Keeping me and my loved ones healthy.

Ensuring that laboratory animals are well cared for.

Supporting development of new discoveries.
Compassion Fatigue and Building a Compassion Resilience Culture

Thursday, September 1st, 2022
10:00-11:30AM (PDT)

J. Preston Van Hooser
Review Scientist & Compliance Manager
Office of Animal Welfare, University of Washington
Co-Chair, Dare 2 Care (D2C) Compassion in Science Program
Member, UW IACUC
NWABR Board Member
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- Shawn Hooper, The Jackson Laboratory
- Anneke Keizer, Compassion Fatigue Support Programs
- Bruce Kennedy
- Cindy Pekow, VA Puget Sound Healthcare System

University of Washington:
- Leadership
- Office of Animal Welfare
- Washington National Primate Research Center
- Department of Comparative Medicine
- Environmental Health & Safety
Webinar Objectives

After attending this webinar, you will be able to:

• Review the importance of identifying Compassion Fatigue in the laboratory animal research setting
• Strategize around developing an institutional compassion in science program
• Identify the IACUC’s role in fostering healthy compassion in an animal care and use program
Webinar Agenda

• Define compassion fatigue and the significance of the human-animal bond

• Examine compassion fatigue and its impact on the laboratory animal care and use community: animal caregivers, IACUC members, research faculty & staff, vets, vet techs, and trainers

• Evaluate stressors that promote compassion fatigue

• Develop and implement a sustainable compassion fatigue well-being program

• Addressing compassion fatigue on an institutional level, and the IACUC’s role in such efforts
Compassion Fatigue and Its Impact on the Laboratory Animal Science Community
What is Compassion Fatigue (CF)?

- Cumulative physical and emotional effects of providing care
- “Cost of Caring”
What is Compassion Fatigue in the Laboratory Animal Science Community?

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.

It’s the negative aspect of our work. It may be related to providing care, working with colleagues, beliefs about self, system failure, burnout and/or any work-related trauma.
Risk Factors

- Forms stronger bonds with animals
- Ethical or moral dilemmas
- Placing needs of others before yourself
- Lack of personal boundaries
- Poor communication
- Unresolved trauma in life
Support Systems

• Huge risk factor – lack of support systems
Intrusive Symptoms

- Intrusive thoughts and images
- Obsessive desire to help
- Inability to let go of work
- Feelings of inadequacy
Arousal Symptoms

• Increased anxiety
• Increased frustration and anger
• Sleep disturbances
• Physical ailments
Avoidance Symptoms

- Apathy
- Decreased energy
- Loss of sense of competence
- Isolation
- Self-medication or addiction
## Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental changes</th>
<th>Physical Changes</th>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression, depression, anxiety</td>
<td>Weight loss or gain</td>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Increased/decreased appetite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crying easily</td>
<td>GI upset/issues</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to focus</td>
<td>Muscle tightness</td>
<td>Indulging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
<td>Back or neck pain</td>
<td>Addictive (drug use, gambling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Jaw pain (clenching or grinding teeth)</td>
<td>Increased alcohol/cigarette use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paranoia</td>
<td>Exacerbation of existing ailments</td>
<td>Fighting/arguing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compassion Fatigue Trajectory

Zealot Phase → Irritability Phase → Withdrawal Phase → Pathology → Zombie Phase

Jan Spilman, MEd, RCC
Transformation

• Pathology & Victimization
  – Overwhelmed
  – Somatic Illness
  – Suicide*
  – Leave the profession

• Maturation & Renewal
  – Resilience
  – Transformation

We All (can or may) Experience It!

Not only do the individuals that work directly with the animals, but IACUC members, administrative support staff, vendors and facilities services personnel may indirectly experience compassion fatigue.

We don’t get compassion fatigue because we are weak, can’t handle the work, aren’t “cut out” for it, etc. We get compassion fatigue because we care, deeply. And we ignore our own needs.
The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

(Remen, 1996)
The human-lab animal bond exists in many forms, and it can improve both human and animal welfare.

Close contact with animals can create feelings of satisfaction and affection.

