

Introductory

Engaging Your Organization: Connect, Inspire, Motivate with Measurable Results

Connect

Where am I Now?

What do I Need to Know?

Exploring Resiliency Factors & Workplace Challenges

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Beat Caregiver Stress

Build Resiliency and Well-Being



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Establishing a baseline of where you are now:

The three self-reported surveys, found online, help you estimate the degree of satisfaction, stress, and resiliency you have in helping animals and the people involved with these animals.

1. How Resilient are You?
2. Animal Caregiver Workplace Challenges
3. ProQOL Version 5 – Professional Quality of Life

Note: *Questions for Workplace Challenges* and *Workplace Resiliency & Satisfaction*: Surveys will be slightly different for three audiences: Shelters/Operations, Animal Protection, and Management in the future. (to be added in July)

The battery of survey measures “where you are now?” in the last 30 days. *It does **not** measure what is specifically happening or why it is happening.* That is up to the participant and/or the organization to reflection on. The surveys measure where the individual is now and uses very specific questions especially in the Workplace Challenges section. Note that surveys are used. They are NOT psychological tests.

When receiving the results, the participant/organization will be better able to:

- Define what a resilient animal caregiver might look like.
- Identify what might be the stressors, challenges, and resiliency skills that are playing out in the last 30 days.
- Understand the terminology used to describe caregiver workplace stress and resiliency and have the opportunity to personally apply it to their workplace experiences.
- Provide a measurement tool to start further discussion and reflection, both individual and by the organization. There has been very little research in this area since Figley, 2005.
- You can revisit the surveys whenever you want, so you can compare ‘Where you **were**’ to ‘where you are **now**’. Results are always free and confidential.

Why complete these surveys?

This activity provides a tool to reflect on questions like:

- Am I too stressed at the moment? Do I need help in asking the key questions to answer that?
- How strong are my resiliency skills?
- What is my first step to building resiliency and wellness?
- Capture, in formal research, what makes a resilience animal caregiver? How can we apply these findings to building resiliency and wellbeing for other caregivers, and organizations in general, doing similar work?

What do the surveys measure? What do you need to keep in mind?

Surveys attempt to measure the degree of risk for burnout and compassion fatigue/secondary trauma and how resilient you have been in the past 30 days. It is confidential. There are no rights or wrongs. It is free. The confidential results are pooled to measure group results. You can take the battery of surveys as many times as you like. Remember these are just surveys you are personally completing. There is no third party conversation. Nothing replaces talking to a trusted friend in the business or a professional health care person if you feel really stressed or are surprised with the results of the surveys.

The surveys are embedded into the program, “Building Resilience and Wellbeing”. The approach is solution focused and uses these surveys to capture where you are now. You will have an opportunity to reflect and apply the information to your situation and the people you work with. In the program you will be able to take the survey before and after the program to see how much you have grown. As leaders in this organization you will walk away with the “big” picture and hopefully secure information to shape a program to help your employees. Progress (ROI) can be measured when implementing the Comprehensive Program.

Survey #1

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Building Resiliency and Wellness: Where are you now?

Adapted & retrieved from: <http://www.resiliencycenter.com/resiliencyquiz.shtml>

Strategy: *This survey is the key to a positive approach in building resiliency and wellness. We truly need to understand how animal caregivers build resiliency. It is the building block to any initiative in managing workplace stress.*

How well do you cope? Are you resilient? Do you bounce back from life's trials and tribulations, or do they throw you for a serious loop? Resilience is the quality that allows us to "survive", and even gain strength from hardship. This Resilience Survey assesses a variety of positive coping skills. Personality contributes a little bit to this, but it is important to note: Resiliency can be learned and thus improved! The Resiliency factor is the glue that allows caregivers to manage stress and recover from challenges along the way. Resiliency increases engagement at work, effective interpersonal skills, work/life balance. Overall you will be more productive in your work!

A. Examine the following statements and indicate which option best describes or applies to you. (I invite you review the survey again and observe through the lens of your organization.)

1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	5 = Very Often
1. In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.				
2. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.				
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.				
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.				
5. I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.				
6. I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.				
7. I feel self-confident, appreciate myself. I have a healthy concept of who I am.				
8. I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.				
9. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.				
10. I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.				
11. I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.				
12. I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.				
13. I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.				
14. I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I'm different in different situations.				
15. I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.				
16. I "read" people well and trust my intuition.				
17. I'm a good listener. I have good empathy skills.				
18. I'm non-judgmental about others and adapt to people's different personality styles.				
19. I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.				
20. I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.				

