Let’s Dance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ueJ4-ITa1s
The Emotional Impact of the Animal Care & Control Profession

CherylAnn Fernandes & Rob Leinberger
Tennessee Animal Care & Control Conference - August 29, 2016
If your compassion does not include *yourself*, it is incomplete.

Jack Kornfield
Training Objectives

- Discuss the history of animal control
- Recognize early warning signs of compassion fatigue
- Apply innovations to reduce stress in shelter environments
- Learn strategies to embrace change and create resilience
History
We’ve come a long way...

Washington, D.C., 1924. "Dog catchers."
National Photo Co
Compassion Fatigue

- Is an accepted alternative term for secondary traumatic stress disorder. "Compassion Fatigue is the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people." (or animals) (Figley 1993)

Greenberg & Associates – Consultants in Police Psychology
“Exhaustion due to compassion stress, the demands of being empathetic and helpful to those who are suffering.”

“Compassion stress is the demand to be compassionate and effective in helping”.

Charles R Figley, PH.D.
from Compassion Fatigue in the Animal–Care Community
printed by: Humane Society Press 2006
Compassion Fatigue...

- Means you care, are a caregiver, have empathy
- Have a bond with the animals entrusted to your care
- May not be entirely the result of animal care alone
- Is a sign of stress, not a sign of weakness or being “bad at your job”
Yea, though ACOs walk through the valley of the shadow of dog bites, they will fear no rabies: for dog treats art in their pockets; thy catch-pole and thy leash they comfort them.
IDENTIFYING DAILY STRESSORS

Daily activities which contribute to trauma
Get it Out: The Language of Release
Work Related Stressors

- Demands of animal care
- Lack of clarity about responsibilities
- You don’t “fit in” with colleagues
- Balancing work and home life
Employer/Employee Related Stressors

- Stress caused by management/staff
- Lack of proper training
- Lack of budget or resources
- Lack of municipal, state or national support for animal welfare efforts/legislative initiatives
The ‘TO-DO’ message board
Policy/Facility Stressors

- Inadequate Facility/Animal Housing
- Overcrowded kennels
- Lack of (qualified) adopters
- No contribution to animal placement/final disposition of animal
Personal Stressors

- Low morale/co-worker disputes
- High expectations of self
- Feelings of inadequacy/despair
- Physical exhaustion
Animal Stressors

- Temperament
- Neglect/suffering
- Animal Cruelty
- Euthanasia
# Symptoms & Warning Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diminished concentration</td>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>Clingy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Impatient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaciness</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Irritable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of meaning</td>
<td>Anger/rage</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased self-esteem</td>
<td>Survivor guilt</td>
<td>Moody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation with trauma</td>
<td>Shutdown</td>
<td>Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma imagery</td>
<td>Numbness</td>
<td>Sleep disturbances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Appetite changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigidity</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
<td>Nightmares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorientation</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Hypervigilance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whirling thoughts</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Elevated startle response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts of self-harm or</td>
<td>Hypersensitivity</td>
<td>Use of negative coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harming others</td>
<td>Emotional roller coaster</td>
<td>(smoking, alcohol or other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>substance abuse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionism</td>
<td>Depleted</td>
<td>Accident proneness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Losing things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-harm behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Symptoms & Warning Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questioning the meaning of life</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>Shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of purpose</td>
<td>Decreased interest in intimacy or sex</td>
<td>Sweating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of self-satisfaction</td>
<td>Mistrust</td>
<td>Rapid heartbeat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pervasive hopelessness</td>
<td>Isolation from friends</td>
<td>Breathing difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennui</td>
<td>Impact on parenting (protectiveness, concern about aggression)</td>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger at God</td>
<td>Projection of anger or blame</td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning of prior religious beliefs</td>
<td>Intolerance</td>
<td>Impaired immune system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: TCS denotes a specific condition or indicator.*
# Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance of Job Tasks</th>
<th>Morale</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in quality</td>
<td>Decrease in confidence</td>
<td>Withdrawal from colleagues</td>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in quantity</td>
<td>Loss of interest</td>
<td>Impatience</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low motivation</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Decrease in quality of relationship</td>
<td>Faulty judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of job tasks</td>
<td>Negative attitude</td>
<td>Poor communication</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in mistakes</td>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Subsume own needs</td>
<td>Tardiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting perfectionist</td>
<td>Demoralization</td>
<td>Staff conflicts</td>
<td>Irresponsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standards</td>
<td>Lack of appreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsession about details</td>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequent job changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>incompleteness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Happiness is an inside job.
Recognition & Action

- Recognize efforts & achievements
  ◦ Celebrate positive outcomes
  ◦ Fill up your “well”
- Recognize your limits
  ◦ Personal
  ◦ Professional
- Take action before problems occur
Self Care Strategies

- Avoid substance abuse
- Eat healthy
- Quality time with loved ones (human or animal)
- Take a break
- Learn to say ‘no’
- Humor
- Emotional recognition
- Outlets for stress
  - Cry
  - Exercise
  - Laugh
- Give/receive affection
- Release guilt
  - It’s not productive!
Recognition

- Recognition of the individual and the profession
  - Simple, yet powerful

- NOT dog catchers—Animal Care & Control Professionals

- Animal Control Officers, Shelter staff, Volunteers = TEAM

- Recognition within the organization and outside, too

- National Animal Care & Control Association
  - State organizations and associations

- Understanding
Stress Management

- Guidance from a mental health specialist
- Employee Assistance Program
- Relaxation techniques
- Counseling
- Exercise
- Hobbies
12 Steps for Self Care

1. If it feels wrong, don’t do it.
2. Say “exactly” what you mean.
3. Don’t be a people pleaser.
4. Trust your instincts.
5. Never speak bad about yourself.
6. Never give up on your dreams.
7. Don’t be afraid to say “No”.
8. Don’t be afraid to say “Yes”.
9. Be KIND to yourself.
10. Let go of what you can’t control.
11. Stay away from drama & negativity.
12. LOVE

Facebook.com/ChangeYourThoughtsToday
KEEP CALM AND USE A CATCH-POLE
The Next ‘BIG THING’

- Build a **community** around yourself of like-minded people
  - Association membership
  - Professional networks
  - Alliances
  - Social media
Networking...
National Resources
Live well

- Find abundance in daily activities
- Create an environment where team members reach out to help one another
- Share ideas, good finds, strategies
More Recommendations

- ACC 100 - Compassion Fatigue for Animal Care Workers
  www.figleyinstitute.com
Compassion Fatigue: Reading List

Nancy Mullins, M.A.
What to do About Compassion Fatigue
http://www.petfinder.com/pro/for-shelters/compassion-fatigue/

CherylAnn Fernandes
Orphaned or Embraced?
http://animalvocations.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2008-02-07T20%3A03%3A00-05%3A00&max-results=7

CherylAnn Fernandes
If You are Happy and You Know It
http://animalvocations.blogspot.com/2008/02/if-youre-happy-and-you-know-it.html

Nancy Mullins, M.A.
Compassion Fatigue and Burnout
http://www.petfinder.com/pro/for-shelters/animal-care-professionals/

Dr. Carol Brothers
Maintaining Resilience
http://www.petfinder.com/pro/for-shelters/maintaining-resilience/
Thanks! Questions?

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