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How facilitating professional and emotional openness helps us to build up stronger teams during challenging pandemic times

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- ✓ Key to recognise and protect human –animal bond
- ✓ Our actions directly impact on care and welfare
- ✓ Key to Culture of care

Complex working environment



“... the stress issue is an intrinsic problem of the research culture ...”



Compassion?
Affection?
Respect?



Emotions do matter !

Emotional challenges can lead to emotional dissonance



Euthanasia remains one of the hardest elements of the job to reconcile

I found it quite stressful really in lots of ways, especially when it came to culling more healthier animals he current academic culture is the problem”

I like the fact that some of the researchers [...] only breed what they need. I wish more of them were like that.

“I have never been asked in my whole career how do I feel about killing animals!”

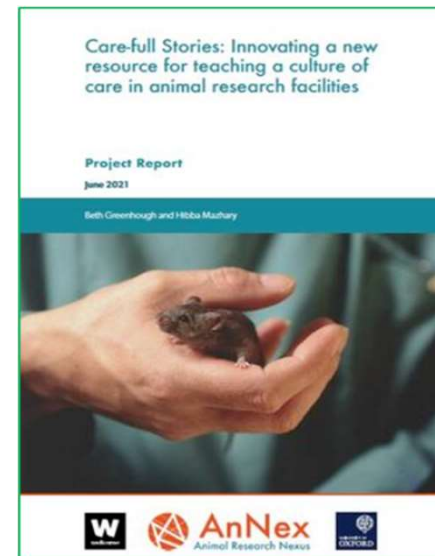
Euthanasia was performed frequently, sometimes without the ability to decide, and may include inhalant & physical methods.



Action: “Emotional openness”

- ✓ Staff well-being: Acknowledge of emotional impacts
- ✓ Challenging for people to find the space to talk openly emotional challenges in their work
- ✓ Support systems available & awareness

Divide emotional labour
Support emotional openness
Empathetic distress fatigue



<https://animalresearchnexus.org/publications/care-full-stories-innovating-new-resource-teaching-culture-care-animal-research>

“Telling stories”

“You remember the faces and names of some of the animals you have worked with ...Everyone has a story in their mind.”

To facilitate in-depth conversations & openness

To use fictionalised prompts to encourage trainees to share their own experiences and to build connections across different staff

Appreciate that there are different kinds and understandings of care for both humans and animals

Share examples of a positive workplace culture

Feedback

- ✓ *Emotions can be 'contagious' in groups (aligned to empathy)*
- ✓ *Acknowledging is important*
- ✓ *Be emotionally intelligent!- ACT*
- ✓ *Do not be a super hero!- Team work*
- ✓ *Support positive workplace*
- ✓ *Embrace challenges-*



The real heroes in action:



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Thank you



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