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Your Resiliency Score is _____:

80 or higher	65-80	50-65	40-50	40 and under
Very resilient!	Better than most	Learning, but get adequate results	Are you struggling at times?	Life is tough! Learn more about Resiliency!

Interpretation of Survey

Highly resilient people show many similar qualities:

Playful, childlike curiosity. Ask lots of questions, want to know how things work. Play with new developments. Enjoy themselves as children do. Have a good time almost anywhere. Wonder about things, experiment, make mistakes, get hurt, laugh. Ask: "What is different now? What if I did this? Who can answer my questions? What is funny about this?"

Constantly learn from experience. Rapidly assimilate new or unexpected experiences and facilitate being changed by them. Ask "What is the lesson here? What early clues did I ignore? The next time that happens I will...."

Adapt quickly. Very mentally and emotionally flexible. Comfortable with contradictory personality qualities. Can be *both* strong and gentle, sensitive and tough, logical and intuitive, calm and emotional, serious and playful, and so forth. The more the better. Can think in negative ways to reach positive outcomes. "What could go wrong, so it can be avoided?"

Have solid self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. It determines how much you learn after something goes wrong. It allows you to receive praise and compliments. It acts as a buffer against hurtful statements while being receptive to constructive criticism. "I like, appreciate, and love myself...."

Self-confidence is your reputation with yourself. It allows you to take risks without waiting for approval or reassurance from others. You expect to handle new situations well because on your past successes. "These are my reliable strengths...."

Have good friendships, loving relationships. Research shows that people in toxic working conditions are more stress resistant and are less likely to get sick when they have a loving family and good friendships. Loners are more vulnerable to distressing conditions. Talking with friends and family diminishes the impact of difficulties and increases feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

Express feelings honestly. Experience and can express anger, love, dislike, appreciation, grief- the entire range of human emotions honestly and openly. Can also choose to suppress their feelings when they believe it would be best to do so.

Expect things to work out well. Deep optimism guided by internal values and standards. High tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Can work without a job description, is a good role model of professionalism. Has a synergistic effect, brings stability to crises and chaos. Ask "How can I interact with this so that things turn out well for all of us?"

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Read others with empathy. See things through the perspectives of others, even antagonists. Win/win/win attitude in conflicts. Ask "What do others think and feel? What is it like to be them? How do they experience me? What is legitimate about what they feel, say, and do?"

Use intuition, creative hunches. Accept subliminal perception and intuition as valid, useful sources of information. Ask "What is my body telling me? Did that daydream mean anything? Why don't I believe what I'm being told? What if I did this?"

Defend self well. Avoid and block attacks, fight back. See through and side-step cons, "games," and manipulations that others attempt. Find allies, resources, and support.

Have a talent for serendipity. Learning lessons in the school of life is the antidote to feeling victimized. They can convert a situation that is emotionally toxic for others into something emotionally nutritious for them. They thrive in situations distressing to others because they learn good lessons from bad experiences. They convert misfortune into good luck and gain strength from adversity.

A good indicator of exceptional mental health is when a person talking about a rough experience says "I would never willingly go through anything like that again,, but it was the one of best things that ever happened to me." Ask "How can I turn this around? Why is it good that this happened? What is the gift?"

Get better and better every decade. Become increasingly life competent, resilient, durable, playful, and free. Spend less time surviving than others and survive major adversities better. Enjoy life more and more.

Important notes:

This is a generic survey. As this program develops, we will look at designing a more unique survey, more specific to animal care.

Adapted & retrieved from: <http://www.resiliencycenter.com/resiliencyquiz.shtml>

An additional Workplace Satisfaction Survey will be added to this inventory. It will directly relate to the specific experiences found in the workplace, similar to the workplace challenges survey.

Several inventories have been gathered for more specific needs, depending on the audience. Most are online. For example, Emotional Intelligence and Optimism surveys.

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Survey #2: What Challenges May You Face in the Animal Care Community?

