scotia. We are a poultry from, uh, primarily broilers as well as some crops and a few head of cattle on the side, because I always say that every farmer needs a hobby, but you don't get to leave the farm.

So it's usually it ends up being more farming, I'm involved in a few things, uh, outside the firm. I am currently the chair of the chicken producers association of Nova Scotia. I sit as a director with the Kings County Federation of Agriculture. Uh, and yeah, it seems like I'm always up to something so really excited to be here today and, and take part in this discussion.

Megz: We are excited to have you here, Himadry.

Himadry: Good morning, everyone. My name is Himadry Singh and I am the marketing manager with Do More. Um, I started working in a shortly after university. Um, I never thought I would be here to be honest, but I was influenced by some friends and loved the industry when I started working there.

Um, yah, I'm excited to be part of this podcast and get to talk about mental.

Megz: Awesome. Well, I'm super excited you all were able to join me and thank you, Hannah, for letting us take over today. I think we're going to start with the power of words. Since we're going to have a conversation about mental health.

I think that's a really great first topic to dive right into. So I want to hear from you all about language and its ability to increase or decrease the stigma surrounding mental health. Are there words or phrases that really don't sit well with you? Either ones that are vocalized or ones that we internalize as self-talk, which can be negative and positive.

Um, and then are there words or phrases that you feel are very powerful and beneficial to both ending external and internal stigma surrounding.

Himadry: Um, one that jumps for me is, um, and I'm guilty of saying it, but I always like, it'll be a very small inconvenience. Like Tim Horton's might not have the donut I want and I'll be like, I'm so depressed.

And that contributing that illness with something where I'm just sad. I don't have a donut. I am not depressed and takes away. Um, from the impact of saying I have depression versus being sad. And so if I ever do feel depressed, I've taken away that feeling of having depression and like, I don't know the proper word for it, but it feels like I takes away from what depression actually is.

And then I'm not able to distinguish my emotions and take care of it, mental health, because I'm combining all these emotions into it, just one word and overusing that word.

Megz: And that might be a hard word for someone else to hear you use in that context, if they're also suffering from depression. Right.

Himadry: Exactly. And it adds to that stigma that more.

Amy: I think too, when we get, you know, I see this in my son, he's, he's 14. He has anxiety and, and things like that. And, and I'm guilty of it myself. When you, when you are kind of, you know, in a depressive episode or just not feeling yourself and you say, oh, I'm just dumb. I'm stupid. I'm. You know, you just get so negative that you forget that you are going through a lot, instead of recognizing that, okay, I am actually depressed.

I, my anxiety is really high and naming what it is. You just, you go the opposite way, which kind of takes again, like Himadry said, takes the focus away from what's really going on and really gets you even more in a negative space than saying, okay, this is my anxiety. I know I'm not dumb. I know I'm not.

You know, I'm not any of these things that I'm calling myself. But I think sometimes we think that people see us in that way, when actually it's just, you know, it's just us, it's our own minds playing tricks on us instead of naming, what's actually happening to us in the background.

Megz: That's a really good point. And that's such a challenging feedback cycle to get out of.

Amy: Yeah, for sure. It can drag you down pretty fast.

Megz: Are there any tips, like you, you mentioned your son, so are there conversations that you have with him around that self conversation and those words that are used to try to help him as he's going through?

Amy: Definitely. We know he's been dealing with these episodes since he was about seven. And so we've, he's come to realize as he's gotten older, what's going on, but it's sometimes after the fact, but it's kind of like a, okay, take a breath and tell me the top three or four things that you're feeling right now.

Think about what happened today. And what is making you feel this way? You know, usually it's, it's very it's social for him. So maybe somebody said something to him and he didn't quite interpret it the way that it was meant. And he's, he's just sat all afternoon and milled around and in his brain, um, So, yeah, we've, we're very open in how we talk about it, which is a good thing.