“Every technician I interviewed for this study experienced some form of attachment to a laboratory animal at least once in his or her career.” ~Arnold Arluke
Human-Lab Animal Bond

- Animals depend on us: a contract
  - Food/water/housing/environment
  - Interaction
  - Enrichment
  - Humane treatment
- Animals seek out contact
Human-Lab Animal Bond

- Animals have
  - Personalities
  - Distinct attributes
    - Friendly, intelligent, courageous, amusing, quirky
  - Ability to distinguish among people
  - Many are long-term
    - Close, frequent contact
We all know...

• Most research animals will be euthanized
  – Protocol needs
  – Illness
  – Unsuitable
  – Not needed
Evaluating Stressors that Promote Compassion
Fatigue
In the mid-1990’s

• When I started to work in the field of laboratory animal science, I was overwhelmed by emotions.
• Nobody told me about the feelings of
  - Guilt...
  - Sadness...
  - Regrets...

And nobody told me (or warned me) how difficult it would be to talk about my work/research.
Laboratory Animal Professional Roles and Triggers of CF

Animal Caregivers
- Negative media
- Animal Rights Activists
- Long hours
- Manual labor
- Hazardous conditions
- Isolation
- Euthanasia
- Observed morbidity and mortality
- May develop animal allergies
- Self-blame
- Sadness over the loss of a particular animal
- Nothing to show for work
- Hard to talk about work

Research Faculty and Staff
- Long hours
- Regularly witness or induce disease in animals
- Euthanasia
- Self-blame
- Isolation
- No one to talk to
- May develop animal allergies
- Desensitization
- Targeted by animal rights activists
- Hard to talk about work

IACUC Members and Administrative Support Staff
- Protocol Reviews
- Protocol/Grant Congruency Reviews
- Post-Approval Monitoring
- Animal Numbers
- Program Size / Complexity
- System Failure
- Ethical Decisions
- Misperceptions
- Hard to talk about work

Trainers/Training Staff
- Volume of animals euthanized for training purposes
- Workload
- Lack of discussion/support
- Mistakes (trainees)
- Failed euthanasia
- No formal program to help prepare newcomers or employees on managing CF
- Hard to talk about work
**Possible Results of CF**

- *Belief that no one is going to listen/care*
- *Attitude that nothing will change*
- *Low morale*
- *Poor attendance*
- *High job turnover*
- *Poor job performance*
- *Callous or uncaring attitude*
- *Belief that the work is not of value*
- *Nothing to show for it*
- *Unexpected research outcomes*
- *Negative Media/Animal Rights Activism*
- *Desensitization*
It Affects the Entire System

• Research Staff
• Lab staff, student helpers, and volunteers
• Veterinary Staff
• Trainers
• Husbandry Staff
• IACUC, AUTS, OH&S, EH&S, Animal Purchasing
• Building Management
• 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
It is important

To provide Lab Animal Professionals (LAPs) with proper training, guidance, and care because this will also have an effect on the animals.
Typical LAP Employee Training

- 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, whistleblower
Typical Animal Use Training Courses (Online)

- Essentials for UW IACUC Members
- Animal Use Laws & Regulations Training
- Rodent User Course
- Non-Rodent User Course
- Working with Mice
- Working with Rats
- Introduction to Rodent Surgery
- Introduction to Surgery (Non-Rodent, USDA-Covered Animals)
Animal Use Training at UW (In-person)

- Mouse Hands-on Lab
- Rat Hands-on Lab
- Hands-on Training for Species other than Mice and Rats
- Certification*
- Lab-Managed Animal Care and Records
- Lab-Managed Sick Rodent Recognition
- Lab-Managed Animal Care and Records: Aquatic Animals
- Surgery Lab Part IA
- Surgery Lab Part IB
- Surgery Lab Part II
- 6th Floor Facility Orientation
- 6th Floor Facility Behavior Room Orientation
- T-wing Facility Orientation
- K-wing Facility Orientation
- Animal Research and Care Facility Orientation
- Foege Facility Orientation
- Harborview (HR&T) Facility Orientation
- South Lake Union (SLU) Brotman Facility Orientation
- South Lake Union (SLU) 3.1 Facility Orientation
- Guthrie Facility Orientation
- Roosevelt Facility Orientation
- CHDD Facility Orientation
- North Lake Diesel Facility Orientation
- ABSL2 Room Orientation
- ABSL3 Room Orientation
- Gnotobiotic Animal Core (GNAC) Orientation

- Mental health training on emotional involvement?
Organizational Effects

• Decreased
  - Morale
  - Productivity

• Increased
  - Absentee rates
  - Job turn-over
  - Worker comp claims
  - Inter-departmental or team dysfunction

http://blog.effexms.com/topic/human-resources
How it Affects the Workplace

- Decreased compassion
- Low quality of care
- Loss of productivity
- High job turnover
- Low morale
- Poor attendance
- Poor job performance
- Increase in errors
- Callous or uncaring attitude
- Leave the profession
Developing and Implementing a Sustainable Compassion Fatigue Well-Being Program
Sharing UW’s Experience: How did we get here?

