

# Fighting compassion fatigue and encouraging resiliency

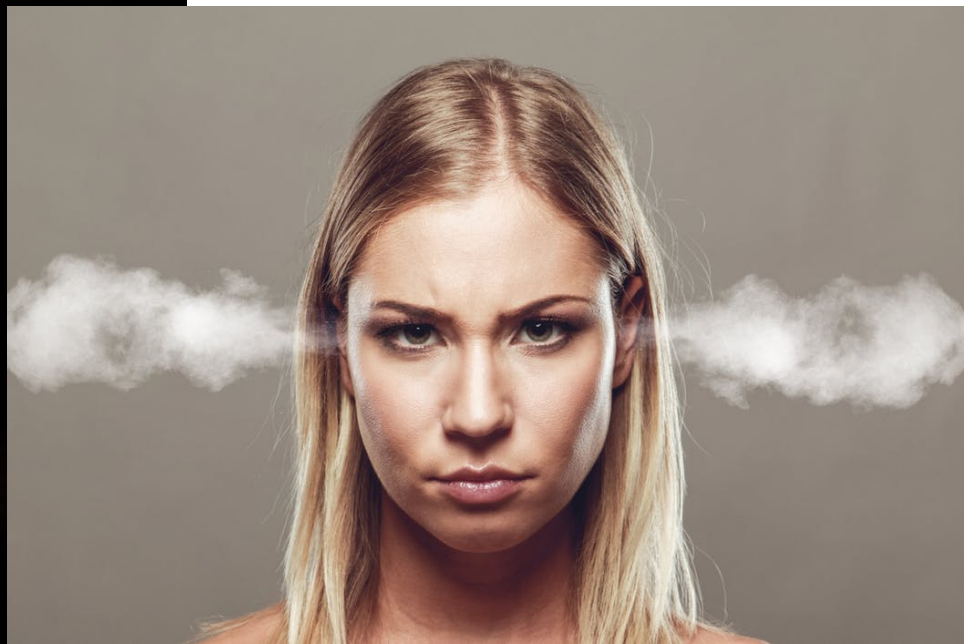


Presented by Vanessa Rohlf

# The good stuff...



# The bad stuff



For many, working in animal management can be rewarding, but there are times which can be difficult and emotionally demanding.