When completing this survey consider that this about you and what is happening in your current workplace situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you remember experiencing these activities in the **last 30 days**. I invite you to reflect on how your organization might look at the challenges as a group. How often are they occurring? These questions were summarized from many animal caregivers.

1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	5 = Very Often
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1. Are you pulled by a deep “sense of purpose”, but still feel misunderstood, underpaid and/or undervalued for the work you do?
2. Do you put animal care/protection ahead of your own self care?
3. Do you experience “blurry” boundaries between work and home?
4. Would you find it hard to extend empathy to people surrendering animals most of the time?
5. Do traumatic memories of work or personal situations in the past hold you back from giving your best, in the present?
6. Do you support your colleagues through stressful times and then go home feeling extremely drained?
7. When facing a number of crisis & victories, day after day, do you experience a rollercoaster of emotional highs and lows?
8. Do you have a habit of keep your “feelings in” to avoid a feeling of chronic emotional bleeding or the state of “nothing left to give”?
9. Does the combination of experiencing chronic suffering of animals, toxic circumstances or the sometimes abusive acts of owners leave you detached, numb, powerless, sad, and/or angry?
10. Do you find that your organization has little or no preventative strategies and supports in place to help you regain balance, emotional clarity, and sustain your energy again?
11. Do you put a low priority in establishing a self care plan to fully manage your challenges working in the animal care community.
12. Do you find that the sadness of humanely euthanizing healthy animals lingers with you so much that it is hard to focus on the other animals needing care?

Total: (add up the number of questions you answered yes to) _____

	Low – Score: 1 to 15	Average – Score: 16 to 34	High – Score: 35 to 55
My score ⇌			
Interpretation	<p>You are working in a healthy environment and manage the challenges of the animal care world well. OR</p> <p>These statements did not relate to the work you do. I invite you to reflect on how your employees might respond?</p>	<p>This is where 50% of animal caregivers land. Work has its ups and downs but at the end of the day, you are able to manage the challenges. Some days are better than others.</p> <p>Review you 4’s or 5’s and see if you can make some changes.</p>	<p>Your work environment might be toxic, especially with the higher scores. Self care might not be a priority. Perhaps there is a mismatch between your workplace and the kind of work you like to do. Take a hard look at the statements that are high and talk to a trusted friend/colleague or professional about these statements.</p>

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Survey #3

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE (PROQOL) VERSION 5 (2009)

http://www.proqol.org/Home_Page.php

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE (PROQOL)

This is a generic survey. It is featured on my website as one of three surveys used to help the animal caregiving community to accurately capture "Where are we now?" PROQOL is the standard survey used in ANY caregiving career. In 2005, over 3,000 animal caregivers have taken this survey. Definitions of the terms used in this inventory can be found at www.beatcaregiverstress.com

The strategy is to pool our results and customize what we need to measure in animal caregiving. Also there is no measure of the resiliency factors and specific workplace challenges in this survey. All inventories are FREE and confidential. Organizations can use it to collect results for their organization or just check for the big picture – 'where are we now?' re: this particular workplace? There will be a third party person to access the results at all times to maintain the confidentiality of individuals.

When you help animals, and people involved with these animals you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you help can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, when working in an animal care community. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the **last 30 days**.

We highly encourage the animal caregiver community to take these surveys www.beatcaregiverstress.com. and access the collective results anytime.

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Answering this online, please write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the 30 days. Results will be distributed at the presentation.

1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	5 = Very Often
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1. I am happy.
2. I am preoccupied with more than one animal/person I help.
3. I get satisfaction from being able to help *animals*/people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as an *animal caregiver*.
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of an animal or person I help.
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I help.
10. I feel trapped by my job as an animal caregiver.
11. Because of my animal caregiving, I have felt "on edge" about various things.
12. I like my work as an animal caregiver.
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the animals/people I help.
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of animals and people I have helped.
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with *animal caregiving* techniques and protocols.
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
19. I feel worn out because of my work in the animal care community.
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I help and how I could help them.
21. I feel overwhelmed because my caseload or workload seems endless.
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of animals, and people involved with these animals I help.
24. I am proud of what I can do to help.
25. As a result of my *helping*, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as an animal caregiver.
28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
29. I am a very caring person.
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

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 /www.isu.edu/~bhstamm or www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited,
 (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold.

