

## CARING FOR YOURSELF & OTHERS: PREVENTING COMPASSION FATIGUE & BURNOUT IN THE ANIMAL SERVICES SECTOR



### REFLECTION 1

### Thinking About Stress and Well-Being

What energizes you in your work?



What do you feel you are doing well in regard to self-care?



What do you feel you are doing well in regard to supporting your coworkers?



What do you find draining or stressful in your work?



How does stress impact your personal wellbeing, your behaviour, relationships, or performance?



 REFLECTION 2


### Signs, Risk Factors, and Protective Factors of Vicarious Trauma

Consider the risk factors and the signs of vicarious trauma, as well as the protective factors (i.e., the skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies that one can use to deal more effectively with stressful events). Take a moment to reflect on how you are doing with regard to the factors we just discussed. Can you think of any other potentials signs of vicarious trauma, risk factors, and protective factors?

What do you notice about yourself with regard to the risk, protective factors and signs of vicarious trauma?



What resources and supports do you have available to you to help protect you?




 REFLECTION 3

### Thinking About Self-Care


Take a moment to think about your own self-care practices, and reflect on the following questions:

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being really strong, how satisfied are you with your self-care?

What makes you feel your best?



What else could you do that might help you to heal or recharge?



## CREATING A SAFETY PLAN



We invite you to reflect on the following prompts and questions to help you create a safety plan for emotionally challenging situations at work. You don't need to answer all of the questions—you are welcome to choose the ones that are useful to you.

### 1 What are your triggers?

What are things or situations that overwhelm you and trigger you? For example: A person raising their voice at you, or the mention of a certain event that you associate with negative memories.



### 2 What are your warning signs?

What are the signs that tell you that you are starting to feel overwhelmed? What happens to my thinking, my body, and my senses when I'm not okay? Warning signs could be thoughts, feelings, mood changes, behaviors, or body sensations. For example: Heartbeat racing, feeling flushed, feeling shaky, or having the urge to cry.



### 3 What are the things that can distract you?

What can you do to help distract yourself and take your mind off the problem or situation? For example: Going outside for a walk, petting your animal, watching a funny video, looking at photos of happy memories.



#### 4 What are your calming coping strategies and grounding techniques?

What are some coping strategies you can use to help calm your mind and your body? What are some things you can do when you're alone, and when you're in public or with others, that can help you to feel safe? For example: Box or deep breathing, listening to a podcast or calming music, doing a quick meditation/relaxation exercise through an app like Calm or a YouTube video.



#### 5 Who can you contact for support?

Who are the supportive people in your life that you can call for help? Or, what are some resources you can consult to talk to someone? You can talk about the situation, or just to talk about something to distract you and take your mind off the stressful situation. For example: your parent, partner, friend, or a free phone or text line such as Wellness Together or Hope for Wellness.



#### 6 What changes can you make to your surroundings?

What are some small things you can change in your surroundings or with your body to help you feel grounded in this difficult situation? For example: You can take a quick walk outside in nature, light a candle, make some tea and take time to breathe in the smell, change into some comfortable clothes, or put on a relaxing music playlist.



#### 7 What truths can you hold onto in this situation?

What are some helpful truths about yourself, others or the world that you can remind yourself of? These can be positive affirmation statements, uplifting quotes, mantras or a word that helps you feel strong and empowered to get through an emotionally challenging situation. For example: "I am worthy", "I have a strong support system", "This feeling will pass", "I know I can handle this situation".



These prompts and questions were adapted from:

<https://www.genesisshelter.org/emotional-safety-planning/> and [https://wgac.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/05/EmotionalSafetyPlan\\_updated.pdf](https://wgac.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/05/EmotionalSafetyPlan_updated.pdf).

**REFLECTION 4****Summing Up**

What are the most important things you learned in this section?



What is working well for you that you want to continue doing?



What is one thing you intend to carry back with you?



What changes might you think about making to support yourself, your people you serve, or your colleagues in managing stress?



What is something you commit to doing differently?