And something that's taken some, you know, some real learning on all of our sides, but just to have that conversation, like, okay, let's sit down or go to your room or go wherever and just kind of think about what it is. And often a few hours later he'll come back and he'll say, I'm sorry. I said those things.

It's just because, and then he's recognized what that was, what the catalyst to that emotional.

Megz: That's very hard and very good that he's able to, to recognize what was creating that emotion in him.

Amy: Yeah. It's been a long time coming, but it's practice and it's, it's just growing up and learning to acknowledge that you have these feelings inside and it's better to talk about them than let them internalize. Mm, cause problems later on one

Megz: for adults too. I mean, that's something I've really been working on with myself is when I feel something it's, it's not trying to push it down. It's why am I feeling this way? Like what just went on in my external world that is making me feel angry or feel sad or feel overwhelmed. And then what can I do? What's within my control to deal with that emotion and in a healthy way, so that that cycle can complete itself. And I've been working with my kids as well. My youngest was super upset the other night and she just needed to cry. And so we were laying in bed reading Harry Potter, and she just laid beside us and cried and cried.

And we talked about how we have to complete those feedback loops within our bodies, where that cycle has to, you know, when you have that feeling, you have to feel it and you have to find a way to let it out and to work through it. And then you can come out of it instead of just holding that.

Amy: Yeah, exactly. Once you name it or give yourself permission to let it out, that's sometimes all it takes.

Himadry: There's definitely a sense of relief as soon as you name it.

Megz: I think you take a little power back in that moment, right

Stuart: It, yeah. I, I think for me, just like Amy and Himady said, you know, there, there is so much stigmatized language out there. Uh, on so many levels and it is so easy to use, um, their, their words and phrases that we all grew up with. Um, so it does take a conscious effort to call yourself out or recognize them or.

Or make changes in how you use those words in everyday life and use those words internally as well. Um, but I also think, at least for me, I've, um, I don't think I, I want, I look at it as in terms of there's a word police or there's, there's a words that are you can't use or that you need to. Um, delete from your vocabulary.

I think it's more an intentional effort at creating community and belonging for everyone and being aware of the impact of words, not what you're intending to

say, but what the impact of those words are. And then choosing not to use words specifically and in situations, um, when impact and intention could be done.

So I think, I think it's, we need to give ourselves grace to when we do screw up and say the wrong things. I don't think perfection is the goal. Um, but rather personal growth and, and building community are that's my goal. When I choose the words I want to use

Megz: that is such a great point. I really appreciate you sharing that and how we have to be so cognitive of, of who's around us and we don't always know what other people are going through, but we probably know enough about them to make choices about the words and the language that we're using that is specific to those people in those situations. And I think that's a very important reminder for all of us and like you're pointing to.

We grew up with them. Right. We grew up with so many words and phrases just being tossed around and that was accepted and it was okay. And I mean, it was never technically okay. But society said it was right. So that was just kind of the conditioning we grew up on. And now how do we change and break those cycles?

And it takes that conscious thought. I'm going to think, oh, sorry, go ahead.

Himadry: I was just going to say with what's you're saying on community, I think one thing too, that we can. With community that needs to happen to you is being open to the feedback. Um, sometimes I don't even recognize when I say something, but if a friend or a family of lets me know, um, and sort of reacting and trying to defend myself, just being open to realize, um, like Stuart mentioned the impact, those words might have and understanding the other side.

Megz: Yeah, that's a very good point. And it's very uncomfortable too, right? Like you have to put yourself out of your comfort zone to be open to that and to have that conversation without trying to bring in a bunch of emotion to it.

Himadry: Yeah, for sure.

Stuart: Yeah. I'd add the, yeah, it's uncomfortable, but I've had some of the most beautiful connections with people, um, who have called word choice or phrases in a polite, respectful, professional way. Um, both whether it both at times when it's me calling it out and at times when I'm being called out and the discussions and the connection that have resulted from some of those

conversations have been super cool. I think, I think we think of those conversations as difficult and they are to Start.