• Identify the Need
• Assess the Potential Demand
• Anneke Keizer, Founder, COPE+
  - Small company specializing in counseling services for people working with laboratory animals
• Needs Assessment (July 2016 & June 2017)
  - Interviews, one-on-one interactions, focus groups
Compassion Fatigue at UW

- Cage Tags
- Heart Stickers
- Email Notifications
- Need More Communication
- Study Endpoint Notification
- Need to say goodbye

- Breakroom Project
- Window Project
- Work Environments
- Currently evaluating all break rooms

- Support for Staff
- Someone to talk to
- Resources
- Dedicated Email
- Dedicated Phone Line
- UW Care Link
- Self-care/Coping strategies
- Animal Use Training
- Occupational Health Screening
- Home2Care Website
- Comment Boxes

- Acknowledgements
- No Thing to Show for Work
- Reflections
- Seminar/Forum
- Dedication Area
- Annual Commemoration
- Sustainability
- Budget
- Marketing
- Work in Progress

DARE 2 CARE
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Compassion in Science
Defining Moment

Stop thinking too much, it's alright not to know the answers. They will come to you when you least expect it.
Dare 2 Care (D2C) Compassion Fatigue Committee
Developing a Compassion Fatigue Program

Management

Those who say it cannot be done shouldn’t interrupt the people doing it.
UW D2C Program Mission Statement

Assist all members of the research team to recognize compassion fatigue and raise awareness, provide tools, strategies and resources for managing human emotions in working with and caring for laboratory animals.
Identify Initial Target Objectives and Other Program Related Objectives
• Study Endpoint Notification
  • Support for Staff
  • Reflections
  • Recognition (Animal Caregivers)
  • Work Environments/Breakroom Enhancements (Animal Caregivers)
Need to Say Goodbye

- WaNPRC CF Subcommittee formed 2017
- Heart Stickers / Cage Tags
  - Heart stickers WIP at DCM Vivaria
  - Decided not to pursue at WaNPRC
Need More Communication

• E-mail Notification (NHP)
  - Endpoint Distribution List
  - E-mail Templates

Acknowledge high levels of humane care
Acknowledge the greater purpose the animal served
Hi everyone,

All animals in room ____ will reaching their endpoint soon.

Our animals are all part of a large study titled _______. We often refer to it as our ____ study.

This study's goal is to _____. As part of the study design, critical endpoint samples must be collected. The scientific knowledge gained in terminal tissue collections and analysis will further the understanding of targeting and eradicating viral reservoirs. In order to thoroughly investigate we will need to humanely euthanize the animals for terminal collections. The pathologist and research staff will carry out this important procedure.

We have worked with these 24 animals for a long time and they are certainly the most vocal, rowdiest group of monkeys we have encountered. Despite that, they have been a pleasure to work with. We have grown to love each of their individual personalities and will miss and remember them all. Endpoints will start ____ and end ___. If you would like specific endpoints for any animals please let me know.

Most everyone has had an important role in this large study. We want to thank all the people that have made this very important study successful. In particular we would like to thank the animal care staff for providing wonderful care for the animals. This is a very vocal group that loves food and treats and you can clearly tell from the animals' response that they prefer the husbandry technicians to anyone else. These animals were housed at Western and ARCF throughout their study and received excellent care. BMS did a great job ensuring the animal's behavioral needs are maintained. (They) setup the pairs which have remained stable throughout the study despite a few room changes. The clinical staff provided therapeutic support during the study and are continuing to do so in the most critical part of the study. Research support and surgery staff have also played a large role in this study. They've helped up performed ___ surgeries/tissue collections during the course of the study. All 24 animals have progressed through this intensive study and have had no major health issues. We thank the vet staff for keeping close watchful eye on them.