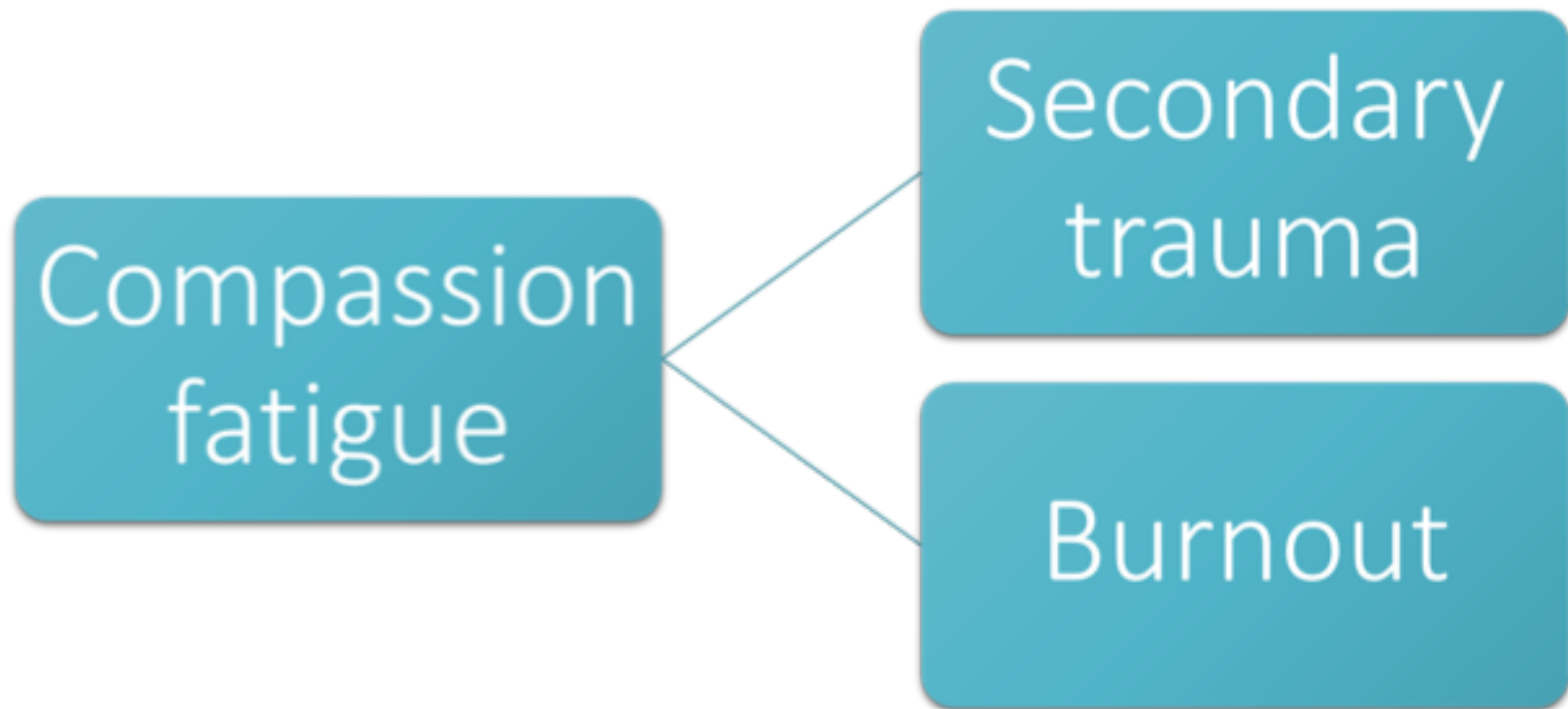




# Aim

- Signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue
- Ways to promote compassion fatigue resiliency





# Secondary trauma

- Stress from helping those who have been directly exposed to trauma
- Rapid in onset
- Typically associated with a single event



# Secondary trauma symptoms

## INTRUSIVE

- Daytime memories
- Dreams/nightmares
- Flashbacks

## AROUSAL

- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Hypervigilance

## AVOIDANCE

- Avoidance of reminders of the traumatic event
  - Activities
  - Places
  - People
  - Feelings
  - Memory loss