Um, but they're, they're worthwhile and, they can really have good results for sure.

Amy: That's such a good point. I think Stuart just really, uh, encapsulated. Do you know, one of my favorite things to say, when people ask me about, you know, stepping up into new challenges and things like that is kind of, you have to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable because in those moments is when you learn and when you grow and you know, it works this way too. If you're, if you're okay being a little bit uncomfortable to have these conversations about, you know, language you're using or about a certain topic and he's right, those are where some of those great conversations come out of. And often both sides walk away knowing a little bit more than they knew before. So I think that he phrased it really well there.

Stuart: Yeah, thanks. Amy. I think too, especially in rural spaces. Um, just, just kind of, like you said, I think we do perceive or stereotype that, you know, these are new discussions or, or maybe this is an, uh, industry or a space where we're not ready for some of these discussions yet, but I find the opposite.

I find there's a craving for, for these discussions to happen. I think people are open to them. I think people want to have them. They. To find, uh, a way to have them or someone to start, um, or someone to ask that question or, or we're all recognizing in the room that something that was said was inappropriate and we want to talk about it and address it. Um, but who's going to be that person. So, um, I think if you're that person ever, if you ever get that chance to be that person. It's worth it. And there's people in the room who, who are going to support you,

Megz: do you think possibly that's coming from our idea of community, shifting a little bit with people being more aware of diversity that exists within the farming community and within agriculture, but also with. You know your point with farms getting bigger, and now we have internet to connect us. So how is all of that influencing the way that we seek community and the way maybe we are trying to create community?

Amy: I think people are generally curious. And like you said, like this messaging isn't, it's, it's new, but it's not, you know, centuries old. It's just new in the last couple of years. And people are hearing this language like diversity and inclusion over and over and over again. And you know, they're, they're sitting

maybe in a room or at a conference or something where this is a topic and. There, they're not going to be the ones to ask about it there, but it's those kind of side conversations that happen after where people may say, okay, what is this about? And that generates their curiosity, but then gets that conversation started.

Himadry: I think social media has played a huge role, um, in opening these conversations as well, because I think these are conversations people have wanted to have, but we've been taught. They don't get brought up at the dinner table. Um, but now seeing them publicly and seeing people share their experiences, their stories, I think it's opened the conversation that this can be, whether it's mental health, whether it's diversity, this can be a regular conversation that we're having.

Stuart: Yeah. I agree with both those things. And I think in agriculture, there's two, two kind of key drivers of why we'd need to, or why we are having these conversations. The first being community, the need for community farms are getting bigger. Our agriculture population is smaller and smaller. Neighbors are further and further away.

Uh, as land gets more expensive, uh, new farmers are, may have to move to new areas to find cheaper land, to find opportunity. Um, they may be leaving their community to, to follow their farming dreams. So. Building community in agriculture and in rural spaces in a face-to-face way is getting harder and harder.

Because our community is smaller and smaller and more spread out. That's just the reality of it. So I think there is an intentional effort at building community. We need that. We crave that that's human nature. We're willing to have these conversations more and more because we recognize we need people.

We need, we need our neighbors. We need our community. That's so important to us. Um, in our farm lives. And then I think also the second aspect is our, it could also just be a business perspective, uh, of our agriculture labor shortage. There's a reason we need to have these conversations beyond just the social and the community, but also to get our products to market.

We have so many, especially in Saskatchewan agriculture, in any Canadian agriculture, we have so many resources that the world needs, but people are limiting factor and diversity inclusion, stigmatized language. We need to normalize and have these conversations all the time in agriculture, because we need talent and we need employment or employees. And we need people who want to be in agriculture.

Megz: Yeah, that's a really good point. It's been, um, I know I've had my own challenges within the industry, whether that's feeling like I don't belong or that I'm not, um, maybe knowledgeable enough to sit at a table because I didn't grow up on a farm, but then I came to the industry and I made that choice to learn.

