B06 - Compassion Fatigue
— Beyond Sharing Your Pain —

Tuesday, April 2, 2019
3:30 – 4:45 PM
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Disclosure: Lesley Sharp & Preston Van Hooser

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Facilitator

Sally Thompson-Iritani, DVM, Ph.D., CPIA, CCFP
Director, Animal Welfare and Research Support & Associate Director, Washington National Primate Research Center (WaNPRC), University of Washington
Executive Sponsor, Dare 2 Care (D2C) Compassion in Science Committee
Speakers

**Lesley A. Sharp, Ph.D.**
Barbara Chamberlain & Helen Chamberlain Josefsberg ’30 Professor & Chair, Department of Anthropology, Barnard College
Senior Research Scientist, Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
Fellow, Center for Animals and Public Policy, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts University

**J. Preston Van Hooser**
Review Scientist & Compliance Manager
Office of Animal Welfare, University of Washington
Chair, Dare 2 Care (D2C) Compassion in Science Committee
Learning Objectives

• Discuss how to gain an accurate snapshot of compassion fatigue across an institution’s animal care and use staff
• Demonstrate what proven group or personal interventions from similarly emotionally taxing workplaces are available for laboratory animal care providers and users
• Explain how to employ staff surveys to track effectiveness of interventions
What is Compassion Fatigue?

In an animal care setting, Compassion Fatigue is a combination of physical, emotional and psychological depletion associated with working and caring for animals and their well-being in a captive environment.
The Cost of Caring

We cannot expect high levels of animal **CARE** without employees then **CARING** about the animals.

*We don’t get compassion fatigue because we are weak, can’t handle the work, aren’t “cut out” for it. We get compassion fatigue because we care, deeply. And we ignore our own needs.*
We all Experience it

Not only may individuals that work directly with the animals experience compassion fatigue, IACUC members, administrative support staff, vendors and facilities services personnel may also indirectly experience compassion fatigue.
Causes of CF: Animal Caregivers & Vet Staff

- Long hours and isolation
- Observed morbidity and mortality
- Hazardous conditions
- High levels of responsibility
- May develop animal allergies
- Desensitization
- Sadness over the loss of a particular animal
- Animals will ultimately be euthanized

*Hard to talk about work*

Outcomes

- No one is going to listen/care
- Nothing will be done
- Low morale
- Poor attendance
- High job turnover
- Poor job performance
- Callous or uncaring attitude
- Nothing to show for it
Causes of CF: Research Faculty & Staff

- Long hours and isolation
- Regularly witness or induce disease in animals
- Self-blame
- May develop animal allergies
- Desensitization
- Unexpected outcomes
- Targeted by animal rights activists
- Animals will ultimately be euthanized
- Negative press

**Hard to talk about work!**
Causes of CF: IACUC & Administrative Support Staff

- Program size and complexity
- Animal numbers
- Protocol and grant congruency reviews
- Post-Approval Monitoring
- System failure
- Ethical decisions
- Desensitization
- Targeted by animal rights activists - UW Kills
- Negative press
- *Hard to talk about work!*
How it Affects the Workplace

- Decreased compassion
- Increase in errors
- Low quality of care
- Loss of productivity
- Low morale
- Poor attendance
- High turnover
- Leave profession
Organizational Compassion Fatigue

- Research Staff
- Lab staff, student helpers, and volunteers
- Veterinary Staff
- Husbandry Staff
- IACUC, AUTS, OH&S, EH&S, Animal Purchasing
- Building Management
- Facility Services
- Facility Services
- Vendors
- Professional Transportation Services
- Government/Company

Research Animals
- Numerous interactions throughout its life in a laboratory
- 100’s of people involved in direct interaction and/or oversight of the animals
Bites, scratches, kicks, physical trauma
Ergonomics, noise
Zoonoses, allergens, blood-borne pathogens
Caustic, infectious, radioactive, toxic agents
Sharps, hot surfaces, physical hazards
Public safety, facility and computer security
Disaster plans, fire, flood, bomb threat
Harassment, discrimination, whistle blower

Training

Emotional Involvement?
Lab Animal Professional Work Resiliency Lifecycle

**Phase 1 (Honeymoon)**
- Red hot and raring to go, out to change the world.
- High on life. We know we can make a difference.
- Enthusiasm overflows, capacity for challenges is limitless.
- We think we understand the problem and we know we can fix it only people would get out of our way.