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WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

To find your score on **each section**, total the questions listed on the left in each section and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

Compassion Satisfaction Scale:

- 3. _____
- 6. _____
- 12. _____
- 16. _____
- 18. _____
- 20. _____
- 22. _____
- 24. _____
- 27. _____
- 30. _____
- Total: _____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Compassion
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Burnout Scale:

- *1. _____ = _____
- *4. _____ = _____
- 8. _____
- 10. _____
- *15. _____ = _____
- *17. _____ = _____
- 19. _____
- 21. _____
- 26. _____
- *29. _____ = _____

The sum of my Burnout questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Burnout
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Reverse the scores for those that are starred.

0=0, 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

Total: _____

Secondary Trauma Scale:

- 2. _____
- 5. _____
- 7. _____
- 9. _____
- 11. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 23. _____
- 25. _____
- 28. _____
- Total: _____

The sum of my Secondary Traumatic Stress questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Secondary Traumatic Stress
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

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Results of the Compassion Satisfaction/Compassion Fatigue/Burnout/Secondary Trauma Survey

Based on your responses, place your results here. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional. It is recommended that you see your GP or a trusted person in your workplace to share this information. Note: Your results will change as your workplace situations shift – This is quite normal. Stress levels are not static. I recommend that you return to this inventory at a later time to try it again. If the Burnout score is high, it is particularly important to see your GP. Burnout can be very physically challenging as well as emotionally challenging.

Compassion Satisfaction Score _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

Burnout Score _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of Compassion Fatigue (CF). It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a nonsupportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a “bad day” or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

Secondary Traumatic Stress/Compassion Fatigue Score _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other’s trauma is somewhat rare, but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious or Secondary Traumatization. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example, field work in a war or area of civil violence, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others’ traumatic events as a result of your work, for example, as a therapist or an emergency worker, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

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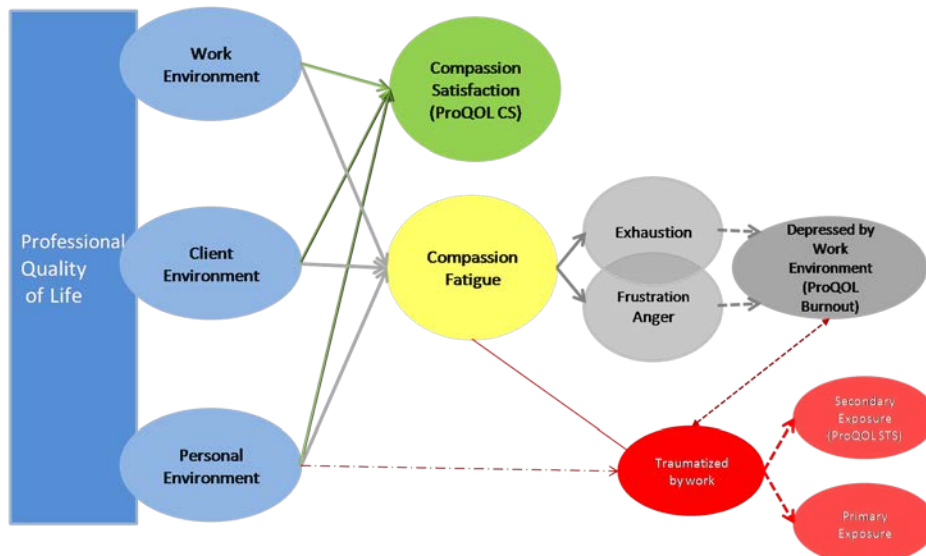
What Do You Need to Know?

Compassion Fatigue: (CF) is the cost of caring for others (as well as animals) in emotional pain, over time. Sometimes it is secondary exposure to extremely stressful events. Sometimes your work puts you directly into the path of **trauma**. Someone who is suffering with CF can still care and be involved, albeit in a compromised way.

Exercising genuine empathy and caring, over time can be mastered, but one needs to invest in self knowledge and self care. Many enjoy Compassion Satisfaction (CS) which is the good stress: the thrills of helping and making a difference. Ironically, those of us who are strongly empathetic may be most at risk. One can feel with those who hurt. For many, it is personal and the caregiver can actually experience the pain vicariously. Consequently, it impacts the caregiver psychologically.