Um, or even I noticed the other day having a conversation, uh, with somebody. And instead of just offering, we're talking about kind of global events and how that's affecting economics and supply chains. And instead of just me, I'm putting in my information into the conversation and being confident in that, and I've spent two years hyper-focused on this.

I felt like I had to explain why I had that information so that, you know, while I was doing this. And so I've been paying attention to this and it wasn't, I, I didn't just feel like. I could put it out there without saying like, no, I actually do know this. Like I've learned this and I've paid attention to this.

And I think that there's a lot in our industry. Um, just the way, whether it's been that traditional, who, what a farmer looks like, or, or what have you, but there's a lot in our industry that makes people, and you know, back to that diversity in that minority side, feel like they maybe don't belong or they shouldn't be at the table.

Um, Yeah. So I don't know if any of you guys want to contribute on that, but that's definitely something that I've experienced a lot and I've struggled with in all aspects of this industry,

Amy: imposter syndrome.

Megz: Yeah. And I don't know if it's always actually that, um, or if it's just, we use that term because we understand what it means now, but how much of it is on us and how much of it is on the environment that is making us feel that.

Amy: True. You know, I was thinking about this last week I was at, in a virtual, I was at a virtual AGM. Um, but a board that for as long as I've been involved in this certain aspect has always been all men. And then there were two females elected to be on the board and I thought, wow, that's awesome. And then was I had this like, feeling like I was intimidated, kind of by these other women and.

I have no idea why, or had no idea why. And then I got thinking like, I'm, I'm never scared. I wouldn't say to challenge a man, but I've never been scared to step up and, and bring myself into a conversation. But then I was like, well, you

know, women are more intimidating because we don't know. Like, I think, well, I shouldn't say we don't know.

I feel like they maybe worked really hard to get where they are. And haven't had that. We haven't seen that. Like we don't, we don't see ourselves in that position or what, because we haven't seen ourselves in that position. So I kind of think like in a way, um, not having that representation is more intimidating than saying, okay, I'm going to step up and do it.

And then all of a sudden there's somebody there and you're like, oh, It's it's it is it's scary or it's, it's hard to picture now. It is weird. It's and I don't know, I probably didn't explain that well at all, but you know, the, the imposter syndrome is one thing, but there are other elements to. To say, okay.

I don't have to explain myself. I should just be able to put this fact out there, but then you have this really deep feeling like, okay, I need to back myself up, you know, like where does that come from? Or why, why do we feel that?

Megz: Yeah, I think that lack of being able to recognize ourselves in those positions is definitely a challenge. Whether that's, um, you know, seeing another woman on a board or a Stuart, like I'm sure that there's ways where you feel that way or Himadry too, but just when you can't see yourself there, because there that person isn't there yet, it makes it seem all the more harder for you to be qualified or be worthy of that position or that next step, or what has.

Himadry: Um, from my perspective, I've worked in agriculture most of my career, but I noticed the other week that my language is never, um, I'm in ag, like, it's been majority of my career, but for some reason I always feel like an outsider of like that I should feel, um, grateful that I can be part of the industry, but I've never felt like I am part of agriculture. I've always felt like I work for ag, yeah. It's interesting.

Megz: Do you think that's because you didn't grow up in it or like, why do you think that is?

Himadry: Um, I think partly because yeah, one, I didn't grow up in it. Um, Oh, the people I meet in ag, or I've often, you know, grown up at a farm, have all this history. And so, uh, me entering it has been a little different. And then there are times when I'm at a trade show and I'll always get the question of like, where are you from? And like the person next to me, won't have the same questions or you show up into your room and it's like, you're expected to explain your history of how you got here versus someone who obviously. Grew

up on a farm and they don't have an explanation of how they got there, but then I have to like defend myself. So I don't think I've ever actually felt like I'm actually part of this industry. And I I've had people tell me I am, but like that imposter syndrome almost comes in or it's like, I don't know if I am.