I would also like to make a special thanks to the Kiem lab research staff (particularly Erica and Kelvin) in conducting ethical and compassionate research for our non-human primate patients. This has been a long, difficult study and these animals are all still healthy and happy thanks to the dedication of the research staff making sure their needs are met.

If you would like please take some time to stop by the animal’s cage prior to the dates listed above.

Best regards, ______ Lab
Dear colleagues,

For quite some time we have been working on the ______ study titled_______________. This study investigates the interaction of ______ treatment to enhance vaccine responses against ______ infection. As part of the study design, critical endpoint samples must be collected. The scientific knowledge gained in terminal tissue collection and analysis will further the understanding on how the ______ plays important role in ______ infection. In order to thoroughly investigate this, we will need to humanely euthanize the animals for terminal collections. The pathologist and support staff will carry out this important procedure.

On behalf of the principal investigator, I would like to inform you that we have reached important study endpoints for the following animals:

##### (Animal #/ Date)

We want to thank all the people that have made this very important research study successful. In particular, we would like to thank the animal care staff for providing humane care for the animals, BMS for ensuring the animal’s social and behavioral needs are met, clinical staff in providing therapeutic support during the study, research staff in conducting ethical and compassionate research for our non-human primate patients and pathology staff for ensuring the endpoint is humane.

If you would like, please take some time to visit the animal prior to the date listed above.

Best regards

_______ Team
Hello all,

###### was humanely euthanized yesterday afternoon due to her clinical condition, _____________.

On behalf of the veterinary staff, I would like to thank the animal care staff, veterinary technicians, research support and BMS for your care and attention to this animal during her time at the center.

Thank you,

____, Veterinarian

**Information to Include at the bottom if desired:**

You can find out more information about the D2C Compassion in Science program here: _____ including a dedicated phone line, as well as a list of personnel you can reach out to if you want to talk about the loss of a particular animal.
• Study Endpoint Notification

• **Support for Staff**
  • Reflections
  • Recognition (Animal Caregivers)
  • Work Environments/Breakroom Enhancements (Animal Caregivers)
Peer2Peer (P2P): Someone To Talk To
Dedicated D2C Phone Line and Email
UW D2C Website

Impact! October 2019
6,897 visitors | 39 countries | 491 cities

Impact! August 2022
21,967 visitors | 97 countries | 2,141 cities

https://sites.uw.edu/d2c
Occupational Health (OH) Screening

- Annual Health Assessment for husbandry staff / animal users administered by UW Employee Health

- One of the first institutions to implement CF assessment as part of OH screening for Laboratory Animal Professionals
VI. ADDITIONAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Yes ☐ I have health or workplace concerns not covered by the questionnaire (e.g. Compassion Fatigue) that I feel may affect my occupational health and would like to discuss with the Employee Health provider.

Yes ☐ I have reproductive concerns that I would like to discuss with the Employee Health Provider

Yes ☐ I have answered the questions truthfully and to the best of my recollection.

VII. SIGNATURE: ___________________ DATE: ___
Dedication Area (In Progress)

- Physical tribute
- Peaceful retreat where staff can go to reflect

Annual Commemoration (In Progress)

- The entire UW community can gather
- Acknowledge contributions to biomedical research and animal welfare
Annual Commemoration / Dedication Area

University of Rochester School of Medicine
Bronze casting, in place since the 1920's

Merck Research Laboratories

In tribute
to research animals
whose contributions have
saved millions of human
and animal lives and
reduced suffering
worldwide.

From the animal technicians,
managers, supervisors, veterinarians
and research scientists who care for
research animals.

Korean FDA, Seoul
Pagoda, site of annual ceremony

ILAR Journal V43(1) 2002, Iliff An Additional "R": Remembering the Animals

Slide courtesy of:
Dr. Cynthia Pekow, Chief, Veterinary Medical Unit @ VA Puget Sound Health Care System
Annual Commemoration / Dedication Area

TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND REMEMBER ALL THE ANIMALS THAT HAVE BEEN USED IN OUR RESEARCH FACILITY, FOR THEY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE AND ENABLED MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT.

AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL RESEARCH PERSONNEL WHO HUMANELY CARE AND USE ANIMALS; YOUR DEDICATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE AND TO SCIENCE IS ADMIRABLE.