When compassion fatigue is experienced, certain behaviors are repeated, over and over, with no favourable results – the professional feels trapped, angry, and guilty. It results in a depletion of energy and could lead to burnout. Work productivity is reduced. Many variables are at play so it can confuse the caregiver. It isn't just about work; it is about whoever you are working with (person or animal) and your personal life. It can be very deceiving. You might be working with serious compassion fatigue yet not burnout. There is a faster recovery with CF than BO.

Unrecognized and untreated compassion fatigue, and its counterparts, causes caregivers to leave the profession or fall into exhaustion, frustration, depression, and anxiety. Understanding the phenomenon, who is at risk, warning signs and symptoms, and available prevention strategies/treatment is crucial for helping the caregiver to be productive in their work. This chart demonstrates a simple version of interplay between the stressors. (PROQOL Slide: www.proqol.org)



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Terminology to help you understand

Compassion Fatigue (CF) is the 'challenging stressor'. It's not a character flaw! Compassion Fatigue is always a possibility for those who care for others. It is the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people or animals. Without sufficient self management of the stressors experienced. Symptoms are normal displays of chronic stress resulting from caregiving work. Caregivers struggle, at times, to function in care giving environments that constantly present heart wrenching, emotional challenges and responsibility. Eventually, challenging circumstances will prevail.

Compassion Satisfaction (CS) is the 'good stressor' and is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society.

CF and CS are frequently experienced at the same time. This can provide an emotional roller coaster of highs and lows. Imagine a number of caregivers in the same shelter all experiencing compassion, the good stressors and/or the challenging stressors, in different degrees and at different times! If not managed properly, over time, it will become the not so merry go round of emotional highs and lows. Say the shelter experiences three crisis and a great adoption in one day. Secondary Trauma and Joy is involved too! There is never a dull moment.

Empathy (the bedrock skill) is the capacity to share and understand another's emotion and feelings. It works with the skill of compassion (caring or caring for).

Generally speaking, it is often characterized as the ability to "put oneself into another's shoes", or in some way experience what the other person is feeling. Empathy does not necessarily imply compassion or sympathy because this capacity can be present in context of compassionate *or* cruel behavior.

To empathize is to respond to another's perceived emotional state by experiencing feelings of a similar sort. **Sympathy** not only includes empathizing (but not always),, but also entails *having a positive regard or a non- fleeting concern for the other person*. Positive regard is not always there for the person you are empathizing with (i.e. someone who has been cruel to an animal).

The nature of empathy and its role in a helping relationship is multidimensional. It has emotional, moral, cognitive and behavioural components. Definitions of empathy vary.

Empathy in the animal care community could also be:

- 'a way of being', where the caregiver, without judgment, enters the private world of the people (and their animals) they are working with.
- a deeper level of empathy where the caregiver gains an insight in the situation, beyond that of the person's (or animal's) awareness. Examples: Understanding and walking into a person's own story when he/she is surrendering an animal, validating that person's world in their conversation, even if you abhor what he/she has done. This is indeed a difficult task to do, over and over, for a long period of time.
- Compassion and empathy are cornerstones for effective communication with animal owners as well as the animals.

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The skill to empathize and apply empathy in animal care is attributes to why caregivers, also experiencing first hand or secondary trauma, are especially vulnerable to compassion fatigue (caring too much, too long).

Burnout (BO) Burnout occurs when you have more energy going out than you have coming in. Burnout does not occur overnight... It is a cumulative process of gradual wearing down of your reserves, with little recharging of your energies. You work harder and harder to catch up, but your reserves become depleted. A total collapse is the ultimate result. It takes a very long time to recover from a full blown Burnout. **Trauma:**

Trauma means wounding. "Just as the body can be traumatized, so can the psyche. On the psychological and mental levels, trauma may refer to the wounding of your emotions, your spirit, your will to live, your beliefs about yourself and the world, your dignity, and your sense of security. The assault on your psyche can be so great that your normal ways of thinking and feeling and the usual ways you have handled stress in the past are now inadequate." (Aphrodite Matsakis, 1992)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) or Vicarious Traumatic Stress

Trauma also affects those who experience it indirectly. Secondary, or vicarious trauma, refers to those people who care for (or are involved with), those who have been directly traumatized (animals, customers or colleagues).

Trauma is absorbed from what comes from the individual/animal and what comes from the situation. It has the capacity to be a result of traumatic experiences happening in your workplace.