Megz: It's like, you're not accepted by the industry.

Himadry: Yeah. In like internally and externally sometimes, but yeah, it's like a little bit of a 50 50 of where I need to accept that. Like, this is what I love to do and this is where I am not, but yeah.

Stuart: Yeah. I, this is also relatable. Um, I think. You can't be what you can't see. And like Amy said, if you haven't seen board members there, or if you haven't seen yourself represented in agriculture, you're always going to have those internalized thoughts of, do I belong? Am I, can I do this? Can I step up? But it also, this conversation also kind of breaks my heart because you three, like you guys are such stars in agriculture.

So if you're, if you're feeling this, there must be a whole. World out there feeling this, and this is not what we need in agriculture. We need people to, to want to work in agriculture to feel like they belong in agriculture, to feel like diversity and differences bring so much value. Like we do legitimately need that. Um, so that I'm listening to this conversation and thinking damn, if, if, if you three. Feel this way, we have some work to like, there's lots of work to do. How do we, how do we change this

Megz: I totally agree. There is a lot of work to do. And I've, I know like I've had people reach out to me privately on social media and they're, uh, you know, in different ways involved in the industry and they are considering getting out or they did get out and it's been described as death by a thousand cuts. 'cause it's just little things all the time, whether that's being doubted because of your sex, uh, whether it's actual harassment, um, for who you are for your gender, for what you look like, there's it just goes on and on. And at what point do we actually come together as an industry and to your point. Realize and celebrate that diversity is only gonna make us stronger. And I think too, like if agriculture is going to be the solution to things that it can be, we need diversity and we need to be supportive of each other and accepting and, and really look for ways to bring in all the differences out there because that's where growth comes from an ideas come from. And we, yeah, we need that. So thank you all for talking about it. Cause I always feel like that's the first step and it helps.

Himadry: Um, I just wanted to touch point on something that Amy mentioned about role models. I think there's also the pressure that if you become that role model, you no longer just represent yourself, but you're also done there's this pressure to represent your D like, for me, it's being a woman of color. It's like, am I the person that should be doing this? And then that's also where the imposter syndrome. Cause it's like, I'm not calling. Like, I don't feel like I'm qualified and I, and I can't represent every woman of color, but if you become in a position of a role model, you have that pressure that like, you don't just know how to open that door. You want to like push that wall down.

Megz: That's a really good point. And we're all experts in our own experiences. Right. And I think that there's strength in sharing our own experiences, because it, to me that opens the door for others to join the conversation.

Amy: I think too, like Himadry said, uh, representing like this entire community, you know, like in, in 2019 I spoke on a panel at the FTP meetings and I was there representing women in ag and it's like, okay, how does this one woman from Nova Scotia go to Ottawa or Quebec city and sit on this panel of ag ministers from across the country and represent all women across Nova Scotia or across Canada when Nova Scotia is this tiny little, you know, sample of a population with completely different um, I guess challenges than maybe someone from Alberta, Saskatchewan would have. So it is, it, it, you get a little defensive, but also a little like, okay, am I this person now?

Like how do I step up and say, okay, this is, this is an issue for women in ag, at least from Nova Scotia. I hope it's across Canada because that's what I'm going to portray here. So it is it's you kind of get by, by speaking up, you do, you, you have to kind of stay true to your values, but also stay open to sharing others messages that aren't, you know, may not be exactly your own, but at least in line with what your message is.

Megz: When you were on, when you were sharing and you were on that panel or you were, um, talking to the elected officials, did you bring up second shift or the roles that women are usually tasked with on top of everything they're doing, even if they don't have children, did you bring that into the conversation and kind of how that influences what our choices are or how we get involved with the industry or what additional, um, stressors are in our life that could be affecting mental health.

Amy: Yeah. So I started it that way. Actually, I, we had a pre-meeting with the other panelists at the time and I was like, okay, I don't really know. I had kind of addressed that. Like I'm one person trying to represent this whole community.