Hospital for Special Surgery, Manhattan

Slide courtesy of: Dr. Cynthia Pekow, Chief, Veterinary Medical Unit @ VA Puget Sound Health Care System
Animal Use Training (Online)

University of Washington: Animal Use Laws and Regulations Training: Compassion Fatigue

Other Lessons:

What is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is a form of burnout that manifests as emotional, physical, psychological and/or spiritual exhaustion. It can result when we are repeatedly exposed to emotionally challenging and stressful situations that call for our empathy and compassion towards another person or animal.

Laboratory Animal Care Professionals are at high risk for compassion fatigue due to the fact that they work with and care for the animals, and their well-being, on a daily basis for weeks, months and sometimes years, and then ultimately having to euthanize them.

Previous | Next

Log out | Back to Course/Exam menu
Self-Care Strategies

Rita & Zombie, Kayaking

Christina, volunteering
One Health in Malaysia

Yuki, hiking to Camp Muir

Sara & Amber, at dog agility class

Holly, climbing Mt. Baker
Non-negotiables of Self-Care

Eat Well

Rest

Exercise and Fresh Air

Connect with others
You wouldn't let this happen to your phone.
Don't let it happen to you either.
Self care is a priority.
Not a luxury.
“The Box Project”

An innovative way to encourage staff to express themselves anonymously
• Study Endpoint Notification
• Support for Staff
• **Reflections**
  • Recognition (Animal Caregivers)
  • Work Environments/Breakroom Enhancements (Animal Caregivers)
Reflections

• Provide an opportunity for individuals to come together in one place to pay tribute to our research animals and each other.

• Guest speakers share their research and acknowledge the contributions provided by Laboratory Animal Professionals

• Open to all animal caregivers, research faculty and staff

Martin K. (Casey) Childers, DO, PhD
Professor
Rehabilitation Medicine
University of Washington

Paul Frase
NFL Veteran
Co-Founder, Joshua Frase Foundation

“REFLECTIONS”
DARE 2 CARE
A World Without Biomedical Research? Why Transparency is Vitaly Important!

Please join us for the event “Reflections” hosted by the Dare 2 Care (D2C) Committee in Science Committee and the Office of Animal Welfare (OAW). The purpose of this reflection is to provide an opportunity for individuals to come together in one place to pay tribute to our research animals and each other, and better underscore the benefits of the research at our institution. We are honored to have Ken Gordon, Executive Director of NWABR, as our invited guest speaker. All are welcome.

Light refreshments will be provided

https://littlewonders.org

DATE: Tuesday, October 22, 2019
TIME: 1:30 – 3:00 PM
LOCATION: Turner Conference Room HSB E-202
CONTACT: (206) 616-2366

The Cost of Caring...
• Study Endpoint Notification
• Support for Staff
• Reflections

• Recognition (Animal Caregivers)
  • Work Environments/Breakroom Enhancements (Animal Caregivers)
HETEROGENEITY OF RESPONSES

1. PCa is widely heterogeneous with differences in mutations/genomic alterations, gene expression, cell of origin, heterogeneity of survival pathways, and therapeutic escape mechanisms.

2. A significant limitation in the understanding of PCa and evaluating novel therapeutics is the lack of pre-clinical models that closely replicate the diversity of the disease seen in vivo.

3. To overcome this limitation, we have established over 40 advanced PCa Patient-Derived Xenograft (PDX) lines.

Rapid Autopsy Program

- To collect human PCa specimens (primary prostate, visceral and metastases) for LuCaP PDX Series
- Sample collection was performed at 4-8 hours post-death
- Metastatic tissue is acquired from 16 different bone sites collected in addition to grossly evident visceral metastases
- 1996-2018: 196 rapid autopsies performed

OBJECTIVES

- Responses to novel therapies are studied
- Genomic, transcriptomic, and STR profiles are generated
- Established PDXs are propagated in vivo
- Samples of advanced PCa obtained from primary prostate cancer from surgery or biopsy are processed

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- 1996-2018: 196 rapid autopsies performed
- Metastatic tissue is acquired from 16 different bone sites collected in addition to grossly evident visceral metastases
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RAPID AUTOPSY—SITE OF METASTASIS

- LuCaP PDX Series
- Established PDXs are propagated in vivo
- Samples of advanced PCa obtained from primary prostate cancer from surgery or biopsy are processed
- Samples of advanced PCa obtained from primary prostate cancer from surgery or biopsy are processed
- Samples of advanced PCa obtained from primary prostate cancer from surgery or biopsy are processed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These studies have been funded by the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF), the Richard M. Lucas Foundation, NIH PO1 (PO1-CA163227), Pacific Northwest Prostate Cancer SPORE (P50-CA097186), the Prostate Cancer Biorepository Network (PCBN), and Movember.