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is believed to impair the ability of caregivers to effectively help those seeking their services (Figley, 1999)

With STS, we have learned that:

- A Person is at higher risk to make poor professional judgments
- It is one reason why so many caregivers leave the field (Figley, 1999)
- Proactive Strategies include:
 - Inventories can MONITOR the levels of secondary traumatic stress symptoms for a start both individually or organizationally. Once the caregiver is aware, he or she can make better choices to heal.
 - Increased supervision by experienced trauma specialists
 - More support for trauma workers
 - Increase use of self-care strategies

Trigger or 'Counter-Transference Phenomenon':

An unexpected reaction triggered by a specific person, animal(s) or a situation which triggers a specific area of the caregiver's personality and character or conflicts.

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

For more details go to: <http://psychcentral.com/lib/2006/symptoms-and-diagnosis-of-ptsd/>

Explanations of PTSD focus primarily on the way that the mind is affected by traumatic experiences. Theorists speculate upon facing overwhelming trauma, the mind is unable to process information and feelings in a normal way. It is as if the thoughts and feelings at the time of the traumatic event take on a life of their own, later intruding into consciousness and causing distress

What is needed for healing TRAUMA experiences?

To re-integrate a self-understanding that allows caregivers to effectively cope and eventually grow and thrive in the world, healing from trauma must occur. In order to heal, the caregiver must re-establish the trust relationship with themselves and the world in a meaningful way and most importantly seek professional help.

Common Behaviors in Trauma & Compassion Fatigue & Burnout

Hyperarousal is when the traumatized person's physiology is in high gear, having been assaulted by the psychological impact of what happened and not able to reset. The symptoms of hyperarousal include: difficulty sleeping and concentrating, being easily startled, irritability, anger, agitation, panic and hypervigilance (being hyper-alert to danger).

Numbing includes feeling robotic or on "automatic pilot" – disconnected from feelings and from vitality, which is replaced by a sense of deadness. Symptoms of numbing/avoidance include: loss of interest in life and other people, hopelessness, isolation, avoidance of thoughts and feelings associated with the traumatic event, feeling detached and estranged from others, withdrawal, depression, and emotional anesthesia. Preoccupation with avoiding trauma or feelings and thoughts related to trauma can become a central focus of the survivor's life.

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Self Compassion: Self Compassion is extending compassion to the self for one's failings, inadequacies, and experiences of suffering.

- It is a skill that can be taught and is always available and in your control.
- It fosters connectedness rather than separation or self-centeredness.
- This skill involves relating to yourself and your life with an open mind and open heart.
- It has the capacity to transform suffering into an opportunity for kindness and connectedness.

What counts as suffering?

- *Any* experience in which we experience emotional pain
- Being stuck in unpleasant emotions, whether the cause is big or small
- Includes self-criticism, feelings of unworthiness, annoyance, frustration, stress, sadness, and "unjustified" negative reactions

Mindfulness

- Present-moment awareness, not lost in thought
- Acceptance and non-judgment of one's experience
- Mindfulness allows us to experience life as it is right now, not just how we think about how it "should" be

The Silencing Response – A Symptom of Compassion Fatigue

When working in a highly charged environment that where the animal caregiver might deal with animals seriously injured, ill or traumatized or euthanized, it can be overwhelming. Sometimes this situation compromises our ability to remain present and focused. We redirect, shut down, minimize or neglect the disturbing information. In other words, when we are already emotionally overwhelmed, we find ways to silence our thoughts, feelings, and the people around us.

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Setting the Scene – How do we capture a voice as to *what is happening?*

Compassion & Empathy are examples of resiliency skills an animal caregiver might need for a long and rewarding career. After the surveys are completed, discussion, reflection, and strategies to build on will be discussed. There is always a psycho educational piece presented for each topic discussed.