And one of the other panelists was like, I think you should just sit down and like list off all the jobs you do.

And so I was like, okay, I can do that. So I sat down and I said, hi, I'm Amy VanderHeide. I'm from a farm in Nova Scotia. Um, along with being a mother of three, which means I'm also a nurse, a chef, uh, I'm a wife, I'm a, uh, equipment operator. I'm an animal husbandry technician. I'm a, this, this and this that I just kind of started listing off everything I do. And in the back of my mind, I'm thinking like, holy cow, I really do do all these things. So there's a bit of self recognition there, but afterwards, a few of them came out to me and said, you know, I grew up on a farm. My mom did all those things, but she was just my mom. I didn't think about all these things that, that she did. And, you know, she. She just did what she had to do and dad was the farmer and whatever, but then when you think about it a little bit more, you're like, okay, so this, this person doing all this background work or, or leaving the field at five to come home and make sure her kids are fed. You know, is, is really taking on a little bit extra in some ways, compared to someone who can just, you know, set their mind on a task and go with it. There's always 17 things on a, to do list at one time in my head that, you know, involve anything from, you know, calling a dealer to making sure I have peanut butter in the fridge, in the cupboard for my sons. It's it's so varied. You know, it gets messy in there sometimes when you.

Megz: Yeah, I would say on top of that, it's,

Amy: it's been a way for me to, I bring that up a lot. To, to say, okay, this is, this is what I do, but this is what all that means and explain what that second shift really is.

Megz: Yeah. It's not just the physical time it takes to do the extra things. It's the mental, mental load of holding all of those moving pieces in your brain all the time. And that waking up in the middle of the night.

Going okay. What haven't I done or going through the list of, are we going to get everybody through everything tomorrow, which could involve, you know, meals for the field? It could involve getting children to school. It could involve running equipment and making sure there's still laundry done. So people have clothes and.

Holding, all of that is, is very hard. And especially if you have younger children, you're probably also the ones still getting up in the middle of the night. Right? Like it's, it's a very challenging time.

Amy: Well, it's trying to prioritize it. All right. Like, it's kind of, if I know that, you know, the kids are in school all day, I can prioritize a little bit better because I know what needs to be done, but when they're home, it's all those things that pop up. You know, your, your list changes constantly when, when those other things are happening in the background.

Megz: So we are, I am watching our time and I want to try to get into one more area before we have to wrap up this beautiful conversation.

Stuart: Can I jump in with one thing? I love what Amy said about. When she was listing off her jobs, how internally she had that thought, wow, I, you know, I am doing all these things. Holy crap. Look at me, go. I'm getting all this done. Yes, I do belong here. Yes. I know what I'm doing. And agriculture. You know, yes, this is my space. We talked earlier about word choice and belonging and community building and how much that can have effect on your internal dialogue and, and self perception.

So I loved hearing that Amy, in that, you know, saying it out loud helped you, you know, you had that, you took that moment to realize. Yeah, you're, you're a powerhouse. You're doing it. You know, your shit, you belong. So, uh, so good for you. We all need more of those moments.

Amy: Yeah. And I think like we don't, there isn't any data on the generations before us that have been doing that. Right. There's no, like there's no role models, but there's no, not even a, a census section that says these are all my jobs or whatever. You know, my grandmother did all the same thing, but. But just never, there's not that data to back it up. So really realizing that you do do all these things, but naming them so other people realize what you're doing, not for the recognition or the pat on the back, but just to say, you know, this is what I have to offer. I'm here. You know, this is my, my place.

Megz: So as we wrap stuff up, I just want to hear if any of you think that there are ways that we can, uh, work together through, um, you know, Stuarts comments on community, but to, you know, we're, we know that we're lacking, uh, resources and structure supports within mental health, especially in rural areas. So do any of you have any maybe personal experiences or comments on how we can use and adjust and grow community to, to fill in some of those gaps?