With great appreciation we acknowledge the patients and their families for their participation in the UW Rapid Autopsy Program, the animals who have been sacrificed to make these breakthroughs to alleviate the suffering and death associated with prostate cancer for fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands around the world, as well as the exceptional daily care of these animals provided by the Animal Caretakers.
Molecular profiling stratifies diverse phenotypes of treatment-refractory metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer
Mark P. Labrecque, …, Peter S. Nelson, Colm Morrissey
Published July 30, 2019
Citation Information: J Clin Invest. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1172/JCI128212.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by a Department of Defense Idea Development Award-Partnering-PI (W81XWH-17-1-0414;W81XWH-17-1-0415), W81XWH-15-1-0430, PC170431, the Pacific Northwest Prostate Cancer SPORE (P50CA97186), the Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Biorepository Network (W81XWH-14-2-0183), Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium W81XWH-15-2-0008, NCI R01 CA230617, NCI P01 CA163227, the Prostate Cancer Foundation, the AACR NextGen Transformative Cancer Research Grant, the Institute for Prostate Cancer Research, and the Richard M. LUCAS Foundation.

We would like to thank the patients who generously donated tissue that made this research possible. We would also like to thank Jennifer Conner, Michiyo Dalos, Daniel Sondheim and the Comparative Medicine Animal Caregivers for assistance with the LuCaP PDX work. Additionally, we would like to thank Paul Lange, Robert Vessella, Funda Vakar-Lopez, Martine Roudier, Xiaotun Zhang, Belinda Nghiem, Jennifer Noteboom and the rapid autopsy teams in the Urology and Pathology Departments at the University of Washington.
• Study Endpoint Notification
• Support for Staff
• Reflections
• Recognition (Animal Caregivers)

• Work Environments/Breakroom Enhancements (Animal Caregivers)
“The Breakroom Project”

Improving break rooms was frequently requested during our Needs Assessment

“Before” and “After” video of animal caregiver breakroom with completed renovations @ https://sites.uw.edu/d2c under Special Projects page
“The Window Project”
Appreciation Lunches
Dear Animal Care Team,

The University of Washington’s Dare 2 Care (D2C) Compassion in Science Committee would like to personally take this opportunity to recognize and thank each of you for your contributions and exemplary resiliency while our community has struggled with the COVID-19 pandemic. D2C, as well as UW Leadership, has seen how dedicated you are to your job and how you have consistently shown up to work and to care for your animals and to support critical research studies. The emotional toll that the pandemic and the ensuing quarantine has taken is apparent and we recognize your determination and dedication. The University has asked a lot of all of its staff that have to come into work and comply with the necessary physical and social distancing requirements that we are all living with. We know this hasn’t been easy.

Local restaurants, The London Plane and Ba Bar, in partnership with the Seattle Science Foundation, are demonstrating their acknowledgement of the important work that you are providing every day in taking care of the animals and supporting the research by providing multiple appreciation lunches in your honor by donating over 365 lunches. We are so grateful for their support and goodwill through these challenging times. This very important recognition of your contributions is a true honor that can only be appreciated in the moment when you see our community finding ways to support one another.

Thank you for being you and going above and beyond to do your job in such a challenging time. And many thanks to The London Plane and Ba Bar in partnership with the Seattle Science Foundation.

With best regards,
D2C
Thank you!

UW COMPARATIVE MEDICINE - 6TH FLOOR STAFF
Frontline Heroes
Kudoboard
Dare 2 Care: Compassion in Science at the University of Washington has created a Kudoboard where we are inviting you to write a message of thanks and words of affirmation to UW’s hardworking laboratory animal technicians - many of whom provide the utmost care to your research animals on a daily basis. Additionally, we encourage you to ask members of your lab and staff to also leave a note of appreciation on the Kudoboard as we recognize all the UW’s animal care technicians.
Sustainability
Sustainability: Leadership and Management

• Communication:
  – Essential to maintaining a sustainable Compassion Resiliency program.
  – Regular updates to program happenings.