Animal caregivers are extremely gifted in the area of compassion and empathy. The question is not if a person has strong empathy and caring skills, rather, it is a question of how well can they manage empathy and balance self care and self compassion with the possible moments of trauma and difficult decisions that need to be made. How can the negative aspects of caring get in the way of their mission to help animals? What happens? What can we do about it? How do we go about helping those working in animal welfare to feel the great satisfaction coming from this work while managing the hidden challenges that animal caregivers face? It can be managed. Look at the animal caregivers who have a long career and ask them how they cope! Many have the answers. For those who suffer there is hope. A snapshot of the caregiver who is suffering is below:

When it is too difficult to continue with an empathic and caring approach:

- One might emotionally disengage to protect from burnout, improve concentration, ration time, maintain impartiality, and control the amount of energy expended.
- Detachment does not protect caregivers from compassion fatigue & burnout. Many are in denial or ashamed to admit their situation. There is a silent stigma to it so the caregiver withdraws rather than reaching out.
- It is exhausting for many caregivers to hold back on empathy and caring. **It is what they love to do.** As he or she continues with this strategy, consciously or unconsciously, it results in a different kind of challenge to develop, ever so quietly. Guilt, loss of connection, isolation, anger, defensiveness, depression, lack of sleep etc. appear on the emotional landscape.
- Empathy, Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Trauma, and Burnout are interrelated. There is a faster recovery from Compassion Fatigue than Burnout. By managing Compassion Fatigue, building resiliency skills, and maintaining your empathic approach, you avoid the very serious state of burnout.

As Leaders in the Animal Care Communities, what are your opinions here?

Unrecognized and untreated compassion fatigue causes people to leave their profession. It is recommended, for both organizations and individuals, to implement proactive strategies for resilience and wellness in their workplace. Help employees experience full engagement and high productivity on the job. Preventative strategies and policies will be a wise return on your investment (ROI). With knowledge, resiliency skills, and self care strategies at hand, animal caregivers will develop positive coping strategies to manage their stress.

*All these issues, and more, will be presented and discussed in the workshop. I invite you to share **your** opinions at the workshop!*

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Additional Reflection Exercises/Surveys

Burnout Inventory (it must be completed with a certified consultant)

Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., and Leiter, M.P. (1996). *The Maslach Burnout Inventory*. (3rd ed.) Palo Alto, California: consulting Psychologist Press.

Emotional Intelligence Report (it must be completed with a certified consultant)

Bar On EQ-i - Go to the MHS site: <http://www.mhs.com/ei.aspx>

This inventory is an important screening strategy for new trainees and for staff development. I have used this report in many Animal Care Communities and found it very useful.

Optimism/Pessimism Inventory

http://www.queendom.com/tests/access_page/index.htm?idRegTest=709

Leveraging our Signature Strengths – Free and online!

Seligman, M. E.P. (2002) *Authentic Happiness*. New York. The Free Press. (The website www.authentichappiness.org is associated with this book, and also provides access to the VIA Strengths Survey.

The VIA strengths are moral strengths. They are strengths of character. We can choose to develop or build these strengths, and choose to apply them in our lives. Strengths are, in part, about developing our full human potential.

Seligman stresses that when using your signature strengths (your top five strengths) you:

- Have a sense of ownership and authenticity – “This is the real me.”
- Express a feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first.
- Experience a rapid learning curve as the strength is first practiced.
- Look for continuous learning of new ways to enact the strength.
- Have a sense of yearning to find ways to use it.
- Have a feeling of inevitability in using the strength. (“Try and stop me”).

Research findings in psychology and organizational effectiveness affirm that both the individual and organizations benefit from a strength focus. There is a positive correlation between employees’ opportunity to use their strengths at work and business measures such as profitability, productivity, and turnover. Why?

- Using our key strengths enhances our degree of happiness and fulfillment.
- Our strengths are assets that we can tap into in times of challenge; hence they are a source of resilience.
- Recognizing and developing our strengths contribute to enhanced trust in ourselves, which makes us more willing to take on challenging goals.
- Our strengths are our best resources for high level performance.
- Feel invigoration rather than exhaustion while using the strength.
- Create and pursue personal projects that revolve around it.
- Have a sense of joy, zest, enthusiasm, even ecstasy while using it.

Another Recommended ‘Strengths’ Inventory (need to buy the book)

Rath, Tom. 2008. *Strengths Finder 2.0*. Strengths based Leadership. Gallop Press, NY.

You will need to buy the book for this one. (\$32.50). It is by far the best inventory with suggestions on how to leverage your strengths and make them work for you. I highly, highly recommend this approach. There is one for leaders and the regular Strengths Finder 2.0 is for general employees. It would be a great project for a team to do. OSPCA used this inventory with their leaders.