**Phase 2 (Depression)**
- Enthusiasm turns sour.
- Lost the boundless energy.
- No longer wish to talk about work, don’t even want to admit where we work.
- Seem powerless to affect change.
- Self-blame.
- Our wall of isolation gets thicker.
- Every now and then we get a spark of Phase 1 energy.

**Phase 3 (Anger)**
- Phase Two depression has turned outward and we’re mad as hell.
- Hypersensitivity turns to anger.
- Everyone is a target for our anger and derision.
- Lost our perspective and our effectiveness.
- Unable to connect with life.
- Even the animals we come in contact with seem somehow distant and unreal.

**Phase 4 (Resilience)**
- New determination and understanding of what our mission really is.
- Big picture time.
- We have been effective — we have made a difference.
- Work is not our whole world.
- Reconnect with the animals.
- Understand that sadness and pain are a part of our job.
- We are, little by little, changing the world.
Resource: UW D2C Website
Resource: UW D2C Website

- 2947 visitors
- 178 cities
- 23 countries
Questions?
Thank you!
Facilitator Bio: Sally Thompson-Iritani

Sally has worked in the animal welfare, compliance and research field for over 30 years. She feels strongly that recognizing the important role of our animal caregivers and the relationship that we form with the animals in our care is essential for the well-being of both the animals and the people that interact with laboratory animals. She provides leadership support and promotes the D2C program at the national and international level. Sally received her DVM from Iowa State University and PhD from the University of Washington. She has worked in the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and academic industries and always comes back to her roots of ensuring optimal care for the animals and people in the laboratory animal field. While not working she enjoys spending time with her husband, 3 kids, 2 dogs, 2 cats and extended family & friends.

Dr. Thompson-Iritani is a Certified Compassion Fatigue Professional and Certified Human Animal Bond Practitioner.
Lesley is a medical anthropologist by training. She is most concerned with critical analyses of the symbolics of the human body, where her research sites range from cosmopolitan medical centers and research laboratories within the United States and other Anglophone countries to urban centers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sharp’s early research (1986-1995) addressed the power of spirit mediumship to mediate the suffering, displacement, and economic struggles of migrants and locals within a booming plantation economy in northwest Madagascar. She returned to this community in the mid-1990s to examine still other afflictions that erupted during a tumultuous transition from isolationist socialism to a capitalist model of governance, where the historical and political consciousness of Malagasy school youth defined a provocative framework of analysis.

Since the early 1990s, her research has addressed the ethical and moral consequences of innovative medicine and science, where investigative domains include the ideological and embodied consequences of organ transplantation, procurement, and donation as transformative experiences among involved parties in the United States; the imaginative and temporal dimensions of innovative and highly experimental transplant technologies, with specific reference to xenotransplantation and mechanical heart design in various Anglophone countries; and, most recently, the ethical, alongside everyday moral, consequences of human-animal encounters in experimental laboratory research.

Sharp is the recipient of numerous external grants and four teaching awards. Her book Strange Harvest won the 2008 New Millennium Book Award of the Society for Medical Anthropology; at Barnard she is the recipient of the Tow Family Award for Innovative and Outstanding Pedagogy, a Presidential Research Award, and previously she held the Ann Whitney Olin endowed chair in Anthropology.
Presenter Bio: Preston Van Hooser

Preston is a Review Scientist and Compliance Manager in the Office of Animal Welfare at the University of Washington (UW). For the past sixteen years, Preston has worked in this role to protect the integrity and excellence of vertebrate animal research and teaching at the UW and in more recent years, with regards to the subject matter being presented, has overseen the successful development and implementation of the UWs Compassion Fatigue Program: Dare 2 Care (D2C). Van Hooser currently serves as Chair of the D2C Committee and has presented on the subject matter at local and national conferences. He feels that it is important to move one-step further on the topic of compassion fatigue in order to start providing laboratory animal professionals and researchers with the tools and strategies needed to help ameliorate, reduce and avoid compassion fatigue, an area often overlooked in the field of animal science.

Van Hooser’s early research efforts (1992-2002) in the Department of Ophthalmology led to numerous professional publications, and patents, as well as the restoration of sight in a mouse model of Leber’s Congenital Amaurosis (LCA), a rare inherited eye disease that appears early in life.

Preston earned his BS in Zoology from the College of Idaho, Caldwell, ID. He serves on several boards, including the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR), is a member of several professional organizations including AALAS and PRIM&R, and is President & CEO of InVision BioResources, a Seattle based Biotech Company that provides incidental ocular tissues to the vision research community, globally.