• Support:
  – Advocate
  – Referral

• Participation:
  – Events
  – Testimonials

• Understand the management perspective:
  – Research must continue.
  – Care standards for animals must be maintained.
Sustainability: Challenges

- Human Resources
- Culture Change
- Lack of support

- Everyone has a full-time job already
- Some staff unsure about program
- Difficult to prioritize ideas

- Scheduling
- Participation
- Find the time
• Identify (and secure) possible funding sources early on.
• Review budget regularly.
• Funding and personnel available to support the program are of course helpful; however, such resources may take time to establish, so planning for actions that can be taken when resources are limited is important.
• Continue to emphasize and justify the need to the institution, so that support (funding (and personnel)) can be encouraged and sustained.
Sustainability: Committee or Working Group

- Committee or working group should meet regularly to:
  - Discuss and review progress.
  - Establish new goals.
  - Evaluate needs.
- Continue to monitor the program and ensure that the actions are impactful is essential.
- Committee should remain independent and available to all research faculty and staff, animal caregivers, veterinary staff, and others.
- Set clear expectations:
  - Committee membership?
  - Charter?
  - Guidelines for volunteers that reach out to staff in need.
- Re-evaluation of the compassion fatigue well-being program should be considered on an ongoing basis.
Sustainability: Measurement of Outcomes

• Baseline survey:
  – Critical to determine overall effectiveness.
  – IRB approval?

• Examples for measuring effectiveness may include:
  – Engagement. Are people showing up?
  – Discussion. Are people talking about it?
  – Inquiries. Are people reaching out when they need help?

• Possible indicators or success:
  – Increase in worker satisfaction.
  – Increased referral rate to the resource that the program offers.

• Direct measurements of well-being, such as surveys or interviews open to individuals from all aspects of laboratory animal care and use within the institution.

• Indirect measures such as error rates, can all help a program determine its needs.
• Institutions should recognize that the need(s) for a CF program may ebb and flow depending on external and internal factors:
  – Committee or working group must be open-minded and willing to change the program focus depending on the needs of the personnel and with the understanding that some efforts may not result in a useful impact.
  – A successful well-being program is never done. Your team should always be open to feedback and new ideas, so the program improves.
Sustainability: Stay Involved

• Recruit investigators to conduct informational seminars:
  – Discuss why the research is important and potential benefits of the results.
  – Explain why specific endpoints were chosen for the study.

• Encourage all forms of support:
  – Investigate partnerships with counseling providers if your institution permits.
  – Encourage individuals to build an outside support network of family and friends.

• Take an opportunity to understand the benefits of the research at your institution:
  – Remember the benefits of research advancement for both humans and animals.
  – Reflect on any personal impacts of research advancements.
Sustainability: Future Directions

- Future studies need to include an overall assessment of the relationship and interplay between people, animals and the environment of the work environment to better support personnel – surveys should include an overall intake of whether this information can help improve health outcomes for personnel that support animal research.

- Additionally, looking for metrics or ways to assess how improved well-being of the humans affects the laboratory animal well-being can provide evidence linking this effort to the One Health concept.
Fostering healthy compassion in an animal care and use program
The ‘old school’ vs ‘new paradigm’. Why now?

**Old School: Myth of Objectivity**
- Hippocrates (460 BC-c.37 BC) established objectivity and stoicism as a central component of “professional” medicine.
- Ineffective method for developing and maintaining resiliency.
- Produces shame, isolation, fear, and exile among practitioners who do become symptomatic.

**New Paradigm**
- Caregiving Hurts!
- Impossible to avoid the pain associated with professional or volunteer caregiving.
- A professional does not have to suffer if s/he is willing to evolve and mature personal and professional skills.
IACUC’s can support programs and tools that build resiliency among laboratory animal professionals.
... through avenues such as

- Semiannual inspections
- Benefits story
- Site visit incentives
- Support letters/letters of acknowledgement
- Animal adoptions
- Openness and Transparency
I am a new IACUC member with less than one year of service. I serve as a non-scientist on the committee. As I review protocols and undertake facility inspections, I am looking to see that there is genuine care and attention to the animals being used in this work. I think that there is a moral imperative on IACUC’s to ensure that the people who have the role of caring for animals, and undertaking research with animals, do everything that they can to minimize pain and distress, and to also provide enrichment. This may be simplistic, but I feel like each animal is giving us a gift and because of this we have to do the things necessary to both honor and value that gift.