Amy: I think that in agriculture, we're very guilty of speaking just to agriculture and not intentionally, but even just how we use our language. General public doesn't understand. So when we look at how to boost things like mental health

and agriculture and how to have these conversations, we really need to rely also on people, outside of agriculture, on organizations, outside of agriculture, whether it's like, um, the Canadian mental health association or, or other players already in the field to help us. We really have to make sure that we check our language and seem open because again, agriculture doesn't always seem open to other, you know, other people in the world. Um, but, and just to have those open conversations, but it does it can't just stay within agriculture. We need to let people in and, and know how to communicate with each other.

Stuart: Yeah, I agree with what Amy said. I think for me, community, like the concept of community was something I didn't figure out until the last few years I building community is intentional. It takes effort. It takes constant cultivation and focus, um, finding the right people in your life. Um, is a job and, um, it's, it's so worthwhile, but I didn't understand how in, how it needed to be so intentional to really see all those benefits of having a good, strong community. And, and I've also realized that the word community doesn't just mean my neighbors or this small town I live in. Um, yes, it includes that. And there's fantastic, amazing people right around me. But my core community also includes people outside of agriculture all over the world. Some that I've never met some just through social media. Um, but it it's community. Isn't just a physical space. It's. Um, it can be so much more than that. So I think for me, in terms of where I, where I focus my effort for, for my mental health, for, um, keeping myself balancing stress and, and, um, it's especially on the farm when it can be so isolating is putting intentional effort and devoted time into building committee.

Himadry: Yeah, I agree with what Stuart and Amy have said, I think it comes down to being open, um, to each other, to having discussions, um, being careful or watching our language, but also our tone of how we speak to others. Um, and how we speak to ourselves. I think change also starts with ourselves so we can understand our own mental health. We'll start to understand others. Um, and yeah, just having those conversations, what seem like difficult, but great conversation.

Megz: All very great points. I appreciate you guys so much for taking the time this morning to join me on Do More's takeover, but also too for being open and for having real and honest conversations. I appreciate that. And it's something that. You know, when we talk about community and looking after our mental health, this is something that is good for me, and it kind of feeds my soul and fuels me. So thank you all so much for being here and for contributing today.

Stuart: You bet. Thank you, Megz. I think Do More Ag and The Diversity Imperative podcast, you know, you guys are doing such wonderful things, both of you, and you're both so, so needed and valued in agriculture.

Amy: Yeah, thanks. And like Stuart said, like thanks for being a space for people can have these conversations. And I think, you know, oftentimes after we have these types of conversations, we all get messages that say, oh, you said something I've been thinking, you know, for a long time. And that's what it's all about. So thanks for giving people the opportunity to listen in on conversations and, and realize that they aren't the only ones with those thoughts or feelings.

Megz: Thank you, Hannah, for letting us take over.

Hannah: Wasn't that the best?

Erin: What a powerful and candid conversation we just had a chance to listen to.

Hannah: Huge gratitude to Megz, Himadry, Stuart, Amy, and the Do More Agriculture Foundation for allowing us to share this conversation with our listeners and for jumping on board for the takeover episode.

Erin: We loved hearing your different perspectives on these important topics.

Hannah: We'll be sure to link to the foundation and where you can find these four amazing folks in our show notes. So be sure to check that out

Erin: And thanks as always to our listeners for tuning into the diversity imperative. Hannah and I look forward to our next conversation in a few weeks time until then please visit our website diversityimperative.com where you'll find past episodes, resources, and a place to sign up for email updates.

And as always, we'd love to hear from you, rate and review the diversity imperative through your favorite podcast player. And connect with us on social. Find us on Twitter at [diversity in ag](https://twitter.com/diversityinag) and on Facebook and Instagram at [diversity imperative](https://www.facebook.com/diversityimperative). Or reach us by email through our website [Talk soon!](mailto:talk@diversityimperative.com) .