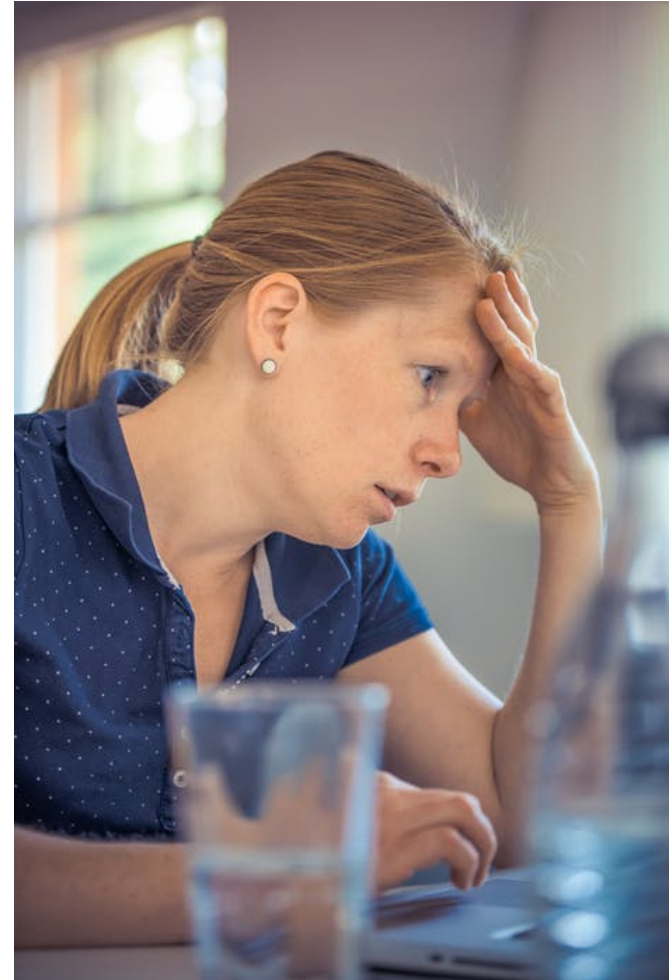
### Emotional numbing

- Restricted emotions
- Detached
- Loss of interest in activities



# Burnout

- Physical, emotional and mental exhaustion
- Gradual onset
- Associated with exposure to multiple occupational stressors



# Burnout symptoms

- Unhappy
- Disconnected
- Unproductive
- Trapped
- Loss of meaning
- Overwhelmed
- 'Bogged down' by the system



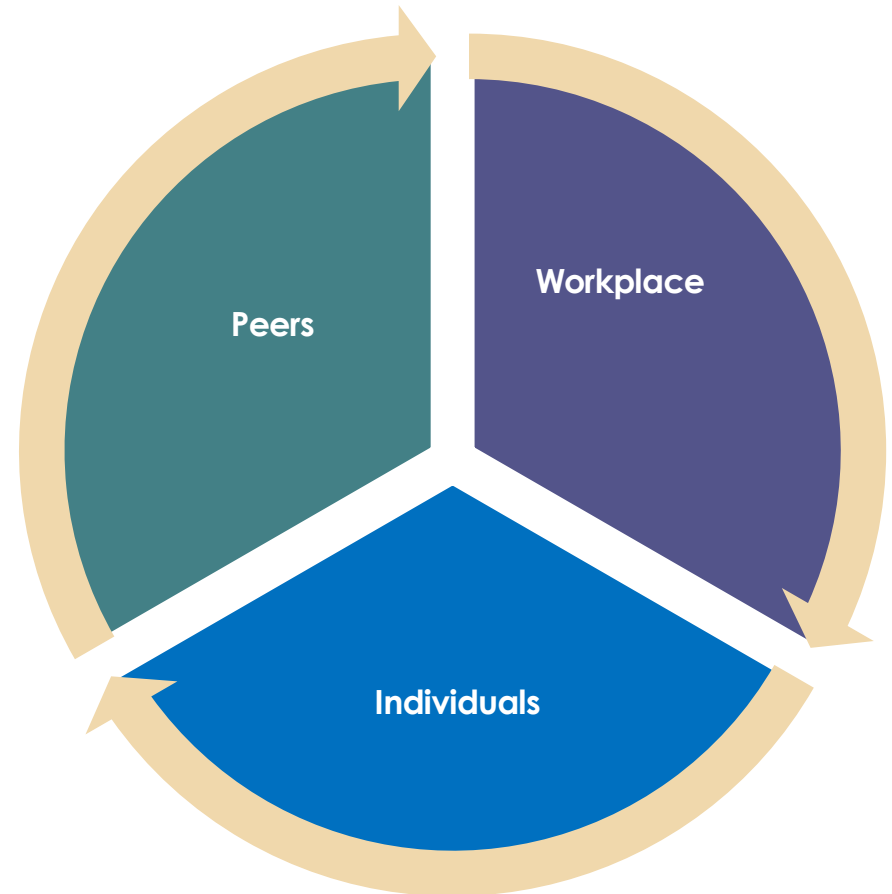
# Effects of compassion fatigue

- Individual
  - Physical effects
  - Psychological effects
- Workplace
  - Reductions in performance
  - Turnover
  - Increase in absenteeism
  - Low morale