In turn, we also have to recognize that this work is hard. We place a huge amount of responsibility on all staff to ensure that they do this hard work well, to reach exacting standards of precision and to also do this work whilst demonstrably caring for animals. This work comes at a cost to all staff involved – and to have a good animal care program we have to have a concomitant human care program. If we don’t look after our people – they will not be able to look after the animals.

Looking after our people is a multi-faceted program. This requires good recruitment, induction, training, counselling and supervision. It also means that we need to recognize them as individuals who have lives that intrude on their work AND that the work intrudes on their lives.

The D2C program aspires to provide a way for staff to have a safe place and support so that the hard nature of the work can be both seen and understood. D2C is a core part of the overall animal care program, and I am pleased that it has its own section in the protocol review process.

~ Ken Gordon
What do you feel the IACUCs role is, or should be, with regards to the benefits of caring (for animal AND human welfare AND public transparency)?

While not directly interacting with animals used in research science, the IACUC is still engaged in tasks which contribute to the notion of compassion. The IACUC members and staff are commonly applying the principles of the 3 Rs. Hopefully, that has not become a “check the box” step. To address compassion, an IACUC would do well to consider and re-think scenarios like the following:

• The total number of animals is always a concern. Imagine, though, what might the non-affiliated or non-scientist member be thinking about when reading in a protocol that 4783 (or more!) mice are proposed for study?
• As obligated, a researcher describes that the study will make sick several groups of dogs to better understand specifics of a disease process. The IACUC members need to be comfortable and able to rationalize why that is the case. What is the institutional culture of caring?
• During facility inspections, one of the stops will typically be where animals are euthanized. The team evaluates the condition of the room and the procedures being performed. Does the environment truly provide for a humane and respectful death process (think Temple Grandin)?
• The position of being IACUC staff is significant and has grown to encompass many responsibilities. An IACUC analyst notices that a member showed some discomfort during the last meeting with FCRs. What could/should be said, even though it’s not in the job description?

~ Bruce W. Kennedy
Call to action....

• Low public image of animal research and stigmatization as ‘dirty’ work;
• Low social support and poor internal communication culture;
• Areas of conflict in daily work.

Reference:
Culture of care in animal research – Expanding the 3Rs to include people
Fabienne Ferrara, Bernhard Hiebl, Peter Kunzmann, Florian Hutter, Freni Afkham,
Megan LaFollette and Christian Gruber
Call to action.... Culture of Care

• More awareness of the real issues surrounding work well-being
• More resources to prevent work-related mental stress
• More supportive cultures to promote work well-being

Reference:
Culture of care in animal research – Expanding the 3Rs to include people
Fabienne Ferrara, Bernhard Hiebl, Peter Kunzmann, Florian Hutter, Freni Afkham,
Megan LaFollette and Christian Gruber
Human Well-Being...

- To combat three main causes of compassion fatigue various strategies should be employed:
  - Improving animal research personnel’s social support
  - Better institutional culture of care and communication
  - Open and transparent communication with the public to improve understanding of animal research, and general support for work related stress

Reference:
Culture of care in animal research – Expanding the 3Rs to include people
Fabienne Ferrara, Bernhard Hiebl, Peter Kunzmann, Florian Hutter, Freni Afkham, Megan LaFollette and Christian Gruber
Openness & Transparency

What is Openness?

• **Engaging the Public Over the Use of Animals in Research**
  – Engaging - tending to draw favorable attention or interest
  – Over - to agreement or concord; win them over

• **Openness vs. Transparency**
  – Characterized by visibility or accessibility of information
  – Readily understood
  – Prefer to use the term openness at this point in time.
Openness & Transparency

In Progress
- University of Washington
- Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR)
- USARO.org
“When we share our stories, what it does is, it opens up our hearts for other people to share their stories. And it gives us the sense that we are not alone on this journey.”

Janine Shepherd
Thank you for what you do..... you truly make a difference!
It is better to have a Compassion Fatigue Program and not need it –

......than to need a Compassion Fatigue Program and not have it.

~ Anthony Gray, 2017