# Compassion fatigue resiliency

## Three pronged approach

1. Workplace commitment to care for staff
2. Recognition of peers to support each other
3. Individual commitment to self care





# Workplace commitment: Stage 1

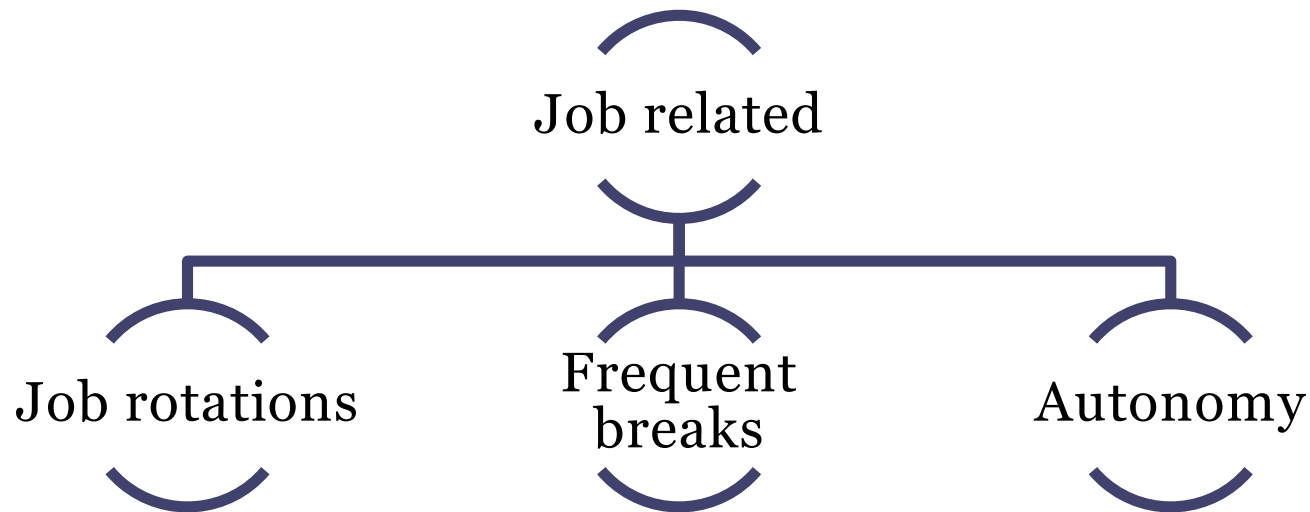
1. Acknowledge
2. Make a formal commitment
3. Ask for feedback
4. Monitor compassion fatigue levels



*"I'm right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me."*

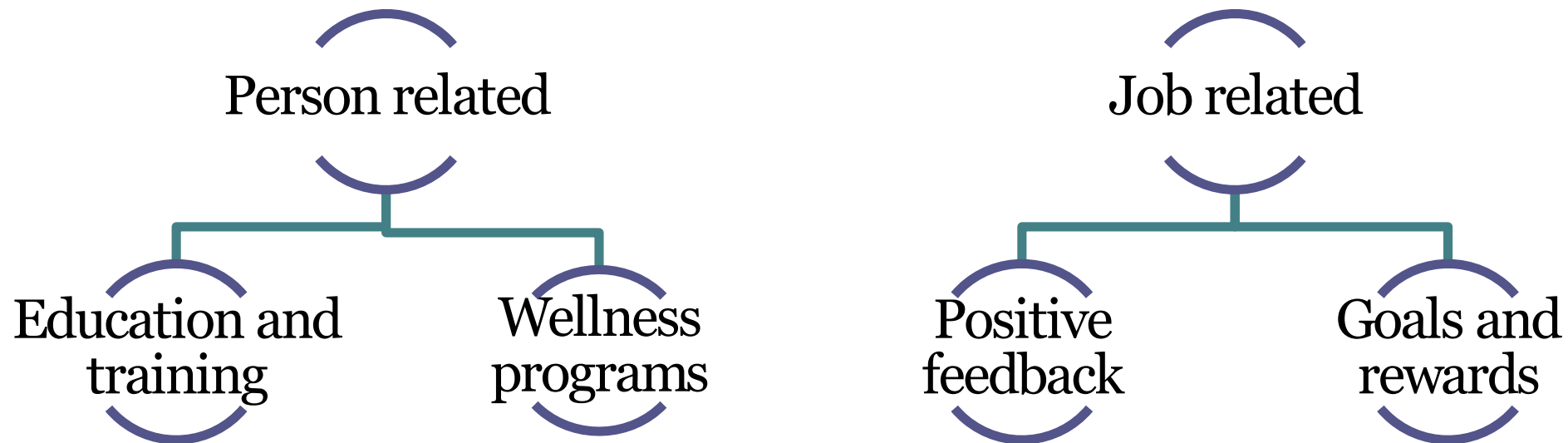
# Workplace commitment:

## Stage 2: Decrease demands



# Workplace commitment:

## Stage 2- Increase resources



# Peer support

## Types of support

- Practical
- Emotional
- Educate
- Respite

## Formal support

- Debriefing
- Peer support meetings
- Mentor programs
- Social outings



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2882490>



# Individual commitment

**A**wareness

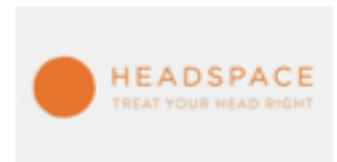
**B**alance

**C**onnect

# Awareness



- Bringing non-judgemental attention and awareness to the present moment
- Formally practiced through meditation
- Linked with a decrease in depression, stress, anxiety and compassion fatigue



# Balance: Self



# Connect: With others



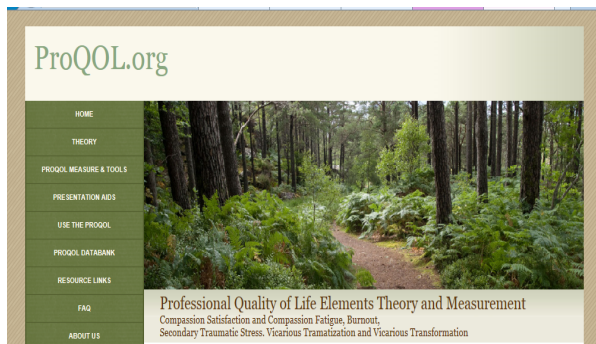


# Connect with professional support and information

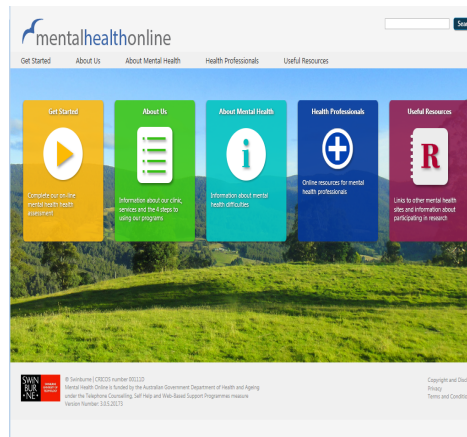
**Lifeline 13 11 14**



**www.proqol.org**



**www.mental  
healthonline.org**



**www.beyondblue.org.au/**



**Your local GP,  
Counsellor  
or Psychologist**

# Connect: With me!



[www.drvanessarohlf.com.au/](http://www.drvanessarohlf.com.au/)

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*Vanessa is a consultant and educator specialising in compassion fatigue and animal bereavement within the animal industry*



# Conclusion

- There are positive and negative aspects associated with work in animal management
- The negative aspects can lead to compassion fatigue
- Organisational commitment, peer support and self care practices are effective strategies to foster compassion fatigue resiliency

# Thank-you

Until one has loved an animal, a part of  
one's soul  
remains unawakened  
- Anatole France

